



## **Protocols**

### **Village of Oak Park**

### **Board of Trustees**

These protocols are intended to provide general rules of engagement for the President and Village Trustees, while conducting the business of the Village of Oak Park. It is understood that extenuating circumstances may arise, and that specific protocols will be waived or adjusted. However, it is also understood that such circumstances should be the exception and not the rule.

These protocols serve as a framework for conducting efficient and effective Board meetings, for proper use of communication tools such as e-mail and social media, for respectful interactions with staff and each other, and for strengthening the Village Manager form of government in the Village as a whole. Protocols can be revisited at any time, but the Board is encouraged to review them at least annually to make any adjustments deemed appropriate.

**Adopted \_\_\_\_\_, 2025**

## Meetings of the Village Board

Minutes of Board Meetings will be prepared by the Village Clerk's Office and presented to the Board, which allows the Board to approve the minutes and their eventual release in a timely and lawful manner.

### I. Regular Board Meetings

#### A. Scheduling (Regular Meetings)

1. Regular Meetings are generally scheduled at 7:00 p.m. on the first, second, and third Tuesdays of a month, unless the meeting falls on a holiday, in which case the meeting will be scheduled on a Wednesday. The anticipated schedule for each new year is adopted every December.
2. Study session topics may be scheduled for discussion during regular meetings and will be scheduled as needed. If a study session topic is scheduled for a regular meeting, if a separate regular meeting is held for a study session, the agenda may contain a limited number of regular business items (i.e., contracts, motions, ordinances and resolutions).
3. If there are five (5) weeks in a month, a fourth meeting may ~~will be considered to be held be scheduled~~ on the fourth Tuesday of the month. This will be a special meeting.
4. Meetings of the Village Board shall conclude no later than 10:00 p.m. The Village Board's goal is to conclude meetings by 9:30 p.m. If a meeting does not conclude by 10:00 p.m., a motion must be adopted to continue the meeting past 10:00 p.m. If the motion fails, a motion to adjourn shall be in order.
5. During April, August, and December, it is preferred that only one (1) meeting be held during these months. ~~Meetings during these months shall be regular meetings to be held on the first Tuesday of the month only.~~ If additional meetings are required, staff will notify the Board and inquire whether a quorum is available for the extra meeting dates.
6. For discussion during a meeting, it is preferred that the President use a Trustee's first name when recognizing them to speak at a meeting, or during conversations between members of the Village Board, or for staff to address the Village Board.
7. Consideration of an agenda item will begin with the President reading the item and then recognizing the Village Manager or a citizen board/commission chair, who will provide a brief summary of the item.

8. Staff or outside expert presentations will be limited to ten (10) minutes, unless an advance request is made and deemed appropriate for a more extended period of time. If a PowerPoint presentation is provided as part of the agenda materials, the Village Board prefers that the presentation not be read in its entirety and that a summary be provided. The Board will then proceed directly to questions after the presentation to assist with meeting efficiency.

9. It is preferable to take one (1) round of questions first to determine if there is sufficient information to take a vote.

10. The Village Board may conduct first and second readings of an item. On request, the Village Attorney will provide guidance related to first and second readings.

#### **B. Agenda Preparation (Regular Meetings)**

1. Staff will limit the number of agenda items so the Board can realistically address items in the time allotted for the meeting.

2. For every regular agenda item and every study session item, staff will set a reasonable amount of time to be spent on each agenda item based on staff's knowledge of the complexity of the issues and post this time next to each regular agenda item. This is for the purpose of helping staff arrive at a reasonable number of agenda items to discuss and to give the Village Board timeframes to follow at the meeting with the goal of ending the meeting by 10:00 p.m.

3. Staff will provide the preliminary agenda by Tuesday prior to a meeting (except the day after a holiday) to include the number of agenda items, the order, and a detailed item overview.

4. Board feedback on the preliminary agenda is due back to staff prior to 9:00 a.m. 12 noon on the Friday Thursday before a Board meeting. The expectation is not to read all of the agenda materials and attachments during this time, but instead to review the list of agenda items and notify the Village Manager of any questions before public posting.

5. Staff will order the agenda items in a manner that is the most efficient use of time at a meeting, including placing items that may draw public attendance or require professional staff time closer to the top of the agenda if practicable.

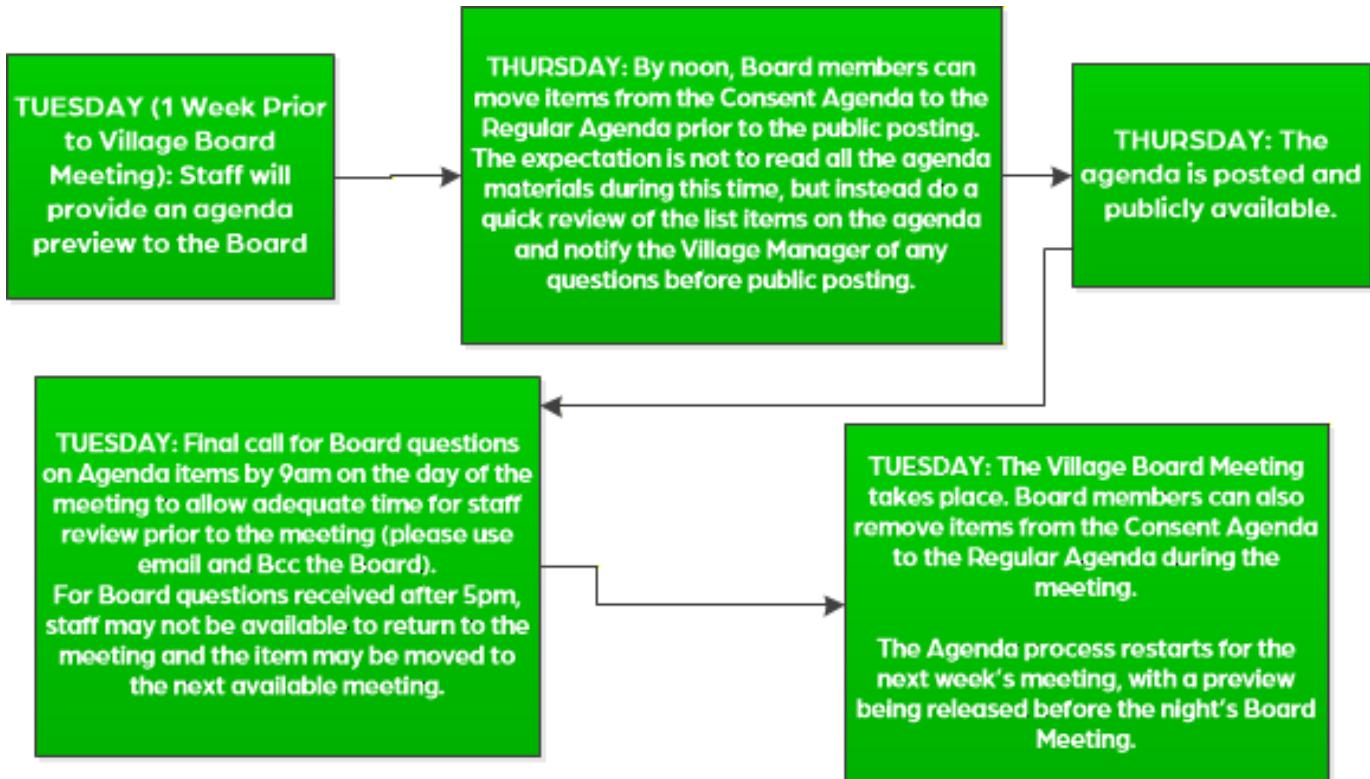
6. Staff will pull an item from the preliminary agenda when the item is not ripe for action and provide a written update when necessary.

7. To add a new item not shown on an agenda, the President individually, or a Trustee with the concurrence of a second may make such request of the Village Manager. This request, along with the second Trustee's agreement, can be submitted electronically to the Village Board email. This request is considered a discussion-only agenda item and will not contain the staff's typical analysis unless the request by the Trustee states explicitly that the scheduling of the item can wait until staff's analysis. Generally, These requests will appear at the next agenda preview for the

next scheduled regular meeting, unless there is a request for a staff analysis. It is also understood that Motions that contain a funding request cannot be approved during this Motion at the meeting. If consensus, a subsequent agenda item will be added at a later date to amend the budget after the meeting discussing the Motion. As a courtesy, there shall be an advance call to the Village Manager to discuss the addition ~~or removal~~ of an agenda item.

8. On ~~Friday~~ Thursday at noon, the agenda is finalized and made public. At the same time the website materials are posted, they are also available to the Board via the Granicus application on iPad. The agenda is emailed to the press by Friday.
9. Questions for any agenda item can be posed by any member of the Village Board throughout the week, but preferably no later than 9:00 a.m. on the ~~Monday~~ Tuesday before the Board meeting, to coordinate staff responses back to the Village Board before the meeting. Questions can be submitted via email to the Board email address, using the BCC option. The Village Manager's Office will coordinate responses and provide them back to the entire Board via email. Unless specifically requested (see B6), staff will assume the questions have been sufficiently answered, and the item will remain on the Consent Agenda. If the questions are asked on the same day as the meeting, a hard copy of the answers will be provided to every Board member at their seat in the Council Chambers.

Below is a flowchart of the agenda preparation process as described above.



10. Items on the Regular Agenda will be discussed. Staff associated with these items will be present at the meeting.

11. Proclamations will only be read in their entirety when there is an individual in attendance at a meeting who will receive the Proclamation or at the specific request of the President or a Trustee.

12. The Board Meeting Calendar will be a discussion item as a part of a Regular Meeting Agenda under the Village Manager's Report generally on the first meeting of the month to determine topics/subjects and a time table for upcoming Special Meetings approximately six weeks in advance. The Village Manager will maintain a current list of topics requested to be scheduled by at least two members of the Board.

#### **C. Consent & Regular Agenda (Regular Meetings)**

1. Between Tuesday and ~~Friday at 9:00 a.m. Thursday at noon of the week prior to~~ before a Board meeting, any member of the Board can request that items on the Consent Agenda be moved to the Regular Agenda. This request can be submitted electronically to the Village Board email. This is done generally because a Trustee is going to vote against the item which will require a separate roll call vote or a Trustee desires to have a conversation about the item specifically during the meeting.

2. While any Board member may pull an item off Consent at any time prior to the approval of the agenda at the beginning of a meeting, the Board agrees to an informal deadline for pulling an item off of Consent is noon on Thursdays ~~by 9 a.m. on Fridays~~. However, if the Village Board sends in notification to pull an item after the public posting of the agenda, the agenda item will not be changed. Instead the Village President and/or Trustee pulling an agenda item from Consent will announce the change during the meeting.

3. Department Directors will attend a Board meeting only if their department has an agenda item on the Regular Agenda as of 5:00 p.m. on the meeting day. Therefore, if an item is moved from the Consent Agenda to the Regular Agenda at the start of the meeting (under Agenda Approval), it is unlikely that necessary staff will be available to address questions.

4. It will be the default practice to waive reading of consent agenda items by the adoption of a motion to approve the consent agenda. Pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order, items on the Consent Agenda are non-debatable and therefore, are assumed to have no discussion.

#### **D. Board Deliberation (Regular Meetings)**

1. Consideration of an agenda item will begin with the President reading the item and then recognizing ~~the Village Manager staff or an applicable citizen board/commission chair~~, who will

provide a brief summary of the item and/or introduce staff or an applicable board/commission chair.

2. Following the summary, Board members will have the opportunity to ask questions, and will try to limit their questions to no more than five (5) minutes each.

3. Following questions, Board members will offer their comments on the item, and will try to limit comments to no more than three (3) minutes each.

4. For questions and comments, the President will call on Trustees to speak in a round robin format, with the President included at the end of each round-robin if the President wishes to ask questions or comment.

5. Following comments, any Board member who wishes to speak again shall be recognized by the President, and will try to limit their comments to one (1) minute; likewise, the President is included at the end of the comment period, where the President may add their own substantive comments, summarize the Board consensus or majority direction, or help an evenly divided Board arrive at a decision.

6. Votes of Board members are taken by roll call or voice vote. Per Village Code Sec. 2-2-3, roll call votes must be taken on ordinances. On any other item, unless a roll call vote is required by law or is requested by a Board member, a voice vote is permitted.

7. During a roll-call vote, no additional comments shall be made.

8. The President, as presiding officer, will keep track of speaking times and may be assisted by the Village Clerk.

#### **E. Public Comment (Regular Meetings)**

1. In keeping with existing Board policy, an individual may provide public comment for up to three minutes during the non-agenda public comment period or during the consideration for a specific agenda item. The President may allow a speaker additional time to accommodate language accessibility barriers. ~~If a Village Board meeting is by remote participation as permitted by the Illinois Open Meetings Act, the public will be given the choice to have their comments read by the Village Clerk or give their comments by calling into meeting without a camera. The public comment procedures in this subsection E(1) are applicable to each subsidiary body of the Village to the extent the body has not adopted its own public comment regulations.~~

2. Non-agenda public comment shall be an agenda item to appear prior to the Consent Agenda and Regular Agenda portions of a regular meeting.

3. The overall time limit for a non-agenda public comment will be thirty (30) minutes, with the balance to be taken at the end of the Regular Agenda.

4. The overall limit for regular agenda public comment will be fifteen (15) minutes per agenda item, with the balance to be taken at the end of the Regular Agenda.

5. Persons who wish to provide public comment regarding a regular agenda item who are unable to be present when the regular agenda item appears on an agenda shall be permitted to provide their comments during the non-agenda public comment portion of a meeting.

6. The Village Board will not respond to public comments as a part of the meeting or enter into discussion with a commenter as a part of the meeting. The Village President will respond and, at the conclusion of the public comment, noting that staff will follow up on the matter.

7. In keeping with existing Board policy, public comment on any item for which a public hearing has taken place or for which a commission has made a recommendation may be limited to five individuals commenting on each side of the issue.

8. Public comment may be received from any one (1) individual for up to three (3) agenda items at a Regular Meeting.

9. To preserve the civility of public meetings, the Board will not recognize comments made by the public from their seats in the audience unless an accommodation is necessary. Public commenters are only recognized during the public comment portions of an agenda and all speakers must speak from the podium after being called by the President after providing a public comment form with the Village Clerk.

10. The Village President may limit repetitive or redundant public comment.

11. Individuals who fail to follow the public comment rules set forth herein may be ordered to leave the podium by the Village President and cease providing further public comment and/or may be subject to removal from the meeting room by the President. Individuals whose behavior disrupts the conduct of a meeting so as to prevent or impede the Board from conducting its business or threatens public safety may also be ordered leave the podium by the President and/or may be subject to removal from the meeting room by the President.

12. Public comment must be given in-person or by virtual means. If public comment is given virtually, the individual providing such comment must be on camera.

## **F. Study Sessions**

1. During the course of a study session held pursuant to subsection A(2) above, the Board may provide direction to Village staff regarding an item which is properly before the Board at the study session in the form of a poll of the Board.

2. After consideration of the Village Manager's recommendations, if any, and Board discussion, the President shall formulate the language of the poll unless a Board member makes

a motion for a poll, which is supported by a poll vote of four (4) Board members. Either process shall be in order any time during the discussion of the subject matter following public input.

3. A poll of the Board taken during a study session shall constitute the interim direction to staff by the Board but shall not constitute final action on the matter before the Board. The President or a Board member shall not be required to maintain the same position in subsequent polls at a study session or votes at regular meetings where formal votes are taken if the matter is brought before the Board at such a meeting. No poll shall bind the Village or create any rights for any third parties.

4. The Village Manager or Village staff shall take actions to implement the interim Village Board direction which is the subject of a poll under this section if there are at least four (4) poll votes of Board members in favor of the polled question.

5. If one (1) or more Board members are absent for a study session poll and there are less than four (4) poll votes of Board members on any poll proposed on a study session matter, the President shall report the question at the next regular Board meeting where formal votes are taken or a future study session when the absent member or members are present and other members voting on the poll are also present. Other than the restatement of the question polled, no debate or question shall be in order at the time of the repoll.

## **II. Special Board Meetings**

If an unplanned meeting is required, such a meeting is a “special meeting” under the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

### **A. Scheduling (Special Meetings)**

1. Special Meetings, as needed, are scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

### **B. Agenda Preparation (Special Meetings)**

1. See “Regular Agenda” section of Protocols.

### **C. Consent & Regular Agenda (Special Meetings)**

1. See “Regular Agenda” section of Protocols.

### **D. Board Deliberation (Special Meetings)**

1. See “Regular Agenda” section of Protocols.

### **E. Public Comment (Special Meetings)**

1. Public Comment will be allowed for agenda items and non-agenda public comment will also

be part of the agenda. The same provisions regarding public comment for a regular meeting are applicable to special meetings.

### **III. Executive Session**

#### **A. Scheduling (Executive Session)**

1. Executive Sessions, if needed, are generally reserved for all Regular Meetings from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
2. Executive sessions will begin on time, and, if held prior to a public session, will end at least five minutes before the start of the public session.
3. For the purpose of roll call, the Village Clerk will use the title and the last name of each Trustee or Village President (i.e., Trustee Smith).
4. After Board direction is provided, the Village President or Village Manager will make a statement recapping the direction given.
5. Executive Session Minutes will detail the reason for the session, the particular subject matter, the direction given, and a summary. The draft minutes prepared by the Village Clerk's office will be reviewed by the Law Department.

#### **B. Agenda Preparation (Executive Session)**

1. Staff will set a reasonable amount of time to be spent on each agenda item on the preliminary agenda, both to help staff arrive at a reasonable number of agenda items and to give the Board timeframes to follow at the meeting.
2. Staff will provide the preliminary confidential agenda topics by Friday prior to the executive session to include the number of agenda items, the order, and the time to be spent on each agenda item.
3. Unless the matter is extremely urgent, no detailed legal or other staff memoranda should be sent out on the day of the meeting.
4. Staff will alert the public at such time if the length of an executive session discussion would result in a delay in the reconvening of the meeting in public.
5. Staff will pull an item from the preliminary agenda when it turns out not to be ripe for action and provide a written update, if necessary, rather than a briefing at the Executive Session.
6. Staff will share information on all pending matters of an Executive Session with all elected

officials as soon as one (1) elected official is advised of the matter.

#### **IV. Committees of the Village Board**

##### **A. Purpose**

1. Each Committee will create a scope of work unless a scope is already defined in subsection B below.
2. Appointments to Committees will be made by the President.
3. Committee meetings are scheduled ~~as needed but should for the purpose of allow for a reduction reducing~~ in the number of Regular and Special Meetings.
4. Committees will report to the full Board as required for issues that are ripe for action in a given area. Reports can also be provided quarterly.
5. Minutes will be kept of all Committee meetings by the Village Clerk's Office.
6. To support Open Meetings Act compliance, a Board member who is not a member of a Committee may attend Committee meetings, but will not participate in the meetings.

##### **B. Structure**

1. Finance (3 Trustees) – generally meets multiple times prior to when the Village Manager recommends the annual budget to the Village Board; reviews draft recommendations for the proposed budget for the following year and provides feedback; and reviews the annual audit prior to Village Board review at a regular meeting. See Village Code Sec. 2-6-2.
2. Personnel (3 Trustees) – generally meets for the Village Manager's formal performance review process.
3. Reinventing Government (3 Trustees) – generally meets to review proposed organizational changes, changes in technology, improvements or innovations to customer service, or to review Partner Agencies.

#### **V. Communications**

##### **A. General Communications**

1. Board members should avoid contemporaneous communications to avoid violating the Open Meetings Act. If an individual Board member nonetheless sends an email to the Board as a whole, Trustees should not reply to all, but may direct a private response to the original sender. These limitations do not apply to communications regarding scheduling matters.

2. Substantive email questions that are directed to staff may be copied to all members of the Board utilizing a “blind carbon copy” (bcc) function and noting the full board bcc in the salutation.
3. For the Village Board’s background, the Village Manager’s Executive Coordinator has access to all emails sent to the Manager.
4. Interaction Communication with staff should go through the Village Manager with a copy to the Executive Coordinator in the Office of the Village Manager, the Deputy Village Managers and the Assistant to the Village Manager, or by sending an email to VMOstaff@oak-park.us. Small action items can be sent directly to staff or a department director, but must also copy the Village Manager’s Office (using VMOstaff@oak-park.us) ~~be copied to the Manager and the Executive Coordinator~~. There should be no commentary on performance or personnel issues with any staff member in such communications.
5. The Village President must strive for transparency in dealings with staff at Village Hall and should keep Trustees informed of meetings and significant interactions on a regular basis.
6. Trustees should can provide feedback on their Citizen Board/Commission liaison role during Regular Village Board meetings.

#### **B. Responding to Email Sent to the Village Board**

1. The Village Manager’s Office is responsible for responding to all Village Board inquiries sent to the Village Board group email. Therefore, the Village Manager, Deputy Village Managers, and the Assistant to the Village Manager and the Executive Coordinator are included in the Village Board’s group email address which is Board@oak-park.us. The Village Clerk is also added to this email, BoardandClerk@oak-park.us, for situational awareness.
2. The Executive Coordinator provides a general reply back to explain that the message is received. If required, a response is also coordinated amongst staff. This response is sent directly to the email sender from staff. A with a copy of staff’s response is sent to the Board by the Executive Coordinator utilizing a “blind carbon copy” (bcc) function to avoid the potential for contemporaneous interactive communication by the Board of Trustees, constituents and staff.
3. Trustees may wish to respond to emails directly, but are encouraged to blind copy all the Board members on their reply for the purpose of: (1) avoiding contemporaneous communications; and (2) informing the other members of the Board that the email has been responded to by an elected official.

#### **C. Response to Voicemail sent to the Village Board**

1. The Executive Coordinator provides a general reply to explain that the message has been received. If required, a response is also coordinated amongst staff and staff will contact the caller directly. The Executive Coordinator will send the Board a follow-up email that briefly describes the service provided to the caller.

**D. Individual Board Emails and Voicemails**

1. Staff does not get a copy of individual Board emails or voicemails, and therefore, staff will not respond. If a staff response is needed, the President or a Trustee will contact the Executive Coordinator or the Village Manager.

**E. Standards for Public Emergencies**

1. When there is an emergency, the Village Manager and/or Chief Communications Officer will work directly with the Village President or President Pro Tem pursuant to Section 2-3-5(B) of the Village Code if it is necessary for an elected official to serve as the spokesperson for the Village Board.
2. The Village Board will not make statements individually. No statements will be made without referring to the Village Manager to ensure all the facts are correct.
3. The Village will utilize the Public Information Officer and/or Communications Department.

**F. Standards for Responding to the Media**

1. For each issue in which it is necessary for a statement from the Board, the Board will decide in advance who the spokesperson is for the Village Board for that issue.
2. When there is a media inquiry, the Village Manager and/or Chief Communications Officer will work directly with the Village President, or President Pro Tem who serves pursuant to Section 2-3-5(B) of the Village Code, if it is necessary for an elected official to serve as the spokesperson for the Village Board.

**G. Responding to Questions Sent to Staff from the Village President/Trustees**

1. The Village Manager's Office is responsible for collecting and coordinating a response with staff to all Village Board questions. Questions from the Village Board should be sent to VMOstaff@oak-park.us. The Village Manager, Deputy Village Managers, and the Assistant to the Village Manager and the Executive Coordinator are included in this email.
2. The Village Manager's Office will provide a general reply back to the Village Trustee to acknowledge the question is received.
3. The Village Manager's Office will coordinate with staff regarding the questions from the Village Board. Depending on the complexity of the question, the request may take a week or more to respond.
4. The Village Manager's Office will send the response or answer back to the entire Village

Board once the question is answered by staff, utilizing a “blind carbon copy” (bcc) function to avoid the potential for contemporaneous interactive communication by the Board of Trustees and staff.

5. See also Section (I) Individual Elected Official Requests for Information below.

#### **H. Opinion Columns**

1. As a courtesy, it is encouraged that any opinion column submission written by any individual Trustee or Village President, or a collection of such individuals, be shared electronically with the Village Manager and fellow Board members at least 24 hours in advance of submission.

#### **I. Individual Elected Official Requests for Information**

2. All individual Elected Official requests for information will be shared with the entire Village Board.

3. If the request requires more than one-two hours of staff time to develop a work product, that request will be presented to the Village Board for formal review. The request will be scheduled for the next available Regular Meeting and a motion will be required to direct staff to complete the information request.

#### **I. Use of Social Media**

1. The Village of Oak Park’s Office of Communications & Engagement maintains and operates official social media accounts on all mainstream platforms for the purpose of disseminating information and interacting with residents and other stakeholders as appropriate.

2. All elected officials should familiarize themselves with, and adhere to, the guidelines and standards set forth in the most recent version of the Village’s social media policy promulgated by the Village Manager, which is hereby adopted by the Board and incorporated herein as though fully set forth.

3. It is not required of any member of the Village Board to have an account or have a presence on social media.

4. If an individual Trustee or the President decides to have an individual social media account, it is the responsibility of that Trustee or President to monitor their own activities to ensure they are not in violation of the Open Meetings Act as a public official. For example, it is a violation of the Open Meetings Act if more than two Trustees comment on another Trustee or President’s thread.

5. Any account maintained by an individual Trustee or President may be considered a public

forum for First Amendment purposes. It is recommended that professional/Village activities and personal activities be kept separate on social media.

## **VI. Electronic Attendance at Meetings**

### **A. Quorum Physically Present**

1. If a quorum of the Board or an applicable Board committee is physically present at a meeting as required by Section 7(a) of the Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/7(a) as amended, the Village President or a Trustee may participate in the meeting by other means pursuant to the provisions below.
2. The President or Trustee who wishes to attend a meeting by other means may do so if the President or Trustee is prevented from physically attending the meeting because of:  
(i) personal illness or disability; (ii) employment purposes or the business of the Village; (iii) a family or other emergency; or (iv) unexpected childcare obligations; or (v) performance of "active military duty" as a "service member," as those phrases are defined in Section 7(a) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act.  
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### **B. Other Means of Attendance**

1. "Other means" as set forth in this section means attendance by video or audio conference.
2. If the President or a Trustee member wishes to attend a meeting by other means, the member must notify the Village Clerk and the Village Manager before the meeting unless advance notice is impractical.
3. The President or President Pro Tem shall make an announcement after the roll call portion of a meeting agenda or other portion of a meeting agenda as applicable that the applicable member will attend the meeting by other means, state the reason for remote attendance for purposes of the meeting record, and inform the public that the member may participate by other means unless a majority of the Board does not approve.

### **C. Repeal of Previously Adopted Policies**

6. The provisions set forth in this Section VI shall supersede and replace any and all previously adopted Board policies, resolutions, ordinances and motions regarding attendance at meetings by the President and Trustees by other means, including electronic means. All such previously adopted policies are repealed.