



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Monday, November 22, 2021

7:00 PM

Remote

I. Call to Order

Village President Scaman called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M. She authorized a statement be read providing that the meeting is being held remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines and that it is not prudent to have people present at the Village Board's regular meeting location due to public health concerns related to that pandemic.

II. Roll Call

Present: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla

Absent: 0

III. Agenda Approval

It was moved by Village Trustee Parakkat, seconded by Village Trustee Buchanan, to approve the Agenda. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

IV. Non-Agenda Public Comment

The following person read their Non-Agenda Public Comment aloud:

Michael Baldwin: Michael Baldwin spoke their public comment representing the South Oak Park Safety Initiative regarding traffic offenses and an increase in crime in their neighborhood near Lexington Avenue. They request the Board join them in a community meeting to vet short term ideas and layout a plan for a more strategic long term improvement to their neighborhood.

Village Clerk Christina Waters read the following Non-Agenda Public Comment aloud:

Brooke Reavey: Brooke Reavey submitted their Non-Agenda Public comment regarding an unpleasant experience with a property inspector for a non-displayed permit for work being down in their home. They inquired why a display of a permit is required when the entire permitting process, and other village activities, is done online.

V. Regular Agenda

- A. [ID 21-374](#) Village Board Review of the Recommended Fiscal Year 2022 Budget
Interim Village manager Lisa Shelley introduced the Item.

Village Clerk Waters read the following Agenda-Public comments aloud:

Andrew Williams-Clark: Andrew Williams-Clark submitted their Agenda Public Comment in support of the Board allocating \$769,349 for the Affordable Housing Fund from the four earmarked and three paid grants. They feel the Oak Park Housing Authority (OPHA) should not be funded using the Affordable Housing Fund for FY 2022 as the OPHA is a core human services program and should be funded accordingly through the General Fund.

Gary Arnold: Gary Arnold submitted their Agenda Public Comment thanking the Board for creating an Affordable Housing Fund for FY 2022 and recommends increasing the existing line item to \$770,000 which accounts for the earmarks and grants tied to restricted affordable housing funds.

Discussion of the following items noted for final direction followed:

Define Incubator Project Board Goal:

Interim Village Manager Shelley gave an overview of this Item indicating this is not a defined project and therefore a feasibility study will be more of a research project to determine what a project could be and how it fits in to the potential work of our Village government.

Tammie Grossman, the Director of Development Customer Services, added after speaking with Trustee Parakkat the concept would be a place where entrepreneurs could look at sustainable start-up programs as well as a training location for people to learn about sustainable careers and gain experience.

Village Trustee Parakkat added there are 3 outcomes; to bring in more tax base and businesses, create equity in the community and surrounding

communities, and aligning the local economy to the future.

Village Trustee Robinson requested clarification on if it is more cost effective to roll this into GRAEF's scope of services instead of putting money into another consultant.

Director Grossman responded they could request a bid from GRAEF to see if there is a cost savings.

Village Trustee Buchanan requested clarification on the goal for tonight's meeting - is staff trying to get direction or will there be a vote taken on these items.

Interim Village Manager Shelley responded staff is looking for direction on the items if they should stay or be removed from the budget.

Village President Scaman commented through her research she understands the resources required for this type of project are significant financially as well as land or shared workspace located in a proximity to entrepreneurial and manufacturing hotspots. She doesn't see this as fulfilling a need for Oak Park.

President Scaman recommended opening a discussion with PlanItGreen and with neighboring communities, as well as having Oak Park host Green Town and create an innovation track as part of the conference.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla commented what many of these items are getting at is the need for transformational change in the way we are doing things. Sometimes those changes required a bit of upfront investment to study if a project is feasible.

Additional Staff Support for Vision Zero Plan Board Goal:

Interim Village Manager Shelley gave an overview of this Item of staffing shortages for filling vacancies in engineering which could impact projects in the Capital Improvement Budget and the traffic calming requests.

Public Works Director John Wielebnicki added the challenge with the shortage of staff is how to prioritize the work for 2022. Staff recommends engaging a traffic consultant to assist with exploring a Vision Zero plan, and noted that the Vision Zero goal may bump other projects.

Village Trustees Buchanan, Taglia, and Robinson are supportive of holding off on the Vision Zero goal due to the vacancies in engineering.

Village Trustee Parakkat suggested leaving the Vision Zero plan in place in case staffing increases to accommodate the project - if staffing is still problematic then they can push it to the next year.

Director Wielebnicki responded they can leave it in the budget as long as the Board understands they will not move the project forward until the staffing issue is resolved.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla expressed concerns over delaying this project and believes a rethinking of how to address pedestrian safety is what is needed. She is in support of leaving the Vision Zero plan in the budget and leaving it up to staff to determine when the appropriate time is to move forward with it.

Village Trustee Enyia commented he wants this to be a priority but understands the staffing issue and wants to ensure we have the staff capacity to do the project right.

President Scaman commented she wants to be realistic in accomplishing their goals and does not recommend adding this to the budget at this time.

Staff was directed to not include the Vision Zero plan in the 2022 budget and to re-evaluate it in the third quarter of 2022.

Funds for Alternative Service Delivery Model:

Interim Village Manager Shelley gave an overview of this Item and clarified the amount of funds to be allocated for this project.

There was discussion around if this Item ties in with the request to increase the service delivery in the Fire Department (EMS Services).

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla recommended increasing the funding and to allocate \$800,000 from ARPA funding.

Village Trustee Robinson requested clarification on the placeholder amount and what an appropriate amount might be for the placeholder. Interim Village manager Shelley responded currently the placeholder amount is \$50,000.

Chief Financial Officer Steve Drazner added increasing the request an additional \$750,000 would bring the tax levy increase from 3% to 5%.

Village Trustee Taglia thanked Paul Goyette for communicating with the Board the request for the \$800,000 potential commitment for this program. Village Trustee Taglia does have concerns with earmarking more than \$50,000 for this as the scope has not been defined and recommendations from the consultant are not yet determined. He is not in support of increasing the tax levy on residents without understanding how much will be needed and determining how to fund this for the long term. He suggests leaving the allocation as is and doing budget amendments in 2022 once

the scope of work and recommendations are in front of the Board for determination.

Village Trustee Taglia also recommended holding off on the additional fire fighter staffing request at this time.

Village Trustee Buchanan requested clarification on if allocating ARPA funds for this Item would result in an increase in the tax levy. Village Trustee Buchanan is in support of allocating more funds to this Item if they are available through ARPA to develop an alternative model in the immediate future.

President Scaman commented this needs to be a community response and sustainable beyond 2026 after the ARPA funding is done. She would like the community health partners at the table to help figure out how to pay for whatever the 911-alternative response is going to be.

President Scaman supports identifying a dollar amount that demonstrates the Board's commitment that does not increase the levy.

Village Trustee Enyia believes the Board needs to be intentional with moving forward with the alternative service delivery model and expressed concern if \$50,000 is enough to address this. If the Board does not move forward with this now we are putting ourselves at a disadvantage down the line.

Village Trustee Parakkat commented although he supports the mental health concerns of the community and the fact we need to address that, allocating money without the scope and solution in place seems premature.

Village Trustee Robinson commented this is an opportunity to use this the ARPA money that we temporarily have and won't have in the future and an opportunity to be proactive about mental health issues. This has to be part of the discussion about ARPA funding and the possibility of streaming some ARPA money towards mental health.

Village Trustee Taglia commented the most intentional and responsible way to proceed is to utilize the budget amendment process and to amend the 2022 budget when it is necessary. To make a decision now, in advance of getting the data from the assessment and discussions that will happen with other community partners, is a little premature.

Village Trustee Parakkat agreed with Village Trustee Taglia, adding he is not comfortable setting aside money without knowing how it will be spent.

Increasing Service Delivery in the Fire Department (EMS Services):

Interim Village Manager Shelley gave an overview of this Item.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla requested Village Trustee Taglia's input on this topic.

Village Trustee Taglia responded he supports the additional staff due to the increase in seniors and developments in the village. He would like clarity on if the numbers of calls for service were impacted by Covid, and would like to see a little more normality in numbers to validate the data.

Village Trustee Robinson requested clarification on a previous discussion regarding if an increase in calls was related to Covid.

CFO Drazner responded in a memo dated November 16 which stated Covid-19 has not increased the number of calls.

Village Trustee Buchanan requested clarification on if Oak Park has 2 or 3 ambulances.

Interim Village Manager Shelley clarified Oak Park mandates 2 ambulances full time, but will staff 3 ambulances if needed. The third ambulance was temporarily mandated during Covid.

Village Trustee Buchanan suggested putting a hold on this request until the numbers are more stable from staff.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla agrees the village will eventually need three full time ambulances, but the timing does not seem right. She recommended revisiting this conversation in the middle of 2022 to see what the data looks like at that time.

Village Trustee Parakkat commented he would like to see the data normalize a bit before making a decision.

Village Trustee Enyia requested clarification on how the fire department's staff is handling all the overtime.

Fire Chief Ron Kobyleski responded they are reaching Covid burnout and are seeing an increase in injuries.

The Board will revisit this Item for additional fire personnel in 2022 - staff was directed to provide more data in year 2022 regarding calls for service.

President Scaman resumed discussion on how to fund the Alternative Service Delivery Model Item. She recommended reallocating the \$300,000 request from the additional fire personnel to fund the Alternative Service Delivery Model.

Village Trustee Robinson requested clarification regarding the ability to earmark ARPA funds to cover this.

President Scaman responded they can use ARPA funds, she was looking for consensus on how much to allocate from those funds.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla supports allocating \$800,000 with half being allocating from ARPA and the General Fund.

Village Trustee Parakkat commented he prefers to have a discussion around balancing the affordability of the community. How are we optimizing these long term programs against other needs of the community?

CFO Drazner recapped the 3 staff directives:

1. Leave \$10,000 in the budget for the feasibility study.
2. There is not an additional \$25,000 being added to the budget for Vision Zero
3. \$300,000 will be reallocated from the additional fire personnel request to the village manager's operating budget within the General Fund for the Alternative Service Delivery Model.

B. [ID 21-387](#) Discussion Regarding the Survey Results for the Expenditure of American Rescue Act Funds

Interim Village Manager Shelley gave an overview of this Item.

There was no further discussion of this Item.

C. [ORD 21-92](#) An Ordinance Amending Chapter 20 ("Public Health"), Article 1 ("Oak Park Department of Public Health"), Section 20-1-6 ("Authority and Duties of the Director") of the Oak Park Village Code to Permit the Public Health Director to Make Reasonable Rules, Regulations and Orders Due to the Outbreak of COVID-19 Disease

Interim Village Manager Shelley introduced this Item.

The following persons read their Agenda Pubic Comment aloud:

Ranga Bodila: Ranga Bodila spoke their comment in support of modifying the public health code to grant our Public Health Department the power to make necessary rules, regulations and orders to keep the public safe.

Village Clerk Waters read the following Agenda Pubic Comments aloud:

Christina Welter, DrPH, MPH: Christina Welter, DrPH, MPH, submitted their public comment in support of reinstating Dr. Chapple's emergency authority and emergency powers. This will allow Dr. Chapple to focus on a strategic, evidence-informed and engaged approach for the next phase of

the response as well as longer term plans for improving public health in our community.

Thomas Ptacek: Thomas Ptacek submitted their public comment to not alter the village code extending the authority of the village's Department of Public Health (DPH) as the code already grants DPH the authority sought by the proposed amendment.

Dr. Suzanne Feeney, PharmD, Dr. Abigail Silva, Dr. Judy Ann Carter:

Doctors Feeney, Silva, and Carter submitted their public comment in support of extending the authorization for Dr. Chapple -McGruder. Authorization will allow Dr. Chapple to quickly make public health decisions, and the community deserves swift action, not red tape.

Dr. Robin Kalish: Dr. Robin Kalish submitted their public comment asking the Board to extend Dr. Chapple-McGruder's temporary authorization to make reasonable rules, regulations and orders related to COVID mitigation measures. They added they believe this authorization should be permanent, so that health directors are able act quickly when needed.

Kathrine Nichols: Kathrine Nichols submitted their public comment in support of the Public Health Director. They requested to extend her authorization not only to enable her to make fast decisions that will benefit our whole community, but also to send a clear message that we support her authority, and to be an example for others (school boards, day cares, pediatricians, business owners, etc.) to do the same.

Kim Jackewicz: Kim Jackewicz submitted their comment in strong support for Dr. Theresa Chapple-McGruder and her work as director of the health department. They also support amending the village code to give Dr. Chapple-McGruder broad authority to make reasonable rules during times of emergency.

Kelley Clink: Kelley Clink submitted their public comment expressing their concern over the expiration of the health emergency authorization and asked the board to extend the emergency authorization.. The community deserves clear communication regarding who is going to be in charge of pandemic related policies and for how long.

Jennifer Gnolfo: Jennifer Gnolfo submitted thier public comment requesting that Dr. Chapple-McGruder's authorization be extended during this hopeful yet still risky phase of protecting our community against COVID. Retaining the person who has been the head of our community's efforts in fighting COVID and showing her the support of our entire Board of Trustees would mean clarity and peace of mind.

Erin Hutto Sowers: Erin Hutto Sowers submitted their support for Dr. Chapple and urge the Village Board to extend the Health Department Director's authority to make reasonable rules, regulations and orders due to the outbreak of COVID-19. At a time when public health experts are under attack, both nationally and here in Oak Park, our village leaders need to explicitly confirm their support for Dr Chapple so she can continue to act with speed and authority to address this pandemic's continued challenges.

Elle Morton: Elle Morton submitted their public comment to express support for extending Dr Chapple's authority to make decisions related to pandemic mitigation measures. By extending the order, village leadership can send the message that harassment and undermining of our public health professionals will not be tolerated, and there will be no ambiguity regarding her authority.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla requested clarification on this Item. Interim village Manager Shelley responded no power or authority has been removed from the Public Health Director regardless of if this emergency authorization is extended or rescinded.

Village Attorney Stephanides added subsection "Z" of section 20/1/6 of the code provides the Public Health Director with the authority to make rules and regulations when there is an emergency in place. There has been an emergency declaration in place since the pandemic began as declare by Governor Pritzker. Subsection "BB" was created early on in the pandemic when it wasn't clear if the governor would continue the emergency declaration. Under subsection "Z" , the authority of the Public Health Director still continues due to the emergency declaration, so the need for subsection "BB" to continue the Public Health Director's authority is not needed.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla requested clarification on the impact if the governor's disaster proclamation expires. Village Attorney Stephanides responded the emergency declaration would not be in effect and the Village Board would need to take action to extend the Public Health Director's authority if they believe that there is still a Covid-19 emergency in Oak Park.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla requested clarification from Dr. Chapple if this Ordinance is what she requested. Public Health Director Dr. Theresa Chapple responded what is written in the Ordinance is what she requested.

Village Trustee Taglia requested clarification on the need to extend the authority if the extension is not required to maintain the authority. Dr. Chapple responded she has heard different explanations of what happens if the authority expires - at this point it is not clear what she can or cannot do without the authority in place.

Village Trustee Robinson commented given there is a lot of confusion around this provision (subsection "BB") and the best way to provide direct support is by making sure we are putting forth a clear and concise Ordinance, and the Ordinance presented does not provide clarity. Village Trustee Robinson added there is a real benefit in having the Director of Public Health at the Board meetings during these discussions to inform the discussion by lending her expertise and to prevent any additional confusion or lack of clarity.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla expressed concern that the village has created a precedent since the start of the pandemic that the emergency declaration is needed to maintain the Public Health Director's authority, as well as a concern of opening the village up to potential litigation if the emergency order expires.

Village Trustee Buchanan expressed concerns that the Public Health Director is not clear of the implications of extending or expiring the emergency authority.

Interim Village Manager Shelley responded some of the confusion may have generated from social media posts and emails from the public stating that the Public Health Director would lose their emergency authority if the Board let this expire, which is not the case.

Dr. Chapple commented her understanding was this Item was originally going to be brought to the Board at their last meeting for a vote but it was pulled as it was thought the governor's disaster proclamation would stay in place. She also has concerns over the way the code is written - it states the authority is extended if there is an emergency declaration, but the governor has it written as a disaster proclamation which may cause confusion or contention.

Village Trustee Parakkat commented there is misunderstanding and a lack of clarity on this subject and would like the village to put out a clear communication to the public regarding the authority of the Public Health Director. He added we are in a different place than we were when the emergency authority was implemented - we should start to create a path to normalcy with this umbrella declaration of emergency from the governor which provides the framework for us to act in case things change.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla responded there is an argument to be made that not extending this authority opens up the village to litigation. The main reason to extend the emergency powers to the Public Health Director is to eliminate the ambiguity. She suggested extending the emergency authority through the winter months, which may be a peak Covid season, and then in the first quarter of 2022 revisit the need to extend the emergency powers long term.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla then made a motion to pass this Ordinance as is written.

Village Trustee Enyia spoke in support of the Public Health Director, the Health Department, and staff in their efforts to keep the community safe during the pandemic.

Village Trustee Enyia then seconded the motion.

President Scaman expressed her support of the Public Health Director having what she needs to do her job. President Scaman commented that the Board has added to the confusion of this Item and clarified that, with the emergency order or without the emergency order, nothing changes in regards to the Public Health Director's authority until the governor's declared emergency order is gone.

It was moved by Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla, seconded by Village Trustee Enyia, to adopt the Ordinance. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 4 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, and Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla

NAYS: 3 - Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, and Village Trustee Taglia

ABSENT: 0

VI. Adjourn

It was moved by Village Trustee Robinson, seconded by Village Trustee Buchanan to adjourn. The motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:35 P.M., Monday, November 22, 2021.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Deputy Clerk DeViller**

AYES: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0