

**MINUTES  
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE  
PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
MONDAY, MAY 24, 2021 7:00P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: President Hayes; Trustees: Baldino, Bertucci, Canty, Grasse, LaBedz, Schwingbeck, Scaletta and Tinaglia

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Randy Recklaus, Village Manager; Mary Rath, Director of Human Resources; Kelly Livingston, Assistant Director of Human Resources; James McCallister, Director of Health & Human Services; Nicole Espinoza, Social Services Coordinator; Tracey Colagrossi, Senior Center Manager; Mary Sterrenberg, Supervising Nurse and Kim Peterson, Recording Secretary

**SUBJECTS:**

- A. Departmental Status Reports – Human Resources
- B. Departmental Status Reports – Health & Human Services

Other Business

**Adjournment**

---

President Hayes called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

President Hayes advised that the Village Board will be hearing Departmental Status Reports from the various Department Heads.

Mr. Recklaus advised that staff is always striving to find meaningful and impactful ways to get information about what is going on in their departments to the Board and to get feedback from the Board. These Departmental Status Reports are really a kickoff to the bi-annual strategic priorities process and a means for staff to interact with the Board. The end goal of this process for the Village Board are the strategic priorities that they develop and the business plan staff puts together in reaction to the strategic priorities. Mr. Recklaus explained how the presentations tonight will include information about the Department's organization, current workload, key accomplishments during the 2020-21 period, current and anticipated challenges and some potential new initiatives for consideration. Mr. Recklaus discussed the 2020-21 strategic priorities that were developed in 2019 and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr. Recklaus stated that he is very proud of

what the Village was able to accomplish and endure the past year although he also acknowledged some of the limitations experienced, including bandwidth and capacity issues at all levels, staffing turnover, silos were reinforced in the virtual Covid-19 environment, technology overload, the ERP project will continue to be demanding and the racetrack project will also require much attention and diligence. Mr. Recklaus explained how the Village is still meeting all of their obligations, however, in the short term, there is a lessened capacity for new initiatives.

#### A. Departmental Status Reports – Human Resources

Ms. Rath advised that the Human Resources (HR) Department is an essential function within the Village, providing structure with managing and maintaining Village policy and procedures, along with providing a wide range of assistance and support to all departments. In addition, the HR Department manages recruitment, benefits, wellness initiatives, class and compensation, risk management, labor and employee relations, compliance, staff development and performance management for all Village employees. The HR Department has an established partnership with each Village Department to effectively and efficiently achieve Village goals and objectives. Human Resources is also involved with strategic planning and recommending and implementing programs that positively impact both the employees and the Village. Human Resources has become a true function within the Village providing structure as well as managing its most important resource – the employees.

Ms. Rath explained how Human Resources is a small Department with four full-time employees and two part-time interns, effective this summer. All employees in HR are cross trained, however each member has clear duties and responsibilities. These employees typically work in the background, behind the scenes, although the impact of their decisions, affects all Village employees.

Ms. Livingston discussed recruitment and how it is a major function of the Human Resources Department and is the first step in creating a positive and welcoming culture at the Village. HR is responsible for the recruitment of all open positions, except for the Village Manager position. Through partnership with each Village Department, the recruitment process results in selecting the best qualified candidate with a positive attitude and aptitude to be a success in the organization. Ms. Livingston referenced a chart that highlighted the total Village positions filled per year and discussed the affect the pandemic has had on recruitment. To date in 2021, the Village has hired eight full-time positions and five temporary positions. There are currently 13 full-time vacancies with an additional four vacancies in the Police Department and four vacancies in the Fire Department.

Ms. Livingston advised that Ms. Rath is the liaison to the Fire and Police Commission and HR coordinates the recruitment process for both Police and Fire entry-level and promotional positions. HR, along with the Fire and Police Departments and the Fire and Police Commission, are dedicated to filling vacant positions with qualified candidates.

Ms. Livingston next discussed Risk Management and how HR has an active role in this process, which is a continuous activity. Having a risk-management process

means that the Village knows and understands the risk that its employees are exposed to. Risks are inevitable and the Village has an obligation to prioritize the safety and well-being of those they serve. In order to maintain the risk, there is a Human Resource management process that keeps both the employees and others safe. Having a risk-management process means that the Village has a proactive process to identify and evaluate potential risks, and has strategies in place to reduce or remove the risk.

Ms. Livingston further stated that employees at all levels continue to be worried about their own health, the health of their family members and the financial health for themselves and the Village. It is imperative that HR stays up-to-date with accurate information related to the Covid-19 pandemic and makes decisions based on facts. This information is then communicated to employees openly and often so that they have the information they need to keep themselves educated and updated about Covid-19. The goal is to stay proactive as HR attempts to anticipate risk and address foreseeable issues ahead of time.

Ms. Livingston next discussed Labor-Management relations and how the Police and Fire bargaining unit members are represented by two unions. The Human Resources Department has certain obligations including negotiating labor contracts and occasional labor-management issues. The Human Resources Director, along with the Assistant Village Manager comprise the Village Administration's negotiation team and seek to maintain a positive relationship with both Unions.

Ms. Rath next discussed Human Resources 2020-21 key accomplishments and explained how Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is no longer optional but has become an important component of our culture. These initiatives are forefront in attracting and retaining a diverse workforce and creating an inclusive workplace. Being mindful of the Village-wide diversity recruitment initiative and in order to reach a broader candidate pool, the entry level 2020 Firefighter candidate testing was conducted in the Fall of 2020 with enhanced outreach to 90 educational institutions, including community colleges, universities and trade schools. Due to the pandemic, remote testing and a remote virtual orientation were implemented. These factors resulted in a higher number of applications from the prior testing cycle. Arlington Heights' Village staff continues to lead the working group of the Northwest Suburban Minority Law Enforcement Recruitment. The Police Officer testing workshop scheduled for the Spring of 2020, with the goal of breaking down traditional barriers for minority and other non-traditional candidates seeking careers in law enforcement, was conducted virtually in March Of 2020. The 2021 entry level Police Officer testing will be scheduled in the Fall/Winter of 2021 and the Police Department is strongly considering a virtual orientation and a virtual examination to expand the candidate pool. The Disability Accommodation Assessment continues with Disability Awareness training conducted earlier this month and the Village employment application has been reviewed by disability employment placement agencies providing valuable feedback to reflect a more inclusive culture.

Ms. Rath advised that the evaluation for the leadership team has been reengineered and the process has begun to reengineer all other performance evaluations. In addition, an employee workforce group has been created to discuss issues that

prevent employees from being their authentic self at work as well their input on behaviors that would create a more respectful workplace.

Ms. Rath explained how the pandemic has had a major impact on the HR Department, as they have become the communication hub regarding all things related to the pandemic, including communication and compliance. HR also managed the benefit allocation for the Village's Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). HR is also part of the Covid committee to monitor and coordinate events around the virus and to implement work safety protocols for all Village employees. The Human Resources Department continues working to ensure the safety and well-being of all the employees while maintaining the Village's responsibilities to the community.

Ms. Rath advised that due to the financial constraints of Covid, vacancies remained unfilled for a period of time which may have had an effect on the stress levels of staff as well as overall morale. In addition, employees are feeling the effect of the continued uncertainty in all aspects of their lives. Mental health has been at the forefront of employee benefits but the pandemic has put a spotlight on mental health.

Ms. Rath explained how this past year has also highlighted gaps in the skill sets of employees and the need for the Village to reconsider upskilling and reskilling in order to consistently learn new skills. In addition, employees have to learn to work smarter and take advantage of technology and prepare for the rapidly changing face of the Village with the ever-growing attrition rates. The Village must continue to build its workforce from within; taking a future focused approach by identifying people today who will be able to bring the Village forward.

President Hayes thanked Ms. Rath and Ms. Livingston for their great report and for all of the great work the Human Resources Department does.

Trustee LaBedz thanked Ms. Rath, Ms. Livingston and their staff for all of their hard work this past year. Trustee LaBedz asked Ms. Rath about recruiting and if the Village is having any trouble with recruitment. Ms. Rath explained how the Village is not experiencing this problem, as they always receive an abundance of applications for entry-level positions, although when it comes to the higher-level positions, the Village typically doesn't receive as many applications, however, the ones they do receive, come from qualified candidates.

Trustee Bertucci acknowledged Ms. Rath and her staff for all of the hard work they have put in to get through Covid. Trustee Bertucci asked about the Asian-American population in Arlington Heights and what efforts the Village has taken to reach out to this particular population. Ms. Rath advised that at this point in time, they have not reached out to the Asian-American community, however, they are working on this. Ms. Rath indicated the DEI Intern will be tasked with this as well. Mr. Recklaus acknowledged that there are certain cultures that find certain professions less desirable, but he is definitely open to any suggestions from those living in the community to help overcome these obstacles.

Trustee Scaletta thanked Ms. Rath and Ms. Livingston for their report and the

efforts Human Resources puts into making the Village a welcoming and safe place. Trustee Scaletta stated that he is happy to see that two Interns will be joining the Human Resources Department this summer and asked Ms. Rath if her Department had an additional part-time person, what would that person be tasked with. Ms. Rath indicated that she would like to explore further levels of training for all Village Staff, as well as developing a leadership, mentoring and a formal supervisory program. In addition, Ms. Rath would like to have someone to help with analytics.

Trustee Baldino thanked Ms. Rath and Ms. Livingston for helping the Village to pivot and meet the challenges of the pandemic, in addition to all of the things they normally do. Trustee Baldino asked for more information with the performance evaluations and the reengineering that took place for the leadership teams, with respect to incorporating DEI. Ms. Rath advised that she and Mr. Recklaus worked together to reengineer the performance evaluations to include DEI goals for the leadership team, and will continue to implement this process into the performance evaluations for all other Village employees by 2022. Mr. Recklaus explained how the Village made Diversity, Equity and Inclusion one of the core-competencies of all of the senior management staff, which they will be evaluated on.

Trustee Baldino asked how far along the Village is in the ERP process, which Mr. Recklaus indicated that Assistant Manager Mikula is the project lead and the Board will hear a lot about this project when she does her presentation, although Mr. Recklaus did say the project is on track and Staff is getting very close to recommending a vendor.

Trustee Tinaglia thanked Ms. Rath, Ms. Livingston and Mr. Recklaus for all of their hard work and asked Ms. Rath about recruitment and if our Village is in better shape than some of the neighboring communities for recruiting employees. Ms. Rath stated that the Village of Arlington Heights has a very strong reputation and is the employer of choice, which makes recruiting easier. The Village is known for having a supportive Village Board and a great work environment and Ms. Rath feels very fortunate with the caliber and quality of employees that they do get. Trustee Tinaglia stated he completely agrees with the great reputation this Village has. Trustee Tinaglia asked what the percentage is of current public service workers applying for positions with our Village is. Ms. Rath advised that those applying for the higher-level positions tend to come from the public sector or non-profits and those applying for mid-level or entry-level positions come from both the private and public sector. Ms. Rath attributes the wider pool of applicants to the use of social media to advertise vacancies.

Trustee Grasse thanked Ms. Rath and Ms. Livingston for all they do for the Village and appreciates the relationship shared between the Village and the employees, which is what she believes younger people are looking for. Trustee Grasse thinks that spreading the word to help younger people realize that public service in government can offer a great future and asked if the Village has a plan to attract more individuals. Ms. Rath advised that there is not a plan at this point in time, however Ms. Rath and Ms. Livingston have discussed getting more involved at the high school level.

Mr. Moens, Arlington Heights resident, asked about Union membership in the Police

Department and why the number of participants seems so low. Ms. Livingston advised that the chart Mr. Moens is referencing indicates the number of Police Officers (Sworn positions in union) hired by Arlington Heights. Mr. Moens also asked about the Police Pension Fund Board and why their meetings were not held remotely and why their minutes are not available on the Village website. Mr. Recklaus advised that the Police Pension Fund Board is a public body but not a typical Village commission. Mr. Recklaus stated that he would look into the posting of legal minutes issue and get back to Mr. Moens.

Mr. Recklaus thanked Ms. Rath and her staff for the tremendous job they do for the organization. In addition, Mr. Recklaus stated Ms. Rath is a staunch defender of the Village's reputation and holds all employees to a very high standard.

## B. Department Status Reports – Health & Human Services

Mr. McCallister began his presentation by first introducing his staff that are present at tonight's meeting, including Nicole Espinoza, Social Services Coordinator, Mary Sterrenberg, Supervising Nurse and Tracey Colagrossi, Senior Center Manager. Mr. McCallister advised the Health & Human Services Department responds to the physical, environmental and social needs of the community, through four divisions, Environmental Health, Nursing Services, Social Services and Senior Services.

The Environmental Health Division conducts food service inspections throughout the community, as well as swimming pool inspections. In addition, they respond to a variety of complaints received by residents, oversee the single-family solid waste program and provide a variety of environmental educational programs to the community.

The Nursing Services Division perform home visits so that residents can age in place and provide a variety of health screening clinics, mainly at the Health Department and Senior Center. In addition, the nurses work at temporary events and provide vaccination clinics.

The Social Services Division provides comprehensive assessments to address individual needs as well as serve as a community resource assisting with disability issues.

The Senior Center provides excellent programming services and a wide variety of volunteer opportunities for the senior citizens in the community.

Mr. McCallister next discussed the Boards & Commissions the Health & Human Services Department provides staff liaison support to, including the Board of Health, Environmental Commission, Commission for Citizens with Disabilities, Youth Commission, Senior Commission, Senior Advisory Council, Arlington Cares, which is a non-profit that raises funds for the Village's emergency assistance fund, Arlington Heights Senior Center, Inc., which raises funds for the Senior Center and Arlington Heights Medical Reserve Corps. Mr. McCallister also discussed the snow shoveling program that has been in existence for the past couple of years and the new lawn mowing service that connects teenage volunteers with seniors and residents with

disabilities to perform these necessary services. In addition, Mr. McCallister informed everyone that Arlington Cares donated \$45,000 to the emergency assistance fund this past year and the Arlington Heights Medical Reserve Crew supported the Department at the vaccine clinics.

Mr. McCallister advised that the Environmental Health Division had a decrease in inspections in 2020 due to the pandemic, which most other Health Departments in the State of Illinois experienced as well. Mr. McCallister stated how proud he is of his Environmental Health team, as every time the Governor would change an Order and the State would move from one phase to another, the Health Inspectors were tasked with informing the business owners of the new guidelines, which included distributing "Food News" flyers to the restaurants to keep them up-to-date with any changes. The Environmental Health Division received 105 complaints about non-compliance at businesses of all types, which does not include multiple calls at same businesses, and referred 24 food service operations to Cook County Department of Public Health for indoor dining violations, as well as one school for face covering violations. They also did many outdoor dining plan reviews for compliance with guidelines and provided signage and information to numerous businesses. In addition, they worked with the racetrack and backstretch, so they could house people and have races during Covid-19.

Mr. McCallister explained how the Nursing Services Division needed to restructure all services provided to meet the needs of residents and clients in an effort to maintain safety from the Covid-19 infection, which among other changes included hosting employee influenza clinics outside.

Mr. McCallister advised the Social Services Division received many requests for rental assistance in 2020. In 2019, Social Services assisted those in need with \$35,000 in rental assistance and in 2020 they assisted with \$120,000 in rental assistance. There was also a predominant need for crisis intervention, counseling subsidies and resources and referrals, which included access to food pantries and government programs.

Mr. McCallister discussed the Senior Center and how the pandemic affected the elderly population, therefore staff had to be very careful what they did at the Senior Center. Staff had to adjust their services when providing medical rides, meals for homebound, curbside congregate meals and the lending of durable medical equipment.

Mr. McCallister discussed some of his Department's key accomplishments in 2020, including assisting Village Administration with the Single-Family Solid Waste Contract. The new contract is for seven years, has lower rates, and along with other new features, it includes an electronics pickup service at no cost to the residents.

Mr. McCallister explained how, due to the pandemic, his Department experienced some technology enhancements, including digital day care inspection forms, digital pool inspection forms and other various application forms, i.e., Social Service application, TB skin test form and application for snow shoveling.

Mr. McCallister stressed the importance of collaborations and partnerships,

especially during a pandemic and highlighted a few of them, including the vaccine clinic partnerships, Social Services inter-department collaborations with the Police and Fire Departments to improve community-based crisis intervention and outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army Arlington Cares, Wheeling, Palatine and Elk Grove Townships, as the Village could not maintain their financial assistance program without these partnerships. In addition, Mr. McCallister discussed the Senior Center's many collaborations and partnerships and how they became accredited again this past year by the National Council on Aging, which couldn't have been done without the outstanding accreditation committee and many great community partners.

Mr. McCallister discussed the Senior Center's space utilization, modernization and program plan and how an architect is coming on board to help decide what the Senior Center should look like moving forward. Mr. McCallister expressed his excitement with the new tag line Senior Center Manager, Tracy Colagrossi created "Live Well, Age Well". The Senior Center bi-monthly newsletter will be revamped to include this slogan, as well as educational materials and new banners in the parking lot. In addition, Mr. McCallister expressed how proud he is of the Senior Center staff, as they worked very hard throughout the pandemic to keep the senior population engaged while they stayed safe at home during the pandemic by offering virtual zoom classes and programs.

Mr. McCallister discussed some of the current and anticipated challenges, including what type of special materials collection event will be conducted under the terms of the new Groot contract. The Village nurses are designated Infection Control Officers and have been tasked with some very difficult decisions during this pandemic. In Social Services, the need for mental health services has increased due to the pandemic. The Senior Center is 21 years old and is due for an update.

Mr. McCallister next discussed some of the potential new initiatives to explore in the future, including incorporating the use of technology to advance food safety in the food establishments, continue to educate and support the residents regarding Covid-19 and educate the residents on health and well-being, invite Social Services staff to further support the DEI initiative and the residents with mental health services post Covid-19, improve the use of technology to support the senior community and using the information received from the architectural firm space utilization, modernization and program plan to propel the Arlington Heights Senior Center into the future.

President Hayes thanked Mr. McCallister for his report and all of the great work he and his Department have done these past 15 months. President Hayes strongly agrees with Mr. McCallister when it comes to the importance of collaborations and partnerships.

Trustee Canty thanked Mr. McCallister for the tremendous job his Department does and asked if the homebound vaccination program was successful. Mr. McCallister stated that it was, as the homebound clients and their caretakers were vaccinated. Ms. Sterrenberg advised that to date, the Village Nurses have given 115 Covid vaccination shots to homebound residents and their caretakers. Ms. Sterrenberg stated that most of the initial referrals came from the Cook County Department of



Public Health, however many of those being vaccinated now through this program are residents of the Lutheran Home. Trustee Canty asked if the Moorings are included in this program, which Ms. Sterrenberg indicated they are currently not, but she can definitely reach out to them and Church Creek to see if this service is needed.

Trustee Canty asked Mr. McCallister about the financial impacts of the pandemic and if he believes the financial need will still exist as we enter into the second half of 2021, and even beyond this year into 2022. Mr. McCallister stated that once the Governor lifts the eviction moratorium, he believes there will be more people seeking financial assistance. Trustee Canty asked with the eviction moratorium ending are there things the Village can be doing now to ensure there is not an influx of people in dire need, which Ms. Espinoza advised she does currently work with many of the landlords in the community and as the need arises, they continue to address it to make sure people stay housed during this crisis. In addition, Ms. Espinoza advised that through their partnerships they have been able to provide access to rental assistance and haven't had to turn anyone away.

Trustee Baldino thanked Mr. McCallister and his staff, as well as Ms. Rath and her staff for the phenomenal job they do in their respective Departments. Trustee Baldino asked about Journeys the Road Home and when they will be resuming normal operations. Mr. McCallister advised that his Department has been working with the Police Department on homeless outreach and how Journeys is still housing people in the hotels. Ms. Espinoza stated that she speaks with the Site Coordinator and Case Managers at Journeys on a monthly basis and receives regular updates about their status, and as of right now, they are still utilizing the local hotels for the homeless to stay in until they return to the normal congregate setting.

Trustee Baldino asked Mr. McCallister if the Village will be hosting a document shredding event soon, which Mr. McCallister stated he is hopeful that his Department can work something out with SWANCC to offer this program. In addition, Trustee Baldino suggested that the Village offer a larger house waste collection event, instead of smaller events that target single waste and have someone on hand to dispose of these products properly. Mr. McCallister advised that these collection events have become very expensive, but if the Village is willing to help supplement this type of event, he is confident something can be arranged.

Trustee Bertucci thanked Mr. McCallister for all of his hard work and asked about the aging population and if the Health Department is doing any projections on how to best serve this population. Ms. Colagrossi advised that in the evaluation with the architectural firm they will be looking at what the needs are of the older adults today, as well as the older adults of tomorrow. Ms. Colagrossi explained how the Senior Center has been in contact with the Illinois Department on Aging and are looking to fully open the Senior Center on July 1<sup>st</sup> and possibly extending the hours of operation on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, beginning in the Fall. The Senior Center is currently looking to hire a new Program Coordinator, with the intention of expanding programs by offering more virtual and hybrid programs and more meaningful programs to engage with all members of the community. In addition, Ms. Colagrossi advised that the Senior Center is looking to create self-directed volunteer teams to address the needs of older adults in the future.

Trustee Tinaglia thanked Mr. McCallister for his extensive and informative report and for all of the great work his Department does. Trustee Tinaglia asked Mr. McCallister how his Department gets all of this information out to the public so they are aware of everything they do and if there is anything the Board can do to help. Mr. McCallister advised that Sarah Fitzgibbons in the Manager's Office helps tremendously with getting information out about the various programs via social media, as well as through the Village's website. Mr. McCallister stated that this question is always on his mind and he's always looking to do more for the community. Trustee Tinaglia is hopeful that Mr. McCallister can promote what his Department does so that residents can take advantage of all of these programs.

Trustee LaBedz thanked Mr. McCallister and Ms. Rath for the amazing work they have done this past year, considering how challenging it has been. Trustee LaBedz asked Mr. McCallister if the implementation of the ERP program is going to be helpful and make things easier with the different programs his Department has. Mr. McCallister stated he believes it will help by streamlining the processes, which will make finding information easier as well as sharing information between departments and the community much easier.

Trustee Scaletta thanked Mr. McCallister and his entire Department for all of the work they do.

Trustee Bertucci advised that the month of May was "Older Americans" month, as well as "Mental Health Awareness" month. Mr. McCallister stated that the Senior Center recognized these causes by offering activities during the month of May.

Melissa Cayer, asked about the Food and Beverage Tax and how it could be more affordable. Mr. McCallister advised his Department doesn't control this tax.

Mr. Recklaus stated that not all communities are fortunate enough to have a Health & Human Services Department, let alone one that performs social and senior services, which makes our community special and stand out from the rest.

## **Other Business**

None

## **Adjournment**

Trustee Scaletta moved, seconded by Trustee LaBedz, to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 p.m. Upon a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.