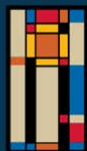




Village of River Forest



RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

Thank you for taking the time to read the Village's E-News. These messages are sent approximately once per month and include timely information regarding Village events, news and other useful information. We strive to keep the content brief and relevant to the issues that matter most to the community.

Message from the Village President



Dear River Forest Residents,

COVID-19 Update

According to Cook County Department of Public Health data, 24 new positive cases were reported in River Forest last week, from Sunday, October 25 through Saturday, October 31 compared to 22 cases that were reported the previous week. Click [here](#) and select "Case Data by Town" to see an update on the cases in River Forest. Please remember that Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health [mitigation measures](#) are still in effect. For more information on testing locations and contact tracing, please read last week's COVID-19 update by clicking [here](#).

Mid-Fiscal Year Budget & Financial Report

At the October 12, 2020 regular meeting, the Village Board of Trustees and I reviewed the mid-fiscal year budget and financial report. The [presentation slides](#) and [video recording](#) are available for review. I am happy to share that the presentation concluded that despite the difficulties 2020 has brought, the Village's **finances continue to be in a strong position**. The following details are highlighted in the report:

- **Revenues** - Revenues for Fiscal Year 2021 (May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021) are projected to fall short of the Village's budget by \$418,357. The bulk of this loss in revenue is due to the reduction in sales tax collected.
- **Assistance for COVID-19** - The Village is expecting to receive \$172,942 in funds for COVID-19 assistance. During the presentation, it was reported that approximately \$60,000 will come from Federal Assistance through FEMA and \$100,942 will come from an allocation from Cook County as part of the CARES Act. Since the time of the report, the Village has received notice that it will receive an additional \$12,000 from the CARES act.
- **Expenditures** - Significant revisions to the budget for expenditures included a savings in salary & benefits of \$374,857 due to positions being left vacant and a six-month wage freeze for non-union employees.
- **Suspension of CERF Transfer** - The Capital Equipment Replacement Fund (CERF) is a fund used by the Village to plan ahead and save for vehicle and equipment purchases. In most years, the Village saves money for these future purchases by making a transfer from the General Fund to CERF. The contribution from the General Fund to CERF will not be made this year, which creates a savings of \$500,329. A good history of being proactive and funding the CERF in the past allows the Village the flexibility in fiscal years like this to forgo this transfer while still having a 97.75% reserve balance in this fund.
- **Pension Obligation Increase** - The Village makes contributions to the police and fire pension funds. The amount needed to be contributed this year is \$377,144 above the amount that was budgeted. These contribution amounts are provided by actuarial reports prepared for the pension funds. The main causes of the increase include changes in assumptions to the mortality tables the actuaries use, plan changes for Tier II employees as part of State of Illinois public safety pension laws, and lower than expected return on investments that are measured at the close of market on April 30 of each year - which this year fell during the height of the pandemic. The Village expects for these increases to be offset in future years by changes in market performance as well as the important public safety pension consolidation law that was adopted in 2019.

The Village had intended to strategically utilize fund reserves this fiscal year to pay for one-time expenditures. As a result of the measures we have taken this budget year, we were able to reduce the amount of fund reserves needed by \$82,732. The Village is able to make measured, thoughtful, and deliberate adjustments to the budget because of strong, responsible financial policies. This allows the Village to continue to provide a high level of service to residents during the pandemic while still putting Village finances in a good position for years to come.

At the Village Board table

I am proud to report that the Village Board of Trustees and I have approved a [resolution](#) supporting a community partnership with Dominican University to fight racial and social injustice using the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT) framework. We are excited for the TRHT board to join us in passing its own resolution so that we can begin work. A special thank you goes to Dr. Sheila Radford-Hill, a River Forest resident who serves as the chief diversity officer at Dominican University, for making this possible. This is truly a historic moment for River Forest and I look forward to the partnership.

The Village Board of Trustees and I also [recognized](#) former River Forest Public Library Director Sue Quinn for her distinguished public service to the community. Sue retired in October and was an awesome asset to all who visit our library.

Finally, the Village Board of Trustees and I [recognized](#) the life of Sister Michelle Germanson who sadly passed away in October. Sister Michelle served as the President of Trinity High School for 27 years and leaves behind an incredible legacy not only at Trinity, but in all of River Forest.

The Village Board of Trustees and I are excited to share that the Village is in the process of conducting a request for proposals for an Automated Water Metering Infrastructure (AMI) program. Once completed, this smart technology will allow for constant and automatic water meter readings and leak detection. We feel this will make important improvements to customer service and employee efficiency.

At our meeting on Monday, November 9, Village Staff will bring back to the Village Board a revised Bike Plan Implementation. The revised plan has a reduced number of signs mostly around wayfinding for bicyclists. A portion of this project is being funded through a grant from Cook County. I expect this plan to be approved.

Recycle yard signs

Do you have corrugated plastic political signs in your yard? Please be sure to recycle unwanted signs at Village Hall. **Only corrugated plastic signs and their metal stakes will be accepted.** Drop-off is open to the public 24 hours a day now through November 30, 2020. The red recycling box is located on Central Avenue under the railroad viaduct next to Village Hall (400 Park Avenue). Please note this is a special drop off and that corrugated plastic and metal stakes should never go in the curbside recycling bin.

Support local businesses

Especially during these times, local businesses need our help. Please consider supporting some of these local business if you can, including:

- [Blackout Baking Co](#) - A River Forest bakery specializing in bite-size gourmet cookies.
- [Buzz Cafe](#) - A community cafe in Oak Park owned by River Forest residents Laura and Andrew Maychruk.
- [Sweetz by Julie](#) - Sweets and baked goods from River Forest resident Julie Merhar.
- [River Forest Chocolates](#) - Local chocolate and sweet shop owned by resident Donna Fantetti-Slepicka.
- For more local businesses that would appreciate your support, please visit the [business directory](#) from the Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce.

This Veterans Day, please join me in thanking and honoring all who have served our country. Please enjoy the beautiful fall weekend safely.

Sincerely,



Cathy Adduci
Village President

Village Spotlight

The Village of River Forest is working with residents to address stormwater issues in the community. The Village is hosting a virtual meeting to discuss the proposed Stormwater Master Plan (SMP) on Monday, 11/16 at 6:00PM. Though an engineering consultant has not yet been selected, the intent of this meeting is to hear from the residents about stormwater and flooding concerns that they would like to have included for study in the SMP. This meeting is open to the public for questions and comments. Click [here](#) for the Zoom link and SMP materials.

Thanksgiving Holiday - Village Hall Closed

The Village Board and staff wish all residents a happy Thanksgiving holiday. Please note Village Hall will be closed Thanksgiving Day (11/26) & Friday (11/27).

Winter Parking Reminders

Parking is not permitted on any Village street after two inches of snow or more has accumulated on the street, and for up to eight hours after the snowfall ends, to allow snow plows to safely clear the street. This helps our dedicated Public Works department do their jobs to keep our streets clean and safe from road hazards. The Village will not grant overnight parking passes during the above conditions.

Cook County COVID-19 Recovery Job Training and Placement Program



If you are a suburban Cook County resident facing COVID-19 financial hardship due to a loss of income, click [here](#) or call 1-800-720-2515 and find out about the Cook County COVID-19 Recovery Job Training and Placement program. This program is funded by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The program will provide training, placement, and lay-off aversion for suburban Cook County jobseekers and employers impacted by COVID-19.

Residents and employers can review eligibility requirements and get assistance by contacting one of the seven American Job Center sites, part of the Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership. The Cook County COVID-19 Community Recovery Initiative aims to strengthen suburban Cook County residents and small business affected by COVID-19. Visit www.cookcountyil.gov/recovery for more resources.

Cook County Equity Town Hall: Veterans Day 2020

Are you or someone you know a veteran? The Cook County Department of Veterans Affairs and local organizations will host an Equity Town Hall to discuss available resources for our veterans on Monday, 11/9 at 3:00PM. Please click [here](#) to RSVP to the event, which will be livestreamed on Facebook.

River Forest Police Department

Reporting Crimes

Recently, the River Forest Police Department has been notified that some crimes in our community have gone unreported. The Police Department would like to remind and encourage all residents to report all crimes and potential crimes to the River Forest Police Department by calling 911. No matter how small: if you see something, say something.

Safety Tip



There's nothing wrong with being proud of your hobbies, your family or any other passion in life. But, are your [bumper stickers](#) broadcasting more than that? Are they drawing unwanted attention? The River Forest Police Department reminds our community members to think twice about what our innocent interests are conveying to would-be offenders.

River Forest Fire Department

Patio Heaters

After a recent fire in town involving a portable patio heater, the River Forest Fire Department would like to offer some [safety tips](#) to read before using patio heaters.



Thanksgiving Safety

Thanksgiving can pose some particular challenges for family pets. Review these [tips](#) to give your pets a safe and happy holiday. Thanksgiving is also a leading day for home fires involving cooking equipment. Click here for [safety tips](#) to prevent

fires.

GREEN NEWS

Don't trash your pumpkin or place it in the street: Compost it!

Help keep pumpkins out of landfills by participating in the Annual River Forest Pumpkin Smash, Saturday, 11/7, 9AM - Noon at Roosevelt Middle School on the Jackson side. Last year, River Forest composted 512 pumpkins (4,860 pounds) - let's smash that record in 2020!

Please encourage friends, family, neighbors to compost instead of trashing, and kindly wear a mask and observe social distancing when dropping off pumpkins. The Pumpkin Smash is hosted by the D90 Green4Good Team with support from Roy Strom Company. Click [here](#) to learn more about the impact of composting 4,860 pounds of pumpkins.



Leave the Leaves



The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) says you can skip raking this fall, at least some of it. Leaving leaves in flower beds helps wildlife during the winter. Many insect and animal species rely on leaf layers. Leaves also form natural mulch, provide plants with a protective blanket in winter, conserve water year-round, and enrich the soil as the plant material decomposes. The NWF also recommends mulching leaves with a lawn mower and leaving the clippings on the lawn. Click [here](#) to learn more.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 90 SPOTLIGHT

Inclusion Preschool Application

There is still time to apply for a spot in the District 90 Inclusion Preschool for the 2021-2022 school year. Applications will be accepted until 11:59PM on 11/21. Students will be selected randomly through an electronic lottery process. Offered at Willard School, the Inclusion Preschool is available to River Forest residents who are ages 3, 4, and 5. If you know a family with a preschool child, please share this information with them. Please click [here](#) for more information about the program and to complete an application.

PARK DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

Deck the Halls with Holiday Tree Trimming

Join the River Forest Park District for its annual Holiday Tree Trimming in Memorial Park on Thursday, 12/3. Community businesses, organizations, neighborhoods, and families are invited to sponsor a tree, which will be on display along Lake Street in Memorial Parkway for the holiday season. A tree with lights will be provided and sponsors will bring and hang their own decorations. Registration is required. Click [here](#) to learn more.



River Forest Park District Park Bench

Sign up for the River Forest Park District's monthly e-newsletter for information on upcoming programs and events, the Fun Guide, and registration dates. Information regarding building closures and district news is also sent through our email list. Click [here](#) to sign up.

RIVER FOREST LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

Please visit the [Library website](#) to see everything that is happening and to view any announcements regarding changes to operations that may occur due to COVID-19. The exciting line up of virtual offerings can be seen on the [Library calendar](#).

Michele Weldon Virtual Author Event

Join the Library on Sunday, 11/8, 2-3:30PM. River Forest author Michele Weldon will discuss her recent book, *Act Like You're Having a Good Time*. Click [here](#) to register and for the Zoom information.

New Director Search has Begun

Sue Quinn, the cherished Director, had her last day in the building on 10/20. The Library wishes her all the best and will miss her profoundly. HR Source has been retained by the Board of Directors to assist in the hiring process, and they have begun evaluating potential candidates.



TOWNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Many in-person Township services and programs have been moved to a virtual platform this fall. To learn more, visit www.RiverForestTownship.org, the River Forest community calendar at www.RFHappenings.com, or [email](#) Supervisor Carla Sloan.

From the Township Assessor

New to the Cook County Treasurer's website: click [here](#) to look at a 20-year history of your property tax payments.

The Cook County Board of Review appeal results have been delayed.

Though the office is currently closed to in-person appointments due to Covid-19 safety precautions, the Staff are still here to help. Please call 708-366-2787 and leave your name, address, phone number twice, and your concern. Staff will research your request and return your call promptly.

Sibshops Are Back this Fall!

Sibshops are back...on Zoom! This program is specially designed for siblings of kids with disabilities, mental health issues or physical illness. Funded by River Forest Township and led by facilitators from Thrive Counseling Center.

For 1st-7th grade siblings. Siblings share with each other and the facilitators, while engaging in fun activities. **11/7, 11/21, 12/5, 12/19**. 11:30AM - 1PM; \$5 per session; \$30 for 7 sessions. Need-based scholarships available. For more info or to register, please contact Laurie Johnson by [email](#) or call 708-383-7500 x 409.

Meaningful Living Group Starting on Zoom

Adults age 55+ are invited to participate by Zoom in a free 8-week wellness group, whose focus is to discuss ways to engage in meaningful and healthy living. Led by Concordia's counseling center staff and students, the group meets Wednesdays, 11/4 thru 12/23, 6 – 7PM. Sponsored by Concordia's Center for Gerontology and Township Senior Services of Oak Park and River Forest. Space is limited to 12 participants. Call leader Alicia Thomas at 312-869-2226 to reserve your spot.

AROUND RIVER FOREST

Still looking for more River Forest info? Click below.

[River Forest Community Calendar – RFHappenings.com](#)

[Village of River Forest](#)

[River Forest School District 90](#)

[OPRF High School District 200](#)

[River Forest Park District](#)

[River Forest Public Library](#)

[River Forest Township](#)

