

# PROTOCOLS

Adopted May 2009

Amended June 2010

Adopted July 22, 2013

Amended May, 2014

Adopted June 16, 2014

Adopted September 21, 2015

These protocols are meant to provide general rules of engagement for the President and the 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. These guidelines will serve as a framework for conducting efficient and effective Board meetings, for proper use of communication tools such as e-mail, 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.

## I. Executive Session

### A. Agenda preparation

- Staff will limit the *number* of agenda items so the Board can focus on preparing for the items that can be taken up in the time allotted
- Staff will set a reasonable amount of *time to be spent* 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 preliminary agenda topics by the Tuesday prior to the Executive Session to include number of agenda items, the order, and the time to be spent on each agenda item
- Board feedback on preliminary agenda is due back to staff within 48 hours
- Staff will pull on item from the 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.*
- Staff will alert the public at such time as the length of an executive session discussion would result in a delay in the start time of the meeting.
- Staff will hold a review of the current permissible executive session parameters in public meeting annually.

### B. Board Direction to Staff

- Each agenda item will provide a clear statement of staff recommendation (similar to regular agenda items), or if staff can't come to consensus, then a clear statement of Option A v. Option B, etc. It is important for staff for 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, Village Manager will make a statement recapping the direction given.

#### C. Detailed Staff Memoranda

- 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.

#### D. Minutes

- 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 minutes and their eventual release in a timely and lawful manner

#### E. Meetings

- Meetings of the Village Board shall be concluded no later than 10:30 p.m.
- 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 Salzman)
- 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.
- The Board Meeting Calendar should be a discussion item as a part of the Regular Meeting Agenda to determine topics/subjects for upcoming Special Meeting approximately six weeks in advance.
- 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.
- Regular Meetings are scheduled at 7:30 pm on the First and Third Mondays, unless the meeting is on a holiday in which case the meeting is on Tuesday.
- Executive Sessions, if needed, are generally reserved for 6:30-7:30 p.m. prior to all Regular Meetings.
- Special Meetings, as needed, are scheduled at 7:00pm on the Second and Fourth Mondays, unless there is a need for an Executive Session in advance of the meeting. The Special Meeting may then be delayed until the Executive Session is over (the start time for executive session would be 6:30p.m.). Staff should avoid the addition of regular agenda items on special meetings.
- 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.
- 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

## II. Regular Meetings

### A. Agenda Preparation

- Staff will limit the *number* of agenda items so the Board can realistically address them in the time allotted for the meeting
- Staff will put agenda items in an *order* that will 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 provide preliminary agenda by the Tuesday prior to meeting to include number of agenda items, the order, and the time to be spent on each agenda item
- Board feedback on preliminary agenda is due back to staff by noon Thursdays. A Board member may also request additional information about an agenda item following receipt of the draft agenda by email which draft agenda is inclusive of the detailed item overview.
- Staff will pull an item from the agenda when it turns out not to be ripe for action and provide a written update when necessary
- On Tuesdays, the Board will receive an electronic copy of the draft agenda for the meetings scheduled for the following week.
- On Tuesday, the draft agenda will include a summary statement for every agenda item.
- To add a new item not shown or to remove an item completely, the President individually or a Trustee with the concurrence 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 Manager to discuss the addition or removal of an agenda item.
- On Fridays, the agenda is finalized and made public. The agenda is generally posted prior to 5 p.m. at Village Hall, on the Village web-site. At the same time the website materials are posted, they are also available to the Board via the Granicus application on iPad. The agenda materials are also emailed to the press no later than Friday.
- Questions 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. on the day of the meeting. This can be submitted via email to the Board email. The VMO will coordinate and provide 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 day as the meeting, a hard-copy of the answer will be provided for every member of the Board at their seat in the Council Chambers.
- 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.
- Items on the Regular Agenda will be discussed. Staff associated with these items will be present at the meeting.

- Staff will estimate *on the Board's copy of the agenda only* and anticipated length of discussion for each item
- 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.

#### B. Consent Agenda

- Between Tuesday and Friday, any Board member can request that items on the Consent be moved to the Regular or vice versa. This request can be submitted electronically to the Village Board email. This is generally done 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 noon Thursday prior to a Monday meeting to allow for the agenda posted to the public to reflect the meeting agenda.
- It will be the default practice to waive reading of consent agenda items by the approval of a motion to waive the reading of the Consent Agenda. It is noted that alternatively, the President will read each Consent Agenda item. Pursuant to Roberts Rules of Order, items on the Consent Agenda are non-debatable and therefore, are assumed to have no discussion. Only the titles of each item will be read.
- Items on the Consent Agenda will not have any staff present at the meeting.
- One roll call vote will be taken for all items on the Consent Agenda.
- Liquor Licenses 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).

#### C. Public Comment

- In keeping with existing Board policy, any 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 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 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 agenda item for which a Public

Hearing has taken place (or will take place) may be limited to three 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.

#### D. Staff/Outside Experts Speaking Limits

- Staff or outside expert presentations will be limited to 10 minutes, unless an advance request is made and deemed appropriate for 20 minutes

#### E. Board Deliberation

- 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 brief summary
- Following the agenda 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's 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

#### F. First/Second Reading

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

### III. Special Meetings

- Agenda preparation, speaking time limits, and Board direction, same as above.
- Public Comment will be allowed for agenda items as well as non-agenda public comment. Same limits apply as for Regular meetings
- Special meetings should be held for more in-depth and study. Action items should not generally be a part of a Special Meeting agenda.

## IV. Individual Roles

### A. Role of Village President

- The Village President must strive for transparency in dealings with staff at Village Hall and should keep Trustees informed of meetings and significant interactions on a weekly basis to be included in the weekend packet
- The President should respond to Trustee e-mails and voice mails in a timely manner
- Trustees should have use of the President/Trustee office for meetings and public office hours, and a scheduling mechanism needs to be put in place to facilitate the use of the office
- The President 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.

### B. Role of Trustees

- Trustees should provide feedback on their Citizen Board/Commission liaison role
- Interaction with staff should go through the Village Manager with a copy to the Secretary to the Village Manager. Small action items can be sent directly to staff but must be copied to the Manager and her Secretary. There should be no commentary on performance or personal issues with any staff member in such communication.
- For the Village Boards' background, the Secretary to the Village Manager has access to all emails sent to the Manager.
- 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.
- 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
- These limitations do not apply to communications regarding organization, logistics, or scheduling.
- Substantive e-mail 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.
- Citizen outreach (door-to-door, written, response to emails/voice mails) can be handled individually by each Trustee as he or she deems appropriate

#### *Responses to Board E-mail*

- The Secretary to the Village Manager provides a general reply back to all Board email to explain that the message is received. If required, a response is also coordinated among staff. This response is sent directly to the email sender and a hard-copy is placed in the Board mail (this is done in order to minimize board e-mails).

#### *Response to Board Voicemail*

- 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.

*Individual Board E-mails and Voicemails*

- Staff does not get a copy of individual Board emails nor voicemails, therefore staff does not respond. If there is a need for a staff response, the President or Trustees will contact the Secretary to the Village Manager or the Village Manager as needed.

*Standards for Public Emergencies*

- When there is an emergency, the Village Manager and/or Communications Director will work directly with the Village President 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.

*Standards for Responding to the Media*

- 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.

*Individual Elected Official Requests for Information*

- All individual Elected Official requests for information will be shared with the entire Village Board.
- 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.

C. Role of Village Clerk

- Statutory
- Customary
- New initiatives

D. Role of Village Attorney

- Statutory
- Customary

IV. Board Committees

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- Permanent and Ad Hoc currently include:
  - o Permanent: Finance {3 trustees}, Personnel {3 trustees}, Reinventing Government {2 trustees} (performance i.e. BPS, marketing, user-friendly etc.), I-Gov {2 trustees}, Contractual {2 trustees} (award of contracts over \$25,000).
- Board Committee will generally have two representatives, with the exception of the Personnel Committee/Finance.
- Each Committee will create a scope of work by using a template {see attached}
- Appointments will be made by the President
- Committee meetings as needed but should allow for a reduction in the number of Special Meetings

- Committee 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 {see attached}.
- Minutes will be kept of all Committee meetings.