



## **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.

# **Board Protocol Exhibits**

**Adopted Jan. 22, 2018**

## **I. Agenda Preparation**

### **Executive Session**

Staff will set a reasonable amount of time to be spend on each agenda item on the preliminary agenda, both to help it arrive at a reasonable number of agenda items and to give the Board timeframes to follow at the meeting.

Staff will provide the preliminary confidential agenda topics by Tuesday prior to the executive session to include the number of agenda items, the order, and the time to be spent on each agenda item.

Unless the matter is extremely urgent, no detailed legal or other staff memoranda should be sent out on Mondays prior to, or at, an Executive Session.

Staff will alert the public at such time as the length of an executive session discussion would result in a delay in the reconvening of the meeting in public.

Staff will hold a review of the current permissible executive session parameters in a public meeting annually.

Staff will pull an item from the preliminary agenda when it turns out not to be ripe for action and provide a written update, if necessary, rather than a briefing at the Executive Session. Staff was reminded to share information on all pending matters of executive session with all elected officials as soon as one elected official is advised of the matter.

### **Regular Meetings of the Board**

Staff will limit the number of agenda items so the Board can realistically address items in the time allotted for the meeting.

Staff will provide the preliminary agenda by Tuesday prior to the meeting to include the number of agenda items, the order and detailed item overview.

Board feedback on the preliminary agenda is due back to staff by 7:30 a.m. on Thursdays. A Board member may also request additional information about an agenda item following receipt of the draft agenda by email.

Staff will order the agenda items in a manner to result in the most efficient use of time at the meeting, including placing items that may draw public attendance or require professional staff time closer to the top of the agenda if practicable.

Staff will pull an item from the preliminary agenda when it turns out not to be ripe for action and provide a written update when necessary.

To add a new item not shown or to remove an item complement, the President individually, or a Trustee with the concurrent of a second may make such request of the Village Manager. This request, along with the second Trustee's agreement can be submitted electronically to the Village Board email. Generally, as a courtesy, there would be an advance call to the Village Manger to discuss the addition or removal of an agenda item.

On Thursdays, the agenda is finalized and made public. The agenda is generally posted prior to 5 p.m. at Village Hall and on the Village website on Thursdays. At the same time the website materials are posted, they are also available to the Board via the Granicus application on iPad. The agenda is also emailed to the press no later than Thursday.

Question for any agenda item can be posed by any member of the Village Board throughout the week, but preferably no later than 9 a.m. Fridays. This can be submitted via email to the Board email, using the bcc option. The VMO will coordinate and provided responses back to the entire Board generally via email. Unless specifically requested (see next bullet point), staff will assume the questions are answered and the item will remain on the Consent Agenda. If the questions are asked on the same days as the meeting, a hard copy of the answers will be provided for every member of the Board at their seat in the Council Chambers.

Items on the Regular Agenda will be discussed. Staff associated with these items will be present at the meeting.

Proclamations may be read in their entirety. Generally, staff will place proclamations on the Consent Agenda, unless a guest is scheduled to be in attendance to receive the proclamation.

Liquor License related actions will be placed by staff on the "Regular Agenda for Items Pursuant to Village Code Chapter 3 Alcoholic Liquor Dealers or Related" and the Village President will recuse himself from the items and ask the President Pro-Tem to preside over the recused item(s).

The Board Meeting Calendar should be a discussion item as a part of the Regular Meeting Agenda to determine topics/subjects for upcoming Special Meetings approximately six weeks in advance.

### **Special Meetings of the Board**

Agenda preparations, speaking time limits and Board direction, the same as Regular Meetings of the Board.

Special meetings should be held for more in-depth study of items. Action items should not generally be a part of a Special Meeting agenda unless timing for consideration requires an exception.

## **II. Public Comment**

**Executive Session - N/A.**

### **Regular Meetings of the Board**

In keeping with existing Board policy, an individual may provide public comment for up to three minutes during the non-agenda public comment period or during the consideration of a specific agenda item.

The overall time limit for Non-Agenda Public Comment at its usual spot near the beginning of the meeting will continue to be 30 minutes with the balance to be taken at the end of the Regular Agenda.

The Village Board will not respond to public comments as a part of the meeting or enter into discussion with the commenter as a part of the meeting. Excluding "thank yous" and announcements, the Village will respond and at the conclusion of the public comment period via the Village President noting that staff will follow-up on the matter.

In keeping with existing Board policy, public comment on any item for which a Public Hearing has taken place (or will take place) may be limited to five individuals commenting on each side of the issue.

Public comment may be received from any individual on up to three agenda items at a Regular Meeting.

To preserve the civility of public meetings, the Board will not recognize comments made by the public from their seats in the audience. Public comments are only recognized during the Public Comment period noted on the agenda and all speakers must speak from the podium after being called by the President in response to filing a public comment form with the Clerk.

### **Special Meetings of the Board**

Public Comment will be allowed for agenda items as well as non-agenda public comment. Same limits apply as for a regular meeting.

### **III. Consent Agenda**

**Executive Session-** N/A.

#### **Regular Meetings of the Board**

Between Tuesday and Thursday at 7:30 a.m., any member of the Board can request that times on the Consent Agenda be moved to the Regular or vice versa. This request can be submitted electronically to the Village Board email. This is done generally because a Trustee is going to vote against the item and therefore a separate roll call vote is needed or the Trustee desires to have a conversation about the item specifically during the meeting.

While any Board member may pull an item off of Consent at any time prior to the approval of the agenda at the beginning of a meeting, the Board agrees to an informal deadline for pulling an item off of Consent is by 7:30 a.m. on Thursdays.

Department Directors will attend the Board meeting only if their department has an agenda item on the Regular Agenda as of 5 p.m. on the meeting day. Therefore, if an item is moved from the Consent Agenda to the Regular Agenda at the start of the meeting (under Agenda Approval) it is unlikely that necessary staff will be available to address questions.

It will be the default practice to waive reading of consent agenda items by the approval of a motion to approve the consent agenda. It is noted that alternatively, the President will read the title only of each Consent item. Pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order, items on the Consent Agenda are non-debatable and therefore, are assumed to have no discussion.

Staff will pull an item from the preliminary agenda when it turns out not to be ripe for action and provide a written update when necessary.

**Special Meetings of the Board-** N/A.



## **IV. Minutes**

### **Executive Session**

Executive Session Minutes will detail the reason for the session, the particular subject matter, the direction given, and a summary.

Minutes will be prepared by staff, reviewed by legal, and presented to the Board in a timely manner that allows the Board to approve the minutes and their eventual release in a timely and lawful manner.

**Regular Meetings of the Board** - *intentionally left blank.*

**Special Meetings of the Board** - *intentionally left blank.*

## **V. Meetings**

### **Executive Session**

Executive Sessions, if needed, are generally reserved for all Regular Meetings at 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Executive sessions will begin on time, and, if held prior to a public session, will end at least five minutes before the start of the public session.

For the purpose of Roll Call, the Village Clerk will use the title and the last name of each Trustee or Village President (i.e. Trustee Smith).

Each agenda item will provide a clear statement of staff recommendations (similar to Regular Agenda Items), or if staff can't come to consensus, then a clear statement of Option A vs Option B, etc. It is important for staff to share viable alternatives, even when there is strong staff consensus for a specific recommendation.

Executive Session time should be used for discussion and not for acquiring excessive amounts of additional information.

After Board direction is provided, the Village Manager will make a statement recapping the direction given.

### **Regular Meetings of the Board**

Regular Meetings are schedule at 7:30 p.m. on the First and Third Mondays, unless the meeting is on a holiday in which case the meeting is on Tuesday.

Meetings of the Village Board shall conclude no later than 10:00 p.m. It is the goal of the Village Board to conclude meetings by 9:30 p.m.

During the months of April, August and December, it is preferred that only 1 meeting is held that month. This is a Regular Meeting on the first Monday of the month only.

For the purpose of discussion during a meeting, it is preferred that the President use the Trustee's first name when recognizing them to speak at a meeting, or among discussion between members of the Village Board or for staff to address the Village Board.

Consideration of an agenda item will begin with the President reading the item and then recognizing staff or citizen board/commission chair, who will provide a brief summary.

Staff or outside expert presentations will be limited to 10 minutes, unless an advance request is made and deemed appropriate for a longer period of time.

At a Regular Meeting, it is preferable to take one round of questions first to determine if there is sufficient information to make a decision.

The Village Attorney will provide clarification on the rules regarding, and expectations related to, a first and second reading of an item.

### **Special Meetings of the Board**

Special Meetings, as needed, are scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on the Second and Fourth Mondays, unless there is a need to convene an Executive Session at the start of the meeting. The Special Meeting may then be Called to Order at 6:30 p.m. and immediately adjourned to an Executive Session prior to reconvening in Open Session at 7:30 p.m.

Special Meetings of the Village Board shall conclude no later than 9:00 p.m. It is the goal of the Village Board to conclude special meetings by 8:30 p.m.

Staff may add regular agenda items to Special Meetings.

## **VI. Board Deliberation**

**Executive Session** - *intentionally left blank.*

### **Regular Meetings of the Board**

Consideration of an agenda item will begin with the President reading the item and then recognizing staff or citizen board/commission chair, who will provide a brief summary.

Following the summary, Board members will have the opportunity to ask questions, and have agreed to try to limit questions to no more than five minutes each.

Following questions, Board members will offer their comments on the item, and have agreed to limit comments to no more than three minutes each.

For questions and comments, the President will call on Trustees to speak in a round-robin format, with the President included at the end of each round-robin if he wishes to ask questions or comment.

Following comments, any Board member who wishes to speak again shall be recognized by the President, and will try to limit those comments to one minute; likewise, the President is included at the end of the comment period, where he may add his own substantive comments, summarize the Board consensus or majority direction, or help an evenly divided Board arrive at a decision.

During a roll-call vote, no additional comments shall be made.

The President, as presiding officer, will keep track of speaking times and may be assisted by the Clerk.

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