



# Village of Oak Park

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

## Meeting Minutes

### President and Board of Trustees

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Monday, February 12, 2018

7:00 PM

Village Hall

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#### I. Call to Order

Village President Abu-Taleb called the Meeting to order at 7:09 P.M.

#### II. Roll Call

**Present:** 7 - Village Trustee Button, Village Trustee Taglia, Village President Abu-Taleb, Village Trustee Tucker, Village Trustee Moroney, Village Trustee Boutet, and Village Trustee Andrews

**Absent:** 0

#### III. Agenda Approval

**It was moved by Village Trustee Andrews, seconded by Village Trustee Button, to approve the Agenda. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.**

#### IV. Public Comment

Village President Abu-Taleb noted that at the last two meetings, the Board attempted to immediately respond to public comment. Going forward, they will follow protocol and not respond during the meeting.

Chris Donovan. Mr. Donovan stated that protocol regarding response to public comment includes Board direction to the Village Manager to respond. He commented that there was a great deal of public involvement regarding the Lake Street project but none for the Madison Street project.

#### V. Regular Agenda

##### A. [ID 18-786](#) Follow-up Presentation and Discussion on Public Safety

Village Manager Pavlicek stated that this meeting will serve as a follow-up to the previous discussion on public safety. She summarized the agenda items.

Police Chief Ambrose gave a summary of crimes reported in 2016 and 2017.

Deputy Chief Reynolds discussed steps taken to increase communication with residents, including new social media accounts. He spoke about programs that already exist that offer opportunities for the police to engage youth and the community.

Chief Ambrose discussed car-jacking cases and stated that all cases remain open until an arrest has been made. There have been six incidents in 2018; four attempts and two actual. There have been two arrests so far. There has been an increase in police presence; officers have been assigned to patrol side streets and alleys, and several Cook

County Sheriff's patrols have been added. He believes that the Village is making progress.

Village Trustee Boutet asked if there have been any trends. Chief Ambrose stated that there are no trends; car-jackings are occurring at all times of the day, all over the community. Offenders are both adults and juveniles.

Village Trustee Button asked for information regarding the maintenance of the new Facebook and Twitter accounts. Communications Director David Powers spoke about posting and monitoring of social media. In regards to a crime, it is basically the same information that the Village shares with the news media. Deputy Chief Reynolds explained the crime response process. There was a discussion regarding promotion of the new accounts.

Deputy Chief Reynolds spoke about the Fleet Watch Program, which is training given to Village staff in terms of personal safety and how to respond to incidents. It is also available to residents.

Village Trustee Andrews complimented the content of the social media outlets and increased police presence. There has been positive feedback from the community in terms of feeling safer.

Village Trustee Moroney would like to see updates on crime in 2018, as there seems to be a downward trend. He commented that his understanding of what the public is looking for is more information from the police. He has reservations regarding the use of a social media page and suggested that comments be turned off. Mr. Powers clarified that, unlike a group page, comments cannot be turned off of a business page. There is a profanity filter, and staff is monitoring other things that are not allowed to be posted. However, it is meant to be social and interactive. Village Trustee Moroney expressed reservations regarding the use of social media for a police page.

Village Trustee Tucker stated that as policy makers, the Board needs to think long term; fear can breed impulsive decisions.

Village Trustee Taglia appreciated the recent forums and other cooperative efforts. He asked if there are other tools that are not being addressed. Chief Ambrose noted that he is not sure how much longer the Cook County Sheriff's patrols will be here. He added that residents should also look out for each other and not hesitate to call the police.

Village President Abu-Taleb discussed how being a victim of a crime changes someone. Oak Park is a tolerant, accepting village, and that should be kept in mind. He believes the car-jacking will end, and that the Board should remember to make policy that is thoughtful and smart, not reactive and impulsive. He wants to ensure that Oak Park continues to treat everyone with respect.

**B. [MOT 18-287](#) **Motion to Concur with the Public Works Director's Recommendation to Create a Pilot Streetlighting Program and Direct Staff to Prepare the Necessary Documents****

Village President Abu-Taleb commented that he and Village Trustee Taglia learned a bit about sustainability lighting at a recent conference.

Stasia Jamell. Ms. Jamell is an amateur astronomer and spoke in opposition to blue spectrum bright lights. She urged the Board to take all information into perspective in

making their decision. Data does not support that lighting lowers crime.

Director of Public Works John Wielebnicki gave an overview the Village's current lighting system of over 6,000 street and 1,000 alley lights. Tonight's discussion will focus on the approximately 2,500 lights that are considered residential. There are several things to consider, such as whether there is a preference for soft lighting in residential districts or to illuminate them like a main street. The current system is 50 years old; some of the technology that was installed at that time is becoming obsolete. There are more options today than when that lighting was installed. He described what is currently used in the Village and presented examples of what can be used to replace them. Staff is offering the following options that could be considered to modify residential streetlights. They are: 1. Relamping using the same type of lamp (100 Watt Mercury Vapor - \$50 installed); 2. Retro-fit to a simple LED lamp using a lighting insert called a "corn cob" (more focused lighting than what is currently used - \$200 installed); 3. Replace existing lamp and ballast with an LED plate light (provides concentrated light distribution in alleys).

There was discussion regarding pilot programs and Mr. Wielebnicki answered questions from the Board. Mr. Wielebnicki commented that the corn cob insert LED lights are being used to replace fixtures as they go bad. Village Trustee Moroney was in favor of swapping out the lamps on an as-needed basis.

Village Manager Pavlicek discussed the pilot program, noting that the lighting needs to be seen through all seasons in order for the Board to make a decision as to what the lighting standard in the community will be.

There was a discussion regarding energy savings and the bulb replacement process. Mr. Wielebnicki clarified that unless the entire fixture is broken, bulbs are just replaced with mercury vapor bulbs.

Village Trustee Button suggested that replacement be done on a block by block basis as opposed to an as-needed basis.

Village Trustee Taglia outlined the long-term cost savings of LED. The system would pay for itself in eight years.

Village President Abu-Taleb suggested getting the Environment and Energy Commission involved. He was comfortable implementing this over five years and would like to have conversations with other communities to learn from their mistakes.

Chief Ambrose stated that lighting alone does not deter crime. The busiest season for crime is summer, when the days are longer. He stated motion detectors in the alleys are very helpful. Residents need to be cognizant, turn on their porch lights, and have motion detectors in their alley.

There was Board consensus to do the pilot program.

**This Motion was approved.**

**C. [MOT 18-285](#) Motion to Concur with the Police Chief's Recommendation to Purchase Portable Cameras and Direct Staff to Prepare the Necessary Documents**

Deputy Chief Reynolds stated that cameras are not a crime prevention tool but are more of an investigation tool. Staff supports the purchase of cameras and based on their research, portable cameras would be advantageous for their purposes. They have the ability to stream live and DVRs can be connected to them in order to record. There are

different systems that can be put on trailers or mounted on vehicles, but the benefits of this type of system gives the police mobility and fluidity of deployment.

Village Trustee Boutet expressed concern that people would feel watched. Deputy Chief Reynolds clarified that the cameras would be used only to assist in investigations.

Village Trustee Moroney asked about the cost of cameras. Deputy Chief Reynolds confirmed that the cost would be approximately \$19,000.

Village Trustee Andrews stated that the investment is worth the test in order to see how effective it would be.

Village Trustee Taglia asked how many cameras the Village owns, as opposed to relying on cameras owned by private businesses. He prefers the idea of a fixed location as that suggests safety. He believes in using more technology to solve crime.

Village Trustee Tucker agreed and would be interested in some fixed cameras in some of the busier areas in Oak Park.

Village Trustee Button agreed as well. Two movable cameras are a good start, but believes the Village can do more. There are ways to objectively place those cameras based on data.

Village Trustee Boutet also agreed.

Village Trustee Andrews commented that fixed cameras may just push crime elsewhere, as people will see where they are.

Village President Abu-Taleb noted that they are not looking at cameras that are easily visible. He asked if it was possible to have some fixed cameras and some portable. The priority is to catch criminals.

Chief Ambrose stated that they were focused on portable cameras and did not research fixed cameras.

Village Manager Pavlicek stated that staff can direct the Civic Information Systems Commission to investigate using fixed cameras.

Village President Abu-Taleb directed staff to move with urgency regarding that.

**This Motion was approved.**

**D. [MOT 18-286](#) A Motion to Concur with the Village Manager's Recommended Staffing Plan for Public Safety and Direct Staff to Prepare the Necessary Actions.**

Village Manager Pavlicek discussed staff in the Police Department, both sworn and civilian, and described the overhire program. She would like to be at a higher staffing level and hire an additional eight officers with plans for additional promoting from within.

HR Director Julia Scott Valdez explained that police average two people on leave, vacation, etc. at all times and need additional staff. The process of hiring and training new officers takes time. This needs to be an ongoing process and will allow staff to be proactive in hiring. Ms. Valdez stated that the goal is to be at 125 sworn personnel.

Village Trustees Tucker, Boutet, Taglia, Button and Andrews expressed support.

Village Trustee Moroney asked if this recommendation is reactive to current crime concerns. Ms. Valdez stated that it is not; the Village should've been hiring this way all along.

Village President Abu-Taleb stated that public safety is their number one priority. He expressed support.

There was consensus to move forward.

## **VI. Adjourn**

**It was moved by Village Trustee Tucker, seconded by Village Trustee Button, to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 P.M., Monday, February 12, 2018.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**MaryAnn Schoenneman  
Deputy Village Clerk**