

**RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, November 17, 2009**

The regular monthly meeting took place Tuesday, November 17, 2009 at the River Forest Civic Center. The meeting was called to order at 6:20 PM by Supervisor Veronica Krawczyk.

Roll called:

Present: Trustees J. Davis, M. O'Brien, Supervisor V. Krawczyk, A. Romeo

Absent: M. Kelty

Also present: RFCC Executive Director Dick Chappell, Assessor P. Kende, Buff Martin

Trustee O'Brien made two amendments to the minutes of the October 20, 2009 meeting of the Township Board of Trustees. Amendments were duly noted by Clerk Sloan.

Trustee O'Brien made a motion to approve the amended minutes of the regular October 20, 2009 meeting of the Township Board of Trustees. Trustee Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Participation

Assessor – Assessor Pam Kende noted that she has been very busy since the tax bills were sent out, in terms of phone calls and visits from residents. Residents are upset by the wide range of their tax increase. Pam is hosting a meeting for taxpayers on Wednesday, November 18; she is expecting a large turnout. She speculated that River Forest residents appear particularly dissatisfied because River Forest is one of three towns open to appeal when the tax bills go out. She noted residents can only change their assessment for next year; they cannot change their current bills unless there was an error. Residents are primarily concerned with paying this bill and how they can reduce their bill; many don't realize the next bill is coming in just three months. Assessor Kende is advising residents against voting for future referendums if they don't want property tax increases.

Clerk Martin questioned how taxes are increasing when home values are decreasing. Assessor Kende explained that current tax bills are based on assessed values from 2004 to the end of 2007 (2006 was the peak). 2008-2009 values are down; these may impact future assessed values. Residents are now appealing their 2009 assessment, which is payable in 2010.

Trustee O'Brien advised Assessor Kende to keep accurate track of her time spent on phone calls and office hours.

Mental Health Committee (MHC) – The Mental Health Committee meeting is scheduled for December. Supervisor Krawczyk and Trustee O'Brien are conducting contract hearings with the mental health agencies. They met with Seguin and Community Support Services. The agencies were appreciative of the personal contact with River Forest Township, as well as the focus on River Forest needs. Topics discussed: improved communications, interagency networking, how to make residents more aware of agencies (parent open house), accountability, avoiding duplication, directing funds to where they are most needed.

Trustee O'Brien noted that the agencies feel removed from River Forest; they do not attend MHC monthly meetings. Trustee Romeo noted that in the past the Committee networked with the agencies through breakfast sessions. Trustee O'Brien emphasized the need for improved outreach from the MHC to the agencies and from the MHC to the community. One idea is to have a brief networking open house prior to

the MHC meetings. Supervisor Krawczyk noted that “meet and greet” networking sessions work well for the Youth Committee with the various youth agencies.

Trustee O’Brien noted that the agencies should at least be notified of the MHC meetings. The agencies also had their own ideas for improved outreach into River Forest. Three more meetings are scheduled with the following agencies: Oak-Leyden, Thrive and The Volunteer Center.

Youth Committee (YC) – Supervisor Krawczyk met with Jeffrey Piper and Abby Schmelling of The Volunteer Center, as part of the Executive Session of the Community Mental Health Board. Piper and Schmelling presented a strategic plan regarding the future of The Volunteer Center. The Teen Program of The Volunteer Center will no longer exist, in part because The Volunteer Center has a difficult time finding volunteer locations for people. They will focus instead on youth through the Enough Program and the Time Program. They are asking for support from the Youth Committee and the CMHB for these programs.

(Note: the Enough Program is an educational program for youth charged with a misdemeanor; it teaches right from wrong and meets on Saturdays for 8-10 weeks. The Time Program is a community service program.)

However, Supervisor Krawczyk and the CMHB do not feel that qualified people are in place at The Volunteer Center to run these two programs. At this time, the CMHB cannot guaranty they will fund these programs as they are currently run. The CMHB would reconsider if there is a new plan for running the programs. The Volunteer Center asked the CMHB to help transition the teens that are already in the Teen Program. The CMHB asked for a proposal to transition the Teen Program by January 1. The CMHB feels The Volunteer Center should have cancelled the Youth Programs, since these could be picked up by other organizations. On the other hand, there is not another organization to pick up the Teen Program.

The Youth Committee believes the Enough and Time Programs could be better run out of the Interventionist Program. The connections with the police exist, and Interventionist Program personnel have the necessary credentials.

Senior Committee (SC) – Seniors are meeting tomorrow, November 18, for their annual Christmas dinner. Supervisor Krawczyk plans to attend.

Supervisor’s Comments – New Township Clerk Carla Sloan was sworn in by Supervisor Krawczyk. Supervisor Krawczyk presented outgoing Township Clerk Buff Martin with a gift and thanked her for her many years of service. Clerk Martin thanked each Board member and Supervisor Krawczyk and acknowledged his or her individual contributions.

Bills - Supervisor Krawczyk presented the bills for October. It was noted that we are still holding \$80,000 in approved bills until the tax bills are paid. Trustee Romeo made a motion to approve the bills for the General Fund totaling \$10,657.10. See Enclosure 1. Trustee O’Brien seconded. Roll called.

Ayes: Trustees Davis, O’Brien, Romeo, Supervisor Krawczyk

Nays: None

Absent: Kelty The motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Krawczyk presented the October bills for General Assistance. Trustee Davis made a motion to approve the bills for General Assistance totaling \$225.00. See Enclosure 1. Trustee O’Brien seconded.

Roll called.

Ayes: Trustees Davis, O'Brien, Romeo, Supervisor Krawczyk

Nays: None

Absent: Kely The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business –None

New Business – None

Supervisor Krawczyk clarified with the Board the proposed 0.1% increase on the 2009 levy of \$498,000, or \$498, based on the data she was sent. Dick Chappell stated that he thought the increase was supposed to be 1%. Supervisor Krawczyk stated she would follow up to verify the 0.1% increase.

Supervisor Krawczyk stated that she did not support the requested 2.5% increase in administrative fees from Oak Park Senior Services. Trustees Romeo and O'Brien agreed, given that the Township is not seeing any increases in revenue, and given that OP Senior Services received a 4.6% increase last year.

Judith Crinolio, a River Forest resident and social worker for 15 years, has volunteered to join the Youth Committee. Trustee Davis made a motion to accept her application. Trustee Romeo seconded.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Don Pochly resigned from the Senior Committee. Supervisor Krawczyk acknowledged his years of service on the Senior and Mental Health Committees. There is now an opening on the Senior Committee, and there is still an opening on the Youth Committee.

Trustee Davis made a motion to go into Executive Session, for the purpose of approving minutes.

Trustee O'Brien seconded.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting reconvened at 7:11pm.

Supervisor Krawczyk asked for a motion to adjourn the Township meeting. The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township Board of Trustees will be on Tuesday, December 1, 2009 at 7:00 PM at the River Forest Civic Center. Trustee O'Brien made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Davis seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Sloan, Clerk