

RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, March 21, 2023 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, at 6:07PM. This was a meeting held both in person and electronically by Zoom.

Roll called: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees: Keith Strom, Helen Connolly, and Deana Herrman. Also present: Clerk Vanessa Druckman, Assessor Pam Kende, RFCC executive director Dick Chappell, Mental Health Services Administrator Sarah Schwarting, and Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly.

Absent: Karen Taubman (excused).

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Participation: None.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2023 regular meeting.

Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Strom, and Herrman. Nays: none. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Assessor

Pamela Kende

- Assessor Kende answered phone calls regarding the 1st installment tax bill, which is 55% of last year's tax bill. No exemptions are taken into account on the 1st installment. .
- Assessor Kende helped taxpayers pay their tax bills on-line using their checkbook.
- Assessor Kende reported that homeowners asked for the total amount of property tax they paid in 2021 to be able to do their federal income tax.
- Assessor Kende said many residents reached out to her office because they were accustomed to receiving their exemption forms in January or February. They were concerned about applying for their exemptions. Assessor Kende informed residents in many outlets that 2020 exemption(s) will auto renew for 2021, and that residents should receive a card in the mail of the exemption(s) that are being auto renewed sometime in March.

- Assessor Kende reported that new residents, first time Senior or Senior Freeze are now able to apply for their 2021 exemptions on-line as the Cook County Assessor went live with a new application process. Her office has helped many residents with this new process. Her office has had many seniors visit in person.
- Assessor Kende fielded calls regarding Cook County Appeal periods.
- Assessor Kende submitted an annual budget.
- Assessor Kende said that residents can now sign up for the Assessor's Constant Contact on our website page.
- Assessor Kende sent out a press releases to newspaper, Village e-newsletter, and the Township website regarding exemptions and 1st installment tax bills.
- Assessor Kende reported that she has been informed by the Cook County Assessor that they believe that the 2nd installment tax bill may come out as late as December.
- Assessor Kende attended CCTAA and Cook County Assessor zoom meetings.

Senior Outreach Coordinator

Betsy Kelly

- Betsy reported that Exit Strategy in Forest Park is having a DJ on March 22 that will play music based on the age of the crowd. She is trying to spread the word to seniors for a nice night out.
- Betsy said that she will now publish Community Connect every 2nd and 4th Friday, and the RF Email will continue to come out at the beginning of each month.
- Betsy planned most Celebrating Senior Week Events and is reaching out to seniors to be recognized.
- Betsy continues to spread the word about home sharing by distributing flyers to the 19th Century Club, and the OP Library. She plans to do a mailing to all River Forest residents in April once our website is updated.
- Betsy explained that the Senior Services Mailing will talk about RF Township Senior Services, our services in collaboration with OP Township Senior Services as well as our programming with the library and other partners.
- Betsy said that Assessor Kende Pam gave her PIN numbers for RF Residents and Older Adults so that she can determine which condo buildings have a lot of older adults living in them for outreach, and identify where older adult homeowners live to reach out to them to promote home sharing and other senior programs.

- Betsy attended a Student Entrepreneurial Class that was developing different ideas to help older adults. Gil Herman from AWN is a mentor in this class.
- Betsy and Supervisor Sloan attended a talk at the 19th Century club about “Mastering Senior Life.”
- Betsy attended a facilitated Asset Mapping Event with AWN at the Main OP Library on March 14.
- Betsy attended the Legislative Breakfast in Maywood in support of Caregiver Support bills. She spoke briefly with Mayor Nathaniel George Booker and will reach out to Lynette Holmes, Executive Director of Maywood Park District.
- Betsy attended the Generations United’s Intergenerational Housing Network Group meeting and made suggestions for policy changes around housing.
- Betsy attended Julie Bach’s Thrive Talk: Aging Fearlessly, which was sponsored by RF Township.
- Betsy continues to help deliver meals to OP Arms and the YMCA when needed.
- Supervisor Sloan added that Margie Rudnik has served on the Senior Services Committee for a number of years and is resigning. She has been a terrific volunteer and was active in starting the Great Neighbors Program and did a lot of work for Celebrating Seniors. We thank Margie for her service and will definitely miss her. We have at least one RF resident who is interested in the committee, so it should not be difficult to fill the vacancy.

Mental Health Services

Sarah Schwarting

- Sarah distributed a new orientation packet to the MHC, and it is a combination of new materials, and old materials. New materials were created by a committee member, Kristin, as well as Sarah and Supervisor Sloan.
- Sarah said The Mental health committee wrapped up all site visits, however two were a little late so the committee will be voting on funding on April 4th.
- Sarah reported that agencies are on board with conducting site visits again in the fall, ahead of their funding application submission deadline.
- Sarah stated that Quarter 3 checks were mailed, and we are getting ready to compile the quarter 4 data. Supervisor Sloan added that she and Sarah continue to work with agencies who look like they will be underspending or overspending this fiscal year.
- Sarah said that Parent University is coming together and we just met and planned out who was doing what the night of the event on April 19. Supervisor Sloan added that major marketing has happened with D90, D97, D200, Fenwick, Trinity and the private schools in RF and OP as well as Facebook groups. Matt Baron is also working on PR about the event to place it in local media.

- Sarah reported that the HUB team is still trying to create an “off ramp” strategy. Supervisor Sloan added that we conducted further surveys with clients who use the HUB, to determine what would happen if we ramped down the HUB when the contract with Find Help ends in September. Survey results further confirm that the impact will be low, and agencies have other alternatives they can use.
- Sarah announced that the Mental Health Committee now has a full body of 9 members.
- Sarah said that the MHC received Positive Youth Development’s marijuana prevention materials. She added that Positive Youth Development will also be coming out with summer programming and after school programming that will be ready in the Fall.
- Sarah reported that River Forest resident Beth Nagy will be designing the resource guide. Sarah has compiled new resources for the guide. Supervisor Sloan added that Sarah has done a great job pulling all the resources together.
- Sarah said that NAMI opened the Loft at 8 Corners, a teen mental health space in Brookfield based on the “Living Room” model. Teens are encouraged to come with a parent, however the counselors can work with teens who come without a parent. Staff is present to work with the parent in one room and the teen in another to provide “wrap around” support.
- Supervisor Sloan said that Cathaleen Roach reports that LOSS has 7 brand new families since LOSS started up again in late fall. This is in addition to the returning participants. While 7 recent suicides is a tragic number, LOSS is extremely grateful that we make space available for them in near west suburbs, and families are fortunate that the LOSS resource is there for them.
- Supervisor Sloan said that Thrive ended the winter session for Sibshops and is already starting the spring session this Saturday. They have 10 children attending, which is a wonderful number, so they want to keep the momentum.
- Supervisor Sloan attended the March MHC meeting, and supported Sarah’s efforts to steer the committee through the funding process. New member Phil Buta attended; he will be a good asset to the committee.

General Assistance

Carla Sloan

- Supervisory Sloan reported that the River Forest Township currently has one GA client. She explained that the use of GA funds is restricted and fairly inflexible. Two bills, supported by TOI supervisors, have gone from committee to the floor, SB1430 in the Illinois Senate and HB3424 in the Illinois house, to expand the flexibility for using GA funds. Supervisor Sloan has reached out to Speaker Welch and Senator Harmon to obtain their support for these bills and has also contacted all Supervisors in Cook County to support the bills and work with their legislators.

Youth and Family Services

Carla Sloan and Trustee Herrman

- Supervisor Sloan reported that Girls on the Rise started at Willard on March 13.
- Trustee Herrman said that Megan Traficano is on an Alternative Call for Response Task Force.
- Trustee Herrman reported that there is now a wait list for Youth Engagement Program specialists.
- Trustee Herrman reported that the YFSC voted no on the Themani Christian grant proposal.
- Trustee Herrman reported that the Wonder Works Children's Museum grant proposal was reviewed and the committee recommended funding it partially: \$3,900 out of \$10,000.
- Supervisor Sloan stated that she spoke to Chief O'Shea regarding the increasing costs of 24-hour crisis response for the police, which is currently contracted between the RF Police Department and Thrive Counseling Center. Discussion ensued.

Supervisor's Report

Carla Sloan

- Supervisor Sloan announced that the TOCC Annual Spring Conference is Thursday, June 22, in-person, NOT at the William Tell in Countryside. Supervisor Sloan is hoping many elected officials and staff can attend.

Approval of Bills

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Herrman to approve River Forest Township operating fund bills as of March 31, 2023 in the amount of \$55,860.06.

Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Strom, Connolly, Herrman, and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- Vanessa Druckman provided an update of the website redesign. She submitted Youth Services copy and photographs last week to Hutchinson Associates to create the pages. She created a document to collect feedback from trustees and other stakeholders. She sent out the website link. She is waiting for Hutchinson Associates to give me access to begin editing each page of the website.

- Trustee Taubman submitted highlights from the Collaboration Sub-committee meeting in writing as she was not in attendance:
 - D200 is considering a Second part of Reimagine OPRF. It primarily involves athletics and pool space. The area of consideration is west of the field house. Construction costs are up about 30% from the original estimate, close to \$100m. The renovations/addition would gain around 70,000 sf of space. Tours are available for the plans for Part 2, and for Part 1.
 - D90 held a vote for full day kindergarten passed at last night's board meeting. The vote was unanimous. There is no fee for full time kindergarten, and it will begin in Fall 2023. Trustee Barb Hickey will be off the board in May, as she is not running again.
 - The RF Public Library reported that the Strategic Plan is complete, and will be on the website soon. Karen Stierwalt is stepping down from the library board.

New Business

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Strom to approve agenda for the 2023 Annual Town Meeting.

All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.
- Supervisor Sloan announced that Emergency Assistance will be offered starting April 3 for River Forest and will be administered by April Dugal. No vote is necessary as this is a discretionary supervisor action. Discussion ensued.
- A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve The Proclamation in support of Older Americans month 2023.

All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.
- Supervisor Sloan provided an update about the preparation for the efficiency study. Trustee Herrman has graduate students who are interested in working on the project, beginning in August.
- Supervisor Sloan stated that she is researching how to be in compliance with the new Paid Leave for All Workers Illinois legislation that will take effect in 2024.
- A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve FY2024 funding for senior programs at the River Forest Public Library in the amount of \$4,175.

Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Strom, Connolly, Herrman, and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

- Supervisor Sloan stated that she met with Ben Ransom and Kim Wojack from ISearch to better understand the impact on their program of potential reduced funding. Last year ISearch received a \$6,000 grant. The YSC is proposing a \$3,000 grant this year. Discussion ensued.
- Supervisor Sloan reminded everyone in attendance that Statements of Economic Interest are due.

Announcement of the Next Regular Monthly Meeting

The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township will be on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 immediately following the Annual Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Strom to adjourn the meeting at 7:40PM. All were in favor and the motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Druckman, Clerk