MINUTES
The City of Crystal Lake
PROCEEDINGS OF THE YOUTH COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL
October 16, 2025 Special Meeting
Aaron T. Shepley City Hall, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Becker called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Thursday, October 16, 2025.

2. Roll Call/Attendance

Commissioners Theo Johnston, Sabrina Noon, Ella Hutchins, Jotham Becker, and Jackson Lisle were present. Commissioners Charlie Benton and Andrew Cioper were absent.

City Councilmember Denise Smith, Police Chief Jim Black, and Deputy City Manager Nick Hammonds were also present.

3. Approval of Minutes from the September 11, 2025 Meeting

Commissioner Johnston moved to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2025 meeting. Commissioner Lisle seconded. Upon voice vote, motion passed.

4. Introductions

None.

5. Public Presentation

Commissioner Becker asked if there was anyone in the public who wished to speak on an item not found on the agenda. No one wished to speak. Commissioner Becker closed public presentation.

6. Crystal Lake Police Department Discussion

Chief Black began the discussion by providing an overview of the structure of the Crystal Lake Police Department. He stated that the department receives nearly 30,000 calls for service each year. He detailed how officers serve many functions, including patrol, investigations, and in coordination with other agencies.

Commissioner Becker asked about the daily tasks that investigators complete if they are not working on an active crime scene. Chief Black stated that investigators are always working on numerous cases, not just active crime scenes. He detailed the efforts undertaken by the department to investigate financial crimes and internet crimes against children.

Commissioner Johnston discussed the speeding around local schools in the mornings and after school lets out. Chief Black stated that he can talk to the school resource officers about speeding near schools. He discussed how speeding in the mornings when people are going to school and work is a common complaint. Officers will patrol areas with speeding complaints when they are available, but that emergencies always take priority.

Commissioner Becker asked about what happens when there are too many calls than officers available. Chief Black stated that the department will look to pull officers from non-emergency related matters to address any emergency situations. The department will prioritize their officers to address emergency matters as needed.

Commissioner Lisle asked what computers are used by officers in their squad vehicles. Chief Black stated that the department relies on technology heavily. He discussed the technology components in squad cars and how the dispatch system works. In addition, Chief Black discussed the importance of the camera systems in use, including body-worn cameras, squad cameras, and security cameras in the station.

Commissioner Lisle asked about the Chief's background. Chief Black described his background, going from a patrol officer up to becoming Chief. He discussed the efforts that the department takes to hire new police officers and the department's approach to training and fostering professional development of staff.

Deputy City Manager Hammonds presented e-bikes and e-scooters as a topic for the Commission to discuss. Commissioner Johnston stated that e-bikes and e-scooters are unsafe and the people using them are often weaving in between cars or driving in places they should not be. Commissioner Becker agreed, stating that they are increasingly being used by more people and creating safety concerns. Commissioner Noon stated that they are dangerous and there are many news articles regarding injuries occurring from people falling or running into objects.

Commissioner Johnston stated that e-bikes and e-scooters should not be banned completely, but that additional rules and guidelines need to be in place. Commissioner Hutchins agreed that a total ban would be too far, however, regulations regarding locations allowed for use, such as residential areas, would be helpful. Commissioner Noon stated that clear rules that are in place and communicated to riders is needed.

Commissioner Lisle inquired about the rules for e-bikes vs. e-scooters. Chief Black provided an overview of the requirements for e-bikes and e-scooters. He stated that there are different classes for e-bikes depending on the capable speed of the device. Chief Black provided an overview of the State laws regulating e-bikes and e-scooters. He stated that riders must be 18 years or older to operate an e-scooter, which is the State law. Officers have handled enforcement on a complaint bases thus far.

Commissioner Lisle asked if the department has to keep all footage from body-worn cameras and squad cars. Chief Black discussed the storage requirements depending on the nature of the incident. He also discussed the amount of storage needed for the volume of data generated from videos each day.

Commissioner Hutchins asked how the advancement of AI is impacting the police department. Chief Black stated that AI presents numerous issues that will have increasing complexity in the years to come. However, he stated that AI also offers many positive benefits that can improve services and functions for police.

Chief Black stated that the City appreciates the Commission's feedback. He cautioned the Commissioners to always be aware of your surroundings and to take safety seriously. Chief Black thanked the Commission for their time and exited the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

7. Youth Empower Alliance

Deputy City Manager Hammonds stated that the representatives from the Youth Empower Alliance had a scheduling conflict and asked to reschedule. City staff will work with the Youth Empower Alliance to schedule their attendance at a future Commission meeting.

8. School Survey and Civic Engagement Forum

Deputy City Manager Hammonds provided the results from the recent youth survey. Councilmember Smith stated that she heard that civics classes are now forming civic groups at the local schools. She stated that this would be a great opportunity for the Commission to partner with civic minded groups to coordinate a civic forum.

The Commission discussed the survey results indicating a majority of respondents did not know how to register to vote. Many respondents were not 18 years old and were not eligible to vote. The Commission discussed the importance of addressing this topic at a civic forum.

The Commission discussed the results of the survey and reviewed the open-ended responses. A common response was that there is a lack of third spaces in the community. Commissioner Noon stated that the Woodstock Panera Bread has been a de facto third space for teens. Commissioner Johnston stated that the Downtown is the primary third space for middle schoolers and Central High School.

The Commission discussed the decreasing amount of third spaces available to local children, teens, and young adults. Finding a place with free wifi and gathering space is increasingly difficult. The survey results indicated similar feelings from respondents.

Councilmember Smith asked the Commission about their thoughts on the City pursuing a facility that can serve as a community center, and therefore a third space. Councilmember Smith discussed the Crystal Lake Library and their evaluation of the existing building. Commissioner Noon stated that having a space in different parts of town would be great. People living on the south side of town may not want or be able to travel to the north part of town where a third space exists. Commissioner Hutchins stated that Downtown is a third space for Central, but not for other schools. Commissioner Johnston stated that the Break is a hangout space, but many people do not know where it is.

Councilmember Smith asked if walkability is an issue. Commissioner Noon stated that walkability is a concern depending on what part of town a person lives. The Commission discussed how youth often do not walk alone, especially at night, but walking in groups is acceptable for traveling around town.

9. Open Discussion

Commissioner Becker inquired if the Commission could meet more than once per month to get some momentum going on their projects. Councilmember Smith stated that the Commission can schedule additional meetings as needed, depending on the availability of Commission Members to achieve a quorum.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business, Commissioner Becker moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:47 p.m. Commissioner Noon seconded the motion. On voice vote, all present voted yes. Motion passed.