



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

6:30 PM

Village Hall

I. Call to Order

Village President Scaman called the Meeting to order at 6:33 P.M.

II. Roll Call

President Scaman noted that Village Trustee Enyia will attend via Zoom due to illness.

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

Absent: 1 - Village Trustee Wesley

III. Consideration of Motion to Adjourn to Closed Session to Discuss Pending Litigation and Collective Bargaining

It was moved by Eder, seconded by Village Trustee Straw, to adjourn to Closed Session. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

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

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 1 - Village Trustee Wesley

IV. Adjourn Closed Session

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

The Regular Meeting reconvened at 7:14 P.M.

VI. Roll Call

Present: 7 - Village President Scaman, Eder, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, Village Trustee Straw, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Wesley

Absent: 0

VII. Agenda Approval

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

VIII. Minutes

- A.** A Motion to Approve Minutes from the November 11, November 18, December 2 and December 9, 2025 Regular Meeting, and the November 20, 2025 Special Meeting of the Village Board.

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

IX. Non-Agenda Public Comment

President Scaman asked whether there were any persons wanting to make public comments.

Resident John W. discussed parking issues due to his son approaching driving age and overnight parking ban. He and neighbors have started a petition to implement residential parking permits.

Community Relations Coordinator Cassandra A. highlighted the contributions of union workers in Oak Park. Emphasized the need for better wages and support for union workers to retain good employees.

Local 73 State Division Director Shea M. discussed the high turnover rate of union workers and the need for better wages to retain employees.

Grants Coordinator Nick M. discussed the need for equity in salaries, comparing Oak Park to other communities. Highlighted the high cost of living in Oak Park and the need for higher salaries to match other areas.

Animal Control Officer Kyle F. shared his experience and the challenges of his role, including low pay and high workload. He urged the board to reconsider the value of their team and the importance of retaining staff.

X. Village Manager Reports

Resident Ingo S. expressed frustration with the current leaf collection process and the condition of the streets. Questioned the village's approach to street cleaning and the impact on sewers.

Public Works Director Rob Sproule explained the challenges faced due to unusual snowfall and late leaf drop. LRS has extended the leaf collection program through March, and residents can continue to bag leaves and place them in the alley. Rob emphasizes the importance of residents bagging leaves to avoid clogging drains and improving street conditions.

Chief Financial Officer Kevin Bueso introduced himself as the new CFO for the

Village of Oak Park, bringing over 15 years of finance experience. He emphasized his commitment to transparency, his excitement to collaborate with the team.

XI. Village Board Committees

None; no action was taken regarding this item.

XII. Citizen Commission Vacancies

B. Board and Commission Vacancy Report for January 13, 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 23 vacancies.

President Scaman stated that anyone interested in serving on a board or commission should contact Clerk Waters at clerkwaters@oak-park.us.

No other discussion transpired and no action took place regarding this Agenda item.

XIII. Public Hearing

C. Public Hearing Regarding the Acquisition of 3-31 Madison Street and 509 S. Humphrey Avenue (Sometimes Known as 11 Madison Street), Oak Park, Illinois by the Village of Oak Park by Eminent Domain using "Quick-take" Powers

Village President Scaman called the Public Hearing to order.

Village Attorney Gregory Smith summarized: The Village Board has chosen the property at 3-31 Madison Street and 509 South Humphrey Avenue (commonly known as 11 Madison Street) as the site for a new police station. After failing to reach a voluntary sale agreement, the Board approved an ordinance on November 11, 2025, to acquire the property through eminent domain and now plans to seek Illinois General Assembly approval for "quick take" powers under the Illinois Eminent Domain Act, with a public hearing held to allow community input before proceeding.

Notice of the Hearing was published by law in the Wednesday Journal on 12-24-25.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Chris D. strongly supports using eminent domain to acquire the property for the new police station, arguing that adaptive reuse would save the village money. They criticize US Bank's history of disinvestment and failure to

uphold community commitments, citing foreclosure data and urging the board to proceed quickly with the acquisition.

Resident Jacqueline L. expressed strong support for using eminent domain to acquire and repurpose the soon-to-be-abandoned US Bank site on Madison and Austin for a new police station, calling it the most logical, cost-effective solution. She emphasized the urgency of addressing the police department's long-standing space needs, criticized US Bank's declining local presence and investment, and urged swift action to ensure the property serves the community rather than sitting vacant.

US Bank Representative Abdel D. urged the Village Board to reject the use of quick take eminent domain, calling it an aggressive and risky approach that would force the bank to leave its Oak Park branch. He emphasized US Bank's long-standing commitment to the community, its desire to remain at the location, and warned that the village's actions would disrupt services for local customers while the bank seeks a new site.

President Scaman called for a Motion to Adjourn the Public Hearing.

Village Trustee Taglia moved and Village Trustee Wesley seconded to adjourn the Public Hearing. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved. Village Trustee Enya's response was inaudible.

XIV. Consent Agenda

Approval of the Consent Agenda

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

AYES: 7 - Village President Scaman, Eder, Village Trustee Enya, Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, Village Trustee Straw, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

- D.** 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 \$212,000.00, Authorizing its Execution and Waiving the Village's Bid Process for the Agreement

This Resolution was adopted.

- E.** A Resolution Requesting Approval of Legislation by the General Assembly Authorizing the Village of Oak Park Eminent Domain Quick-Take Authority to Acquire 3-31 Madison Street and 509 S. Humphrey Avenue (Sometimes

Known as 11 Madison Street), Oak Park, Illinois

This Resolution was adopted.

- F.** A Resolution Approving an Independent Contractor Agreement with Pipe View, LLC. d/b/a Pipe View America for Project 25-10 Sewer Cleaning and Inspection, in an Amount not to Exceed \$105,730 and Authorizing its Execution

This Resolution was adopted.

- G.** A Resolution Approving the Purchase and Planting of Parkway Trees through Contracts Secured by the Suburban Tree Consortium in an Amount not to exceed \$145,000.00 for the 2026 Tree Planting Program

This Resolution was adopted.

XV. Regular Agenda

- H.** A Motion to Approve an Updated Organization Chart for the Village Clerk's Office, Including the Creation of a Part-Time (.5 FTE) File Clerk Position, and Directing Staff to Prepare the Necessary Budget Amendment

Village Clerk Waters explained that Records Management will transfer to the Clerk's Office in FY2026, expanding responsibilities to include physical and electronic records, archival processing, digitization, and compliance. Due to insufficient staffing, she requested a file clerk position and outlined plans to partner with the library for archival storage and complete digitization while improving overall records management across the organization.

It was moved by Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, seconded by Village Trustee Enyia, that this Motion be approved. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 7 - Village President Scaman, Eder, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Leving Jacobson, Village Trustee Straw, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

- I.** A Resolution Approving a Purchase and Subscription Agreement with Granicus, LLC for Government Experience Service Cloud, Granicus Operations Cloud, Communications Cloud Advanced Package, Government Experience Agent, Boards and Commissions and AzureAD Connector License Through a Master Agreement Secured By OMNIA Partners For a Term of Five Years in An Amount Not to Exceed \$179,489.65 Annually, Authorizing its Execution and Waiving the Village's Bid Process for the Agreement.

Chief Communications Officer Dan Yopchick provided an update on expanding

the village's partnership with Granicus, including migrating existing services like the website, agenda software, and newsletters to a cloud system for better support and service credits. The plan also includes implementing an AI chatbot to improve 24/7 responsiveness, web search functionality, and user experience, with customization during a 6-8 week rollout.

Village Trustee Wesley provided support for the purchase and shred his experience in testing out Jackson County's AI feature. He advocated for adopting the AI chatbot, explaining that modern LLM technology enables conversational, accurate, and user-friendly access to dense information without manual configuration, unlike older chatbots, and argued that Oak Park should embrace this widely adopted technology now to improve efficiency and community engagement.

Village Trustee Straw supports approving the contract but requests adding language that allows the village to remove the \$30,000 annual LLM chatbot component in future years if it proves ineffective, to avoid being locked into a five-year commitment for a feature that may not meet expectations.

Village Trustee Leving Jacobson acknowledged the logic behind waiving the bid process but questioned whether comparable services from other vendors were reviewed and how costs compare. While finding some proposed aspects compelling-such as potential staff and community benefits and data insights-they expressed concerns about unclear inclusivity, accessibility, and the specific problems the AI chatbot would solve for Oak Park, noting the proposal felt too general and lacking a clear justification for the investment.

Village Trustee Eder emphasized that the report shows strong community interest in composting and recycling, urging the village to expand composting programs-especially for multifamily housing-and improve education on what materials are compostable or recyclable. They noted that cost and confusion about proper disposal are key barriers and suggested clearer messaging to reduce contamination and outdated recycling habits.

This Resolution was Withdrawn.

J. Presentation and Discussion on the Outcomes of the Village Waste Characterization Study

SES Engineer Spencer LaBelle presented: The study showed Oak Park produces less waste per person, has higher recycling rates, and significantly lower contamination than national averages, with one-third of waste being organic and half of the overall stream recyclable or compostable. A supporting survey of over 1,100 residents confirmed these findings, identified barriers like uncertainty about cleaning recyclables, and revealed strong reliance on village communications, with nearly 90% of respondents satisfied or neutral about current services.

Village Trustee Straw supports approving the contract but requests adding language that allows the village to remove the \$30,000 annual LLM chatbot component in future years if it proves ineffective, to avoid being locked into a five-year commitment for a feature that may not meet expectations.

Village Trustee Eder praised the report's findings and expressed enthusiasm for Oak Park's progress, emphasizing a strong desire to accelerate universal composting and asking whether the village's high engagement and performance could lower the tipping point from the previously suggested 50% subscription rate.

K. Presentation and Discussion by Staff and the Village Waste Hauler Lakeshore Recycling Systems on the Current Status and Future Options for the Village Waste Hauling Contract

Public Works Director Rob Sproule highlighted that the village is approaching a decision point on whether to renew its waste hauling contract with LRS, which expires in March 2027, or go out to bid, and has invited LRS to present current services, challenges, and future vision while gathering board feedback to inform a recommendation by the end of March this year.

LRS Area Vice President George Strom reflected on their role in Oak Park's program-emphasizing sustainable cart transition, interest in customer-friendly tools like chatbots/QR codes, strong household hazardous waste diversion, daily use of an electric Mack LR truck aligned with village goals, and ongoing efforts to improve resident recycling education, including considerations around the leaf program.

Village Trustee Wesley supports a system that keeps leaves out of the street, suggesting a flexible approach combining parkway, bag, and compost options, ideally tied to universal composting, and encourages LRS to adopt the tech solutions they discussed.

Village Trustee Taglia questioned the sustainability and cost impacts of recent service changes-citing resident burdens, persistent complaints since switching from Waste Management to LRS despite earlier cost savings-and, while appreciative of LRS's enthusiasm, expressed concern about ongoing service issues and LRS's smaller scale compared to Waste Management. Argued that all options, including leaf collection, should be considered despite potential costs and challenges, and stressed that any multi-million-dollar contract like this should automatically go out for competitive bid to ensure fairness and cost efficiency.

Village Trustee Straw recommended going through a competitive bid process to explore more options, noting that the previous leaf collection program limited bidders and that moving to a bagging system could attract additional waste haulers.

Village Trustee Eder agreed that creative solutions are needed but emphasized that, as stewards of a large contract, it is fiscally prudent to go out to bid to ensure the village has the most options, even if the current provider ultimately remains.

XVI. Call to Board and Clerk

Village Clerk Waters reminded everyone that economic interest and ethics filings for Oak Park will begin soon and emphasized early voting from March 2-16 at Village Hall, including weekends, while noting that USPS postmark dates are no longer guaranteed to match mailing dates, so voters should mail ballots early or use the secure drop box at Village Hall. She also acknowledged the recent passing of Mr. Ernie, founder of the Maywood Fine Arts Center and long-time community contributor.

Village President Scaman announced the passing of Wine Johnson, a longtime co-president of APPLE at Oak Park River Forest High School and a dedicated activist for youth and racial equity, noting that a Celebration of Life will be held at the 19th Century Club on January 24 at 3 p.m., with a village board proclamation in her memory. She expressed condolences for recent significant losses in the Black community, including Bishop Dr. Claude Porter and Mary Ann Brown. Also noted the one-year anniversary of Frances Sullivan's passing, highlighting her historic achievements and suggested a future proclamation.

XVII. Adjourn

It was moved by Village Trustee Wesley, seconded by Village Trustee Straw to Adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 10:58 P.M. Tuesday, January 13, 2026.

**Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Carswell**