

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
July 20th, 2026**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on July 20th, 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, Trustees Brennan, Gillis(Virtual), O'Connell, Keskitalo, Vazquez(Virtual), and Village Clerk Castellano

Absent: None

Also Present: Village Attorney Lance Malina, Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, Fire Chief Tom Gaertner, Director of Public Works and Engineering Jack Bielak, Police Chief James Greenwood, Deputy Police Chief Michael Swierczynski, Deputy Fire Chief Dave Bochenek, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, HR Manager Trish Ivansek, Deputy Clerk Luke Masella(Virtual) and Assistant to the Director of Public Works Seth Jansen.

MOTION by Trustee O'Connell, seconded by Trustee Bachner, to allow Trustees Vazquez and Gillis to participate virtually due to health and business reasons.

Roll call:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Passes.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3.SPECIAL PRESENTATION

President Adduci asked the Village Board if they would be willing to review consent agenda item a. first in light of its meaningful nature.

The Village Board agreed.

- a. A Resolution Posthumously Honoring David Raino-Ogden and Designating the 500 Block of Edgewood as “David Raino-Ogden Way”

MOTION by Trustee Keskitalo, seconded by Trustee O’Connell, to approve the resolution honoring David Raino-Ogden.

Roll call:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Passes.

President Adduci read the resolution into the record before presenting it to the family and friends of David Raino-Ogden, who were in attendance. Historic Preservation Commission Chairman Dave Franek then offered remarks regarding the resolution, followed by comments from Kris Raino-Ogden.

- a. Swearing in of Firefighter/Paramedic – Julia Massey

Fire Chief Gaertner provided background on this agenda item.

Village Clerk Castellano swore in Firefighter/Paramedic Julia Massey.

- b. Police Department Commendation Award – Officer Niemann and Officer Saldana

Police Chief Jim Greenwood provided background information on these awards and presented the awards to the Officers.

- c. Police Department – Citizenship Award – Aengus O’Neill

Police Chief Jim Greenwood provided background information on these awards and presented the award to Aengus O'Neill.

4.CITIZEN COMMENTS

Homer Bizzle provided an update on upcoming events from the charity he owns America Cares Too.

Tatiana Mason provided further details regarding the events.

Margie Cekander provided public comment regarding the July 9, 2026, Development Review Board hearing. She expressed concerns about the integrity of the hearing, the handling of the proposed development, and elements of the application, including the traffic study. She also raised concerns regarding the legal process and potential impacts on nearby residents. Additionally, she opposed reducing the Historic Preservation Code notice requirement, stating it should remain at 500 feet. Finally, she expressed concern about the Village's potential takeover of the local community center and stated that any such action should be decided by referendum.

5.ELECTED OFFICIALS' COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee O'Connell highlighted the success of some local youth baseball teams in the Village.

Trustee Keskitalo congratulated the Park District for their new Parks in town and provided an update on new parks in D90. She then recognized Joy Tea, a local business, for opening a brick-and-mortar store. Additionally, she commented on her time at the All-American City Conference in June.

Trustee Brennan congratulated Firefighter Massey on being sworn in and recognized the officers and local resident who received awards. She then highlighted the upcoming Twin Village Covenant Cup kickball game between Maywood and River Forest, hosted by the Village.

Village Clerk Castellano had nothing to add.

Trustee Vazquez had no comments.

Trustee Gillis echoed Trustee Keskitalo's comments regarding the All-America City Conference. She then thanked the residents who expressed concerns about the silver maple tree on the proposed development site at Madison Street and Ashland Avenue and explained that, if the project were to move forward, the tree would be appropriately replaced.

Trustee Bachner gave a land acknowledgment.

President Adduci recognized Firefighter Massey on being sworn in as the Village's first female firefighter. She also congratulated Aengus on receiving his award. Additionally, she shared her experiences at the All-America City Conference, noting that she was proud of the Village for being named a finalist and thanking Village staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the process. She noted that she would like to follow up on the idea of a Youth Commission with Trustee Keskitalo.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- ~~a. A Resolution Posthumously Honoring David Raino-Ogden and Designating the 500 Block of Edgewood as "David Raino-Ogden Way"~~
- b. Accounts Payable – June 2026 – \$2,095,892.79
- c. June 2026 Financial Report
- d. Administration Department Report
- e. Monthly Department Reports
- f. Change Order – Village's Public Works Aerial Truck – Versalift – \$1,088.00
- g. Purchase Approval – Large V-Box Spreader – Sourcewell Cooperative – \$51,021.00
- h. Intergovernmental Agreement – Metropolitan Water Reclamation District – Village Hall Permeable Paver Parking Lot
- i. Award of Contract – Construction Engineering Services (2026 Franklin Avenue Watermain Replacement) – Christopher B. Burke Engineering – \$96,500.00
- j. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – June 22nd, 2026
- k. Village Board of Trustees Executive Session Meeting Minutes – June 22nd, 2026

Trustee Keskitalo requested that Item B be pulled for separation consideration.

Trustee Bachner asked that her vote be recused for Item J and K.

MOTION by Trustee O'Connell, seconded by Trustee Keskitalo, to approve Consent Agenda Items C-K.

Roll call:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Passes.

7. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

b. Accounts Payable – June 2026 – \$2,095,892.79

MOTION by Trustee Keskitalo, seconded by Trustee O'Connell, to approve item b.

Trustee Keskitalo asked clarifying questions regarding the total amount paid to Jasculca Terman. She requested that staff prepare a full accounting of all payments made to the firm for the next meeting and, if the Village chooses to continue utilizing its services, provide a proposed contract for the Board's consideration.

Trustee O'Connell asked whether the total amount referenced included all prior work performed by Jasculca Terman for the Village. Trustee Keskitalo confirmed that it did.

President Adduci asked Trustee Keskitalo to clarify the information she was requesting. Trustee Keskitalo stated that she was seeking a complete accounting of all payments made to Jasculca Terman to date, the services those payments covered, and, if the Village chose to continue the relationship, information regarding the proposed scope and terms of any future agreement.

Trustee Brennan stated that he was also interested in understanding the scope of work Jasculca Terman had been retained to perform.

Trustee Bachner asked whether Village Administrator Walsh had any comments

regarding Trustee Keskitalo's concerns. Administrator Walsh stated that he did not have a comment at that time, as he would first need to review the Village's financial records to determine the total amount paid to Jasculca Terman. He added that he had been in discussions with the firm regarding a potential new contract.

Trustee Brennan asked whether all of Jasculca Terman's work for the Village had been related to the Madison Street development. Administrator Walsh confirmed that it had, noting that the firm's services were funded through the Madison Street TIF and providing additional context regarding its role compared to the Village's other communications firm.

Roll call:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

8.RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

a. Historic Preservation Commission

i. Proposed Amendments to the Village's Historic Preservation Code

MOTION by Trustee Bachner, seconded by Trustee Vazquez, to approve an ordinance amending the Village's Historic Preservation Code.

Historic Preservation Commission Chair Dave Franek provided background information on the proposed amendments and responded to questions from the Board.

Historic Preservation Commission Member John Forehand explained the Commission's rationale for proposing to extend the demolition delay period to nine months.

Trustee Brennan asked if the proposed notices for local landmarks could be changed from certified mail to just regular mail.

Chair Franek explained the Commission's rationale for requiring notice by certified mail. Trustee Brennan noted the concerns raised regarding the reliability

and accessibility of certified mail and suggested that they explore alternative methods of providing notice.

Chair Franek noted that the proposed reduced requirement applies only to local landmark properties, which are relatively rare in the Village. He added that the Historic Preservation Commission would have no objection if the Board chose to amend the notice requirement and suggested that an affidavit of mailing or similar form of verification could be used as an alternative. In response to a question from Administrator Walsh, Chair Franek explained the Historic Preservation Commission's core mission and the protections afforded to significant and landmark properties within the Village.

Trustee O'Connell asked whether other public notice requirements in the Village are limited to a 250-foot notification radius.

Administrator Walsh explained the Village's various public notice requirements and how they differ depending on the type of application.

In response to questions from President Adduci and Trustee Bachner, Chair Franek identified the Village's two local landmark properties and explained the distinction between local landmarks and significant properties.

The Board, staff, Chair Franek, and Village Attorney Malina continued discussing various aspects of the public notice requirements, including notification radii, certified mail, regular mail, and potential alternatives.

Trustee Brennan suggested that certified mailers be removed and just regular mail be utilized instead.

Trustee Bachner suggested it be kept at the 500ft since the reduction in the type of mailers.

Trustee Gillis noted she would support the reduction to 250ft and the use of regular mail, not certified mail.

Trustee Keskitalo asked whether designating a property as a local landmark would have any impact on neighboring properties. Chair Franek confirmed that it would not.

President Adduci stated that she supports the demolition delay provision but raised concerns regarding situations where a property may become deteriorated and create a nuisance. Chair Franek explained that the proposed amendments include a new provision addressing this issue, known as demolition by neglect.

Trustee Bachner asked how many properties would typically fall within a 250-foot notification radius. Administrator Walsh stated that the number varies by block but is generally around 10 to 15 homes.

Trustee Bachner noted that residents may be interested in knowing if their neighbors are pursuing landmark status.

President Adduci stated that she had no concerns with the 500-foot notification radius but noted that her primary concern was the certified mail requirement.

Chair Franek stated that he would support changing the requirement to regular mail, provided that the applicant is required to provide some form of proof or verification that the notices were sent.

President Adduci reiterated her concerns regarding the certified mail requirement.

Trustee Keskitalo asked if there are any outstanding demolition permits that would be impacted by this change.

Deputy Clerk Masella stated that, to his knowledge, he was not aware of any.

President Adduci noted that the length of the demolition delay period was a topic debated during the creation of the Historic Preservation Code.

Trustee O'Connell stated that he appreciated the change requiring applicants to appear before the Historic Preservation Commission prior to applying for building permits. He also raised concerns regarding the cost of renovating a home and whether the proposed delay could impact property owners' ability to renovate their homes.

Administrator Walsh reminded Trustee O'Connell that the demolition delay period being discussed applies only to demolition requests.

Chair Franek provided an explanation of what could be accomplished during the additional time provided under the proposed demolition delay period.

Trustee Brennan stated her support for the proposed demolition delay extension.

President Adduci and Chair Franek discussed the demolition of a property commonly referred to as the Marrs Mansion within the Village.

President Adduci reiterated that she wanted to ensure the Board was aware of the potential implications associated with the proposed demolition delay.

Trustee Keskitalo asked how many single-family homes are located within the Village. Administrator Walsh estimated that there are approximately 3,000 single-family homes.

Trustee Keskitalo highlighted that the proposed amendments would still only affect approximately 10 percent of homes within the Village.

Trustee Bachner asked for an explanation of how a property becomes designated as a landmark. Chair Franek provided an overview of the landmark designation process.

Administrator Walsh provided an explanation of the distinction between significant properties and local landmarks.

Trustee Keskitalo asked whether the Commission could allow a property owner to proceed with demolition sooner rather than requiring the full demolition delay period.

Chair Franek confirmed that the Commission could do so.

President Adduci stated that while she supports more properties being designated as significant, she raised concerns regarding the potential number of conditions that could be imposed.

Trustee Brennan asked if there would be a difference between how attached and detached garages are handled.

Chair Franek noted that there is no separate distinction between the two of them

and provided an explanation of how the proposed garage demolition approval process would be held.

President Adduci stated that the motion would be to approve the amendment with a 500-foot notification requirement using regular mail rather than certified mail.

Chair Franek suggested requiring the applicant to submit a statement or affidavit confirming that the required notices were sent.

President Adduci stated that such a requirement could be included.

Trustee O'Connell suggested that the applicant provide the Village with the list of addresses to verify that the required notices were sent.

Village Administrator Walsh noted that Village staff typically generate the notification addresses for applicants.

Roll call:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Passes.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

10. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Liquor Control Amendment – Villa Nail Spa LLC & Nita's Bakery, Inc. – Ordinance

MOTION by Trustee O'Connell, seconded by Trustee Keskitalo to approve a liquor license control amendment.

Assistant Village Administrator Spencer provided background on this agenda item and fielded questions from the Board.

Trustee Bachner asked for clarification on the ordinance document and the number of drinks allowed.

Assistant Village Administrator Spencer asked the Board how many drinks they think should be allowed.

Trustee Keskitalo asked what number of drinks the applicant originally requested.

Assistant Village Administrator Spencer stated that the owner of the proposed establishment was in the audience and asked the owner directly. The owner stated that they were requesting one or two drinks.

Trustee O'Connell asked Police Chief Jim Greenwood if he had an opinion on the appropriate number of drinks. Chief Greenwood stated that one drink would be adequate.

Trustee Keskitalo stated her support for the proposed amendment and asked whether it would be possible to notify other businesses in the Village about this opportunity.

Assistant Village Administrator Spencer stated that such outreach would be possible.

Trustee Bachner asked for clarification regarding what constitutes a business license for a salon.

Assistant Village Administrator Spencer stated that staff would need to review the definitions and report back to the Board.

Trustee Bachner highlighted a potential business on North Avenue and asked whether it would qualify under the proposed amendment.

Administrator Walsh stated that the business would likely fall under the proposed amendment.

Trustee Brennan noted that the Village's first liquor license was issued to Good Earth Greenhouse. She questioned whether the Village should continue issuing

individual licenses or consider creating an umbrella license category for businesses, such as Good Earth Greenhouse or salons, where the primary purpose of the business is something other than alcohol service.

Village Attorney Malina provided an explanation of how liquor licenses are traditionally handled and noted that the specificity of license categories is intentional.

Trustee Keskitalo asked if additional businesses came forth if the Village would be able to add an additional number of licenses.

Village Attorney Malina stated yes.

Assistant Village Administrator Spencer provided background information on the proposed cupcake business liquor license and responded to questions from the Board.

Trustee Keskitalo noted that the proposed agreement did not include a specific food-to-alcohol ratio and asked whether such a requirement should be incorporated.

Assistant Village Administrator Spencer explained the owner's proposed plan for selling alcohol and noted that establishing a food-to-alcohol ratio could be included as a restriction.

Trustee Bachner stated her support for potentially establishing a food-to-alcohol ratio and asked whether the applicant operates solely as a catering service.

Assistant Village Administrator Spencer explained that the applicant operates out of a shared kitchen facility and is not permitted to sell products directly from that location. She noted that the applicant would prepare the food product there and sell it at businesses outside of River Forest.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

b. Introduction to the Community Connect Service – No Action

Fire Chief Tom Gaertner and Deputy Fire Chief Dave Bochenek reminded the Board of the upcoming Fire Department Blood Drive. They then provided background information on the agenda item and responded to questions from members of the Board.

President Adduci asked whether residents can enter their medications into the system, how the system complies with HIPAA requirements, and who controls the associated data.

Deputy Fire Chief Dave Bochenek provided an explanation regarding the security and privacy measures of the system.

President Adduci also asked whether the system would be expanded beyond the Fire Department.

Administrator Walsh stated that the intent is to expand the system for emergency or urgent notifications, such as water main breaks or other critical issues.

Trustee Bachner asked whether the Police Department would have access to the information stored in the system.

Fire Chief Tom Gaertner stated that the Police Department could request certain information, such as emergency contact information and phone numbers, when needed.

Trustee Bachner asked whether residents should continue using emergency information sheets, commonly referred to as "ICE packs," stored in their freezers.

Deputy Fire Chief Dave Bochenek explained that the information in the system can be shared with responding agencies, making it accessible to emergency personnel when needed. He noted that residents may continue using ICE packs if they choose, but the system is intended to make that information readily available to responders.

President Adduci suggested asking residents whether they would authorize

mutual aid fire departments to access their information in situations where the Village is unable to respond. Fire Chief Gaertner stated that he would look into that possibility.

Trustee O'Connell asked whether the Fire Marshal had begun outreach to larger businesses, such as Whole Foods and Jewel-Osco. Fire Chief Gaertner stated that those efforts were already underway.

Trustee Bachner asked what would happen if a resident failed to complete the annual renewal. Fire Chief Gaertner explained how resident information can be accessed and updated, including in situations where a resident has moved.

Trustee Bachner requested that the Fire Department make an effort to identify when homes are sold so that outdated information is not relied upon during emergency responses.

President Adduci noted that the Village is notified of home sales through the transfer stamp process and stated that the Fire Department should be able to use that information to help keep records current.

Trustee O'Connell asked when the program would go live. Fire Chief Gaertner stated that the launch date is August 1.

Trustee Bachner asked whether outreach to larger universities is conducted through their administrations rather than directly with students. Deputy Fire Chief Bochenek confirmed that it is and noted that he has been working with security personnel at the larger institutions within the Village.

11.EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Trustee Vazquez, and seconded by Trustee O'Connell, to enter into Executive Session to discuss the purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired. The Village Board will adjourn after executive session and will not return to open session.

Roll call:

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

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Passes.

The Board entered executive session at 8:56pm.

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 12:46 a.m.



Rosa Castellano, Village Clerk

Date: 08/17/26