

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE TOWN BOARD OF
TRUSTEES OF THORNTON TOWNSHIP HALL
333 E 162nd St SOUTH HOLLAND, IL 60473**

September 24, 2024

Thornton Township Supervisor Henyard called the Thornton Township Board of Trustees Meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. Deputy Clerk Sawe called the roll.

PRESENT: Trustees Christopher Gonzalez, Carmen Carlisle, and Supervisor Tiffany Henyard

ALSO PRESENT: Deputy Clerk Kiearra “Kiea” Sawe, Highway Commissioner Geary DePue and Attorney Eric Stach

ABSENT: Trustees Gerald “Jerry” Jones, Trustee Darlene Gray-Everett, Clerk Loretta Wells and Assessor Cassandra Elston.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to approve the Board Meeting minutes held on September 10, 2024. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. There being no questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 3 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle, and Supervisor Henyard

NO: 0 None

ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being three affirmative votes, **the motion carried.**

OLD BUSINESS:

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to approve the upcoming event, Big Bingo(monthly). The motion was made by Supervisor Henyard and seconded by Trustee Carlisle. Trustee Carlisle expresses her concerns about the prizes that are being given at Big Bingo and questions whether anyone receiving a gift of over \$600.00 should complete a 1099 form. Until an answer is given to that, she says there should be a pause on that. She explains that stopping this for the moment is to ensure that the rules and laws are being followed. Supervisor Henyard speaks about Protocols that they’ve taken to make sure Residents could have Big Bingo, she says its money going back to the residents and there shouldn’t be an issue with that. Supervisor Henyard also states that Bingo is always a huge success, and she speaks on what Bingo is all about. The Supervisor gives her apologies to the Residents because the board does not want to continue bingo. She repeatedly mentions that they have reached out to the gaming board and the village of south holland to make sure bingo was legal. Finance Director, Robert Hunt clarifies that no one ever mentioned that the prizes for Bingo were donated and there may have been some miscommunication. Trustee Gonzalez mentions that we could still have Bingo without large prizes or none. There being no further questions or comments, Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 1 Supervisor Henyard
NO: 2 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being one affirmative vote, **the motion failed.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to approve the upcoming event: Gospel Fest. The motion was made by Supervisor Henyard and there was not a second. There being no second, the motion failed.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to approve the General Fund Bills. Trustee Carlisle entertained an amended motion to approve the General Fund as presented to the Board for payment except for the following line items, 1-119, 206-252 and 258. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. Finance Director, Robert Hunt read off the line-item bills that were mentioned. Supervisor Henyard speaks about things that are on the list. Trustee Gonzalez points out the fact that items that weren't voted out to be approved end up being paid with a credit card. Supervisor Henyard responds, stating that whatever wasn't approved, it needs to be pointed out. Supervisor Henyard also mentions her reason for voting on this motion. A lengthy discussion occurred. There being no further questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 3 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle, and Supervisor Henyard
NO: 0 None
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being three affirmative votes, **the motion carried.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to approve the General Assistant Fund Bills. Trustee Carlisle entertained an amended motion to approve the General Assistance Fund as presented to the Board for payment except for the following line items, 1,14 and 43. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. Supervisor Henyard speaks on how the Supervisor is over the GA Department and how we're still operating off the old budget. Finance Director, Robert Hunt reads off the line-item bills that were mentioned. Supervisor Henyard speaks about the items that were taken out by Trustee Carlisle. Trustee Carlisle mentions the first item being paid on a credit card and that it's part of the Tax Rebate and further speaks about the budget, leadership, and accountability. A lengthy discussion occurred. There being no further questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 3 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle, and Supervisor Henyard
NO: 0 None
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being three affirmative votes, **the motion carried.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to approve the Road and Bridge Fund as presented to the Board for payment. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. There being no questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 3 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle, and Supervisor Henyard
NO: 0 None
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being three affirmative votes, **the motion carried.**

NEW BUSINESS:

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to approve the retainer agreement with Leinenweber Daffada & Sansonetti, LLC(LDS) to represent the Township Officials in the cases of 1. Jerrel Jones vs Thornton Township et al, 24 L 5398. The motion was made by Supervisor Henyard and seconded by Trustee Carlisle. Trustee Gonzalez questions whether there have been any actions taken prior to approval, whether it be a motion or a filing. Supervisor Henyard explains this lawsuit. A lengthy discussion occurred. Trustee Carlisle entertained a motion to table the retainer agreement with Leinenweber Daffada & Sansonetti, LLC(LDS) to represent the Township Officials in the case of 1. Jerrel Jones vs Thornton Township et al, 24 L 5398, to the next Board of Trustees meeting, to be held on October 8, 2024. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. A representative from LDS made a few comments and answered questions. There being no further questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 3 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle, and Supervisor Henyard
NO: 0 None
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being three affirmative votes, **the motion carried.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to approve the upcoming events (Senior Services) Harvest Roundup/Location: Calumet City Senior Services Center. Date/Time: Monday, October 21, 2024/Budget: \$3,625.00. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. There being no questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 3 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle, and Supervisor Henyard
NO: 0 None
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being three affirmative votes, **the motion carried.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to approve the upcoming events (Senior Services) Harvest Roundup/Location: Calumet City Senior Services Center. Date/Time: Monday, December 30, 2024/Budget: \$5,730.00. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. There being no questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 3 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle, and Supervisor Henyard
NO: 0 None
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being three affirmative votes, **the motion carried.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to conduct forensic audit/investigation of Keith Freeman's credit card & Carmen Carlisle use of said credit card. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. Trustee Carlisle explains that she's welcome and happy to talk to any investigator about this. Trustee Gonzalez questions whose providing this service and how much it'll cost. A lengthy discussion occurred. There being no further questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 3 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle, and Supervisor Henyard
NO: 0 None
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being three affirmative votes, **the motion carried.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to conduct forensic audit/investigation on all departments, all audits dating back to 10 years. The motion was made by Supervisor Henyard and there was not a second. There being no second, the motion failed.

Trustee Gonzalez entertained a motion to conduct forensic audit/investigation on all departments, all audits dating back to 3 years. The motion was made by Trustee Gonzalez and seconded by Trustee Carlisle. Supervisor Henyard questions why only three years. A lengthy discussion occurred. There being no further questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 3 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle, and Supervisor Henyard
NO: 0 None
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being three affirmative votes, **the motion carried.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to approve an Ordinance related to establishing a Whistleblower Protections Policy for Thornton Township, Cook County, Illinois. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. Supervisor Henyard explained what the Whistleblower Act is, and that the whistleblower act is already in existence at the state level, if anyone like to review the act the statue is 740 ILCS 174/15. A lengthy discussion occurred. There being no further questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 2 Trustees Gonzalez and Carlisle
NO: 1 Supervisor Henyard
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being two affirmative votes, **the motion failed.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to direct the Township's Attorney to send Nation Builder a cancellation void ab initio notice. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. Trustee Carlisle made comments about the Nation Builder Software and stated that there was a serious line between collecting data and electioneering. A lengthy discussion occurred. There being no further questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 2 Trustees Gonzalez and Carlisle
NO: 1 Supervisor Henyard
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being two affirmative votes, **the motion failed.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to discuss possible action related to the creation of an Accountability Department. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. The supervisor inquired about what is the accountability department. Trustee Carlisle explains what the Accountability Department is and the reason for it. There being no further questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll. The attorney asked for clarification of the actual motion. Trustee Carlisle repeated the motion: To discuss possible action related to the creation of an Accountability Department.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 2 Trustees Gonzalez and Carlisle
NO: 1 Supervisor Henyard
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being two affirmative votes, **the motion failed.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion for discussion and possible action related to the establishment of a new salary ordinance for elected officials of the Township. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. Trustee Carlisle explained the reason for creating another salary ordinance. The attorney suggested that the motion should be to table this ordinance until the next meeting. The supervisor asked why another ordinance is being created. A lengthy discussion occurred. Trustee Carlisle entertained a motion to table discussion and possible action related to the Establishment of a new salary ordinance for Elected Officials of the Township. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez- Supervisor Henyard reads an old ordinance from the year 2021 and explains the salaries of all the elected officials. Trustee Carlisle explains what was done as a Board, Trustee Gonzalez made comments, and a lengthy discussion occurred. There being no further questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 2 Trustees Gonzalez and Carlisle
NO: 1 Supervisor Henyard
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being two affirmative votes, **the motion failed.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to approve the TIFF extension support letter for the Village of Lansing. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. There being no questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 3 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle, and Supervisor Henyard
NO: 0 None
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being three affirmative votes, **the motion carried.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to request that the Supervisor retain separate counsel within the next ninety (90) days for the following cases: A. Thrash v. Thornton Township, et al. B. Jones v. Thornton Township, et al. C. Lawrence v. Thornton Township, et al. D. Dukes v. Thornton Township, et al. Trustee Carlisle entertained an amended motion to strike the case of Jones v. Thornton Township, et al. and request that the Supervisor retain separate counsel within the next ninety (90) days for the following cases: A. Thrash v. Thornton Township, et al. C. Lawrence v. Thornton Township, et al. and D. Dukes v. Thornton Township, et al. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. Trustee Carlisle explains the reason for this motion. A lengthy discussion occurred. There being no further questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 2 Trustees Gonzalez and Carlisle
NO: 1 Supervisor Henyard
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones

There being two affirmative votes, **the motion failed.**

SUPERVISORS REPORT:

Supervisor Henyard thanks everyone for coming to the meeting and announces all the great things we do here in Thornton Township. Gives an update and announces all past successful events. Supervisor Henyard presents videos of events that occur throughout the Township, such as Big Bingo, GA, Cooking with Tiffany Henyard and more.

Upcoming Events:

- Township Talk– September 25, 2024, 5pm-7pm (Main Building)
- Tech Savvy – September 26, 2024, 11am-1pm
- Friends of Tiffany Henyard – September 1, 2024

ACTIONS ITEMS ON THE AGENDA:

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to discuss possible action to retain an independent investigator to investigate the Township's Outreach department to include investigations related to the Outreach Department's funding, expenditures, contracts (independent contractors), contracts for other goods and services, staff/employees, and management of the Outreach Department and its finances. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. There being no questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 2 Trustees Gonzalez and Carlisle
NO: 1 Supervisor Henyard
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones
There being two affirmative votes, **the motion failed.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to discuss possible action to retain an independent investigator and/or a forensic auditor to audit and investigate the use of certain grant money and possible Township Funds related to the Township's At-Risk Youth program, including but not limited to how, where and by whom the grant funds and Township funds were used to support this and other similar programs. The motion was made by Trustee Carlisle and seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. There being no questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 2 Trustees Gonzalez and Carlisle
NO: 1 Supervisor Henyard
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones
There being two affirmative votes, **the motion failed.**

Supervisor Henyard entertained a motion to go into closed session. Trustee Carlisle motion to have public comments first and then go into closed session to discuss item C. Discussion and possible action to retain an independent investigator to investigate Employee A and allegations of misconduct and improper pay. The motion was seconded by Trustee Gonzalez. There being no questions or comments Supervisor Henyard asked Deputy Clerk Sawe to call the roll.

On the Roll Call, the vote was:

YES: 3 Trustees Gonzalez, Carlisle, and Supervisor Henyard
NO: 0 None
ABSENT: 2 Trustees Gray-Everett and Jones
There being three affirmative votes, **the motion carried.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Michael Smith, Township Resident - Questions who was the agenda created by and speaks on how it's an agenda he's never seen before. He mentions the Senate Bill 2966. He says he thinks that the investigation should go back 10 years, instead of three. He speaks about things that went on within the previous Administration, he says the current programs and expense part of it cost less than the previous Administration.

Deborah Reeves, Township Resident - Speaks about the differences between how the Supervisor and Trustee Carlisle gets treated and the things that went on with a previous Township employee ~~Keith Freeman~~ and Trustee Carlisle

Paul Robertz, Township Resident - Mr. Robertz reads off a letter that he proposed and explains that the purpose of his comment is to ask the Supervisor to work with the Trustees reasonably.

Due to an outburst of disturbance taking place, public comments were cut short and the Supervisor suggested that the board go into closed session. Closed session did not take place because of the continued outburst. The meeting was not adjourned due to lack of Quorum.

The Meeting of the Board of Trustees was not adjourned.

X

Loretta Wells
Clerk

X

Gerald "Jerry" Jones
Trustee

X

Christopher Gonzalez
Trustee

X

Darelene Gray-Everett
Trustee

X

Carmen Carlisle
Trustee

X

Tiffany A. Henyard
Supervisor