

**APPROVED MINUTES - SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK
HELD ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2011 AT 6:30 P.M.
IN ROOM 130 OF OAK PARK VILLAGE HALL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Pope called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Trustees Brewer, Hedges, Johnson, Lueck, Salzman and Tucker; President Pope
ABSENT: None

**III. CONSIDERATION OF MOTION TO ADJOURN TO
EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS LABOR**

In compliance with the Open Meetings Act, it was moved and seconded to adjourn to Executive Session for discussion of labor. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. The meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 6:33 P.M. Monday, October 24, 2011.

IV. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION IN ROOM 101

PRESENT: Trustees Brewer, Hedges, Johnson, Lueck, Salzman and Tucker; President Pope
ABSENT: None

The Special Meeting reconvened at 7:24 p.m. in Room 101.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda for the meeting. A voice vote was taken and the agenda was approved.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

VII. PUBLIC HEARING

Village Manager Tom Barwin announced that this was the second budget session of the year. Tonight's meeting will focus on the Public Works Department and the funds that

operate under them; water, sewer and solid waste, and time permitting, Capital Improvement Funds.

Mr. Barwin added that the Village is required to hold a formalized Public Hearing on the budget as well as holding a Truth in Taxation Hearing, whether required or not. He referred to Chief Financial Officer Craig Lesner to provide an overview of the budget.

A. Truth in Taxation Public Hearing for the Recommended 2011 Tax Year Levy

Mr. Lesner explained that according to State statute, a Truth in Taxation Public Hearing is required prior to the approval of any recommended property tax levy in excess of 105% of the current year's extended levy, or a 5% increase. While the proposed general operating levy is flat, the debt component will increase \$799,021, pension component will decrease by \$841,117 and the Library's portion will increase by \$286,441 for a combined increase of \$244,344 or 0.8%.

Trustee Hedges asked what the options are regarding the Library's requested increase. Mr. Lesner noted that this increase is for operating expenses. Trustee Lueck noted that the Village Board has worked very hard for the past several years in order to not raise the levy, making significant cuts in Village expenses to do this. She added that it would be helpful for the Village Board to receive an explanation of the Library's increase. The Village has not provided non-union staff increases for several years. Mr. Lesner will contact the Library Board for more information.

B. Draft 2012 Budget Public Hearing

There were no comments.

VIII. BUDGET DISCUSSION CONTINUED

C. Public Works Department

Public Works Director John Wielebnicki stated that his department oversees several funds: the General Fund, Environmental Services Fund, Water and Sewer Fund and the Capital Fund.

Mr. Wielebnicki spoke about positions in his department. This year's budget reflects one and a half fewer full-time positions due to removal of one position in Fleet and a meter reader position changed to part-time. Five current vacancies are expected to be filled. He also discussed materials and supplies, noting that he was under budget this year for Roadway Maintenance primarily because of salt conservation. Mr. Wielebnicki noted that the Fuel line item is over budget due to the higher cost of gas and that the proposed increase for 2012 anticipates that this will continue. He noted that the same situation applies to Vehicle Equipment Parts, as he is working with an aging fleet.

Regarding Contractual Services, an increase of \$100,000 is proposed for the Forestry Department, including tree-trimming, tree removal and stumping. He presented a graph of trees infected with Emerald Ash Borer, noting they are all on

public areas. Eventually all ash trees will be removed, both public and private. There was a discussion regarding the Emerald Ash Borer and the number of trees that would be removed. Village Forester Jim Semelka stated the Emerald Ash Borer population is overwhelming. He also discussed a new strategy of species variety in planting to help avoid future losses of this magnitude. Discussion followed regarding types of trees, planting specifications, maintenance, and the number of trees being planted.

Trustee Johnson asked about the Commercial Planter Program, noting that some of the perennials in the median planters have died but were not replaced. Mr. Semelka stated that a few years ago the Village planted more perennials, many of which were grasses that were moved to other areas for permanent placement. The 2012 budget includes \$118,000 for this program and will include design costs, plant rotation and planting of more annuals. He added that some of the business districts have been maintaining planters in their own areas. Mr. Wielebnicki added that seasonal help is budgeted to maintain these as well.

Trustee Lueck commented that she would like to see more information on conceptual decisions regarding where money was and was not being spent.

Mr. Wielebnicki stated that he and the Finance Committee had discussed the potential of developing a much-needed private property brush pickup program to address the amount of brush from private property being left by the street for Village pickup, especially following storms. Currently, the Village picks up bundled private brush with a sticker from the back alley, but many residents instead mix this material with parkway debris. This would reduce the amount of time staff currently spent picking up this additional material following storms and allow them to return to regular duties more quickly after storm cleanup.

He suggested incorporating this fee into the Environmental Services budget (the solid waste program). Pickups of brush from private property would be made from the parkway five times during the year at a cost of \$40,000 per pickup, or a total of \$200,000. If this can be utilized as a pass through fee, residents will pay an additional \$1.35 per month on their trash bill. He asked the Board to consider this proposal. Mr. Semelka noted that there will be a size limit on what the Village will pick up. Another option being discussed is issuing permits for private property tree removal. Part of this program would be to requiring the contractor that removed the tree to haul it away.

Trustee Johnson asked for additional analysis regarding the increase in general contractual and external support, noting that there is not a corresponding decrease in personnel services and fringe benefits.

D. Enterprise Funds (Water, Sewer, Solid Waste)

Mr. Wielebnicki stated that the expenditures of the Water Fund include completion of water meter change outs, water main replacements and vehicle replacement. The majority of expenses are for personnel and the water charge from the City of Chicago.

Mr. Lesner stated that Chicago raised their rate 25% for 2012, with an additional 15% annually for each of the next three years. He added that this increase will be brought before the Board at the end of the budget process to pass on to the residents. The final figure has not yet been confirmed. Trustee Johnson asked about education on conserving water. Mr. Wielebnicki stated that the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has received grant funding and is working with the Village to help develop a water conservation plan.

Trustee Johnson raised the subject of Moody's bond rating assessment, noting that there is a \$2.3 million deficit in the Water Enterprise Fund and a projected \$4 million owed to the General Fund. It is also noted that the Village plans to increase rates by at least the rate of inflation and slow capital programs. He asked how this can be done, as well as what Capital Programs will be slowed and how to start paying back the General Fund from the Enterprise Fund.

Mr. Lesner explained that capital spending will be reduced slightly over what was being spent during the last couple of years to maintain the standard Capital Program. He added that the concerns regarding the Water Fund is a cash flow issue, since the majority of residential users are billed on a quarterly basis. Mr. Lesner also said there have been discussions regarding how to build up cash reserves over time. This would require keeping expenses in check and focusing on 1% to 3% rate increases each year.

Trustee Hedges asked how much of the \$4 million owed is due to cash flow and asked what the average balance is during the year. Mr. Lesner replied that he would get him that information and noted that the operating philosophy is to build up cash reserves, not just in the Water Fund, but in all funds, to minimize inter-fund borrowing.

Mr. Wielebnicki spoke about the Sewer Fund, noting that two items discussed last week, sewer modeling and updating the 1994 sewer evaluation for \$150,000, and an overhead sewer reimbursement program for \$200,000, are included. President Pope commented that this would total \$350,000; he was under the impression that the amount allocated in these areas would be \$250,000. Mr. Wielebnicki noted that the budget was prepared before the conversation on flooding took place, but that amount could be adjusted.

Mr. Wielebnicki stated that he and other staff, as well as staff from Berwyn and Cicero, met with an engineer regarding moving forward with a Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan to help secure future funding through FEMA for flood mitigation improvements. The cost to create the plan would be \$50,000 per community. Mr. Barwin clarified that this was an estimate from one engineering company. The Village has the option of asking the other two communities to solicit proposals, Oak Park can do this alone, or the Village can obtain an update on the status of Cook County's plan. He added that once more details were in place, this information will be presented to the Board. Mr. Barwin also noted that the sewer modeling and evaluation may cost more than the estimated \$150,000; if they move forward with this they will solicit proposals.

Trustee Salzman wanted the rationale for spending \$150,000 for an updated study and asked if this was critical in order to get Federal funding

Village Engineer Jim Budrick explained that this would allow for a three dimensional view of the system; currently two-dimensional maps of the sewer system are used. This would provide the tools necessary to not only analyze what is there presently but also to help plan for future improvements. He referred to a similar project completed for the water system and said that it is used frequently when putting in new water mains and similar work.

President Pope stated that the current budgeted amount may be used as a place holder but the language describing the overhead sewer reimbursement program will be replaced with "flood prevention program". A more detailed conversation regarding what will be done with those funds will be held at another time.

Trustee Johnson commented on the item regarding replacement of a dump truck, noting the Village bought one just last year. Mr. Wielebnicki noted that these vehicles are used heavily, adding that the Fleet Replacement Program is set up to replace one vehicle every year to avoid everything breaking down at once. All of the Village's dump trucks are used for snowplowing as well as for sewer work. Trustee Hedges commented that keeping a vehicle too long does not save money in the end when lost manpower and down time is considered.

There was a brief discussion about the Solid Waste Fund, which includes the Waste Management contract, leaf program and new brush pickup program.

E. Capital Improvement Funds (Fleet, Buildings, Street/Alleys)

Mr. Wielebnicki referred to the document entitled 2012-2016 Capital Improvement Plan Summary and noted that it includes the Fleet Replacement Program, Building Replacement Program and Water and Sewer Capital Program. He stated that the fleet size has been reduced by 15% since 2006, from 241 to 214, and noted where reductions were made.

Trustee Lueck raised the subject of the administrative fleet and asked if it would be more economical to pay mileage. Mr. Wielebnicki replied no; it costs approximately \$250 per month to maintain those cars; mileage is currently \$.55 per mile which adds up quickly. Trustee Johnson spoke about using I GO cars instead of purchasing cars. Mr. Barwin added that a pilot I GO program is scheduled to be implemented shortly with two pool vehicles for use between 8:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. These will also be available for use by residents who are I GO members in the evenings and on weekends.

Mr. Wielebnicki noted an ambulance and some of the Parking Enforcement Officer vehicles needed replacement, as well as another dump truck that has been used strictly for plowing and salting. This would be replaced with a multi-use dump truck. President Pope asked Mr. Wielebnicki to what extent alternate ways to provide for the plowing needs of the community were looked at and what those options would be as well as the implications. Mr. Wielebnicki spoke about an anti-ice liquid that was used on streets last winter. President Pope asked what the feasibility was for

outsourcing plowing. Mr. Wielebnicki noted he had included provisions for contract support for the heavier snowstorms.

Mr. Wielebnicki spoke about building improvements, one of the larger being replacement of the chiller. He stated that this has been in place since construction of the building and noted that it has become difficult to get maintenance contracts because of its age. Also included are improvements to the Council Chambers HVAC system, \$350,000 for a gun range for the Police Department, as well as some repairs to the Public Works Building.

Mr. Budrick discussed some of the street improvements budgeted for 2012, including resurfacing on Harlem.

Following a discussion regarding street sign replacement, President Pope stated that it was the general consensus to not move forward with a community-wide replacement program but to look at important intersections or places where there is a legitimate public safety concern, or where there has been diminished reflectivity and to proceed on a case by case basis. He also suggested they put together a systemic plan to be equipped to meet the newest Federal regulations in the event that a mandate from the Federal government remains in place in the future.

Mr. Wielebnicki stated that \$800,000 was proposed for alley improvements; there were 130 alleys currently rated as poor. This would include nine to ten alleys.

Trustee Salzman noted a decrease in bike plan funding. Mr. Wielebnicki stated that grant funds are applied for and as they come in, the bike plan is implemented. He also noted that he plans to take this to the Transportation Commission for their feedback regarding the next steps.

Public Arts Funding and possible projects for 2013 and beyond were briefly discussed.

IX. ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. The meeting adjourned at 10:54 P.M. on Monday October 24, 2011.

SUBMITTED AND RECORDED IN THE OFFICE OF:

By: MaryAnn Schoenneman
Interim Deputy Village Clerk

Teresa Powell, Village Clerk