

RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, February 16, 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: Holly Economos, Deana Herrman and Helene Connolly, Also present: Clerk Vanessa Druckman, Assessor Pamela Kende, Mental Health Services/General Assistance Administrator Avis Rudner, RFCCA Administrator Dick Chappell, Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly.

Public Participation: Keith Strom.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Economos and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021 regular meeting. Roll call was taken due to the zoom format. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Assessor

Pamela Kende

- River Forest was certified with the Cook County Board of Review on February 3rd. Our office received the results file yesterday. A few residents inquired about the opportunity to appeal to a higher entity, Property Tax Appeal Board (PTAB). Assessor Kende reminds all residents considering appealing beyond the Board of Review is that PTAB, unlike the Board of Review, can increase your assessment if they deem it under assessed.
- 1st installment tax bills arrived in the mail. Tax bills are also available on-line. 1st installment tax bills are 55% of the total amount paid in the previous year. All exemptions and changes in assessment are taken into account on the second installment tax bill. 2nd installment tax bills may be sent out later than the usual date of July 1st. Both tax bills in 2021 will have a penalty free grace period of 2 months. Discussion ensued.
- Submitted an article for the Village E-newsletter. Updated Assessor's website with press releases, new information and hyper-links.
- Attended CCTAA and informational exemption zoom meetings. Cook County Assessor's office has informed us that most exemptions are now going to be done using only Docusign. Assessor Kende anticipates this to be a problem for some of our senior population as some seniors do not use or own computers. She is actively working on a solution.

- Assessor Kende has purchased two new laptop computers that will update our office and have the flexibility to go to senior homes to help them get their exemptions even if they do not have a computer.
- Submitted Occupancy Certificates and processed Certificates of Errors.
- Fielded questions from River Forest residents regarding renovations and their relationship to future tax bills.
- Supervisor Sloan mentioned that due to the grace period in property tax payments, our operating balance is low: down to \$32,000. May need to cash in some CD accounts to cover the operating fund cash shortfall due to the timing issue.

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:

- 11 funding applications were received by the January 20th deadline from existing agencies. A 12th funding application was received from the Progress Center for Independent Living, located in Forest park, to which Deana had connected us. We are excited to be reviewing an application from a new agency.
- In FY2022, we plan to revert to fee-for-service grants for most agencies. In FY2021 agencies were paid flat grants on a quarterly basis to help them better cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- FRED, the local parent support group for parents of kids with mental health issues and disabilities, has nearly completed their website, which the Township funded. Very exciting step forward for FRED, who previously did not have a website. Website is www.fredparentsupportgroup.com. For FY2022, FRED has applied for a small amount of funding to maintain the website.
- The February MHC meeting was held on the 9th. 2 FRED parents were our guest speakers who shared their needs and experiences. Excellent meeting.
- Supervisor Sloan was a lunch guest of Opportunity Knocks staff and warriors. Great example of how they are keeping programming going through zoom. The young adults do quite well with the technology.
- Avis Rudner to retire in 2021. No official end date at this time. Avis said, "It was wonderful to spend 10 years with the River Forest Township." Avis was with the Oak Park Township before joining the River Forest Township. Total of 30 years of service to our joint townships.

Senior Outreach Coordinator

Betsy Kelly

- Circle of Friends began on 2/11. Will run for 12 weeks on Thursdays at 3PM with a group of 8 women. Joint facilitation with Betsy and Barb Bodner of Arbor West Group.

One of the facilities has poor WiFi so will shift to those participants using cell phone for future meetings.

- Met with Senior Citizen Service Council Collaboration and had an interesting presentation on Point in Time Organization which rehabs convents into senior homes.
- Attending different meetings on isolation and digital divide for older adults.
- Attending Thrive Suicide Prevention presentation on Thursday.
- Access to vaccination is a great concern for our seniors. Directing them to the Cook County Department of Public Health website for information.
- Meeting with the Sheridan Senior Living Center was very productive. They offered their community space for our use. We gave them the River Forest Township presentation on our many programs and services which they found very interesting. Included a discussion on areas of need and past surveys. Follow-up meeting to talk about next steps on working together to be scheduled.
- Betsy spoke at the last February Coffee Monday about senior services. Next Coffee Monday will feature ML Wahlfeld and Susan Lucci.
- Assessor Kende has provided a list to Supervisor Sloan of senior exemption holders. List only counts one senior per household but is very useful for communication purposes. Significant change in numbers since 2016 - from 800 to 1,000.
- In Case of Emergency (ICE) packets have been distributed to two seniors who requested them.
- Working with Arbor West Neighbors on Trustee and Candidate Forums they have been having. They are having a forum Thursday night with the Village of River Forest president and trustee candidates specifically focused on older adult concerns in River Forest.

Youth Services

Carla Sloan

- Attended the YSC meeting on Feb 9. At this meeting, the River Forest committee members approved the two River Forest programs, I-Search, which we fund with the RF Police and takes place in D90 schools, and the Connections Program, which occurs after school at the River Forest Library for the middle school kids.
- Since the I-Search team cannot meet in person with the kids, they have made a video to help in their outreach efforts, which Supervisor Sloan shared with the YSC members.
- Plans are being finalized by the D200 Wellness Collab to host a Parent University March 24 at 6:30 pm by zoom. There will be 6 topics and parents will choose 3; topics include mindfulness and other coping mechanisms, mental health, substance use as a poor choice for coping, pandemic-related topics. Speakers consist of experts in those fields. We are hoping for a great crowd.

Supervisor's Report

Carla Sloan

- Supervisor Sloan attended the TOCC Supervisors Division meeting. Guest speaker and lobbyist Taylor Anderson spoke about Townships still being threatened in Springfield by those who tout the reduction in property taxes if you eliminate Townships, even though they know the facts to be otherwise. Spoke about the importance of the changes to the Rules in the Illinois House under the new Speaker: Rep. Chris Welsh.
- Supervisor Sloan attended the Administrators' Meeting. It was Eric Palm's last and Lisa Scheiner will be filling in for him until after the April election. It was the first administrator's meeting for Emily Compton-Szak who is the new River Forest Public Library Director. She came from the Winnetka-Northfield Public Library. Supervisor Sloan reached out to Emily to introduce herself and discuss working together.

Approval of Bills

- A motion was made by Trustee Economos and seconded by Trustee Herrman to approve Operating Fund bills as of February 28, 2021 in the amount of \$67,659.39 and an additional amount of \$1,147.49. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Connolly, Economos, Herrmann, and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. Roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- Continue to work with IT and Comcast to install the internet, fix bugs in remote access, and lay groundwork for a new phone system. New internet is wired but not yet hooked up, because we need to verify a few things with IT people. Disappointed that we still have bugs with the remote access but we are working through them.

New Business

- none
- Trustee Herrman asked about the 2017 Community Health Plan and the plans to update it. Discussion ensued. All agreed to review the 2017 plan.

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 Connolly to adjourn the meeting at 6:43pm. Roll call was taken. The motion was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Druckman, Clerk