



APPROVED

**Central Street Evanston
Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 12, 2025
Zoom Meeting**

Attendees

Stacia DeSalvo
Dylan Johnson
Bane Srdjevic
Sarah Weitz
Jim Conrad
Paula Danoff
Paul Zalmazek

Not Present:

Eric Green
Drew Beckmann

Staff:

Angela Shaffer

I. Call Meeting to order: Stacia DeSalvo (5 Minutes)

Stacia announced a quorum and the meeting was called to order at 9:02am.

- a. Approve [September 10, 2025](#) minutes.

Stacia asked for a motion to approve the September 10, 2025 board minutes.

Dylan motioned to approve the September 10, 2025 board minutes. Bane seconded the motion. The Board unanimously agreed to approve the minutes.

II. Treasurer's Report: Dylan Johnson/Angela Shaffer (10 minutes)

- a. Financial Update (Dylan)

Dylan reported the SSA is running low on funds due to waiting on the past due tax levy disbursement. Angela met with bookkeeper Amy Ceisel to review the SSA's current financial state and the anticipated financial state at the end of the year.

Current cash in bank as of 11.10.25 = \$23,489 + Line of Credit = \$73,490

SSA 7 = \$10,606; SSA 8 = \$12,883. Line of Credit is \$50K

Anticipated financial position at 12/31/2025 = \$73,490 - \$44,197 = \$29,293

Dylan asked Paul if there are any updates regarding the tax levy disbursement, and Paul said there are currently no updates, but he's hoping for December.

Angela reported in her recent meeting with Amy, that Amy recommended we borrow \$12,500 from the line of credit, currently with a 7% interest rate. Angela asked if the Board would be open to borrowing \$12,500 from the line of credit and that she would work closely with Amy through the end of the year to monitor our finances. Angela said she's holding on tight to the current SSA money.

Dylan asked how much was expected to come in. Angela said the expected amount is \$95,209. Dylan suggested if we had to borrow the full \$50K, we're looking at \$291/mo of interest over four months. If we had to borrow \$25K, the amount we'd have to pay in interest would be between \$600 - \$700 over a three month period.

Dylan opened the floor for discussion.

Bane asked if we'd ever touched our line of credit and Angela confirmed that we had not and never planned to. The line of credit was obtained for emergency situations like our current situation.

Angela asked the board for approval of the transfer of \$12,500 from the line of credit to our checking account. Stacia initiated a vote, and the board unanimously approved the funds transfer. Angela will move forward with requesting the transfer, and she reiterated that the goal is to pay back the borrowed amount upon receipt of the tax levy. It was agreed upon by the board that if additional funds were requested prior to the January board meeting that Angela would initiate an email request for the board to vote on.

b) **Financial Audit:** Angela reported that the audit is officially complete.

III. Business/City Updates: Paul Zalmezak (10 minutes)

a) Tax Delay Update

Paul reported that there are no updates at this point

b) Other Business

Paul reported that they are close to signing a lease at the west end service station property with a restaurant use. He will share updates as soon as he has more information.

Paul reported that the Central Street construction project should be wrapping up with final touches to be completed in the spring. Paul suggested we keep an eye on the north Prairie pedestrian crossing, because he believes it really should be reinstalled.

Paul reported that the 2026 SSA budgets were introduced at the Monday night City Council Meeting as a formality and will be approved at the next Council meeting.

Stacia asked Paul about the signage request from the Gichigamiin Museum that came up in the annual meeting. Paul put in a request to the City for more information and he'll follow up again.

Angela brought up the east end gateway mural project to be funded by the Evanston Thrives team and shared that the original plan location on the Metra tracks bridge didn't get approved. Angela told Art Encounter she didn't want to move forward with a mural without further discussion about a replacement location. Since the mural is intended to welcome folks to Central Street coming from the east end looking west, one possible location for the mural could be on the building managed by Wesley Realty where EPNA resides.

Angela provided an overview of the gateway mural project happening via the Evanston Thrives project, to be funded by the City.

Paula asked if we sent samples as to what the mural will look like. Angela said the project didn't get that far, since the location was turned down. But, when the location is finalized, Art Encounter will put out an artist call and we get to approve the art. We get the final say.

Paula mentioned she heard there were funds to help restore the eight year old Constellation mural under the Metra bridge on the north side of the train tracks. Angela said she didn't know anything about that, but there might be some confusion around the mural being discussed. Paul said he will look into Paula's request for funding to help restore the mural under the bridge. He said he's not convinced there is funding for restoration purposes.

Paula asked where the proposed Gichigamiin museum sign might be. Paul confirmed that the sign recommendation for the Museum came out of the annual meeting and would be similar to the heritage signs. Paul said there might be an opportunity to come up with a cool design as long as it meets highway standards. Paula said her board will ask her about a sign for the Evanston Art Center, since there used to be one at the old location. Paul said he will have to look into that.

Paul reiterated that the mural Angela is referring to is for business district identification and it's adopted in the Evanston Thrives plan. All districts are getting some form of gateway signage - a mural or other type of sign to further identify the business district. The signs are currently being fabricated.

Jim asked about the purple banners on the street signs and where those were made. Angela shared that they were paid for by Central Street as part of our branding. Jim asked if there might be an opportunity to work on some banners

together as part of the opening of the new stadium to help create buzz - a new design to blend the two together. Paul said he would like to talk about this with Jim as a bigger opportunity as a whole via the Economic Development Committee.

Paul left the meeting at 9:30 AM

IV. Events/Programming:

Angela gave a [slideshow presentation](#) with an overview of marketing/event/business updates.

Overarching Goal: How to attract people to Central Street and spend money.

a. Brief 2025 Events Overview

Halloween: Angela shared that we had 42 businesses participate in the event with an attendance of approximately 900. Each year we gauge attendance by talking with businesses regarding how many pieces of candy they give out. Marie from Leonidas makes 1200 hand dipped marshmallows each year. She gave out 900 pieces, and everybody gets one.

- Angela thanked Paula for participating with the annual Halloween candy bag making and crafts at the Evanston Art Center.
- Brightview sponsored a very generous hay bale photo display.
- Angela thanked Sarah for doing an after-hours event at The Fat Shallot.

Holiday Stroll/Tree Lighting Event: Angela shared that it's coming up. Angela provided the dates of all holiday events and an overview of the upcoming schedule for the holiday stroll and tree lighting. She shared backup plans for parking and worked with the construction team to make sure they have plans to work away from our event site.

Angela reported that the holiday lights are up and the planters will be planted shortly.

2025 Events: Angela shared the 2025 schedule and discussed how we tried lots of new programming ideas and shared what she thought worked well and what didn't. Angela recommended not doing First Friday events, because they didn't get the best attendance. Additionally, the Pride event wasn't well received by all. She canceled the July first Fridays because there wasn't enough business participation interest.

Angela suggested that in 2025 the majority of her time was spent planning events and she didn't feel like her time was well balanced between all her responsibilities. New events and concepts take time and she wanted the board to make sure time is properly allocated for 2026 board priorities.

For 2026, Angela recommended making the quarterly business meetups happen, since we weren't able to pull it off in 2025.

Angela presented some general programming ideas:

- 1) Previous discussion of a crawl in the past, but the challenge is how to get people from the east end to the west end.
- 2) A community dining opportunity outside - The longest table
- 3) Activate our stage in the park on a more regular basis, but we would need to fundraise and/or partner with organizations who might want to come out and perform. We would need to pay for sound.

b. Proposed 2026 Schedule of Events (Programming)

Angela presented a preliminary schedule of events for 2026 and opened up the conversation for feedback.

- Dylan recommended a Wellness Wednesday reboot.
- Sarah shared what Wilmette's doing. Passport idea to get people in the shops. Can be anything. Can be Sona Fitness, a restaurant, and all types of businesses. Get kids and families out and about! Dylan recommended find Bella.
- Stacia wanted to reiterate the sustainability efforts for Central Street. Angela suggested she would reach out to Mary Beth Shaye early in the year to discuss ideas.
- Angela said she received a lot of Busker Fest feedback from people that we host the event in one location. Recommended getting the entire parking lot open to bring west end businesses to the area. Keep it all centered and use money to make it easy for east and west businesses to feel welcome. Paula recommended paying for tents and setups for businesses. Angela said that would require additional funding.
- Sarah asked about how much money we raised for Busker Fest this year. Angela shared that we raised \$3K. Sponsors included: Northwestern, Chicago Stars, Lauren Weiss, Karaoke Camper, Byline Bank

c. Open Conversation 2026 Programming and More

- Sarah said overall she feels like the west end isn't getting enough attention when it comes to events. She said events don't really do anything for her business. She understands the need to do events in the main area, but we should think of ways to accommodate west and east end businesses. Angela said it's been an ongoing issue and that she looks forward to working with Sarah on ideas for improving.
- Stacia asked for an update on the Central Street website and asked when it would be complete. Angela said she's back to working on the website. She said we didn't have enough money upfront to do what we wanted, so she's been working on it in stages.
- Businesses have asked Stacia how people can access the Hello Lamp Post data. Angela explained that the data is internal, but she can pull together the data from that and try to put it in a legible format. Angela also mentioned her plan is to further promote Hello Lamp Post, which will draw more eyes on the project and get more users to help with data.
- Stacia would also like to see us do Wellness Wednesdays again.

- Stacia asked how Ripple is helping us for the remainder of the year. Angela said they are doing a heavy holiday push and also promoting our holiday gift guide through their channels. They are trying to get us on WGN again. Angela also asked them to work on press materials for Hello Lamp Post.
- Dylan said he thinks we're going to be facing some financial constraints and would like to see us really push getting sponsorships for our events this year. We need the dollars and need to make it a priority.
- Angela mentioned that we couldn't have promoted Busker Fest without Ripple. Being on TV would not have been possible without them.
- Sarah asked Angela about her role in planning events and if she takes the money allocated and runs with the programming or if the board is supposed to approve everything. Angela said it's her job to allocate the funds appropriately for the events planned. Sarah is concerned about how little money we have for events. Angela said we pulled off Busker Fest for \$6K, so that really helped.
- Sarah asked if we had more people at Takeout Picnic or Busker Fest, since they were both great events. Angela said Takeout Picnic had more people because it was the 4th year and it rained during Busker Fest.
- **Website:** Sarah asked about the website, and Angela explained that we received \$10K from Northwestern to help us with the website. But with that money Angela was only able to take it so far. Once the Squarespace sight was developed, Angela sent it to our branding team to tweak because it felt a bit off brand. Angela said the ask was too big for the person who designed it initially, so Angela parted ways and the website still needs some tweaking to get it right.

Dylan asked what the process was because he's had affordable luck with hiring someone. He wondered what made it so complex. Angela explained that there is still an ask for a search feature, so on the backend the team had to build it out in a way that was user friendly. Dylan said he's happy to take a look at it and see how they can help get it to the finish line. Angela said she would share it with the team.

Meeting Ended at 10:11 AM