



**TOWN OF CICERO  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026 at 7:00 PM**

**Call to Order:** President Cox called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Gary gave the prayer. President Cox called for roll call. Members of the Cicero Town Council were present or absent as follows:

<b>Present:</b>	Joseph Cox	<b>Absent:</b>
	Eric Hayden	
	Dennis Johnson	
	Jacob Everett	
	Emily Pearson	

**Declare a Quorum Present:** President Cox declared a quorum with all members present.

**Others Present:** Rhonda Gary, Clerk Treasurer  
Jeff Rednour, Police Chief  
Chris Frazier, Fire Chief  
Frank Zawadzki, Cicero/Jackson Township Plan Commission Director  
Terry Cooper, Street & Utilities Director  
Jim Hunter, Parks Superintendent  
Aaron Culp, Town Attorney  
Keith Bryant, Town Engineer  
Bruce Freeman, Storm Water Management Board President  
Dan Strong, Project Coordinator

**Approval of Agenda:** Mr. Johnson made the motion to approve the agenda as amended. Ms. Pearson seconded, motion carried 5-0.

**Approval of Prior Minutes:**

**Town Council Staff Meeting Minutes, January 15, 2026, 7:00 PM**

**Town Council Meeting Minutes, January 20, 2026, 7:00 PM**

Mr. Hayden made a motion to approve the minutes listed above. Mr. Johnson seconded, motion carried 5-0.

**Approval of 2/3/26 Claims:** Ms. Pearson made a motion to approve claims. Mr. Johnson seconded, motion carried 5-0.

**2026 Community Crossings Matching Grant Bids – Results were as follows:**

Ace Paving - \$379,850.00  
Baumgartner & Co Asphalt - \$473,697.50  
Calumet Civil Contractors, Inc - \$378,000.00  
DC Construction Services, Inc - \$430,501.56  
E&B Paving, LLC - \$324,316.00  
Grady Brothers, Inc - \$391,150.00

Howard Companies - \$321,495.00

Afterwards Mr. Hayden made a motion to approve the lowest most responsive, responsible bidder (Howard Companies) or to the second low bidder (E&B Paving) if needed contingent on legal and engineering approval. Mr. Johnson seconded, motion carried 5-0.

**Council Committee Reports:**

1. OTC Report – There was no report.
2. EDC Report – There was no report
3. SWU Management Board Report – SWU President Freeman had nothing new to report but informed the council that the SWU Board received nine bids for the Morse Landing Drive Underdrain project. They will meet after Mr. Bryant and Director Cooper have reviewed and approved the lowest most responsive and responsible bidder.

**Legal Counsel Report –** Mr. Culp had several documents for council’s approval. They were:

- a. Expense Reimbursement Agreement – Mr. Hayden made a motion to approve and allow President Cox to sign. Mr. Everett seconded, motion carried 5-0.
- b. Barnes and Thornburg Terms of Engagement – Mr. Hayden made a motion to approve and allow President Cox to sign. Mr. Johnson seconded, motion carried 5-0.
- c. Taft Terms of Engagement – Ms. Pearson made a motion to approve and allow President Cox to sign. Mr. Johnson seconded, motion carried 5-0.
- d. August Mack Letter of Engagement – Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve and allow President Cox to sign. Ms. Pearson seconded, motion carried 5-0.

**Cicero/Jackson Township Plan Commission Director's Report January 2026**

**Permit Revenue:** January 2026 = \$9,821.86 YTD: \$9,821.86

January 2025 = \$2,997 YTD: \$2,997

Difference: Month = \$6,824.86 YTD: \$6,824.86

A total of 12 building permits were issued for January 2026. Nine were inside the corporate limits (of which 0 was for new a home). Three building permits were issued Jackson Township (of which, 0 was for a new home). Estimated Cost of projects permitted \$58,725.

The Plan Commission has started using the new system, there are 2 additional PDF’s with this report that were generated by the new system. They are comprehensive and save a lot of time with no errors. There are still several bugs that we’re working out as they are discovered, these reports revealed a few more.

Mr. Strong then addressed the council stating that the Cicero/Jackson Township (CJT) Plan Commission met on 1/14/26 and held a public hearing concerning the rezone request for the Nickel Plate Reliability Project. The CJT Plan Commission sends a non-favorable recommendation to the council with 6 yes and 3 no vote on the non-favorable recommendation.

**Town Engineer Report – Keith Bryant**

1. Water – Mr. Bryant had nothing to report.

2. Wastewater – Mr. Bryant reported that Reynolds continues to work. Work is slow with the weather; however, they did get the sludge press, pumps and water booster system started up last week. There is a site meeting tomorrow. Afterwards, Mr. Hayden made a motion to approve Pay Application #19. Mr. Johnson seconded, motion carried 5-0.
3. 2024 Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG) West Jackson Street – Mr. Bryant stated that the lights have been changed, pipe bollards are up and ADA parking signs are in. They are substantially complete. They are waiting for the snow to melt to walk it and do a punch list to wrap it up to include looking at parking striping and flag poles.
4. 2025 CCMG Catherine/Flannigan and Morse Landing Drive Closeout – Mr. Bryant said that the project is completed and should be closed out soon.
5. 2026 CCMG East Jackson Street – Mr. Bryant stated that the bids were opened tonight. More information to follow. President Cox stated that he has received the CCMG grant agreement notification and asked that council allow him to sign the agreement. Mr. Hayden made a motion to allow President Cox to sign the aware notice. Ms. Pearson seconded, motion carried 5-0.
6. Morse Landing Drive Underdrain Project – Mr. Bryant and his team are reviewing the nine bids that were received. They will then go back to the SWU Board with a recommendation.

**Old Business:** There was none

**New Business:**

- a. Additional Appropriation Public Hearing – Removed from the Agenda.  
Additional Appropriation Adoption Resolution No. 02-03-2026-01 – Removed from the Agenda.
- b. Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) – Mr. Gahman and his team were on site to address questions and concerns from the council. He disbursed a handout of the previous meeting’s information and gave a brief description to the Nickel Plate Reliability Project which led to numerous questions which are summarized in these minutes.

President Cox inquired about:

- A. the ownership and management during the lifecycle of the project.
- B. previous decommissioning experience as well as the life cycle of the project and size of the batteries. He then inquired about failing batteries and who monitors the system. He asked about the sound and decibel level of the BESS.
- C. about insurance.
- D. contaminants.
- E. permitting and standards. President Cox inquired about how to mitigate negative effects to surrounding residents as well as security deterrents, monitoring and locations of similar facilities.
- F. grid lines, power outages and distribution.
- G. incentives for the project and Mr. Gahman’s personal preference for the location.

Mr. Everett inquired about:

- A. the history (prior to coming to Cicero) as well as the process involved concerning Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). Mr. Culp requested that Mr. Gahman explain to us what MISO is. Mr. Gahman explained that there are many grids that make up the US electricity grid. They are the governing bodies that determine the power flow.
- B. (from Mr. Culp) the bond concerning decommissioning.
- C. monitoring, as well as response times.

Mr. Hayden inquired about:

- D. the site.
- E. protecting agreements if AYPa goes out of business. Mr. Culp added that Cicero would require a decommissioning plan and they would include those provisions in the Plan Unit Development (PUD) along with any council requirements.
- F. the noise/sound and referred to the town's noise ordinance. Discussion ensued concerning the noise and ordinance. Mr. Hayden also inquired about decommissioning plans and confirmed with Mr. Culp.
- G. building mounds or berms around the area.
- H. soil contamination testing.
- I. the aesthetics of other BESS locations and catastrophic scenarios.
- J. back-up supply and segment boundaries.

Mr. Johnson inquired about:

- A. response time and procedures, requirements and internal fire suppression. Mr. Culp inquired about the proximity requirement of AYPa employees.

Ms. Pearson inquired about:

- A. a plan for a natural disaster.

The council had no additional questions at this time. To see and hear this presentation and AYPa responses in its entirety go to: [www.ciceroin.org](http://www.ciceroin.org) and click on 'LIVE STREAM MEETINGS'.

**Miscellaneous:** Mr. Hayden is concerned about the damage to the town's streets due to large trucks/semis. He inquired of Mr. Culp about how to protect the town's streets. In short, Mr. Culp responded and advised that the town could adopt an ordinance to address the issue.

**Comments by Citizens:** President Cox stated that there will be a two minute time limit.

1. Ms. Chance addressed the Letters being read during meetings and suggested a word limit so that all parties could hear what was stated. Conclusion is that the town will request letters to be submitted several days before the meeting and will be put online for all to read. Ms. Chance was satisfied with that proposal.
2. plowing damage or remove snow as opposed to plow it. Director Cooper will look into this.

3. Ms. Irvin is opposed to the BESS and challenged several points of their presentation.
4. Ms. Kiofsky presented and challenged static information i.e. noise, natural disasters, etc. and consequences as well as sharing of information from the council. Mr. Culp and Mr. Everett addressed her concerns.
5. Ms. Dale is concerned about the pipeline proximity to the lithium batteries. Mr. Johnson addressed that concern with comments that he received from a Miller Pipeline representative. She went on to touch on obsolescence and replacement of obsolete products/parts, pollution, etc. She suggested a field trip to get a real feel of the noise levels. Finally, she talked about the fire department funding and procedures, safety, training as well as baseline water testing.
6. Ms. Alexander inquired about who benefits, what is the benefit and how specifically will we receive it from this project.
7. Mr. Alexander inquired about the pond contamination and asked if the pond will be lined. He also has a concern about the view from the train.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Ms. Pearson made the motion. Mr. Johnson seconded, motion carried 5-0.

**Signatures on Official Documents!**

***Signatures of Cicero Town Council***

AYE		NAY
	Joseph R Cox	
	Jacob T Everett	
	Eric C Hayden	
	Dennis D Johnson	
	Emily K Pearson	

Attested: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rhonda Gary, Clerk Treasurer

**The Next Cicero Town Council Meeting will be on February 17, 2026 at 7:00 PM at Red Bridge Community Building.**