

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

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on March 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, Bachner, Brennan, Gillis, O’Connell, Keskitalo, and Village Clerk Castellano

Absent: Trustee Vazquez

Also Present: Village Attorney Lance Malina, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, Fire Chief Tom Gaertner, Director of Public Works and Engineering Jack Bielak, Deputy Police Chief Michael Swierczynski, Police Commander Martin Grill, 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. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Homer Bizzle, founder and president of America Cares Too, a local charity that recently moved into town, introduced himself and his organization to the Village Board. He noted that he looks forward to working together in the future.

Ronald J. Villagomez introduced himself and shared information about his role and work with the America Cares Too charity. He noted that he looks forward to working with the Village on future projects.

President Adduci invited them to participate in the River Forest Memorial Day

Parade.

Trustee Brennan thanked them for attending the meeting and introducing themselves.

Patty Henek thanked the charity representatives and provided public comment on the Madison Street development. She raised concerns about the developer's ties to the Lake and Lathrop property, prior cigar shop ownership, attempts to open another shop against resident opposition, reported COVID violations at a shop in Oak Park, and the Village hiring a communications firm to manage messaging about the property.

Ed Pogue provided public comment on the proposed Madison Street development. He stated that while he supports reasonable development in town, he does not consider this project to be reasonable. He raised concerns about its impact on parking and congestion, as well as actions by a surveyor who attempted to survey his property, and urged the Board to respect neighbors' wishes and not approve the project.

Trustee Brennan inquired whether the Village had contacted the surveyor or the developer regarding the request to survey Mr. Pogue's property.

Assistant Village Administrator Spencer addressed Mr. Pogue's comments and described the usual process surveyors follow in the Village.

Trustee Brennan requested that, in similar situations in the future, the Village consider requiring applicants to provide residents with advance notice if a survey will be conducted on their property.

Debbie Borman provided public comment regarding the recent neighbor meeting for the proposed Madison development project. She expressed concerns about the meeting format and the required summary submission under the Planned Unit Development Code. She also raised questions about the proposed developer, including information related to their actions on prior developments in the area.

Greg Abcarian provided public comment on the proposed Madison Street development, raising several concerns, some of them being safety and nuisances in the alley and parking areas, security, traffic congestion, and potential impacts

on local schools. He encouraged the Village Board to listen to the residents in the room and not allow the project to move forward.

Charles Burchard provided public comment on the proposed Madison Street development, expressing concerns about parking, density, fit, and the elevators.

4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee O'Connell thanked the Village's Police and Public Works departments for their work on the St. Patrick's Day parade.

Trustee Keskitalo addressed the residents, acknowledging their concerns and expressing disappointment upon learning of a potential connection between Lake and Lathrop and the proposed developer. She requested an open discussion between the developer and the Village Board to clarify the situation. She also thanked the representatives from America Cares for attending the meeting and highlighted a recent Lincoln PTO event.

Trustee Brennan raised concerns about not hearing about the potential Madison Street developer's connection to Cigar Oasis from the Village and its outside advisors prior to hearing about this from residents this evening.

She stated that she would have preferred to have learned about this connection as part of the Village's own vetting process, rather than from concerned residents. She requested that the Village's advisors brief the Board about this, so that the Board can take into account any and all relevant information as it makes decisions.

Trustee Gillis congratulated Trinity High School on their third-place finish in the state championship and thanked the Police, Fire, and Public Works departments for their work in the team's send-off. She also highlighted the upcoming deadline for E-Waste pickup, reminded residents to vote in the upcoming election, and thanked the representatives from America Cares Too for attending, noting she looks forward to working with them.

Trustee Bachner opened her comments with a land acknowledgment and shared concerns about the cigar shop similar to those raised by other trustees. She agreed that the Village Board should have an open discussion with the developer about the facts surrounding these issues before moving forward. She also noted her support for including a requirement in the RDA for the proposed project to use

as much union labor as possible if the contract proceeds.

President Adduci stated that she would also support including union labor requirements in the RDA if the contract moves forward. She further expressed support for inviting the developer before the Board to address questions about the potential connections between the cigar shop and Lake and Lathrop. She then shared her recollections regarding the cigar shop and reiterated her support for the Village to research the matter and have the developer appear before the Board for clarification.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – February 23rd, 2026
- b. February 2026 Accounts Payable – \$1,845,837.96
- c. Administration Department Report
- d. Monthly Department Reports
- e. Right-of-Way Encroachment Waiver – 1224 Franklin Avenue
- f. Award of Contract – Roof Top Unit (RTU) #2 – Anchor Mechanical Incorporated – \$168,162.63
- g. Purchase Approval – Bulk Salt - State of Illinois Joint Purchasing Program – \$63,570.00
- h. Award of Contract – 2026 Village Hall Building Envelope Maintenance Project – Otto Baum Company, Inc – \$35,000.00
- i. Award of Contract – 2026 Sewer Lining – National Power Rodding Corp – \$140,000.00
- j. ComEd Green Region Program Authorization – Hawthorne and Central Native Pollinator Restoration Project – Resolution
- k. Purchase Approval – Light Rescue Vehicle – Bulldog Fire Apparatus – \$278,996.00

Trustee Brennan asked that Item i. be pulled for separate consideration.

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

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees O’Connell, Gillis, Bachner, Brennan and Keskitalo

Absent: Trustee Vazquez

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

- i. Award of Contract – 2026 Sewer Lining – National Power Rodding Corp – \$140,000.00

MOTION by Trustee O’Connell to approve consent agenda item i. Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

Trustee Brennan noted a possible scrivener’s error in the memo related to this agenda item and requested clarification regarding the price differences outlined in the memo.

Director Bielak provided clarification on the memo and explained the difference in the listed prices, noting that the point repair costs are included in case the contractor discovers larger issues during the work.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees O’Connell, Gillis, Bachner, Brennan and Keskitalo

Absent: Trustee Vazquez

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

None.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn by Trustee O'Connell, Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

Roll call:

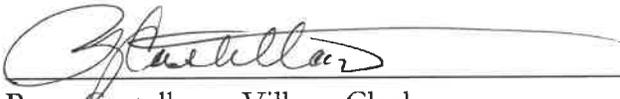
Ayes: Trustees O'Connell, Gillis, Bachner, Brennan and Keskitalo

Absent: Trustee Vazquez

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.



Rosa Castellano, Village Clerk

Date: 03/23/26.