



RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

Caring | Connection | Community

**River Forest Township Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 13, 2024**

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, at 6:09 PM. This was a meeting held both in person and electronically by Zoom.

Roll Call:

- Supervisor Sloan, Trustees: Helene Connolly, Deana Herrman, Keith Strom, and Karen Taubman.
- Also present: Clerk John Becvar, Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly, and RFCCA Facilities Administrator/RFCC Executive Director Dick Chappell.
 - Assessor Pam Kende participated via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Participation and Comments:

- Public was not in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

- A motion was made by Trustee Herrman and seconded by Trustee Strom to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2024 regular meeting.
 - The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

Assessor

- Assessor Kende stated 1st installment tax bills were sent out by Cook County on February 1 and are due March 1.
- The Exemption form roll out date is being changed; exemption forms will not be available or mailed until March.
- The Assessor's office continues to field questions regarding the Board of Review results and Property Tax Appeal Board (PTAB) appeals. 2024 Appeals will open once the Board of Review work is complete.
- The Assessor's office added 2023 statistics to the Efficiency report saying:
 - Over 5,000 phone calls incoming and outgoing per year
 - 754 appeal packets created for residents.
 - 43 exemptions filed for residents.
 - 52 Certificates of Error filed for residents with missing exemptions.

Mental Health Services (MHS)

- Mental Health Administrator Schwarting sent a written report saying *Parent University* will take place April 10 from 6-8:30pm at OPRF High School. The keynote speaker is Dr. Devorah Heitner talking about Social Media. There will also be two workshop sessions.
- She and Supervisor Sloan visited the new *NAMI* (National Alliance for Mental Illness) teen Living Room in Brookfield called The Loft at 8 Corners..
- The Mental Health Committee (MHC) will have funding recommendations for the March River Forest Board of Trustees meeting.
- The *Opioid Task Force* reconvened and is scheduling a strategic planning meeting to determine leadership structure and future goals.
- The D90 support group for parents of children with IEPs on February 1 had ~25 parents. Schwarting and Supervisor Sloan attended and presented local resources available to families for therapy, tutoring, and advocacy/support.

General Assistance (GA)

- Supervisor Sloan reported we continue to have one (1) GA client.

Senior Outreach Coordinator

- Senior Outreach Coordinator Kelly reported attending a focus group that Concordia Center for Gerontology held. Concordia is no longer holding classes specifically for 55 plus adults.
- Eric Morton from Triton came to the last Coffee Monday to talk about Lifelong Learning Classes. Triton is starting to offer senior trips as well.
- Oak Park and River Forest Townships Senior Services Committee and Youth & Family Services Committee jointly met to review an Intergenerational RFP for up to \$15,000. The Area Arts Council proposed working with the Aging in Community Commission (Village of Oak Park) to create a mural outside of the Senior Services Building. Further consideration is tabled until next year.
- Celebrating Seniors Week will be May 9-16. The RF Fire Department will likely do a home safety talk at The Sheridan. The Townships will likely host a Secretary of State Super Seniors “rules of the road” event.
- Supervisor Sloan shared that the Senior Home Repair Program has won a major Program Excellence Award from the International City/County Managers Association (ICMA). The program is a 4-way collaboration between the two townships and the two villages.

Youth and Family Services (YFS)

- Trustee Herrman said referrals to the Youth Engagement Program have increased.
- Trustee Herrman recommended contacting the IEP parents to see if any of them are interested in filling the two vacancies on the YFS Committee.
- The YFS Committee will have funding recommendations for the March River Forest Board of Trustees meeting. Discussion followed regarding recommendations for funding the “River Forest only” programs.

Supervisor’s Report

- Supervisor Sloan announced Evan Michel, new Township Manager at Oak Park Township (OPT), has officially started. Supervisor Sloan is reaching out to start work on renewing the 4 IGAs we have with OPT which are up for renewal on March 31.

- Sloan attended a legislative breakfast hosted by CSS, Oak Leyden, UCP Seguin and two other agencies. Of our legislators, Eileen Lynch, Senator Don Harmon's chief of staff, attended.
- Sloan attended the OPRF Community Foundation Communityworks Board meeting. Leadership Lab is spinning off from Communityworks support and which will now be called Community Connections Leadership Program, under guidance of Cathy Yen.
- Sloan gave a special shoutout to Township Clerk Becvar, who has done much of the work to complete the River Forest Township Policy Handbook.

Approval of Bills

- A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve River Forest Township operating fund bills as of February 29, 2024 in the amount of \$57,873.33 and General Assistance bills as of February 29, 2024 in the amount of \$3450.00.
 - Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Herrman, Strom, and Taubman. Nays: none. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- Efficiency Report Committee Update
 - Supervisor Sloan summarized the Committee meeting on January 29th.
 - The final draft of the Decennial Efficient Report is complete and is being circulated for final comments. We anticipate committee approval on March 11 and final Board approval on April 9.
- Collaboration Committee
 - Trustee Taubman provided a summary of the January meeting saying:
 - District 90 Schools: There is a new principal at Roosevelt Middle School, Tina Steketee. D90 will be hiring a new director for Curriculum and Instruction.
 - Public Library: The new Community Room renovations are nearing completion. The RFPL Foundation is hosting an *After Hours For Book Lovers* on February 23, from 7-9pm.
 - OPRF HS: The new Track and Field project is open to the public. The Athletics project has gone out to bid. The School Board decided to keep the current semester schedule instead of changing finals to January.
 - RF Park District: Finalized levy and working on long term plans. Washington Commons is complete, Constitution Park plans are finalized.
 - The next Collaboration Committee meeting is February 28 at 7pm in the RF Township office.
- Banking Update
 - The Township has set up and distributed the new Byline credit cards for Township employees. The existing 5/3 Bank cards will be kept in reserve.
 - Supervisor Sloan announced she will be moving the funds in the CD renewing at Forest Park Bank to Byline Bank.
 - The Township continues to gather ACH payment information and is planning a trial in March.
- Policy Handbook
 - Supervisor Sloan commented that we recently added "Committee Members and Volunteers" language to the Handbook draft that was previously circulated.

- Trustee Strom moved and Trustee Connolly seconded the motion to approve Resolution 2024-01 to approve the River Forest Township Policy Handbook as amended.
 - Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Herrman, Strom, and Taubman. Nays: none. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

- Raise Emergency Assistance (EA) Maximum Grant
 - Supervisor Sloan informed the Board that, at the recommendation of OPT, who administers the EA program for River Forest Township, she increased the maximum grant amount to \$1600 (from \$1200) to match what OPT offers, effective April 1. This will be a way to better help residents, since the average need is \$1800. Per Statute, EA and General Assistance (GA) recipients must be River Forest residents who are US citizens.
- Reminder March 1 is the last day for voters to request an agenda item for the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 9, 2024.

Announcement of the Next Regular Monthly Meeting

- The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township Board will be on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 6PM.

A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Strom to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 PM. All were in favor and the motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
John Becvar, Clerk