

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES  
October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, October 16<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 7:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

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

Absent: Village Clerk Keller

Also Present: Fire Chief Thomas Gaertner, Deputy Fire Chief Bochenek, Police Chief James O'Shea, Police Commander Swierczynski, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Assistant Finance Director Keke Boyer, Village Attorney Lance Malina, Human Resources Manager Trish Ivansek, Public Works Analyst Seth Jansen, Deputy Clerk Luke Masella, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, Village Administrator Matt Walsh.

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to allow Trustee O'Connell to participate in the meeting virtually due to work obligations. Seconded by Trustee Brennan.

Roll call:

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

Absent:

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

President Adduci invited Maura Zinni up to the podium to make public comment.

Ms. Zinni made public comment regarding a tree on the parkway of her property that she states is a safety hazard and damaging Village sewage infrastructure. Ms. Zinni reported that they had Davis Tree Care evaluate the tree and that Davis had stated it

is a hazard. Ms. Zinni asked that the Village allow the tree to be removed and contribute to the costs related to the removal.

Village Administrator Walsh reported that the Village staff arborist evaluated the tree and determined that the tree was healthy. Due to this, and the Village's focus on tree canopy preservation, Mr. Walsh stated Staff does not believe the tree should be removed. Mr. Walsh also noted that there are many other occurrences of similar tree formations, and that Staff is worried about the precedent that may be set by allowing the removal of this tree.

Trustee Bachner asked Mr. Walsh if this tree had ever been identified in the past as having issues.

Mr. Walsh stated no. He also mentioned that Staff had reached out to Davis Tree Care regarding their determination of the tree as hazardous and have not heard back.

President Adduci and Trustee Vazquez stated that they felt like the Village should discuss the tree with Davis Tree Care before taking any further action.

Village Administrator Walsh explained that the safety concern raised by the resident is mostly related to the proximity of the tree to the sidewalk and driveway apron, rather than the health of the tree.

Trustee Johnson asked about the impact on the Village sewer systems.

Mr. Walsh stated that staff are not concerned about the sewer systems but that damage to private and public sewage systems is common in the town due to the number of large trees.

President Adduci asked if Staff's position is that the tree is not an issue for the sewer systems.

Village Administrator Walsh stated that is correct.

Trustee Brennan asked if there was a commission that could give the Board a recommendation as she felt the statements made by the resident have not been flushed out and confirmed.

President Adduci stated that there is no such commission.

Trustee Brennan asked if the current position from the Village Administration is that no action is needed.

Mr. Walsh stated that is correct and that staff will attempt to confirm with Davis Tree Care and potentially another tree specialist.

Trustee Vazquez reiterated he is worried about the concerns raised by the residents and would like more information.

Trustee Gillis stated that the Village should consider what precedence the removal of this tree would set.

President Adduci stated that she thinks the largest issue with the tree is how close it is to the driveway apron.

President Adduci reiterated that Village Administrator Walsh will discuss further with Davis Tree Care before any decision will be made.

Trustee O'Connell stated that he feels the Village should be careful with its decision due to similar formations of trees in the Village.

President Adduci invited Rene Hermes to make public comment via Zoom.

Mr. Hermes asked that the Village enforce the existing code that he states does not allow decorations on parkway trees throughout the Village. He cited Village code 8-13-6 as the basis for not allowing objects on Village trees.

Mr. Hermes then gave public comment regarding the proposed traffic installations in the northeast portion of town.

President Adduci invited Mr. Hermes to make public comment on the proposed traffic installations at the next Village Board meeting as the traffic installations will be on the agenda.

Village Attorney Malina gave background on policies surrounding objects on Village trees.

Trustee Brennan stated that this complaint should serve as a reminder to regularly enforce Village code. The Board was in agreement to enforce the code on this matter.

Trustee Johnson asked if holiday lights would fall under this discussion.

Village Attorney Malina stated yes.

President Adduci invited Gary Northrup to make public comment via zoom regarding the proposed traffic installations in the northeast portion of town.

Mr. Norton made public comment against the proposed barriers and asked that the Village address what he felt was the root cause of the issue, the intersection of Harlem and North Avenue. He stated that the Village should not attempt to block off River Forest.

President Adduci invited Mr. Northrup to make public comment at the next Board meeting.

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

Trustee Bachner gave a land acknowledgement and reported attending a round table event put on by various Oak Park organizations and governments to discuss Latinx topics. She also gave her condolences to anyone impacted by the situation occurring in the Middle East.

Trustee Gillis congratulated the Fire and Police Departments for the open house event and also gave thanks to Beth Cheng for her service on the Sustainability Commission. Trustee Gillis gave a belated congratulations to Forest Park Kiwanis for a 100-year anniversary.

Trustee Vazquez reported participating in an Age Friendly event with President Adduci and condemned the violence occurring in the Middle East.

Trustee Brennan gave thanks to Jeff Loster for his service to the Village. Trustee Brennan reported attending a Check Reveal from the River Forest Lemonaid charity. The check was awarded to the Proviso Township Ministerial Alliance Network for their 4 x 4 x 4 program. She hopes that the Village can work with the program to get Village interns. She also echoed the same sentiments as other trustees surrounding the conflict in the Middle East.

Trustee Johnson stated he shares the same sentiments as other Trustees surrounding the Middle East conflict and encouraged residents who wish to display support to utilize their yards.

Trustee O'Connell shared his condolences surrounding the conflict in the Middle East and also congratulated the Village on the successful open house event.

President Adduci reported attending the West Central Municipal Conference Award Dinner and encouraged people to read the statement she gave in the Village Newsletter surrounding the conflict in the Middle East.

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

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- b. Monthly Department Reports
- c. Accounts Payable – September 2023 - \$2,639,855.98
- d. Financial Report – September 2023
- e. Administration Department Report
- f. Award of Contract – FY 2024 Tree Trimming Program – Davis Tree Care – \$47,469.50

- g. Intergovernmental Agreement – Cook County – ADA Crosswalk Upgrades

**MOTION** by Trustee Bachner to approve items a through g. Seconded by Trustee Gillis.

Roll call:

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

Absent:

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

## **6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION**

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

## **8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Review and Acceptance of FY23 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

**MOTION** by Trustee Johnson to accept the Village's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 2023. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

Finance Director McAdams made remarks regarding the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). She gave background on some of the causes for large financial changes discussed in the report. She invited Martha Trotter, from Sikich LLP, to present the document in more detail.

Ms. Trotter gave a presentation highlighting key aspects of the ACFR and also gave guidance on how to read and interpret the document. She gave thanks to the Village staff for turning over the large number of documents required for the audit in a timely manner. She reported the Village is in good standing and directed the Board to read the Management Letter portion of the report for further highlights.

Trustee Vazquez asked if there was anything found in the report that the Village should be worried about.

Ms. Trotter stated no.

President Adduci gave thanks to Village staff for their effort and thanked Ms. Trotter for her presentation.

Roll call:

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

Absent:  
Nays: None

Motion Passes.

#### **10. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION** by Trustee Gillis to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1), (2), & (11) to discuss: The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives and pending litigation. The Village Board will adjourn after executive session and will not return to open session. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

Roll call:  
Ayes: Trustees Vazquez, Bachner, Johnson, Gillis, O'Connell, Brennan  
Absent:  
Nays: None

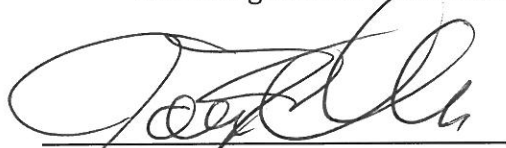
Motion Passes.

#### **11. ADJOURNMENT**

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

Roll call:  
Ayes: President Adduci, Trustees Vazquez, Bachner, Johnson, Gillis, O'Connell, Brennan  
Absent:  
Nays: None

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

  
Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk