

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
SPECIAL VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
Monday, March 16, 2020**

A special meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, March 16, 2020 at 9:00 a.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 9:04 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, O’Connell, Vazquez

Absent: Trustee Henek

Also Present: Village Clerk Kathleen Brand-White, Village Administrator Eric Palm, Assistant Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner, Assistant to the Village Administrator Jonathan Pape, Police Chief James O’Shea, Fire Chief Kurt Bohlmann, Village Attorney Greg Smith

Trustee Cargie made a motion, seconded by Trustee O’Connell, to allow Trustee Vazquez to participate telephonically due to work obligations.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, O’Connell

Absent: Trustees Henek, Vazquez

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Susan Altier, 12 Ashland. Ms. Altier shared that she hoped the Board would carefully consider the language in the state of emergency ordinance to protect the residents and officials.

3. AMENDMENT OF THE VILLAGE CODE REGARDING AUTHORIZING THE VILLAGE PRESIDENT TO DECLARE A STATE OF EMERGENCY IF NEEDED – ORDINANCE

Trustee Bachner made a motion, seconded by Trustee Brennan, to approve an ordinance amending the Village Code regarding authorizing the Village President to declare a State of Emergency if needed.

President Adduci thanked everyone for attending the meeting and noted the extraordinary time all communities will be working through because of the coronavirus. She indicated that other communities would likely be passing similar measures.

Attorney Smith explained that a declaration of a state of emergency is a tool that gives flexibility to the Village to deal with emergency issues, such as waiving bidding requirements

to make emergency purchases. He further noted the emergency declaration is limited to allowing the Village President to take actions that would otherwise have to be taken by the Village Board. For example, he stated that an emergency declaration would not authorize the Village President to seize someone's home because that is not something the Village Board can otherwise do. He stated the emergency declaration expires either upon adjournment of the next regular meeting or until the Village President withdraws it.

In response to a question from Trustee Brennan, Village Attorney Smith stated the ordinance follows State law regarding the language about when the emergency declaration expires. He stated the ordinance does not divest authority from the Village Board and that it simply allows the Village President to do things related to the emergency on the Board's behalf.

In response to a follow up question from Trustee Brennan, Village Attorney Smith stated that at this time, the Open Meetings Act still applies. He stated the governor or the General Assembly would have to take action to waive the requirements to allow for remote attendance.

Trustee Bachner amended her motion, seconded by Trustee Brennan, to include regular or special meetings regarding the expiration of the emergency authority.

Trustee Bachner stated she thinks this is a critical need in the Village and that she trusts in President Adduci's authority. She further stated she is glad to see swift movement in combatting COVID-19. She thanked President Adduci and everyone who has worked on this and especially first responders.

Trustee O'Connell stated the Board has had this information for several days and did have adequate time to review and digest this information. He thanked Ms. Altier for attending the meeting and expressed his assurance this was not a snap decision.

Trustee Vazquez echoed these sentiments. He added that an issue his law firm has run into working with municipalities is that they did not have this type of language in their Codes to allow them to work quicker. He applauded and encouraged passing the ordinance.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: Trustee Henek

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

President Adduci read her [press release](#) and further explained the purpose of the emergency declaration. She stated the Village is working with the River Forest Township to provide additional services to seniors and others in need during the pandemic, and she stated she has directed Village Staff to take all necessary precautions in order to maintain services and continuity of operations. She also cautioned residents to beware of scammers who may try to capitalize on global attention to the pandemic.

President Adduci thanked the Board for their trust in giving her the authority to implement emergency measures important to the community. She further explained the senior citizen response program, stating that the Village will be sending mailers to seniors to let them know about additional services that will be offered, such as grocery shopping, prescription medication pick-up, and dog walking. The Village will hire a part-time employee to coordinate this program with volunteers.

Trustee O'Connell suggested sending a letter to everyone in the Village to make sure this information reaches all seniors, including renters.

Trustee Brennan suggested the coordinator reach out to condominium association presidents as well.

Trustee Bachner asked about the cost differential of sending a letter to everyone in the Village.

Administrator Palm stated Staff will look into sending a post card to everyone in the zip code. He also quoted a message from emergency management training that "perfection is the enemy," and cautioned that things may be clunky as the Village works through this disaster. He stated he expected the information about the senior program would get through formal and informal networks.

In response to a follow up question from Trustee Bachner, he stated the letter will go out first and then Staff will look into other means of dissemination.

Administrator Palm also thanked the Board for taking the action it did, noting that expediency is important in as we respond to things.

Chief Bohlmann reviewed the precautions being taken by and the changes to the Fire Department's operations. He stated that the Department is focusing on providing the same emergency services while protecting residents and firefighters from exposure as much as possible. He stated dispatch is screening 911 calls to provide advance knowledge of infected patients. To date, he noted, there are no confirmed cases of coronavirus in River Forest. He also stated that the Village's pharmaceutical distribution program TripCom is preparing for possible activation in the event that a vaccine becomes available. Chief Bohlmann explained that if activated, the State would advise of where to pick up the pharmaceuticals, which would then be distributed to everyone in the Village.

Trustee Vazquez left the meeting at 9:42 a.m.

Chief O'Shea reviewed the precautions being taken by and the changes to the Police Department's operations. He stated the Department is implementing best practices to ensure the safety of the public and personnel. He summarized the rigorous cleaning regimen and detailed the availability of protective equipment. He noted that command staff has met with other towns to discuss plans with regard to TripCom, and he assured that the Police Department is prepared to escalate its response to the coronavirus if needed. Chief O'Shea

also discussed balancing limiting personnel contact with the public but not shutting down services. He stated they are waiting for direction and orders from Cook County with regard to policing. He also stated the business liaison officer is in communication with businesses in town.

In response to a question from President Adduci about enforcing the Governor's order regarding restaurants and bars, Chief O'Shea stated the Department will look for chairs to be removed or put up, and that they are working with businesses on educational information and protocols.

Trustee Brennan asked generally how hourly workers' pay may be affected during this time.

Village Attorney Smith stated the issue of pay while employees are on leave is ultimately up to their employer and that they could be entitled to unemployment. He stated there is federal legislation being considered regarding amendments to the Family Medical Leave Act, mandated paid sick leave, and payroll tax breaks.

Trustee Brennan stated she is grateful for the flexibility and skills of Staff and fellow trustees.

4. AMENDMENT OF THE VILLAGE CODE REGARDING THE IMPOSITION OF A LOCAL MOTOR FUEL TAX DUE TO A REQUEST FROM THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE – ORDINANCE

Trustee Cargie made a motion, seconded by Trustee O'Connell to approve an ordinance amending the Village Code regarding the imposition of a local motor fuel tax due to a request from the Illinois Department of Revenue.

Administrator Palm explained that this ordinance does not change any of the legislative intent and only consists of technical changes required by the Department of Revenue in order to enact the tax. He noted it was included on the agenda due to IDOR's filing deadline of April 1.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: Trustee Henek

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Cargie made a motion, seconded by Trustee Brennan to adjourn the special Village Board of Trustees Meeting at 9:59 a.m.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, O'Connell

Absent: Trustees Henek, Vazquez

Nays: None
Motion Passes.

Kathleen Brand-White, Village Clerk