



Village of Oak Park

123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302
www.oak-park.us

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

6:30 PM

Village Hall

I. Call to Order

Village President Scaman called the Meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Village Trustee Wesley arrived at 6:33 P.M.

Village Trustee Straw arrived at 6:33 P.M.

Present: 6 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Eder, Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, Village Trustee Straw, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Wesley

Absent: 1 - Village Trustee Enyia

III. Consideration of Motion to Adjourn to Closed Session to Discuss Purchase or Lease of Real Property for the Use of the Village pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5)

It was moved by Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, seconded by Village Trustee Eder, that this be approved. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 6 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Eder, Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, Village Trustee Straw, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 1 - Village Trustee Enyia

IV. Adjourn Closed Session

V. Reconvene to Regular Meeting in Council Chambers and Call to Order

The Regular Meeting reconvened at 7:05 P.M.

VI. Roll Call

Present: 6 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Eder, Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, Village Trustee Straw, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Wesley

Absent: 1 - Village Trustee Enyia

VII. Agenda Approval

It was moved by Village Trustee Eder, seconded by Village Trustee Straw to approve the agenda.

VIII. Minutes

- A. [MOT 26-134](#) A Motion to Approve Minutes from the March 10, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Village Board

It was moved by Village Trustee Eder, seconded by Village Trustee Wesley to approve the Minutes. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

IX. Non-Agenda Public Comment

There was no Non-Agenda Public Comment.

X. Proclamation

- B. [MOT 26-136](#) A Motion to Approve a Proclamation Recognizing March 2026 as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

Village President Scaman read the Proclamation aloud.

WSSRA Executive Director Marianne Birko thanked the board for honoring the disability community and described WSSRA's 50 years of providing inclusive recreation across Oak Park and neighboring communities.

OPRFHS Special Education Pre-Vocational Coordinator Brian Dubina shared gratitude for the recognition and described his role helping students with disabilities gain employment, committing to work with the community to expand opportunities beyond the school system.

UCP Seguin Chicago President/CEO Joseph Mengoni thanked the board for the proclamation and described his organization's wide range of services, including group homes, job readiness programs, and community supports for people with developmental disabilities.

Oak Leyden CEO R.J. McMahon explained that his organization provided day programs, group homes, and early intervention services, thanked the board for the proclamation, and emphasized the need for collective accountability.

L'Arche Chicago Executive Director Mic Altena expressed gratitude for Oak Park's inclusiveness and support for residents with intellectual disabilities.

PACTT Director of Development & Communications Terry Herbstritt expressed gratitude for living and working in a community that valued people with developmental disabilities and supported them through group homes and learning programs.

It was moved by Village Trustee Straw, seconded by Village Trustee Leving

Jacobson, that this Motion be approved. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

XI. Village Manager Reports

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C. [ID 26-193](#) Presentation of the Proposed Canopy Connection Neighborhood Registry Program

Neighborhood Partnerships Administrator Paola Garibay presented the Canopy Connection Program, explaining its voluntary neighborhood registry with capacity-based tiers, available supports, and a planned \$30,000 pilot, while addressing questions about eligibility, equity, accountability, and guardrails to keep the program focused on community building rather than advocacy.

Village Trustee Wesley clarified that although he co-led SEOPCO, he was not involved in shaping the proposal, emphasized SEOPCO's long-standing nonpolitical focus, and strongly supported the program as a way to give neighborhoods clearer pathways, staff support, and structure similar to the organic organizing that emerged during the Barrie Park remediation.

Village Trustee Straw praised the program's ability to surface issues like traffic and safety more informally, asked how new groups would be identified and managed when overlapping, and urged staff to establish guidelines to prevent conflicting or duplicative neighborhood organizations.

Village Trustee Eder supported the concept but questioned budget use, annual eligibility, and whether small grants could introduce conflict or administrative burden for volunteer groups; he stressed the need to evaluate pilot year results to understand what motivated participation and how funds were used.

Village Trustee Leving Jacobson supported the registry but raised equity concerns, noting that established homeowner groups might benefit more easily than renters or less organized areas and urging intentional outreach to ensure resources reached neighborhoods with fewer existing structures.

Village Trustee Taglia agreed on the importance of equitable participation but noted the challenges of forming renter based groups, questioned whether small grants would motivate organizing, and supported proceeding with the pilot while remaining cautious about its potential to require more staff capacity.

Village Manager Jackson emphasized that the registry was designed to

support residents and strengthen coordination, not political activity, and explained how clearer communication channels, expectations, and boundaries would prevent duplication while enabling small staff supports to boost community-led projects.

D. [ID 26-249](#) A Brief Discussion on Highway Authority Agreements and Limited Environmental Indemnity Agreements

Village Engineer Bill McKenna explained that the agenda included two Highway Authority Agreements and two Limited Environmental Indemnity Agreements for gas stations on Chicago Avenue, noting that the agreements addressed contamination in the public right of way, required worker notifications, and ensured property owners covered project related costs. He summarized Oak Park's long history with these tools, the roughly 25 affected sites, and the different circumstances of the two cases. McKenna answered questions about soil removal, plume movement, leaking tanks, and the difficulty of full cleanup in urban settings, and he acknowledged risks from bankrupt owners while describing protections like liens and one-time payments.

Village Trustee Straw asked how remediation aligned with future street projects and whether construction could create opportunities to remove contaminated soil. He expressed concern about the plume at 100 Chicago Avenue and whether upcoming road work should incorporate additional cleanup. He noted that both full remediation and maintaining contamination under agreements carried risks of properties becoming brownfields and warned that the Village could ultimately bear future cleanup costs, as often occurred with gas stations and dry cleaners.

Village Trustee Eder asked why the two sites were being addressed now, sought information on leak frequency, and asked how the agreements supported remediation efforts. He noted that the agreements clarified responsibilities and helped move cleanup forward, and he reiterated broader concerns about whether gas stations fit Oak Park's long-term community vision given the contamination issues.

Village Trustee Leving Jacobson asked whether property owners ever violated agreement terms and what happened in those cases. She learned that violations could void the agreement and jeopardize the owner's remediation status with the state, and she noted that smaller independent stations often struggled with compliance compared to large corporate operators with established legal processes.

Village Trustee Taglia commented that older steel tanks nearly always leaked, making contamination common, and he raised concerns about the Village's financial exposure if a property were abandoned or an owner went bankrupt. He questioned whether the agreements inadvertently

shielded owners but concluded after staff's explanation that, despite risks, the agreements were the better option for the Village.

XII. Village Board Committees

XIII. Citizen Commission Vacancies

- E. [ID 26-250](#) Board and Commission Vacancy Report for March 18, 2026

This report lists the expected number of members, current number of members seated and number of active vacancies for the Village's 18 citizen boards and commissions. There are currently 23 vacancies.

XIV. Citizen Commission Appointments, Reappointments and Chair Appointments

None; no action was taken regarding this item.

XV. Public Hearing

XVI. First Reading

XVII. Second Reading

XVIII. Consent Agenda

Approval of the Consent Agenda

It was moved by Village Trustee Eder and seconded by Village Trustee Wesley to approve the items under the Consent Agenda. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 6 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Eder, Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, Village Trustee Straw, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 1 - Village Trustee Enyia

- F. [ORD 26-110](#) An Ordinance Approving a Highway Authority Agreement and a Limited Environmental Indemnity Agreement between Hargobind Inc. and the Village of Oak Park for the Property Located at 100 Chicago Avenue and Authorizing their Execution

This Ordinance was adopted.

- G. [ORD 26-116](#) An Ordinance Amending Chapter 18 ("Administration"), Article 2 ("Farmers' Market"), Section 4 ("Location Of Market; Market Dates And Hours") Of The Oak Park Village Code To Change The Length Of The Farmers Market Season

This Ordinance was adopted.

- H. [ORD 26-120](#) An Ordinance Approving a Highway Authority Agreement and a Limited Environmental Indemnity Agreement between Hargobind Inc. and the Village of Oak Park for the Property Located at 330 Chicago Avenue and Authorizing their Execution
This Ordinance was adopted.
- I. [RES 26-156](#) A Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of Two 2026 Ford Hybrid Maverick Pick-Ups from Currie Motors of Frankfort, Illinois, in an Amount not to exceed \$63,454.00 and Waiving the Village's Bid Process for the Purchase
This Resolution was adopted.
- J. [RES 26-157](#) A Resolution Approving the Purchase of Four 2026 Ford F-250 Pickup Trucks from Sutton Ford of Matteson, Illinois, through the Suburban Purchasing Cooperative Joint Purchasing Program in an Amount Not to Exceed \$230,121.00
This Resolution was adopted.
- K. [RES 26-160](#) A Resolution Authorizing the Use of Motor Fuel Tax Funds in the amount of \$1,883,933.00 for the Maintenance of Streets in the Village of Oak Park for Fiscal Year 2026
This Resolution was adopted.
- L. [RES 26-161](#) A Resolution Approving the Purchase and Installation of One 6.5 RRU Body Insert and Upgrades for a 2026 Ford F-250 Pickup Truck, from ESI Apparatus Division of Montgomery, Pennsylvania, in an Amount Not to Exceed \$121,289.02 and Waiving the Village's Bid Process for the Purchase
This Resolution was adopted.
- M. [RES 26-162](#) A Resolution Approving a Contract with Nardulli Construction Company, Inc. for the 26-4 Alley Improvements Project in an Amount not to Exceed \$2,392,460 and Authorizing its Execution
This Resolution was adopted.
- N. [RES 26-163](#) A Resolution Approving a Task Order for Professional Engineering Services with Edwin Hancock Engineering Co. for Construction Engineering Services for Alley Improvements in 2026 in an Amount Not to Exceed \$203,720 and Authorizing its Execution
This Resolution was adopted.
- O. [RES 26-167](#) A Resolution Authorizing the Submission of an Invest in Cook Grant Application for the 2027 Chicago Avenue Safety Improvement Project

This Resolution was adopted.

- P. [MOT 26-126](#) A Motion to Approve the Payment of the Bills in the Amount of \$8,417,626.25 from February 1, 2026, to February 28, 2026

This Motion was approved.

XIX. Regular Agenda

- Q. [ID 26-229](#) A Study Session Presenting Option to Increase Revenue for the Sustainability Fund and Seeking Board Direction

Chief Sustainability Officer Lindsey Roland Nieratka summarized the Sustainability Fund's history and growing deficit, explaining that early grants, aggregation revenue, and the bag fee once supported programs but rising costs for grants, rebates, staffing, and Climate Ready Oak Park created a \$1.5 million shortfall that would deplete the fund by 2027. She recommended increasing the bag fee, raising transfers from Environmental Services Fund fees, and shifting additional sustainability costs to the General Fund, asking the Board for guidance on fee structures, tiering, and overall direction.

Oak Park Climate Action Network Organizer Pam Tate supported staff's revenue proposals-including bag fee increases, higher Environmental Services transfers, and General Fund support-and urged consideration of a natural gas use tax. She called for dramatically accelerated electrification efforts and backed exploring a General Fund supported revolving loan program to help residents electrify homes, describing it as a scalable solution aligned with the village's climate goals.

Village Trustee Eder reiterated his concerns about the fund's depletion, supported raising the bag fee to \$0.15, and remained open to Environmental Services or water/sewer adjustments while seeking more information on vehicle related revenue options. He favored a natural gas tax, supported classifying sustainability as a core General Fund service, and strongly encouraged pursuing a home electrification revolving loan program given the scale of the village's climate targets.

Village Trustee Straw supported a higher bag fee and opposed raising Environmental Services or water/sewer fees due to their regressive impact. He backed differentiating vehicle sticker fees to incentivize electric vehicles and supported shifting sustainability activities to the General Fund, arguing the climate response should not be limited by the size of the sustainability fund.

Village Trustee Taglia warned against regressive fees and rising resident costs, especially through water rates, and sought explanations of special

revenue fund rules and the conditions that might merge the sustainability fund into the General Fund. He questioned raising the bag fee due to potential revenue drops, pushed for improved vehicle sticker enforcement and parking related revenue, and urged caution about over-reliance on the General Fund amid competing priorities.

Village Trustee Wesley asked for clarity on defining core services and agreed that sustainability staffing belonged in the General Fund given its long-term function and growing scope. He expressed discomfort with regressive revenue options and questioned raising the bag fee, supported exploring a loan program with potentially modest interest rates, and stressed coordinating electrification efforts with housing strategies.

Village Trustee Leving Jacobson supported shifting salaries to the General Fund, exploring differentiated vehicle sticker fees, and raising the bag fee while noting the need to mitigate impacts on low-income shoppers. She strongly supported advancing the electrification loan program and asked about future grant prospects and regional collaboration, urging continued updates despite a challenging funding landscape.

Village President Scaman affirmed that sustainability was a core service and supported moving staff costs-and potentially grants-into the General Fund. She backed raising the bag fee with equity considerations, encouraged improved vehicle sticker enforcement, and acknowledged the loss of federal support while highlighting Oak Park's participation in regional networks. She urged the finance committee to evaluate revenue options while balancing sustainability goals with affordability.

Chief Financial Officer Kevin Bueso clarified legal and financial constraints, noting the state transportation lockbox limited how vehicle related revenues could be used and confirming that Highway Authority Agreement obligations stayed with properties. They explained that special revenue funds could not run long-term deficits and would need to be merged into the General Fund if unable to sustain their operations, providing trustees with legal context on enforcement, fee limits, and fiscal risk.

Village Manager Jackson confirmed that staff would follow up on vehicle sticker analysis, the loan program, and revenue strategies. He emphasized clarifying core services during the finance committee process, maintaining financial stability, and avoiding over reliance on fund balances. He stated that staff would soon release a meeting schedule and expected a fast-paced set of discussions beginning in early May.

XX. Call to Board and Clerk

Village Clerk Waters thanked staff, election judges, the Welcome Center team, and the Township for their roles in a successful election. She

highlighted strong early-voting turnout.

Village Trustee Wesley reflected on how difficult it was to balance revenue needs with the impact on residents who could least afford it. He also emphasized that housing intersected with nearly every village decision and noted the tension between improving sustainability and maintaining affordability.

Village Trustee Taglia publicly wished a happy birthday to longtime community member Faith Julian, expressing appreciation for her contributions and legacy.

Village Trustee Leving Jacobson echoed birthday wishes to Faith Julian and thanked Clerk Waters and the Welcome Center team for their work on early voting and Election Day.

Village Trustee Eder wished Faith Julian a happy birthday and expressed gratitude for the productive conversation on sustainability. He reaffirmed the importance of sustainability to him and thanked community advocates for their engagement.

Village President Scaman thanked Trustee Eder for preparing his memo and acknowledged that the Board still had unresolved questions about sustainability funding. She emphasized the importance of regional collaboration and expressed appreciation for the Girl Scouts Women's History Month program.

XXI. Adjourn

It was moved by Village Trustee Wesley, seconded by Village Trustee Eder to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Carswell