



# Village of Oak Park

123 Madison Street  
Oak Park, Illinois 60302  
[www.oak-park.us](http://www.oak-park.us)

## Meeting Minutes

### President and Board of Trustees

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Monday, November 11, 2019

7:00 PM

Village Hall

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#### I. Call to Order

Village President Abu-Taleb called the Meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

#### II. Roll Call

**Present:** 7 - Village President Abu-Taleb, Village Trustee Andrews, Village Trustee Boutet, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Moroney, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla

**Absent:** 0

#### III. Agenda Approval

**It was moved by Village Trustee Boutet, seconded by Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla, to approve the Agenda. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.**

#### IV. Public Comment

George Bailey. Mr. Bailey asked the Board to continue funding the Oak Park Township Youth Interventionist Program. He asked for their rationale for withdrawing those funds and what they would be used for that is more worthwhile.

#### V. Regular Agenda

##### A. [ID 19-346](#) Village Board Review of the Recommended FY20 Budget

Village Manager Pavlicek stated that three meetings of the Finance Committee were held, with good attendance of all Trustees. This is the first Special Meeting of the full Board to review the budget. Additional Special Meetings for the purpose of budget review are scheduled for this Thursday and Monday, November 25. The final recommended budget adoption is scheduled for Monday, December 2, with the following Monday available if additional review is needed. The Public Hearing will be held during the Monday, November 18 Regular Board Meeting.

Village President Abu-Taleb thanked staff for presenting a budget that is no more than a 3% increase in the tax levy.

CFO Steve Drazner stated that the projected beginning General Fund balance is \$12.5 million, which includes a \$2.5 million transfer to the Self-Insured Retention Fund as recommended by the audit. Revenues and expenditures are each budgeted at approximately \$63.7 million.

Village Trustee Andrews commented that at \$3.9 million, the Transfer Tax projection is a

little aggressive. He would like it reduced. There was a discussion regarding possible larger sales in 2020 and the real estate market in general. Village President Abu-Taleb suggested that CFO Drazner make a recommendation based on data of the past ten years, with outlier circumstances removed. Village Trustee Moroney suggested that \$3.5 million would be more accurate; ten years is too long of a period to assess due to the changing economy.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla suggested that because this is the first recorded Board Meeting in terms of budget discussion, the Board should go through the entire budget for transparency. Village President Abu-Taleb disagreed. He suggested that the Board ask staff to address only their biggest concerns.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla asked that the Police Department budget be broken down into the kind of data that the Fire Department presents. CFO Drazner noted where the Chart of Accounts is located in the budget document for easier reference. She asked Police Chief La Don Reynolds to explain why there is a \$1.1 million increase in the 2020 recommended budget. The Budget Analyst for Police explained that the \$1.1 million is based on a fully staffed department and is requested as that every year. Currently, they are not fully staffed, which accounts for the lesser amount in the 2019 Year End Estimate. Chief Reynolds explained the mandatory Mental Health Wellness Check Program that will be implemented in 2020. Village Trustee Boutet asked for clarification on whether the wellness checks are completely confidential. Chief Reynolds stated that they are. She also asked Chief Reynolds if he had the opportunity to talk with the Township regarding the Youth Interventionist Program. He stated that he has not. He explained his role in the program.

Village President Abu-Taleb expressed his appreciation of staff's work. The Trustees concurred.

Village Trustee Taglia asked why contractual services in the Forestry Division have increased. Director of Public Works John Wielebnicki replied that he expects bids to increase for landscaping next year. Village Trustee Boutet asked Mr. Wielebnicki if he has any concerns regarding an adequate salt supply. Mr. Wielebnicki commented that it will be monitored; the current contract allows the Village to increase their order by 20% if needed. Village Trustee Boutet asked about the feasibility of Forestry contracts being combined with those of the Park District. Mr. Wielebnicki stated that they have had conversations.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla asked for the cost of the leaf pick-up program. Mr. Wielebnicki stated that the cost in its entirety is approximately \$330,000. Leaves are pushed to the corners by in-house personnel, then are picked up and disposed of by Waste Management. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla would support ending this program. Mr. Wielebnicki stated that this is a very popular program with residents. The Village is also still responsible for picking up and disposing of leaves that fall in the street. The burden on staff would be too much without contractual services. He noted that a majority of communities allow residents to put leaves in paper bags and they are then picked up. He noted that the program could be reduced to six weeks, but the Village would need resident support. Village Trustee Moroney was in favor of reducing it to six weeks but not canceling it altogether. Mr. Wielebnicki stated that he would come back to the Board with some options next summer.

Village Trustee Buchanan discussed the Greenways Plan. She was interested in knowing what could be done without in order to pay for that next year. Mr. Wielebnicki stated that the priorities this year focused on projects with a bigger public benefit. Village Engineer

Bill McKenna discussed the \$200,000 recommended by the Transportation Commission for the Bike Safety Plan near the high school and noted that the Greenways Plan has been deferred to 2021. He suggested that repairs to Austin may be eligible for Federal grant funding. Funds originally allocated for that project could possibly be freed up for something else. Village Manager Pavlicek stated that she and CFO Drazner would work with Mr. Wielebnicki and Mr. McKenna and come back with a recommendation within a reasonable expenditure limitation. The timelines for requesting the grant, as well as the project, were discussed. Village Trustee Moroney commented that current projects supporting bike infrastructure are not being acknowledged. He is not concerned that the \$200,000 is not in the 2020 budget. He would support efforts for a bigger plan, such as a protected bike lane on Ridgeland. Village Trustee Taglia asked for the overall scope of the project and what additional obligations there would be once they invest the \$200,000. Mr. Wielebnicki commented that it could be significant and include several \$200,000 projects. He also noted that Ridgeland is a State controlled route and it will be a challenge to remove parking to put in bike lanes.

Village President Abu-Taleb would like to schedule a Study Session to discuss a "no shut-off" water service program for those who cannot afford to pay. Village Manager Pavlicek commented that staff has some research to do, such as looking at the Village Code and current guidelines as well as exploring what other communities are doing to get sample best practices. She expects to bring that to the Board in early 2020. Village President Abu-Taleb asked how many accounts get shut off per month. Village Manager Pavlicek indicated that the bi-weekly shut-off list is substantial. CFO Drazner added that most of those scheduled do pay prior to the water actually getting shut off. Village President Abu-Taleb asked if billing could be done monthly versus quarterly. Mr. Wielebnicki stated that it would be helpful as residents wouldn't have to wait three months before discovering they have a leak. He also described plans for developing a "fix network" once all the new meters are installed. This would enable staff to read meters remotely, run reports to identify high usage accounts and give the Village the ability to bill monthly. It will take all of 2020 and 2021 to implement the program.

Village President Abu-Taleb asked where staff is regarding a two-year budget. Village Manager Pavlicek stated that documents for the Public Hearing will be based on what is discussed tonight. However, a second year model based on that will be available for the Board later this week.

Village President Abu-Taleb stated that he had mentioned parking fines several times. He does not think it is fair for the government to double fines within two weeks. The government in general does not allow credit card companies to charge more than 27% interest and it is unfair for the Village to charge a 100% fee for tickets not paid within two weeks. It is not a good way to be welcoming to anyone who lives in the Village. He had previously suggested \$5 for each month it is late until the fine is doubled or 10% a month. When speaking to the Village Manager, she stated that the system does not "know how" to charge per month and that she needs more time. He understands that, but wants this changed as soon as possible. In addition, he believes parking in general in Oak Park is difficult. Parking garages are less convenient but available. Village President Abu-Taleb suggested that the current seven monthly overnight parking passes be increased to 12. He also expressed concern regarding the Parking Pilot Program and would like to revisit that. Village Trustee Boutet noted that these comments were made in the past, and she was under the impression that per Board protocol, this would come back as an ordinance. Village President Abu-Taleb stated that he wants to make sure staff has ample time to make the necessary adjustments. Village Manager Pavlicek described what steps need to be taken.

Village President Abu-Taleb commented that he made a suggestion that the Village stop the day-to-day management of the Farmers Market and have it run by an outside not-for-profit organization. Director of Public Health Mike Charley stated that he was directed by the Village Manager to investigate this in November of 2018. His response memo is included with their materials. Mr. Charley discussed indirect costs to the Village above and beyond the Village's funding. He gave examples of communities that operate their Farmers Markets through a non-for-profit. Village Trustee Boutet was not supportive of this idea. The costs are incidental to the Village versus the benefit to the community. In addition, there is currently no organization interested in funding this. Village President Abu-Taleb clarified that he is not suggesting they cease funding the Farmers Market. He is just interested in investigating whether there is a more efficient way to run it. It is the job of the Board to question the status quo. Village Trustee Andrews further clarified the suggestion. He is interested in exploring options and agrees that they should look through the lens of efficiency. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla stated that asking a not-for-profit to step in is not an efficiency, it's because the Village doesn't want to pay staff to manage it any more. She discussed the benefits of having the Village control the Farmers Market. Mr. Charley described grants that have been awarded to the Village that non-for-profits may apply for as well.

Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla asked for more information regarding proposed bond debt for the Lake Street project and the Police facility renovation. Village Manager Pavlicek stated that the Lake Street project requires the Village to borrow funds. In regards to the Police Station, the current draft of the budget shows \$4 million as a placeholder that would be borrowed if the Board gave direction to engage the architect further in terms of repair, additional construction or new construction. Staff will be presenting that to the Board on November 25 in order to make a decision regarding the placeholder. CFO Drazner explained how the debt is related to the CIP. It is difficult to give an accurate forecast of future debt service.

Village Trustee Boutet requested a letter from the Township stating that the Youth Interventionist Program will continue, despite the Village discontinuing their funding, prior to making a decision. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla asked what the rationale is for that. Village Manager Pavlicek stated that when the Village of River Forest withdrew their funding and wanted to rely on the Township for funding, staff had a discussion and recommended that the Village of Oak Park withdraw as well. They believe that the Township should be paying for and managing the Interventionist Program. Village Trustees Walker-Peddakotla and Boutet do not support discontinuing funding. Village Trustee Andrews stated that he doesn't want to see the program end but believes that the Township has the funding to keep it going. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla stated that it is more cost effective to pay now rather than pay for people going through the criminal justice system. Village Trustee Taglia commented that the Township has \$2 million in their reserves and can afford to pay for it without financial support from the Village. Village Trustee Boutet stated that the collaboration aspect of it is just as important as who funds it. She would like that to continue. Village Trustee Moroney supports the Township paying for the program. Village Trustees Andrews, Buchanan and Boutet would like confirmation from the Township on whether they can fund it on their own prior to withdrawing Village funding. There was consensus to wait for a response from the Township.

Village Trustee Buchanan noted that the Sustainability Fund budget includes funding for the LED street lights, \$90,000 for on-site solar and sustainable materials. She asked why the \$220,000 for energy efficiency for moderate and low income housing was not included. Village Manager Pavlicek stated that recommendation will be coming to the Board at the next meeting. The next draft of the budget will include that. She noted that

it will be run through Development Customer Services. Village Trustee Buchanan commented that there is a lot of money in this fund and she would like to see something more visible for residents, as this fee is coming from their bills. She added that she has been attending the Environment and Energy Commission's meetings and they are not aware of the sustainable materials of energy efficiency initiatives. She was hoping that with their expertise, the commission would be able weigh in on best ways to spend this fund. She's not convinced that is happening, since they didn't even know about about these projects. Village Manager Pavlicek stated that better reporting back from staff is needed. Village Trustee Boutet would like an update on PlanItGreen. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla would like to see a line item in the budget for at least the planning stages for a utility scale solar array. Village Trustee Andrews agreed. Village Trustee Taglia added that the Village should be trying to expend that money at a more rapid pace; to expend at least as much as they're collecting.

In regards to direction for the Housing Center, Village Trustees Boutet, Taglia and Andrews would like to wait for the audit. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla supports funding them regardless of the audit. Village Trustee Andrews is concerned that no plan exists to mitigate issues with the functionality of the Housing Center. He does not want to continue spending public dollars without efficacy. He doesn't believe the Housing Center is affecting integration. It is reasonable to see the results of the audit before making a decision.

Village Manager Pavlicek asked for confirmation from the Board that they would like to meet this Thursday. Village President Abu-Taleb asked if it would make sense to consolidate the items planned for discussion on Thursday with items scheduled for Monday the 25th. There was consensus to not meet on Thursday.

Village Trustee Boutet would like to see the recreational cannabis zoning issue come back sooner rather than later. The longer the Board doesn't act, the longer potential applicants rely on the current ordinance.

## **VI. Adjourn**

**It was moved by Village Trustee Andrews, seconded by Village Trustee Moroney, to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:19 P.M., Monday, November 11, 2019.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**MaryAnn Schoenneman  
Deputy Village Clerk**