



RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

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River Forest Township Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Tuesday, June 20, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the River Forest Township Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, June 20, 2023 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, at 6:03 PM. The meeting was held both in person and electronically by Zoom.

Roll Call:

- A quorum was physically present with Supervisor Sloan, Trustee Karen Taubman and Trustee Deana Herrman.
- Trustee Keith Strom participated via Zoom with a work-related physical absence.
- Trustee Helene Connolly was excused absent from the meeting.
- Also present: Clerk John Becvar, 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:

- Public was not in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

- A motion was made by Trustee Herrman and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2023 regular meeting.
 - Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Strom, Taubman and Herrman. Nays: none. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Assessor - Pam Kende

- Assessor Kende stated May was an extremely busy month. River Forest was open for assessment appeals with the Cook County Assessor until May 30th. Each Township is normally open for 30 days but River Forest Township was open for 37 days.
- Assessor Kende attended a virtual outreach on May 22 for Township with the Cook County Assessor and hosted a community outreach on May 23 with the Cook County Assessor in which approximately 90 people attended. The program was well received with a data analyst who provided detailed information.
- Assessor Kende coordinated with the Village to send out notices weekly regarding the reassessment in addition to the Township Constant Contact emails. A few glitches with the Village e-newsletter in attaching correct links were discovered and corrected.

- Assessor Kende coordinated with Riverside and Oak Park Townships regarding the appeal process as they were going through the process at relatively the same time.
- As a note, it is possible the 2nd installment Property Tax bills may not be sent out until December 1, 2023 and due January 1, 2024.
- As a comparison for re-assessment resident contact volumes, noting the 2020 re-assessment was during COVID:

	May 2017 Totals	May 2023 Totals
Phone calls	622	2438
Emails	284	1392
Visitors	105	38
Appeal Packets created	383	507

- New contacts added in May for Constant Contact: 317; Total Assessor contacts for Constant Contacts: 1145 of 1515 total contacts.
- Supervisor Sloan thanked the Assessor’s team for the wonderful job Assessor Kende and Deputy Assessor Elliott did during the month of May. The outreach on May 23 was a success and Supervisor Sloan thanked them for setting that up with the Cook County Assessor's office.

Mental Health Services - Sarah Schwarting

- Mental Health Administrator Schwarting said all agency contracts will be finalized and emailed out within the next month. She is looking into how to share more strategies to parents for the Parent University kick off meeting on Aug 28.
- The township was represented at the kickoff luncheon for Celebrating Seniors Week, the *NAMI* gala, the 50th anniversary for Oak Park’s Community Mental Health Board (CMHB), the Memorial Day Parade and the Pride walk. Supervisor Sloan and Administrator Schwarting were at the ribbon cutting for the *Liv4 Lali* van, which might be coming to the Mental Health Committee (MHC) for a tour. The van offers peer counseling, naloxone, fentanyl test strips and safe needles.
- Both consortias will meet again in July. Resources were shared with RiverEdge hospital and they are interested in collaborating with and coming in to talk with the committee.
- Schwarting is working on a process under which the Township will consider new agency grant requests should they come up within the next year or two.
- The *They Deserve More* coalition’s contact of representatives has garnered direct service providers a \$2.50 wage increase.
- The MHC year-end dinner went well and the committee received handouts on harm reduction and stigma busting. They were also given information on the upcoming Youth and family Services school supply drive.
- Oak Park CMHB shared information regarding their contracting process with the committee so both can stay up to date on each other’s procedures. All spreadsheets have been updated to begin tracking FY 2024 data.
- Two representatives from *Thrive Counseling Center* met with Supervisor Sloan and Administrator Schwarting to discuss plans for the future, including tackling ageism in the community.
 - We plan to work with River Forest police, Town Center businesses and the Village to see if the *Liv4 Lali* truck can visit the Town Center once a week as well.

- Schwarting and Sloan had a lunch meeting with *Thrive*. The grant Thrive received has really helped them boost their psychiatric staffing and eliminate waitlists for psych services. They also hired two people of color, key in delivering equitable services. They also eliminated their waiting list.

General Assistance - Carla Sloan

- Supervisor Sloan reported the Township continues to have one General Assistance (GA) client and may have another one soon..

Senior Outreach Coordinator - Betsy Kelly

- Senior Outreach Coordinator Kelly reported *Celebrating Seniors Week* events went through May 18 and included a celebration for Pat Koko who has been involved with seniors in the community for the past 45 years.
- Barb Bodner, one of the founders of *Arbor West Neighbors*, *Circle of Friends* and the *Great Neighbors Project*, moved to DC.
- Dominican University's *Reminiscing Project* with Professor Julie Bach's social work class will start in July. Coordinator Kelly recruited 10-12 seniors for the project for four (4) dates total (July 24, July 31, August 7 and August 14).
- Oak Park / River Forest Township Senior Services will start office hours on Wednesdays in the River Forest Township conference room, from 9-5 starting June 21 to help people apply for benefits. Most appointments will be scheduled in advance.
- Coordinator Kelly is working with River Forest Community Center (RFCC) to get meeting rooms. Thursday Mahjong is in a different room week to week. The Wednesday Mahjong folks found another location for their game. She is working with the Bridge folks for Wednesdays.
- Approximately 25 names have been added to the senior email list from the Assessor Event. In June and July, Coordinator Kelly will send one Community Connect Email (CCM) and River Forest Senior Newsletter email. In August, she will continue to send CCM the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month. Clerk Becvar has agreed to help with the emails.
- The Village of River Forest *Age-Friendly Survey* is complete. Highlights include that the Village of River Forest and River Forest Township need to work together to get the word out about services available to older adults. Coordinator Kelly has been hoping to do a mailing (self-mailer) for a long time about the services the Township provides.
 - Township should coordinate with the Village of River Forest who may have a USPS mailing list for seniors as well. Coordinator Kelly will reach out to Village Administrator, Matt Walsh
 - A "one-stop shop" directory is needed ie. better lighting; more places to sit.
 - Survey did not focus on "affordability" because they already know this is an issue. 60% of those surveyed have room for another person and 25% open to the idea of having an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).
- The final Oak Park / River Forest Township Senior Services meeting is in June and then will break for the summer.
- The Township Medical Equipment Lending Library is in need of incontinence supplies.
- Supervisor Sloan mentioned the AARP Livability Index report was the initial reason for the Village's survey.

Youth and Family Services (YFS) - Supervisor Sloan and Trustee Herrman

- Trustee Herrman said the Youth and Family Services backpack / school supply drive continues. There is a QR code that links to Amazon; donating residents can order supplies and have them shipped directly to Oak Park Township.
- The River Forest Pride Walk on June 1st was well attended.

Supervisor's Report - Carla Sloan

- Supervisor Sloan announced the Township Officials of Cook County (TOCC) spring conference is Thursday, June 22 evening with 140 registered and paid. With the help of Ali el Saffar from Oak Park Township, Supervisor Sloan secured Senator Don Harmon as the keynote speaker.
- The Memorial Day parade on May 29 was wonderful. Thanks to all who participated. It was a gorgeous day and as always, provided good visibility for the Township.
- Thanks to everyone who attended the Pride parade on June 1 and took photos, which were posted on Instagram. Looks like a very successful event.
- Trustee Herrman, Clerk Becvar and Supervisor Sloan attended the meeting at Village Hall on May 22 in support of the Village pride flag raising and proclamation. Supervisor Sloan also attended the Juneteenth ceremony and flag raising at the Library that was also a well-attended and meaningful event.
- Please mark your calendars for the Rotary Food Truck Rally on Saturday, August 26. Sloan would like for the Township to once again be an event sponsor. If you recall, all of the sponsorship funds go to the local grants which Rotary gives out to organizations like House in Austin, Ping, WonderWorks, Beyond Hunger, Housing Forward, etc. There is tremendous visibility with the tent.

Approval of Bills

- A motion was made by Trustee Taubman and seconded by Trustee Herrman to approve River Forest Township operating fund bills as of June 30, 2023 in the amount of \$62,375.71.
 - Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Strom, Taubman, Herrman, and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Trustee Taubman and seconded by Trustee Herrman to approve River Forest Township General Assistance (GA) fund bills as of June 30, 2023 in the amount of \$2700.00.
 - Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Strom, Taubman, Herrman, and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- Update from Website Project - Supervisor Sloan was waiting for the Assessor's team to be done with their appeals month. Supervisor Sloan will meet with Kathy and Vanessa Druckman to transition responsibilities. Supervisor Sloan still needs to review some of the proposed web sections. The goal is to launch as soon as possible.
- Collaboration Sub-Committee update from Trustee Karen Taubman stated they have not yet met and it is unclear who the host will be.
- Approval of the Front-End Services Agreement with RFCC is still on hold and the Township continues to pay the old rate.
- Efficiency Study update - The Township formed an Ad Hoc Committee to complete the Efficiency Report with three resident volunteer members: Barb Hickey, John Phelan and Melinda Peterson. The first meeting was June 6. Supervisor Sloan will meet with the

residents 1:1 in July, and Trustee Herrman will meet with the students in the fall and then schedule a committee meeting.

New Business

- Approve FY2024 Budget
 - The Levy edit report came out and a small “levy adjustment amount” was added.
 - A motion was made by Trustee Herrman and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve River Forest Township Combined Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for 2023-2024 in the amount of \$859,299 consisting of:
 - Town fund of \$763,839
 - General Assistance Fund \$22,700
 - Component Unit RFCCA for \$72,760
 - Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Strom, Taubman, Herrman, and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.
- Approve December 2023 Meeting Change
 - A motion was made by Trustee Herrman and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve changing the meeting from December 5, 2023 to December 12, 2023.
 - Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Strom, Taubman, Herrman, and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.
- FY2023 Audit Update - FY2023 Auditor was here in June. All went well and the Township is awaiting their report (normally received in July).
 - Supervisor Sloan thanked Jane Brennan for her assistance in the audit process.
 - Discussed moving away from paper checks to ACH payments following one check that was not received (payment was stopped). Supervisor Sloan will work on the process of getting Board approval prior to the ACH.
- Approve Hourly Increases for Senior Outreach Coordinator and Mental Health Administrator who have a maximum of 18 hours/week.
 - A motion was made by Trustee Herrman and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve a \$1 per hour increase for Senior Outreach Coordinator to \$28 and Mental Health Administrator to \$29 effective July 1, 2023.
 - Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Strom, Taubman, Herrman, and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

Announcement of the Next Regular Monthly Meeting

- The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township will be on Tuesday, July 18, 2023 at 6:00M.

A motion was made by Trustee Taubman and seconded by Trustee Herrman to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 PM. All were in favor and the motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

John Becvar, Clerk