



Protocols

**Village of Oak Park
Village Board of Trustees**

**First Adopted May 2009
Adopted September 21, 2015
Adopted January 22, 2018**

These protocols are meant to provide general rules of engagement for the President/Mayor and Village Trustees while conducting the business of the Village of Oak Park. It is understood that there will be extenuating circumstances at times that will mean certain protocols will be waived or adjusted. However, it is also understood that such circumstances should be the exception and not the rule. The guidelines will serve as a framework for conducting efficient and effective Board meetings, for proper use of communication tools such as e-mail and social media, for respectful interactions with staff and each other, and for strengthening the Village Manager form of government in the Village as a whole. Protocols can be revisited at any time, but it is suggested that the Board review them at least annually to make any adjustments deemed appropriate.

Meetings of the Village Board

The Village Board has four types of meetings: Executive Session, Regular Board Meetings, Special Meetings and Board Committees. The attached exhibits contain the protocols for each meeting type.

Individual Roles

1. Role of Village President/Mayor

- 1.1. The Village President/Mayor must strive for transparency in dealings with staff at Village Hall and should keep Trustees informed of meetings and significant interactions on a regular basis.
- 1.2. The President/Mayor should respond to Trustee e-mails and voice mails in a timely manner.
- 1.3. Trustees should have use of the President/Mayor's office for meetings and public office hours, and a scheduling mechanism needs to be put in place to facilitate the use of the office.
- 1.4. The President/Mayor and with assistance of the Clerk upon request should research and work to implement a set process for Commission Chair replacements in a timely and orderly fashion.

2. Role of Trustees

- 2.1. Trustees should provide feedback on their Citizen Board/Commission liaison role.
- 2.2. Interaction with staff should go through the Village Manager with a copy to the Administrative Coordinator in the Office of the Village Manager. Small action items can be sent directly to staff a department director but must be copied to the Manager and her Administrative Coordinator. There should be no commentary on performance or personnel issues with any staff member in such communication.
- 2.3. For the Village Boards' background, the Village Manager's Administrative Coordinator has access to all emails sent to the Manager.
- 2.4. Board members shall generally avoid stating their position on issues currently before the Board in e-mail communication sent to all members of the Board simultaneously.
- 2.5. When an individual Board member nonetheless sends such an email, recipients may not reply to all, but may direct a private response to the original sender
- 2.6. These limitations do not apply to communications regarding organization, logistics, or scheduling.
- 2.7. Substantive email questions that are directed to staff may be copied to all members of the Board utilizing a "blind carbon copy" (bcc) function and noting the full board bcc in the salutation.
- 2.8. Citizen outreach (door-to-door, written, response to emails/voice mails) can be handled individually by each Trustee as he or she deems appropriate.

3. Responses to Board Email

- 3.1. The Administrative Coordinator provides a general reply back to all Board email to explain that the message is received. If required, a response is also coordinated amongst staff. This response is sent directly to the email sender with a copy to the Board utilizing a "blind carbon copy" (bcc) function to avoid the potential for contemporaneous interactive communication by the Board of Trustees, constituents and staff.

4. Response to Board Voicemail

- 4.1. Village staff does not respond directly to voicemail but does take down the information for staff follow-up. The Board does not receive any further information except for a copy of the voicemail.

5. Individual Board Emails and Voicemails

- 5.1. Staff does not get a copy of individual Board emails nor voicemails, and therefore staff does not respond. If there is a need for a staff response, the President/Mayor or Trustees will contact the Administrative Coordinator or the Village Manager as needed.

6. Standards for Public Emergencies

- 6.1. When there is an emergency, the Village Manager and/or Communications Director will work directly with the Village President/Mayor or President Pro-Tem (who is selected on seniority and availability) if it is necessary for an elected official to serve as the spokesperson for the Village Board. The Village Board will not make statements individually. No statements will be made without referring to the Village Manager to ensure all the facts are correct. The Village itself has its own Public Information Officer.

7. Standards for Responding to the Media

- 7.1. For each issue in which it is necessary for a statement from the Board, the Board will decide in advance who the spokesperson is for the Village Board for that issue.

8. Individual Elected Official Requests for Information

- 8.1. All individual Elected Official requests for information will be shared with the entire Village Board.
- 8.2. If the request requires more than one-two hours of staff time to develop a work product, the Village Manager shall review the request and further direction and clarification from the full Village Board.

9. Role of Village Clerk

- 9.1. Statutory
- 9.2. Customary
- 9.3. New initiatives

10. Role of Village Attorney

- 10.1. Statutory
- 10.2. Customary

11. Board Committees

- 11.1. Permanent
 - 11.1.1. Finance (4 Trustees)
 - 11.1.2. Personnel (3 Trustees)
 - 11.1.3. Reinventing Government (3 Trustees) – performance i.e. BPS, marketing, user-friendly etc.
 - 11.1.4. I-Gov (2 Trustees)
- 11.2. Board Committees will generally have two representatives, with the exception of the Personnel Committee/ Finance.
- 11.3. Each Committee will create a scope of work by using a template
- 11.4. Appointments will be made by the President/Mayor.
- 11.5. Committee meetings as needed but should allow for a reduction in the number of Special Meetings.
- 11.6. Committees will report to the full Board as required by issues which are ripe for action in a given area. Reports can also be provided quarterly by using a template.
- 11.7. Minutes will be kept of all Committee meetings.