

RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Monday, September 21, 2021 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, at 6:00 pm. This was a meeting held both in person and electronically by Zoom.

Roll called: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees: Deana Herrman, Karen Taubman, Keith Strom, Helene Connolly. Also present: Clerk Vanessa Druckman, Dick Chappell, Assessor Pam Kende and Mental Health Services Administrator Sarah Schwarting.

Public Participation: Joanna Strom, Kathryn Schmahl (Mental Health Committee candidate)

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Herrman to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2021 regular meeting. Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Strom, Herrman, Connolly and Taubman. Nays: none. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Assessor

Pamela Kende

- Tax bills came out late this year with a due date of October 1st. Assessor Kende is working to get corrected tax bills due to missing exemptions by filling Certificate of Errors online for residents. The Cook County Assessor is very slow to process these Certificates of Error. Assessor Kende is also talking to residents about their property assessment and the appeal process.
- The Cook County Assessor has not certified River Forest for the 2021 assessment. This has delayed the Board of Review from opening. The River Forest Assessor's office does not have any information about when the Cook County Assessor will certify River Forest, nor do they know when the Board of Review will open.
- Assessor Kende revised an article that the Village was going to put in their e-newsletter regarding the 2nd installment tax bills.
- Assessor Kende continues to work with realtors and lawyers. There have also been calls regarding vacancy, sales, exemptions and possible purchases and tax implications.
- To better serve a few seniors with their exemption issues, Assessor Kende has had them come into the office for assistance. These are our first visitors since March 2020.
- Assessor Kende is working with the Village to resolve computer glitches with their new online permit filing system.
- Assessor Kende is taking continuing education classes.

Mental Health Services/General Assistance

Sarah Schwarting

- Sarah Schwarting stated that FY2022 grants contracts have been signed by all eleven funded mental health agencies.
- Sarah has met with 7 of the 11 agency directors. She reports that most agencies are hiring and she has assisted them in promoting their open positions on LinkedIn.
- Sarah has put together a one-sheet document using Canva to share on Instagram to get the word out about the agencies we work with.
- Sarah has created a LinkedIn page for the River Forest Township.
- The October Mental Health Committee meeting will feature Diane Farina White from Community Support Services.
- Lila Pagni has announced that she is leaving the Mental Health Committee after 5 years of service, due to her upcoming move to Oak Park. Her contributions are greatly appreciated and she will be missed.
- Supervisor Sloan and Sarah Schwarting will be meeting with the HUB team on 10/20 to plan the upcoming year.
- Cheryl Potts will be replacing Lisa DeVivo as Executive Director of the Oak Park Community Mental Health Board. Lisa is retiring after 13 years and has led a wonderful partnership with River Forest Township.
- Supervisor Sloan gave an overview of a useful one-page document summarizing our program funding of the I/DD and mental health agencies.
- Supervisor Sloan stated that April Dugal at the Oak Park Township continues to efficiently manage General Assistance and screen River Forest clients.
- Supervisor Sloan announced that Kelly Arquette has replaced Patty Henek as the head of the Holiday Food and Gift Basket program.

Senior Outreach Coordinator

Betsy Kelly

Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly was out of town and Supervisor Sloan gave her update.

- Betsy attended her regular monthly meetings.
- Betsy continues to send out Community Connect every week and River Forest email monthly. She is continuing to train on using Constant Contact for the River Forest mailing and the Community Connect mailing.
- Trustee Strom and Carla Mayer spoke about the Hemingway Foundation at the latest Coffee Monday. The “Celebrating Seniors All Year Long” presentation on container gardening was also a success.

- Betsy is finalizing plans for the Aging Well/Balance Grace Lutheran event which will be held virtually on 10/3.
- The Arbor West Housing Forum for the “Missing Middle” has been postponed until spring.
- Katy Schwartz who runs a home sharing program in Palos Heights will speak at the October Committee Meeting.
- The Circle of Friends organized with Mather is now over. Five meetings took place over phone and zoom. It was a good experience but not in the prescribed format for Circle of Friends (too many people and too short a time). Betsy is hoping to start a new Circle of Friends in October. Three people are currently interested and Betsy is trying to recruit 2-3 more.
- Betsy visited the Township Senior Services office to meet with Kristin Norman and spread the word about Circle of Friends.
- Betsy met with Pam Mahn to discuss home sharing. She also reached out to Dominican University to gauge their graduate students’ interest.
- Betsy has been working with Barb Bodner from Arbor West Neighbors to talk with social services at Rush OP and Chicago about services available for seniors.
- Betsy confirmed that our community will hold the 10th Celebrating Seniors Week in May 2022.
- Betsy is working on planning the Coffee Mondays for the winter.
- There is one opening on the Senior Services Committee.

Youth Services

Carla Sloan

- Supervisor Sloan announced that the Youth Services Committee scheduled for 9/8 did not have a quorum from the Oak Park side and was postponed a week.
- YSC member Nicole Paulk is relocating to Indianapolis and is therefore resigning from the committee. Nicole was a strong contributor to the last grant funding process. We thank Nicole as we look for a new member to replace her.
- Megan Traficano is still on maternity leave, but things are running smoothly in her absence. Amanda Stephens, PYD manager under Kelly O’Connor, has left to work in private practice closer to her home.

Supervisor’s Report

Carla Sloan

- The Townships of Cook County (TOCC) Supervisors Divisions officers met in September. The October meeting will take place at River Forest Township.
- The Rotary Food Truck Rally was a great day, although turnout was lower than previous years, due in part to the hot weather.
- Supervisor Sloan attended the Administrator’s Meeting. River Forest Fire Chief Kurt Bohlmann retired after 31 years of service. The police department has numerous

openings. The Park District is beginning the design planning of the Keystone tennis courts renovation. They are also redoing the Priory north baseball fields. D200 will be holding the homecoming dance outside and in shifts. The D200 student resource addition will be operational in January. Greg Johnson is the new D200 superintendent. D200 student vaccination rate is over 80% and staff vaccination rate is over 85%. In D90, staff vaccination rate is 98%. Air conditioning projects for D90 are now complete.

- Collaboration Sub-Committee - Trustee Taubman attended the meeting where they discussed the impact of COVID, early childhood resources, and the history of welcome wagons in River Forest. The sub-committee plans to meet every 6-8 weeks.

Approval of Bills

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve Operating Fund bills as of September 30, 2021 in the amount of \$29,846. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Herrman, Taubman, Strom, Connolly and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Strom to approve a payment for Hutchinson Associates in the amount of \$2,266.67. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Herrman, Taubman, Strom, Connolly and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- At the August meeting, the board approved the hiring of Hutchinson Associates to redesign the River Forest Township website, contingent upon him explaining the range in cost of his proposal. Hutch subsequently explained that the range is contingent on changes in scope. Trustee Herrman provided valuable feedback on the importance of website accessibility and getting input from the community. Clerk Druckman will be putting together a survey to share with committee members and other community members to get feedback on desired website functionality. The signed agreement will be sent to Hutchinson Associates tomorrow and the other RFP firms will be notified..Kick off meeting with Hutchinson Associates will take place later this month.

New Business

- Supervisor Sloan announced that the Annual Treasurer's Report for the Township Fund and the General Assistance Fund has been filed, published and posted.
- A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to approve the addition of Kathryn Schmahl to the Mental Health Committee. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Herrman, Taubman, Strom, Connolly and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

- A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Connolly to increase the hourly rate of Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly from \$25 to \$27 after her 15 months of service to the River Forest Township. Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Herrman, Taubman, Strom, Connolly and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

Announcement of the Next Regular Monthly Meeting

The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township will be on Tuesday, October 19, 2021 at 6:00 pm. A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Taubman to adjourn the meeting at 6:51pm. Roll call was taken. The motion was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Druckman, Clerk