

RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, January 18, 2022 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, at 5:06 pm. This was a meeting held electronically by Zoom.

Roll called: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees: Deana Herrman, Keith Strom, Karen Taubman, and Helen Connolly. Also present: Clerk Vanessa Druckman, Dick Chappell, and Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly.

Public Participation: None.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Herrman to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2021 regular meeting. Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Strom, Taubman, Connolly and Herrman. Nays: none. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Assessor

Pamela Kende

As Assessor Kende was not present at the meeting, Clerk Druckman read the assessor report.

- Assessor Kende reported that the Board of Review was open for appeal until January 4, 2022. The office was very busy during this appeal period. Being open for appeals over the holidays made many residents anxious regarding the deadline and receiving their information on time. Residents contacted the Assessor's office every day during this time. Assessor Kende and her team answered phone and email requests for appeal packets 7 days a week for most of this appeal period.
- Assessor Kende reported that the Cook County Assessor's Office will continue the automatic renewal of the following exemptions: Senior Freeze, Veterans with Disabilities, and Persons with Disabilities, Homeowner and Senior Exemptions. If a homeowner received any of these five exemptions last year (tax year 2020), they do not need to reapply this year (tax year 2021).
- Assessor Kende stated that for first time applicants and residents who filed a Certificate of Error for 2020 exemptions, the 2021 tax year exemption filing period will begin in early March 2022.
- Assessor Kende reported that permits were sent to the Cook County Assessor via the new portal.

- Assessor Kende received multiple questions regarding new sale price vs. addition to home and impact on assessment and tax bill.
- With regards to Certificates of Exemption, Assessor Kende processed Senior and Homeowners exemptions and cleared up information regarding refunds expected for filed Certificates of Exemption.
- Assessor Kende attended the Cook County Township Assessor Association meeting.

Mental Health Services/General Assistance

Sarah Schwarting

As Sarah Schwarting was not present at the meeting, Supervisor Sloan read the mental health services report.

- All funding applications were returned by January 7th and sent to the Mental Health Committee on January 13th. The committee has until February 2nd, to return the applications with any questions, and will need to make their funding decisions by March 2nd.
- Additional NAMI resources were sent to D90 after it was determined to be a need during a D90 meeting. D90 is still in the process of putting together a parent university. During the D90 meeting and a meeting with a D200 school social worker it was found that the teachers need additional mental health support and mental health training to be better equipped to handle their classrooms.
- Positive Youth Development would like to meet with us in the coming quarter.
- Quarter 3 data from agencies is expected by the end of the month, and is already coming in. Agency checks will be ready to approve at the February meeting.
- Sarah found the book ‘Mindset’ in her office and has found resources surrounding this. It is being discussed to hold a poll with agency directors and see if they would like to attend a workshop presentation by Sarah on the ‘growth mindset’ found in the book. D90 has expressed interest.
- Sarah has been posting wellness resources to the LinkedIn page for Wellness Month.
- Sarah is almost done going through NAMI resources; the two webinars that look like they will offer good resources and/or information are on the following topics: Cultivating Peer Talent, and the Future of Mental Health Care in Illinois.
- Sarah and Supervisor Sloan met with Laura Brooks from OP Community Mental Health Board, and we are thinking of ways to get the consortiums meeting again, perhaps over zoom. Consortiums need to resume discussion of the gap in residents’ knowledge of the services available to them, and how to motivate residents to use those services.
- The approval of resident Kristin Sneeringer for Mental Health Committee membership is pending at tonight’s meeting.
- Sarah and Helene will join the PlanItGreen committee and report back to the township to see where the township and the committee can partner in the future.

- Supervisor Sloan and Sarah met with D200, NAMI and OP CMHB to continue planning Parent University. They are trying to finalize the date. They have a list of topics and possible speakers.
- Supervisor Sloan reported that Sara Semelka from the OP Dept of Public Health is heading up the 2022 Iplan effort. Sara Semelka held the kickoff meeting on January 6, where the stakeholders reviewed the timetable and tasks to be accomplished, as well as the role of a consultant. They will be meeting every two weeks, with smaller meetings in between.
- Supervisor Sloan reported that we are once again meeting regularly to strategize the HUB. The Project Manager Randy Kim is now on board.
- Sibshops started up again for winter/spring. Unfortunately, they are meeting on zoom again; hopefully this is temporary.
- We have one GA client who came on board in December. April Dugal continues to do an excellent job for us administering GA.

Senior Outreach Coordinator

Betsy Kelly

- Betsy is attending her regular meetings and sending monthly Community Connect emails.
- Betsy said she attended a Housing Forum group meeting including Arbor West Neighbors and Concordia about missing middle housing in the area as well as those “Missing Middle” older adults. A Forum entitled Aging in Our Communities: Affordability, Accessibility and Livability will be scheduled during Celebrating Seniors Week on May 14th from 9:00- 12:30.
- Betsy said that the Fall Prevention Event at Grace Lutheran planned for the fall has been rescheduled for May 11. The plan is to have physical therapists do fall assessments; we will also have different agencies/ people there that can help with fall prevention (i.e. doctor to look at meds; and RF Fire Dept. to talk about home safety).
- Betsy will be working with the River Forest Park District to plan another event for Celebrating Seniors Week.
- Betsy had a meeting with the Celebrating Senior Week Group. Celebrating Seniors Week is planned for 5/12 - 5/19.
- Betsy announced that Community Connect and River Forest email are now on Constant Contact; both are more presentable and able to track viewership.
- Supervisor Sloan and Betsy will be meeting with Nora Pienta, the Dominican University Dean of Students, to discuss home sharing.
- The Circle of Friends of newcomers to the area referred to us by Arbor West Neighbors continues to meet. They have 8 members. Their next meeting is tomorrow.
- River Forest Public Library has moved all events to virtual until 2/19. Brain Wallowitz is the new teen and adult librarian.

- The next Senior Committee Meeting is taking place tomorrow night.

Youth Services

Carla Sloan and Trustee Herrman

- Trustee Herrman said that youth services contractor night took place on zoom earlier this month and was moderately attended. All who applied for FY2023 grants were invited.
- Trustee Herrman announced that the Youth Services Committee received 10 grant applications for FY2023. Two were specific to River Forest. Eight are for Oak Park and River Forest.
- The Youth Services Committee is still looking for two members from River Forest.

Supervisor's Report

Carla Sloan

- Supervisor Sloan attended the Administrator's Forum, led by the new Village Administrator, Brian Murphy. The new fire chief, Tom Gaertner, was just sworn in. The construction project at Lake and Lathrop has removed oil tanks and is in the excavation phase, in preparation for the foundation. The River Forest Public Library project was approved to move HVAC outside onto park land, to open space for a room inside, to be renovated likely for meeting space. The River Forest Park District reported that youth basketball has begun with new rules – no one but players and coaches. District 90 schools are focused on staying open and keeping kids in-person.
- Supervisor Sloan attended the JRB meetings for the Madison St and North Ave TIFs. The Madison St TIF has an increased EAV of \$6.9 million, which is good news. There has been no activity or change in EAV for the North Ave TIF.
- Supervisor Sloan attended the Community Business Managers meeting, which she had not attended in quite some time, where she learned quite a bit about the long-term finances of the other taxing bodies.

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 January 31, 2022 in the amount of \$73,046.23. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Herrman, Strom, Taubman, Connolly and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Trustee Herrman and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve the General Assistance bills for the Town of River Forest as of January 31, 2022 in the amount of \$1,750. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Herrman, Strom, Taubman, Connolly and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- Supervisor Sloan announced that the 2021 Levy was successfully submitted.

- Supervisor Sloan announced that the 2022 meetings have been posted throughout River Forest and published on our website and in the local paper.
- Vanessa Druckman provided an update of the website redesign. Hutchinson Associates reviewed all the Square Space Templates and identified 14 which would work with our desired design attributes. Vanessa Druckman reviewed those 14, as well as all the others on the site, and narrowed it down to 4. Supervisor Sloan, Trustee Strom, and Vanessa are meeting on Wednesday, 1/26 to review these templates and choose one. Once the template is chosen, Hutchinson Associates will begin working on a mockup of our site with a focus on font and color.
- Trustee Taubman announced that the Collaboration Sub-Committee will be meeting tomorrow for the first time since November.

New Business

- Sarah Schwarting has recruited Kristen Sneeringer who lives at 46 Gale, to join the Mental Health Committee. Kristen Sneeringer has submitted her application. She is a life coach, a D90 volunteer, and an inclusion advocate.

A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Herrman to approve the appointment of Kristen Sneeringer to the River Forest Mental Health Committee. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Herrman, Strom, Connolly, Taubman and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

- Supervisor Sloan announced that Jane Moore has resigned from the Mental Health Committee. The Mental Health Committee is now looking for one more member.
- Supervisor Sloan explained that she has been working with insurance broker Patrick Sheahan who works for the broker Alliant and who represents ICRMT, Illinois Counties Risk Management Trust. She sent the trustees information last week regarding the consolidation of all our insurance policies and brokers into one account with ICRMT and Alliant. ICRMT comes highly recommended by multiple Townships. We are moving to one broker, one insurer, one renewal date. We will in essence be getting better coverage for the same cost, or a little less, and we will streamline our administrative efforts. We will once again have D&O insurance coverage. No other insurance brokers were able to provide the same package of coverage.

A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to switch our insurance coverage to Illinois Counties Risk Management Trust through insurance broker Alliant. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Herrman, Strom, Connolly, Taubman and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

- Supervisor Sloan stated that she would like to retain Vanessa Druckman as a marketing/communications freelancer. This would consolidate our

marketing/communications efforts with one person, resulting in a more cohesive strategy. Vanessa has solid experience in this area. Supervisor Sloan would like the trustees to think about this concept and she will bring it to a vote during our February meeting after presenting a contract outlining the marketing freelancer responsibilities and pay structure.

Announcement of the Next Regular Monthly Meeting

The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township will be on Tuesday, February 15, 2021 at 6:00 pm. A motion was made by Trustee Taubman and seconded by Trustee Connolly to adjourn the meeting at 5:55pm. Roll call was taken. The motion was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Druckman, Clerk