

RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, at 6:00 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance followed. 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, Mark Kelty and Helene Connolly, Also present: Clerk Abby Schmelling, Assessor Pamela Kende, Mental Health Services/General Assistance Administrator, Avis Rudner, RFCCA Administrator Dick Chappell, Township Attorney Pat Deady and Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Kelty to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2020 regular meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Participation

Supervisor Sloan introduced Deana Herrman, a River Forest resident and member of the Mental Health Committee running for Board of Trustees, Vanessa Druckman, potentially replacing Abby Schmelling as Township Clerk, and resident Keith Strom. Introductions were made to these guests.

Assessor

Pamela Kende

This year in the Assessor's office has differed from previous years.

- The Board of Review was closed for River Forest on August 28th and has reopened for appeal October 13 through November 1, 2020. This re-opening is due to changes/corrections issued by the Cook County Assessor's Office (CCAO) to over 900 property parcels in River Forest where they had previously certified and published their final values. The same has occurred in Oak Park and Riverside. Residents' assessments may or may not have been impacted by this recertification. If one has already submitted an appeal, they do not need to file again. If one previously missed the 30 day window to appeal at the Board of Review, they may now submit a new appeal through November 1, 2020.
- During this modified twenty day period, online users will have the ability to amend and supplement previously submitted arguments and related evidence. In addition, "new" complaints can be submitted during this time. However, there will be no additional "evidence submission" period.

- This has led to a huge uptick in phone calls, emails, and resident confusion. The Cook County Assessor has noted that he will be sending out letters to all who had their value changed, but letters have not yet been received.
- This has been one of the most challenging and busiest years on record for the River Forest Township Assessor's office. We will have been open twice for both the Assessor and Board of Review, for a total of 120 days. We were able to handle the volume of appeals (in the hundreds). Significant and ongoing resident education is required due to the triennial reassessment, appeals, Covid-19 reduction, and reopening of both the Assessor and the Board of Review. Many of our residents are uncertain of what of this means to their tax bill.

Other Assessor activities included:

- Updated website with press releases and information as well as archiving older press releases.
- Updated Village-wide calendar.
- Helped residents pay tax bills on time and online and through the phone.
- Attended CCTAA Zoom meetings.
- Fielded questions regarding new sale price and their relationship to a tax bill.
- Completing and verifying all permits sent to Cook County; deadline for 2020 permits is October 29.
- Processed Certificates of Error.
- Submitted Occupancy certificates.
- Working with Oak Park and Riverside to figure out the best approach to educate and advocate for our residents.

Mental Health Services/General Assistance

Avis Rudner

Avis has been out on leave; we are happy to see her at tonight's meeting. Carla gave Avis' report:

- Second quarter payments to agencies are being processed tonight. We are paying them as a flat grant, reflecting for most agencies 25% of the year's total grant, in order to help agencies streamline and have better cash flow during Covid-19's challenges. FY2021's contracts have all been signed and that process is complete. The Mental Health Committee meeting was cancelled for October. We will start preparing the FY2022 funding application in November.
- We have hired a new project manager for the HUB, Lynda Murphy, who comes to us from Infant Welfare Society, where she was the grants manager. Lynda has worked with the HUB and knows our communities well. She starts next week.
- Sibshops are underway with a solid group of 5 or 6 on Zoom. We received some excellent coverage in the local Neighbors magazine, thanks to Matt Baron.
- Carla attended the Sibshops facilitators' training, for four 90-minute sessions; it was excellent.

- Carla spoke about a proposed change in General Assistance management. River Forest Township doesn't have any GA clients at this time. We are proposing to partner with Oak Park Township for the remainder of the fiscal year, as a pilot, to engage OPT in processing our GA applications and managing any GA clients. Social service calls to River Forest will still be handled by RF Township staff

Youth Services

Carla Sloan

- Carla attended the Youth Services Committee meeting on October 7. Megan Traficano continues to work with each Youth Services program to see how services can best be delivered in the 2nd half of this fiscal year, given Covid restrictions. The FY2022 RFP is being prepared so it can be sent to grantees by the first of the year.
- Meetings continue with the OPRF High School staff and the D200 Wellness Collaboration to plan the fall parent support groups on November 18. Staff is seeing a strong need for parents to be supported at this time. Support groups will rely on humor and will take the place of the previously planned Parent University.

Senior Outreach Coordinator

Betsy Kelly

- Coffee Monday: Dr. Ed Condon, D90 Superintendent, talked about school planning during Covid. Up next month: Officer Ben Ransom on the Silver Alert system.
- Celebrating Seniors All Year Long: Beth Sair from the Chicago Architectural Center gave a presentation about the "talking statues" of Chicago.
- Dementia Friendly River Forest: the group discussed upcoming website launch and dementia training.
- Arbor West Neighbors: initiatives are under discussion to address the safety issues of "older adults wandering", with the police department, villages, townships, etc.
- Betsy is attending the Dementia Leadership Training with Pam Mahn and Carla; this training consists of four 4-hour sessions. Betsy mentioned the twelve pre-programmed headphones she distributed for use by people with dementia. Ned Wagner from Belmont Village received seven and sent photos of the residents using them.
- Meaningful Living, an 8-week wellness group for adults age 55+ will be starting up again at Concordia by Zoom November 4-December 23. Carla has been working with Matt Baron to get some strong media coverage.
- Oak Park Township and River Forest Township will be working with Thrive and seniors regarding mental health/suicide prevention.
- The Memoir/Genealogy program started by Cathaleen Roach won Program of the Year from the state ITASCSC senior organization. Pam Mahn also won the special Director of the Year award.
- Betsy is looking into a new opportunity, "Circle of Friends", and is going through training aimed at reaching out to seniors.

Supervisor's Report

Carla Sloan

- Carla attended the Administrator's Forum.
- Sue Quinn, the River Forest Public Library Director, is retiring this month.
- Carla attended the TIF Joint Review Board (JRB) meetings which saw the appointment of Susan Altier as resident liaison to the Madison Street TIF JRB.

Approval of Bills

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Kelty to approve Operating Fund bills as of October 31, 2020 in the amount of \$96,964.63. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Connolly, Kelty, Taubman and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously. Carla mentioned that all motions made on Zoom meetings require a full roll call.

Unfinished Business

- Carla gave a short infrastructure update mentioning the computer software upgrades.

New Business

- A motion was made by Trustee Helene Connolly and seconded by Trustee Kelty to approve Melinda Peterson as a new member of the River Forest Mental Health Committee. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Connolly, Kelty, Taubman and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.
- Carla announced the resignation of longtime Oak Park and River Forest Township Youth Services Committee member Dick Barrett, due to his moving downtown. She thanked Dick for his many years of dedicated service on the YSC.
- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve Nicole Paulk as a new member of the Oak Park and River Forest Township Youth Services Committee. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Connolly, Kelty, Taubman and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Trustee Taubman and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve the General Assistance application process and client maintenance pilot move to Oak Park Township. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Connolly, Kelty, Taubman and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.
- Carla gave an update on the Township Clerk position and introduced Vanessa Druckman who will also be running for this position in the spring election.
- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Kelty to implement in November 2020, the Supervisor and clerk CPI salary increases postponed from May 2020. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Connolly, Kelty, and Taubman. Supervisor Sloan abstained. The motion passed.

- There was discussion of the proposed elected official salaries for Supervisor and Clerk (effective May 2021-May 2025) and Assessor (effective January 2022-January 2026 which will be voted on in November by statute. Carla explained the summary specifics, especially the changes in the job of the Township Assessor. (Trustee Economos arrived).
- Carla talked briefly about the conversion of Executive Session minutes to Regular Meeting minutes.

Announcement of the Next Regular Monthly Meeting

The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township will be on Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 6:00 pm. A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Kelty to adjourn the meeting at 7pm. The motion was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted, Abby Schmelling, Clerk