

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
February 9th, 2026**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on February 9th, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue – River Forest, IL.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Brennan, Bachner, Gillis, Keskitalo, Vazquez, O’Connell, and Village Clerk Castellano

Absent: Village Administrator Matt Walsh

Also Present: Village Attorney Lance Malina, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, Fire Chief Tom Gaertner, Deputy Fire Chief Dave Bochenek, Director of Public Works and Engineering Jack Bielak, Deputy Police Chief Michael Swierczynski, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, HR Manager Trish Ivansek, Deputy Clerk Luke Masella, and Assistant to the Director of Public Works Seth Jansen.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3.SPECIAL PRESENTATION

a. Fire Department Guardian Award – Emilia Huggins

Representatives from the River Forest Fire Department presented to the Village Board of River Forest and recognized Emilia Huggins as the recipient of the 2026 guardian award. The department briefly summarized the January 7, 2026, incident and commended her quick actions in alerting her family, which allowed for a safe evacuation and a prompt emergency response.

4.CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

5. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Bachner gave a land acknowledgment.

Trustee Gillis recognized Emilia Huggins for receiving the Guardian Award and expressed appreciation to Village staff and Five ThirtyOne Partners for their contributions to the Village's recent open house events. She also extended Valentine's Day wishes to the community and noted that a graduate of Fenwick High School had recently highlighted the school during an NFL game.

Trustee Vasquez's highlighted attending the West Central Municipal Conference breakfast along with other members of the Board and Village Staff.

Clerk Castellano had nothing to add to the record.

Trustee Brennan recognized Emilia Huggins for her award and noted the presence of her teachers in the audience in support of her. She also extended condolences to the family of former Village President Frank Paris. In addition, she congratulated Village Administrator Matt Walsh and his wife on the birth of their son.

Trustee Keskitalo thanked the Fire Department for its ongoing service and recognized the Village's Public Works Department for their efforts throughout the winter months. She also highlighted key points from the Public Works monthly report, noting that winter operations may have helped keep the number of traffic crashes relatively low.

Trustee O'Connell expressed condolences to the Paris family and highlighted key accomplishments of Frank Paris during his tenure. He also congratulated Village Administrator Matt Walsh and his wife on the birth of their child and reminded residents of the upcoming Presidents' Day closure of Village Hall. He then thanked staff for their work on the open houses.

President Adduci thanked Trustee Keskitalo for highlighting the work of the Public Works Department and expressed appreciation to staff for their efforts. She congratulated Village Administrator Matt Walsh and his wife on the birth of

their child and reminded the trustees that Mr. Walsh is currently on parental leave, asking for their patience and understanding as staff manage operations in his absence.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – January 26th, 2026
- b. Administration Department Report
- c. Monthly Department Reports
- d. Accounts Payable – January 2026 – \$2,713,874.84
- e. Proclamation Commemorating Black History Month
- f. Proclamation Recognizing National Engineers Week – February 22nd through 28th
- g. Updated Mutual Aid Agreement – Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network (IPWMAN) – Resolution
- h. Agreement Amendment – Vera Mobility – Automated Traffic Enforcement Systems
- i. Contract Approval – Professional Services – Jasculca Terman Strategic Communications – \$60,000.00
- j. Award of Contract – Concrete Water Reservoir Rehabilitation Project, Construction – Era Valdivia Contractors, Inc.– \$177,980.00
- k. Award of Contract – Concrete Water Reservoir Rehabilitation Project, Construction Engineering Oversight – Dixon Engineering, Inc. – \$36,650.00

Trustee Brennan asked to pull item 6.h from the consent agenda for separate consideration.

Trustee Bachner asked that item 6.i be pulled for separate consideration.

MOTION by Trustee O’Connell to approve consent agenda items A through G and J through K. Seconded by Trustee Keskitalo.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustee Vazquez, Gillis, O’Connell, Bachner, Brennan, and Keskitalo
Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

7. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

h. Agreement Amendment – Vera Mobility – Automated Traffic Enforcement Systems

Trustee Brennan noted that she had seen some negative online reviews of the company and asked staff whether they had experienced similar concerns with Vera. She also inquired whether the Village could include provisions in the contract to help prevent these types of issues.

Chief Greenwood responded that the department has not experienced any issues like those noted by Trustee Brennan.

Trustee Brennan asked if the original contract had protection against these possible issues.

Chief Greenwood noted he could not answer that off the top of his head but noted that they have had good service from Vera Mobility.

Trustee Brennan noted that the article was from the previous week and suggested the Village monitor services provided by Vera Mobility. She also raised concerns about what appears to be missing words or numbers related to signal phases.

Chief Greenwood noted that the blank space is most likely due to the Illinois Department of Transportation having final say over the number.

Director Bielak explained IDOT's role in the contract.

Trustee Brennan expressed concern about voting on a contract that appeared to have a word missing.

President Adduci stated that staff would investigate and proceed accordingly.

Trustee Brennan also requested clarification on signal phases, and Director

Bielak provided an explanation of what signal phases are and how they function.

Assistant Village Administrator Spencer stated that if the Board were to vote on this item, staff would hold off on taking any action until further research ensures the contract is complete and appropriate for execution.

Trustee O'Connell asked Village Attorney Malina to review the contract's indemnification clauses.

Trustee Bachner requested that Chief Greenwood summarize the processes used by Vera Mobility, and Chief Greenwood provided an explanation of how the company operates.

Trustee Bachner also asked for clarification on the Village's revenue from fines compared to the \$3,700 Vera fee.

Finance Director McAdam explained the comparison between fees and revenue, noting that some cameras are not functioning, which has resulted in inconsistent revenue.

Village Attorney Malina stated that, although he was unable to conduct a full review, he observed that the existing contract contains several relevant indemnification clauses that protect the Village.

President Adduci stated that staff will further review the signal count issue raised by Trustee Brennan.

MOTION by Trustee Vazquez to approve consent agenda item H. Seconded by Trustee Gillis.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustee Vazquez, Gillis, O'Connell, Bachner, Brennan, and Keskitalo

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

i. Contract Approval – Professional Services – Jасulca Terman Strategic Communications – \$60,000.00

Assistant Village Administrator (AVA) Spencer provided background information on this agenda item and addressed questions from members of the Board.

Trustee Bachner asked whether the Village has been working with the team without a current contract.

AVA Spencer confirmed that it has.

Trustee Bachner raised concerns about the scope of work and the contract dates, asking if the termination date is June 1, 2026.

AVA Spencer clarified that the contract's termination date is June 30, 2026, and reviewed both the services the Jасulca team has already provided and those they are expected to provide in the future.

Trustee O'Connell suggested that the contract be revised to more accurately reflect the services already provided.

The Village Board discussed the format of a possible new contract and previous services the Jасulca team has provided.

Trustee Keskitalo asked why the Village needs a second communications consultant when one is already in place.

Trustee Keskitalo expressed concerns about the Village potentially using two companies for services that could be handled by a single provider and asked whether any tasks would be passed through to the Jасulca team during their contract.

AVA Spencer responded that they would not.

The Board and AVA Spencer continued discussions regarding the various services and contracts the Village has with communications consultants.

Village President Adduci expressed support for utilizing two separate vendors.

Trustee Gillis added that it is not uncommon to have two different firms working on projects and goals and noted being in support of the contract.

Trustee Keskitalo stated that she supports the approach but reiterated her concerns about potential duplicate efforts.

President Adduci noted that the Village team has been pushing out a lot of content lately and reiterated her support for the two contracts.

Trustee Brennan asked if the Jasculca team has been handling the online comments regarding the Madison street project.

AVA Spencer confirmed yes and provided an explanation on how those comments are handled.

MOTION by Trustee O'Connell to approve consent agenda items i. Seconded by Trustee Gillis.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustee Vazquez, Gillis, O'Connell, Bachner, Brennan, and Keskitalo

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

8.RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

None.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

10.NEW BUSINESS

None.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn by Trustee Bachner, Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

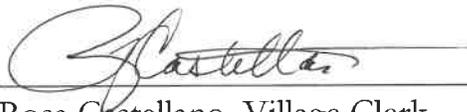
Roll call:

Ayes: Trustee Vazquez, Gillis, O'Connell, Bachner, Brennan, and Keskitalo

Absent: None

Nays: None

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.



Rosa Castellano, Village Clerk

Date: 02/23/26