

## **RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP**

### **Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, May 16, 2023**

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, at 6:01PM. This was a meeting held both in person and electronically by Zoom.

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

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Public Participation:** John Becvar.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Strom to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2023 regular meeting.

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

#### **Assessor**

**Kathy Elliott**

- Assessor Kende stated that April was a busy month with exemptions as the Cook County Assessor finally rolled out the new exemption forms. Over 25 residents have had appointments in the assessor office for exemption applications.
- Assessor Kende said that River Forest opened for assessment appeals on April 27<sup>th</sup> with the Cook County Assessor and will close on May 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Assessor Kende reported her office is having a community outreach meeting on Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6 pm during which the Cook County Assessor's staff will be giving a presentation.
- Assessor Kende sent out press releases to the Village e-newsletter and updated the Township website with lots of new information, including how to request an appeal packet.

- Assessor Kende said her office has created hundreds of appeal packets. In the last week, her office has had over 350 requests for appeal packets. Each packet must be done on an individual basis.
- Assessor Kende said that her staff has created a google form on the River Forest Township website to request an appeal packet. This will significantly streamline the appeals process. The request form captures necessary contact info for the assessor's office, facilitating the creation of an appeal packet. The public has been alerted about this new form from an outgoing message on the assessor phone line and an auto reply on the assessor email. This has been a great time saver for all, as the mean residential increase was 34%; we have never seen such a large increase in property value or request.
- Assessor Kende reported that her office is working extra hours to assist residents during this time.
- Assessor Kende mentioned that when Oak Park Township opened for their appeal period, prior to River Forest Township being open, Deputy Clerk Kathy Elliott gave a helping hand at the Oak Park Township Assessor's office.

## **Mental Health Services**

**Sarah Schwarting**

- Sarah said she shared the tentative approval of grant requests with all agencies. All appreciated the grant awards.
- Sarah reported that Jean Meister is stepping down at the end of June as a Mental Health Committee (MHC) member, and Sarah will begin looking for her replacement. We thank Jean for her many years of service and contributions to the MHC. Committee meetings resume in the fall.
- Sarah said that the Positive Youth Development committee has reviewed the movie 'Screenagers' and will be meeting on Thursday to discuss whether it will be shown to the community.
- Sarah said that Parent University will have a kickoff meeting on August 28. They held a debrief meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup>. Supervisor Sloan added that 100 people attended Parent U. Middle schools were also invited and have asked for more relevant content for the next Parent University.
- Sarah said the HUB began its sunset process on May 4.
- Sarah reported that we had Township representation at the CSS gala, Thrive gala, Sarah's Inn Together We Inspire breakfast, and the Celebrating Seniors luncheon kickoff event
- Sarah said that Oak Park held a wellness fair at FCC fitness and many of our agencies were well represented.
- Sarah reported that Thrive was informed that an LGBTQ group would be beneficial to the community one group for adults, and one for kids as recommended by our MHC member Kathryn Schmahl.
- Sarah said that the MHC was informed about the upcoming D90 Pride Walk, and so far, two members have said they are going.

- Sarah reported that both the behavioral health and I/DD consortium met in April. Materials shared with the consortium members were also shared with MHC members.
- Sarah said that she and Trustee Herrman are participating in the access to care implementation meetings that have stated in response to the IPLAN process of last year.
- Sarah reported the following upcoming events:
  - ribbon cutting for the CRC in Oak Park on Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup> from 2-5pm
  - ribbon cutting for the Liv4Lali van, which will promote overdose and harm reduction resources, on May 24<sup>th</sup> from 10-11:30am
  - Oak Park Community Mental Health Board 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on May 24<sup>th</sup> from 5-7pm
- Sarah reported that all agencies have been asked to share River Forest Township's social media handles with their staffs.
- Supervisor Sloan reported that an affordable printer for the resource guide has been found, and we will be moving forward with that project.
- Supervisor Sloan spoke about the Oak Park Task Force on Crisis Response. Cheryl Potts, director of the OP CMHB, is co-chair of this task force, whose mission is to improve response to mental health crisis in Oak Park and to work within the new 988 system. The task force issued their recommendations and Sarah can send a copy to anyone who is interested.

#### **General Assistance**

**Carla Sloan**

- Supervisor Sloan reported that the River Forest Township currently has one GA client.

#### **Senior Outreach Coordinator**

**Betsy Kelly**

- Betsy reported that she is working on final preparation of Celebrating Seniors Week (CSW) events.
- Betsy dedicated much time and effort on the 60 over 60 nominations for Celebrating Seniors Week.
- Betsy said that the CSW opening luncheon event had a good turnout.
- Betsy reported that the Secretary of State Super Senior event was very successful. The Rules of the Road Class had 40 attendees and the Secretary of State representatives were busy with drivers' license renewals.
- Betsy said that Mahjong had some new players during CSW.
- Betsy reported that no one came to the HomeSharing Q&A.
- Betsy attended the evening Bocce Ball event; 8-10 people attended.
- Betsy attended "Only You Can Write Your Own Story" with Julie Bach at Dominican. Five older adults attended, and it was a good class about positive reminiscing. Starting in July, Julie Bach will have a Reminiscing Class led by 5 social work students.
- Betsy said that the Stand up to Stop Falls with Elevate Physical Therapy went well.
- Betsy met with Mike Carioscios to interview for the Township Senior Services

Committee as a rep from River Forest. He is willing to serve and will be a great addition. He will be at the June meeting.

- Betsy said that Pleshette Davis and Caroline Wilz will work in River Forest Township on Wednesdays starting in mid-late June, to help older adults with their benefits. Their preference is to schedule appointments in advance, but they will take walk-ins. They will also be trained as SHIP Counselors.
- Betsy is still putting together the monthly RF Senior Newsletter email, as well as the twice monthly Community Connect email. Betsy is pulling information together for summer News and Views as well as scheduling Coffee Mondays. Our last Coffee Monday speaker was from CUB (the Citizen Utility Board)
- Betsy attended a Fair Housing Event at OP Library with Oak Park Regional Housing Center.
- Betsy continues to volunteer to deliver meals to Mills Tower.
- Betsy is hoping to move forward soon with a mailing to seniors, to better inform them as to the many programs and services provided by the Township.

#### **Youth and Family Services (YFS)**

**Carla Sloan and Trustee Herrman**

- Trustee Herrman said the YFS committee is on recess until September.
- Trustee Herrman reported that the YFS will begin collecting backpacks and school supplies on 5/15, to be given to families in need at the YFS back-to-school event in August.
- Supervisor Sloan said that Girls on the Rise is enjoying good success at Willard with 6-8 participants. Groups continue to be successful and well attended at Roosevelt as well; 19 girls are participating there.
- Supervisor Sloan said the new Community Justice program is getting off the ground successfully. This addresses kids coming through the adjudication system and offers them the opportunity for community service. 10 of the 34 participants are from River Forest.

#### **Supervisor's Report**

**Carla Sloan**

- Supervisor Sloan announced that plans are solidified for the June 22 TOCC spring conference and thanks everyone who can attend. 6 educational seminars are planned. She added that the Township will pay for all registrations.
- Supervisor Sloan said that the Memorial Day parade will be on May 29 at 9 am and asked that everyone can attend if possible.

- Supervisor Sloan reported that she attended the administrator’s meeting with Matt Walsh as the new Village Administrator.

**Approval of Bills**

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve River Forest Township operating fund bills as of May 31, 2023 in the amount of \$63,235.76.

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

**Unfinished Business**

- Vanessa Druckman provided an update of the website redesign. She provided feedback to Hutchinson Associates about the Youth Services section and a few picture errors. She is beginning the final website edits using valuable feedback from trustees and other stakeholders. She asked Hutchinson Associates for clarification on outstanding questions regarding constant contact landing pages.
- Trustee Taubman said that the Collaboration Sub-Committee seems to be on hiatus.
- Supervisor Sloan stated that a discussion of the front-end services agreement will be tabled to the June meeting.
- Supervisor Sloan announced that she has found one resident to volunteer for the Efficiency Study Committee and needs one more. Trustee Herrman confirmed that she has a graduate student who will help create the report for the Township as an internship project.

**New Business**

- Supervisor Sloan gave an overview of the FY2024 budget.

	Receipts	Appropriation
Town	\$707,959	\$763,839
GA	\$9,000	\$22,700
RFCCA	\$72,000 (non-Levy)	\$72,760
Total	\$788,959	\$859,299

Discussion ensued. The budget vote will take place at the June 2023 meeting.

- As part of the approval process for the new Clerk, a motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Herrman to accept Vanessa Druckman's letter of resignation as River Forest Township clerk effective May 31, 2023.

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

- A motion was made by Trustee Herrman and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve John Becvar as the new River Forest Township clerk effective May 31, 2023.

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

- Clerk Druckman administered the Oath of Office to John Becvar, effective May 31, 2023.

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Strom to approve Mike Carioscio as a member of the Senior Services Committee.

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

- Supervisor Sloan announced that the August 15 Board of Trustees monthly meeting date will be moved to August 14.
- A motion was made by Trustee Herrman and seconded by Trustee Strom to approve the Township Proclamation in recognition of LGBTQIA+ and Pride Month.

All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

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

The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township will be on Tuesday, June 16, 2023 at 6PM.

A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Herrman to adjourn the meeting at 7:03PM. All were in favor and the motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Druckman, Clerk