



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Thursday, November 21, 2024

6:00 PM

Village Hall

I. Call to Order

Village President Vicki Scaman called the Special Meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Trustee Enyia joined via remote participation per Village policy.

Trustee Robinson joined the meeting during Executive Session.

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

Absent: 1 - Village Trustee Robinson

III. Agenda Approval

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

IV. Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session to Discuss Probable or Imminent Litigation and Collective Bargaining

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Straw, to adjourn into Executive Session. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 6 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 1 - Village Trustee Robinson

VI. Reconvene Special Meeting and Call to Order

The Special Meeting reconvened at 6:54 P.M.

VII. Call to Order

VIII. Roll Call

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

IX. Non-Agenda Public Comment

There were no comments.

XI. Village Board Committees & Trustee Liaison Commission Reports

Trustee Wesley expressed his gratitude to outgoing Civic Information Systems Commission Chair David Baker.

XII. Public Hearing

A. [ID 24-607](#) Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2025 Tentative Annual Budget of the Village of Oak Park

Village Attorney Greg Smith said notice of the public hearing was published as required in the *Wednesday Journal* newspaper on November 13, 2024. The notice stated the means by which persons may provide public comment for this public hearing and the methods for providing public comment are also stated on the published agenda for this hearing.

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Straw to continue the hearing to December 3, 2024 at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYE: 7 - Trustees Buchanan, Enyia, Parakkat, Robinson, Straw, Wesley and President Scaman
NAY: 0
ABSENT: 0

It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Wesley, to open the Public Hearing. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

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

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

XIII. First Reading

B. [ORD 24-157](#) First Reading of An Ordinance Amending Chapter 26 (“Water”), Article 2 (“Charges and Collections”) of the Oak Park Village Code Regarding the Rates for Water and Sewer Services

Public Works Director Rob Sproule presented the Item.

Trustee Wesley asked if this rate increase in advance of a general re-evaluation, which Director Sproule confirmed. Staff are proposing in 2025 a five-year water rate study based on the expected impact of our lead sewer line replacement program. This is a stop-gap measure to keep us up with the rate of inflation for 2025 to put us in a good position to do a rate study and present multiple options to the Board for 2026-2030.

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded By Trustee Buchanan, to waive the second reading. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved. The roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: 7 - Buchanan, Enyia, Parakkat, Robinson, Straw, Wesley and President Scaman
NAY: 0
ABSENT: 0

XIV Second Reading

C. [ORD 24-170](#) Second Reading and Approval of an Ordinance Establishing the Annual Building and Construction Permit Fees and the Zoning Application Fees of the Village of Oak Park

Development Services Director Emily Egan presented the Item.

Trustee Wesley asked if the demolition fees are being increased. Director Egan confirmed they are. The Housing Trust Fund (HTF) will not be impacted. Management Analyst Noemy Diaz said the demolition fee going into the HTF is not changing. Staff are simply proposing to change the permit fee for any demolitions, which is a separate fee.

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Straw, that this Ordinance be adopted. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

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

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

D. [ORD 24-174](#) Second Reading and Approval of an Ordinance Amending Chapter 18 (“Business Licensing”), Article 2 (“Fee Schedule”), Section 8-2-1 (“License Fee Schedule”) of the Oak Park Village Code

There were no comments.

It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Straw, that this Ordinance be adopted. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

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

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

XVI. Regular Agenda

E. [MOT 24-269](#) A Motion to Direct Staff to Negotiate a Professional Services Agreement with Johnson Lasky Kindelin Architects, Inc. for Schematic Design Architectural Services for the Oak Park Municipal Campus

Director Sproule presented the Item.

Trustee Parakkat asked if \$500K has been spent so far on the two architectural firms and is it all for schematic design. Director Sproule said those numbers are approximately correct for cost to date. The Village has not yet been doing schematic design as defined by the qualification document. FGM was identified in 2019 to do a space needs analysis of the police station and very high level conceptual design. They were re-engaged to do a space and staff needs analysis of Village Hall.

Based on Board interest, staff then engaged JLK to do that feasibility study to evaluate whether the Village Hall building could be saved and meet the needs of modern governance. JLK came up with very high level conceptual designs about what could be done to meet the shortcomings of this building on its own without consideration of the police station. The Board decided additional feasibility analysis was not needed and there was a path forward to renovate the existing Village Hall and build a new police station on this site. We are now beginning the design of that direction. Manager Jackson noted the Board voted no on schematic design in 2020 and staff picked it up again in 2022. We have never gotten to the point of schematic design until now.

Regarding timeline, Director Sproule said it depends on the level of public engagement. The Board will be presented options at the end of March for what they want to advance through the process with a final presentation for schematic design to the Board in Q2.

Trustee Robinson asked if JLK, the historic preservation firm, is the only firm that will be engaged and paid for the schematic design phase. Director said JLK is the lead and they put together a team of architects with different specializations. JLK will lead design and construction to Village Hall and they will partner with Dewberry to be the lead on the new construction of the police station.

Trustee Robinson said cost is going to be a significant driver in the decision-making process in terms of scope and types of renovations. Director Sproule said they brought a cost-estimating firm as part of their team to provide costs all through the design process. She said she is interested in retaining a subset of the Village Hall facility committee in case we want a second architectural opinion.

Trustee Buchanan asked if there is a plan to construct the police station first which is the highest priority. Director Sproule said part of the schematic design process is to provide the Board with a phasing plan and potential opportunities and impacts to phasing different parts of the project. She asked how our electrification ordinance will play into this. Director Sproule said if that is a Board goal of the project, it can be done whether or not it is required. She said she is not going to push for net zero for this project but she hopes it will be fully electric and incorporate as many certifications and sustainability aspects as feasible.

Trustee Wesley suggested adding two floors to the new police station for administrative offices instead of renovating Village Hall. He asked if that option can be added to the schematic design options. Director Sproule said one of the original options presented through FGM was a combined facility, estimated at \$120M-\$130M range. Manager Jackson said the outcome of schematic design represents 30% design plans. Trustee Wesley said he would like to see a higher level conceptual design and cost. Once we have that, then we decide what to do with the existing Village Hall.

President Scaman thanked the facilities committee for their service. She said she wants something that symbolically matches our values system and will serve this community for the next 50 years. She said she also wants to push for sustainability.

Trustee Straw said JLK has a deep understanding of what we currently have and what our hopes are and he is confident with this team in bringing us a design that reflects the values of Oak Park.

Trustee Wesley noted the brand new and beautiful Community Recreation Center (CRC) cost less than \$30M to build which is about the same as the cost to bring Village Hall up to code.

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Robinson, that this Motion be approved. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 6 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, and Village Trustee Straw

NAYS: 1 - Village Trustee Wesley

ABSENT: 0

F. [ID 24-569](#) **Review of the Fiscal Year 2025 Proposed Budget**

Interim CFO Donna Gayden presented the Item.

Trustee Buchanan proposed to use some of the very large fund balance to add to the sustainability budget, mainly to go to the energy efficiency retrofit grants program. She is more in favor of bonding out for the big projects and using the fund balance for some of our current priorities. We need to make some bold moves if we are going to reach the goals of our Climate Ready Oak Park (CROP) plan. She proposed using \$1M next year and \$1M the following year.

Trustee Straw asked how much energy efficiency retrofit budget would the Village be able to use. Chief Sustainability Officer Lindsey Roland Nieratka said we could probably spend more than has been historically budgeted. Neighborhood Services Director Jonathan Burch said many of the dollars currently flow through the Neighborhood Services department and we discuss staff capacity and if external contractors would be needed to get those dollars out the door. Trustee Straw said he is in favor of increasing the line item for energy efficiency grants if we are able to fund the \$1M of additional projects.

Trustee Robinson asked if this is the CROP goal to dedicate at least 40% of community choice aggregation to clean energy and climate retrofits, which CSO Nieratka confirmed. Trustee Robinson noted that the community choice aggregation has decreased significantly. She asked if a plan would be created to specifically target highly vulnerable community members. CSO Nieratka said the current budget is designed around the CDBG grant funding that is also going into the energy efficiency grant program for these more vulnerable populations. Trustee Robinson said it should be a targeted spend and it hits at the issue of long-term affordability. She said she is supportive of it at a lower dollar amount.

Manager Jackson said staff prepares a proposed budget based on the capacity to deliver. If we add funding to the budget to do more than what staff proposed, we would have to answer the question of how much more could they do with existing staff resources or would additional staffing be needed to support a different scale than what is being proposed.

President Scaman said we could either add a cushion to the existing budget or ask staff to bring forward a response in Q1 and then make a budget amendment. CSO Nieratka said we have the existing program and we have this plan with the one-stop shop technical assistance to build out a bigger program.

Trustee Parakkat said he agrees building emissions is the largest that we have to tackle. He said he likes the recommendation for an analysis to make sure we have the right programs matched to the right capacity and ability to spend. He suggested also offering this to affordable units and asked if there is still an opportunity to get more federal funding. CSO Nieratka said there are no open grants right now though our existing federal dollars will still be in place.

Trustee Wesley said he is broadly supportive of this, especially helping vulnerable communities. He said he would like to see the match changed. 1:1 feels too generous. 2:1 or 3:1 feels more in line for those above a certain income threshold.

President Scaman said health disparities is another intersection of our goals, such as flooding. She said she might be in favor of a modest increase. What we decide dictates how staff prioritize their time.

Trustee Buchanan suggested increasing it by \$500K now and then having staff come back in Q1 to let us know if they could spend more. Trustee Wesley seconded. Trustee Parakkat noted that would double the current program. He recommended transferring the \$209K surplus rather than taking from the fund balance.

Trustee Robinson asked when the community aggregation contract expires. CSO Nieratka said it expires December 2025 and it would come back to the Board. CFO Gayden said there is a benefit to holding onto the \$209K and she recommended starting with \$250K. Trustee Robinson recommended starting with \$500K from reserves.

Trustee Straw said he is supportive of the \$500K.

Trustee Wesley said it makes sense to him to use the excessive fund balance for programs like this and go to bond for capital improvements like most municipalities do. He said he supports the long-term consideration of what sustainability looks like at an increased budget level, especially when we can make sustainability an intersection of low and moderate income and racial diversity work together.

Trustee Parakkat asked how the list of expenditures associated with economic vitality are reconciled with the budget that was brought from the Oak Park Economic Development Corporation (OPEDC). Manager Jackson said the Village is talking about launching a holistic full-scale formalized Village-administered economic development program which will strengthen the institution and the Board's leadership capacity on economic

development in the Village. There is no single linear link to the OPEDC. The Board has directed staff efforts to create opportunities for alternative call response, re-imagining policing, advancing affordable housing, and sustainability.

Trustee Parakkat said because we do not have an economic vitality plan, we are taking smaller programs as a stop-gap for economic vitality. He said he wants to make sure we are linking all of these pieces and looking at it holistically as an economic vitality engine that we are creating for the community as a whole. Manager Jackson said the answer to that question is yes.

Trustee Wesley said he does not want to get rid of two parking enforcement officers. Manager Jackson said there is a rationale for making decisions on whether we need positions tied to our ability to deliver. Development Services Director Emily Egan said part of the intent is to maximize existing technology and utilize in a way where there is no decline in service delivery. He asked if revenues will go back up to the status quo before we were short on staff. Chief Johnson said she thinks we can achieve what we are trying to achieve with the current staffing unit. He said he would like a pre-COVID target rather than a post-COVID target. Assistant Village Manager/HR Director Kira Tchang said we have had a very challenging time maintaining the staffing levels within our parking enforcement office. This transition is an opportunity to have officers with regularity to train and develop the existing staff and invest in them to perform their services at a higher level and to leverage technology to support enforcement.

Trustee Wesley noted he served as chair of the OPEDC for two years and served on the board for four years. He read some accomplishments from their annual report.

Trustee Enyia wondered if any of the proposed additional money for the sustainability fund could be used for buildings that score low within our benchmarking case study.

Trustee Straw said he would be in favor of making a budget neutral shift of \$285K from overtime to hiring three additional firefighters which would increase the level of service to our community and reduce the burden on firefighters.

Trustee Robinson said she is not yet ready to support that shift until she has more information about how the overtime framework and system works and how we are contractually required to make it work under the union agreement in conjunction with the strategic planning. Oak Park Fire

Department Chief Ron Kobyleski said staff can put together a memo on how overtime works and how the membership is impacted by it. The Local 95 study should be done in Q1.

Trustee Straw asked if there is a risk to putting the decision off to Q1 and having to go out for a new hiring list. Director Tchang said she anticipates to post a final eligibility list for Fire in January 2025. Current vacancies will need to be immediately filled.

Trustee Parakkat said he doesn't see a reason to hurry it and he would prefer the additional detail. He asked if the Village has had challenges in the past filling Fire vacancies. Director Tchang said the Village has had periods of time when we have not had any vacancies and the list became stale. The list can be in effect for two years.

Trustee Wesley said he is largely supportive of this and would rather pay full-time employees that enjoy their jobs than pay overtime which leads to more injuries and more overtime. He said if we don't think we can hire them before the study, then it is okay to wait for the study. He said he wants to prioritize having the right amount of people.

Trustee Robinson said the budget discussion is not the ideological benefits and detriments to overtime. It is whether or not there will be an offset of new hires to our overtime number and she has not been assured of that. The question for this discussion is how is overtime administered and what is the likelihood that we will see a savings in overtime if we do the permanent hires. She said she thinks we should wait until the strategic planning to ask the right question to get the right answer to that.

Trustee Wesley said we are government and whenever we ask a question is the right time to ask the question and think about our staff's mental health. He said he thinks the case has been made that it is a prudent move.

Trustee Enyia said we want to ensure we are not relying on overtime to take care of the duties of our firefighters and he would be supportive of this.

President Scaman asked if adding three firefighters would become the new threshold we are seeking with the union. Director Tchang said the Village has the management right to determine the number of staff for operations as long as it doesn't interact with something that has been bargained already. The Board has the authority to set that level of service. However there have been many occasions within the Fire department where that staffing level has been adjusted as a result of collective bargaining. Deputy Manager Shelley said there could be something in the collective bargaining contract that impacts cost.

Trustee Buchanan said she is surprised that we as a Board think we know more than the staff does on their staffing needs. She said she is not comfortable with this at all and she is satisfied with the explanation from Manager Jackson and CFO Gayden at the previous meeting.

President Scaman asked if a study is always needed to make this decision. Manager Jackson said it is standard professional practice and it helps the Board make the best decision on how to invest the resources. She asked if both studies are needed. Manager Jackson said he supported a study from International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and he thinks it is best practice to have an independent study. Trustee Robinson clarified that the Village is doing a study and the union, a separate entity from the Village that we bargain against, is doing their own study which should be completed in Q1. Manager Jackson said if the Village study is approved through the budget, it makes sense to also do it in Q1 which coincides with the timeline of the long-term strategic financial plan.

President Scaman said she participated unofficially in a I-290 Blue Line Coalition and she requested \$5K-\$10K in membership dues to consider that coalition. The coalition advocates for continued dollars in competition with other areas in the state going for Rebuild Back Better funds. The I-290 expressway has seen an infusion of grants to study possibilities for expanded bridges. We want Oak Park to be at the forefront to maximize the potential for our needs and have a seat at the table in that advocacy. Manager Jackson said it could be added to the line item for intergovernmental affairs work.

Trustee Wesley provided data from parking enforcement revenue. 2017 was \$2.2M, 2018 was \$2.4M, 2019 was \$2.4M, 2020 was \$1.2M, 2021 was \$1.6M, 2022 was \$1.6M, 2023 was \$1.8M, 2024 adopted budget is \$1.2M, 2025 forecast is \$1.2M.

- G. [ORD 24-175](#) **An Ordinance Amending Chapter 20 (“Public Health”), Article 7 (“Garbage, Weeds and Littering”), Section 20-7-2 (“Storage and Collection of Garbage, Refuse, Yard Waste and Recyclable Materials for Residential Buildings Containing Five Units or Less; Storage and Collection of Yard Waste for All Buildings”) of the Oak Park Village Code to Provide a One-Time Leaf Collection Program Credit****

Trustee Robinson said she is hearing that residents don't know how to get bags and sign up for the assistance program. Director Sproule said bags can be purchased from any of the Ace Hardware stores. There is a coupon on the Village website. Other regional hardware stores and big box stores also carry the leaf bags. Free bags are available at Village Hall and the Public Works Center. Residents can call Public Works at 708-358-5700 to

have bags dropped off at their home. The Village website home page has a sign-up link for the assistance program or call 708-358-5700. The Village also has a volunteer-based program that is partnering with a local Cub Scouts group and the OPRF wrestling team.

Trustee Straw said he does not support the refuse credit. \$29 is going to every participant in the refuse program rather than being directed to folks with a financial need or who are unable to do leaf bagging. He said he would be more in favor of a credit that tied to a need rather than it being broad-based. He said he also has equity concerns because the program excludes folks who live in most of our multi-family housing. He said he would prefer to direct these funds toward decreasing the cost of compost bins or providing bins for everyone in the program.

Trustee Buchanan said leaves do not have to be put into bags. They can be mulched into the grass and raked under trees and beds.

Trustee Wesley, Trustee Parakkat, and President Scaman said they are in support of this. President Scaman said she would be interested in looking at additional programs in the future including hard bins instead of bags.

It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Enyia, that this Ordinance be adopted. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 6 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 1 - Village Trustee Straw

ABSENT: 0

H. [MOT 24-275](#) A Motion by Trustees Robinson and Wesley to Discuss Village Board Support of the Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce's 2025 Youth Internship Program: Navigating Employment and eXperience Training (NEXT).

Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Darien Marion-Burton presented the Item.

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Robinson, to extend the meeting past 10:00 P.M. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved. The roll call was as follows:

AYES: 6 - Trustees Buchanan, Enyia, Robinson, Straw, Wesley and President Scaman

NAYS: 1 - Trustee Parakkat

ABSENT: 0

Trustee Robinson asked if there would be increased payroll costs for these businesses to add the part-time help. Director Burton said it would be very

marginal. It is just the hourly rate. She asked who would be responsible for addressing any HR issues. Director Burton said that would be the responsibility of the Chamber and they would do on-boarding and dedicate a program manager to this. The Chamber is also looking to expand the services of their HR provider to include these businesses. She said she thinks we should do the summer cohort and then decide about the fall.

Trustee Parakkat asked what that would do the cost. Director Burton said if there is not a second cohort to administer, he would estimate it would be diminished by 35%-40% and it would take away the second cohort's reimbursement funding. Trustee Parakkat said he is really optimistic about the program and it is giving a great platform for kids to come and be a part of our community and learn and support the businesses. He said he is worried about the Chamber's capacity to grow and handle this based on all of the 2025 programming. He asked if the Chamber would prefer to do the pilot program in the fall rather than the summer which has so much programming already. Director Burton said he would prefer fall but he thinks the Chamber has the capacity to do both at the same time and has the support of its Board. The summer has a slight advantage in terms of the workforce. Trustee Parakkat said he is fully supportive.

President Scaman suggested lowering the number of the pilot program from 20 to 10. Director Burton said the Chamber has been doing ambitious things for the past three years as an organization and he feels the Chamber is prepared to fully support and make it its best work.

Trustee Wesley said ambition is the only way to get things done. Nearly all of the students at the OPRF High School Civics Learning Fair asked where they can get a job or internship. The potential good we can do more than outweighs the rockiness it's going to take to get there. He said he is more than ready to give that opportunity and start changing lives and putting young people in a position to succeed.

Trustee Parakkat said he works for Junior Achievement, an organization that focuses on financial literacy and entrepreneurship. He has worked on internship programs with Dominican, Northwestern Kellogg, and OPRF High School. Each age category has its unique challenge. He wants to set the expectations the right way with the businesses and with the students so there are no issues as we try to make this successful.

Trustee Straw said he loves the idea behind the program and doing one cohort and then evaluating. He asked if D200 has been contacted about providing financial support of this program. Director Burton said OPRF's vocational counselor is on the Chamber's Board and he is very supportive of it. Manager Jackson said he sees an opportunity for collaboration with

OPRF and other community partners who have a mutual interest in leveling up our youth. President Scaman suggested the Library and Township.

Trustee Straw said partnerships with D200, Library, Township, and Park District might allow us to step it up to the full two cohorts and wrap around additional academic supports.

Trustee Wesley said he is always open to partnerships but he does not want them to get in the way and be a condition of this program to bring all six governments to the table. It shouldn't take a long time and a lot of debate to do this.

President Scaman clarified we are not requiring partnerships, we are identifying opportunities. Government can offend when we feel we are creating something that already exists.

Trustees Wesley and Straw said they are for the full amount. Trustee Wesley noted the Village Clerk has relationships with youth and schools and would hopefully be a major part of this program because of that existing leadership. Clerk Waters noted the Community Relations Department had a job readiness summer program that could be a helpful template.

Trustee Robinson asked if the Village can support two cohorts as opposed to one. Manager Jackson said more than likely it would be the same from a staffing standpoint. She said she would support the original proposal.

President Scaman recommended amending the motion to go up to the dollar amount presented. Trustee Wesley said he would not be in favor.

Trustee Parakkat said he is comfortable voting on it the way it is presented.

Director Burton apologized to President Scaman if his comments were offensive, which was certainly not his intent. The Chamber values its partnership with the Village. President Scaman said she has equal respect and no apology is necessary.

No vote was taken on this Item.

XVII. Adjourn

It was moved by Trustee Straw, seconded by Trustee Robinson, to Adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:47 P.M., Thursday, November 21, 2024.

**Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Hansen**