

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES  
December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, December 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 Brennan, O’Connell, Bachner, Gillis, Vazquez, Village Clerk Keller

Absent: Trustee Johnson

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

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

John Morrissey made public comment and asked the Village Board to consider focusing on and improving the walkability of the Village.

Kathleen Corcos gave public comment regarding the term limit agenda item. She thanked the Village Board for placing the item on the agenda and encouraged the Village Board to adopt an ordinance placing the term limit question on the April 1<sup>st</sup>, ballot. She also raised concerns about the impacts of multiterm elected officials.

Thea Tsatsos made public comment in support of term limits and highlighted some of the reported benefits of term limits.

Phyliss Rubin made public comment in support of the Village Board placing the term limit question on the April 1<sup>st</sup>, ballot. Ms. Rubin raised concerns about the impact of establishment politicians and asked the Village Board to let the voters decide on term limits via the referendum.

Magdy Milad made public comment in support of the term limit question.

Margie Cekander made public comment in support of the Village Board placing the term limit question for the Office of Village President on the April 1<sup>st</sup>, ballot. Ms. Cekander raised a multitude of concerns about the potential impacts of not having term limits, how the Electoral Board handled the hearings. She then requested the Village Board let the voters decide on term limits via placing the question on the ballot.

Susan Adler thanked the Village Board for placing the term limit discussion on the agenda that evening. She then made public comment in support of term limits.

Jan Saeger gave public comment in opposition of the proposed term limits and then proposed policies that the Village should address that she felt were more meaningful than term limits.

Patty Henek made public comment in support of the proposed term limits. She then thanked Village Staff, Board members, and members of their public for getting the term limit item on the agenda. Ms. Henek reminded the Board that it is the residents on the top of the River Forest organizational chart and asked that the Village Board take any necessary actions to get the question on the April ballot.

Ms. Henek then offered some points of clarification regarding statements she had seen in emails and on social media.

Greg Abcarian thanked the Village Board for placing the term limit discussion on the agenda. Mr. Abcarian stated that he supported term limits for the entirety of Village Boards and Commissions, not just the office of Village President. He reminded the Board that at least 700 residents signed the petition in support of term limits and noted the opportunity for fresh ideas that term limits would provide.

Bridget Erfort read into the record a statement in support of term limits from Deborah Borman who could not be in attendance that evening.

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

Trustee Bachner began her comments with a land acknowledgment and then wished everyone a happy holiday season. Trustee Bachner then brought up ideas surrounding future Casual Conversation events

Trustee O'Connell reminded everyone that the reason the Village Board members could not speak at the last Casual Conversation event was due to the open meetings act.

Administrator Walsh offered an explanation on the format for the Casual Conversation events in relation to the Open Meetings Act rules. Trustee Bachner requested that future events be prepared to allow for other Trustees to participate.

Trustee Bachner highlighted some of the traffic comments raised by residents at the Conversation events and discussed traffic solutions along Lake Street.

Administrator Walsh noted that staff would explore traffic solutions along Lake Street further.

Trustee Bachner also reported attending the wake for the fallen Oak Park Police Officer and thanked the Village's Police Department for their work.

Trustee Gillis echoed the same sentiments as Trustee Bachner about the Village's Police Department. She then highlighted the Police Department's Vacation Watch program. She also thanked the Public Works Department for their leaf removal program. Trustee Gillis reminded everyone of the upcoming Light Up the Night event.

Trustee Vazquez also thanked the Village's first responders for their work. He then wished everyone a happy holiday season.

Clerk Keller had nothing to add to the record.

Trustee Brennan noted that she would appreciate it if the Casual Conversation events in the future could be turned into official public meetings so all board members could participate.

Trustee O'Connell thanked the Village's first responders and then thanked the Village's Public Works department for their leaf pick up. He then asked Director Bielak for an update on the lead service line survey.

Director Bielak provided an update and encouraged residents to complete the survey.

Trustee O'Connell noted the easiness of the survey. He then asked if the Village's senior snow removal program is still occurring.

Village Administrator Walsh stated yes and provided background information on the program.

Trustee O'Connell then reminded everyone that there are multiple public entities outside of the Village that have an impact on residents and that the Village will be putting information out soon on these governments.

President Adduci reported attending the vigil for the fallen Oak Park Police Officer and also gave thanks to the Village's emergency responders. She then noted being proud of the Casual Conversation events and encouraged everyone to sign up or the newsletter for further updates on the events.

President Adduci also reported attending the Illinois Municipal League winter conference and reminded everyone that the state government has a large impact on municipal governments. She highlighted the potential impact the state and federal governments may have on the replacement of lead service lines and encouraged residents to be cognizant of the lead service line replacement project. She also reminded residents of the Village's 50/50 match program for lead service line replacement and then wished everyone a happy holidays.

## **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- b. Village Board of Trustees Executive Session Meeting Minutes – November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- c. Administration Department Report
- d. Monthly Department Reports
- e. November Financial Report
- f. November Accounts Payable – \$3,023,619.53

- g. 2024 Property Tax Levy Adoption Ordinance
- h. Purchase Approval – Automated License Plate Reader System – Minuteman Technologies – \$50,017.26
- i. Purchase Approval – 2025 Chevrolet Blazer Electric Police Pursuit Vehicle – Currie Motors – \$65,407.00
- j. Purchase Approval – Fire Department Record Management System – First Due – \$26,900.00
- k. Purchase Approval – Ford F350 – Public Works Department – Sutton Ford of Matteson, IL – \$60,291.43
- l. 2025 Meeting Calendar Adoption
- m. Annual Renewal Agreement with Municipal GIS Partners – \$48,138.00
- n. Purchase Approval – Microsoft 365 Office License Renewal – \$30,548.24

Trustee Brennan asked to pull consent agenda items C and H for separate consideration.

**MOTION** by Trustee Bachner to approve Consent Agenda Items A through B, D through G, and I through N. Seconded by Trustee Gillis.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: Trustee Johnson

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

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

- c. Administration Department Report

**MOTION** by Trustee Gillis to approve Consent Agenda Item C. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

Trustee Brennan asked for clarification on the payment to Jasculca Terman Strategic Communications (JTSC.)

Administrator Walsh reported that this payment was the first payment to JTSC and not an extension of the contract. He then reported that the Village is in the process of wrapping up the services with JTSC.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: Trustee Johnson

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

- h. Purchase Approval – Automated License Plate Reader System – Minuteman Technologies – \$50,017.26

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to approve Consent Agenda Item H. Seconded by Trustee Bachner

Trustee Brennan asked for clarification on what the contract includes.

Deputy Police Chief James Greenwood provided clarification on the contract and noted that most of the costs are related to hardware and its installation. He then provided information on the general location of the cameras.

President Adduci asked if a grant was used to pay for these cameras.

Deputy Police Chief Greenwood provided clarification on how and when the grant money was used for this project and other camera projects.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: Trustee Johnson

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

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

None

**8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

## 9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discussion of Term Limits for Offices of Village President, Village Trustees and Village Clerk

President Adduci thanked the Village Board for their interest in this agenda item.

Village Clerk Keller asked Village Attorney Malina what the procedure for the Village Board would be to place this item on the ballot.

Village Attorney Malina offered an explanation on the differences between binding referendum questions and advisory questions. He stated that advisory questions are simply ways to garner information on what the public thinks about a particular topic. Mr. Malina then explained that binding referendums, if passed, actually change the law of the government. He noted that the original petition for term limits filed in the summer was a binding question.

Mr. Malina then explained that under the current election calendar, the deadline for a Village Board to place referendum question on the ballot is January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Village Clerk Keller asked what steps the Village Board must take to have the item on the January 13<sup>th</sup> agenda.

Mr. Malina stated an ordinance would have to be approved at the January 13<sup>th</sup> Village Board meeting.

Trustee Vazquez asked if the question could end up on the 2027 ballot.

Administrator Walsh noted the question can be placed on ballots outside of just local elections such as the primary election in 2026.

Trustee Vazquez noted that if further action is needed on term limits, the Village Board can get the item on a voting ballot before the next Village election.

Trustee Bachner noted that if the Village was firm about the January 13<sup>th</sup> timeline, the Board can hold special meetings.

Trustee Bachner asked Village Administrator Walsh for background on how this item ended up on the agenda.

Administrator Walsh provided background information on the agenda item and noted that all the trustees were interested in discussing term limits in some capacity.

Trustee Bachner asked for background information on the previous term limit petition that ended up before the Village's Electoral Board.

Administrator Walsh provided background information on the term limit referendum petition that was filed this past summer and reported the Electoral Boards findings and decision.

Village Clerk Keller expanded on the Village Electoral Board's decision as he was a voting member of the Electoral Board. He explained that the Electoral Board determined the question's language was too vague and open for interpretation.

Trustee Bachner asked if the Electoral Board had any power to alter the referendum question.

Village Attorney Malina stated the Electoral Board does not have that power.

Village Clerk Keller provided further information on the Electoral Board's discussion over the referendum.

Trustee Bachner asked for clarification on how the Electoral Board was composed after President Adduci's recusal.

Village Attorney Malina provided clarification on how the third seat of the Electoral Board was filled with a Public Member.

Trustee Brennan asked what the proper language for the term limit question would be if it was to go on the ballot.

Village Attorney Malina stated the proper word choice would have been "terms" over "years."

The Village Board discussed whether any term limit proposal would be retroactive or proactive in the counting of term limits.

Village Attorney Malina noted that the question cannot be retroactive and must be prospective and stated that the deadline of January 13<sup>th</sup> makes this a complex situation.



President Adduci suggested that the Village Board approach this topic deliberately and thoroughly before taking any action. She noted that Trustee Johnson was not present as well.

President Adduci also reminded the Village Board to be careful about taking any potential precedent setting actions.

Trustee Brennan commented that the original petition had a large number of signatures, and the Village Board received many public comments in support of the item. Considering the amount of public support, she stated she would support getting the question on the ballot by the January 13<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Trustee Gillis asked for clarification on what election ballots the question can be placed on.

President Adduci stated that there would be opportunities to place the question on the ballot in 2026 and 2027.

Trustee Vazquez suggested the Village Board take time to explore term limits and then place the question on a later ballot. He stated that he felt as if the Village has not received enough feedback regarding term limits to take any further action.

Trustee Bachner noted being in support of getting the question submitted by the January 13<sup>th</sup> deadline. She then stated that by placing the question on the ballot, the Board would be acting in a responsible manner to its constituents.

Trustee Vazquez stated that he would support considering enacting term limits on the entirety of the Village Board and encouraged his fellow Board members to not rush into action.

Trustee Bachner asked why the Village Board could just not discuss and deliberate the term limits this evening and then have staff create a proposal to be discussed and voted on at the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Trustee O'Connell stated he opposes taking action to get the item on the January 13<sup>th</sup> agenda.

President Adduci reminded everyone that with the upcoming holiday season, getting all the Board members to a meeting may be difficult.

Trustee Bachner stated that the Village has taken important votes in the past without all the Village Board members present.

Trustee Brennan stated that she would not support placing the question on a later ballot because it appears as if the residents want to vote on the item now.

Village Attorney Malina stated that he is not ready to give a formal opinion on which terms would count as prospective if the question were to be confirmed by the January 13<sup>th</sup> deadline and subsequently confirmed by the April 1<sup>st</sup> election.

Trustee Brennan stated that her understanding of the “which terms count” question is that previous year’s terms cannot be counted and stated that delaying this question any further allows elected officials to have more terms.

Village Clerk Keller reminded the Board that they are solely discussing whether the question should be on the ballot and offered some formatting suggestions.

President Adduci gave an example of where a District 90 elected official filled a position in between terms. President Adduci wondered how that “in between term” would be counted for term limits and used this as an example of why the Village Board should take their time when deliberating term limits.

Trustee Brennan stated that she felt that the District 90 situation was not a good example and agreed with Village Clerk Keller that Board should focus on whether or not the question should be on the ballot.

President Adduci stated she was giving the example as a possibility that the Board should consider.

Trustee Bachner suggested that it may not be as difficult as it seems to have an item for the January 13<sup>th</sup> board meeting because there are many other communities in the area with term limits that the Village could reference when researching.

President Adduci also raised issues that reportedly the Village of Brookfield has faced due to their term limits.

Trustee Bachner suggested that Village Attorney Malina draft something for the Board to review at a Special Meeting.

President Adduci reminded everyone that it may be difficult to obtain a quorum with the upcoming holidays. Additionally, she warned the Board of taking any precedent setting actions.

Trustee O'Connell reiterated that he would like to not rush this item and reminded the Village Board that they have been burned in the past after rushing things through.

Trustee Vazquez reminded everyone of the Northeast Corner traffic situation.

Trustee Brennan noted that the difference between this item and others is that the Village Board is not voting on the item, the residents are.

Trustee Vazquez reiterated that he would prefer the Village Board not rush the item through for the January 13<sup>th</sup> date.

Trustee Brennan stated she would be in support of asking the Village Attorney to draft an ordinance similar to the original petition but with the proper wording for the office of Village President. She then noted she would be willing to have multiple questions on the ballot for each position and asked Village Attorney Malina if that would be possible.

Village Attorney Malina stated that he would have to look into it.

Trustee Brennan reiterated her goal is to amplify the voice of the residents who signed the petition and because of that, would be willing to include all the Board's positions if that would help get the question on the ballot.

President Adduci reminded everyone that two members of the Village Board were on the Electoral Board and that the Electoral Board agreed that there was an issue with the question.

Village Clerk Keller and Trustee Vazquez reiterated the findings of the Electoral Board.

Trustee Bachner reiterated her support for adding the term limit question to the Ballot and stated that the Village Board could meet multiple times before the deadline to discuss the item.

Trustee Gillis stated she is not in support of placing the item for discussion by the January 13<sup>th</sup> deadline. She stated that the recent discussion surrounding the

Traffic and Safety Barriers has made her weary of quickly acting on items and would like as much research as possible about term limits before voting.

Trustee Bachner stated that she feels other items have been quickly addressed by the Village Board and noted being disappointed that a resident driven item is not getting that same consideration.

Trustee Brennan asked why the Village cannot at least prepare for the January 13<sup>th</sup> deadline, whether action is taken or not.

Trustee Bachner stated she does not feel as if this item would be rushed if it were to be placed on the January 13<sup>th</sup> agenda.

Trustee O'Connell suggested the Village wait to discuss this further and also attempt to gather feedback from residents through various platforms such as the Village newsletter.

Trustee Brennan stated she would support having the Village Attorney draft an ordinance and then having the Village Board discuss the item in time for the January 13<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Trustee Vazquez stated he would be in support of discussing the item at a slower pace.

Trustee Gillis stated she would be in support of discussing the item but not rushing it for the January 13<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Trustee Brennan asked if the verbiage was clarified, would Trustee Gillis change her support for the January 13<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Trustee Gillis stated no, as she disagreed with the sense of urgency surrounding the topic.

Trustee Bachner reiterated her support for doing whatever is needed to get the item to the January 13<sup>th</sup> deadline as she felt it was the right thing to do.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Roll call:**

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

Motion Passes.

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.



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Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk

Date: 01/27/25