



RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

Caring | Connection | Community

## **River Forest Township Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Tuesday, November 14, 2023**

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, at 6:10 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.
- Also present: Assessor Pam Kende, Clerk John Becvar, Mental Health Services Administrator Sarah Schwarting, Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly, and Website Project Manager Kathy Elliott.
- Sergeant Ben Ransom and his family and former Township Prevention Services Manager Kelly O'Connor also attended.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **Public Participation:**

- Sergeant Ben Ransom (and his family) and former Township Prevention Services Manager Kelly O'Connor were present.

### **Proclamations**

- Supervisor Sloan presented a proclamation honoring former Community Resource Sergeant Ben Ransom.
- Supervisor Sloan presented a proclamation honoring former Township Prevention Services Manager Kelly O'Connor.

### **Approval of Minutes**

- A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2023 regular meeting.
  - The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.
- Supervisor Sloan explained we completed the semi-annual review of Executive (Closed) Session Minutes.
- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Traubum to convert the minutes of the Executive (Closed) Session of May 21, 2017.
  - The minutes were converted unanimously by voice vote.

## Assessor

- Assessor Kende stated:
  - Board of Review 2023 Assessment Appeal period closed October 17, 2023.
  - The tax bills were mailed at the beginning of November and are available online. 2nd Installment Property Tax Bills are due December 1, 2023. The Assessor's office is assisting residents in getting corrected tax bills due to missing exemptions and sent out a Constant Contact notification regarding tax bills.
  - She informed us that everyone can also prepay 2023 first installments online.
  - Assessor Kende's office processed the Certificate of Errors and attended a "Train the Trainer" event for Certificate of Error processing. She also attended the CCTA meeting.
- Supervisor Sloan thanked the Assessor's team for their work.

## Mental Health Services

- Mental Health Administrator Schwarting said:
  - All the agency site visits are done. Quarter 2 checks will be going out to the agencies shortly.
  - Parent University is November 15, 2023.
  - The Consortium schedule will be the same as last year – Jan, Apr, July and October 2024.
  - The Township will be re-joining the Opioid Task Force meetings.
  - The Mental Health Committee (MHC) is looking into winter volunteer opportunities at New Moms. They are trying to set up a QPR suicide prevention training for the mental health committee to attend January 13, and will be touring the new Seguin sensory machine when it is operating.
  - The MHC will again be partnering with the River Forest Police and Fire Departments to pass out packets to displaced people.
  - Positive Youth Development (+PYD) will resume meeting, at least until the grant runs out in September, at which time it will be decided how +PYD will continue.
  - Administrator Schwarting attended the Township Officials of Illinois (TOI) conference in Springfield.
  - Funding applications will be sent out to the agencies on November 16 with a return date of December 20 for committee review on December 28.
- Supervisor Sloan added:
  - The mental health resource guide is at the printer to mail to all residents and businesses in River Forest, with extras for resource fairs. She complimented the designer, Beth Nagy, who was easy to work with.
  - There is still an opening on the MHC so if anyone knows anyone, please contact [supervisor@RiverForestTownship.org](mailto:supervisor@RiverForestTownship.org). We put the word out on the Village e-news and our new website.
  - The Drug Free Communities Grant is ending in 2024 and it is uncertain if Township Prevention Services will re-apply for year 6-10 funding by the February 2024 application deadline.

## General Assistance (GA)

- Supervisor Sloan reported we continue to have one (1) GA client. Sloan added the Township does not have any new Emergency Assistance (EA) grants beyond the two given this year.

### **Senior Outreach Coordinator**

- Senior Outreach Coordinator Kelly reported:
  - The Super Senior Event with the Secretary of State DMV had a good turnout.
  - Cindy Lyons Health Fair at Forest Park Mohr Center also had a great turn out; the Township measuring tape was a popular give away item.
  - Coordinator Kelly helped at the Township Senior Services Halloween Party and complemented Laura Valcour with doing a great job with programming.
  - Zumba Gold is still taking place at Oak Park Township Dining Room with Cynthia Daniel; however no River Forest residents are attending.
  - A mailing on senior services to all residents is targeted for early January 2024.
  - Kelly has put together a tentative schedule for Planned Coffee Mondays through May 2024. Sergeant Ben Ransom and Officer Megan Drake from RF Police Department spoke about Fraud and Scams at the November Coffee Monday.
  - Betsy met with Sarah White from Senior Home Sharing in Lombard to learn about their programming, see how we can share information, and determine if there is any room for collaboration.

### **Youth and Family Services**

- Trustee Herrman reported
  - She gave feedback on the RFP that Oak Park Township Youth & Family Services (YFS) is sending out soon.
  - Contractor night will be January 10, 2024 with grant applications due January 17.
  - Girls on the Rise will be attending Parent University on November 15.
  - D97 will now have a pilot Girls on the Rise program in an elementary school, to mirror River Forest.
  - Migrants were moved from Austin to Oak Park by Oak Park residents, and YFS helped assist.
  - YFS voted to limit grants to \$15,000 and have one inter-generational grant (also at \$15,000).
- Supervisor Sloan explained what happened with the 102 asylum seeking migrants coming to Oak Park last month. She is going to reach out to the Village of River Forest to discuss the local situation.. There is little capacity in River Forest to house migrants. Supervisor Sloan also reminded everyone that there are now two openings on the YFS Committee, as member Jim Norman recently resigned due to heavy work obligations.

### **Supervisor's Report**

- Supervisor Sloan reported she, Clerk Becvar and Administrator Schwarting attended the Township Officials of Illinois (TOI) Conference in Springfield November 12-14. It was well attended with 600 officials. The Chair of the Illinois House County/Township Committee received an award and is favorable to Townships. Sloan mentioned Wendell Cox was a speaker and is doing another efficiency report on Illinois Townships that will be out in 1Q '24.

### **Approval of Bills**

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Hermann to approve River Forest Township operating fund bills as of November 30, 2023 in the amount of \$81,250.57.
  - Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Herrman, Strom and Taubman. Nays: none. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Unfinished Business**

- Website Project Manager Kathy Elliot reported the new River Forest Township website ([www.riverforesttownship.org](http://www.riverforesttownship.org)) is live. Supervisor Sloan indicated Kathy did a fabulous job. We are in a soft launch but Project Manager Elliot noted Constant Contact sign-ups have increased. She is going to update some photos and correct some links.
  - The Township is still using Venacity for the time being for domain services.
- Collaboration Sub-Committee update - Trustee Karen Taubman attended the Collaboration Committee meeting on November 8 and reported hearing from:
  - River Forest Park District (Mike Grant)
    - Keystone Park is almost done. Design for Constitution Park is complete. It is a \$1.5 million project; they have applied for a State of Illinois grant to assist.
    - There is some discussion of potential closing of Keystone Avenue between Lake & Hawthorne to expand the usability of Keyston Park..
  - D90 Schools (Stacey Williams)
    - Presented a report card last night at a meeting from IL State Board of Education. Lincoln and Willard are considered exemplary, and Roosevelt Commendable (almost exemplary).
    - Schools are undergoing a curriculum review; a town hall meeting will be held on December 5 th at Roosevelt Middle School.
    - Issued \$4.5 million in bonds; previous bonds were retired.
    - Principal search is underway for Roosevelt Middle School.
  - Rez Vasquez (Village of River Forest)
    - Northwest River Forest traffic issue remains a divided issue among residents and the board as well; the traffic and safety commission reviewed as did outside consultants. The outcome was to do a “Y” on Harlem. Potential additional changes are pending.
    - The Lake & Lathrop deal is dead; the bank has taken over the property. It will likely be an extended time before any movement. The Village is keeping all options open.
  - Tim Brandhorst (D200 OPRF High School)
    - The track and field project is almost complete; on time, and possibly under budget.
    - They are starting to accept bids and plan to break ground in June for the \$102 Million building project. This is part two of the 5 parts for Reimagine OPRF. Reimagine OPRF Foundation projects to donate \$20M.
      - Supervisor Sloan reported Reimagine ORPF is interested in increasing communications to seniors (who pay taxes and don’t have kids in high school) and will have a presentation in January.
    - Moms Demand Action is asking for notification on safe guns, asking for support.
  - Ann Berens (RF Library)

- Air handler project has caused a lot of issues, but they believe it's going in the right direction.
  - The next goal is to finish and furnish in the Children's area, for a community space. They received a \$50K grant for an ADA compliant bathroom.
- Efficiency Report Committee update
  - Supervisor Sloan indicated she conducted one-on-one sessions with the three residents on the Committee and asked for ideas on how to improve things and do better. The next Committee meeting will be in 1Q'24.

## New Business

- Discuss 2023 Levy draft notice that will be published in the Wednesday Journal on November 29, 2023 - 14 days before the meeting. John, don't know that we have to include the text. Can just archive the notice with the minutes.
  - A public hearing to approve a proposed property tax levy for River Forest Township for 2023 will be held on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 6:00 PM at the River Forest Civic Center Authority Building, 8020 Madison Street, River Forest, Illinois.
  - The corporate and special purpose property taxes extended or abated for 2022 were \$688,907 for the Town Fund and \$11,578 for General Assistance. The proposed corporate and special purpose property taxes to be levied for 2023 are \$716,463 for the Town Fund and \$10,000 for General Assistance. This represents a 4.0 (%) percentage increase over the previous year for the Town Fund and a 13.6 (%) percentage decrease over the previous year for the General Assistance Fund.
- Insurance Renewal. The building insurance, paid for by RFCC, has increased from \$13,143 to \$14,432, or +9.8%. All other insurance, paid for by RFT, has increased from \$8,362 to \$9,167, or +9.6%. Alliant provided the following explanation for the increases: ICRMT had provided a higher renewal indication, but Alliant was able to push for lower renewal premiums. At 10%, the renewal is in line with current market conditions and is at the low end of renewal increases we are seeing, anywhere from 10% to 35%.
  - A motion was made by Strom and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve Insurance renewal in the amount of \$23,599 for the period December 1, 2023 - December 1, 2024 to cover liability, property and worker's comp for River Forest Township and River Forest Community Center.
    - Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Herrman, Strom and Taubman. Nays: none. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Hermann to approve 2024 Board Meeting dates that will be published in January. That is:

Tuesday, January 16, 2024  
 Tuesday, February 13, 2024  
 Tuesday, March 19, 2024  
 Tuesday, April 9, 2024 (*also Annual Meeting*)  
 Tuesday, May 21, 2024  
 Tuesday, June 18, 2024  
 July 16, 2024  
 August 20, 2024  
 September 17, 2024  
 October 15, 2024  
 November 19, 2024

December 10, 2024

- o The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Hermann to approve the Remote Meeting Participation Policy.
  - o The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Hermann to approve the Whistleblower Protection Policy.
  - o The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Hermann to approve the Ethics Ordinance.
  - o Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Herrman, Strom and Taubman. Nays: none. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Hermann to approve the Civility Pledge.
  - o The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- Supervisor Sloan discussed that Clerk Becvar has been working on a draft of the Township Policy Handbook that will be shared in December that addresses how the Township plans to comply with the Paid Leave for All Act effective January 1, 2024.

### **Announcement of the Next Regular Monthly Meeting**

- The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township will be on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 6PM.

### **Executive Session**

- A motion was made to approve entering into Executive Session to approve the Executive Session minutes of August 17, 2021 by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Hermann.
  - o The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the session started at 7:51 PM.
  - o A motion was then made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Hermann to approve the Executive Session minutes of August 17, 2021.
    - Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Herrman, Strom and Taubman. Nays: none. The motion passed unanimously.
  - o Being no other business, the Executive Session ended at 7:52 PM.

A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Strom to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 PM. All were in favor and the motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Becvar, Clerk