



Town of Cortland
Board of Trustees Town Board Meeting

Lions Den 70 S Llanos St. Cortland, IL 60112

May 12, 2025

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / ROLL CALL

Mayor Pietrowski called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 7:02 p.m. The pledge of Allegiance was recited, and roll was called showing as present Trustees Corson, Fioretto, Haier, Olson, and Siewierski. Shown as absent was Trustee Stone. Quorum was present. Also present were Public Works Director Joel Summerhill, Engineering/Zoning Administrator Brandy Williams, Police Chief Lin Dargis, and Attorney Kevin Buick.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustee Siewierski moved and Trustee Corson seconded a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.

PUBLIC WISHING TO SPEAK

David Pehlke addressed the board and audience and stated if anyone had questions regarding chickens when the meeting was completed he would be available.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve Town Board Minutes of April 28, 2025

Trustee Corson moved, seconded by Trustee Olson to approve the minutes of April 28, 2025, as presented.

Roll call vote

Yea: Trustees Siewierski, Corson, Fioretto, Olson, and Haier

Nay: None

Absent: Trustee Stone. Motion Carried

UNFINISHED BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

2. Discussion regarding Urban Chickens

<https://www.villageoflombard.org/502/Backyard-Chickens> includes linked details.

Mayor Pietrowski stated there are a wide variety of ordinances with different regulations regarding construction of coops, setbacks, use of the Department of Agriculture, county regulation departments and the like.

He stated he would like to approach the subject by topics beginning with setbacks. examples provided have restrictions of 10 foot setback from lot lines, 30 foot setback from neighbors structures; 4 foot fencing up to 8 foot fencing. Discussion ensued.

Total number of birds; some ordinances require 4 square feet per bird, inside the coop/structure, no free-range chickens, only hens.

It was asked if maps could be made available to depict how a coop/structure could fit and on which lots in town. Ms. Williams replied a depiction could be done based on an average sized lot. It was noted that HOA's do not allow chickens, so those areas would be excluded. Examples of structure height were ranged from 5 feet to 8 feet. Mayor Pietrowski stated he would like a requirement that the entire coop/enclosure be covered.

Business aspect of raising chickens; Slaughtering, selling of eggs, maintenance. Examples: require a certificate from the IL Department of Agriculture, Health Department, rules and violations, town staff enforcement

It was suggested that creation of an ordinance could be a pilot program with a specified end date or renewal date.

Fines and Fees

Questions to ask comprehensively:

Will allowing backyard chickens make Cortland a better, more attractive place to live?

Will it change the character or nature of the Town in negative ways?

Will it help us attract the kinds of businesses and enterprises we really want?

Do the residents really need urban chickens?

Is this a worthy goal, given the Town's many other priorities and limited resources?

Discussion ensued. It was suggested that the fines and fees need to be high enough to have a positive impact. As a non-home rule community the highest fine that could be assessed is \$750.00. Fees had no beginning suggestions.

Mayor Pietrowski stated that staff would develop a suggested ordinance to be presented at the June 9 meeting. The board may choose to vote in favor or against.

NEW BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

3. AN ORDINANCE IMPLEMENTING A MUNICIPAL GROCERY RETAILERS' OCCUPATION TAX AND A MUNICIPAL GROCERY SERVICE OCCUPATION TAX FOR THE TOWN OF CORTLAND

Mayor Pietrowski stated the ordinance before the board is for information and could come back for action. This is the result of the state of Illinois removing a tax and shifting the authority to municipalities. This tax is currently being collected and the revenue will stop after December 31, 2025, unless the town imposes the tax. This is revenue that come directly to the town.

No action was taken.

4. Consider a motion to re-appoint Planning Commissioners Mark Hedrick and Joelle Morken each for a 3-year term to expire May 2028

Mayor Pietrowski asked for consensus of his reappointment of Mark Hedrick to the Planning Commission for a 3-year term. Trustee Siewierski moved to accept the appointment of Mark Hedrick to the Planning Commission for a 3-year term, seconded by Trustee Fioretto.

Roll call vote:

Yea: Trustees Siewierski, Corson, Fioretto, Olson, and Haier

Nay: None

Absent: Trustee Stone

Motion carried.

It was noted that Joelle Morken has chosen to step aside.

PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Presenting proposed park names

Trustee Fioretto presented the recommendation of park names from committee. She stated these names could be for current unnamed parks and newly established parks.

Top Park Names

Dragons Tail Park or Dragon Lair Park- These names would only be options for the park by the pond.

Spur Line Park- Named after the Spur line that used to go through Cortland. Also near the old spur line was an area of trees that when Cortland didn't have a park people used to go to hangout, camp, and picnic. It was considered Cortland's first park. Could do a sign with the information and pictures from the history book if a park is named this.

Legacy Park or Founders Park- Either one of these names would make a great name for a park that we could have in memory/honor of signs. We could do a shelter/gazebo and have it named in memory or honor of someone with a plaque. We could do that with beaches, park equipment, trees, and statues. All with plaques and a story.

Walnut Park-This name would only work for the park off Walnut Street. The Committee's plan is a passive park with a little path, some sitting areas, and to plant some walnut trees there as well.

Ohio Grove Park- This name comes from the first hotel in Cortland that they believe Abe Lincoln may have stayed at. The park then would have a plaque with a photo explaining where the name came from.

Rich Land Park- Named after Cortland's original town name of Richland. The town was called Richland because of all the rich farmland that it had. There would be a plaque explaining story behind it from the history book.

Ole Red Barn Park-Named after the oldest red barn still standing in Cortland. Also, the story behind it could be displayed in a plaque from the information in the history book with photos.

Grist Mill Park-Named after the flouring mill dated late 1800's that burned down in 1910. Story from the history book on a plaque with photos displayed at the park.

Prairieview Park-No story behind the name, the committee just liked the name due to all the open land in Cortland. Thought it would make a nice peaceful park name.

Trustee Corson expressed his opinion that a park should be named in honor of Bill Abbott, "Mr. Cortland" who continues his volunteerism throughout the town for many people. He should be recognized. Other trustees suggested that this name be added to the park names list.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

5. Police Department and Building Permit reports of April 2025

The reports are in the packet. It was noted that the police department has been stopping more vehicles along Somonauk Road for speeding.

COMMENTS

Brandy Williams address the Board stating that two grants which were thought not to be funded are in fact being funded. The paperwork, which is not yet ready, needs to be signed by the end of May. The documents will be brought to the board for ratification June 9.

The two grants total \$75,000 and will be used for the Hetchler Park detention pond project.

MAYOR'S REPORT

6. Town Sign Slogan Contest

Mayor Pietrowski stated he would like to have a slogan contest for the new Town welcome signs. The feedback was clear that the original choice is not being received well. He will have suggestions submitted and the board can make a choice.

June events are Touch a Truck and the continuation of Jokers Wild to support CortlandFest.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to discuss a motion for adjournment was moved by Trustee Siewierski and seconded by Trustee Olson. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Cheryl Aldis
Town Clerk