MINUTES
The City of Crystal Lake
SPECIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE YOUTH COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL
November 20, 2025 Special Meeting
Aaron T. Shepley City Hall, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Cioper called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. Thursday, November 13, 2025.

2. Roll Call/Attendance

Commissioners Sabrina Noon, Charlie Benton, Jotham Becker, and Andrew Cioper were present. Commissioners Ella Hutchins, Theo Johnston, and Jackson Lisle were absent. City Councilmember Denise Smith, Assistant to the City Manager Ryan Oates, and Deputy City Manager Nick Hammonds were also present.

3. Public Presentation

Commissioner Johnston 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 Johnston closed public presentation.

4. Civic Engagement Forum Discussion

Councilmember Smith began the discussion by asking the Commissioners if they have spoken with leadership at their schools regarding hosting a civic engagement event. Commissioner Benton stated that Prairie Ridge will not allow an event hosted by the Youth Commission, but an event hosted by a school club would be allowed.

Commissioner Benton discussed the model UN club as a potential host for an event. The event would have to be scheduled before or after school. Commissioner Cioper discussed the model UN club at his school. He stated he is in the leadership for the club and can look at options to coordinate an event. Commissioner Cioper stated that he and Commissioner Benton are leaders on the news team and can craft specific messaging to the school to promote an event.

Councilmember Smith stated that the event would not discuss specific candidates or parties. There are no Crystal Lake offices on the ballot in 2026. She discussed how the County Clerk, County Sheriff, and the congressional mid-terms are occurring next year.

Noon stated that Marian central has similar restrictions as Prairie Ridge, where a club would have to be the organizing entity for an event. Commissioner Becker stated that MCC has more flexibility with hosting an event. There are group spaces and options to setup a table to interact with students in the hallways. He stated the earliest that a table or space could be reserved would be after January 21st.

Councilmember Smith asked the Commissioners for their feedback on the project. She asked for their overarching goal that they would like to accomplish. Commissioner Becker stated that he envisions enhancing engagement and increasing voter turnout would be the goal. Commissioner Cioper agreed, stating that the Commission would like to compare voting results to see an increase in voter turnout. The Commission discussed voter turnout numbers and whether there are breakdowns specific to age of voters for each election.

The Commission discussed how to get the word out about the event and voting in general. Commissioner Cioper discussed social media posts to enhance engagement. Commissioner Benton discussed the local schools' news outlets.

Councilmember Smith recapped the topics for an event and promotional materials. The Commission agreed that the focus will be on voter registration education, increasing voter turnout by educating people on their polling location and how to access information regarding candidates, and promoting the election judge program. The Commission discussed rules around voting. Educating people that they can pre-register to vote before they turn 18 so that they are eligible to vote at an upcoming election once they are 18.

The Commission agreed to create a presentation covering the topics they would like to promote at an event. Commissioner Benton agreed to start the presentation. Commissioner Becker will work on location options at MCC. Commissioners Cioper and Noon will work on backup materials and handouts/flyers corresponding to the event's topics. Councilmember Smith stated that she will contact the County Clerk to follow up on the candidate information website and to ask for guidance around hosting a voter registration and education drive.

5. Adjourn

There being no further business, Commissioner Cioper moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 p.m. Commissioner Benton seconded the motion. On voice vote, all present voted yes. Motion passed.