

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES  
September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on September 22<sup>nd</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 7:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

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

Absent: Trustees Gillis

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

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President Adduci led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Margie Cekander spoke regarding the Ethics Commission discussions scheduled for executive session later that evening. She expressed that the matter should be addressed in open session and then raised concerns about how the Village has handled the complaint along with other matters related to the Ethics Commission and its practices.

Bruce Faland asked the Village Board for clarification on several topics, expressed concern about the tone of recent meetings, and encouraged the Board and Village Staff to share as much information as possible with residents.

President Adduci thanked Mr. Faland for his comments and asked Village staff to follow up with him to address his questions and concerns.

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

Trustee Bachner wished everyone a Happy Rosh Hashanah and thanked Trustee Keskitalo for attending that evening. She then read aloud a statement condemning and raising concerns about recent immigration enforcement actions in the area.

Trustee Vazquez reminded everyone that Illinois has two state laws regulating the role of local police in immigration enforcement actions. He also noted that he and several others recently attended the Illinois Municipal League conference.

Trustee Brennan began her remarks with a land acknowledgment, then echoed many of Trustee Bachner's comments while adding her own thoughts regarding the recent immigration enforcement actions in the area.

Trustee Keskitalo wished her daughter a happy birthday and offered comments recognizing the Rosh Hashanah holiday. She also shared her thoughts on the immigration enforcement actions taking place in the area.

Trustee O'Connell thanked his fellow trustees for their comments regarding the recent immigration enforcement actions. He then asked staff to continue working toward finalizing the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group's report.

President Adduci wished Trustee Keskitalo a happy New Year and extended birthday wishes to her daughter. She then shared that she attended the Illinois Municipal League conference, emphasizing the event's importance and relevance.

#### **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- b. Monthly Department Reports
- c. Administration Department Report
- d. Change Order – 2025 Street Improvement Program – Schroeder  
Asphalt Services – \$92,040.39

- e. Lake Street Crossings – Safe Routes To School Grant Funding – Resolution

**MOTION** by Trustee Bachner to approve consent agenda items A through E. Seconded by Trustee O’Connell.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: Trustee Gillis

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

**6.CONSENT ITEMS FOR SPEARATE CONSIDERATION**

None.

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

None.

**8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**9.NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Approval of Collective Bargaining Agreement with the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150 (5/1/2025-4/30/2028)

**MOTION** by Trustee O’Connell to ratify the collective bargaining agreement with the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150 and authorize the Village Administrator and Director of Public Works & Engineering to execute the contract pending attorney review. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

Village Administrator Walsh provided background information on this agenda item.

President Adduci asked Administrator Walsh whether he felt the bargaining process was successful.

Administrator Walsh responded that he did and went on to highlight additional aspects of the contract.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: Trustee Gillis

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

President Adduci thanked Village staff for their involvement in the negotiations.

## **10.EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Before the motion was made, Trustee Brennan asked whether the Board and staff could address concerns raised during public comment.

President Adduci stated that she believed Mr. Faland's concerns had been appropriately addressed.

Trustee Brennan requested that his question regarding the Village Attorney's role be answered and suggested including updates on Lake and Lathrop and Term Limits in each edition of the weekly newsletter.

President Adduci stated that was possible but noted there are times when no meaningful updates are available on those topics, which could make the messaging repetitive. She added that the Village already provides updates when they are necessary and relevant.

Trustee Keskitalo suggested adding a standing section in the newsletter where residents could click links to access information on the most frequently requested topics.

Trustee Brennan noted being in support of the suggestion from Trustee Keskitalo.

Trustee O'Connell emphasized the importance of ensuring that all residents are signed up for the Village's newsletter.

President Adduci agreed that these suggestions would be easy to implement and said staff would look into doing so. She reiterated the Village's commitment to keeping residents informed and encouraged residents to reach out to staff whenever they have questions or need assistance.

President Adduci then made remarks about where the Village currently stands in the process of discussing the term limits referendum and encouraged residents to attend the October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Village Attorney Malina then responded to Mr. Faland's question regarding his role as the Village Attorney.

Mr. Faland mentioned that he had previously tried to get an answer to that question without success and expressed his gratitude to the Board.

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c) to discuss (1)The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees,&(3)The performance of a or appointed public officer, &(4)Evidence or testimony presented in open hearing, or in closed hearing where specifically authorized by law. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

Roll call:

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

Absent: Trustee Gillis

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Trustee Brennan asked if the Village Board will be returning to open session after executive session.

Village Attorney Malina stated yes.

Trustee Brennan stated that she felt the agenda did not make this clear and requested that future agendas explicitly indicate when the Board will be returning

to open session.

The Village Board and staff discussed adjustments to the agenda to ensure it clearly indicates when the Board will return to executive session in the future.

Executive Session began.

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to adjourn Executive Session and return to open session. Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: Trustee Gillis

Nays: None

Motion Passes and the Village Board returned to open session at 8:02pm.

Upon returning to open session, a roll call was taken.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: Trustee Gillis

Nays: None

**A MOTION** was made by Trustee O'Connell to adopt the findings of the Ethics Commission, determining the complaint to be resolved with no further action, and directing the Village Administrator to distribute a summary memo and ordinance to all Village Covered Individuals. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

Trustee Bachner requested that Village staff provide examples of recusals and outline the proper procedure for recusal when distributing the updated ethics ordinance to all Village covered individuals.

Administrator Walsh noted that the Ethics Commission requested something similar be done as well in their recommendation.

Trustee Keskitalo noted that the initial documents shared by Administrator Walsh could have been clearer and provided examples and requested that follow up emails contain simple examples.

Trustee Bachner agreed with Trustee Keskitalo, noting that this approach could help the Village address potential conflicts of interest as early as possible.

Trustee Vazquez suggested sharing resources from the Illinois Municipal League with Commissioners.

Trustee Brennan suggested that the Village could explain what exactly “recusing” yourself means from a discussion.

Trustee O’Connell posed a hypothetical question to Village Attorney Malina regarding recusals, asking whether a commissioner should leave the room or if simply remaining in the audience is acceptable.

Village Attorney Malina explained that recusals generally involve multiple steps: the individual must first disclose any conflict of interest and then refrain from participating in the meeting’s debate. He added that potential conflicts are common in this field and encouraged everyone to contact staff promptly if they arise.

Trustee Brennan asked that in the future, all audio from meetings surrounding ethics complaints be made available for the Village Board prior to their deliberation.

President Adduci asked Village Administrator Walsh if the audio was available for review.

Administrator Walsh stated yes.

Trustee O’Connell asked for confirmation that the Ethics commission meeting was on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

Administrator Walsh stated correct.

Village Attorney Malina provided background on how executive session recordings can be listened to after the fact.

President Adduci asked when the audio was available for Trustees to listen to.

Administrator Walsh stated that the Village Board was provided with information regarding the complaint over the past weekend.

Trustee O'Connell requested clarification on the significance of the September 9 and August 8 dates.

Administrator Walsh explained that September 9 was the date the Ethics Commission met, while August 8 was when the complaint was filed.

Trustee O'Connell added that, during earlier discussions about the ethics ordinance, he had emphasized the importance of timely reviews and expressed concern that the timeline for this complaint had not been completed promptly.

Trustee Brennan reiterated that she felt the Village Board needs to be given more time to review matters like this in the future.

President Adduci asked that while the notice was late, the audio was offered to the Board to listen to.

Trustee Brennan stated no, the audio was not offered.

Administrator Walsh stated that he had not explicitly offered the audio, believing the documents provided would achieve the same understanding. He added that, moving forward, he will make every effort to ensure the audio is available prior to future deliberations.

President Adduci asked for Village Administrator Walsh to provide an explanation on the length of time it took for the Ethics Commission to review the complaint.

Administrator Walsh noted that there was a vacancy on the Commission and the acting chair wanted to wait until the seat was filled to address the complaint.

Trustee Keskitalo asked whether the review timeline for future complaints would be quicker.

Administrator Walsh confirmed that it would.

Trustee Bachner suggested that staff assist in identifying and addressing potential



conflicts of interest when they arise.

Trustee Brennan asked for clarification on when and how Village staff or Commissioners are permitted to review Ethics Commission complaints.

Administrator Walsh explained that submissions through the online Ethics Commission form are sent only to the Ethics Commission Chair and the designated email address. He reported that the Ethics Chair notified him of the complaint and requested that he take the necessary steps to initiate the meeting process.

Trustee Brennan then asked if the closed session for the Ethics Commission and the recent Village Board meeting were justified.

Village Attorney Malina provided a legal explanation on the validity of the executive session meetings.

Trustee Bachner reminded everyone that although the Village Board may review the legal aspects of certain matters, the Village should still strive to share as much information with residents as possible.

President Adduci stated that she believes the current practices surrounding executive session are appropriate.

The Village Board and staff continued their discussion on executive session procedures and past executive sessions.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: Trustee Gillis

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** to adjourn by Trustee O'Connell. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

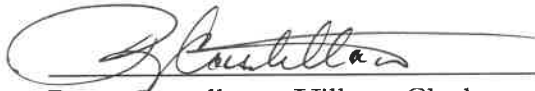
**Roll call:**

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

Absent: Trustee Gillis

Nays: None

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.



Rosa Castellano, Village Clerk

Date: 10/17/25