

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES  
June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on June 9<sup>th</sup> 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 7:03 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Keskitalo, Brennan, Bachner, Vazquez(virtual), O'Connell, Gillis and Village Clerk Castellano

Absent: None

Also Present: Village Attorney Lance Malina, Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, Police Chief James Greenwood, Fire Chief Tom Gaertner, Deputy Fire Chief Dave Bochenek, Deputy Police Chief Michael Swierczynski, Director of Public Works and Engineering Jack Bielak, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Police Commander Martin Grill, and Deputy Clerk Luke Masella

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President Adduci led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

- a. Swearing in of Deputy Police Chief Mike Swierczynski
- b. Swearing in of Police Commander Martin Grill
- c. Swearing in of Police Sergeant Dan Humphrey
- d. Swearing in of Firefighter/Paramedic Sameh Abuzineh
- e. Presentation of Water Ambassador Gold Designation Award

Village Clerk Castellano swore in Deputy Police Chief Mike Swierczynski, Police Commander Martin Grill, Police Sergeant Dan Humphreys, and Firefighter/Paramedic Sameh Abuzineh.

Darell Blennis presented the award to the Village on behalf of the Illinois Water Works Association.

#### **4.CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Sue Foran made public comment regarding the term limits referendum. She asked when the Village will codify the term limits referendum.

Trustee Bachner asked Village Administrator Walsh to address the comment from Ms. Foran. Village Administrator Walsh deferred his comments to Village Attorney Malina.

Mr. Malina provided background information on the process of implementing term limits and the legal questions surrounding referendums.

Trustee Brennan asked for further clarification.

Mr. Malina stated that it is not clear whether the referendum question is binding or advisory and provided further legal opinions on the matter.

Trustee Brennan asked what makes the Village's situation different from other municipalities that have implemented term limits.

Mr. Malina stated that there were discrepancies in how the petition was presented and provided background information.

Trustee Brennan asked if there has ever been a similar situation in the State of Illinois and what the Village Board should do in this case.

Mr. Malina stated he is unaware of a similar situation occurring and expressed his opinion that the Village should not act on the referendum.

Trustee Bachner noted that someone should be able to determine whether the referendum is binding or advisory.

Mr. Malina provided additional thoughts on the situation.

Trustee Bachner expressed discomfort with not considering the referendum, given that residents voted in favor of the question.

Trustee Brennan also noted being uncomfortable with the matter and requested that Village Attorney Malina provide a written legal opinion on the issue.

The Village Board discussed previous legal opinions that had been shared with them regarding the referendum.

Trustee Keskitalo asked to review the previous legal opinions and expressed discomfort with not addressing the situation, considering the residents' vote.

Margie Cekander reminded the Board that there are still outstanding issues with the Ethics Ordinance and provided background information on a complaint she filed with the Ethics Commission. Ms. Cekander also raised concerns regarding the Village Board's handling of Boards and Commissions appointments. She requested a status update on the term limits referendum, raised concerns about Village spending related to EV charging stations, and asked the Village Board to reconsider the tree ordinance on the agenda that evening.

Sheila Radford-Hill made public comment about the Juneteenth agenda item before the Board that evening. She provided background information on the holiday and asked everyone attend an upcoming Juneteenth event.

John Keefe asked for an update on the development property at Lake and Lathrop. He then made comments about the Juneteenth event.

## **5. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Trustee O'Connell commented on the Memorial Day Parade and expressed his appreciation to everyone involved. He also thanked the Public Works Department for their efforts in addressing recent water main breaks.

Trustee Keskitalo thanked all who contributed to and attended the Village's Pride flag raising event. She also congratulated recent school graduates on their achievements.

Trustee Brennan began her comments with a land acknowledgment. She thanked Ms. Radford-Hill for her work on the Juneteenth event, highlighted the importance of the celebration, and encouraged all who are able to attend. Trustee Brennan also expressed appreciation to Trustees Keskitalo and Bachner for their

efforts on the Village's Pride event. She requested that a proposed leaf blower ordinance be brought before the Board at an upcoming meeting and asked that the affordable housing plan return for further review. She also inquired why the plan has not received more attention in recent years.

The Village Board and Administrator Walsh discussed the history of the affordable housing plan.

Village Clerk Castellano wished everyone a happy Father's Day.

Trustee Vazquez thanked the Fire Department for hosting the recent Senior Breakfast and expressed appreciation to Village staff for their work on the Memorial Day Parade. He also thanked everyone involved in planning the upcoming Juneteenth event. Lastly, he reminded residents of the upcoming vehicle sticker purchase deadline.

Trustee Gillis highlighted the Business Bash segment of the Memorial Day Parade and thanked the Village's Public Works Department for their efforts in addressing recent water main breaks. She then read aloud a Facebook post she had made in her neighborhood group about the water main breaks.

Trustee Bachner thanked everyone for their involvement in the Memorial Day Parade and also thanked everyone for their involvement in the River Forest Pride event. Trustee Bachner then read aloud the speech she gave at the event.

President Adduci stated that an update on the affordable housing plan will be included on the next Village Board agenda. She highlighted the Memorial Day Parade, recognized those involved, and thanked them for their efforts. She also thanked Ms. Radford-Hill for her work on the upcoming Juneteenth event. President Adduci shared that she recently gave a presentation to 8th-grade students at a local middle school and was impressed by their thoughtful comments and questions. Lastly, she expressed her gratitude to Trustees Bachner and Keskitalo, as well as Township Supervisor John Becvar, for their contributions to the event.

## **6. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- b. Monthly Department Reports

- c. Administration Department Report
- d. Accounts Payable – May 2025 – \$2,800,700.69
- e. May Financial Report
- f. Juneteenth Flag Raising – Resolution
- g. Recognition of Pollinator Week – Proclamation
- h. Authorization of Sale/Destruction of Surplus Property – Police Department Surplus Firearms
- i. Intergovernmental Agreement Renewal with IDOT – Maintenance of Municipal Streets – Resolution
- j. A Right-of-Way Encroachment Waiver and Agreement for an Irrigation System in the Public Right-of-Way with the Property Owners at 1346 Forest Avenue
- k. Purchase Approval – Fire Department – 2025 Ford Escape – Currie Motors – \$34,116.42
- l. Award of Contract – Lake Street Traffic Calming Engineering Design – Gewalt Hamilton Associates – \$64,744.00

Trustee Brennan asked that Consent Agenda Item L be pulled for separate consideration.

**MOTION** by Trustee O’Connell to approve Consent Agenda Items A through K. Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

**7. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION**

- l. Award of Contract – Lake Street Traffic Calming Engineering Design – Gewalt Hamilton Associates – \$64,744.00

**MOTION** by Trustee Gillis to approve Consent Agenda Items L. Seconded by Trustee Keskitalo.

Trustee Brennan requested background information on the item and asked

whether her interpretation was correct that there are multiple underlying actions or requests associated with this one agenda item.

Village Administrator Walsh stated that is correct and provided background on the agenda item.

Trustee Keskitalo asked if there is a time frame on this project.

Director Bielak stated the timing all depends on IDOT.

Trustee Bachner emphasized the importance of the project's timing and asked that the Village make every effort to ensure all aspects of the potential project are addressed in a timely manner.

Administrator Walsh noted that all options for Lake Street are currently being analyzed simultaneously.

Trustee Gillis asked why a specific design has already been proposed and whether it would be permitted by IDOT.

Director Bielak provided background on the rationale behind the proposed design.

Trustee Bachner inquired about the inclusion of median bump-outs at intersections and requested that Director Bielak explain the criteria used to select locations for traffic infrastructure improvements throughout the Village.

Director Bielak gave a street-by-street breakdown of the proposed project and noted that Lake Street has been a frequent concern raised by residents, particularly the intersection at Lake Street and William. He explained that, as a result, staff decided to evaluate the entire length of Lake Street rather than focus on a single intersection.

Trustee Bachner asked Director Bielak whether the currently installed plastic delineators have been effective.

Director Bielak responded that they have.

Trustee Brennan inquired about how the proposal might affect the existing bike

lane on Lake Street.

Director Bielak replied that the impact should be minimal but noted he would further review the specific area mentioned by Trustee Brennan.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes

**8. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES**

- a. Economic Development Commission Appointments
  - i. Cuyler Brown (Chair) – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
  - ii. Tim Brangle – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
  - iii. Raj Chiplunkar – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
  - iv. Elizabeth Muhr – Appointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
  - v. Scott Elza – Appointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
- b. Development Review Board Appointments
  - i. Elias Yanaki – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2027
  - ii. David Crosby – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2027
  - iii. Corina Davis – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2027
  - iv. Ron Lucchesi – Appointment – Term ending 4/30/2027
- c. Plan Commission Appointments
  - i. Elias Yanaki – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
  - ii. Mike Gibbs – Appointment – Term ending 4/30/2030 (Vacancy)
- d. Zoning Board of Appeals Appointments
  - i. Mary Shoemaker – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2030
- e. Traffic and Safety Commission Appointments
  - i. Kimberly Hoyt – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
  - ii. John Osga – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
  - iii. Frederick (Rick) Gillis – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
- f. Sustainability Commission Appointments
  - i. Susan Charrette (Co-Chair) – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
  - ii. David Hoyt – Appointment – Term ending 4/30/2029

- g. Historic Preservation Commission Appointments
  - i. Brian Muhr – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
  - ii. Carla Graham White– Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029
- h. Fire Pension Board Appointments
  - i. Tom Severson – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2028
- i. Police Pension Board Appointments
  - i. Rosemary McAdams (Village Treasurer) – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2027
- j. Board of Fire and Police Commissioners Appointments
  - i. Nathan Mellman - Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2028

Trustee Gillis requested that a separate vote be conducted for item 8.E.iii: the reappointment of Frederick (Rick) Gillis, term ending April 30, 2029.

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to approve all items under section 8 except for item 8.E.iii, Frederick (Rick) Gillis – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029. Seconded by Trustee O’Connell.

Trustee Keskitalo requested that résumé be included with future appointments.

Administrator Walsh noted that only recently has a résumé been required when submitting applications for positions, thus there is a lack of résumé in the packet.

Trustee Brennan asked whether it would be beneficial for current Boards and Commission members to submit their résumé to the Village when being considered for reappointment.

President Adduci noted that is a fair point and résumé will be requested in the future.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

**MOTION** by Trustee O’Connell to approve agenda item 8.E.iii, Frederick (Rick) Gillis – Reappointment – Term ending 4/30/2029. Seconded by



Keskitalo.

**Roll call:**

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

Abstain: Gillis

Nays: None

Motion Passes

k. Sustainability Commission

- i. Presentation Regarding Climate Action Plan Implementation – *No Action*

Public Works Analyst Seth Jansen presented an update on the Village's Climate Action Plan implementation and responded to questions from the Board.

Trustee Gillis thanked the Sustainability Commission for their efforts and highlighted an online tour of the LRS recycling facility available on their website.

President Adduci asked Analyst Jansen for an update on the leaf blower ordinance.

Analyst Jansen provided background on the potential ordinance and noted that it could be ready for the next Village Board agenda.

Trustee O'Connell asked if the Board had agreed to wait and observe how the ban in Oak Park progressed before taking any action.

Analyst Jansen noted being in contact with staff members at the Village of Oak Park and receiving feedback about their ban.

Trustee Brennan expressed that she does not support waiting to see how things unfold in Oak Park before acting.

Sustainability Commission Co-Chair Susan Charrette provided background information on the Commissions proposed ban and noted being in support of the Village taking action sooner rather than later.

The Board and Chairperson Charrette discussed the timing and approach for

implementing any proposed ban.

President Adduci stated that the proposed ban could be included on the July Village Board agenda and expressed interest in how the Village of Oak Park plans to enforce their ban.

Analyst Jansen highlighted some of the factors involved in Oak Park's enforcement efforts.

- ii. Award of Contract – Electric Vehicle Charging Station Project – Christopher B. Burke Engineering – \$993,226.00

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to award a contract to CBBEL in an the amount not to exceed \$993,226.00 of which the Village's cost is not to exceed \$343,535.00 after grant funding and ComEd rebates for the construction, equipment purchase, and equipment installation for the Electric Vehicle Charging Station Project and authorize the Village Administrator to execute the contract agreement.to approve Consent Agenda Items A through K. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

Analyst Jansen provided background information on the agenda item and responded to questions from the Board.

Trustee O'Connell noted that the Village only owns the lot adjacent to the CVS parking lot, not the entire CVS lot.

Analyst Jansen confirmed that this is correct.

Trustee Brennan inquired about the current parking arrangement in the Village-owned lot at that location.

Analyst Jansen explained that the lot operates on a first-come, first-served basis and is limited to daytime parking only.

Trustee Brennan asked for clarification on how the charging stations near Village Hall operate.

Analyst Jansen explained how the charging stations operate and provided details about the payment system. He then compared those stations to the proposed

stations included in the evening's agenda, highlighting how they will function similarly or differently.

Trustee Vazquez asked whether the existing chargers have an alarm system to notify users when charging is complete or when the time limit has expired.

Analyst Jansen confirmed that they do, explaining that users must activate the stations through an app, which helps monitor usage and provides notifications.

Co-Chair Charrette provided background information on the charging costs incurred by users at the stations.

Trustee Bachner asked whether the chargers could be used as a potential revenue source and if other municipalities take that approach.

Analyst Jansen responded that while he is aware of the fees and rates set by other municipalities, he is not certain whether they are intended to generate revenue.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

iii. Proposed Amendment to Village's Tree Preservation Ordinance – Text Amendment – *Board Direction Requested*

**MOTION** by Trustee O'Connell to direct the Village Administrator to propose text amendments related to tree preservation to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a public hearing and recommendation. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez

Public Works Analyst Seth Jansen provided background information on this agenda item and fielded questions from members of the Village Board.

Administrator Walsh clarified that the motion on the table is to direct staff to present the proposed changes to the Zoning Board of Appeals for review and recommendation, before returning to the Village Board for final consideration.

Trustee Bachner asked Analyst Jansen to explain how the calculation is made for tree removal and the required planting of new replacement trees.

Analyst Jansen responded that the standard is a minimum 1-to-1 replacement ratio.

Trustee Gillis noted that the proposed change would apply only to residential properties.

Trustee Brennan commented that this could result in a significant change and requested that the Village make every effort to publicize it.

President Adduci stated that the Village will utilize all regular communication channels, including social media and the newsletter, and will also explore additional methods for community outreach regarding the proposed changes.

Trustee Bachner agreed and emphasized the importance of conducting as much public outreach as possible.

Trustee Keskitalo asked how the proposed changes might affect situations where tree roots are impacting sewer lines.

Director Bielak explained that trees do not break sewer lines on their own; rather, if a pipe has existing cracks, tree roots are drawn to the moisture and will grow into those openings.

Director Bielak noted that Village staff would only cut down a tree as a last resort in a situation regarding sewer lines.

Trustee Keskitalo asked the Village to consider any potential undue hardships these proposed changes might impose on residents.

Analyst Jansen referenced a section of the code that addresses this concern.

Trustee Brennan noted that the proposed changes still contain non-gender-neutral language.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

iv. Switch Together Solar Program Partnership

**MOTION** by Trustee Bachner to approve participation in the Switch Together Solar Program, including the use of the Village logo on marketing materials and to feature information about the program in the Village website. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

Public Works Analyst Seth Jansen provided background information on the agenda item.

Trustee O'Connell suggested holding a community meeting to help residents understand the program and to ensure its legitimacy.

Analyst Jansen explained how the program operates.

Trustee Gillis recommended that the Village create a chart to clearly outline the various solar programs available to residents.

Trustee O'Connell expressed caution regarding any future opt-out programs.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

v. Award of Contract – Pump Station and Street Lighting Electricity –  
AEP Energy

**MOTION** by Trustee Gillis waive Formal Bidding (Due to Competitive Quotation) and award a 36-month electricity supply contract for the Pumping Station and Street Lighting with AEP Energy, Inc. not to exceed the price of \$0.06 per kilowatt hour and authorize the Village Administrator to execute the

contract agreement. Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

Analyst Jansen provided background information on the agenda item, explaining that the Village's pump station and street lighting are billed through separate accounts from other infrastructure, requiring their contracts to be renewed every few years.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: Brennan (left the room briefly)

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

## **9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a. Discussion of Fire Alarm and Sprinkler System Alarm Notification Process and Requirements – No Action

Fire Chief Tom Gaertner provided background information on this agenda item, outlining the Village's fire sprinkler alarm system requirements and the history of past regulations related to these systems in the Village. He then responded to questions from the Board.

Trustee Brennan asked if community outreach efforts will inform residents about the recent changes in code requirements.

Chief Gaertner confirmed that they will.

Administrator Walsh added that the Village has contacted multiple alarm providers to notify them of the changes.

Trustee Brennan asked why the Village had recommended a specific vendor to residents.

Chief Gaertner explained that the recommended vendor had the necessary infrastructure at the time, which other vendors lacked.

Tom Cloud, a resident impacted by these alarm requirements, provided

information on how he is updating his system.

## **10. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Presentation Regarding Village of River Forest Water System – No Action**

Director Bielak gave a presentation on the Village's water infrastructure.

Trustee Bachner asked about the location of the old well that the Village previously used for water.

Director Bielak responded that it is located within the pump station.

Director Bielak explained how Village staff determine whether a property has a lead service line.

President Adduci inquired about the Village's future water source.

Director Bielak responded that the Village's water source will remain the same and provided information on potential changes to the water rates in the future.

## **11. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2(c)(2) to discuss: Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees and the Village Board will adjourn after executive session and will not return to open session. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** to adjourn by Trustee Vazquez. Seconded by Trustee Gillis.

### **Roll call:**

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

  
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Rosa Castellano, Village Clerk

Date: 07/17/25