

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES  
Monday, January 13, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, January 13, 2020 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 Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, O’Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Also Present: Village Clerk Kathleen Brand-White, Village Administrator Eric Palm, Assistant Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner, Assistant to the Village Administrator Jonathan Pape, Management Analyst Sara Phyfer, Police Commander James Greenwood, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Fire Chief Kurt Bohlmann, Public Works Director John Anderson, Village Attorney Greg Smith

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Robert Stelletello and Angela Cooper from the Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce thanked the Village Board for their support of the 2020 Professional Development Program, noting that a program like this would cost thousands of dollars in another setting.

**4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a. Swearing-In of New Firefighter/Paramedic Jonathan Rouse

Chief Bohlmann introduced Firefighter/Paramedic Jonathan Rouse, and Village Clerk Brand-White swore-in Jonathan Rouse.

Trustee O’Connell stated he is excited about the work the Village did last year and that he is looking forward to this year.

Trustee Henek wished everyone a happy New Year and thanked everyone for being at the meeting.

Trustee Brennan wished everyone a happy New Year. She reported that she attended a reception with Sustainability Commissioner Beth Cheng for ComEd grant winners, and she

explained that the grant will fund the Parkway for Pollinator program for another year. She stated the CEO was impressed with the program and that they discussed the possibility of collaborating on an electric vehicle station in River Forest.

Trustee Vazquez wished everyone a happy New Year. He explained that he started a new position with Elgin Community College and that he no longer has a common law conflict of interest on TIF District items.

Trustee Cargie wished everyone a happy New Year.

Trustee Bachner read a statement to acknowledge that this land was once inhabited by indigenous people and stated that River Forest continues to be a place that people from diverse backgrounds live and gather. She noted that Census Day is April 1 and that the majority of people will be asked to complete the census over the phone or internet, and residents will receive a code by mail in March. She stated the Census helps plan budgets for government at all levels, and helps with spotting trends and determining the economic wellbeing of the nation. Trustee Bachner noted that River Forest is connected with 40 organizations to help spread the word, and she announced she will be at an event tomorrow with the League of Women Voters.

President Adduci discussed the Illinois Municipal League 2020 agenda, noting that IML is a legislative arm in Springfield representing issues important to municipalities. She explained Governor Pritzker's pension consolidation law and noted the anticipated savings. She congratulated Village Attorney Greg Smith for sitting on the IML Home Rule Attorney Committee. President Adduci announced the Village's sponsorship of PASO/West Suburban Action Project for their anniversary. She reported she met with the new Byline Bank officials, and that she and Village Administrator Palm met with Cook County Commissioner Pete Silvestri. She also noted that Village Hall recently hosted 30 Girl Scouts for a tour and presentation from her.

b. Presentation from School District 200

School District 200 Superintendent Dr. Joylynn Pruitt-Adams presented on the Oak Park River Forest High School Strategic Plan for 2019-2024. She noted the plan's core is ensuring equity and excellence through access for all students. She also explained each priority in their 2019-2020 focus. Assistant Superintendent Greg Johnson and Director of Student Learning Dr. Laurie Fiorenza discussed the curriculum changes, and Executive Director of Equity and Student Success Dr. LeVar Ammons discussed the racial equity policy.

In response to a question from Trustee Cargie about D200's budget for this plan, Dr. Pruitt-Adams explained the School Board has no intent to increase their budget.

President Adduci applauded the District for what they do for the community, noting how this works in concert with the Village's goal of strengthening property values.

John Phelen, 600 Thatcher. Mr. Phelen stated his support for D200 but expressed concern about the lack of a successful record for detracking. He encouraged everyone to pay attention to the freshman curriculum restructuring. He noted that property values are important to residents and that many people move to the Village for the schools and their rigorous curricula.

Steve Lefko, 719 Thatcher. Mr. Lefko thanked the District 200 officials for their presentation. He also commented on the change in instructional philosophy that began three years ago in District 90 schools and the subsequent declines in student achievement, declines in the teaching climate and the State's recent downgrade of two River Forest schools. He urged the Village Board to invite D90 to discuss their changes in curriculum and trends.

**5. PUBLIC HEARING – SPECIAL SERVICE AREA #11 (THE SHERIDAN PROJECT)**

- a. Call to Order

President Adduci called the Public Hearing to order at 8:09 pm.

Administrator Palm explained the Public Hearing and purpose of the Special Service Area.

In response to a question from the audience, Chief Bohlmann stated that there are three levels of ambulance service costs ranging from \$900 - \$1,500.

- b. Final Adjournment of Public Hearing

Trustee Vazquez made a motion, seconded by Trustee O’Connell to close the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, O’Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

**6. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Regular Village Board Meeting Minutes – December 9, 2019
- b. Update to the Village Personnel Policy Manual Regarding Cannabis
- c. Resolution Supporting the Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce 2020 Professional Development Program – Resolution
- d. Amend Section 3-8-15 of the Village Code Regarding the Imposition of a Municipal Cannabis Retailers’ Occupation Tax Due to a “Cleanup Bill” Adopted by the Illinois General Assembly – Ordinance
- e. Amend Section 3-8-14 of the Village Code Regarding the Imposition of a Local Motor Fuel Tax Due to a “Cleanup Bill” Adopted by the Illinois General Assembly – Ordinance

- f. Waiver of Formal Bid (Due to Competitive Quotes for Service) and Award of Contract to Unique Plumbing Co. for the Manhole Replacement at North Avenue and Bonnie Brae in a not-to-exceed amount of \$33,200.00
- g. Change Order #1 (Final) for the 2019 Street Improvement Project for \$14,724.15 – Resolution
- h. Monthly Department Reports
- i. Monthly Performance Measurement Report
- j. Financial Report – November 2019 and December 2019
- k. Accounts Payable – December 2019 - \$1,472,549.32
- l. Village Administrator’s Report

Trustee Brennan made a motion, seconded by Trustee Henek to approve the Consent Agenda items A - L.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, O’Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

President Adduci encouraged everyone to read Monthly Department Reports, which she said contained a lot of information about what goes on in the Village.

**7. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION**

None.

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

None.

**9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a. Intergovernmental Agreement with the Forest Preserves District of Cook County Regarding a Wildlife Management Program

Marta Kozbur, 1235 Monroe. Ms. Kozbur discussed sharing a habitat with animals and noted other animals that carry diseases. She asked how the Board could have the IGA discussion before forming a task force and encouraged that the task force make its recommendations first.

Askold Kozbur, 1235 Monroe. Mr. Kozbur stated his concern that the Board is voting on the IGA after deciding at the December meeting to set up the task force. He expressed concern that a resident survey has not been conducted and that the Village is relying on anecdotal data. He also commented on the cost of the IGA, noting the unequal cost sharing with Elmwood Park. He requested that the Board delay consideration of the IGA for one year.

Elizabeth Martin, 1130 Lathrop. Ms. Martin stated that she and Toni Moore came to the Board over 20 years ago requesting help with the deer problem. She expressed concern about overpopulation, damage to landscaping, and the threat of disease and traffic problems. She discouraged fencing noting that part of the appeal of River Forest is the park-like setting. Ms. Martin stated she agreed about conducting a survey of residents.

David Record, 1308 Lathrop. Mr. Record expressed his support for culling deer and stated it is irresponsible not to participate. He stated the cost is minimal compared to the Village budget and expressed concern about damage to landscaping and traffic problems. He expressed hope that the Village moves forward with the IGA.

Toni Moore, 1100 Lathrop. Ms. Moore stated she was one of the first people to start this discussion after being concerned with the number of deer in residential areas. She encouraged restoring a healthy balance in the population, and expressed concern about ticks with Lyme disease. She asked that the Board give the benefit of the doubt to people instead of deer.

Linda Lucchese, 1231 Monroe. Ms. Lucchese made a comparison to getting multiple quotes to repair a roof and stated she did not think residents had been given other means to resolve this issue. She asked for more information and that surveys be completed before the Village moves forward. She stated there are other ways to solve this problem.

Maryla Blum, 7214 Oak. Ms. Blum stated she did not agree with culling deer and suggested alternatives such as deer repellent for plants.

Mary Vanker, 1234 Monroe. Ms. Vanker stated she was commenting in opposition of the contract and that she was disappointed the Board was considering the intergovernmental agreement before the creating the task force. She expressed concerns about the manner in which the Village was proceeding with this issue and remarked on the fair approach for residents. She stated she had a discussion with Tim Preuss from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and stated he recommended assessing concerns of residents and conducting an analysis. She stated there was no compelling reason to begin culling deer this season.

Frank Vanker, 1234 Monroe. Mr. Vanker stated he shared Ms. Vanker's concerns and observations and that he was not opposed to efforts to manage wildlife. He remarked that the plan should be carefully considered to achieve a quantifiable objective at the lowest cost to taxpayers. Mr. Vanker expressed concerns about the contract language in the intergovernmental agreement with the Forest Preserves and the possibility of an agreement with Elmwood Park, commenting that the Village should not assume financial responsibility for this program. He requested more specification for the work plan.

Gerri Humber, 1319 Park. Ms. Humber stated there has not been evidence and only anecdotal data of the increase in deer in Thatcher Woods. She urged the Board to take advantage of

residents who volunteered to be on the task force and asked that an analysis be completed to determine if there is a problem.

Annie Wallis, 846 Monroe. Ms. Wallis encouraged the Board to revisit the task force and take time to gather data and identify metrics to ensure satisfactory progress has been made. She stated the residents would have greater respect for a decision to cull if they felt it was appropriate. She also expressed concern about the contract language in the intergovernmental agreement.

John Roeger, 7837 Greenfield. Mr. Roeger stated he did not like disagreeing with neighbors. He explained how ticks can transmit diseases and noted that he has previously spoken about his daughter who has Lyme disease. He shared that he knows of other families who had kids with similar symptoms who also tested positive for tick-borne diseases. He discussed being vegetarian and remarked that the deer meat would be donated.

Bob Zimmerman, 906 Keystone. Mr. Zimmerman discussed Freedom of Information Act requests he had submitted to the Forest Preserves and expressed concern about the lack of data provided by the County proving ecological damage to flora. He stated he was directed to a study by the Prairie Research Institute, but they were unable to provide their study due to its preliminary nature. He asserted that the Village would be torn apart if the Village proceeded without the task force.

Cathy O'Leary, 1138 Ashland. Ms. O'Leary stated her opposition to culling right now and encouraged more research and the formation of a community task force.

Carla Graham-White, 743 Park. Ms. Graham-White stated she has noticed an enormous increase in deer. She stated she hoped people had read the data provided by the Village, and noted the increase in call volume. She expressed concern about residents building tall fences and the number of residents with Lyme disease. Ms. Graham-White also suggested the Village provide residents with information about preventing tick bites to humans and pets.

Mary Rose Smith, 1220 William. Ms. Smith expressed concerns about Lyme disease and deer-related car accidents. She stated the Village had to do something before there is a fatality and stated she did not think the deer management program could wait.

Gigi Hoke, 1037 Forest. Ms. Hoke stated there is a compelling reason to move forward sooner than later and shared that two of her children have Lyme disease. She suggested the Village provide educational materials on Lyme disease and discussed its effects. She stated that reducing the herd will help residents stay healthier.

Julie Armstrong, 121 Thatcher. Ms. Armstrong stated her appreciation for her neighbors but that she did not think there is enough information to move forward with this program.

Trustee Cargie made a motion, seconded by Trustee O'Connell, to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Forest Preserves District of Cook County Regarding a Wildlife Management Program.

Administrator Palm thanked everyone for the feedback and respectful dialogue. He recapped the Village's meetings on the topic thus far. He summarized the data provided and stated Village staff is working through data to find more information. Administrator Palm emphasized the increase over the past three years in public works employees removing dead deer from the roadway and sometimes residents' private property. He also explained how the deer management programs in Elk Grove Village and Northbrook are administered much differently and on private property. He highlighted that while the Forest Preserves' observations and conclusions are through the lens of ecology and plant life, their professional recommendation is to move forward with the program. Administrator Palm stated some of the feedback received was to look at a regional program, which spurred the discussion with Elmwood Park and proposed agreement. Finally, he explained the Village's position relates to public safety and that there are concerns about serious accidents between deer and vehicles. Administrator Palm recommended the Village Board move forward with the program and stated Village staff would assist with the task force where needed.

Trustee Cargie expressed frustration that no document has been provided to justify an IDNR decision regarding granting a permit.

Administrator Palm stated the recommendations are based on the Forest Preserves' observations of flora and fauna, including deer graze lines, over time and that hard data reports do not exist.

In response to a follow up question from Trustee Cargie, Administrator Palm clarified that the IDNR permit will be applied for upon signature of the IGA.

In response to a question from Trustee Bachner about other reports she found, Administrator Palm stated the reports are completed as part of active deer management programs.

Trustee Bachner stated the data in these reports would be helpful to support a decision.

Trustee Henek stated she was confused by the suggested number of deer to cull and how it would be determined that the same number would be effective if Elmwood Park joined. She stated that if all the information requested in the IDNR's application was provided, this would have been an easier decision to make.

President Adduci asked where to go from here if the data the Board wants to use to make its decision does not exist.

A member of the audience stated the Forest Preserves is supposed to document data for two to four years prior to culling, and that this is how they determine the number of deer to tag. She stated the Village and Forest Preserves are backfilling information to justify this decision and it is backwards.

Administrator Palm stated the reports being referred to are completed as part of active deer management programs in other communities and they would be consistent with the work plan in the IGA.

Village Attorney Smith explained that the contract provides that the Forest Preserves must generate a work plan and that there is a limitation of \$40,000 annually for the program. Administrator Palm clarified that this is for work completed by third-party contractors, not work completed by the Forest Preserves.

Trustee Brennan stated they have heard a lot of inconsistencies and that she felt the Forest Preserves letters were vague and did not address Thatcher Woods with detailed information. She stated they had also heard a lot of offers from residents to work together on a task force.

Trustee Brennan made a motion to table the Intergovernmental Agreement but it was not seconded.

Trustee Henek remarked on the Forest Preserves' Comprehensive Plan, noting that it refers to protecting land, restoring natural plantings, and balancing biodiversity. She stated there is a section in their Plan about deer management, which includes expanding this program to other areas. She stated this document was created in 2014, noting that this was identified six years ago. Trustee Henek stated that she recognized that in order for them to realize their goals, they may need to partner with municipalities. However, she stated, the letter acknowledges they have already begun ecological restoration and that the next phase to sustain investment is to maintain beneficial population levels. She expressed concern that this is already part of their plan but that Village is paying for it. She also expressed concern about moving forward despite the confusion of where they are, including the specific number of deer to be culled. She stated that she recognized culling is probably the way they will go, but she drew a distinction between how the Forest Preserves see success and how the residents see success. She asked why would they continue paying for a program if the measurements are not in place.

President Adduci clarified that the contract is cancellable and there would be a plan in place to measure success.

Trustee O'Connell commented that the deer are out there. He expressed frustration that Village staff made a professional attempt to get information and were misled by the Forest Preserves. He asked if the only way to get the real number of deer for this acreage is by signing the IGA and starting the process.

Administrator Palm stated that in the conversation he and Mr. Pape had with the Forest Preserves District today, the number is up to 50 tags.

President Adduci wondered how they determine what the right number is and what would happen tomorrow if the IGA were signed. Administrator Palm stated the next step would be to put together the work plan which would include determining the amount of deer and tags, location, times, and other operational issues.

In response to a question from the audience about sharpshooters, President Adduci stated the costs in the agreement include protecting the site securely and that the Village would not consider using its own police officers, as other municipalities had to keep costs down. She further stated the process involves a specific way of surrounding the woods and ensuring safety.

Assistant to the Village Administrator Pape further explained that as part of the IDNR permit, their staff would inspect the site and have to approve sharpshooters at the location as a safe working site.

President Adduci stated the Board would look at the work plan as a group in order to ensure the safety of the community.

Trustee Brennan stated that Tim Preuss from the IDNR recommended surveying residents' attitudes, which would be useful and helpful data to have. She stated that in a conversation with him, he told her it does not make sense to begin culling this year and have the task force at the same time. She further stated they should use all the data and the resources the task force can offer first.

The Board discussed how the task force would operate and be funded, and Trustee Brennan indicated that Tim Preuss from the IDNR had offered to assist in this effort.

President Adduci stated they had to decide whether to put the IGA on hold and continue with the task force or move forward with the task force and begin culling. She emphasized, however, that it is important not to ignore the residents who are affected by Lyme disease.

Trustee Brennan clarified that Tim Preuss would not be managing the task force but that he had offered to contribute to it.

Trustee Cargie asked whether, if they signed the IGA, the Forest Preserves would have enough time to collect the information to justify the culling and do it by March.

Administrator Palm stated that the Forest Preserves had indicated that they would be able to do that. In response to a follow up question from Trustee Cargie, Administrator Palm reiterated that the Village's costs are only related to work performed by third-party contractors.

In response to a question from President Adduci, Administrator Palm stated the IDNR population control permits include site descriptions, overall goals, objectives and methods, and historical information.

Trustee Bachner stated this is the type of information she had expected to see.

In response to a question from President Adduci, Administrator Palm confirmed that the IGA gets signed first, then the work plan is designed, then the IDNR permit application is completed.

Trustee Cargie stated he did not see how the Forest Preserves would be able to complete their habitat assessment in winter, and he expressed concern about the way their letter is written.

President Adduci stated Lyme disease and traffic issues cannot be disputed, but that she understood the concerns about waiting and getting a full report. She further stated that if the Board felt uncomfortable that they were not getting the proper information from the Forest Preserves and IDNR, that was a decision they needed to make.

In response to a question from Trustee Cargie about whether they could approve the IGA and have a second trigger, Administrator Palm stated it could be approved subject to attorney review and it could be brought back to the Board if there was additional language to be included.

Trustee O'Connell suggested giving the Board the ability to approve the work plan or cancel the IGA if not approved.

President Adduci stated that it was best to table the conversation and look at the task force. She assured that the Village hears those with Lyme disease and those who had been injured in collisions and that they want to solve this problem. She expressed hope that the task force would work together and do what is right for the health and safety of the community.

Trustee Vazquez stated that he supports the task force and that he felt they had heard from an equal number of residents on each side. In referencing the roofing analogy earlier, he stated that the problem is once a roof is leaking, you want to fix that. He urged that the Board not continuously table the discussion and make a decision at some point.

In response to a question from President Adduci about next steps, Trustee Brennan proposed tabling the IGA and moving forward with the task force.

Trustee Cargie stated if the Village did not cull now, they would not be able to do it this year.

Trustee Bachner concurred with Trustee Brennan. She stated she did not think the Board would be able to get enough information to feel comfortable culling this season. She further suggested establishing the task force and identifying metrics, and also suggested using Ms. Vanker's template.

The Board briefly discussed again the work plan, and President Adduci stated the question was whether the Board was prepared to sign the IGA.

Trustee Brennan expressed concern about the lack of information available to complete the IDNR application form.

Trustee Brennan made a motion, seconded by Trustee Henek, to table the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Forest Preserves District of Cook County Regarding a Wildlife Management Program.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Henek

Absent: None

Nays: Trustees Cargie, O'Connell, Vazquez

Motion Fails.

*The original motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Forest Preserves District of Cook County Regarding a Wildlife Management Program stands.*

Trustee Cargie withdrew his motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Forest Preserves District of Cook County Regarding a Wildlife Management Program, and Trustee O'Connell withdrew his second.

b. Discussion: Creation of a Task Force Regarding Wildlife Management

Trustee Vazquez suggested that the task force would need an end date relative to the when the IGA decision needs to be made. He also stated the task force ought to have an equal amount of members for and against to have fair representation. He noted that someone would have to facilitate the task force as Tim Preuss from the IDNR would only be a resource.

Trustee Brennan concurred and indicated the materials from Cornell University have instructions for how to create a task force. She also suggested that a resident who had worked on the D200 task force could provide insight.

Trustee Vazquez noted that D200 had an application process and committee to evaluate them. He cautioned that while it is not difficult, the process is time-consuming and would have to be set up correctly.

Trustees Bachner and Henek concurred, noting the Cornell University study was a useful resource and had good guidelines.

Trustee Henek volunteered to work on the task force, noting that she does have some travel plans that could limit her somewhat. She stated it is a matter of putting together and managing the survey, and stated she thought there were things that could be done to get the information needed to have the community feel comfortable in their decision-making. She emphasized that this would be an ongoing evaluation. Trustee Henek also stated the Village is in a unique position and has different goals from the Forest Preserves'.

Administrator Palm stated it is like having two processes: one would be going through the process as if the Village were the applicant for the IDNR permit, part of that being creating the task force to gather the information the community wants; the other process is the County

putting forth their application with its work plan and ecological data. He clarified that only the County would be submitting an application to the IDNR.

Trustee Bachner stated the IDNR application asks about metrics, and she wondered whether the application would include only flora and ecological information or also things like deer-vehicle collisions going down.

Administrator Palm stated that is a question for Tim Preuss since he is the one approving the applications.

Trustee Henek stated the Forest Preserves should be part of the task force meetings, and the Board discussed this idea and concluded they would ask them to be part of it.

The Board reached a consensus that the Village will use Cornell University's application and that the Board will vote on President Adduci's selections, and the task force would have to make its recommendation by September 30, 2020. Administrator Palm clarified that a resolution creating the task force will be on the next Village Board agenda.

c. Establishment of Special Service Area #11 (The Sheridan Project) – Ordinance

Trustee Cargie made a motion, seconded by Trustee Vazquez, to approve an Ordinance establishing River Forest Special Service Area 11.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

**11. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Cargie made a motion, seconded by Trustee Vazquez to adjourn the regular Village Board of Trustees Meeting at 11:01 p.m.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

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Kathleen Brand-White, Village Clerk