

RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, August 18, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, immediately following the 6:00 pm 2020 Annual Town Meeting. This was a meeting held both in person and electronically by Zoom, per Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-7.

Roll called: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees, Karen Taubman, Holly Economos, Mark Kelty and Helene Connolly. Also present: Clerk Abby Schmelling, Mental Health Services/General Assistance Administrator, Avis Rudner, RFCCA Administrator, Dick Chappell, and Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly. Also in attendance, former River Forest Township Trustee, Mary O'Brien.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Taubman and seconded by Trustee Kelty to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2020 regular meeting, The minutes were approved unanimously. A motion to accept the Special meeting Minutes of June 11 and June 15, 2020 were made and seconded by Trustees Economos and Connolly. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Participation—Former Trustee O'Brien was praised for her conducting of the Annual Town Meeting.

Assessor

Pamela Kende

The following was accomplished by the Assessor's office: Read by Clerk Abby Schmelling:

- Assessor appeal results were mailed out. We heard from many residents that were confused due to getting two separate result letters. One of these was a Covid-19 factor applied by the Cook County Assessor.
- Tax bills were mailed out on time. We have helped many residents get corrected tax bills and Certificates of Error's due to missing exemptions. The Cook County Assessor's Office has been extremely slow in processing Certificates of Error. We have notified and explained that the Treasurer has extended the property tax bill payment without penalty until October 1st.
- The Board of Review opened for appeals on July 30th. We were given only 24 hours notice. River Forest will close on August 28th. We have completed many appeal packets and mailed them out as well as completing many appeals on line for residents who are not able to appeal on line themselves. We also provided assistants with the online appeal process over the phone and via email.
- We continue to deal with realtors and lawyers. There have also been calls regarding vacancy, sales, exemptions and possible purchases and their tax bill implications.

- We have been constantly updating our website and calendar with upcoming dates and deadlines. We have submitted e-newsletters to the Village.
- During these unprecedented times, we in our office have felt an increase in pressure and stress from our residents who have been affected. Kathy has been an amazing presence in the office.

Mental Health Services/General Assistance

Avis Rudner

- We completed the first quarter of our grant funding to agencies for mental health services and are collecting the service numbers to see what they look like. Agencies are required to complete a report at the end of the quarter indicating usage by River Forest residents. The numbers are starting to come in and will help to determine how funds will be distributed in the second quarter.
- Carla attended an event for Infant Welfare where the director spoke.
- There was a virtual HUB 201 training last week. Attendance and feedback were strong.
- Applications are coming in for the part-time position to manage HUB. We are reviewing those this week. We will assess the applicant pool and determine whether we need to keep looking.
- NAMI has applied to the OPRF Community Foundation for a grant to support SUPPORT4U, the 24/7 texting program for our middle school and high school students. Kimberly Knake from NAMI was on vacation, so I assisted the NAMI staff in their grant interview with the Community Foundation and assisted with gathering data and writing the final report.

Youth Services

Carla Sloan

- Carla interviewed a person for one of the last two spots on the Youth Services Committee, and we will vote under New Business tonight on her application. This leaves only one open River Forest spot on the Committee going into the fall.
- The PYD (Positive Youth Development) substance abuse prevention group met. Plans continue for virtual parent university in the fall. Also Talk Cards are off to print: These are decks of cards with “conversation starters” about drinking, vaping, marijuana and other areas. The goal is to help parents start conversations about these topics with their teens in a fun and meaningful way.
- The larger PYD work group met and are starting to review the 2020 Illinois Youth Survey data which shows alcohol and marijuana usage going back up after lows in 2019. 2020 data is still much better than 2010 data. So over the long term, we have been moving in the right direction; however, in the short term, we are not.
- Meetings continue with the High School staff to plan the fall virtual Parent University. We will likely use the same speakers and topics which comprised the spring Parent University, which was cancelled due to Covid-19.

- The Youth Intervention Program intergovernmental agreement, including funding, was approved by the River Forest Park District at their August Board meeting, so now nine taxing bodies in Oak Park and River Forest are continuing to support the program. Only the two villages do not support the program. Kudos to Megan Traficano and her team for providing added value to the funders, and for the more data driven evaluation of the program's performance.
- Carla met with library staff to discuss the Connections after school program which we fund. Even though the kids cannot gather in person at the library after school in their usual large group, we will support online Connections programming for the kids after school. This includes the ever popular crafting as well as a book club. There will also be conversational sessions which include Laura, the Youth Interventionist who works in River Forest.

Senior Outreach Coordinator

Betsy Kelly

- Coffee Monday- Six older adults attended and Megan talked about Library services, specifically their digital services and getting onto their different apps for books, movies, articles etc. People can start coming into the library for 30 minute slots to check email or check out things. We asked participants what they would like to see at upcoming Coffee Mondays.
- There was no OP Township Meeting or Dementia Friendly RF Meeting.
- Carla and Betsy met with Trustee Vasquez to hear about the Age Friendly Commission, which focuses on the livability of River Forest for all residents, which is based on AARP's Livability index. He said they are hoping to do a survey of older residents in River Forest. He said the commission is looking at the ordinances to see what the obstacles are for housing. Carla mentioned that there have been so many surveys done over the past few years and that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Carla agreed that we and Pam Mahn would come to their next meeting and let them know what the River Forest and Oak Park Township Senior Services does and that we would review the surveys that have already been done. We presented at their August Meeting. It was agreed that there needs to be a centralized database of resources that are out there.
- Carla and Betsy met with Helen Kwan to see where Volunteer Corps stands; Helen said things are slower now, but that we can still refer people to her; mostly helping with book pick up and drop off and light grocery shopping. She feels that the need will pick up in the fall and winter.
- Carla and Betsy met with Megan and Shannon from the Library to figure out plans for Coffee Mondays and Celebrating Seniors All Year Long. We figured out a schedule through December for Coffee Mondays and will start scheduling CSAYL when the library re-opens on Sundays possibly at the end of October. There was also talk about creating kits for seniors to do from home via Zoom, like creating a wreath in December- seniors would come to the library to pick up their kit or have a kit delivered and then they would tune in to meet with the group and create their craft.
- Betsy talked to Kay Frey about their Volunteer Opportunities with RSVP- from tax preparers, teaching English Conversation to volunteering with the Police Trainee

Academy. Kay Frey is retiring at the end of this month and there will be a new contact. Betsy sent out Monthly email end of July for August

- Betsy is starting discussion with Arbor West Neighbors and other community groups (Police, Township, Dementia Friendly groups) about concerns around two people wandering away from nursing homes in Oak Park (on this same note Ruth mentioned that RSVP was looking for volunteers for their Tax Preparer Program; they will be training in January); she will reach out to the volunteer coordinator and forward information to the library for them to disseminate.
- Betsy will be speaking at STAR, at Oak Park Temple on Thursday.
- Carla added the need to meet with the Village's new senior committee and keep aware of duplication of services.

Supervisor's Report

Carla Sloan

- We had a Zoom meeting called by Cathy Adduci including the township, library, park district and District #90. Cathy asked that we all present a unified front in promoting mask-wearing and social distancing. Gatherings continue to be reported in the parks, where the land is open and police staff are present for programs but not at other times. Carla recommended that we look at collectively funding some park monitors just for the next six weeks or so until the weather changes, but no one seemed interested in pursuing it.
- Cathy also let us know that the Village is engaging in the All In Illinois campaign for people to wear masks. She asked all of us taxing bodies to do the same. The campaign is based on "it only works if you wear it" and compares masks to seat belts, life jackets and bike helmets. All in Illinois provides the materials like Instagram and Facebook artwork ready for us to use. There are also signs all over the Village including here at the RFCC. Carla told Cathy that she has our support and that we will use the All in Illinois campaign on our social media and otherwise.

Approval of Bills

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Kelty to approve Operating Fund bills as of August 31, 2020 in the amount of \$41,377.36. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Connolly, Economos, Kelty, Taubman and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- The Complete Count Committee meets this Thursday by Zoom. Carla will attend for us now that Cathaleen is gone. The Census is due to finish by September 30, so the committee's activities are winding down, although there may be one final push required to increase participation online or by phone. Census workers are also taking over with the door-to-door effort.

- The fiscal year 2020 audit is complete Carla emailed a copy of the audit to the Trustees. The audit is also posted on our website. The audit firm has filed the appropriate financial information with the state and the county.
- Carla is in conversation with a reputable and longstanding Chicago telecommunications company called “One Call”. They have an agreement with Townships of Illinois, TOI, to offer inexpensive POTS (alarm and elevator) line pricing to townships; they also have another agreement to offer inexpensive POTS line pricing to non-profits. Carla is hoping that they can take over the POTS lines here in the building which service the elevator and the alarm system. Pending on that success, we will get a quote from them for the new Township voice over internet jphone system, which we hope to install in late fall. We also have quotes from three other companies, one of which is a contender.
- Carla talked about the time and angst spent on our computer upgrades, all in the direction of enabling remote access. Carla’s computer is now complete with all new software (including Windows 10 pro and Office 365 pro) and remote access. Avis, Abby and Betsy’s computers are in various stages of progress toward full remote access.

New Business

Approval of new Youth Services Committee member, Roza Briskovic. Carla talked about her credentials and experience. A motion was made by Trustee Economos and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve Roza Briskovic to the Youth Services Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

Announcement of the Next Regular Monthly Meeting

The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township will be on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 6:00 pm. A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Kelty to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted, Abby Schmelling, Clerk