

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
April 29th, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, April 29th, 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 7:04 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

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

Absent: None

Also Present: Fire Chief Thomas Gaertner, Deputy Fire Chief Bochenek, Police Chief James O’Shea, Deputy Police Chief James Greenwood, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Village Attorney Lance Malina, Human Resources Manager Trish Ivansek, Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, Deputy Clerk Luke Masella.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Margie Cekander made public comment regarding the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2025. Ms. Cekander raised concerns about tying the currently proposed Zoning Code Changes and the potential loss of the Grocery tax together.

Ms. Cekander also raised concerns about the Villages spending and made suggestions on how to reduce expenses. Ms. Cekander then commented on the proposed venue of choice for the recently announced Village President informal meeting as that venue does business with the Village.

4.ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. 2024 Police Officer of the Year Award

Police Chief James O’Shea gave remarks on Officer Marty Dosen and highlighted events, actions, and character traits that displayed Officer Dosen’s high character.

Police Chief James O’Shea presented the award to Officer Dosen.

Trustee O'Connell highlighted the new proposed changes to the Whole Foods Market Space and other opportunities at the River Forest Town Center Site. He also noted attending the River Forest Bike exchange event and reported attending a recent Thrive Counseling Event. Trustee O'Connell then highlighted the Misericordia Candy fundraising occurring at the River Forest Jewel Osco and expressed being excited about the River Forest Memorial Day Parade.

Trustee Johnson noted being excited for the Memorial Day Parade.

Trustee Brennan thanked the Public Works Department for their work on the Curbside Composting Program and highlighted a recent schedule change. She then thanked District 90's Green For Good Team for a recent polystyrene pickup event. Trustee Brennan highlighted other polystyrene disposal opportunities. She also gave an update on the River Forest Juneteenth Flag Raising Event and gave thanks to the parties involved.

Village Clerk Keller had nothing to add to the record.

Trustee Vazquez noted attending the Illinois Municipal League Lobby Day in Springfield and highlighted the State's proposed elimination of the Grocery Tax. He also noted the discussions surrounding the Local Government Distribution Fund.

Trustee Gillis noted that the Hazardous Waste Collection Program is beginning soon and reminded everyone to sign up. Trustee Gillis also highlighted the Village's partnership with the University of Illinois Chicago and the students work on a Village Climate Action Plan. She reported on attending the River Forest Bike Exchange and thanked the Police Department and the event host.

Trustee Bachner began her comments with a land acknowledgement and noted being excited about the upcoming Juneteenth events in the Village. Trustee Bachner also noted the upcoming Inclusion and Pride Walk in June.

President Adduci thanked Officer Dosen for his hard work and thanked his family for attending the event. She then reported giving a presentation on local government to the River Forest Daisy Scouts of Willard School. She also reported seeing posts on Facebook about the River Forest Police Department interacting with bicycle riders and awarding those who wear helmets with certificates to River Forest Chocolates.

President Adduci made remarks on her experiences at the Municipal Lobby Day and noted meeting with the Governor regarding issues facing municipalities. She also made comments on the proposed changes to the Local Government Distribution Fund, the Grocery Tax, and the Pension System. She offered to share articles from the Illinois Municipal League on these and other important proposed changes with anyone who is interested.

Trustee Bachner suggested the Village highlight these proposed changes in the Villages communications. She reminded residents that in local and state politics, a simple phone call can go a long way.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – April 8th, 2024
- b. Administration Department Report
- c. Proclamation Designating May 5th – May 11th, 2024, as Compost Awareness Week
- d. National Therapy Animal Day – Proclamation
- e. Right of Way Agreement Property Owners at 553 Thatcher Avenue for an Underground Sprinkler System in the Public Right-of-Way
- f. Contract Approval – Nexamp Solar, LLC – Community Solar Anchor Account
- g. Approval of Contract – DeKind Computer Consultants – Village I.T. Consulting Services
- h. Amendments to Chapter 9-6-9 of the River Forest Village Code-Schedule of Fines and Penalties (Vehicular Violations) – Ordinance
- i. Approval of Collective Bargaining Agreements with International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) for Firefighters and Fire Lieutenants
- j. Adoption of Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Compensation Plan – Ordinance

Trustee Brennan asked that Consent Agenda Item “c. Proclamation Designating May 5th – May 11th, 2024, as Compost Awareness Week” and Consent Agenda Item “f. Contract Approval– Nexamp Solar, LLC – Community Solar Anchor Account” be pulled for separate consideration.

Trustee Gillis requested Agenda Item “d. National Therapy Animal Day – Proclamation” be pulled for separate consideration.

MOTION by Trustee Brennan to approve Consent Agenda Items A, B, E and G-J. Seconded by Trustee O’Connell.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Vazquez, Bachner, Johnson, Brennan, O’Connell, Gillis.

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

- c. Proclamation Designating May 5th – May 11th, 2024, as Compost Awareness Week

MOTION by Trustee Vazquez to approve Consent Agenda Item “c. Proclamation Designating May 5th – May 11th, 2024, as Compost Awareness Week.” Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Trustee Brennan expressed her appreciation for this proclamation and highlighted the significant reduction in CO₂ emissions attributed to composting. She stated that this proclamation reminded her to revive the discussions surrounding the Village’s curbside compost program, and asked the Board to consider changing this to an “opt out” program .

Trustee Brennan and President Adduci discussed the process of reviving the opt out program discussions.

Village Administrator Matt Walsh stated the process can be started with the Sustainability Commission and Lake Shore Recycling at the same time.

Trustee Brennan suggested the conversations begin solely with the Sustainability Commission to determine the Village’s priorities before involving Lakeshore Recycling Systems.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Vazquez, Bachner, Johnson, Brennan, O’Connell, Gillis.

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

d. National Therapy Animal Day – Proclamation

MOTION by Trustee Johnson to approve Consent Agenda Item “d. National Therapy Animal Day – Proclamation” Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

Trustee Gillis stated she pulled this item from the agenda so a representative from a local therapy animal organization could make a statement.

Susan Macaulay made comments on the importance of Therapy Animals and spoke on her various visits to local institutions to provide Therapy Animal services.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Vazquez, Bachner, Johnson, Brennan, O’Connell, Gillis.

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

f. Contract Approval – Nexamp Solar, LLC – Community Solar Anchor Account

MOTION by Trustee Gillis to approve Consent Agenda Item “f. Contract Approval- Nexamp Solar, LLC – Community Solar Anchor Account.” Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Trustee Brennan stated she had pulled this item from the consent agenda as it was the first time she had seen this contract. While she noted being in favor of this item, she raised concerns about sections of the contract and the length of the contract.

Village Administrator Walsh noted that Village Attorney Malina had reviewed the contract.

Trustee Brennan noted that the Madison Street Lighting was a separate utility account.

Village Administrator Walsh reported that the Madison Street Lighting has been separate since the streetscape project several years ago.

Trustee Brennan asked how the residents in the Village see the cost savings from this contract.

Village Administrator Walsh noted that this contract covers Village infrastructure that is not covered under the Village’s franchise agreement with ComEd.

Trustee Brennan asked how the Village currently pays for the items in this contract.

Village Administrator Walsh stated that these items are paid out of the utility line items in the Water and Sewer Fund and the Public Works fund.

Trustee Brennan asked how the Village will monitor the Nexamp rates compared to ComEd’s. She stated she supported moving to the solar energy contract but worried about the 20-year length of contract in light of the constantly changing green energy field.

Village Administrator Walsh stated that there might be protections in the contract but at this time he could not answer that question.

Trustee Bachner asked if there was a deadline to sign the contract and noted the Board could discuss this contract at a later date in light of Trustee Brennan's questions.

The Village Board continued to discuss the contract and Village Attorney Malina stated he would need to do further research to answer some of the questions from Board Members.

Trustee Gillis withdrew her motion and the Board agreed to vote on this at a later date.

7.RECCOMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

None.

8.UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

9. NEW BUSINESS

a. Park District Planned Development Introduction – Constitution Park

Dennis Healy and Michael Sletten with the River Forest Park District gave a presentation on the proposed changes to Constitution Park and fielded questions from the Village Board.

President Adduci and Trustee Brennan raised concerns about the trees on the site.

The Board and Mr. Sletten further discussed the trees and other proposed amenities.

Trustee Johnson asked if the proposed new covered shelter would be available to rent and if it had bathrooms.

Mr. Sletten noted that the bathroom would look similar to the bathrooms at Washington Park and stated that the shelter will be available to residents for free.

Trustee Johnson asked for a construction timeline and noted being worried about construction potentially occurring during the school year.

Mr. Sletten stated they are hoping the construction will begin between May 15th and June 1st of next year and noted they will work with District 90 to make sure construction is not occurring during the school year.

Trustee O'Connell asked if the Park District had talked to residents about the parking situation in the area.

Mr. Sletten stated they had multiple resident meetings regarding the proposal and parking was not a concern raised by the residents.

Trustee O'Connell asked how much pre-engineering work has occurred so far.

Mr. Sletten noted that there have been no engineering discussions but does not think those will be needed.

Trustee Bachner raised concerns about flooding.

Mr. Sletten reported not noticing any flooding issues but noted that there is a possibility the Park District will install flood measures if the engineering determines it is needed.

Trustee Johnson asked how the construction site will be secured during construction.

Mr. Sletten stated the park will be closed during that period and will be fenced off.

President Adduci thanked the Park District for presenting.

Trustee Brennan stated that she appreciated the Park District focusing on accessibility and inclusivity in their designs.

b. Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget – Ordinance

MOTION by Trustee Gillis to Approve an Ordinance Adopting the Annual Budget for the Fiscal Year Commencing on the 1st Day of May, 2024 and Ending on the 30th Day of April, 2025 for the Village of River Forest, Illinois. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

Trustee Brennan asked for clarification on some of the comments made by Ms. Cekander earlier in public comment.

Finance Director McAdams offered clarification on some of the concerns raised by Ms. Cekander.

Village Administrator Walsh noted that 2 million dollars a year is the projected cost of replacing about 200 hundred lead service lines a year.

Trustee Brennan asked if this rate of replacement will allow the Village to complete the removal of the lead service lines before the State's deadline.

Village Administrator Walsh stated yes.

The Village Board had further discussions surrounding the concerns raised about Ms. Cekander.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Vazquez, Bachner, Johnson, Brennan, O'Connell, Gillis.

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Trustee O'Connell to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2(c)(11) to discuss: Pending, Probable, or imminent Litigation and the Village Board will adjourn after executive session and will not return to open session. Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Vazquez, Bachner, Johnson, Brennan, O'Connell, Gillis.

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes at 8:15pm.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn by Trustee Brennan. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

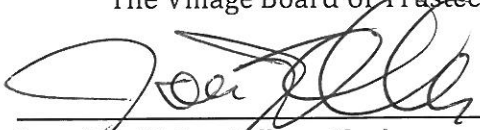
Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.


Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk

Date: 05/13/24