Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Tuesday, February 24, 2026 | **7:00 PM** | **Village Hall**

I. Call to Order

Village President Pro Tem Enyia called the Meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

II. Roll Call

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

Absent: 1 - Village President Scaman

III. Agenda Approval

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

IV. Minutes

A. MOT 26-120 A Motion to Approve Minutes from the February 10, 2026 and February 17, 2026 Regular Meetings of the Village Board

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

V. Non-Agenda Public Comment

There was no Non-Agenda Public Comment.

VI. Proclamation

None; no action was taken regarding this item.

VII. Village Manager Reports

Fire Chief Terry provided an overview of the large fire that took place on the 1200 block of north Taylor Ave.
Village Trustee Eder asked about cost & Chicago's response.
Village Trustee Leving Jacobson asked about the displaced families.

B. ID 26-209 A Presentation from the Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce

Interim Executive Director of the OPRF Chamber of Commerce Yoo-Jin Hong stated that the Chamber learned the importance of early coordination with Village staff before bringing proposals to the Board.

Director of Programming and Membership of the OPRF Chamber of Commerce Melissa Mallinson presented on the OP Next Internship, First Friday Festivals, BLEND programming.

Village Trustee Leving Jacobson suggested more targeted outreach for the internship program through school staff and mentors to reach students without existing networks. Asked about involving Chris T. (Your Passion First) and about the timeline for a new proposal.

Village Manager Jackson explained that no funding for these programs was included in the current budget and that Board direction would be needed to reinvest. Said staff could return with a refined proposal if the Board was interested, though timing would be tight. Agreed to include staff perspectives in future discussions and emphasized that the initiatives aligned with Village priorities.

Village Trustee Taglia appreciated receiving the update early and supported reviewing funding during the regular budget process. Found the program outcomes encouraging.

Village Trustee Eder supported continuing the programs and asked for cost details. Confirmed that BLEND had not launched and requested clarification on spending.

Village Trustee Enyia strongly supported continuing the programs. Emphasized improving communication so all Oak Park students learned about internship opportunities. Encouraged reaching youth who already ran small businesses and asked about age requirements for Chamber membership.

Business Services Manager/Administrative Officer Noemy Diaz provided the financial breakdown: roughly $135,000 of the $250,000 contract had been spent, with the remainder returned to the fund balance. Stated that additional Village costs totaled about $19,936 and that about half of the internship allocation was used.

VIII. Village Board Committees

IX. Citizen Commission Vacancies

C. ID 26-200 Board and Commission Vacancy Report for February 24, 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 21 vacancies.

X. Citizen Commission Appointments, Reappointments and Chair Appointments

None; no action was taken regarding this item.

XI. Public Hearing

None; no action was taken regarding this item.

XII. First Reading

None; no action was taken regarding this item.

XIII. Second Reading

None; no action was taken regarding this item.

XIV. Consent Agenda

Approval of the Consent Agenda

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 1 - Village President Scaman

D. RES 26-150 A Resolution Approving A Purchase Price Agreement with Victor Stanley, LLC. for the Purchase of Street Furniture for the Oak Park Avenue Streetscape Project in an Amount not to Exceed $73,111, Authorizing its Execution, and Waiving the Village's Bid Process for the Agreement

This Resolution was adopted.

XV. Regular Agenda

E. ID 26-142 Study Session on Homeownership Programs Part 2

Oak Park Area Association of Realtors representative Michael B.highlighted rising median home prices and extremely low housing inventory, argued that first time buyer assistance should be paired with measures to unlock existing supply, and proposed a targeted $2,000 transfer tax refund (owner occupied only, 1 year application window, excludes investors/multifamily) to improve mobility without significantly impacting Village revenue.

River Elm Properties Designated Managing Broker & Elmwood Park Trustee Jonathan Z. shared Elmwood Park's 30 year experience with a transfer tax rebate for residents buying/selling within the community, said it fostered mobility and generational roots without harming revenues, and suggested it could work well in Oak Park.

Neighborhood Services Director/ Asst. Village Manager Jonathan Burch presented a comprehensive homeownership strategy aligned with the Village Board's housing goals and the Strategic Vision for Housing. He explained that the plan responds to both affordability challenges and racial disparities in homeownership in Oak Park. He proposed two key metrics for evaluating success over the next five years: supporting 250 homebuyers earning under 120% AMI and narrowing racial/ethnic homeownership gaps to regional levels. He outlined several recommended program components. First, a robust homebuyer education and counseling program. Second, a down payment assistance program focused on the most affordable ownership option in Oak Park-condominiums-offering $6,000 for first time buyers between 70-120% of AMI. Burch also recommended the Village join the Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) program through ASSIST Illinois.

Village Trustee Straw expressed strong support for the Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) program and emphasized the need to pair it with robust homebuyer education so participants understand how to claim the annual tax credit. On transfer tax refunds, he favored applying refunds to buyers rather than sellers, with a low cap to target more affordable purchases and assist renters moving into homeownership. He viewed the refund as a tool to prevent residents from feeling "locked in" to housing that no longer fits their needs. He also endorsed opportunistic acquisitions with strict criteria to avoid competing with typical buyers, and he felt the shared equity model was not a good fit for Oak Park at this time. He said overall program success would depend on expanding housing supply.

Village Trustee Taglia asked about the sustainability of long term funding for home buyer education and down payment assistance. He cautioned that Village revenues will not always support large fund balances and emphasized the need to understand how these programs would be funded in future years. He asked legal counsel whether any proposed ideas raised concerns and highlighted that MCCs function as tax credits, meaning participants must have tax liability to benefit. He expressed interest in transfer tax incentives as a way to help residents-especially long time owners-remain in Oak Park. He also stressed the importance of updating the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO) using market based analysis to ensure development remains feasible, noting the need for expert input from

economic vitality staff.

Village Attorney Smith explained that any increase to the real estate transfer tax would require voter approval through referendum and that a full legal review would be necessary before evaluating the legality of the various program options.

Village Manager Jackson emphasized that the proposed programs-including education, down payment assistance, and MCCs-are commonly used in other cities and legally sound. He explained that previously budgeted housing service funds could support early phases and that staff would return with more detailed financial analysis, especially regarding supply expansion and future IHO updates. He reiterated that staff from multiple departments-including economic vitality and finance-will coordinate to balance affordability goals, supply needs, and long term fiscal responsibility.

Village Trustee Eder supported the short term recommendations, especially education and the MCC program, which he described as surprisingly valuable and under recognized. He requested more detail on why the MCC should not be the Village's long term cornerstone. Birch responded that reliance on private activity bonds has opportunity costs and that annual uptake varies widely. Eder supported down payment assistance, carefully targeted acquisitions, and further exploration of transfer tax refunds. He asked whether the transfer tax could be adjusted in a more equitable or graduated way.

Village Trustee Enyia relayed that President Scaman strongly supported transfer tax flexibility to help residents-especially seniors-remain in Oak Park. He praised the MCC as a valuable tool for first time buyers and highlighted the Village's progress in innovating housing supports internally rather than relying solely on outside agencies. He emphasized balancing affordability with maintaining strong relationships with developers and ensuring the Village does not leave incentives "on the table." He supported the acquisition of neglected properties to return them to affordable ownership and stressed that Oak Park must continue offering meaningful pathways to homeownership. He concluded that the Board had provided clear direction for staff to return with next steps.

F. MOT 26-124 A Motion by Trustee Wesley and Seconded by Village President Scaman to Authorize an Amendment to Ordinance 22-51 Granting a Special Use Permit for the Oak Park River Forest High School South Field Light Standards to Extend the Lighting Duration for their Fall Sports Season

G. ORD 26-115 An Ordinance to Authorize an Amendment to Ordinance 22-51 Granting a Special Use Permit for the Oak Park River Forest High School South Field

Light Standards to Extend the Lighting Duration for their Fall Sports Season

Village Trustee Wesley explained that OPRF High School asked to extend field light hours from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. from August through early December to allow more youth teams and community groups access to the baseball field. He introduced a motion to approve the extension.

This Ordinance was adopted.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 1 - Village President Scaman

XVI. Call to Board and Clerk

Clerk Waters reminded residents of upcoming early voting dates and provided contact information for election related questions.

Village Trustee Straw shared concerns about national political rhetoric opposing diversity, equity, and inclusion, emphasizing that the Village continues to focus on practical, community centered governance such as housing, waste management, and public policy that supports residents.

Village Trustee Leving Jacobson expressed gratitude for the Fire Department's recent work responding to a structure fire, noting how serious such incidents are for the community and how fortunate it was that no one was hurt.

XVII. Adjourn

It was moved by Village Trustee Wesley, seconded by Village Trustee Straw to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:58 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Carswell