

Office of the Town Clerk

South Rock Island Township August 25, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes - **APPROVED**

Call to Order/Roll Call

The August 25, 2025, South Rock Island Township Board meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by Supervisor Grace Diaz Shirk.

Elected Board Officials Present:

- Supervisor Grace Diaz Shirk (Chair), Clerk KJ Whitley, Trustees – Bill Sowards, Diana Hebbeln, Jonah Sallows-Hines, Chris Elsberg

Other Elected Officials Present:

- Assessor Nichole Parker

Remote Electronic Attendance (if necessary)

None

Pledge of Allegiance

Supervisor Prayer

Approval of the Agenda

Sowards moved, and Elsberg seconded, to approve the August 25, 2025 South Rock Island Township Board meeting agenda. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Elsberg moved, and Hebbeln seconded, to approve the July 25, 2025, South Rock Island Township Board meeting minutes. Voice vote. Motion carried.

Reports

Supervisor's Report – Presented by Shirk *(Record)*.

Parking Lot - Supervisor Shirk reported that the parking lot has been resurfaced and restriped. She suggested that the Board may want to consider a complete tear-out and full reconstruction of the parking lot in future years.

FOIA Request / Illinois Department of Human Rights Letter - Shirk informed the Board that a FOIA request had been received, along with a letter from the Illinois Department of Human Rights alleging discrimination and denial of service. She contacted the Township's attorney to ensure the matter was being handled appropriately. Our attorney noted that this was the third letter his office has received this year using the same template language. Shirk assured the Board she will keep them informed as the situation progresses.

Bus Ticket Requirements - Shirk provided the Board with written guidelines regarding bus ticket requests. Any resident of South Rock Island Township is eligible to receive up to 20 free yellow unemployment bus tickets per 12-month period.

Soles for Children Event – September 21, 2025 - Shirk shared information about the upcoming **Soles for Children** event scheduled for **Sunday, September 21, 2025**, now being held at the **Martin Luther King Center** (formerly hosted at the Friendly House). The event supports over 1,000 children across the Quad Cities, offering shoes, coats, food, free haircuts, mittens, and other essentials. A total of **57 organizations** are participating this year. No child is turned away. Shirk encouraged the Board to consider a donation (request appears below) to help cover the cost of items, noting a funding request of **\$1,680**. The Township will have a table at the event and will hand out small trinkets to help make the day special for attending children.

Ring Doorbell - Supervisor Shirk informed the Board that the current doorbell is no longer functioning and proposed installing a Ring camera at the main entrance of the building. Since there is no existing wiring, she is in the process of obtaining bids for installation. Elsberg suggested checking with ADT for pricing and compatibility. Shirk will gather quotes and report back to the Board.

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Rock Island Labor Day Parade - Shirk thanked Elsberg for donating the use of her Jeep for the upcoming Rock Island Labor Day Parade. Shirk will also provide her 1968 Firebird. Both vehicles will be decorated for the event, and participants were asked to arrive by **8:30 a.m.** (walkers by **9:00 a.m.**) to allow time for setup.

Newsletter - Articles and bios for the fall newsletter are due to Katie by **August 29, 2025**. Board members were reminded to submit content as needed.

Earl Hanson School T-Shirts – Additional Funds - Shirk informed the Board that an additional \$500 was sent to Earl Hanson School to help cover extra expenses related to the school's t-shirt order. The Board had previously approved a \$2,000 donation for the shirts, which included the Township logo. Following the original order, the school requested an additional \$736 to cover the cost of extra shirts and reached out to all sponsors for assistance. After reviewing the request, it was decided that the Township would contribute an additional \$500 to help cover the shortfall.

Program Coordinator – Full-Time Discussion - Supervisor Shirk informed the Board that the newly hired Program Coordinator has expressed interest in transitioning her position to full-time. Currently working 20–25 hours per week, she would like to expand her role and develop additional programs that would benefit Township residents. A full-time position is considered 30 hours per week and would include eligibility for insurance benefits. Although the position was not originally budgeted full-time, Shirk advised that the additional hours and insurance costs could be absorbed into the existing budget. Following general discussion, the Board reached a consensus to have Supervisor Shirk work with the employee to explore how expanding the role could further benefit the Township. The Board agreed that the employee should provide a proposal outlining the potential benefits of increased hours for consideration. This item will be placed on the next meeting agenda for further Board consideration.

Upcoming Community Events

- **Shred Day** – Scheduled for **October 8, 2025**, from **9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** Residents are encouraged to spread the word.
- **Flu Clinic** – Scheduled for **October 16, 2025**, from **9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.** Retired nurse Edna Sowards will administer flu shots. The Township will cover the cost for individuals without insurance.
- **Outdoor Giveaway** – Scheduled for **October 21, 2025**, from **9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.** Donations, including furniture, are currently being accepted.
- **Drug Take Back Day** – Scheduled for **October 25, 2025**, from **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** The Board traditionally staffs this event.
- **Trick or Treat** – Scheduled for **October 31, 2025**, during regular business hours. Desk-to-desk trick-or-treating will take place, and all are welcome to participate.
- **Lantern Parade** – Scheduled for September 10, 2025, from **5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Hodge Park**. The township will have lantern kits for kids to put together.

Clerk's Report – Presented by Whitley

Clerk Whitley presented the Township Clerk's Report. One FOIA request was received. Whitley attended the TOI training at Bally's Casino along with Sowards, Hebbeln, and Elsberg. She inquired whether anyone would be attending the upcoming training in Springfield, Illinois, scheduled for November 2025. At this time, the clerk will be the only representative from South Rock Island Township planning to attend. She also requested that her official SRIT email address, kjwhitley@sritownship.net, be used for all future communications, including FOIA requests.

Whitley reported that a recent FOIA request, which was inadvertently emailed to Supervisor Shirk while she was out of town, should have been directed to the Township Clerk. The request appeared to seek information from both South Rock Island Township and Rock Island Township. The FOIA included multiple items, such as policies related to eligibility and anti-discrimination, internal communications, service denial/approval logs, and discrimination complaints. The Township responded by referencing its adherence to the Township Supervisors of Illinois General Assistance Handbook and confirmed that no internal communications or complaints responsive to the request existed. Additionally, it was noted that certain records are exempt under the Illinois FOIA due to privacy protections. Public records such as annual financial statements, staff listings, budgets, and audits for fiscal years 2021–2025 are available on the Township's website at www.sritownship.net/minutes.php.

Assessor's Report – Presented by Parker (Record)

Assessor Parker reported that a total of **542 Senior Freeze applications** have been received. The Assessor's Office sent out **116 birthday letters** to South Rock Island Township residents. Additionally, the **County issued second notices** for Senior Freeze applications. The **anticipated date for the Board of Review is September 27, 2025**. The **Township Factor** has been set at **1.0850** (means your property's

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assessed value is being multiplied by 1.10850 to bring its average assessment level in line with a legally mandated standard. This process is known as equalization.)

General/Emergency Assistance Report (Record)

The **July 2025** Client/Public/Senior Citizen Report was provided with the agenda.

Treasurer's Report and Authorization and Transfers of Town Fund and Relief Fund Bills

The Treasurer's Report for **July 2025** was presented and placed on record. The Township Board audited the **July 2025** bills and claims, which were also placed on record. Sowards moved, and Sallows-Hines seconded, to authorize payment of the **Town Fund and Relief Fund bills and transfers** in the amount of **\$57,139.80**. Roll call vote. 5-Ayes Elsberg, Shirk, Hebbeln, Sowards and Sallows-Hines. 0-Nays. Motion carried.

Unfinished Business

New Business

Audit with Odoni - Shirk reported that the four-year audit with Odoni has not yet been received. She has contacted the auditor three times, and he indicated that he is currently working on two other audits but anticipated completing the South Rock Island Township audit in time for the August meeting. Shirk reminded the Board that a contract is in place with Odoni and clarified that, although the audit is delayed, it does not require Board acknowledgement/approval until the September meeting. She also noted that Odoni is reportedly behind on audits for both Blackhawk and Rock Island Townships. Due to these delays, the Board briefly discussed exploring alternative firms and Shirk may look into other potential providers for future audit services.

Donation Request

Campaign for Excellence - \$175 - \$5,000 Sponsorship Requested – Sowards moved, and Elsberg seconded, to donate **\$1,000** to support the Rock Island High School **Campaign for Excellence** through a "Partner" tier sponsorship for the 2025–2026 school year. Roll call vote: Ayes – Shirk, Elsberg, Hebbeln, Sowards, Sallows-Hines; Nays – None. Motion carried.

Rock Island Futbol Club - \$825 Requested - Elsberg moved, and Sallows-Hines seconded, to donate **\$825** to the **Rock Island Futbol Club** to sponsor 11 children at \$75 each. Roll call vote: Ayes – Shirk, Elsberg, Hebbeln, Sowards, Sallows-Hines; Nays – None. Motion carried. **Note:** This item was previously discussed at the July 28, 2025, Board meeting, where the Board supported a contribution of up to \$825 and encouraged collaboration with Rock Island Township to co-sponsor an additional 11 children. Supervisor Shirk had received guidance at that time to utilize her discretionary spending authority. Upon receipt of today's formal request for sponsorship, Shirk again sought an official motion from the Board, which reaffirmed support for the \$825 contribution.

Knights of Columbus Annual Civic Award - – Elsberg moved, and Sowards seconded, to donate **\$200 (4 @\$25 & 2 @ \$50)** in(Rock Island) gift cards to the **Rock Island Knights of Columbus** in support of their **46th Annual Civic Awards**, honoring Police Officer Drake Schroeder and Firefighter Joel Wilford. Roll call vote: Ayes – Shirk, Elsberg, Hebbeln, Sowards, Sallows-Hines; Nays – None. Motion carried.

Soles for Children, September 21, 2025 MLK, \$1,680 requested - Sallows-Hines moved, and Hebbeln seconded, to donate **\$1,680** to **Soles for Children** in support of their September 21, 2025, event at MLK. The donation will assist with the purchase of coats, shoes, mittens, hats, free haircuts, and food for 12 children. Roll call vote: Ayes – Shirk, Elsberg, Hebbeln, Sowards, Sallows-Hines; Nays – None. Motion carried.

Public Comments

No public comments were noted.

Adjournment

Elsberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:12 PM, and the motion was seconded by Sowards. Motion carried.

Next Meeting

The next South Rock Island Township Board meeting is scheduled for **Monday, September 29, 2025, at 4:00 PM**.

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THIS IS A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING APPROVED
BY THE SOUTH ROCK ISLAND TOWNSHIP BOARD ON JUNE 30, 2025.

Seal—>

Township Clerk

9.29.25
Date