MINUTES
The City of Crystal Lake
PROCEEDINGS OF THE YOUTH COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL
April 9, 2026 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 4:15 p.m. Thursday, April 9, 2026.

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Ella Hutchins, Theo Johnston, Sabrina Noon, and Jotham Becker were present. City Councilmember Ellen Brady, City Councilmember Denise Smith, City Councilmember Ian Philpot, Assistant to the City Manager Ryan Oates, Deputy City Clerk Jackie Melesio, and Deputy City Manager Nick Hammonds were also present.

3. Approval of Minutes from the March 12, 2026 Meeting

Commissioner Johnston moved to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2026 meeting. Commissioner Hutchins seconded. Upon voice vote, motion passed.

4. Public Presentation

Brenda Napholz with the Break Teen Center discussed the upcoming youth-led event on Saturday, April 18, 2026 at McHenry County College. Ms. Napholz introduced Harley, a youth group member who will be the keynote speaker for the event. Harley spoke about the importance of youth in the community providing their voice. Commissioner Johnston spoke during public comment and will also be a speaker at the April 18th event. The focus this year will be on litter and the environment.

5. History of Crystal Lake

Diana Kenney introduced herself to the Commission and provided a presentation of the history of Crystal Lake. Ms. Kenney reviewed the Native American tribes in the area prior to the arrival of the first settlers in the 1830s. She provided a detailed history of the Village of Crystal Lake located on Route 14, and Nunda located in the current Downtown area when the train line was constructed in the 1850s. The two entities became the City of Crystal Lake when the Village of North Crystal Lake was annexed in 1914.

Ms. Kenney provided the history of religion in Crystal Lake, featuring historical photos of the churches. Next, Ms. Kenney reviewed the history of education in town. She discussed the City's first school teacher, Hannah Beardsley, who taught in 1838 in a one-room log cabin. Ms. Kenney reviewed the evolution of education in Crystal Lake from the one-room cabin to the construction of Crystal Lake Community High School in 1921. In addition, Ms. Kenney provided the history of the development of McHenry County College.

The history of transportation in Crystal Lake, including the train line and various train depots, were discussed. Ms. Kenney reviewed the history of horse drawn carriages, cars, and motorcycles.

Ms. Kenney provided the history of government services in Crystal Lake. She reviewed the development of Crystal Ville, Nunda, North Crystal Lake, and then the City of Crystal Lake. Ms. Kenney discussed the first election where women were allowed to vote in 1914. In addition, she reviewed the first mayor, the first woman elected to public office, and the history of the various City

Hall properties. Ms. Kenney provided photos of the City's postmasters, the old post office, the first Fire Department and fire truck, and the early police department. Next, Ms. Kenney discussed the history of library services dating back to 1913, and showed photos of the library in 1952, 1974, and present day.

Ms. Kenney reviewed the history of Crystal Lake's military service members. She shared a photo of the soldiers who served in the Union army during the Civil War. In addition, she featured photos of cemeteries in Crystal Lake, the statues that have been saved and refurbished through donations, and the Veteran's Memorial.

Next, Ms. Kenney provided historical photos of natural disasters in Crystal Lake, including the Palm Sunday tornado and various snow storms. She provided photos and a history of community bands over the years. She also reviewed the history of theaters in town, including the Raue Theater.

The history of recreation in Crystal Lake was shown next. Ms. Kenney discussed the baseball teams and organized sports over the year. In addition, she discussed the development of Veteran Acres park and the use the City's namesake lake.

Integral to the City's history was the ice harvesting on Crystal Lake. In addition, Ms. Kenney discussed the terra Cotta factory, pickle factory, TECO Pottery, newspapers, and lakefront resorts. Ms. Kenney concluded the presentation by reviewing photos and providing details of the historical homes and commercial buildings in town.

Commissioner Johnston asked if the Commission can share the presentation that Ms. Kenney provided. Ms. Kenney stated that most of the information from the presentation can be found on the Crystal Lake Historical Society website at www.cl.hs.org. She encouraged the meeting attendees to visit the website.

Councilmember Smith asked if there have been historical books created about Crystal Lake. Ms. Kenney stated that she has written books, as well as Jim Heisler. Councilmember Smith asked if historical photos can be purchased. Ms. Kenney stated that photos can be purchased as long as the Historical Society has the original prints, and as long as the purchaser is not using the photos for a commercial purpose.

6. School Survey and Civic Engagement Forum

The Commission agreed to plan on meeting at MCC on Thursday, April 23rd from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to hand out the information cards, provide information regarding voting, and promote the Youth Commission. Councilmember Smith stated that she plans to attend as well.

7. Open Discussion

Mr. Hammonds asked the Commissioner for their availability on May 7th to tour the McHenry County election center. The Commissioners indicated they were unavailable that week due to prior commitments.

8. Adjourn

There being no further business, Commissioner Hutchins moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:23 p.m. Commissioner Becker seconded the motion. On voice vote, all present voted yes. Motion passed.