MINUTES
The City of Crystal Lake
PROCEEDINGS OF THE YOUTH COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL
February 12, 2026 Special Meeting
Aaron T. Shepley City Hall, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Noon called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Thursday, February 12, 2026.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Approval of Minutes from the January 8, 2026 Meeting

Commissioner Noon moved to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2026 meeting. Commissioner Hutchins seconded. Upon voice vote, motion passed.

4. Public Presentation

Commissioner Noon 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 Noon closed public presentation.

5. Randi Freese, State's Attorney

Ms. Freese introduced herself and thanked the Commission for inviting her to join the meeting today. She stated that she was elected to her position in 2024 and she has worked at the State's Attorney's Office for over 15 years. She provided an overview of the functions of her job and the State's Attorney's Office. She stated that the office employs 33 attorneys who are responsible for prosecuting crimes, representing the County Sheriffs as needed, and representing County Officials as needed.

Ms. Freese stated that attorneys will carry a phone to be available for patrol officers to seek approval from the State's Attorney's Office if a felony occurs. The State's Attorney must provide approval to charge a person with a felony. The attorneys will provide guidance regarding the case to make sure the charges will hold.

Ms. Freese discussed how the State's Attorney will prepare for court cases. She stated that the State's Attorney will interact daily with the various police departments in the County. They work together to prosecute crimes by coordinating with the prosecutors and meeting with defense attorneys on cases.

Ms. Freese discussed her background and how she went from law school to interning at the State's Attorney's Office. She recommended that the Youth Commission members should attend court cases to see how the process works. Ms. Freese stated that there are a few options for summer internships and job shadowing, and she provided her contact information to the group to coordinate internship opportunities.

Commissioner Johnston asked Ms. Freese about the most interesting or wild cases she has worked. Ms. Freese discussed a variety of interesting cases she has handled over the years.

Assistant to the City Manager Ryan Oates asked Ms. Freese about her experience campaigning for the position. Ms. Freese stated that she did not have an opponent running against her, but she still made an effort to visit all parts of the County to familiarize herself with the people and places she will be representing. She stated that her position has been a great way to get involved with the community and be a resource to keep McHenry County safe.

Councilmember Philpot discussed how the State's Attorney must run on a party ticket, but the nature of the job is apolitical. Ms. Freese agreed and stated that the State's Attorney must treat everyone equally, regardless of political affiliation. Upholding the laws of the community by being tough but fair are important attributes for the role.

Commissioner Benton asked about the internship opportunity with the State's Attorney's office. Ms. Freese stated that the internship is flexible to fit the needs of the intern. The internship is unpaid, but that the interns can get involved in any area that interests them.

Commissioner Benton asked about the work life balance for Ms. Freese. Ms. Freese stated that it is challenging at times. There may be complex or high profile cases that require a lot of work, including nights and weekends. She stated that she works hard to balance her work life with her family life.

6. Robb Tadelman, McHenry County Sheriff

Sheriff Tadelman was unable to attend due to a prior arrangement. The Commission will coordinate with Sheriff Tadelman to attend a future Commission meeting.

7. School Survey and Civic Engagement Forum

Commissioner Becker stated that MCC is very flexible with scheduling times for events. He stated that there is no fee to host an event. Commissioner Benton will share her progress on the presentation. Commissioner Johnston suggested creating a one-page flier that provides a quick snapshot of the information the Commission is trying to promote related to voting and civic engagement.

8. Open Discussion

Councilmember Philpot stated that he found an old home video from the 1930s showing life in Crystal Lake. He uploaded the video to YouTube and will share a link to the video. The Commission agreed to have a guest speaker attend the March meeting to discuss the history of Crystal Lake. The video will play during the meeting, and City staff has found some historical documents and photo albums that can be viewed during the meeting.

Mr. Hammonds stated that he received an email from a youth commissioner with the City of Crystal Lake's Sister City, Holzgerlingen, Germany. The youth commissioner inquired about the City's Youth Commission and asked to meet via web conference on March 26, 2026. The Commissioners agreed to meet on that date. Mr. Hammonds stated that he will follow up with the Commissioners to work on getting a school release so that everyone can attend.

9. Adjourn

There being no further business, Commissioner Noon moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:09 p.m. Commissioner Hutchins seconded the motion. On voice vote, all present voted yes. Motion passed.