

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
April 14th, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on April 14th 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 7:02 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Johnson, Gillis(Virtual), Brennan, Bachner, Vazquez, O'Connell, and Village Clerk Keller

Absent: None

Also Present: Village Attorney Lance Malina, Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, Police Chief James O'Shea, Fire Chief Tom Gaertner, Deputy Police Chief James Greenwood, Director of Public Works and Engineering Jack Bielak, Human Resource Manager Trish Ivansek, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Police Commander Michael Swierczynski, Deputy Fire Chief David Bochenek, and Deputy Clerk Luke Masella

MOTION by Trustee Vazquez to allow Trustee Gillis to participate via Zoom due to work. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustee Bachner, Brennan, Johnson, Vazquez, O'Connell

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

4. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

- a. 2024 Officer of the Year Presentation – Keagan Lenz
- b. Police Department Commendations
 - i. Officer Mark Catalano and Detective Denisse Zermeno
 - ii. Officer Eddie Coleman
 - iii. Officer Anthony Cortes
 - iv. Officer Paul Mika

Police Chief James O'Shea presented the 2024 Officer of the Year award to Officer Keagan Lenz.

Deputy Police Chief James Greenwood presented awards to Officer Mark Catalano, Detective Denisse Zermeno, Officer Eddie Coleman, Officer Anthony Cortes, and Officer Paul Mika.

5. PUBLIC HEARING – FISCAL YEAR 2026 VILLAGE OPERATING BUDGET

- a. Public Hearing – FY 2026 Village Operating Budget

Village Administrator Walsh reported that the required public hearing was properly noticed and held, with the FY 2026 budget made available for public review at Village Hall and on the Village website. Final consideration and approval of the budget is scheduled for the April 28 meeting at 7:00 PM.

There were no public comments.

MOTION by Trustee Johnson to close the public hearing. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustee Bachner, Gillis, Brennan, Johnson, Vazquez, O'Connell

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Bachner delivered a land acknowledgment and shared that she recently met with several Boy Scouts working toward their Eagle Scout rank. She expressed how impressed she was by their dedication and efforts.

Trustee Gillis had no comments.

Trustee Vazquez thanked the Village staff for their hard work on the budget and extended congratulations to the officers who received awards.

Clerk Keller had nothing to add to the record.

Trustee Johnosn congratulated the newly elected officials in town.

Trustee O'Connell wished everyone a happy Easter and acknowledged those who are celebrating Passover.

President Adduci had no comments.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – March 24th, 2025
- b. Village Board of Trustees Executive Meeting Minutes – March 24th, 2025
- c. Administration Department Report
- d. Monthly Department Reports
- e. Accounts Payable – March 2025 – \$1,784,157.89
- f. March 2025 Financial Report
- g. Purchase Approval – Bulk Salt – State of Illinois Joint Purchasing Program – \$63,570.00
- h. Education & Sharing Day – Proclamation
- i. Earth Day – Proclamation
- j. Arbor Day – Proclamation

MOTION by Trustee O'Connell to approve Consent Agenda Items A through J. Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

8. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

None.

9. RECCOMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

None.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Adoption of Municipal Grocery Tax – Ordinance

MOTION by Trustee Vazquez to Adopt an Ordinance Implementing a Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax and a Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

Administrator Walsh provided background information on the proposed tax.

Trustee O'Connell asked if additional sales tax revenue could be expected when the new Whole Foods project opens entirely.

Administrator Walsh stated that is correct.

Village Clerk Keller asked who collects this tax.

Administrator Walsh stated that the State will continue as the collector.

Trustee Bachner requested clarification regarding the specific items and services subject to the tax.

Administrator Walsh and Director McAdams responded by providing examples of the goods and services that would be included under the tax.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

b. Introduction of River Forest Park District Priory Park Planned Development Proposal – No Action

Mike Sletten, Executive Director of the Park District, delivered a presentation on the proposed changes to Priory Park and responded to questions from the Village Board.

Director Sletten noted that the existing memorial bricks at the Priory will be preserved and reused.

Trustee Bachner asked about who would have access to the proposed new structure.

Director Sletten noted that Park District staff would.

Trustee Johnson suggested adding benches and additional stalls to the bathrooms to accommodate people changing after using the proposed splash pad.

Director Sletten agreed, noting that it is a great idea.

Trustee Bachner asked for clarification on how the water will drain.

Director Sletten stated that the site's drainage will be directed directly into the Village's water infrastructure.

Trustees inquired about who will set the timers for the splash pad.

Director Sletten explained that Park District staff will manage the splash pad's operating hours and can set fixed end times. The splash pad is projected to be open from Memorial Day to Labor Day, operating six hours per day.

Director Sletten stated that there will be minimal impact to the trees on site.

He also noted that the Park District has already hired a traffic consultant to complete a study.

Trustee Brennan asked if there will be an overhand shelter similar to what exists at Keystone Park and if during a weather emergency, will people be allowed into the building.

Director Sletten noted that access would be limited to the bathrooms only, which are typically open from approximately April 1 through early November. He also stated that the bathrooms are open daily from 7 a.m. to sunset.

Trustee Bachner asked about the number of stalls in each bathroom and the maximum capacity of the splash pad.

Director Sletten responded that each bathroom contains two stalls and that the splash pad can accommodate up to 70 people.

Trustee Bachner asked whether there are any other picnic shelters in the Park District parks and how many tables could fit under the proposed shelter.

Director Sletten stated that there are no picnic shelters at other Park District parks and that the proposed shelter would accommodate only one table. He noted that the shelter is currently in the design phase, is expected to be approximately 12 feet by 12 feet with a solid roof and will not be available for reservation.

Director Sletten provided an overview of the feedback received from residents.

Trustee Brennan inquired whether individuals with memorial trees or bricks at Priory Park will be notified if their trees are relocated.

Director Sletten responded that they will make every effort to notify those individuals to the best of the Park District's ability.

President Adduci asked about the proposed project schedule.

Director Sletten stated that construction is expected to begin in mid-August, with the building anticipated to be open by Christmas and the splash pad operational by next May.

Village Administrator Walsh provided a timeline outlining the next steps for the project within the Village's development process.

Trustee Johnson reiterated his concerns about the lack of benches and changing spaces in the bathrooms, encouraging Director Sletten to consider adding more.

c. Presentation of Employee Handbook Updates – No Action

Human Resource Manager Trish Ivansek presented on the proposed employee handbook and fielded questions from the Board.

Trustee Vazquez inquired about the retention policy for the Village's water license program.

Administrator Walsh noted that the increased pay for the position helps retain newly trained employees.

Trustee Bachner inquired whether this program could be seen as an incentive to attract people to work for the Village and also asked if the employees are responsible for covering the program's costs.

Manager Ivansek confirmed that this is correct and clarified that the Village covers the cost of the program, not the employees.

Trustee O'Connell pointed out that this was the first time he had seen Nova Collective mentioned and requested an update on the work of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion group.

Trustee Bachner mentioned that she and Trustee Johnson are reviewing a draft report and expect to have something ready in the coming weeks.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn by Trustee Bachner. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Vazquez, O'Connell, Brennan, Gillis, Johnson, Bachner, and President Adduci

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.



Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk

Date: 04/28/25