



March, 2025

Events

- March 1** – Story Time @ 10 AM
@ Flewellin Library
- March 3** – Yarn Twisters @
11 AM @ Flewellin Library
- March 8** – Story Time @ 10 AM
@ Flewellin Library
- March 8** – Community Game Night
@ 6 PM – 9 PM @ Up Realty
(104 W Comanche Ave)
- March 10** – Yarn Twisters @
11 AM @ Flewellin Library
- March 11** – Village of Shabbona
Town Hall @ 7 PM @ 21st
Century Room at Indian
Creek High School
- March 12** – Euchre @ 11 AM – 2
PM @ Flewellin Library
- March 13** – Preschool Screening for
Ages 3-5 @ Indian Creek
School District
- March 15** – Cards with Kim & Jamie
@ 6 PM @ Flewellin Library
- March 15** – Story Time @
10 AM @ Flewellin Library
- March 17** – Yarn Twisters @
11 AM @ Flewellin Library
- March 19** – Elder Care Services &
Tech Help @ 12 PM – 2 PM
@ Flewellin Library

(Continued on next page)

Illinois Attorney General Investigating Village

By Joshua Snyder

The Public Access Bureau has started an investigation regarding alleged Open Meetings Act (OMA) violations committed by the Village of Shabbona. The allegations are that the Village took final action on the purchase of two properties and purchase of an easement while in a closed, executive session. The OMA exists to provide transparency in government and make backroom deals illegal.

The Public Access Bureau is an office of the Illinois Attorney General in charge of enforcing the state's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Open Meetings Act.

An excerpt from the Public Access Bureau's letter to the Village explains the requirements for taking final action on matters discussed in executive session: "*Section 2(a) of OMA (5 ILCS 120/2(a) (West 2022)) requires all meetings of public bodies to be open to the public and section 2.02 of OMA (5 ILCS 120/2.02 (West 2022)) requires 48 hours advance notice to the public of any meeting of a public body, including an agenda listing any items that will be the subject of final action. Section 2(e) of OMA states that "[n]o final action may be taken at a closed meeting. Final action shall be preceded by a public recital of the nature of the matter being considered and other information that will inform the public of the business being conducted."* 5 ILCS 120/2(e) (West 2022)."

The Village should have responded to the letter by February 28, but as of the writing of this article it appears they still have not responded.

A copy of the letter sent to the Village of Shabbona requesting information to review the allegations is available at: shabbonaexpress.com/oma

Love Your Library Chili Cook-Off

Winners of the Flewellin Memorial Library's Chili Cook-Off include:

Overall Best: Emily & Sean Douglas

Hottest But Still Edible: Adrianna Carr & Javier Sanchez

Best Name: Jan Schnorr

The basket raffle winners were Sharon Atkins & Beth McRoberts

Shabbona Express

Events

(Continued)

- March 22** – Story Time @
10 AM @ Flewellin Library
- March 24** – Yarn Twisters @
11 AM @ Flewellin Library
- March 24** – Village of Shabbona
Board Meeting @ 7 PM @
Village Hall (206 S
Blackhawk St)
- March 26** – Euchre @ 11 AM – 2
PM @ Flewellin Library
- March 27** – Library Referendum
Town Hall @ 7 PM @
Flewellin Library
- March 28** – Light Supper & Game
Night @ 5:30 PM @
Shabbona Community
Church (104 E Navaho)
- March 29** – Story Time @
10 AM @ Flewellin Library
- March 31** – Yarn Twisters @
11 AM @ Flewellin Library

First Village of Shabbona Town Hall Rescheduled

By Joshua Snyder

The Village of Shabbona has rescheduled their first town hall to be held on Tuesday, March 11 @ 7 pm in the 21st Century Room at Indian Creek Highschool (506 S Shabbona Rd, Shabbona).

The meeting is open to the public and will be conducted by members of the community to allow citizens to have a back and forth Q&A and talk about any suggestions or concerns with the Village President and Board of Trustees.

I highly encourage everyone to come and ask questions to learn more about what's in store for the Village.

For Shabbona, This is the Golden Opportunity

By Kallan Welsh

On April 1, 2025, a Consolidated Election will be held to determine, among other things, who will sit on the Shabbona Village Board. Of six (6) total seats, four (4) are up for election, meaning whoever wins this election wins control of village government.

This presents the best opportunity to turn the Village around that we'll have for years.

If you feel strongly represented by the current village government, then voting for the incumbents is fine; if you don't, then I urge you to vote for the incoming candidates who will make Shabbona prosper again, be responsible with taxpayer funds, and be transparent with the residents of the village.

For Shabbona residents, this very well may be the most important election of our lifetimes; while the recent federal elections had enormous impact, this local election will impact Shabbona residents more directly. Amidst a backdrop of local office holders using their government authority to target people for personal reasons, will Shabbona continue to decline? Or will we bring Shabbona back?

The answer, of course, is that the residents of Shabbona are tired of the status quo, and want to bring Shabbona back to a more prosperous, transparent, and reasonable time. These municipal elections are tight and can literally come down to one single vote, so the impact any individual voter has is enormous and matters a great deal. *Please make sure your voice is heard on election day, April 1.*

Our polling place is at Resource Bank on the east side of town, off the intersection of US Rt. 30 and Indian Road. Polls are open between 6am and 7pm.

Shabbona Express

Village Government News

By Joshua Snyder

The Village of Shabbona had their regular board meeting on February 24, 2025. A few key matters discussed were:

- The water drainage project between the well house and fire barn was briefly discussed and seems to be moving forward. It was agreed that the Village would meet with the Fire District before moving forward with the engineering to make sure the proposed plans were sufficient.
- David Meier was nominated to fill a vacant seat in the Zoning Board.
- The Village has implemented a safety vest program to hand out free safety vests to any residents who would like one. They are available to help improve pedestrian safety while out walking.
- The first town hall, which was originally scheduled for February 12 but was cancelled due to the weather, has been rescheduled for Tuesday March 11 at 7 PM in the 21st Century Room at the Indian Creek High School.
- Setting up adjudication continues to be on hold for now. The village attorney mentioned that Hinckley is planning to start next month and it appears that Shabbona is planning to implement it alongside Hinckley.
- The board approved modifying the railing between the street parking and Muddy Paws / the old laundromat to add an entrance for easier access to those storefronts. The engineer provided a rough estimate of \$10,000 to add one in.



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Village Board Candidate Questionnaire

Kallan Welsh

- 1) **What do you believe are the most pressing challenges for the village and how will you work to overcome them?**

Bringing back downtown. I plan to work with existing and prospective small business owners to cut red tape and promote investment into downtown.

- 2) **What are the greatest assets of the village and how will you leverage them to improve the community?**

The park is a big asset to the village, and we need to ensure that it stays that way. The historic charm of downtown is also a big potential draw and quality of life improvement. Most of all, the people who live here are the greatest assets! Shabbona has a great community, and I hope to continue to foster the community spirit we have here.

- 3) **What are your plans to attract business and investment?**

We need to streamline our zoning and building processes and make them simpler and more transparent for new businesses to navigate. The village needs to be easy to work with and not make unreasonable demands or treat new business owners as a "cash cow" and/or a way for board members to get what they personally want.

- 4) **How will you approach changes to the community?**

As I said before, Shabbona has an incredible community spirit, and we need to work to maintain it. Shabbona needs to be a great place to raise families, and our kids shouldn't feel they need to "escape" from it.

- 5) **How will you prioritize projects and improvements?**

"Big projects" aren't always the way to go. Ideally, we should be making smart investments that yield a return to taxpayers such that we can, over time, cut taxes on residents. There are a lot of improvements and investments that can be made that are smart and which don't burden the taxpayers - but we need to prove those projects rather than push them forward just because they "sound good".

- 6) **How will you promote transparency in the Village Government?**

Residents deserve a more transparent government. It shouldn't be the case that we only find out about new ordinances and rules well after they are passed - residents should be given ample opportunity to examine and comment on these measures the government is taking. The Village should be doing outreach rather than expecting each individual resident regularly approach the Village Board to find out what's happening.



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7) How do you plan on working with the Prairie Band Potawatomi while also ensuring the views and interests of the citizens are protected?

Most importantly, the Village government needs to remember that it's village residents that they're representing. The interests of the residents are what board members should focus on. If the Prairie Band Potawatomi are going to be our neighbors, it's important we maintain a good relationship with them - but for Trustees, the residents of Shabbona come first.

8) If you are not an existing trustee: what is the most impressive accomplishment of the current board?

I'm glad the Village Board elected recently to publish the board packets - this was an important step towards greater transparency. Also, while too much of the burden falls on local taxpayers, the Village has explored other funding avenues for various projects and successfully funded some portion of their expenditures with grants and voluntary contributions. As a Trustee, I would want to see those efforts to save taxpayer money expanded.

9) What is something the existing board has done that you were against?

I believe there has been a serious lack of respect from the Village towards its own residents and small business owners. The Board has pushed through many ordinances and projects which have made it harder to do business in town and unnecessarily stressed the Village's finances. Instead of serving the people of the village, the President and Board have promoted pet projects or ordinances which exist solely to target and harm individuals in town they personally dislike. As Trustee I intend to put a stop to that behavior, and instead have the Village government do what it's supposed to do - serve the people of Shabbona.

Joshua Snyder

1) What do you believe are the most pressing challenges for the village and how will you work to overcome them?

Shabbona's downtown is economically depressed with buildings falling into disrepair and empty storefronts. Myself and many others have been fixing up downtown buildings in order to open businesses and have faced countless challenges with the current administration. I would work towards changing the Village's approach to dealing with investors to incentivize investment instead of driving it away.

2) What are the greatest assets of the village and how will you leverage them to improve the community?

The state park is a great asset, along with all of the visitors it brings. Shabbona has not been capitalizing on that, but I believe allowing more businesses to open up will encourage those visitors to come into town. The historic downtown is another great asset. The most interesting part of any small town is almost always their historic downtown. While I think everyone can agree it suffers from some deferred maintenance and investment, I'll work with the property owners who have been discouraged by the current board to bring it back.



Shabbona Express

3) What are your plans to attract business and investment?

There are already many businesses interested in coming to Shabbona. The reason they haven't is largely due to the attitude the Village has towards the downtown. The Village just needs to let the property owners fix up their buildings without all of the roadblocks it has been creating, and the Village needs to stop using its position to go after people they personally don't like.

4) How will you approach changes to the community?

Shabbona is a great place to live and raise a family. The small town charm and sense of community are some of the reasons I love Shabbona. I will work to protect those aspects while encouraging reasonable growth.

5) How will you prioritize projects and improvements?

I believe the way the current Village has been handling projects has been largely irresponsible. The improvements need to make sense and the costs need to be justified. Whenever spending money on something comes up during a board meeting there is almost never a discussion about whether the expenditure is a good use of the Village's limited funds.

6) How will you promote transparency in the Village Government?

Transparency in government is paramount. That is a large factor of why I started the Shabbona Express, to inform residents and promote community events. The Village exists to protect and serve the residents' interests. Doing things in secret does not serve that purpose. I believe the Village has been misusing executive sessions and discussing village affairs outside of their open meetings, and virtually everything has little debate or dissension among the board members. As a trustee, I would work towards bringing the discussions into the public meetings and ensuring that everything is done as transparent as possible so the Village can get feedback to serve the community as best it can.

7) How do you plan on working with the Prairie Band Potawatomi while also ensuring the views and interests of the citizens are protected?

Along with question 7, transparency is key. The Village exists to serve its residents. Backroom deals would be off the table and any deals or proposals should be publicized so everyone's voice can be heard. Maintaining a good relationship with the Prairie Band will be important and there may be opportunities for collaboration to benefit both sides, but ensuring the rights and interests of the residents of Shabbona will always come first.

8) If you are not an existing trustee: what is the most impressive accomplishment of the current board?

The board has done a great job at find alternative ways to fund their projects, whether it's through grants or private fundraising through non-profits. While taxpayer funded grant money is not free and not all of the costs get covered, it does redirect that money back into improving our community.

9) What is something the existing board has done that you were against?

The Village appears to have personal vendettas against many of the property owners in town. They outright bullied the Greenwells into selling their small engine repair shop to the Village. They also shut down plans to open a coffee shop, a bakery, and another bar in town. Instead of allowing these businesses to make a go of it and fix up their building, the Village would rather punish these property owners. No one is going to fix up a building that they cannot use.

Village Board Candidate Questionnaire

The other candidates for Village Board Trustee did not submit a response to our questionnaire. We believe a well informed citizen is paramount, however, so if they would like to submit a response by March 21st we would gladly include them in the next edition which will be going out before election day.

Indian Creek School District PreK Screenings

The Indian Creek School District will be hosting a preschool screening day for children ages 3 through 5 years old. These screenings are for identifying children who are at-risk as defined by the Preschool-for-All criteria. Children meeting the at-risk criteria will be offered services through our preschool program for either the 24-25 or 25-26 school year.

The screening process should take about 45 minutes and will address multiple areas of development.

All screenings will be held at:
Indian Creek Elementary School
301 W. Cherokee Ave.
Shabbona, IL 60550

Upcoming Screening Dates:
March 13th, 2025
May 8th, 2025

Please call Kylie Mairs at 815-824-8257 to schedule an appointment.
Screenings are done by appointment only!

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