

RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 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, Holly Economos and Helene Connolly, Also present: Clerk Abby Schmelling, Assessor Pamela Kende, Mental Health Services/General Assistance Administrator Avis Rudner, RFCCA Administrator Dick Chappell, Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly, Deana Herrman, Vanessa Druckman, Keith Strom, Mark Kelty and Village of River Forest Administrator Eric Palm.

Public Participation

Supervisor Sloan read a Proclamation of Appreciation (Resolution 2021-01) for Village of River Forest Administrator Eric Palm and a Proclamation of Appreciation (Resolution 2021-02) for former Township Trustee Mark Kelty. A motion was made by Trustee Economos and seconded by Trustee Taubman to pass these proclamations. The proclamations were approved unanimously.

Supervisor Sloan introduced Deana Herrman, a member of the Mental Health Committee who was appointed Trustee later in the meeting to replace Mark Kelty and will run for Board of Trustees in April 2021; Vanessa Druckman, who was appointed Clerk later in the meeting when Abby Schmelling resigned and will run for Clerk in April 2021; and resident Keith Strom who will run for Board of Trustees in April 2021. Introductions were made to these guests.

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Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Economos and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2020 regular meeting. Roll call was taken due to the zoom format. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Resignation and Swearing In

Trustee Economos made a motion to approve Deana Herrman as interim trustee. Trustee Connolly seconded the motion. Roll call was taken. The motion was approved unanimously.

Supervisor Sloan administered the oath of office to Trustee Herrman.

Clerk Schmelling submitted her resignation letter. Supervisor Sloan read Clerk Schmelling's letter and commended her for five years of service to the Township, including her genealogy work with Seniors which was awarded Illinois Program of the Year. A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Economos to accept Clerk Schmelling's resignation. Roll call was taken. The motion was approved unanimously.

Trustee Taubman made a motion to approve Vanessa Druckman as the acting Clerk of River Forest Township pending the April 2021 election. Trustee Economos seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Supervisor Sloan administered the oath of office to Clerk Druckman.

Assessor

Pamela Kende

- Due to Covid-19, all exemptions will automatically be renewed only for the year 2020 which is payable in 2021. All of those exemptions will be taken into account for the second installment payment. This includes homeowners, seniors, seniors freeze, disabled veterans and regular disabled.
- Due to Covid-19, 1st and 2nd installment tax bills will be deferred by two months penalty-free to May 1st.
- Homeowners who turn 66 years of age in 2021 will still need to file a senior prime exemption. We have a list of those seniors who have already contacted us. We will be sending them the forms that will be available in late February along with a return envelope.
- Worked with IT to replace software, computers, and printer.
- Board of Review has completed review process and has sent out assessment appeal decision letters. Have been fielding many calls and emails regarding what those decisions mean and providing guidance to residents who wish to appeal further in circuit court or PTAB.
- Scheduled virtual meeting with Tammy Wendt, new board of review commissioner for later this week.
- Updated Village calendar and assessor web pages.
- Submitted to Village of River Forest E-newsletter.
- Supervisor Sloan asked that Village of River Forest E-News update be sent to her before the last Tuesday in January.
- Certification by Board of Review will happen on February 3.

Senior Outreach Coordinator

Betsy Kelly

- Attended Circle of Friends and Thrive Suicide Prevention trainings.

- Betsy to speak at the next Coffee Monday in February about senior services in River Forest township in general.
- Circle of Friends initiative launching soon. Will combat senior social isolation. Small groups of 8 people will be brought together online initially, facilitated by Betsy. Working with Arbor West neighbors too, Barb Bodner will help facilitate.
- Village of River Forest voted to move forward with senior home repair assistance program in partnership with River Forest Township, Oak Park Township as well as Northwest Housing. Sliding scale fee structure based on income for older adults. Will be a one year pilot. Last step is for Village of Oak Park to vote on initiative.
- Thrive Suicide prevention will host a training on 2/18 for those who work with or care for older adults.
- In Case of Emergency (ICE) packets have been distributed to a few seniors who requested them.
- Meeting tomorrow with the Sheridan, the new senior living facility on Chicago and Harlem which is set to open in next few months. No move in date at this time.
- Discussion took place on how to help seniors find vaccines. Many seniors are calling with growing concern on how to get vaccinated.

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:

- 12/16 - Funding applications sent out for fiscal year 2022.
- Held January Mental Health Committee meeting. Brainstormed on working more productively and finding new partners.
- February Mental Health Committee Meeting will feature a panel of parents from FRED, a support group for parents of kids with mental health needs and disabilities.
- New Agencies to fund:
 - FRED has applied for funding for ongoing support for their new website. Exciting to help fund this critical need. Great use of funds and proof that small dollars can have a big impact.
 - Trustee Hermann introduced us to Progress Center for Independent Living. Hope they apply for funds in 2022.
- Continue to meet regularly with the HUB team, Lynda Murphy is a wonderful project manager for the HUB. Developing "roadmap" plan for the next few months. The Pro Bono Network was added to HUB.
- Sibshops started up again on Zoom on 1/16.

Youth Services

Carla Sloan

- Supervisor Sloan attended the Youth Services Committee meeting on January 6 which was “Contractors’ Night”. Excellent meeting because many of the attendees had submitted funding applications.
- Funding applications have been submitted to Youth Services and are being reviewed by the Youth Services Committee for next two months.
- ISearch is a program funding by the River Forest Township and the River Forest Police Department bringing local police to schools for relevant presentations. They have created a video presentation to reach the D90 students during COVID.
- Meetings continue with the OPRF High School staff and the D200 Wellness Collaboration to plan Parent University on March 24 by zoom. Focus will be on Mindfulness, Coping Mechanisms, Mental Health, and pandemic related topics. Parents will select 3 topics out of a choice of 6.
- PYD conversation cards continue to be distributed. Available for pick-up at River Forest Community Center.

Supervisor’s Report

Carla Sloan

- Supervisor Sloan has been working with IT to transition Clerk Druckman into her new role.
- Supervisor Sloan has been meeting with both Comcast and Access One to review phone and internet options for the township. There are pros and cons to both vendors. A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Economos to approve being able to use either Comcast or Access One as our phone and internet solution. Roll call was taken. Motion was approved unanimously.

Approval of Bills

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Economos to approve Operating Fund bills as of January 31, 2021 in the amount of \$50,579.76. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Connolly, Economos, Hermann, Taubman and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. Roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- Carla gave a short infrastructure update mentioning the computer software upgrades.
- 2020 Levy has been filed. Because of COVID, it no longer needs to be Fedexed and can simply be uploaded.
- 2021 Election - Certificate of Ballot has been filed.
- 2021 Meeting Dates have been published.

New Business

- none

Announcement of the Next Regular Monthly Meeting

The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township will be on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 6:00 pm. A motion was made by Trustee Economos and seconded by Trustee Taubman to adjourn the meeting at 6:48pm. Roll call was taken. The motion was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Druckman, Clerk