

Village of Cambria Board Minutes

Date: August 4, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Mayor William Lo. Present: Mayor William Lo, Trustee Marshall Brown, Trustee Robbie Chitwood, Trustee Suzette Coffey, Trustee Robin McFarlin, Trustee Mark Phillips, and Trustee Mike Ren.

Approval of Minutes and Balance Sheet

The board reviewed the minutes from the July 7 meeting. Robin McFarlin moved to accept the minutes. Suzette Coffey seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Authorized Disbursements

The board reviewed authorized disbursements, which had been distributed in advance as part of the board packet. No questions were raised regarding the disbursements.

Public Comments

Mayor Lo exercised his right to three minutes of public comment at the opening of the meeting. He addressed community concerns regarding his leadership, clarifying that he had not pursued a personal or political agenda. He outlined accomplishments completed since taking office in June, including working to obtain financial reports that had not been seen by the board for months, initiating a sidewalk bid process, pursuing body cam policy compliance with the Illinois Attorney General's office, obtaining FOIA certification, and obtaining Open Meetings Act certification. The Mayor acknowledged areas where he was still learning and invited community members to contact him directly with concerns or criticisms, emphasizing accessibility and a willingness to accept constructive feedback.

A community member addressed the board regarding the condition of sidewalks throughout Cambria. He noted that many sidewalks simply needed to be cleaned of weeds and overgrowth rather than replaced, and provided specific examples of locations where sidewalks were in poor condition.

A community member, Debbie Lawson, addressed the board regarding the recording status of an annexation related to Marshall Brown's property at the Williamson County Courthouse. She

stated that she had visited the courthouse, the GPS office, and the tax office, and that none of those offices had a recorded document on file. She noted that until the document is officially recorded, city taxes cannot begin to be assessed. Mayor Lo indicated that he believed the document had been recorded and committed to following up with the appropriate offices. He also agreed to the community member's request to contact State's Attorney Ed Hampton to inquire about the status of the filing.

A community member raised a concern about a missing street sign on Relative Street near the stop sign coming from the casino. Mayor Lo acknowledged the concern and asked the community member to contact the village directly in the future so issues could be resolved promptly.

Chris Dakin addressed the board regarding an independent survey she had ordered on property belonging to Mr. Brown's father. She stated that the survey was interfered with, contrary to Illinois state statute, when the surveyors were told they were not permitted to step on the property. She noted that she had economic interest in the survey results because she alleged that David Brown had claimed to be within village limits for thirty years without paying village taxes on his residence. She indicated that only \$1.26 had been paid in taxes from the annexed property in the prior year and expressed her intent to continue pursuing the matter.

Presentation: Youth Community Program

Misty Gamble presented a youth community program she had developed for Cambria residents. She reported that eleven teens had already expressed interest and that the group had been meeting weekly at the park. She described the program's goals as focused on leadership, responsibility, business and investment skills, community service, life skills including CPR, and civic engagement.

Ms. Gamble requested the following support from the village: permission to use the park, pavilion, or community building for meetings; access to storage space; promotion of the program through the village website, social media, and newsletter; monthly recognition of youth participants at board meetings; and access to printing resources.

Mayor Lo expressed support for the majority of the requests, noting that use of community spaces and promotion through village channels were straightforward approvals. He noted a concern about setting a precedent with office printer use and suggested instead that the village pledge a set dollar amount to cover printing costs, which could be fulfilled through any outside print shop with receipts provided for accountability.

Mayor Lo noted that the board could not formally approve a specific funding amount at this meeting but committed to bringing the item to the next meeting for a vote.

Reports

Mayor Lo noted that the scheduled report from the Veterans Assistance Commission representative, Tom, was not in attendance. Chief and Bruce were also unable to attend, so department reports were skipped for this meeting.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Lo explained the consent agenda process, noting that all items had been previously discussed or tabled. He stated that he wished to avoid further delays for vendors and contractors waiting on approvals. Items on the consent agenda included water department hardship provisions, a vent fan purchase for the fire department, and other routine items.

Fire Chief Randy Simmons spoke regarding the vent fan purchase, explaining that the department had responded to four structure fires the prior month and had been required to use a borrowed fan each time, as neither fire truck currently carried a positive ventilation fan. He noted that the Milwaukee battery-compatible version was selected because the department already possessed compatible batteries, avoiding an additional \$2,000 in battery costs. The chief also noted that a leaf blower included in the purchase would assist with clearing debris at accident scenes.

Robin McFarland moved to approve the consent agenda. Mark Phillips seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Marshall Brown – Yes, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarland – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Wren – Yes. The consent agenda passed unanimously.

Old Business

Mayor Lo noted that the sidewalk project remained on the agenda as an accountability measure. He reported receiving one bid from River to River and stated he was actively pursuing two additional bids. He indicated that once additional bids were received, the board could vote on a contractor and begin the process of installing new sidewalks. He noted that the village had not bid out sidewalk work in approximately twenty years and confirmed a company had already come out to assess the sidewalks.

New Business

Merit Board Appointments

Mayor Lo introduced candidates for the newly established Merit Board. The following individuals were presented: Carlie Dafron, a six-year law enforcement officer currently employed with a local police department for four years who resides in Cambria; Matt Morgan, a Cambria resident of five years with twenty-five to twenty-six years of public safety experience including work as a dispatcher for police, fire, and emergency services; and Jim Manis, a community member who stated he had previously served as a police commissioner and pledged to remain impartial in reviewing matters before the board. Mayor Lo also noted that Thomas Lafond, a corporal with Energy Police and a military veteran, had been selected but was unable to attend the meeting.

Mayor Lo acknowledged difficulty in selecting a trustee appointee but stated he wished to honor a prior verbal commitment to Robbie Chitwood, who was named as his final appointee to the Merit Board.

During discussion, Trustee Brown questioned were raised regarding Jim Manis' impartiality given a prior Facebook post expressing support for Police Chief Boss. Mr. Manis addressed the concern directly, clarifying that his position was that individuals should not be condemned for a single mistake, and reaffirming his commitment to objective and impartial decision-making on the board.

Suzzette Coffey raised the question of whether the Merit Board would operate under Robert's Rules of Order. Mayor Lo responded that the board would follow the Open Meetings Act and encouraged public attendance at future Merit Board meetings.

Vote on Carlie Dafron: Robin McFarlin moved. Robbie Chitwood seconded. Roll call: Marshall Brown – Yes, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Ren – Yes. Motion passed.

Vote on Robbie Chitwood: Motion and second were made. Roll call: Marshall Brown – No, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Ren – Yes. Motion passed.

Vote on Thomas Lafond: Robin McFarlin moved. Mark Phillips seconded. Roll call: Marshall Brown – Yes, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Ren – Yes. Motion passed.

Vote on Jim Maness: Mark Phillips moved. Robbie Chitwood seconded. Roll call: Marshall Brown – No, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – No, Mike Ren – Yes. Motion carried.

Vote on Matt Morgan: Suzzette Coffey moved. Robin McFarlin seconded. Roll call: Marshall Brown – Yes, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Rren – Yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Lo noted that the Merit Board would be tasked with developing a 30-60-90 day implementation plan, electing a board president and secretary internally, and operating under the Open Meetings Act with publicly posted meeting notices.

Village Clerk Appointment

Mayor Lo appointed Heather Wepsiec as Village Clerk, noting her 25+ years as an attorney and clarifying that residency was not required. Ms. Websick emphasized her local ties, fiduciary duties, and lack of personal agenda. Despite trustee and public questions about her connections, local spending, and other local applicants, Mayor Lo stated she was the most qualified candidate.

Robin McFarlin moved to accept Heather Wepsiec as Village Clerk. Suzzette Coffey seconded. Roll call: Marshall Brown – Yes, Robbie Chitwood – No, Suzzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Ren – No. Motion passed four to two. The appointment carried.

Police Department Equipment Purchases – E-Citation System

Mayor Lo presented a request from the Cambria Police Department to purchase e-citation software and hardware, as recommended by Williamson County. The total amount requested was not to exceed \$49,730. He noted that there are few vendors offering the software and that bids were still being collected, with the possibility of a lower final cost. He indicated that the primary cost driver was the purchase of Panasonic Toughbook laptops and that he was exploring alternative hardware options.

Marshall Brown expressed concern that the expenditure may be premature without data on ticket issuance and revenue. Robin McFarlin stated she did not fully understand the system and voted no for that reason.

Robbie Chitwood moved to approve the purchase of police equipment up to \$49,730. Mike Ren seconded. Roll call: Marshall Brown – No, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Ren – Yes. Motion passed.

Cambria Fire Department Labor Day Event

Fire Chief Randy presented a request for \$2,000 to fund the annual Cambria Fire Department Labor Day event. Funds would be used for candy, dunk tanks, bouncy houses, and other children's activities. The chief noted that costs for the event accumulate quickly and that the village has historically contributed to this event.

Marshall Brown moved to approve \$2,000 for the Cambria Fire Department Labor Day event. Robin McFarlin seconded. Roll call: Marshall Brown – Yes, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Ren – Yes. Motion passed unanimously. Chief Simmons agreed to provide receipts upon completion of the event.

Mowing Contract – Randall Simmons Lawn Care

Mayor Lo provided a status update on the existing mowing contract with Randall Simmons Lawn Care. He noted that the contractor had been approved for two mows and was receiving direction from Bruce regarding areas to mow. He stated that any complaints about mowing should be directed to Bruce, who would then notify the contractor, with a 24-hour rectification window per the contract.

Mayor Lo noted that due to rainfall and growth conditions, a third mow might be warranted and asked that the contractor document such situations with photographs. The fire chief noted that some ditches could not be accessed with a 60-inch mower due to their configuration. No formal motion was required for this item.

Comprehensive Plan for Ditches, Sidewalks, and Culverts

Mayor Lo requested board approval for Bruce to develop a comprehensive plan identifying which ditches, sidewalks, and culverts need to be cleaned or repaired, prioritized by urgency, with an outline of resources and a timeline for completion.

Marshall Brown moved to require Bruce to submit a formal comprehensive plan for ditch and culvert maintenance. A second was made. Roll call: Marshall Brown – Yes, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Ren – Yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Grant Project Manager – Park Improvement Project

Marshall Brown reported that an RFP was issued to engineering firms for park improvement design work. The committee is considering A George Development LLC as project manager for cost analysis, proposal review, bid solicitation, and board updates. He noted that project delays risk cost overruns due to rising material prices.

Discussion confirmed Tri-C athletics' existing park agreement and plans to convert tennis courts into three pickleball courts. Community members asked about opening the walking path at night; Mayor Lo stated park cameras and related ordinance updates would be addressed later.

Regarding cracked plastic on a climbing structure, Mayor Lo committed to having Bruce fix the issue.

Marshall Brown moved to approve the proposal from A George Development LLC for grant project management services up to a cap of \$10,000, with funds drawn from the grant.

Roll call: Marshall Brown – Yes, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Ren – Yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Solar Installation Ordinance Updates

Mayor Lo presented proposed amendments to the village's existing solar ordinance. The three proposed additions were: a requirement for an 18-inch offset from the roof edge to allow fire department access for roof cuts during structure fires; a requirement for a rapid power-down switch for solar installations; and a prohibition on solar panels in front yards for aesthetic purposes.

Trustee Coffey moved to approve the three amendments to the solar ordinance. Roll call: Marshall Brown – Yes, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Ren – Yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

Suzette Coffey moved to enter executive session to discuss pending litigation and pay. A second was made. Roll call: Marshall Brown – Yes, Robbie Chitwood – Yes, Suzette Coffey – Yes, Robin McFarlin – Yes, Mark Phillips – Yes, Mike Ren – Yes. The board moved into executive session.

The board adjourned following the conclusion of executive session.