



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Thursday, September 14, 2023

6:00 PM Nineteenth Century Club, 178 Forest Ave., Oak Park

I. Call to Order

Village President Vicki Scaman called the Special Meeting to order at 6:13 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Trustee Straw arrived at 6:15 P.M.

Trustee Robinson arrived at 6:21 P.M.

Present: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

Absent: 0

III. Agenda Approval

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Enyia, to approve the Agenda. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

IV. Non-Agenda Public Comment

Pamela Tate: resident and representative of the Oak Park Climate Action Network (OPCAN). Urged the Village Board to accelerate its efforts to reduce emissions and ensure the highest priority items in the Climate Ready Oak Park (CROP) Plan make it into the budget.

V. Regular Agenda

A. [ID 23-424](#) Village Board Protocols

Village Manager Kevin Jackson introduced the third and final goal setting session and review of Board protocols. A meeting to review the draft goals is tentatively scheduled for October 12.

Strategic Government Resources Vice President Hilary Shine presented the Item for discussion.

President Scaman said she does not believe most Board votes are unanimous yes votes, especially Regular Agenda items. Trustee Buchanan

said the goal to always be unanimous sounds boring. VP Shine responded there should be intense deliberation and the yes votes often can come from compromise. Manager Jackson added that is the purpose of the study session is to go deeper, get feedback, and have staff present options. President Scaman noted the previous Board traded votes and this Board does not do that and respects the differences.

Manager Jackson introduced the draft Board Protocols document.

Deputy Village Manager Lisa Shelley read staff's recommendations for scheduling regular meetings of the Board. If approved, these changes will take effect in the new year. Staff recommends moving regular meetings from Mondays to Tuesdays to provide an extra day to review materials and get questions answered. Agendas would still be published on Thursdays. Staff recommends three regular meetings a month, unless a fourth is needed. Regular meetings can include study sessions. Special meetings can be scheduled as needed. Commission meetings on Tuesdays would need to be rescheduled.

Trustee Robinson wondered how capping the meetings at 10 P.M. would limit discussions. Manager Jackson said it has only been recently that the Board meets every week. The 10 P.M. protocol has always been in place. Trustee Robinson said she liked the changes.

Trustee Parakkat said he is in favor of Tuesdays and three meetings a month. He requested that meetings not be scheduled on Thursdays, during spring break, and during August.

President Scaman noted that if the meetings are moved to Tuesdays, the *Wednesday Journal* would always be a week behind. She requested that Trustees lump their additional requests to staff. She said it may be difficult to take August off and she felt stress from the staff in accommodating that this year. Manager Jackson agreed it is easier to plan ahead and noted that goal setting will not need to happen next year.

Trustee Straw suggested moving the meetings to Thursdays, publishing agendas on Mondays, and sending the draft on Thursdays or Fridays so Trustees can review over the weekend. President Scaman said she has events on Thursdays and is comfortable meeting on Tuesdays. Trustee Straw said it is difficult for him to read the draft on Tuesdays before the agenda is published Thursdays. Trustee Parakkat agreed. Trustee Straw requested that if the meetings are changed to Tuesdays, the draft is still provided on Tuesdays. Deputy Manager Shelley noted that when the agenda used to be published on Fridays, it required staff to stay late on Fridays. The draft is intended to provide a sneak peek, not to expect the

Trustees to have thoroughly read through everything.

Trustee Robinson requested a way of knowing when items get removed from the agenda. Trustee Parakkat requested to also know when documents get added and to have a link between related items.

Trustee Wesley said he is comfortable meeting on Tuesdays. The other Trustees agreed. President Scaman said it is staff's discretion whether to publish agendas on Thursdays or Fridays. The deadline for Trustees to submit their comments or questions will be end of day Thursday and no later than 8 A.M. Friday.

Remote protocols are determined by the state. Child care has been added as a reason to participate remotely. President Scaman said the resolution can be updated.

Staff recommends adding language that there must be a motion adopted by the Village Board in order to continue a meeting past 10 P.M. Trustee Parakkat said he prefers to have study sessions end at 9 P.M. and special meetings end at 8:30 P.M.

Trustee Parakkat asked if proclamations can be handled differently. President Scaman said the Clerk's Office and DEI Office are discussing procedures to limit requests, the number per meeting, and the length. Trustee Wesley recommended treating proclamations as regular agenda items to plan for their time. President Scaman noted they can now be spread out over three regular meetings each month.

Trustee Robinson said she doesn't think people elected us to do proclamations. She suggested limiting them to 3 minutes and inquired how presentations get decided. Manager Jackson said staff can look at doing ceremonies prior to the meetings, though not everyone will be able to attend. A 3-minute time limit can be set for presentations. Trustee Parakkat suggested they be put at the end of the meeting. President Scaman said she does not want to make recipients wait that long. As chair, she has the right to engage further if it is in the best interest of the community.

There was consensus to increase the Village Manager's spending authority from \$25K to \$50K, which is standard and will decrease the agenda items, staff time, and executive session time. The Village Manager is still guided by the budget. Trustee Parakkat requested to continue to see the agreements, which Manager Jackson confirmed can be done.

Regular items presentations will be limited to 10 minutes and study sessions will be limited to 20 minutes. Trustee Wesley noted he is more

engaged and efficient when staff attach the presentations. Trustee Straw requested to receive updated presentations before the meeting.

Trustee Parakkat said it may not always be feasible for Trustees to have an advance call with the Village Manager. Manager Jackson said the intent is to talk it through and get additional information to help inform the motion as opposed to staff just putting it on the agenda and inquiring about it at the meeting. Trustee Wesley suggested making the motion, then having the call with the Village Manager, then making the second.

Trustee Straw recommended changing the requirement from a call to some form of communication, which can include an email. Trustee Robinson said having an advance call with Manager Jackson makes her motions better and she has never had difficulty scheduling a call. President Scaman agreed and said this is about trust-building. She noted the provision that motions requiring more than a certain number of staff hours require a majority of the board's support.

Staff recommends a single public comment period at the beginning of the meeting for all agenda items. Trustee Wesley agreed with that. Trustee Straw said he thinks it is helpful to have the public comment right before the agenda item. President Scaman said commenters can still do that if they prefer. Staff can craft language around disability access for commenters. Trustee Straw suggested a portable microphone.

Staff recommends giving the Village Manager 24 hours' notice regarding an opinion piece authored by a Trustee so the Village Manager can provide information and ensure accuracy. Trustee Parakkat said he feels it should not be a requirement and should be at the Trustee's discretion.

Trustee Enyia shared a recent example of the bomb threat at Oak Park Public Library where a Library Trustee posted incorrect information on social media that the Executive Director then had to correct. Manager Jackson said the intent is about collegiality and to prevent an awkward situation where the Village has to speak to the media in opposition to a Trustee to ensure the public has accurate information.

Trustee Parakkat gave the example of the proposed demolition of Village Hall and said Trustees need to have the ability to make their case to the community. President Scaman said her intention is to respect the Village Manager's position in helping Trustees be successful and have information that is not undermining his work. Trustee Parakkat said his only intention is to serve the community that elected him and he needs to be able to use this tool. Trustee Straw noted that staff are not proposing to take away the tool. Trustee Parakkat said he is objecting to it now so it does not become an

issue when his next editorial piece is perceived as offensive.

Manager Jackson said in this case of the op-ed, it is in the spirit of collegiality to think of the Village Manager's Office as a resource. This is a recommendation as a way to be proactive and is not about trying to change anyone's opinion or try to stop them from putting something out.

Trustee Wesley wondered if emailing a draft op-ed would be able to be released in a FOIA request. VP Shine said to write "DRAFT" on it. Trustee Wesley requested clarification on whether the advance notice is to be sent to all Trustees as well. Chief Communications Officer Dan Yopchick said the notice to Trustees can be taken out. President Scaman said she likes the inclusion of Trustees in the spirit of team-building but she also respects individual opinions. Manager Jackson suggested rewriting it to be about ensuring facts and figures are correct. President Scaman noted the other boards in the community have policies against speaking out.

Trustee Parakkat said he was provided no knowledge about the formation of a facilities committee regarding Village Hall. President Scaman responded that what has been discussed has been at the Board table and in the press. She said she has met with some residents and it is within her role as Village President to work with staff to form committees. Topics will go in the Village Manager's Report. Trustee Straw inquired if Trustee Parakkat wants to also see a Village President's Report. Trustee Parakkat said he feels that per the policy, Trustees should have been informed of any significant interaction. Manager Jackson noted the committee has not yet been finalized. President Scaman said when the process has been formalized and it is determined how the committee will work, she will work harder to ensure every Trustee is made aware.

Manager Jackson said the Village is updating its social media policy. Trustee Wesley recommended a separate Trustee Facebook page so your personal account is not subject to FOIA. Trustee Straw noted there is also a campaign finance-related issue. Trustee Robinson requested Attorney Stephanides re-circulate his social media memo.

VP Shine presented the Input-Output Processing Template (I-OPT) and the Trustees' and Village Manager's results.

VI. Adjourn

It was moved by Trustee Parakkat, seconded by Trustee Straw, to Adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned 10:04 P.M., Thursday, September 14, 2023.

**Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Hansen**