



Village of Oak Park

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

Meeting Minutes

Finance Committee

Monday, October 28, 2019

6:30 PM

Room 101

1. Call To Order

Village President Abu-Taleb called the Meeting to order at 6:34 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Present: Finance Committee Members Village Trustee Boutet (6:58), Village Trustee Moroney, Village Trustee Taglia and Village President Abu-Taleb

Also Present: Village Trustee Andrews, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Manager Pavlicek, Village Attorney Paul Stephanides, CFO Steve Drazner, Director of Adjudication Robert Anderson, Director of Communications David Powers, Director of Human Resources Kira Tchang, Community Relations Coordinator Cassandra Hurt, Community Relations Coordinator Cassandra Hurt, Director of Development Customer Services Tammie Grossman, Eric Wagner of Visit Oak Park, Tracy Wik and Athena Williams of the Oak Park Regional Housing Center, Fire Chief Tom Ebsen, Deputy Fire Chief Peter Pilafas, IT Director Alvin Nepomuceno, Police Chief La Don Reynolds, Public Works Director John Wielebnicki

3. Public Comment

Paul Sakol. Mr. Sakol believes that cutting funding to the Oak Park Regional Housing Center (OPRHC) is contrary to the Board's recent commitment to racial equity.

Geoffrey Greer. Mr. Greer understands the need for cuts. However, as a landlord of several apartment buildings, the OPRHC provides a valuable referral service in regards to affirmative moves. He is against the Village cutting their support.

Amy Dean. Ms. Dean expressed concern that the Housing Programs Advisory Committee (HPAC) was not informed that this was being considered. She also believes that the Village should give the new Executive Director an opportunity to share her vision.

Jim Peters. Mr. Peters thanked the Board for their progress towards reaching their budgeting goals. However, cutting funding to the Housing Center defies the idea of strategic budgeting.

Daniel Lauber. Mr. Lauber stated that this is the worst possible time to cut the Village's contribution to OPRHC by 75%. He explained how online services do not have a reputation for encouraging affirmative move work. It is a small price to keep diversity in Oak Park.

Diana Lauber. Ms. Lauber discussed Oak Park's All American City Award from 1973 and noted that the work of the OPRHC is the primary reason for receiving that. She spoke against reducing the Village's contribution.

Diana Lauber, on behalf of Paul Hamer. Mr Hamer summarized the functions of the OPRHC and believes this is a strategic slow move by the Village toward eliminating the Housing Center.

Stuart Barnes Jamieson. Mr. Jamieson spoke in support of maintaining full funding to the OPRHC. He believes they provide an essential service to Oak Park and the Village should support their work.

Bruce Kleinman. Mr. Kleinman is concerned about property taxes. The Village needs to be fiscally responsible. The OPRHC was historically important; if it is still important he would like to see the data on that.

Seamus Ford. Mr. Ford stated that Oak Park's "brand" is diversity. Because of the work of the Housing Center, Oak Park has never had to work at attracting people to live there.

Cameron Gearen. Ms. Gearen urged the Board to fully fund the Housing Center. She is the landlord of a 4-flat and relies on the Housing Center for guidance.

James Pfluecke. Mr. Pfluecke commented that cutting this funding is essentially closing the OPRHC.

Gavin Kearney. Mr. Kearney strongly supports the efforts of the Housing Center. Integration is largely the reason he and others have chosen to live in Oak Park.

Kitty Conklin. Ms. Conklin discussed introducing processes that streamline activities and increase efficiencies. She values the history of the OPRHC, but taxes are a bigger threat to diversity than a lack of Housing Center services.

4. Approval of Minutes

There were no Minutes.

5. New Business

A. [ID 19-323](#)

Finance Committee Review of the Draft Recommended FY20 Budget

Village Manager Pavlicek stated that the General Fund, which includes all Operating Departments, and the Special Revenue Funds would be reviewed. She gave an overview of the budget process and the timeline of past meetings. She noted that Oak Park will be 118 years old next year, and the public infrastructure is older than that. The CIP is reviewed first in order to be responsive to maintenance of infrastructure. The Board asked that staff maintain a 3% maximum increase in the tax levy and noted that the Village's portion is less than 15% of total property tax dollars. This budget maintains a 3% increase. The first priority after infrastructure is funding pensions; the second is debt service funds. Property taxes are the primary source of revenue for the General Fund. Other sources include miscellaneous use taxes and fees. Salaries and benefits comprise 75% of General Fund expenses; contractor services is 14%. Public safety - Police, Fire and Public Works - constitutes 80% of salaries and benefits. There are nine Collective Bargaining Units. All labor contracts are current. The Village has made significant progress towards building and maintaining a cash reserve for emergency situations. Village Manager Pavlicek gave examples of such situations. She noted recommendations for reduced funding to a number of partner agencies for 2020. Staff is not recommending funding of the Township's Youth Interventionist Program as well as

maintaining a reduced level of funding to the Oak Park Economic Development Corporation. In addition, staff is not recommending funding to the Oak Park Regional Housing Center (OPRHC) other than the \$163,439 in CDBG funding authorized in September 2019. She discussed their non-compliance with the previous agreement.

Village Trustee Boutet does not want to remove funding for the Township's Youth Interventionist Program until she is sure that the Township can maintain that without the Village's contributions.

CFO Steve Drazner noted that the levy that will be adopted includes the Library's; the Village's part is presented with a 3% increase. He discussed increases in revenue of several accounts within the General Fund.

Adjudication

Director Robert Anderson stated that there is not much change in his budget from 2019 to 2020, other than an increase in labor costs and external support. This is related to the shifting of data from old internal software to the CityView and Passport platforms. The license fees will be ongoing. He discussed looking into programs outside of Oak Park for juveniles who are non-residents and sentenced to community service. Village President Abu-Taleb questioned the attitude and approach of the judges towards residents. Mr. Anderson stated that he is consistently working on improving customer service. He is looking into training for the judges through HR and noted that two of them are newer to their jobs.

Village Manager's Office, Administrative Services

CFO Drazner stated that this department also includes Communications, Human Resources and Legal. Village Manager Pavlicek commented that an increased workload is expected in 2020. Projects include racial equity training, a racial equity assessment and negotiations for several union contracts. Less funding is being requested for 2020 due to withdrawal of funding for the Youth Interventionist Program. Full funding for the IGA with Early Childhood Collaboration is being maintained. Funding for the Frank Lloyd Wright Trust will be at a lower rate in 2020. In addition, support for Boards and Commissions has been reduced. Village Trustee Boutet stated that GARE training has to include training for employees and the Board. Village Manager Pavlicek commented that it is not feasible to train all employees with the Board. There was discussion. Village Manager Pavlicek agreed that training nearly 400 employees would require some baseline training with the staff. Village Trustee Boutet would prefer training 35 to 40 top leaders and having them train their employees. There are funds for training set aside in the HR budget. Subject to the results of the RFP, staff will know whether it can be accommodated within the budgeted amount. Village Trustee Taglia asked for the funding amount for the Youth Interventionist Program. Village Manager Pavlicek stated it was approximately \$61,000 in 2019. She explained what External Support entailed for the benefit of Village Trustee Buchanan.

Communications

Director David Powers stated that the only major change from last year is certain steps that need to be taken regarding the website. The website server is at end of life. The bigger obstacle is that the operating system, Drupal 7, will no longer be supported by the end of next year and staff needs to move to Drupal 8. That will be supported for three to five years. In addition, security updates are constant. He asked if perhaps the Board would want to consider replacing the website. He has put aside \$50,000 as a placeholder for that. Village Trustee Boutet was supportive of investing in a new website, such as OpenGov. Mr. Powers explained how data is displayed on that website through third parties. Village Trustee Andrews suggested creating a need versus want document to

strategically consider what the Village would want in a new website and evaluate how to accomplish that. Village Manager Pavlicek outlined the process in which a new website vendor would be chosen. Mr. Powers discussed where website traffic is coming from. There was discussion. Village President Abu-Taleb summarized that the Board would like a website that is visual, intuitive and user-friendly.

Human Resources

Director Kira Tchang stated that the 2020 budget will be a decrease from 2019, even though they are looking to add another position to the department. That position will be funded through the Health Insurance Fund. Staff has worked hard to keep their healthcare costs low. They are looking to stabilize those costs and the person in the new position will continue to focus on that work through wellness initiatives. She believes that will keep current employees happy and healthy, as well as attract new ones. There are no other significant changes other than \$22,000 budgeted for training. This is not specifically for racial equity training but is available to go towards that. Ms. Tchang and Village Manager Pavlicek clarified how the new employee will be funded through the Health Insurance Fund. Village Trustee Boutet commented that the Village has an EAP for these types of things. She asked for more details regarding the duties. Ms. Tchang stated that this person would focus on the benefit programs the Village currently offers and manage the worker's comp program in a more robust way with a focus on improving safety and wellness. Village President Abu-Taleb stated that the only way to deliver good service to residents is to have good people working at the Village of Oak Park. He feels that the Village has a really good work force and looks forward to attracting more of the right people.

Legal

Village Attorney Stephanides stated that there are no significant changes for 2020.

Community Relations

Community Relations Coordinator Cassandra Hurt stated there are no significant increases in 2020. Village Trustee Boutet stated that she envisions the Community Relations Department taking a bigger role in advancing equity. Ms. Hurt stated that she and Director Cedric Melton have been looking at the equity piece and it is a significant undertaking. They will work in tandem with the Human Resources Department in terms of training.

Development Customer Services

Director Tammie Grossman stated that this department has five divisions. The Parking and Mobility Services Division was discussed at a prior meeting. Tonight she is addressing the Administrative Services, Permit Processing, Neighborhood Services and Planning Divisions. Expenses are remaining stable. Contractual Services will decrease, as the contract with HR Green will be lower in 2020. Village President Abu-Taleb commented that parking continues to be problematic for many residents. He would like the revenue from parking fines to be looked at; he strongly disagrees with charging a 100% penalty after a ticket is two weeks late. He would like for the Board to consider restructuring fines in such a way where the penalty goes up 10% for each month it is late. In addition, he feels that allowing people to park overnight three nights per month free and seven nights for \$7 should be increased to five free nights and 13 or 14 nights at \$7. He acknowledged that the overnight parking ban is important to maintain but would like to make it easier for people to live and do business in the community. He discussed this with the Board at a prior meeting and hoped that the budget would come back with an option regarding managing the levy without these fines. Mr. Drazner stated that these fines amount to \$2.5 million. Village President Abu-Taleb stated that most of this is not collected. He wants the Board and staff to look at this in a different way because it is not

fair to the people who live in communities with high taxes. Mr. Drazner noted that he has started an analysis and it will be released to the Board after the proper review. Village President Abu-Taleb would also like to bring back the parking pilot and discuss some of the issues that are not working in it. Ms. Grossman stated that the Transportation Commission is meeting this evening to discuss that and recommendations will be brought back to the Board. She also discussed the status of the bike sharing program in her work plan.

Village Manager Pavlicek interjected that staff wanted to schedule some time for the Housing Center to give a presentation. Other partner agencies were invited but will not give presentations; this could be scheduled for a subsequent meeting in November if the Board chooses. Village Trustee Taglia requested brief quarterly reports from all partner agencies. Village Manager Pavlicek stated that she can create a template and include that requirement in the contracts.

Eric Wagner of Visit Oak Park discussed their 2019 accomplishments and plans for 2020. Village Manager Pavlicek added that Visit Oak Park is funded by hotel/motel tax revenue.

Tracy Wik, President of the Board of Directors of the Oak Park Regional Housing Center, discussed changes implemented and planned for the organization. Executive Director Athena Williams gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding their strategic plan. She noted that they are looking to build relationships with other partners, create transitional systems to help ease staff turnover, provide staff training and improve technology in terms of data collection and the client outreach platform. They will also continue promoting and sustaining racial integration and fair housing in Oak Park. There was discussion regarding their new app, Movesmart. Ms. Wik and Ms. Williams answered questions from the Board. There was discussion.

Finance

CFO Drazner discussed the Turnover Savings Account in the General Fund, which comes from unused salaries of vacant positions. He noted that there will be less transferred from the General Fund into the Health Insurance Fund in 2020. There is \$75,000 in the External Support Account that can be used for the OpenGov software if the Board desires. There was consensus to keep the placeholder. He stated that approximately 510 patients have been affected by the ambulance billing issue, where Oak Park residents were billed after payment was received from their insurance. The total is approximately \$120,000. He asked for direction on whether to start issuing refunds. Village Manager Pavlicek gave a summary of the ordinance change. Village Trustee Boutet commented that it was wrongly collected, as much as they don't want to lose revenue. Village President Abu-Taleb directed him to start the refund process. There was Board consensus. He summarized various transfers and noted that will be discussed in detail at a later date.

Fire

Chief Tom Ebsen stated that the total budget for 2020 is personnel and equipment. They are not requesting any personnel changes. There are some increased equipment costs, as they are currently running three ambulances versus two, and keep another in reserve. A placeholder of \$300,000 has been set for the department's self-contained breathing apparatuses, which are reaching the end of their service lives. A grant of \$290,000 has been awarded to cover that cost. Chief Ebsen explained the rationale behind having three ambulances in service. Deputy Chief Pete Pilafas discussed getting additional State funding for Medicaid transports.

Information Technology

Director Alvin Nepomuceno gave an overview of major projects planned for 2020. These include the Fiber Wide Area Network project, the Microsoft Office 365 upgrade, Windows 10 upgrade and ongoing core data system upgrades. He discussed increases in third party license fees.

Police

Chief La Don Reynolds stated that in 2020 they will continue with the plan for 21st Century Policing. A new officer wellness program will bring a mental health expert in-house to interview each police officer. He discussed the program and believes this will give the officers the opportunity to seek help if necessary. He described 21st Century Policing and initiatives he would like to implement, including a possible police survey to determine how the police are doing. Village President Abu-Taleb appreciates the department investing in training.

Public Health

Director Mike Charley stated that although the budget is down, it is not detrimental to the Village. Village President Abu-Taleb stated that the Village should not be running the Farmers Market. He would like the Board to consider having a private non-profit organization running it and would like to know the pros and cons of that. Mr. Charley stated that he did some research at the request of Village Manager Pavlicek and provided her with a memo listing several options. Many successful farmers markets are run by not-for-profit organizations. Village President Abu-Taleb asked that the memo be emailed to the Board and perhaps they should have a discussion. Village Trustee Boutet does not understand why anything should be changed. Village Trustee Taglia commented that perhaps it should be looked at, as it does take a lot of effort from staff. He does not see a problem with having a discussion. In response to Village Trustee Buchanan's concern regarding water filters, Village Manager Pavlicek noted that the Board of Health's work plan covers that information, which will be brought to the Board separately.

Public Works

Director John Wielebnicki stated that the proposed 2020 budget will go down approximately one-half a percent as compared to the amended 2019 budget. That is primarily due to tree removal and trimming expenses down to where they have been historically. In addition, there are no expenses for Dole Library anymore. He discussed changes in personnel, including the addition of an Assistant Director. Salt prices have gone up significantly; he will only be requesting what he anticipates using instead of 20 percent more in case of a severe winter. Mr. Wielebnicki answered questions from the Board.

Village President Abu-Taleb asked if there were any questions regarding any of the Special Revenue Funds. There were no questions.

Village Manager Pavlicek stated she will provide an update on Special Service Area 1, Downtown Oak Park. She gave an overview of the Sustainability Fund. Spending will be increased by \$220,000, which is due to the Home Efficiency Grant Program. Staff will be bringing that to the Board. She gave a brief summary of the program. She also stated that CFO Drazner will be bringing an analysis regarding restricted funds.

6. Old Business

There was nothing to discuss.

7. Adjournment

It was moved by Village Trustee Boutet, seconded by Village Trustee Moroney, to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:07 P.M., Monday, October 28, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,

MaryAnn Schoenneman
Deputy Village Clerk