

CAMPTON TOWNSHIP
2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
April 8, 2025
7:00 PM

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had at the meeting of the above-entitled cause before the Honorable RICHARD JOHANSEN, Clerk, at 5N082 Old Fox Road, St. Charles, Illinois, on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at the hour of 7:02 p.m.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Okay. We're going to begin the meeting now at 7:00. So, welcome everybody to the 185th town meeting. I'll need a pledge of allegiance. Barb, could you do that?

(WHEREUPON, the pledge of allegiance was done.)

CLERK JOHANSEN: Thank you. Only registered voters of Campton Township may speak, make motions, or vote on motions. When you came in the door, you should have registered or checked your registration. If you haven't done that, please do so now. I've noticed people seldom do that. If you did not, do it again -- do it now.

For the benefit of the court reporter, when you speak, please spell your name and address.

Now, we're going to get a bunch of thank yous to all the people. It's a long list because there's a lot of people to thank. There's a lot going on here.

I want to thank the staff for all their hard work they have done to keep the township going. And beginning in no particular order, our administrator Ruth Rottmann who is back there, I think. Rebekah Flakus, our finance director also back there. Gayle Garbarski also back there, our staff assistant, Pam Snyder, Risk Management and Human Resources Coordinator; Ray Weber, road district foreman; Michelle Schuring, road district office manager; Kim Jordan, assistant road district office manager; Travis Medernach, assistant road district foreman; Tom Serewicz, operations manager; Bryan Kerwin, solid waste district president; and a whole other page.

Rhonda Corron, Corron Farm Preservation Society President; Carter Dell, I think he's behind me here, Parks and Open Space Ecologist; Jason Welander, park staff; Nick Overstreet, seasonal Natural Resources; David Serewicz, seasonal park staff; Cheryl Smith, Outreach Manager. Is she behind me? Maybe. She was. Kaitlyn Ruffino, Outreach Naturalist; Katy Bolger, Chief Deputy Assessor back there. Colleen O'Brien, Deputy Assessor; Amanda Voice, administrative assistant; Mark Rake, IT. Jimmy Lake, operations crew; Dave Corron, site manager and Corron Farm's named for -- that was their farm. Franz Valkenberg, seasonal parks and open space; John Valkenberg, seasonal parks and open space; Sarah Williams, Restoration Technician; and Holly Barron and myself for covering Fox Mill Creek,

Fox Mill, Fox Creek, and Norton Lakes for the referendum.

You have all done a great job keeping the township going all year, and thank you for your hard work.

Now, we need to elect a moderator, and then I get to sit down. Would somebody please nominate a moderator?

MR. ROTTMANN: I would like to nominate Barb Wojnicki for moderator.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Thank you.

MR. CARLSON: I'd like to second that.

MR. ROTTMANN: My name is Alan Rottmann, 6N879 Balmoral Lane.

CLERK JOHANSEN: And Mike Carlson is the second.

MR. CARLSON: 5N615 Cochise Drive.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Any other nominations?

MS. WOJNICKI: Should I spell the last name?

THE REPORTER: Yes, please.

MS. WOJNICKI: W-o-j-n-i-c-k-i.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Motion to close nominations.

MS. MURPHY: Motion to close nominations. Elizabeth Murphy. 4N830 West Mary Drive, Campton Hills.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Is there a second?

MS. BOLGER: Katy Bolger.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Katy Bolger. Thank you, Katy. All in favor, say aye.
(Ayes heard.)

CLERK JOHANSEN: Thank you. Opposed?
(None heard.)

CLERK JOHANSEN: Thank you for that. Nothing. Thank you, Barb. Guess what, you're up.

Okay. Now you're the moderator, Barb.

MS. WOJNICKI: Okay. All set?

CLERK JOHANSEN: Thank you. Now, I can sit down.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: The oath.

CLERK JOHANSEN: I've got it right here. I'm going to swear you in now, Barb. And you get to read it also so you can keep up.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Thank you.
(WHEREUPON, the Moderator was sworn.)

CLERK JOHANSEN: Thank you, Barb. Okay. You need to sign that.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Now, I get to sit down. Okay. Barb, you're up.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Bear with me. It's been a year. All right. Okay. I'll entertain a motion to approve the minutes.

MR. ROTTMANN: Hold on, hold on. You missed the moderator's salary.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Oh, I'm sorry. Okay.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Very important.

MR. ROTTMANN: You say I'm looking for a motion to set the moderator's salary.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: All right. I'm looking for a motion to set the moderator's salary.

MR. ROTTMANN: I would like to set -- I make a motion to set the moderator's salary at \$200 as we have in the past five years.

MR. GARBARSKI: Second.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: And second by Joe Garbarski. All in favor say aye.
(Ayes heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: All opposed say no.
(None heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Motion passes. Thank you, Alan. All right. Now, entertain a motion to approve the minutes?

MS. BOLGER: So moved, Katy Bolger.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. Moved by Katy Bolger. Second? Do I have second?

MR. KERWIN: Second, Bryan Kerwin.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. We have a second. Any discussion? All in favor say aye.

(Ayes heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: All opposed?

(None heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Motion passes. Okay. Now, we have John Kubar, supervisor's annual financial report.

MR. KUPAR: All right. Good evening, everybody. Let's go through the financials. And then after that, I'll do my supervisor's report. So, let's start off with the general town fund. The town fund beginning balance as of April 1st, 2024 was \$688,694.44. The total town fund ending balance as of March 31st 2025, was \$721 -- I'm sorry \$721,647.65. We had a little bit of a surplus, and that was about \$32,963.21.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: All set?

MR. KUPAR: All set for that one.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: I'll entertain a motion
to approve the town fund.

MS. MURPHY: So moved.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: All right. I'm sorry. Was it Betty?

MR. ROTTMANN: Betty got it. I second.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. And Alan Rottmann seconds. All in favor say aye.
(Ayes heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: All opposed.
(None heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Go ahead, John.

MR. KUPAR: All right. We're going to move on to the road and bridge fund. The total beginning balance as of April 1st, 2024 was \$1,869,240.83. The total ending balance as of March 31st, 2025, was \$2,311,552.03. That also includes a surplus to fund reserves to aid in the building of a new salt building for next year, and that's about 442,311.20.

MS. MURPHY: I move we accept the annual report for the Campton Township Road and Bridge fund for the year ending March 31st, 2025.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Moved by Betty Murphy, and do I have a second?

MS. BOLGER: Katy Bolger.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Second by Katy Bolger. All in favor say aye.
(Ayes heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Motion passes.

MR. KUPAR: Okay. The next one is capital improvement fund. We had a beginning balance of this fund on April 1st, 2024, of \$51,047.01. We had an ending balance on March 31st, 2025 of \$31,836.67. We took away about \$19,210.34. We planned for a final lease payment for the (inaudible), and so now we're all paid off of that. So that's that.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. Motion to approve the capital improvement fund.

MR. ROTTMANN: I'd like to make a motion to approve that.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Moved by Alan Rottmann. Do I have a second?

MS. BOLGER: Katy Bolger.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Second by Katy Bolger. All in favor say aye.
(Ayes heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: All opposed say nay.
(None heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Motion passes.

MR. KUPAR: All right. I think we're moving on to the last one here, and that would be the open space fund. We had a beginning balance on April 1, 2024, in the amount of \$3,260,375.25. We had total revenues of \$6,111,582.32. We had total expenditures -- that's off a little bit -- but let's go with the ending balance of March 31st, 2025 and that would be \$4,189,947.02. Numbers are off a little bit only because we had a surplus of \$929,000 -- well

\$929,572.37. And that is receipts of what -- of credits that we received last year. So it's a good chunk of change.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. I'll accept a motion to approve the open space fund.

MR. CARLSON: I'll motion.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Moved by Mike Carlson. Second by?

MS. BOLGER: Katy Bolger.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Katy Bolger. All in favor say aye.
(Ayes heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: All opposed say nay.
(None heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Motion passes. And we will move on to comments by supervisor.

MR. KUPAR: All right. I'm going to probably go through this pretty quick. I'm going to maybe not go through the preamble as much as I wanted, but fiscal year 2024 was characterized as a year of further growth in our open lands, our open space programs, activities, and personnel. Public use has supported the township's parks and open space land, and programs continue to be robust and growing.

Township has made investments in new nature and educational outreach programs as well as new personnel. Basically, all of our departments ended with -- ended up with a little bit of surplus which is good.

Dick already introduced the staff. And, again, last year, you know, Carter Dell and Tom Serewicz and the staff still continue to undertake some difficult projects in addition to their normal responsibilities.

I also want to thank Cheryl Smith and Kaitlyn Ruffino for the social media outreach they are doing with the township. This has made a difference in getting our residents participating in programs and utilizing our parks and open spaces, so that's actually worked out really good.

In addition, I would like to thank the many volunteers and scouting organizations that have spent countless hours of their time and effort in support of Campton Township's programs, committees, and projects. And I'm very pleased to see that over the last year, the Girl Scouts are utilizing more and more of the township resources including summer camp for a lot of our facilities so that's good.

I'd like to mention that we have an Eagle Scout project that was done over the last year. A Wyatt Tiedt of Troop 13 did a project at the Headwaters Conservation Area, and he constructed and installed trail direction signs on posts at Headwaters, so that was very good.

Since 1992, over 53 Eagle Scout projects have been completed in the township covering a wide range of construction and restoration projects.

On behalf of the township, I'd like to thank all the Eagle Scouts who have completed these projects for the benefit of the Campton Township residents.

So now for some good things. We had an election last week. We had a referendum that we floated, and we passed, which is awesome for us for the next ten years. We have a lot of projects that we have to complete that are open space. So, with the referendum, what we're looking at, we're going to be looking at a little bit of acquisition for some properties adjacent to existing properties. We're looking at a lot of development at our open space and a lot of restoration work, so we have a lot of work that is cut out for us.

Leading into that, the Campton Township Open Space Foundation has been a great partner over the last few years of providing financial and program support for various projects within the township.

This year, the foundation has spent a significant amount of its time and resources in working on the open space referendum. They did a great job. And as you know, the referendum passed. I wanted to thank Joe Garbarski and his team for all their effort in making this referendum a success.

I personally want to thank Joe for all his time and drive to make this referendum a success. Joe took a lot of the brunt of a lot of the social media, and he responded in a very gentlemanly fashion. Joe took the high road, and it was never a controversy. So, he -- a lot of work. He's had a lot of sleepless nights and mornings. I mean, I would call him at 6:00, 6:30. I kind of miss those calls.

MR. GARBARSKI: They'll start up again soon.

MR. KUPAR: I also want to thank the Conservation Foundation for all their support on the referendum. These guys are experts in what they do when it comes to the literature and some of the strategies, and I think, Joe, you could agree, they helped us out a lot.

MR. GARBARSKI: Immensely.

MR. KUPAR: And the last, I guess, piece of literature that they sent out actually changed some people's minds, and it was excellent. So, as I mentioned earlier, this fiscal year's activities focus on further growth in our open space lands, open space programs, activities and personnel.

And, you know, as we start looking at getting the funds from the referendum, I can see this is going to be growing quite rapidly probably again for about ten years, long after I retire so that's good.

So many of the highlights of our growth and open space lands, facilities, and programs this year included -- we've had a lot of awards over the last year -- this year. This one here, Campton Township and our engineer, V3 Companies were awarded the American Council of Engineering Companies 2025 excellence award for special achievement.

This award was for recognition of the design and operation of the Gray Willows Wetlands Mitigation Bank. And I'm really happy that we were cited for this. You know, it's such

a great facility. The Corps of Engineers actually uses Gray Willows as a training ground for wetlands mitigation. That's a great example, and they always love to come back.

Campton Township completed the report for compliance with Decennial Committee of Local Government Efficiency Act. This is something that the state placed on us that we had to do. The final report provides a very good overview of the Township's roles, responsibilities, activities, and value to our township residents.

While putting this document together, it was eye opening to see how far we have come as a township over the last ten years, and the accomplishments that we have achieved.

I just want to read something really quickly. So, one of the questions that they have on this report that we have to submit it says, in the last decade, what have we done well.

All right. The last decade has seen significant growth in the township land resources which allow our residents significant access to both passive and active recreational opportunities. Over half the township's open space lands have been purchased over the last ten years. We now have over 1653 acres, I believe; right, Joe?

MR. GARBARSKI: Correct.

MR. KUPAR: In our open space program. So how did we get there? We aggressively and continually refinanced our open space funds to achieve low interest rates. This saved our residents millions of dollars in taxes. The township has a double A bond rating from the (inaudible). What that means is that it's an investment free quality bond, so that's -- for a little township, that's great.

We have found new sources of grants to help purchase open space lands at little or no cost to our residents. You know, when it's all said and done, depending upon which way we go, both Goldenstein East and West is going to cost us maybe \$500,000, you know, for a \$4 million piece of property. So that's not bad.

We have partnered with private and government agencies to help with the township's restoration efforts. We have internalized resources for site maintenance and restoration activities. We have developed an education and outreach department to help maximize our residents' utilization, enjoyment of our open space.

And from a township administration perspective, we have invested in new accounting software, which allows the township to track our budgets. And as always, we live within our budget.

So as a little township, we've done pretty good. You guys have done a great job. In October of 2024, the township received a check in the amount of \$750,000 from the State of Illinois for the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant. We applied for that two years ago, so the state is kind of slow, but we finally got it.

The grant was for the acquisition of the Goldenstein Farm West property, but the receipt of this reimbursement grant, the funds received last year from the Illinois Clean Energy Grant, the township has been fully reimbursed for all funds used for purchase of this property.

Campton Township received notification of another land and water conservation fund grant in November of 2024. This grant in the amount of \$903,000 is a reimbursement grant for the purchase of the Goldenstein Farm east property.

The grant agreement was fully signed in December of 2024. And once the property has been purchased and all documentation has been submitted, the state will release these funds for us.

This is something that we probably didn't talk very much about, but you're going to hear more about it this year. Campton Township partnered with the Wasco boys' baseball league for an open space land acquisition and development grant. We won that. And the \$1.3 million matching grant to split between the township and the baseball league over the course of a two-year period. And this is to be used to upgrade the existing facilities, construct new amenities at Anderson Park. So, yeah, we got our notification in December.

Some other interesting things. We had a very successful Christmas at Corron Farm last year. We had over 762 residents attend the event, which is an all-time high. Everyone had a great time. We had carolers, Santa Clause, elves, crafters, an awesome food truck. And just the next thing here is incredible. We ran out of cider donuts, and we bought 25-dozen. I mean, they were gone. And we had like 500 sets of S'mores. They were gone. So, kind of interesting. I think we're going to have to plan more for this year.

Now, the township staff did an outstanding job helping to support the event. And the Corron Farm Preservation Society did a great job planning and executing this event.

The All-Wheel Show we saw in October of last year, 2024. We had to cancel the original date in September due to weather. The outreach team was able to reschedule and get most vendors and exhibitors to reschedule. We had 125 cars displayed with 400 residents attending. And we had more vendors and spenders -- more vendors and sponsors than ever before, and we expect to grow this event this year a little bit more.

The next one here is kind of like people are recognizing the types of programs that we have and the value of our open space, and the quality of what we do in the restoration of these open space lands.

The board of directors and senior staff of the Conservation Foundation toured several of the township's facilities in June of last year. Jesse Varsho and Carter Dell led the Conservation Foundation on a tour of Gray Willows Farm, Goldenstein Farm, and Harley Woods.

I was in Alaska so I couldn't do it, but they did a great job. We partnered with Conservation Foundation for two decades. The directors and senior staff of the foundation wanted to see the success that we have achieved over that time, and they were very much impressed with what they saw.

So, what they tell me is that the monies that they generate -- help generate for us is very well spent and very well managed. So that's good to hear.

And finally, the township received the last of the proceeds of wetlands credits from the Gray Willows Wetland Mitigation Bank. This amounts to \$922,083. Our next wetlands mitigation bank will be at the Goldstein properties, both east and west.

The current design calls for the development of approximately 75 acres of wetlands. Once the design has been completed, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will release 15 percent of the credits for purchase. So that's another method that we fund our restoration efforts within the township.

One other announcement, I was told that on Page 51, the summary of open space program, there's two pages of that. There are some minor mistakes in that so we have the

corrected sheets on the back table there. So, if you'd like to get the corrected summaries, they are in the back there. Any questions for me?

MR. GARBARSKI: John, I have a question.

MR. KUPAR: Yes.

MR. GARBARSKI: How does the cemetery district tie into the township?

MR. KUPAR: That's a very good question.

MR. GARBARSKI: Thank you, John.

MR. KUPAR: All right. If the cemetery district -- we're responsible for the district ultimately as a township. If they cease to exist, they will turn over all that responsibility to us, and we be responsible for maintaining the cemeteries.

MR. ROTTMANN: The town board sets the positions of the cemetery board. They have to be approved by the board -- the town board members.

MR. KUPAR: But I think to answer your question, if they were out of money, we are responsible for it. So hopefully, you know, we could help them a little bit financially, but if they cease to exist, we have to take on all responsibility for that.

I don't know how to run a cemetery to be honest with you. So hopefully, there's a referendum next year that they pass, and we don't have to worry about it because, in reality, they know where all the bodies are buried, and we don't.

Well, I mean, practicality. You know, if you're selling lots, you have to know where everything is; right? I have no idea. Nobody here does, so we have to make --

MR. ROTTMANN: Well, I think a referendum would pass, but I think that the cemetery board needs to get the word out. A lot of people went to the election not even knowing it was on the ballot or what it was about.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: True.

MR. KUPAR: So, I mean, I got to be honest with you. That's my thoughts right now.

MR. ROTTMANN: I would think it would pass --

MR. KUPAR: And I think what's going to happen next year is somehow we're going to have to help them a little bit. I don't know if legally we can do that, but you know, we have a lot of folks in the township that have a lot of experience with referendums; right, Jim?

MR. ROTTMANN: If that referendum would pass, it only means an additional -- basically \$10 per year per home. So, it's not a huge cost to keep them solvent.

MS. MURPHY: I think we could -- if nothing else -- help with the -- make that information more known, and the fact that it's -- they haven't had an increase in what 20 years?

MR. KUPAR: Well, they've been getting the full amount.

MS. MURPHY: Yeah, I know, but they never once raised their levy.

MR. ROTTMANN: Right. Well, they are running -- they are taking care of four cemeteries with only \$25,000 a year, okay. And you can't do that anymore. They're going to need more funds.

MR. KUPAR: So, I mean, what we've offered is that as a township, if they have trees that go down in cemeteries, Tom and his crews can take care of that.

MR. SEREWICZ: And we do. Even now, we replace the flag. We replace as much as we can help out. When a tree falls, we take care of it.

MR. KUPAR: But, you know, that helps out. And that might save \$2 or \$3,000 a year. You know, we've offered to give them \$5,000 this year to help them make it through another year. And we've also asked the village to make that happen so let's see what we can do.

MR. GARBARSKI: The referendum would be in two years.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: That's right.

MR. KUPAR: So, I think they can make it pretty much for that year, maybe two years. But after that, I think their funds will be depleted.

MR. GARBARSKI: Thank you.

MR. KUPAR: Any other questions? All right. Great. Thanks.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: All right. Thank you, John.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Thanks, John.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. Moving on, we have the assessor's report.

MR. ROTTMANN: Why thank you, Moderator Wojnicki. The 2025 annual report Campton Township assessor's office. Basically, this revolves around the 2024 assessed valuations. We are still currently working on the 2025 assessed valuations.

The Campton Township Assessor's office added \$88,210,519 in new value for 2024. That's \$29,400,566 in assessed value. This value represents construction of new residences and improvements to existing homes. There were 146 permits issued for new single family

residences, and 289 permits were issued for other types of new construction such as additions, garages, decks, pools, et cetera.

There were 477 property sales in 2024, which is up from 395 in 2023. Of those sales, 399 were single-family residences and 41 were sales of buildable lots. There were sales of 25 farm parcels and 11 commercial properties. And one sale of an exempt property.

The average sale price in 2024 for a single family home in Campton Township was \$602,779. This is an increase from the average home price of \$555,557 in 2023. \$539,114 in 2022, \$493,712 in 2021, and \$438,335 in 2020. As you can see, the property values have been steadily increasing.

As of December 31st, 2024, there are a total of 7,648 parcels in Campton Township represented by 6,783 residential parcels, 468 farm parcels, and 176 commercial and industrial parcels. 221 are exempt or partially exempt properties.

That is the assessor's report.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. Any questions for Alan? Any comments? All right. Hearing none, thank you, Alan.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Thanks, Alan.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Next, we have highway commissioner's report. Is anybody here from the highway commissioner's office? I don't see anybody. Look in your booklets. I think there's a summary in there from the highway commissioner.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Just read it.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. Open space update. We have outreach/maintenance. Oh, Cheryl.

MS. SMITH: Okay. So, for the annual report for Outreach Department. In 2024, fiscal year, we welcomed 131 children for our five weeks of summer critter camps with a wait list for every week during our summer camps. We had 20 kids for our fall critter camp and 27 for our winter critter camps.

Throughout these programs, we explored a wide range of topics including nature, ecology, and conservation through engaging, hands-on projects.

Our campers left with a deeper appreciation for the natural world and a better understanding of how to care for it. In addition, they gained valuable tools for relaxation and physical activity in outdoor settings helping to foster a lasting connection with nature.

In addition to our seasonal critter camps, we had 149 children participate in our monthly natural and wildlife detectives' clubs. This year-round program allows us to dive deeper into specific nature projects or topics I should say, each month creating space for immersive, hands-on learning.

Together, we explored a fascinating world of land mollusks, planted gardens, crafted glowing firefly night lights during our firefly themed session. And October brought us a special Halloween edition where kids dressed in costume and tackled a nature-themed escape room challenge.

We also ventured out on thrilling night hikes giving us a glimpse into the crepuscular and nocturnal worlds of wildlife. We discovered lichen and uncovered ecologist importance, explored wildlife adaptations and deepened our understanding of local flora and fauna while learning how to protect them.

Each session offered unique experiences that sparked curiosity and strengthened each child's connection with the natural world.

In 2024, we were excited to once again welcome 93 students, along with their parents and teachers from Ferson Creek Elementary School's fifth grade class for their year-end celebration at Gray Willows Farm. That was our second year. We're already booked for -- I just booked today for this year. I coordinated with K.A.R.E to help facilitate the day's events. And Paige from K.A.R.E. and I led engaging presentations while handling birds of prey, while Kaitlyn coordinated the transition between the school-planned activities.

Outreach efforts remained strong in 2024 with 25 30X30 plots reserved and 22 raised beds reserved in our community gardens.

And our parks hosted 30 rental reservation agreements this year accommodating a variety of events including scout meetings, birthday parties, showers, and even a wedding.

These rentals ranged from single-day use to recurring weekly or twice a week for Boy Scouts and Girl Scout groups and dog scent training sessions. We have also handled numerous walkthrough requests for wedding parties and other special events.

I also designed and facilitated Girl Scout workshops with a total of 203 Girl Scouts earning their natural-related badges at our parks through fun and educational experiences and presentations.

We hosted a view of the night sky event with the Fox Valley Astronomical Society at Gray Willows Farm on September 22nd with 29 people in attendance. And the outreach Department also took the lead on planning and replanning the All-Wheel Show as John covered earlier.

And, again, we had more sponsorship funding this year than any previous year. We also played a key role in helping with Prairie Fest and Christmas at Corron through handling signage, banners, flyers, social media promotions, volunteer coordination, raffle item procurement, and anything that Joni needed.

Kaitlyn and I represented Outreach by attending different tabling events throughout the community including Wasco Nursery's Fall Fest, Whimsey Farm Easter Event, National Night Out, and Village Christmas Parade. Additionally, I assisted with the Girl Scouts donation drive at St. Charles North and helped table at Ferson Creek's back-to-school event further strengthening our community connection.

We also supported Mark Metzger's Harvesting Sweetness workshop in December by creating a flyer and managing promotional efforts through social media design and posts.

In November, I introduced our first ever senior hike on social media, and on March 18th, we hosted a senior program focused on spring bird migration with another event already scheduled for Saturday, April 26th.

Throughout the year, we hosted a variety of hikes open to all ages including peaceful sunrise hikes in the spring, vibrant fall hikes, and our fan favorite, night hikes during the winter months.

Outreach continues to manage daily social media content promoting all open space and gladly sharing updates from other departments. Our most viewed posts were fall and winter camp posts with photos, and the All-Wheel Show reschedule post and Christmas at Corron Post.

We've also supported the natural resources team both on the ground helping with a few seed harvests and prescribed burns and online by amplifying their work through outreach posts.

We helped on the referendum. And also, I've taken over the management of our new website and am actively learning how to maintain and improve it through online courses to make sure that we have a more user-friendly visual feeling and valuable resource for our community.

Finally, our newsletter saw a major transformation this year with refreshed content and a redesign layout. We've experienced significantly higher engagement and positive feedback from readers. Since launching the Outreach Department, we've significantly increased engagement with our monthly newsletter rising from approximately 40 percent to around 70 percent. In addition to higher open rates, we've also seen a noticeable improvement in the click-through rates thanks to recent content and design enhancements.

According to Square reports, the Outreach Department generated over \$40,000 in revenue during the 2024 fiscal year. This figure does not include additional income from All-Wheel Show sponsors, miscellaneous check payments for camps, or payments and donations collected at various programs and events.

Additionally, I've successfully secured grants for the Outreach Department through online applications and with the support of CTOSF, helping to offset costs for program materials needs.

And that is my report for Outreach. And we have the video that John asked me to create for our kid programs.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. Any questions for Cheryl before we move on? Any comments or questions? Okay. And then we've got Carter for natural resources.

(WHEREUPON, a video was shown.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: We're on natural resources. Carter, your turn.

MR. DELL: All right. Hello everyone. My name is Carter Dell. I'm the ecologist for Campton Township Parks and Open Space.

The team and I manage the natural resources, parks. Our primary goal is to restore our open space to pre-European traditions for the benefit of the community and for wildlife.

So, let's dive in. We wear a lot of hats in my department, but I'll just focus on the things that take up most of our time. I'm going to read the mission statement for us just so we're all aware. Mission statement for the township parks and open space program is, preserve and protect the semirural character of Campton Township, acquire open land to (inaudible). Protection of farmland and historic landmarks (inaudible) wetlands, woodlands, wildlife, and geologically significant features. Education pleasure and recreation of the public. And to date, over 1,650 acres of open space has been protected by Campton Township. We

got the update that since last year. That's why I put it up like that. Thought that was kind of cool.

And then that's our new map updated and current. The red is our open space properties. The orange are easements that we have all the rights with. This map is also on the wall right there.

Time-wise, the main thing that my team does is invasive species management. Invasive means, typically, in our field, we're referring to a plant. Could be any living thing, but we mainly deal with plants. Invasive means that it comes from somewhere else, and it's taking over here, out competing the native stuff for resources, the things that we want to propagate.

On the left we have buckhorn, and on the right, we have Bradford pear. These are just two examples of what I consider the big bads.

CLERK JOHANSEN: Is the green the buckhorn?

MR. DELL: It is. Yeah, you beat me to it. And that's a very good example. There's a reason why I chose this specific photo. It's because anytime you're driving around in the fall, and you see just a dense understory of green leaf and all the leaves of the oak trees and all the lower stuff has all fallen, when you see just that green band in there, buckhorn. So, you see that everywhere.

The other one is honeysuckle, also very invasive, kind of acts in the exact same way. The Bradford pear, very common landscaping tree still sold in nurseries today. They are short-lived and smelly. Although they do give pretty white flowers, they also know how to dominate a prairie and out compete our plants. We spend a lot of time cutting them down.

And actually, these are some more woodies that we have. Those are cotton woods actually. Cottonwood is a native species but still requires management. Just because it was here doesn't mean that it can't take over and out compete just based on the way the things are set up nowadays. Instead of thousands and thousands of open acres, now, they're all confined and fighting each other. So, this is a bit of a before and after of the prairie right next to the Gray Willows barn parking lot showing that we -- after we burn and open it up, we cut (inaudible) cut, stump, spray.

And then this is from the reverse angle. You can see two of my field staff out there cutting down cottonwoods and other invasive wooded species in the prairie. And then that's what it's supposed to look like, no woodies, ta-da.

And then one more thing about invasive species management. It's gotten a lot easier for us, thank you to the Campton Township Open Space Foundation. They provided us with this beautiful, magical Enduraplas sprayer that we put in the back of our UTV now, and that thing sprays great. So, we can load it up with all kinds of herbicide. It has multiple different spray ports down here so we get several hoses going at once, so that's pretty crazy. It's great for me. I don't know if you guys have ever done that. For me it's like, oh, man. So, this thing is awesome. We've been using it like crazy.

Now, prescribed burns. We've had a very successful year for several different indicators. Started off a little bit slow. Typically, we get a stronger fall burn season.

In November, we got one. So, at least we're on the board. Then we snuck another one in December. This one was actually December 1 at Gray Willows. So that's where we

burned, and then that opened up all those cottonwoods that you just saw that we went through and cut down.

So, yeah. Typically, we get a lot more burns in the fall matching as many as we get in the spring, hopefully, but it was not the case this year. We were ready for it. Weather did not cooperate.

Typically, we can burn anytime between October and April, but we don't just burn to burn, we burn for a purpose. Typically, it's to open things up and to get rid of invasives and recycle nutrients. But we were ready for it in March. We did a whole lot of burning in March, just full weeks of it, and we got a lot of good ground covered.

So, the important number here on the bottom is 217 acres. That's what we did between last fall and the spring. And that is almost a third of our burn acreage. It's lower than last year because the fall just did not happen.

If we had a normal fall plus a good spring, (inaudible) But we still hit. We labeled a document with a way to bring (inaudible) priority of units we wanted to burn, and we hit at least every one that was ranked highest, No. 1. So, we did that, and we put the kibosh on that last week. We've been seeing a lot of snakes and ground nesting birds coming up. They don't have a way to escape the fire, and so we called it quits.

You might have seen people burning today. Cook County Forest Preserve was burning today. They also have 74,000 acres, a little bit of a different management than we got going on here.

We did all of our main priority things, and we don't want to kill snakes. They're -- everything is -- we're worried we'd be doing more harm than good, so we hit our mark, and we're good.

Now, the thing that I can't stress on enough is the tremendous volunteer support. I know -- I see a familiar face in here. I see Corey sitting with us today. Thank you, Corey, for your support. And thank you everybody else who has joined on burns in the past.

We had 308.5 volunteer hours joining us between the fall and the spring, and we depend on that. A lot of times -- we're such a small staff that a lot of times we can't burn without our volunteers, at least a few showing up.

And depending on the value that you put per volunteer hour, either 24 is kind of the old one and 34 is kind of what some people are calling it now, saves us a ton of money. Thousands and thousands of dollars. I can't stress how crucial the volunteer burn crew is to our program.

And then moving right along, the other thing that we really like to focus on is not just burning everything down and not just spraying with herbicide and not just going haywire with saws. We also planted flowers to even it all out.

So, we do a native seed harvest to take from the more densely populated areas that we have in our open space and put it elsewhere that needs a little bit of biodiversity pushing, and so we do a lot of volunteer seed harvests August through October. We almost ran them seasonally -- or weekly. We missed one week because of weather.

And we had 220 volunteer hours come out for that. Very consistent crews crossover between the burn crew as well. Sonia, right here with the red sunglasses, did not miss like a single seed harvest or burn, so hat's off to Sonia. She's incredible. Some new faces too, you know, and we've had plenty of people that show up for one or two, and that's great too. Any help is help.

Same thing, too, depending on what price you multiply those hours by, we're saving tons of money, and then what we get out of it.

So last year, we had a smaller staff and some turnover, so we had a little bit of a lull. Right back to it this last year. So tremendous volunteer support really helped us out. Time for third most harvested seed in program history.

And the total value is this gray line up here between what we harvested and what we got out of our intergovernmental seed team agreement with the Kane County Forest Preserve.

We go and harvest seed with them every week too because they have harvestable populations of seed that we can't really harvest. We might have those species scattered through our parks, but like a few plants here and there, and we're trying to propagate those. We can't really harvest them.

They have fields of it because they got 25,000 acres. So, we go there, harvest with them, they give us a cut, and that was this year. So total, we're looking at \$25,000 worth of harvested and donated seed, plus the, you know, 20,000 or so from volunteer hours. We're looking at a tremendous volunteer support of the program this year. So, hat's off to our volunteers. And here's hoping that we can sustain that level of volunteer stewardship in our open space. Yeah. This truly, truly fantastic community support for the program.

Couple other support projects that we have going on. The scout projects. They showed up as they always do all the way to Cub Scout seed harvest. This is the one in Gray Willows. We did some (inaudible), some common milk weed. And we had (inaudible) Varsho do her Girl Scout silver award where she constructed six picnic bench -- picnic tables at Gray Willows Farm.

Her Girl Scout Troop 75 with a bronze award where they planted over 30 native trees in the Gray Willows children's prairie. We had Wyatt Tiedt, as John said, do a trail signage project at (inaudible) conservation area for his Eagle Scout project.

And his troop, Troop 13 did a significant amount of work on the community center stairwell, and other events. They helped us out with the All-Wheel Show and various other projects.

And the last couple things, like I said, we wear a lot of hats. I could be up here for an hour telling you about all the other things we did, but a couple of other things that I would really like to highlight. My staff has really been working hard this year. That's Sarah assisting one of our -- that was at Prairie Fest this last summer. She was doing that, and I was doing the wagon rides. We'd swap. And we updated the township brochure that's floating around. We updated all the GIS and acreage files, and we added one more mile of trail open in the back of Gray Willows. We built a bridge. We took on some pretty crazy problem trees that were laying all across and all mangled up. And then we dug up our famous tree stumps by hand because we couldn't get the equipment back in there at that time. So, we were going at it with axes. Old school.

So, yeah. Again, volunteers, thank you so much. And Open Space Foundation, thank you so much for the Enduraplas and all your support in other ways. Thank you, community.

And if you're interested in getting involved with restoration and community volunteering with our program, feel free to e-mail me at restoration@camptontownship.com.

And that is a picture of our current three staff in the department. Me, Carter Dell Sarah Williams, and Nick Overstreet. Any questions?

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Any questions or comments for Carter?

CLERK JOHANSEN: Good job.

MR. DELL: Thank you.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: All right. Moving along. We have comment by electors. I just wanted to start out and echo what I said last year. Cheryl, beautiful photos, some beautiful photos on the cover.

Anybody else have comments or questions? Okay. Hearing none. New business? Campton Township Open Space Foundation update. I would say that's Joe.

MR. GARBARSKI: I don't need to stand, do I?

CLERK JOHANSEN: It's up to you.

MR. GARBARSKI: Okay. Our fiscal year matches the calendar year so there is some overlap between '24 and '25.

We were able to purchase two, 20-foot flagpoles that Tom and his staff installed at Poyner and Headwaters. Anderson Park, we paid for the removal and purchase and installation of the new entrance signs. We purchased a handful of items for the Outreach Program, and we also purchased the -- Carter's sprayer that he so fondly spoke of earlier.

And then we were also able to finish the Poyner Park concrete bumpers that were done at the end of 2024. So, we've got some new projects that we're working on for 2025, waiting to see how the referendum shakes out before we have some definitive plans there.

The other thing is we formed a committee from the foundation called the Campton Citizens For Open Space. The township cannot -- township-elected officials cannot advocate for the referendum, and that became our job and undertaking. And we worked in concert with the township where they could only speak in factual data and information, and we, obviously, were able to promote that.

So, we worked with the Conservation Foundation, got some help and direction from them. We worked with the township staff to help assemble a lot of the data. We had some open houses. We had a lot of social media presence, created a new website that was specific to the referendum and helped the township launch a specific parks and open space referendum.

So as of 5:00 today, we have a 97 vote lead, which doesn't sound like a lot, but on election night it was 60 votes. So hopefully, the county can certify the election sooner rather than later, and then we can move on with our lives and come up with some work in the future that will all be targeted.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. Do you want to say anything about Kathleen Judy, who was on our open space committee?

MR. GARBARSKI: Well, I could say something about everybody, Barb. But right now, since you know I'm very superstitious, I don't want to go too far with that.

So, after the referendum is certified and passed, then we can, you know, have some celebrations. But right now, we're just going to hold back and wait for those results to be finalized.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. Very good. Let's see. Setting an annual meeting date for 2026.

MR. ROTTMANN: I'd like to make a motion that the next annual meeting date for April 14th, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: At 7:00 p.m. Okay. Anybody, any questions? Any comments about that?

MR. ROTTMANN: Do you need a second?

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: I would like a second.

MR. CARLSON: I will second that.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Mike Carlson seconded it. Do I do all in favor on that?

CLERK JOHANSEN: Yes.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: All in favor on setting the annual date?
(Ayes heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: I guess it's good. And then motion to adjourn.

MS. BOLGER: Katy Bolger, motion to adjourn.

MR. ROTTMANN: Second.

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Okay. All in favor say aye.
(Ayes heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Opposed say nay?
(None heard.)

MODERATOR WOJNICKI: Adjourned. Thank you everybody.

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(Proceedings concluded at

8:03 p.m.)