



RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

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River Forest Township Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, October 17, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, October 17, 2023 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, at 6:06 PM. This was a meeting held both in person and electronically by Zoom.

Roll Call:

- Supervisor Sloan, Trustees: Helene Connolly, Keith Strom and Karen Taubman.
 - Trustee Deanna Herrman participated via Zoom with a qualified business reason.
- Also present: Assessor Pam Kende, Clerk John Becvar, Mental Health Services Administrator Sarah Schwarting, Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly, and Website Project Manager Kathy Elliott. RFCCA Facilities Administrator Dick Chappell joined mid-meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Participation:

- Public was not in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

- A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2023 regular meeting.
 - The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

Assessor

- Assessor Kende stated:
 - River Forest Township is open for appeals with the Cook County Board of Review until today, Tuesday, October 17, 2023 at 11:59pm. The Assessor's office has been assisting residential taxpayers file their appeals online. Residents can sign up for an appeal packet on the Township website and obtain additional information if a property had flooding or a catastrophic event. They have created over 250 appeal packets. Assessor Kende held a community outreach with the Board of Review on Monday, October 2 at 6pm that was well attended with about

80 residents. They also prepared content for the Village e-newsletters. Kende updated the Township website to reflect all the events, opening and closing dates.

- The Assessor and Deputy Assessor both attended off-site in-person classes to earn continuing education credits.
- The 2022 Second Installment Property Tax Bills are currently online and due December 1, 2023. Taxpayers will be able to view, pay and print out a copy of their property tax bills on the Cook County Treasurer's site. The Assessor suggests that residents review their exemptions; their office can assist residents with missing exemptions to obtain a corrected tax bill.
- Assessor Kende thanked the RFCC front desk staff for their assistance in greeting and directing residents who visited the Assessors office during the busy appeals time.
- Supervisor Sloan thanked Assessor Kende and Deputy Assessor Elliot for getting through the appeals cycle which ends today. She thanked them for the October 2 outreach which was well attended, especially by seniors.

Mental Health Services

- Mental Health Administrator Schwarting said:
 - The Mental Health Committee (MHC) is steadily completing the agency site visits. 2nd quarter grant payments to agencies will be ready in November.
 - She updated the funding application for fiscal year 2025 and will send that via email to all agencies mid-November 2023.
 - The Behavioral Health Consortium met and learned about the ongoing changes being made to improve behavioral health care for children.
 - The *Infant Welfare Society* is now accepting young adult clients through age 21 (previously stopped services at age 18).
 - *Positive Youth Development* is still doing organizational research to try and figure out if they will successfully continue into another 5-year grant cycle.
 - Township materials were distributed at the NAMI Family Summit held October 15.
 - Supervisor Sloan and Schwarting attended the *Way Back Inn* Rebuilder's dinner on September 29.
 - Topics are almost all confirmed for the upcoming November 15 Parent University; the poster and registration link are starting to be circulated.
 - River Forest Township will have a table at the upcoming OPRF High School Resource Fair on Wednesday, November 8, 2023.
 - The MHC is looking into new activities to undertake when the funding recommendations are completed in January.
- Supervisor Sloan added:
 - We are about 90% complete on the mental health resource guide with the goal to mail prior to Thanksgiving and be available for resource fairs.
 - Sloan attended the D90 parent night in September which had about 30 parents in attendance.

- There is still an opening on the MHC so if anyone knows anyone, please contact supervisor@RiverForestTownship.org.

General Assistance (GA)

- Supervisor Sloan reported we continue to have one (1) GA client. Sloan added the Township does not have any new Emergency Assistance (EA) grants beyond the two given this year.

Senior Outreach Coordinator

- Senior Outreach Coordinator Kelly reported:
 - The talk at the 19th Century Club went well. Judy Smith and Chris Hauri spoke about the Asset Map resources in the community that Arbor West Neighbors prepared and Kelly spoke about Community Connect.
 - Kelly distributed more Senior/Older Adult folders at the Assessor Community Outreach meeting.
 - Mahjong is going strong and attendance is growing with four tables now.
 - *Zumba Gold* at Oak Park Township had a good turnout in the first 2 classes and is at full capacity at 23. Right now Oak Park Township Senior Services is funding through 11/6 and then the hope is that it will be a Silver Sneaker program or similar.
 - Coffee Monday went well. Annese Piazza spoke about Medicare changes and Esther Gracham, her business partner, was there to answer questions. Annese also meets with seniors after Mahjong class to answer Medicare questions, given that Open Enrollment just started.
 - Kelly continues to do outreach to generate interest in the *HomeSharing* pilot program and to meet with residents who show interest.
 - Dominican University has a Recipe Box Cafe where nutrition students make and serve meals to the community.
 - Trustee Taubman noted that there are foreign students who are working on ESL certification at Dominican. They need a short-term place to live, which may generate interest in home sharing on a trial basis. Coming up:
 - Super Senior DMV Event is October 23.
 - Cindy Lyons Health Fair at the Mohr Center in Forest Park is October 25.
 - The Senior mailing will move forward and go out when the new website is ready.
 - Kelly continues to send River Forest and Community Connect emails with 60-70% open rate.
- Supervisor Sloan reported the designer submitted a solid initial draft of the senior mailing and thanked Trustees Strom and Taubman for representing the Township at the River Forest Fire Department Open House last weekend.
 - Supervisor Sloan asked Administrator Schwarting to check into supplying “care packages” for River Forest Police and Fire to distribute to homeless people in need, as we did before COVID

- The Senior Citizens' Council had their annual Ulyssean award dinner; as usual, the Township supported the dinner with a full page ad.

Youth and Family Services

- Trustee Herrman reported at the last Youth and Family Services (“YFS”) Committee meeting they talked about intergenerational grants (using joint funds from Senior Services). The YFS RFP is being reviewed; the YFS Committee is deciding if they are going to cap their project funding, with an anticipated budget of \$125,000.
 - Supervisor Sloan asked if there would be a contractor night.
 - *Girls on the Rise* is doing well at Roosevelt. The principal at Lincoln reached out to participate, and GOTR is underway there. Willard is having a slower start in recruiting.
- Supervisor Sloan reminded everyone that there is still an opening on the Youth & Family Services (YFS) Committee. She will post the vacancy in the Village eNews.
- Sloan prompted Trustee Hermann to share about her daughter, Anja Herrman, who was one of 15 girls nationally to receive the Girls Leading Change award. Anja, a senior at OPRF High School, was recognized at a White House ceremony hosted by First Lady Jill Biden for her advocacy work in disability rights, equity, and inclusion. Hermann was praised for her grassroots disability advocacy efforts and her research highlighting the need for inclusive school safety plans.
 - Supervisor Sloan indicated she plans to have a proclamation in early 2024 to recognize Anja.

Supervisor’s Report

- Supervisor Sloan reported she, Clerk Becvar and Administrator Schwarting will be in Springfield November 12-14 for the annual Township of Illinois (TOI) conference.
- The Township of Cook County (TOCC) Board meeting is this Saturday and the TOCC Supervisors Division meeting is on October 19. Sloan is working on getting more attendance at the Supervisors Division meetings; they plan to charge dues in FY2025 after not having dues this year.
- Sloan attended the *Way Back Inn* fundraiser with Administrator Schwarting where Speaker Chris Welch was honored. He recognized River Forest Township and other Townships for their valuable work
- Sloan will be attending the *Sarah’s Inn* fundraiser October 21.
- IMRF is introducing a new website and Supervisor Sloan attended mandatory training.

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 October 30, 2023 in the amount of \$116,180.28.
 - Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Herrman, Strom and Taubman. Nays: none. The motion passed unanimously.

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve River Forest Township General Assistance bills as of October 30, 2023 in the amount of \$4650.00.
 - Supervisor Sloan indicated this includes one EA grant and two quarters of GA and EA admin from Oak Park Township.
 - Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Herrman, Strom and Taubman. Nays: none. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- Website Project update
 - Website Project Manager Kathy Elliot indicated the new website should launch by November 3, 2023. She explained we can only have one plug-in for a newsletter sign-up list unless the Township gets a supplemental service. Clerk Becvar has been working diligently on his portions of the website. Elliott shared a web content site map. The Township's two outside web advisors, Hutchinson and Venacity, are ready to make the transition. Elliot is going to audit the site for ADA compliance.
 - Supervisor Sloan indicated we will launch and make updates as needed, citing the flexibility of squarespace to do so.
- Collaboration Sub-Committee update
 - Trustee Karen Taubman reported the next Collaboration Committee meeting is November 8 at 7pm.
- Efficiency Report Committee update
 - Supervisor Sloan indicated the Northern Illinois grad student, Kennedi, is hard at work on the Efficiency Report. In reviewing the TOI report template and checklist, Supervisor Sloan determined the Township will update our policies in a couple of areas (Ethics, Whistleblower Protection, Civility Pledge, Remote Participation). Clerk Becvar will send out drafts of the resolutions/ordinances prior to the next Board of Trustees meeting.

New Business

- Ageism Awareness Day October 7, 2023 Proclamation
 - A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve the River Forest Township Proclamation in support of Ageism Awareness Day, October 7, 2023
 - Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Herrman, Strom and Taubman. Nays: none. The motion passed unanimously.
- Motion to allocate the 2022 Sheridan Impact Fee
 - A motion was made by Trustee Taubman and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve River Forest Township allocating \$5000 from the 2022 Sheridan Impact Fee towards the purchase of an accessible minivan by Township Senior Services (including the capacity to deliver meals),

- Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Herrman, Strom and Taubman. Nays: none. The motion passed unanimously.
- Motion to allocate the 2023 Sheridan Impact Fee
 - A motion was made by Trustee Taubman and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve River Forest Township allocating \$5,000 of the 2023 Sheridan Impact Fee towards the upcoming mailing to River Forest residents about senior services.
 - Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Herrman, Strom and Taubman. Nays: none. The motion passed unanimously.
- Discuss the 2023 Levy
 - Supervisor Sloan indicated the vote would be in December with the proposal sent in November. The CPI is 6.5% again this year with the Township capped at 5% and the goal to be below 5% increase. Last year the Levy was a 4.5% increase and GA was -24%. Discussion followed. At this time, the Board supports a 4% increase in the Town Fund levy and a flat GA Fund levy.
- Discuss 2024 Board Meeting dates
 - Clerk Becvar distributed a list of proposed 2024 Board of Trustee meeting dates generally on the 3rd Tuesday of the month (except 2nd Tuesday in select months). Supervisor Sloan indicated the vote would be at the next meeting. We also discussed having the same Zoom for all 2024 meetings to simplify remote participation.

Announcement of the Next Regular Monthly Meeting

- The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township will be on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 6PM.

A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 PM. All were in favor and the motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
John Becvar, Clerk