



Agenda Item Summary

File #: ORD 24-139, **Version:** 1

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Reviewed By

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Agenda Item Title

An Ordinance Amending Chapter 20 (“Public Health”), Article 7 (“Garbage, Weeds and Littering”), Section 20-7-2 (“Storage and Collection of Garbage, Refuse, Yard Waste and Recyclable Materials for Residential Buildings Containing Five Units or Less; Storage and Collection of Yard Waste for All Buildings”) of the Oak Park Village Code to Provide a One-Time Leaf Collection Program Credit

Overview

This Ordinance proposes a one-time credit of \$29.04 for all residential refuse collection program participants to be applied on the last bill of the 2024. \$29.04 is equal to 12 months of the monthly fee residents pay for the annual fall leaf program.

Recommendation

Adopt the Ordinance.

Background

At the June 18, 2024 Board meeting, staff presented the option of issuing a one-time credit to all residential refuse program participants in Oak Park in order to offset the potential financial burdens associated with transitioning to a bagging program model for Fall Leaf Collection in 2024. There was consensus among the trustees to consider implementation of the credit at a later meeting. This item presents the necessary ordinance language changes to facilitate the credit. The proposed credit would be applied to participants’ last bill of 2024 and is equal to 12 months of the monthly fee residents pay for the annual fall leaf program. This credit corresponds to the cost of approximately 58 landscape bags.

Fiscal Impact

In 2024, \$2.42 from each customer’s refuse rate per month is collected by the Village to cover the Fall Leaf Collection Program costs. The proposed 12-month credit equates to \$29.04 per customer. The one-time credit will be issued through the Village’s billing software and automatically appear on the customer’s final quarterly water bill of 2024. The total cost to the Village to credit all customers is \$325,248. The Environmental Services Enterprise Fund fund balance has sufficient funds to cover the proposed credit. The Environmental Services Enterprise Fund maintains a fund balance to cover unexpected costs that would exceed budget expectations. These unexpected costs typically cover extreme weather events or other unknowns like an issue with contractors or disposal. Staff is confident that there are sufficient funds to cover this proposed rebate and still provide financial cover for any unexpected situations.

DEI Impact

The historic pile program model was found to conflict with the Village Board Goals related to Community Health & Safety; Vibrant, Diverse, Connected Neighborhoods; and Sustainability & Resiliency. The pile program model was also determined to be unaligned with the Climate Ready Oak Park (CROP) and Vision Zero plans.

The Village acknowledges and values the diverse community in Oak Park and has considered the unique challenges that many residents face in their daily lives. Village staff is performing ongoing engagement with community partners and citizen groups to develop supportive programming for the bagging program transition through an equity lens and ensure that residents in need have adequate opportunities for assistance.

This one-time credit will address financial concerns related to the cost of supplies and landscaping services required for residents to comply with the updated Fall Leaf Collection Program guidelines. In tandem with issuing this credit, the Village has partnered with Oak Park Ace Hardware stores to issue coupons for discounted leaf collection tools and supplies. This initiative will return funds to all single-family residents, ensuring that vulnerable community members receive equal benefits, and supports the local economy and small businesses. Residents are encouraged to use the credit towards the purchase of necessary materials and/or to hire leaf collection services.

Alternatives

The Village Board can delay action to gain additional information.

Previous Board Action

At the November 20, 2023 meeting, the Board raised multiple safety and sustainability concerns with the existing Fall Leaf Collection Program, including hazards such as vehicle fires, impaired visibility for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, flooding events, and greenhouse gas emissions from the heavy equipment required to operationalize the current model. The Board directed Public Works staff to research alternative program models and develop an informational presentation.

Staff returned to present the alternative leaf bagging program on March 12, 2024. The Board approved the change and directed staff to move forward with the transition (ID 24-171).

Staff returned to the Board on April 30, 2024, and presented A Resolution Approving an Amendment to the Independent Contractor Agreement with Lakeshore Recycling Systems, LLC to Change the Fall Leaf Collection Program Option and Authorizing its Execution (RES 24-180).

Staff also presented an Ordinance Amending Chapter 20 ("Public Health"), Article 7 ("Garbage, Weeds and Littering") Section 20-7-1 ("Definitions") and Section 20-7-2 ("Storage and Collection of Garbage, Refuse, Yard Waste and Recyclable Materials for Residential Buildings Containing Five Units or Less; Storage and Collection of Yard Waste for All Buildings") of the Oak Park Village Code Regarding the Village of Oak Park's Annual Fall Leaf Collection (ORD 24-118) at the same meeting. Both items were adopted at the April 30, 2024 Board meeting.

In response to a motion to delay the implementation of this program change to 2025, staff presented the Leaf

Collection Engagement Campaign to the Board at the June 18, 2024 meeting. This campaign is being executed by Village staff with the assistance of a5 Branding & Digital and incorporates feedback from ongoing outreach and engagement. The motion to delay implementation did not pass. Therefore, the Board directed staff to carry on with the program transition as planned in 2024.

Citizen Advisory Commission Action

Public Works staff attended the Aging in Community Commission meeting on April 11, 2024, and the Disability Access Commission meeting on April 24, 2024, to discuss the anticipated impacts of the bagging program on Oak Park residents. Residents in the aging and disability community face a unique variety of challenges in daily life that will be considered when developing policies and programs. The discussions raised concerns about the financial burden of landscape bags/services, the physical labor needed to bag leaves, and the best methods for communicating the updated requirements and opportunities for assistance.

The commissions provided helpful suggestions for ways in which the Village can support these groups, including implementation of a 24-hour hotline to report leaf bags that are blocking walkways, development of an assistance/volunteer program for those who are unable to achieve compliance, and dissemination of discounted/complimentary landscape bags during the transition. Staff continues to work with these commissions to ensure equitable program design and will return for follow-up discussions at later meetings.

Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments

N/A

Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

Village staff met with Oak Park Township Senior Services staff on April 23, 2024, to discuss potential partnerships and programs for assisting seniors with Fall Leaf Collection. The Township provided insight into the unique physical and financial challenges that seniors may face with the bagging program and offered to support the Village in several ways. The Township offered to provide targeted outreach via ads in their new bi-monthly newsletter with approximately 3,800 subscribers, time slots at their popular Dine-In Lunch Program to deliver presentations on the program regulations and opportunities for assistance, and a sharing of educational materials at tabling events such as the Oak Park Farmers' Market.

Village staff also met with the Oak Park Public Library (OPPL) Environmental Programming Specialist on June 21, 2024, to discuss additional partnership opportunities including sharing outreach materials at the library's Environmental Hub, providing paper applications and technical assistance for enrolling in the Village's supportive programs, and offering educational information at community events.