



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Monday, July 27, 2020

6:30 PM

Village Hall

I. Call to Order

Village President Abu-Taleb called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. He clarified that the meeting is being held remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions and that it is not prudent to have people present at the Village Board's regular meeting location due to public health concerns related to that outbreak.

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 Andrews, seconded by Village Trustee Boutet, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 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

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

IV. Non-Agenda Public Comment

Kevin Barnhart and Sue Humphreys: Ms. Humphrey's and Mr. Barnhart submitted public comment drawing attention to a new Freedom to Thrive Oak Park report and the public health crisis of policing Black and Brown people, they requested what the village manager's next steps will be regarding public safety/use of force and the Citizen Police Oversight Committee, what the communication plan will be to the public, and a request to remove the "Guide to the Suspicious" on the Village website.

V. Regular Agenda

A. [ID 20-193](#) Discussion of the Police and Fire Pension Actuarial Reports in Preparation for the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget & Levy

Village Manager Pavlicek introduced the annual discussion of the Police and Fire Pension Actuarial Reports in Preparation for the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget & Levy. CFO Drazner introduced Todd Schroeder of Lauterbach & Amen, LLC who presented a pension

funding report. He began with a summary of contribution recommendations and funding percentages. Pension funding percentages have remained fairly consistent, fire is slightly lower from last year while police is slightly higher. For assessing funding needs a five year smooth method is used, which means some of this years results are based on a small portion of asset performances over the last five years. Next it was pointed out that both police and fire have more inactive members than active members to the pension fund, greater for the Fire Department. Pension payments are expected to increase over the next ten years due to a new mortality rate chart and pension plan changes. A new requirement from last year is to assess risk management of pension funds to prevent cash flow problems. Risk Management percentages have decreased slightly from last year. Mr. Schroeder reviewed the demographic changes to understand the impact of new hires and retirements in each fund. This review includes a review of assumptions which attempts to predict when people will retire, disability, life expectancy, payroll increases, and inflation rates. A new mortality table used in this assessment has determined a greater life expectancy for both fire and police. Additional analysis included plan changes. There is a much higher pension-able pay at retirement for Tier II members as a result of recent legislation, this has resulted in an increase of \$500,000 to contributions for Tier II members this year and moving forward. Overall the recommendation is an increase of \$1.3M for pension contributions after all of the considerations summarized. There was brief discussion on potential changes that could be presented after consolidation legislation; actuarial changes could be used to determine contributions as well as possible funding requirement changes that are not known yet. There is legislation that has been proposed to move 90% funding by 2040 to 2050. This would cost communities more money overtime. From a market comparison contributions have increased, when utilizing the five year smooth method the increase appears minimal, however when figures are audited they will look good. The role of the actuarial is to as accurately as possible aim towards sufficient funding of pension funds to meet demand and prepare for the future.

Village President Abu-Taleb asked whether the Village should reconsider reevaluating the discount rate because the market is not performing as well. Mr. Schroeder would recommend keeping an eye on that but the Village is already a little lower than some at 6.75% versus 7%. The unfunded pension obligation translates to approximately \$10.5M in liability, the regular pension obligation is \$2.8M. Benefits have increased, the market has not generated what we need, more dollars are going out than coming in and the discount rate has made the Village look more funded in the past than what was reality. Village President Abu-Taleb believes this is important information for taxpayers to understand. Village Trustee Andrews cautioned that it is important to have an accurate picture of the pension liability rather than look good on paper and cautioned that the Village should consider lowering the discount rate. Village President Abu-Taleb commented that this is a delicate balance and asked Carolyn Clifford for her opinion. Carolyn Clifford is a highly respected Attorney representing police and fire pension funds, she has worked with the Village of Oak Park for many years. She commented that the Village of Oak Park has been smart in determining their assumptions conservatively long before other communities, that with all the additional factors pension funds are absorbing this year she is not concerned that the Village need to lower their discount rate for this year. Village President Abu-Taleb stated his support for police and fire and believes it to be an important commitment to pay pensions responsibly.

B. [MOT 20-042](#) A Motion to Approve the Unaudited Year-to-Date Quarterly Financial Report as of June 30, 2020

CFO Steve Drazner reported on the General Fund Budget-to-Actual revenue analysis for 2015-2020, compared to the amended budget from COVID-19

projections. It is expected that several revenue funds will be negatively impacted by COVID-19 but property taxes are expected to remain more constant. Liquor tax revenue is doing well for the amended budget but considerably lower than previous years. The Natural Gas Tax is lower than amended as homeowners are assumed to be on tighter budgets. Sales and Use Tax Revenues are doing well but Board members were cautioned that current numbers do not reflect the negative affects of COVID-19 just yet because payments will always be three months behind, lower revenue is expected for future quarters. Real Estate Transfer taxes are doing well. Transfer taxes can now be paid online. It is not clear whether we will reach our goals for Utility Tax Revenue, it has already been a trend to see this area go down as more and more people are getting rid of their land lines. Licenses and permits are currently reaching amended budget estimates but remain less than prior years. The CFO acknowledged that he had original hoped some revenue sources would start to show some marginal level of recovery by now had COVID-19 virus cases improved sooner. The Village Manager shared that her view all along has been that the Village should expect to be responding to COVID-19 long term. Income tax revenue is expected to exceed amended numbers but not by much. Adjudication, and fines are two areas that have remained low in response to suspended activities and fines due to COVID-19. Services are expected to meet the amended budget expectations. Overall, the Village reduced expenses by \$1.7M. Contractual fees are on budget, so are materials and supplies. The Parking Fund is taking the largest hit outside of the General Fund with suspended activities, working from home, and suspended fees. The Village has cut parking expenditures to offset that loss as much as possible.

Village Trustee Boutet would appreciate having net information to make it easier to digest this information. Staff is currently working on the FY 2021 proposed budget. The Village Board will see that information in late September. Staff needs the time to gather more information because much of municipal revenue is 3 months behind. Trustee Boutet would appreciate having a big picture worst case scenario to help Board members understand what they have to prepare for. Village Trustee Moroney stated the situation is clear but difficult, the fund balance is going to be low, pension contributions have increased, and revenue is low. Village Board members need to consider every expenditure. It is important for taxpayers to understand the difficult choices that Board members are making. Village Trustee Boutet summarized that it is important to remember that every time they vote to suspend a fee we will be turning around and collecting it in taxes.

It was moved by Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla, seconded by Village Trustee Andrews, to approve this motion. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 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

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

C. [ID 20-199](#) Discussion of the Overnight Parking Ban

Village Manager Pavlicek introduced the discussion of the overnight parking ban, requested by Trustee Andrews, Buchanan, and Walker-Peddakotla.

Gretchen Kenagy: Ms. Kenagy would like the Village Board to seek community input before consideration of lifting the overnight parking ban, to take into consideration different parking needs and challenges for different areas of the Village.

Nara Schoenberg: Ms. Schoenberg is in support of temporary parking changes due to COVID-19 but not for long-term.

Kristen Woods: Ms. Woods feels that many of the parking restrictions are inequitable and unnecessary.

Village Trustee Andrews asked for a discussion on overnight parking that would seek to address a more equitable solution to overnight parking availability and restrictions throughout the Village without changing the character of the Village overall. He believes the Village Board is prepared to tackle this conversation thoughtfully. He would like to see a timeline for having this discussion. Village Trustee Andrews expressed his support for extending the overnight parking moratorium until the end of September in the interim. Village Trustee Buchanan agreed the conversation is worth having and supports the suggestion to extend the moratorium.

Village Trustee Taglia suggested it might make sense to extend the moratorium until September 15, 2020 for consistency with a State of Emergency order. Village Trustee Andrews feels the additional two weeks provides the Village with the opportunity to solidify a schedule for more permanent solutions.

Village Trustee Boutet thanked Tammie Grossman for the very helpful history of the parking ban which provides needed context for this conversation. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla echoed appreciation for the history of the overnight parking ban. Ms. Walker-Peddakotla expressed concern for some of the historic rationale for the overnight parking ban suggesting that it aids public safety, she does not see the connection. She does not understand the need for streets to be empty as a more urban community next to the city of Chicago. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla does not support an end date for the overnight parking moratorium due to the uncertainty of COVID-19 and financial challenges it poses to families. Additionally, she would be willing to begin conversations based on community input from previous studies, she asked what has really changed. Village Trustee Taglia would like to understand the financial impact of continuing the moratorium for the Village budget. Village Manager Pavlicek summarized the different parking revenues and cautioned that ongoing changes to these revenue sources does affect what can be paid for with that revenue source, she stated it is all very intertwined with other Village services. Additionally, the Village Manager stated changes that would call for adjustment from residents and likely complaints would be how loosening of the overnight parking ban would affect street cleaning and snow removal. She also explained the unique challenges posed to residents who live in a business district and how releasing of bans in those locations would make it very difficult for them. Development Customer Services Director Tammie Grossman added that parking permits are normally sold out and currently they are at 50-60% capacity, which implies that people are parking in other districts that would normally have an overnight parking ban. Ms. Grossman - explained how the parking pilot was designed to provide the information that has been

part of an ongoing discussion for many decades, including many concerns shared by the Village Board. COVID-19 has interrupted the test sample which would have otherwise provided results of the parking pilot before now. Due to the suspension of restriction for COVID-19 the parking pilot would need to almost start over in order to survey residents for results with integrity for the process.

Village Trustee Moroney commented on the complexity of parking challenges in Oak Park. He believes many Oak Parkers value clear streets at night. He believes it to be an appeal to purchasing property here. He suggested there should be incentives to landlords to provide parking for tenants. He cautioned that the affects of removing the overnight parking ban may not be felt immediately but inevitably will become more problematic overtime. He shared a suggestion that he has heard Village Trustee Andrews mention previously, the thought that the Village could open up a limited number of passes for residents to purchase and park in areas that would otherwise have an overnight parking ban. He stated he would be open to discussing that option. Village President Abu-Taleb summarized the discussion over the overnight parking ban for consensus including directing staff to develop a plan and timeline for gathering community input and bringing back to the Village Board for further discussion. Additionally, there was direction provided to extend the moratorium on the overnight parking ban until September 30, 2020.

D. [RES 20-184](#) A Resolution Declaring an Emergency Affecting the Public Health through September 14, 2020 Due to the Outbreak of the COVID-19 Disease in the State of Illinois

Village Manager Pavlicek explained the difference between a "State of Emergency" and a "Stay at Home Order". On the agenda this evening is a "Declaration of State of Emergency" in response to an increase in cases, particularly of young people. The declaration permits Village staff to access the tools they need to respond quickly to the pandemic.

Constance Contursi: Ms. Contursi expressed strong concern for small businesses, as a small business owner herself, and the general health of residents related to a potential COVID-19 shut-down of businesses and activities.

Mary Ann Bender, President of OPRF Chamber of Commerce: Ms. Bender thanked Village staff and the Board for prioritizing public health. With the understanding that this order is not intending to immediately close businesses they would ask that data collected by the Village, that can potentially reduce the risk of a shut-down, be shared and genuine communication and collaboration with the business community take place.

Dory Rodriguez: Ms. Rodriguez shared strong concern for doing anything possible to prevent the need for business closures due to COVID-19.

Sara Schmitz: Ms. Schmitz commended the Village and members of the community for taking the pandemic seriously. She cautioned that closing of businesses would be potentially detrimental to all and all decisions should be evidence based.

Sue Reynolds-Frost: Ms. Reynolds-Frost would like to see more transparency on decision making related to shut-downs in response to COVID-19. She believes a shut-down would be detrimental to the business community.

Public Health Director Mike Charley updated the Village Board on current COVID-19 data

and stated that the Health Department is concerned with a spike in the 14-day average which has increased from 1.3 cases/day to 3.9 cases/day as of today. Additional concern is related to data supporting 65% of cases being below the age of 40 and an increase in cases for under the age of 20. A declaration of a state of emergency does not include closing businesses but is intended to assist with raising awareness that numbers are going up and need for caution before the Governor feels compelled to make the decision to close businesses. Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla asked whether it can be assumed that the increase is from an increase in decisions to test. Mr. Charley shared that the information they have from contact tracing is the link to the virus is most often a family member and indoor activities. Ms. Walker-Peddakotla questioned what the risky behaviors are that he had previously eluded to in an email for younger cases. Mr. Charley stated the assumption is that younger people may be finding it more challenging to adhere to diligent mask wearing and remaining socially distant. He is in support of the declaration. He believes that if the Board approves this declaration it is effectively communicating to the community the seriousness of the pandemic and places it as a priority for staff for residence awareness. Village Trustee Boutet stated that in her opinion the order is specifically to provide staff with the authority to make purchases in response to the pandemic. She does not feel it is necessary to provide this authority because she does not understand what purchases would be necessary that are not already authorized. Village Trustee Boutet asked for clarification on what zoning relief would apply in reference to the order and related to the pandemic. The Village Manager repeated from earlier remarks that the order allows for staff to accommodate businesses, such as daycares in need of special use space to operate safely under COVID-19, without the additional burden of the special use permitting process. Village Trustee Boutet does not agree that the burden is high to put these items on a Board agenda for approval. The Village Manager's response was that process is burdensome during a pandemic and that she has need for the Village of Oak Park to be a more efficient organization. Village Trustee Buchanan was looking for clarity in understanding the need for this order and examples from the Village Manager provided her that clarity. Village Manager Andrews does not understand what the down side is to this declaration. Village Trustee Moroney did acknowledge that this declaration is proactive and has caused some angst in the community under the circumstances. He does believe it is important from the business community to understand that this declaration is not calling for an immediate shut-down. Village Manager Pavlicek did clarify that they do have every intention of responding to a particular business if they learn through contract tracing or other avenues that a business needs to work towards better compliance in order to safely serve their clients. It is staff intention to be proactive to respond to problems in the business community or elsewhere as needed.

It was moved by Village Trustee Andrews, seconded by Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla, that this Resolution be adopted. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 6 - Village President Abu-Taleb, Village Trustee Andrews, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Moroney, Village Trustee Taglia, and Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla

NAYS: 1 - Village Trustee Boutet

ABSENT: 0

VI. Adjourn

Village Trustee Boutet asked to be heard regarding a potential "Open Meetings Act" violation. Village President Abu-Taleb did not hear the

Trustee with the absence of "Call to the Board" on the agenda.

It was moved by Village Trustee Andrews, seconded by Village Trustee Moroney, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 4 - Village President Abu-Taleb, Village Trustee Andrews, Village Trustee Moroney, and Village Trustee Taglia

NAYS: 3 - Village Trustee Boutet, Village Trustee Buchanan, and Village Trustee Walker-Peddakotla

ABSENT: 0

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Scaman, Village Clerk