



RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

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River Forest Township Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Tuesday, March 19, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, at 6:00 PM. This was a meeting held both in person and electronically by Zoom.

Roll Call:

- Supervisor Sloan, Trustees: Helene Connolly, Deana Herrman, Keith Strom, and Karen Taubman.
 - Trustee Deana Herrman had an excused absence.
- Also present: Clerk John Becvar, Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly, Mental Health Coordinator Sarah Schwarting, Assessor Pam Kende and Township Attorney Pat Deady.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Participation and Comments:

- There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

- A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2024 regular meeting.
 - The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Assessor

- March has been extremely busy with exemptions and appeals. The Cook County Assessor changed the way in which residents apply for exemptions. Assessor Kende's team has helped many Homeowners and seniors get either their prime Senior and /or Senior Freeze exemption. It appears the new filing time for exemptions going forward will be March and April as opposed to January.
- The Assessor uploaded final numbers from the Board of Review from the 2023 appeal period.
- Assessor Kende attended CCTAA meetings both in person and via Zoom.
- Supervisor Sloan thanked the Assessor's team for all the work they did helping residents.

Mental Health Services (MHS)

- *Positive Youth Development* (PYD) is being restructured given a shift in staffing. PYD will focus on prevention activities.
- The *Opioid Task Force* has reconvened beginning March 12 with monthly meetings.
- *Parent University* will take place April 10 from 6-8:30pm at OPRF High School. The keynote speaker is Dr. Devorah Heitner talking about Social Media. There will also be two workshop sessions about teens for parents.
- Both *Hephzibah* and *Infant Welfare Society* are looking for new executive directors.
- Supervisor Sloan and Administrator Schwarting attended the UCP *Seguin Big Event* with representatives from Oak Park Township who received an award.
- The Township co-sponsored another I/DD resource event with the community mental health board on March 12 via zoom.
- Supervisor Sloan thanked Administrator Schwarting for her work with the Mental Health Committee (MHC) to finalize the committee's FY2025 budget recommendations. The Board will discuss those on April 9 as we are waiting for some key info from an agency.

General Assistance (GA)

- Supervisor Sloan reported our GA client received notification of SSI, so that client goes off GA and the Township will be reimbursed for the GA payments.
- A new GA client has been approved as well as another EA grant.

Senior Outreach Coordinator

- Coordinator Kelly is working on promoting the HomeSharing Pilot in The Wednesday Journal Housing/Homes Section.
- It appears there will not be a *Celebrating Senior Week* in May. There are not enough resources/volunteers to step up to organize the week.
- River Forest Fire Department reached out about doing a program at The Sheridan. Coordinator Kelly reached out to The Sheridan and Elevate Physical Therapy to do a presentation about HomeSafety. The Township will also provide In-Case-of-Emergency (ICE) packets.
- Coordinator Kelly hopes to host an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) tour in partnership with AWN.
- *Coffee Mondays* have been scheduled through June (with no Coffee Monday in July). *Coffee Monday* and Celebrating Seniors All Year Long (CSAYL) information through July will be distributed at the Township office, RFCC, Village Hall and key buildings in the community. March's *Coffee Monday* presenter was Mario Porras from Triton's RSVP Program.
- Mahjong is going strong with 4 tables. The mahjong group is getting together for other activities (arts and crafts at RF Library, exercise programs, a dancing with the stars show at Brookfield HS) outside Mahjong and to help each other when one is in need. One suggestion is to have a comparable activity for older gentlemen.

Youth and Family Services (YFS)

- The YFS Committee voted on funding the joint programs that will be reviewed later.
- There are still two openings on the Youth & Family Services Committee. We continue to search for River Forest residents who would like to get involved on this committee.

Supervisor's Report

- Supervisor Sloan went to the Seguin Gala with Administrator Schwarting..
- Supervisor Sloan and Clerk Becvar met with Oak Park Township Manager Evan Michel to review the IGA's.
- The Township's outsourced bookkeeper, Jane Brennan, is retiring in May after 35 years with the RFCC (25 years working with the Township). The RFCC hired Annette Kessel to replace Jane. Annette recently retired as the Business Office Manager from DePaul University.
- This is the formal announcement of Supervisor Sloan's retirement, effective May 21 after 11 years as Supervisor and 3 years as Clerk. This Board will vote to accept the resignation at the May 21 meeting. Sloan said leaving the Township is bittersweet, as she loves all that she does here, as well as the people with whom she has been privileged to serve and to work. She added:
 - We have built something wonderful over the last 11 years, and I want that momentum to continue. As you know, John Becvar has done an exemplary job as Clerk over the last several months, and I believe he will continue to do so as Supervisor starting May 22. So also at the May 21 meeting, John will resign and I am asking the Board to appoint him as the next Township Supervisor. We also hope to be appointing and swearing in a new Clerk at that time, so if you know of anyone who might be interested in the Clerk position, please let us know.

Approval of Bills

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Strom to approve River Forest Township operating fund bills as of March 31, 2024 in the amount of \$116,477.80 and General Assistance bills as of March 31, 2024 in the amount of \$3450.00.
 - Roll was called. Ayes: Supervisor Sloan and Trustees Connolly, Strom and Taubman. Nays: None. Absent: Herrman. The motion passed.

Unfinished Business

- Collaboration Committee update from Trustee Taubman from the 2/28/2024 meeting
 - RF Public Library is starting to work with architects and designers on the new space. The Library Foundation event was in late February with over 60 attendees.
 - District 90 - The Lincoln PTO generously donated \$80K to fund the Park Avenue playground. The PTO is working with the building engineers and principal to start plans.
 - District 200 - Bids will come in during March for Project II budgeted at \$102M. There were two lockdowns at OPRF HS on February 14 but there was not a threat.
 - The next Collaboration Committee meeting is Wednesday April 24 at 7pm at TBD location.
- Banking Update
 - Supervisor Sloan gathered the ACH payee information for all of our payees and our bookkeeper is entering that into Quickbooks. Byline is completing the paperwork for ACH and Positive Pay to protect payments starting in the new fiscal year.

- The CD at Forest Park Bank has been closed and deposited at Byline Bank. The Township accounts will be at Byline Bank; RFCCA and GA accounts will be at 5/3 Bank.
- Efficiency Report
 - The Ad Hoc Decennial Committee met for the third time and approved the Efficiency Report on March 11, 2024.
 - Supervisor Sloan extended the Township's thanks to Trustee Herrman for her work with grad student Kennedi Glover to provide the foundation of our report...to our resident committee members John Phelan, Melinda Peterson and Barb Hickey...and to Clerk John Becvar who was instrumental in assembling the overall report.
 - Trustee Strom moved and Trustee Taubman seconded a motion to approve the final [River Forest Township Decennial Efficiency Report](#)
 - Roll was called. Ayes: Supervisor Sloan and Trustees Connolly, Strom and Taubman. Nays: None. Absent: Herrman. The motion passed.
 - Trustee Strom moved and Trustee Taubman seconded a motion to approve [March 11, 2024 Efficiency Report Committee minutes](#).
 - The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

New Business

- Trustee Strom moved and Trustee Connolly seconded a motion to approve the [April 9, 2024 Annual Township Meeting Agenda](#) that will be published in Wednesday Journal
 - The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.
- Trustee Connolly moved and Trustee Strom seconded a motion to approve 2024-2026 IGAs with Oak Park Township for:
 - [General Assistance/Emergency Assistance](#)
 - [Senior Services](#)
 - [Youth and Family Services](#)
 - [Home Repair Program](#)
 - Roll was called. Ayes: Supervisor Sloan and Trustees Connolly, Strom and Taubman. Nays: None. Absent: Herrman. The motion passed.
- Supervisor Sloan discussed the status of the FY2025 funding recommendations from the Mental Health Committee (MHC) and said they would be voted on in April.
- Trustee Strom moved and Trustee Connolly seconded a motion to approve FY2025 funding recommendations, with a 3.4% increase for administration, totaling \$143,264 from Township Senior Services
 - Roll was called. Ayes: Supervisor Sloan and Trustees Connolly, Strom and Taubman. Nays: None. Absent: Herrman. The motion passed.
- Trustee Strom moved and Trustee Connolly seconded a motion to approve FY2025 funding totaling \$111,382 for Youth & Family Services Budget including fully funding I-Search's \$9000 request; Connections \$4909 request; and \$1500 grant from Holiday Food Gift Basket.
 - Roll was called. Ayes: Supervisor Sloan and Trustees Connolly, Strom and Taubman. Nays: None. Absent: Herrman. The motion passed.
- Trustee Strom moved and Trustee Connolly seconded a motion to approve a \$5,000 FY2025 grant to River Forest Public Library for joint Township/Library senior programs (programs are shared 50/50 with the RFPL).

- Roll was called. Ayes: Supervisor Sloan and Trustees Connolly, Strom and Taubman. Nays: None. Absent: Herrman. The motion passed.
- Supervisor Sloan reminded everyone to complete their Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) by May 1 for both RFT and RFCCA.
- Trustee Strom moved and Trustee Connolly seconded a motion to add to the May 21 Board meeting agenda to accept the resignation of Supervisor Carla Sloan; accept resignation of Clerk John Becvar; appoint Clerk John Becvar to the Supervisor position; and replace the Township Clerk position, effective May 21, 2024.
 - The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Announcement of the Upcoming Meetings

- The Annual Town Meeting for the River Forest Township will be Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 6:00 PM at 8020 Madison St., Room 202, River Forest.
- The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township Board will be on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 following the 6:00 PM Annual Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 PM. All were in favor and the motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
John Becvar, Clerk