



RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

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TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBERS POLICY

Approved April 9, 2024

The purpose of this Township Committee Members Policy (“Policy”) is to provide reasonable guidelines for Committee Members when communicating internally or externally:

1. with the Township while you are a Committee Member
2. during Township Meetings
3. outside Township meetings about the Township activities

The River Forest Board of Trustees appoints residents of River Forest to one of several regular and ad hoc township committees on a volunteer basis (each appointee is a “Committee Member”). Committee Member appointments are for three years beginning June of each year (or to fill a vacancy of an open position until the end of that term). To be eligible to be a Committee Member, a person must be a registered voter in River Forest Township (“Township”) and have lived in the Township for at least one year prior to appointment. Interested applicants are required to submit a completed application and have an interview with the Committee staff member and/or the Township Supervisor.

The Township has several opportunities for residents to volunteer to be on an advisory committee including but not limited to 1) the River Forest Township Mental Health Committee and jointly with Oak Park Township, 2) the Senior Services Committee and 3) Youth & Family Services Committee. Joint committees are established by IGA with Oak Park Township.

Committee Members generally meet once or twice a month in person at a predetermined day and time (unless circumstances require the Committee staff member to call a remote meeting). One Committee Member may volunteer to take on the additional responsibility of being a Chairperson of the Committee (“Committee Chair”). Another Committee Member may volunteer to take on the additional responsibility of being the Vice Chair (for Senior Services) or Secretary of the Committee (for other committees). Senior Services staff serve as secretary and are responsible for preparation of all agendas, minutes, and related meeting materials for the Senior Services committee.

The Township greatly appreciates residents who take their time to get involved and serve in an advisory capacity. However, the Township also recognizes that to efficiently and effectively have advisory committees, there needs to be some policies and procedures in place.

Finally, please remember every Committee Member is required to take an electronic training course related to the Open Meetings Act (OMA), developed and administered by the Public Access Counselor. (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b)). The training must be completed within 90 days after the Committee Member joins the Township Committee. The Certificate of Completion should be forwarded to the Township Clerk (clerk@RiverForestTownship.org).

COMMUNICATION WITH THE TOWNSHIP

It is your obligation to communicate with the Township Supervisor if you or your immediate family member has or will have an interest in any organization that the Township does business with. This does not automatically preclude you from being a Committee Member or doing business with the Township, however, such relationships must be clearly identified, communicated and made public.

When communicating with the Township, always be fair and courteous to Township Employees, Elected Officials, other volunteers, independent contractors and agency workers. Follow the Township Civility Pledge:

“In the interest of civility, I pledge to promote civility by listening, being respectful of others, acknowledging that we are all striving to support and improve our community and understanding that we each may have different ideas for achieving that objective.”

Try to resolve Committee-related complaints by speaking directly with the Committee Member or the Township Supervisor rather than by posting complaints to a social media outlet or in a public forum.

COMMUNICATION DURING TOWNSHIP MEETINGS

The Township is a public body subject to the Open Meeting Act. As such, there should always be a published agenda for approved meeting topics. If you would like to request a topic be included on the agenda, please reach out to the Committee Chair or Township Supervisor prior to the meeting. Please respect the meeting agenda, Robert’s Rules of Order and do not speak over one another in a meeting.

Advisory groups operate by meeting and discussing issues. Please understand that it is the role of the Township Supervisor or Committee Chair to keep to the meeting agenda to respect everyone’s time. Generally speaking, any one individual’s comments or questions should be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes on a topic during a Township meeting. For the Public Comment section of a meeting, committee members may address a non-agenda item however Township Officials and Staff will not address public comments at that time.

Committee Members should make best efforts to attend all meetings in person. If you cannot attend a meeting in person, you are required to notify the appropriate committee staff person in advance. If you need to attend a meeting via remote access (e.g. Zoom) due to illness or other reason, you may ask the appropriate committee staff person if you can attend by remote access, which will be at their discretion. For the Youth and Family Services Committee, a quorum of committee members in person is required at any meeting where a vote is taking place.

If there has been an excess amount of unapproved absences, the committee staff person or the Township Supervisor will reach out to you to determine your interest in remaining on the committee and to reinforce the importance of meeting attendance. If unapproved absences persist, the Township may remove the Committee Member from the committee.

COMMUNICATION OUTSIDE TOWNSHIP MEETINGS

As a Volunteer, you will learn about many great programs and events that the Township is doing. It's only natural you will want to tell your friends and neighbors about this. The best way is to forward already approved communications or social media posts. When adding additional content or speaking outside Township meetings, express only your own personal opinions and not that of the Township or any other Township official, employee or volunteer.

Only those individuals directly authorized by the Township Supervisor or Township Board may represent the Township, the Township Board or the Township Committee. Volunteers should never represent themselves as a spokesperson for the Township unless they have been specifically authorized to do so.

Volunteers must never engage in communications which injures the reputation of the Township or its clients or which discloses confidential information. Maintain the confidentiality of the Township's private or confidential information that has not been approved in official Township records such as agendas, minutes, approved reports or website postings. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related communications without prior approval from the Township Supervisor.

If posting complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage the Township, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or Township Policy. Remember that harassment, bullying, discrimination and retaliation that would not be permissible in the workplace is not permissible between volunteer / Township officials / Township employees, even if done after hours, from home and on home computers.

Respect all copyright, fair use and other intellectual property laws. For the Township's protection as well as your own, it is critical to show respect for the laws governing copyright, fair use of copyrighted materials owned by others, trademarks and other intellectual property, including the Township's own copyrights and trademarks. Do not use the Township's logos or trademarks in postings without express written permission from the Township.

SUMMARY

The Township Board retains all rights to remove a Committee Member from a Township Committee if the Committee Member does not comply with all Township applicable policies, procedures, regulations and statutes, including those found in this document and the [River Forest Township Policy Handbook](#).