



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

6:00 PM

Village Hall

I. Call to Order

Village President Pro-Tem Susan Buchanan called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:04 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Trustees Straw and Wesley arrived late.

Present: 6 - Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

Absent: 1 - Village President Scaman

III. Consideration of Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session to Discuss Pending Litigation

It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Enyia, to adjourn into Executive Session. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

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

The Regular Meeting reconvened at 6:26 P.M.

VI. Roll Call

Present: 6 - Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

Absent: 1 - Village President Scaman

VII. 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.

VIII. Minutes

- A. [MOT 25-104](#) A Motion to Approve Minutes from the October 22, 2024, November 12, 2024, November 19, 2024 Regular Meeting and November 21, 2024 Special Meeting of the Village Board

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

IX. Non-Agenda Public Comment

George Bailey: Lives on 700 block of South Clarence. Representing the AMENS Group Inc. of Oak Park which declared its ongoing support of the Percy Julian preservation project. Presented a letter with signatories.

Jacob Drews: Sophomore at Columbia University and Oak Park graduate. 85% of Oak Parkers voted in support of referendum to adopt initiative rights. Proposes an ordinance with additional safeguards for collaboration with the Village Board.

X. Proclamation

- B. [MOT 25-103](#) A Motion to Approve a Proclamation for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday on January 15, 2025.

Trustee Wesley read the Proclamation into the record.

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Enyia, that this Motion be approved. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

XI. Village Manager Reports

Village Manager Kevin Jackson introduced the new Village website design. Chief Communications Officer Dan Yopchick provided an overview of the site.

Trustee Parakkat asked if the previous site links will work. CCO Yopchick said the short URLs will still work.

Trustee Robinson asked if this is the first effort under the new language access policy. Manager Jackson confirmed it is.

Manager Jackson said the Village will have a website demonstration of the open data portal and project management system dashboard this quarter. The Q1 Board calendars will continue to be updated.

Trustee Enyia noted he will be out March 20. Manager Jackson said that is a tentative special meeting to talk about the outcome of the schematic design process for the municipal campus. The charrette is scheduled for February 1 and a separate meeting will be scheduled for the Board for February 11.

XII. Village Board Committees & Trustee Liaison Commission Reports

Trustee Straw reported the Transportation Commission will present the Vision Zero plan to the Village Board next week. The Bike Plan is being discussed along with the study of the possible Ridgeland protected bike

lane.

President Pro-Tem Buchanan reported the Board of Health is continuing to look at the issue of unregulated THC and plans to call each Trustee to provide more information.

XIII. Citizen Commission Vacancies

- C. [ID 25-132](#) Board and Commission Vacancy Report for January 14, 2025

There were no comments.

XIV. Consent Agenda

Approval of the Consent Agenda

It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Enyia 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 Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 1 - Village President Scaman

- D. [RES 25-101](#) **A Resolution Approving a Purchase Price Agreement with Ferguson Enterprises, LLC, d/b/a Ferguson Waterworks for Water Meter Reading Equipment in an Amount not to Exceed \$150,000.00, Authorizing its Execution and Waiving the Village’s Bid Process for the Agreement.**

This Resolution was approved.

- E. [RES 25-102](#) **A Resolution Approving A Purchase Price Agreement with Ferguson Enterprises LLC, d/b/a Ferguson Waterworks for Water Meters and Water Meter Parts in an Amount not to Exceed \$250,000.00, Authorizing its Execution and Waiving the Village’s Bid Process for the Agreement.**

This Resolution was adopted.

- F. [RES 25-103](#) **A Resolution Approving a Renewal of the Independent Contractor Agreement with CityEscape Garden & Design LLC for Village Wide Landscape Maintenance Services in 2025 in an Amount not to Exceed \$231,000.00 and Authorizing its Execution.**

This Resolution was adopted.

- G. [RES 25-104](#) **A Resolution Approving a Renewal of the Independent Contractor**

Agreement with CityEscape Garden & Design LLC for Village Wide Seasonal Container Display and Maintenance Services in 2025 in an Amount not to Exceed \$115,000.00 and Authorizing its Execution.

This Resolution was adopted.

- H. [RES 25-112](#) **A Resolution Approving a Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the Village of Oak Park and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers for the Period of January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2027, and Authorizing Its Execution.**

This Resolution was adopted.

- I. [RES 25-116](#) **A Resolution Authorizing a Three-Year Renewal of the Granicus, LLC Subscription Agreement for the Government Experience Cloud, Including Website Services and Related Solutions, Originally Secured Through the National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance, with an Annual Cost Not to Exceed \$78,040.93 in Year 1; \$107,142.98 in Year 2; and \$112,500.13 in Year 3 and Waiving the Village Bid Process.**

This Resolution was adopted.

- J. [ORD 25-101](#) **Concur with the Zoning Board of Appeals' Recommendation and Adopt an Ordinance Granting a Special Use Permit to Operate a Reception/Banquet Facility at 6537 North Avenue.**

This Ordinance was adopted.

- K. [ORD 25-102](#) **Concur with the Zoning Board of Appeals' Recommendation and Adopt an Ordinance Granting a Special Use Permit to Operate a Massage Service Establishment at 423 ½ North Marion Street.**

This Ordinance was adopted.

- L. [MOT 25-102](#) **A Motion to Approve the October 2024 Monthly Treasurer's Report for All Funds.**

This Motion was approved.

XV. Regular Agenda

- M. [ID 25-131](#) **A Presentation and Discussion on the Village's Economic Vitality Strategic Plan.**

Economic Vitality Administrator Brandon Crawford introduced the Item and Camoin Associates Senior VP Dan Gunderson presented the Item via remote participation.

Trustee Enyia said he likes the breakdown of what could be added to the community to bring more vitality to the area. He noted the limited space in the village and need to be strategic.

Trustee Robinson inquired about the final report. VP Gunderson said there will be an economic vitality strategic plan that will outline the issues and include recommendations and an action matrix. Data will be placed as appendices. She said she wants to see an analysis based on Oak Park-specific information. VP Gunderson confirmed whatever Oak Park data is available will be included. She said she would like to see information for key parcels, including ones held in private ownership.

She noted the Oak Park Economic Development Corporation (OPEDC) was disbanded and the Village brought that effort in-house which is a unique situation. She said she would like to understand what things the Village should have in-house and what is not needed anymore and how it works now that we no longer have an intermediary. Manager Jackson said Camoin and the Village staff are aware of our interest in making sure the Village is in a position of strength operationally to support implementation of the strategic plan. We are interested in assessing the previous external organization and how it relates to moving forward with a holistic vision that is transparent, well-defined, and provides clear direction to the staff on policies and deliverables.

Trustee Parakkat requested information about the composition of public and private funding for the cost of a vitality plan. He noted that aggressive panhandling is an issue of concern, especially in the downtown area, and is not included in this report. Administrator Crawford said some of the social challenges came out in the survey results and are being grouped under community safety. He said it can be pulled out into its own section to bring more attention to it.

Trustee Straw asked if the report will support the interconnection between making progress on the strategic vision for housing and how that will support the overall business climate and developing more night life. VP Gunderson confirmed that is their intention.

Trustee Wesley inquired about the scope of the presentation. Administrator Crawford said the Village is providing an update of some of the preliminary opportunities and aspirations of the community to date. It is an ongoing initiative and we will have a more robust strategy and recommendation at the open house next month. Manager Jackson noted the strategic framework here provides a foundation to build a plan and includes the input from the community.

Trustee Wesley said there is not much here that he did not already know. He noted the village has already been doing TOD-centered development for 15 years. He said what is missing is the why, such as why this data is important. He said retail follows rooftops and that is not in here at all.

He asked why the workforce development piece is important. Administrator Crawford said workforce development or skills training presents folks with an opportunity to discover and better their livelihoods. We surveyed 300+ people and met individuals and focus groups. The entrepreneurial community is largely made up of women and minorities and we want to make sure they have the resources, support, and access to a network that can take them to the next step.

Trustee Wesley asked if it is included in the economic vitality plan because we do not have enough workers for the businesses in Oak Park. Administrator Crawford said some restaurateurs have provided feedback that it is difficult to hire and retain workers who can earn more working in the city. The Village has made connections with organizations that provide those services and we want to make sure we are better linked. Trustee Wesley said if a restaurant can't find workers because they can get better pay elsewhere, then they are not paying enough.

He asked if anyone was interviewed from the legacy OPEDC. Administrator Crawford said he has met with them. Camoin has not met with them yet due to scheduling issues and the Village will make an effort to make that happen. Trustee Wesley said where we stand now is the footings that they built and if we are going to build on top of that, we should talk to them and understand what was built and why and what worked and didn't. We have to learn from the past in order to build for the future. He said he values the community input but is more interested in the expertise of the consultants.

He said he has heard that getting permitted and opening a business here sucks. He said he would like an outcome to be how we fix that. He recommended interviewing people who said it was too difficult to open a business in Oak Park. We can't diversify our tax base if people don't want to open businesses here.

He said he is disappointed that the only focus on black folks in this data is on the inequitable educational aspects which we already know and is not necessarily related to economic vitality. He said he would like to see how our economic environment and regulations and processes are impacting minority and women-owned businesses.

Manager Jackson said workforce development is multi-dimensional and connects back to educational outcomes. We need to build partnerships to ensure kids have clear on-ramps and pathways to career and technical educational opportunities. It is not just about supplying workers to businesses but it is also about empowering our community economically to thrive. Trustee Wesley said he agreed with that.

Trustee Wesley asked how we got the number for the \$3.3M in home improvement retail sales in other communities. Administrator Crawford said Oak Park has limited goods and services so we are missing that much potential revenue. VP Gunderson said they understand some of the challenges with women and minority-owned business and are exploring many different approaches including developing new funding sources and having supportive regulations. Administrator Crawford noted that having the economic vitality strategic plan opens up federal and state grant opportunities.

Trustee Parakkat said he would like to see the data for the local restaurants who said they need staff and the lower pay comparison. He said he would like to see specific numbers in the final report for the tax base expansion and diversification of the economy.

President Pro-Tem Buchanan said she hopes more details are forthcoming for what is needed for modernizing buildings, the recommendation for investment in targeted commercial corridors, and which regulations and policies we would need to change.

N. [ID 25-122](#) **Presentation of 2022 Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Energy Efficiency Grants, and FY2025 Emission Reduction Strategy with Response to Board Requests.**

Chief Sustainability Officer Lindsey Nieratka presented Items N and O.

Trustee Wesley asked how changing Tier 3 from \$1000 to \$2500 would impact our allocations. CSO Nieratka said it would potentially lower the minimum number of households served. He asked if gas furnaces are eligible for this program. CSO Nieratka said we want this to be an encouragement to move from gas to electric. He said he would like to be open to pivoting from electric-only furnaces to high-efficiency gas if we are not seeing the number of folks taking advantage of this for these reasons.

Trustee Robinson asked if the comparison between 2019 and 2022 is proportional to each house. CSO Nieratka said she didn't calculate the per capital greenhouse gas emissions for this presentation but we could do that. Trustee Robinson asked if it would be helpful to have sub-goals for the climate coaches and energy efficiency grant program to be able to get to

the 2030 end goal. CSO Nieratka said that can be done.

Trustee Robinson asked if households with radiator heat are able to convert to electric heat sources. President Pro-Tem Buchanan said it is hard and you should have a back-up system for under 10 degrees. CSO Nieratka clarified that single-family households and multi-family properties up to four units comprise half of our housing units. Trustee Robinson said she is in favor of increasing the \$1000 to \$2500. She noted she is interested in the one-time distribution from the reserves while we re-examine the community aggregation arrangement.

Trustee Straw said he is good with it staying at \$1000 for the Tier 3. He said he thinks it needs to be at that 120% of AMI. He said he is not viewing it as covering a massive portion of the project. He said he installed a top-of-the-line heat pump and ductwork in his coach house for a total cost of \$14K. He said \$10K will cover a residential furnace to heat pump transition and will make the heat pump option cheaper than the gas option. He said he would not be in favor of adding high-efficiency gas as an option for the energy efficiency grant program because we are looking to incentivize going with the more environmentally-friendly option. He said he also wants to keep it at \$1000 to get the most possible projects funded out of the \$70K in the Tier 3 bucket. If we want to reach this 2030 goal, we need to continue support of this program and others into future years and not have it just be a one-time thing.

Trustee Parakkat noted the Chicago metro AMI is \$80K versus the \$107K Oak Park AMI. He recommended increasing it to \$2500 and monitoring it to adjust if needed. He said he likes the idea of getting granular with the goals mapped against the trajectory chart. He said he thinks the 2030 goals are unrealistic and at some point we have to say it is not feasible and there has to be a different path to 2050. He asked if there are exceptions for multi-unit projects that keep the emission reduction target. CSO Nieratka said the current guidelines show the eligible costs and entities so an owner-occupied four unit multi-family property would be eligible to do a larger project. It is a different strategy for multi-family properties than an owner-occupied single-family home.

Trustee Enyia agreed that we need to figure out that conversion rate for how many homes need to be interviewed to get to this goal. Trustee Enyia said the \$1000 is a starting point and understanding how many people are utilizing the program might help us to then scale it up. He said he supports \$1000 at this time.

Trustee Straw said he is fine with moving to the \$2500 and would ask staff to provide an update when we are nearing the 28 grants that would be

allowed in 120% of AMI so he can move for a budget amendment to increase the grant funding in that bucket. He noted the 2030 goal is based on global climate science and he does not want to admit defeat on that goal or consider revising them downwards.

Trustee Parakkat said he does not appreciate the insinuation he is denying climate science. He said he does not think we need to be at the 60% reduction from 2019 baseline. That trajectory was decided locally and not defined based on the Paris Agreement. Trustee Straw said he didn't say Trustee Parakkat was denying climate science, he said he was not interested in re-evaluating that goal.

Trustee Wesley said he would like to understand the replacement costs for radiators to heat pumps.

President Pro-Tem Buchanan said we are going in the right direction but this can't be up to municipality funds alone to fix this problem. She noted the community solar numbers are very low and do not include the other commercial entities that offer community solar. CSO Nieratka said she has requested that number from ComEd. MC Squared has said we are at capacity so it is waiting for there to be more solar development built. President Pro-Tem Buchanan asked why that does not count toward reductions. CSO Nieratka said it is related to who gets the credit for that emission reduction to avoid double counting. The more solar development and grid electricity coming from solar, the less carbon-intensive the grid.

CSO Nieratka said in the November 21 Village Board meeting, the additional \$500K was given to the energy efficiency grant program. The request was to think about the staff capacity and what the Village could do if it were to get that second half of influx into the fund. The multi-family program and fee waivers would require budget amendments. Everything else is already in the 2025 budget.

President Pro-Tem Buchanan said she cannot support gas and imagines the newer boilers are all high-efficiency. Trustee Wesley said they are not all high-efficiency. CSO Nieratka noted an electric heat pump might not be the first thing for everyone accessing these grants. Weatherization and electrical upgrades might also be needed. Trustee Wesley noted at the 80% AMI Tier, more people are replacing something broken rather than looking to enhance the efficiency of their home.

Trustee Parakkat noted furnaces have a long life so if we are locking people into gas furnaces through this incentive program, that does not contribute to our roadmap so he would prefer to incentivize people to move to the electric option so it retains our ability to pursue our 2050 goals at

least.

President Pro-Tem Buchanan noted this is one incentive and there are other state and federal incentives. Trustee Parakkat said it would be good to explore how difficult it is to get the state and federal funding. He said he is open to either the \$1000 or \$2500 option as long as we are committed to keeping the goal in mind and re-evaluating and changing as appropriate.

CSO Nieratka noted the long-term utility costs will be lower with an electric heat pump. The Village is considering these barriers and elements while wanting to support moving away from the gas infrastructure. She said staff selected \$1000 thinking that for that income level, it might make the difference to switch to electrical.

Trustee Straw asked how quickly we will be able to move grant applicants through the process. CSO Nieratka said they are reimbursement grants so they either bring us invoices or we pay the contractor directly. He noted they might not be able to front the additional cash for the heat pump option. Assistant Village Manager/Neighborhood Services Director Jonathan Burch noted the Village's CDBG program does also provide an emergency repair program up to \$5000 for homeowners to be able to make those repairs quickly. The same Village staff facilitate both programs.

Trustee Straw asked if there is any eligibility criteria in future years for people who previously received this grant. CSO Nieratka said the limit is once per year. He asked if we have a budget for how we are going to advertise this out to the community. CSO Nieratka confirmed there is money in the budget for that type of marketing.

President Pro-Tem Buchanan said she supports providing \$400K to develop a multi-family program and \$100K to do permit fee waivers for specific projects. Manager Jackson said it would come from reserves because the budget is adopted. He said there may be savings the Village did not anticipate having that might create an opportunity. Trustee Robinson said she does not support it coming from reserves but would be willing to examine other funding pools. Trustee Parakkat asked if we can explore any grant opportunities for that through our partnership with Metro Strategies. Manager Jackson said staff can do that and look at any other options.

Trustee Straw said he would support these programs coming back with funding options and some metrics of the impacts of these dollars and moving us toward our goals. Trustees Wesley and Enyia agreed.

- O. [RES 25-108](#) **A Resolution Approving and Adopting the Village of Oak Park Sustainability Fund Energy Efficiency Grant Program Guidelines.**

It was moved by Trustee Straw, seconded by Trustee Wesley, that this Resolution be adopted. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

XVI. Call to Board and Clerk

Trustee Enyia sent his condolences to the Bassett family who lost their family this morning and wished his brother a happy birthday.

President Pro-Tem Buchanan read a quote from Instagram that "Climate change will manifest as a series of disasters viewed through phones with footage that gets closer and closer to where you live until you're the one filming it."

Trustees Straw and Parakkat wished everyone a happy new year.

XVII. Adjourn

It was moved by Trustee Enyia, seconded by Trustee Wesley, to Adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 P.M., Tuesday, January 14, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Hansen