



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

Finance Committee

Monday, October 30, 2017

6:30 PM

Room 101

1. Call To Order

Village President Abu-Taleb called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Members of the Finance Committee: Trustee Andrews, Button (6:40 p.m.), Taglia, Tucker, and President Abu-Taleb.

Absent: none

Also Present: Village Trustee Boutet, Village Trustee Moroney, Village Manager Pavlicek, Village Attorney Stephanides, Chief Financial Officer Drazner, Public Works Director Wielebnicki, Police Chief Ambrose, and Fire Chief Ebsen.

3. Public Comment

Bonita Robinson: Ms. Robinson expressed her dissatisfaction with the Village response to her Nuisance Code Enforcement complaint against her neighbor for excessive outdoor lighting. She requested the Village give her neighbor a deadline for complying with the Village Nuisance Code.

Vernon Robinson: Mr. Robinson provided pictures of the current excessive outdoor lighting situation referred to by Ms. Robinson. Mr. Robinson suggested the neighbor lower the lights to shining on their own property to resolve the problem.

Kitty Conklin: Ms. Conklin reported on a negative building permit process, including inspection of the work, that was approved originally, later denied and needed to be revised unnecessarily.

4. Approval of Minutes

- A. [MOT 17-252](#) Minutes from the October 23, 2017 Meeting of the Finance Committee.

It was moved by Trustee Tucker and seconded by Trustee Andrews to approve the October 23, 2017 Finance Committee meeting minutes. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

5. New Business

B. [ID 17-673](#)

Fourth Meeting of the Finance Committee to Review the Draft Recommended FY18 Budget

Village Manager Pavlicek provided a brief introduction explaining the focus of today's discussion is on expenditures within the General Fund including for the 14 Village Departments and 6 partner agencies.

Public Comment:

Anne Pezalla: Ms. Pezalla spoke as a small business owner to ask the Village Board to support small business with funding of \$250,000 for a two-year pilot facade rehabilitation grant program.

Norka Escobedo: Ms. Escobedo spoke of her positive experience utilizing the Oak Park Regional Housing Center to maintain diversity in her multi-unit building.

Paul Hamer: Mr. Hamer referred to Oak Park as the 2nd most indebted community in Cook County. He feels priorities should be for supporting Police, Fire, Arts, and Fair Housing; not development. He feels the Housing Center is a vital part of our community.

Chris Donovan: Mr. Donovan provided the Village Board with information responsive to what he feels was inadequate community input on the Madison Street Project, according to the Complete Streets Policy requirement of the Village code. Mr. Donovan does not support the Madison Street TIF.

Village Manager Pavlicek outlined the timeline of information provided for the Village Board as part of the Budget approval process and the timeline for approving the budget before December 31, 2017. Priorities have been to ensure financial stability of the Village, addressing capital needs, and investing in technology. The Village Manager highlighted major changes from last year, which included additional staffing positions for the Police and Fire Departments. Additionally, the Village Manager outlined proposed fund transfers and explained revenue and costs for each request.

Staff responded to questions of the Village Board related to use of motor field tax funds, cost of 911 call center expenditures, and projected contracted permit fees relevant to proposed new development. Trustee Boutet requested a cost analysis for utilizing contracted permit inspectors vs. in-house staff.

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) explained the Village Fund Balance Policy, past and projected fund totals.

Trustee Moroney is very concerned with the rising tax levy. The CFO and Village Manager responded to how the budget process anticipates the levy need. Trustee Moroney finds the current process of deciding the levy before approving budgeted items challenging. Trustee Boutet believes the general fund approval process should be in more detail and aligned with Board goals. Trustee Tucker explained how the Finance Committee of the Village Board does that work. President Abu-Taleb confirmed how the process exists and works. Trustee Button would be supportive of staff providing a document explaining how the proposed budget is addressing Board goals. Trustee Taglia suggested the Village Board provide staff with what tax levy they would be comfortable with and allow staff to provide a budget in response to that direction. The Village Board discussed the increase in the Police Department budget due to increased pension costs. Trustee Andrews reiterated that the proposed tax levy and Village debt is unsustainable. Trustee Boutet would like to see a MAP evaluation process that identifies efficiency vs. cost. President Abu-Taleb summarized the great services we have and the need to invest in our community and infrastructure.

Director of Public Works Wielebnicki responded to current efforts to have a green fleet. The Village currently purchases diesel fuel vehicles and hybrids whenever possible. Mr. Wielebnicki responded to additional questions on green infrastructure options and Village programs.

Trustee Boutet requested the Records Coordinator, currently in the Finance Department, be moved to working under the Village Clerk as the keeper of Village records. The Village Manager responded that the Village Attorney can provide the Board with his legal opinion on what records the Village Clerk is the keeper of. The Village Clerk responded briefly that she would like the resources needed to do her job well and it is a priority to fill the current vacant position in her Department. It is her understanding that the Village Board plans to discuss the role of the Village Clerk at a future meeting. She would welcome that opportunity to have a longer discussion.

The Village Board directed staff to suggest \$2.5M in cuts to the current proposed budget without compromising safety in the Police, Fire, and infrastructures budgets. Staff was asked to provide proposed expenditure reductions and identify new revenue options.

The Village Clerk requested confirmation that a meeting to discuss the role of the Clerk as it pertains to the Budget be scheduled. The Village Board

requested the Clerk provide additional information in a memo.

President Aub-Taleb thanked all Village Department Directors for their hard work improving processes as they serve the community.

The Executive Director of the Oak Park Area Arts Council (OPAAC), Camille Wilson-White, and Treasurer of the OPAAC Board, Bill Wallace, presented on their work promoting public art in the Village and in partnership with the Austin community over the last year; the Sculpture Walk, Community Murals, and Off the Wall Program. Ms. Wilson-White spoke to new initiatives for 2018 that will continue to advance Oak Park's notoriety for public art.

Trustee Boutet questioned why the Public Art Commission was eliminated. Staff responded that by direction led by previous Trustee, Trustee Brewer, the budget designated for the Public Art Commission was moved to the OPAAC to be administered under one centralized initiative for Public Art in the community. The move did not increase the budget expenditure. The Village Board asked questions related to the OPAAC budget for clarification. Trustee Andrews would like to see public art in areas of the Village that have not been the recipient of previous programs. He would also like to see the OPAAC seek partnerships with other agencies that may increase their visibility of programs on social media. Ms. Wilson-White plans to investigate the cost of statues of famous Oak Parkers by suggestion from Trustee Moroney. She also spoke to how she knows she is successful with her work as the Executive Director of the OPAAC. Trustee Button acknowledged the benefit of the OPAAC collaborating with new development to display public art.

David Pope presented as the President of the Oak Park Residence Corporation. Mr. Pope provided a summary of the role of the Residents Corporation to the Village as a partner and second largest property owner with the purpose of providing high quality low income housing and promoting diversity. Mr. Pope spoke to a newer initiative, by request of the Village, to assist condo associations with becoming more self-sustainable. The Village Board asked questions to understand fully the role, relationship with the Village, and benefit of the Residents Corporation for the community.

David Pope also presented as the Executive Director of the Oak Park Housing Authority that administers various Federal programs that assist the Village's low-income population in finding decent and affordable housing. Mr. Pope explained how project placed and tenant placed vouchers differ.

President Abu-Taleb thanked David Pope for his work and expressed his gratefulness that Mr. Pope is in his current position.

Rob Breymaier presented on the Oak Park Regional Housing Center (OPRHC) mission of working to sustain racial integrity and affirmatively further fair housing in Oak Park and how they work with other partner agencies to support that mission. Mr. Breymaier explained the national model that is the work of the OPRHC, "racial blind spots" that exist when individuals are seeking housing, and how their work is needed to maintain integration in Oak Park. He further explained how the OPRHC is working to utilize technology in their process. Mr. Breymaier highlighted that as part of his budget proposal he is asking for funding to support an online application process which would assist with collecting racial and economic data. He Breymaier responded to questions on how the OPRHC competes with other online apartment finders, how they are different from other agencies, and what services they provide that are directly responsive and necessary to meet their mission objectives. Additionally, he explained the challenge that they have in securing alternative or additional funding to support their mission in a competitive not-for-profit market with far fewer grants available for their purpose and the purpose for not charging fees. Different building owners donate to the OPRHC at different rates. Trustee Moroney believes the great historical work of the community is to be commended for the segregation that exists today. Mr. Breymaier represented his opinion that maintaining segregation takes constant conscious work. Trustee Andrews suggested the OPRHC look closely at how they use technology and consider utilizing other websites to assist with showing apartments to increase efficiency. The Village Board discussed a community perception, right or wrong, that new expensive development has negatively affected the perceived affordability of Oak Park and could be a threat to our current diversity. Trustees Andrews, Moroney, and Taglia desired the opportunity to revisit the OPRHC budget before approving the Village contribution. Trustees Boutet, Button, Tucker and President Abu-Taleb are currently satisfied with budgeting \$425,000 for the OP.

Cathy Yen, the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, requested the Village continue their support of the Chamber in the amount of \$100,000. The Chamber provides support to twelve business districts in the Village of Oak Park with information, technology, marketing and business help with an on-line mobile enhanced business directory, email communication system, survey tools, marketing tools, free on-line calendar, weekly newsletter, and dining guide. The Chamber would like the opportunity to continue their efforts, with Village support, to further improve communication between business and government, provide networking opportunities, and working to serve business districts that do not get as much attention. Trustee Boutet would like to see the Chamber working with

other Village partners to coordinate marketing initiatives. Additionally, she would like to see the Village Board have a conversation to determine what the Village should do to contribute to marketing that benefits the Village as a whole.

Sara Barnett, President & CEO of Visit Oak Park, presented on the budget request for Visit Oak Park that serves as the resource for travelers and includes neighboring communities. Visit Oak Park supports a thriving tourism industry. Trustee Andrews questioned revenue generated at the Visit Oak Park store and would like to see improvement or efficiency changes that would improve that cost. The Village Board asked questions to clarify budget needs and ask if there are areas of overlap with other agencies.

6. Old Business

7. Adjournment

It was moved by Trustee Tucker, seconded by Trustee Andrews to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M., Monday, October 30, 2017.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vicki Scaman
Village Clerk