

# **RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP**

## **Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 21, 2023**

The regular monthly meeting of the RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP Board of Trustees was called to order on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 by Supervisor Carla Sloan, at 6:04PM. This was a meeting held both in person and electronically by Zoom.

**Roll called:** Supervisor Sloan, Trustees: Keith Strom, Helen Connolly, and Karen Taubman. Also present: Clerk Vanessa Druckman, Assessor Pam Kende, RFCC executive director Dick Chappell, Mental Health Services Administrator Sarah Schwarting, and Senior Outreach Coordinator Betsy Kelly.

Absent: Deana Herrman (excused).

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Public Participation:** None.

### **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Trustee Taubman and seconded by Trustee Strom to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2022 regular meeting.

Roll call was taken. Yeas: Supervisor Sloan, Trustees Connolly, Strom, and Taubman. Nays: none. The minutes were approved unanimously.

### **Assessor**

### **Pamela Kende**

- Assessor Kende said that her team is enjoying seeing people in the office again, and have had 5 residents come to their office.
- Assessor Kende said that first installment tax bills are delayed and have a new due date of April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Her office has been informed by the Cook County Assessor that the exemption form process is being revamped. They will learn details at the upcoming Cook County Assessor's meeting.
- Assessor Kende fielded questions regarding the new sale price, upcoming reassessments, and their relationship to a tax bill.
- Assessor Kende processed Certificates of Error.
- Assessor Kende stated that the Board of Review closed December 27<sup>th</sup>. Her team fielded questions regarding when the Board of Review will announce their results. Results were emailed on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Helped residents with Board of Review re-review appeals.

- Assessor Kende updated the Assessor's website and submitted Village E-newsletter information.
- Assessor Kende sent out a Constant Contact notice to inform residents about 1<sup>st</sup> installment tax bill delay, Senior Tax Deferral Program and delayed exemption forms. She added some Constant Contact stats: Very highly rated  
69% open rate (within 2 days) - 66% desktop and 34% mobile phone  
49 new contacts  
195 Clicked through

### **Senior Outreach Coordinator**

### **Betsy Kelly**

- Betsy attended the initial Celebrating Seniors Week (CSW) meeting at Mohr Center. CSW is May 11-18. She plans to do a few events with River Forest Park District, a Secretary of State "Rules of the Road" event led by Township Senior Services, a fall risk assessment with a local physical therapy group, and an Introduction to Reminiscing class. She also plans to open the regular Thursday mahjong group to CSW attendees.
- Betsy attended a California HomeShare group monthly meeting. She also joined the Generations United intergenerational network to talk about creative intergenerational housing options. She spoke with a woman from the University of Chicago that is working with a group that will be creating a senior building in Chicago.
- Betsy reported that she met with Carla and Vanessa to discuss a mailing to River Forest residents to let them know about River Forest senior services available, including the HomeSharing pilot. Mailing is targeted for April 2023.
- Betsy met with Brenda Powers at the Forest Park Mohr Center to learn more about their programming.
- Betsy said that the impact fee funds provided to the River Forest Township from the Sheridan (\$10,000/ year) can possibly go towards the mailing and to costs associated with the HomeSharing pilot; snow removal and home improvements could be other uses of the impact fee funds.
- Betsy said that Kelsey Gordon from Age Options talked about benefits for older adults at the latest Coffee Monday. She also planned the rest of the Coffee Mondays through August.
- Betsy and Carla met with Prof. Julie Bach at Dominican University School of Social Work to discuss her reminiscing class and a pilot project for the summer. The Senior Wellness Groups at Concordia are no longer happening; we are hoping that Dominican might be interested in creating something new.

- Betsy announced that the asset mapping meeting with Arbor West Neighbors will be taking place in March with many other agencies from the community.
- Betsy reported that Community Connect will now be published twice a month and the River Forest senior newsletter email will be published once a month.

## **Mental Health Services**

**Sarah Schwarting**

- Sarah reported that Dr. Doug Bolton has been confirmed as the keynote speaker at the D200 Parent University on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Supervisor Sloan added that we are partnering with D90, D97, Fenwick and Trinity to help “fill the room” more effectively.
- Sarah said that Positive Youth Development (PYD) hosted the marijuana prevention town hall on the 9<sup>th</sup>, during which about 13 community members listened to speakers and shared their views surrounding keeping kids away from marijuana. Supervisor Sloan also attended. PYD continues to share the health dangers of marijuana and has stated that a new dispensary is going to open in Forest Park.
- Sarah reported that Q3 checks for the agencies are ready to be mailed. Supervisor Sloan added that she and Sarah have been working with the agencies who may be underspending this fiscal year to see if they have other related areas where they can use some of the excess funds. They are also working with an agency who has serviced 70% more RF residents than anticipated to redirect funds to support that effort. She concluded that in the end, we want to be flexible to support the agencies if the need and their activity can justify it.
- Sarah said that the Mental Health Committee (MHC) members are wrapping up their site visits and all reports are due to her by Feb 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Sarah said that progress is being made on revising the 2015 mental health resource guide. She and Carla met to discuss what information should be included. These will be mailed out in the spring.
- Sarah is currently working on a site visit template form. MHC will be again conducting site visits this fall in advance of the FY2025 grant process. Typically, site visits have taken place after grants have been submitted; we hope this change will make the site visits more effective.
- Supervisor Sloan attended the MHC meeting; she noted there are many new members. She offered historical perspective and reasons why we do things. Sarah is also in the process of adding more information to the new MHC member orientation packet.
- Sarah met with the Addiction Recovery Team on Thursday to talk about the upcoming events ride for recovery and overdose awareness day. She reports that Daryl Stuermer

may be interested in participating in the entertainment for an event next year, and that can start to be organized in August of this year.

- Sarah said that the River Forest Township's LinkedIn social media page's URL was updated so that the page would get more views.
- Supervisor Sloan said that they will likely ramp down the HUB when the contract with Find Help ends in September; further conversations with agencies support that decision.
- Supervisor Sloan said she worked with Cathaleen Roach to send out a mailing about LOSS to agencies, faith-based communities, and mental health providers, to more effectively get the word out about the LOSS program and its benefits.

### **General Assistance**

**Carla Sloan**

- Supervisory Sloan reported that the River Forest Township currently has one GA client.
- Supervisor Sloan met with Gavin Morgan and April Dugal at OPT to discuss Emergency Assistance (EA). Both Townships plan to start the EA program April 1. To recap, EA uses GA funds to help someone out of a "life threatening" emergency which can include rent, utilities, auto for work, and health care. EA is a once annual grant which, when combined with other funds, solves the problem at hand.
- Supervisor Sloan said SB1430 goes to committee hearing tomorrow. This bill is an effort to expand the use of GA funds. Currently, use of GA funds is very restricted, such that few people can access the funds, and GA fund balances have grown. Townships want to serve more people in need and use GA fund balances. She has reached out to Senator Don Harmon to support this bill.

### **Youth and Family Services**

**Carla Sloan and Trustee Herrman**

*Committee report read by Clerk Druckman in Trustee Herrman's absence.*

- Trustee Herrman reported that Youth Engagement Program specialists are almost at capacity.
- Trustee Herrman reported that Girls on the Rise (GOTR) is at 110 girls across all programs. Supervisor Sloan added that GOTR is scheduled to start at Willard on March 13. The population at Lincoln is too small to start a group this year, but the social workers plan to do so next year.
- Trustee Herrman said that Youth Services admin assistant Jacob Matson will be switching to Community Justice Manager.

- Trustee Herrman reported that Narcan availability is an initiative out of Township Youth Services/opioid task force. Youth Services team and OP Public Library security are trained in use. Narcan is available in various spots in Oak Park.
- Trustee Herrman said that Oak Park Township has two open spots on the Youth and Family Services Committee (YFSC).
- The following is an overview of the funding proposals reviewed at the YFSC:
  - River Forest Only: Lincoln Belonging and Inclusion Committee: New group that is developing curriculum for teachers and does events around inclusion, cultural humility. Has been in Lincoln school and has good use/satisfaction from educators there. **YFSC recommends \$6940.**
  - River Forest Only: RF Public Library Connections programming: After school programming for middle schoolers –maker spaces, gaming, to movies. Always well attended. **YFSC recommends \$5,553.**
  - River Forest Only: ISearch: RF Police department and ISearch program staff educating K-8 students about various safety protocols for physical safety, drugs and vaping, cyber safety, etc. Application did not indicate any new programming or materials. YFSC felt the program will run because it is a part of the RF police department. **YFSC recommends partial funding of \$3000.**
  - Joint OP/RF: Intramurals at OPRFHS. **YFSC recommends \$9000 (20% RF).**
  - Joint OP/RF: Clean up Give Back: New environmental awareness group that does clean up and recycling in OPRF area with a teen-led board. **YFSC recommends \$2140 (20% RF).**
  - Joint OP/RF: STEM robotics at Concordia: Longstanding strong program, but issues with data/participation/demographics reporting and exclusive reliance on Township funding. **YFSC recommends partial funding of \$6,000 (50% RF).**
  - Joint OP/RF: Friday Night Place: Long time program but issues with program and succession plan. Program in some form likely to move under OP Park District when new CRC opens. Supervisor Sloan questions RF participation. **YFSC recommends no funding.**
  - Joint OP/RF: Themani Mental Health/Counseling: new support services for families of youth/people with disabilities offered out of Calvary Church which include counseling, support groups, buddy programming in a “Christian counseling” lens. Committee members wanted more information about methods and goals of Christian counseling (concerns about this from many members), credentials of counselors, who and how many will be served. **YFSC recommends more information.**
- Supervisor Sloan added that several new programs applied for Youth Services funding this year, which is wonderful since we have not had new applicants in a long while.

Wonder Works Children's Museum is a new applicant whose grant will be reviewed. Some longtime grantees may receive reduced funding as we have funded them for an extended period and they need to look for more sustainable sources of funding.

## **Supervisor's Report**

**Carla Sloan**

- Supervisor Sloan announced that the TOCC Supervisor's Division meeting was in Elk Grove Village last month. An attorney from Ancel Glink advised that we wait to form the committee to do the Local Government Efficiency Study, as TOI is preparing template forms and guidelines for the report.
- Supervisor Sloan has been doing a lot this month to wrap up the year-end bills. Some of this work includes calculating what the RFCC needs to reimburse us for the building insurance and the POTS lines, and Supervisor Sloan has sent those analyses to Dick and to Jane.
- Supervisor Sloan said that Annual Township Lobby Day is April 26 in Springfield, but she is unable to attend this year. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.
- Supervisor Sloan attended the JRB meetings for the Madison Street and North Avenue TIF's.

## **Approval of Bills**

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve River Forest Township operating fund bills as of February 28, 2023 in the amount of \$119,510.76.

Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Strom, Connolly, Taubman, and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

- A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve River Forest Township General Assistance Fund bills as of February 28, 2023 in the amount of \$2,700.

Roll was called. Ayes: Trustees Strom, Connolly, Taubman, and Supervisor Sloan. Nays: None. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Unfinished Business**

- Vanessa Druckman provided an update of the website redesign. She met with Supervisor Sloan to finalize the Youth Services pages organization and content last week. She created a Youth Services copy document that she submitted to Supervisor Sloan today for approval to submit to Hutchinson Associates to create the pages. She reported that the Mental Health and Resident Services section are now fully built. She stated that as soon

as the Youth Services section is built, 3-5 days after copy submission, we can move on to Vanessa editing each page of the website in preparation for 4/1 launch.

- Trustee Taubman reported highlights from the Collaboration Sub-committee meeting.
  - The Village of RF Administrator resigned for health reasons. The new Village of RF Fire Chief has started. NE Village resident traffic complaints have caused changes in traffic flow, the changes are temporary for now pending a traffic survey. Once the survey is complete, permanent decisions will be made. The Village has received mixed feedback about streetlights. The Village Trustee incumbents are running unopposed.
  - In D90, five people are running for three open board positions. Larry Garski is retiring after the 2023-2024 school year. The board has decided to do a full day Kindergarten investigation/task force and have determined it could be done within the building footprints. They need to determine source of funds to support additional personnel expenses. The D90 website has a presentation recorded on technology in the schools.
  - The RF Public Library reported that the air handler project is underway. The strategic plan is complete and will be posted on website by May 1st. There are three open positions on the board; 2 incumbents and 1 new person will run unopposed.
  - River Forest Park District reported that 3 people are running for 3 spots. Keystone Park work has halted for now. They expect an early June completion; it will not affect spring sports in RF. Washington Park will begin construction this year, with an expectation of fall completion, and will be an ADA compliant park. The Park District is reviewing all park space in RF to enhance facilities, and provide optimal areas in RF.

## **New Business**

- Supervisor Sloan reported that we have once engaged NFP Audit and Tax to conduct our FY2023 audit. We signed a 1-year engagement letter for \$6500. Costs have gone up significantly since last year's \$5600, but this appears to be the case across the board. There are not many auditors willing to take on a small organization like ours, so staying with NFP Audit and Tax appears to be the smartest move. The audit is scheduled for June 13.
- Supervisor Sloan said that a new front-end services agreement is needed with the River Forest Community Center, as the current agreement dates to April 2015. We utilize some of the services of the RF CC for the sake of efficiency and cost savings. These costs include IT/server, bookkeeping, and admin services. We are proposing a new agreement starting April 1, 2023 for discussion tonight. The updated contract will be voted on at our March 21 meeting.
- A motion was made by Trustee Strom and seconded by Trustee Taubman to approve Phillip Buta for membership on the Mental Health Committee.

All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

- Supervisor Sloan added that both Oak Park and River Forest Townships would like to start offering Emergency Assistance starting April 1. This addition is at the discretion of the Township Supervisor and does not need a vote. Emergency Assistance uses General Assistance funds for a once annual grant to address and resolve a life-threatening emergency.

### **Announcement of the Next Regular Monthly Meeting**

The next regular meeting of the River Forest Township will be on Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 6 pm. A motion was made by Trustee Connolly and seconded by Trustee Strom to adjourn the meeting at 7:30PM. All were in favor and the motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Druckman, Clerk