



MINUTES  
President and Board of Trustees  
Village of Arlington Heights  
Committee-of-the-Whole  
Board Room

March 28, 2016  
7:30 PM

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. ROLL CALL**

President Hayes and the following Trustees were present: Glasgow, Tinaglia, Rosenberg, Scaletta (entered at 7:35), Sidor, Blackwood and Farwell.

Trustee LaBedz was absent

Staff members present: Randy Recklaus, Tom Kuehne, Charles Perkins, Ken Koeppen, Mary Ellen Juarez, Georgine Voight, Alexis Smulson, Bernie Lyons, Pete Ahlman, Richard Manthy, Vic Tamosaitis, Dwayne Wood, Andrew Larson and Becky Hume

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Departmental Status Reports - Finance

Mr. Kuehne presented the scope of services of the Finance Department to the Board. He introduced the department's investigation into online payment software. The goal is to allow users to pay via multiple technology platforms and have the software easily link to the existing accounting software. Mr. Kuehne highlighted the efforts made to change the fiscal year to align with the calendar year. He said the department is working on a two year plan to increase annual street expenditures to keep the Village's streets at the current "good" level. He also said there will be challenges regarding the storm sewer maintenance program funding.

Mr. Kuehne anticipates that the contribution requirements will increase for the Police and Fire Pension Funds as the stock market has been sluggish. The Village's actuary is working on this issue with numbers to be forthcoming. The Finance Department is investigating how a storm water utility fee could

be implemented as a financial answer to storm sewer maintenance costs. Mr. Kuehne is also directing the department to review the Village's investment policy and recommended a fixed asset valuation study for property insurance purposes.

Trustee Rosenberg asked if the online pay software has been around for a while. Ms. Juarez said that the Village has used Sunguard (accounting software) for over 20 years, and Sunguard recommended this software as they have integrated it with other municipalities successfully. Trustee Rosenberg asked if the new software can handle the variety of payments the Village incurs. Ms. Juarez said it handles utilities and parking tickets as well as a dozen different payment categories. It is still being reviewed.

Trustee Rosenberg asked if there was an amount anticipated to cover the Police and Fire Pension funds. Mr. Kuehne said the numbers are very preliminary but it could be a combined amount of \$500,000. It is also possible for the Village to adjust the assumptions time frame to 5 years from 3, as a way to smooth out market fluctuations. Evaluation needs to be done and further discussion will ensue. Each year that rolls over could be a new 5 year spread.

Trustee Rosenberg asked if there were bonds expiring so the Village could re-bond for sewer projects. Mr. Kuehne said he thought there were some bonds maturing in 2-3 years which might allow for a bond issue without raising property taxes.

President Hayes thanked Mr. Kuehne for keeping the Village in a strong financial position.

Trustee Farwell thanked the Finance Department for the fiscal change to the calendar year as it increased transparency.

Trustee Sidor said he noticed a grand improvement over the last three years in customer service.

Trustee Tinaglia asked how the Village can better communicate and educate residents as to where their tax dollars are going. Mr. Kuehne said he would give it some thought and noted that the press did a good job with the infrastructure reporting in the past year.

Trustee Scaletta said moving the fiscal year to agree with the calendar year was in public's best interest. He noted the Finance Department does a great job providing information. He said he appreciated the Departments efforts with Metropolis. He said the efforts to improve customer service are good.

Trustee Rosenberg asked if the Village is self-insured, why an asset valuation was necessary. Mr. Kuehne said that the Village is responsible for the first level and is self-insured up to that point. Above that level, the Village belongs to an insurance pool and the valuations need to be reported.

Trustee Blackwood said it is important to prepare for what needs to be done with infrastructure and pensions and thanked Mr. Kuehne for the clear communication. She said as the Village goes forward there needs to be a laser beam focus on infrastructure.

#### B. Departmental Status Reports - Planning

Mr. Perkins reviewed the Planning Department's accomplishments and workload over the past year. Staffing levels are a challenge as the economy has improved; therefore more projects are coming through needing attention. The volume of work also takes away from staff's ability to work on long term and complex projects in order to give residents the customer service they deserve. Deputy Planning Director Bill Enright headed a committee to reduce multiple permitting reviews when possible. Permitting responsibilities were also reevaluated and reassigned to help balance work load.

Community survey data on corridor appearance was presented with 90% of respondents agreeing with improving the appearance of certain corridors along major roadways. A consultant analysis of improving the pedestrian experience on Evergreen will be forthcoming. Also in the works are new streetscape concepts for downtown.

President Hayes said she supported beefing up staffing as Planning is a revenue generator. It is important they have the resources they need to accomplish and maximize their revenue generating potential.

Trustee Glasgow asked if there was a way for some permits to be paperless. Mr. Perkins said permits are submitted in Building and routed to Planning. All are hard copies. He said some permits could move to an electronic format, the Building Department would need to be part of any change. Mr. Recklaus said the new website will have more avenues for paperless permits. Fences and sheds are perfect examples.

Trustee Glasgow asked if the Rand Road Corridor will be a viable revenue area in the future given the pressure from Deer Park and Randhurst Village. Mr. Perkins said that it could, but it is facing challenges. The higher end retailers are going to Deer Park because it is aesthetically pleasing. There are a multitude of different owners so some centers look better than others. There is tremendous traffic volume. Retailers are very selective. Mr. Perkins said stabilizing the area would be the minimum standard. There are fewer retailers in general so attracting them gets more challenging. It is hard to say if improvements will generate more sales tax.

Trustee Tinaglia asked if some of the permit review process can be taken off of Planning's shoulders. There is very talented staff looking at basic reviews. He said adding an entry level person to look at basic reviews is another option, leaving the talent to review larger issues.

Mr. Recklaus said all departments are stretched. He said the suggestion of reallocating permit reviews can't be answered tonight, because a lot has to be taken into consideration. Trustee Tinaglia said the Planning Department clearly needs help. He said he feels the same way about the Building Department. Both need horsepower. Trustee Tinaglia said he would like to find a way to encourage property owners to invest in their properties and show them that upgrades only do good things for everyone. Mr. Perkins said Code enforcement is one way and Planning has talked about trying to put together a marketing piece on the benefits of upgrades.

Trustee Scaletta asked for updates on the 13 East Miner and the Arlington Downs projects. Mr. Perkins said 13 E. Miner has two years before they come back for final approval, and staff has had no update. The permits have been issued for Arlington Downs but have not been picked up. It has been difficult for them to get financing for certain components of the project. He said they are close to getting tenants on the East commercial side.

Trustee Scaletta asked why the CDBG numbers changed so dramatically over the years both in terms of dollars and number of applicants. Housing Planner Nora Boyer will respond to this.

Trustee Scaletta asked if residents were asked if they would be willing to raise taxes to improve corridor's appearances. Mr. Perkins said this question was not asked. Trustee Scaletta noted that the cost presented at the CIP meeting to improve Northwest Highway was \$1.2 Million. He said there needs to be a reasonable way to improve appearances and said he was not in favor of spending a lot of money for corridor aesthetics. Mr. Perkins said the plan presented at CIP was a 5 year plan which had a more modest approach in the following years. Mr. Perkins said retailers are choosing Deer Park because of a combination of synergy, ambiance and its distance from Woodfield.

Mr. Recklaus said much of development is out of the Village's hands. The one button the Village can push is to improve the physical location. How much and when are the decisions the Village has.

Trustee Scaletta asked why Evergreen was not pedestrian friendly. Mr. Perkins said there is only a foot of walking space next to the Condo building. The consultant is looking at eliminating the center turn lane to add parking and increasing the depth of the sidewalk on the East side. There could also be a mid-block crosswalk. Mr. Perkins said they are looking at concepts at this point. Trustee Scaletta expressed skepticism that the size of the sidewalk was deterring visitors to that area.

Trustee Farwell said he would like to know more about the permit review evaluation process, what changed, and how the responsibilities were divided. He said reviewing sheds should not be part of the Planning Department's responsibilities. He said he looked forward to the new Building Director's approach. He said it was important for the Board to look at work loads of all

departments and evaluate the delivery of essential services. He said he never thought balancing expansion would be viewed as difficult. He said he would rather decrease the demands on Planning before adding staff. He said he saw other departments having greater needs.

Trustee Farwell said Mr. Perkins brought alternatives for development financing to the Board in 2007. He said it would be good to look at those ideas again to foster development.

Trustee Sidor said the Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Report should have been included. He asked if the program was viable. Mr. Perkins said it is still early to evaluate as there has been a learning curve for the Chamber as far as understanding the Village's internal processes and the reporting requirements. As the Chamber gets more familiar with Village procedures, it will get more efficient. Having the Chamber involved helps to cover the more than 4,000 businesses in the Village.

Trustee Sidor asked about the Planning Department's database. Mr. Perkins said business statistics come from the Building Department's licensing information. This information is only as good as what is provided by the owners. There are also some resources at the Library. Currently the Village does not have one source for all local business data. Trustee Sidor said the Board is data driven; the ability to manipulate accurate data is important and up to date email contact information. Mr. Perkins said he would like to collect more information but isn't able to do so.

Mr. Recklaus said a casualty of being understaffed is often reporting. Departments are so busy doing the work; they often don't have time to develop tools to share it out. Part of Ms. Mikula's task is to help all departments get there.

Trustee Blackwood asked if all 532 the business retention visits were from the Planning Department. Mr. Perkins said yes, some were phone calls or communications, they were not all visits. She noted the constant traffic on Rand Road and expressed concern that the businesses going in are consignment and second hand stores in such a prime area. She asked how larger developers can be attracted. Mr. Perkins said it is a concern and the Village has to try to reverse the trend. A lot of these stores moved in after the recession when rates were cheap. He said it is challenging to attract developers. Trustee Blackwood asked if there was much interest in Town and Country. Mr. Perkins said there are two major vacancies, Dominick's which is controlled by Safeway and the former Ashley Furniture.

Mr. Recklaus said Finance and Planning stand out and are success stories. Both departments are facing challenges that didn't exist 10-15 years ago. A lot of the strategies that got the Village to this point won't work moving forward. These directors are not resting on their laurels, they are looking forward. They are doing it with fewer resources and have a real understanding of what is going on in their worlds. If the Village has it's "A"

game, it can compete. The pie is smaller in retail, there are fewer players and hard decisions will come to the Board.

### C. Departmental Status Reports - Fire

Chief Koeppen explained the scope of services the Fire Department provides. He noted that Arlington Heights received 9,893 calls last year. This averages to 97 calls per firefighter, a much larger amount than neighboring towns. The Fire Department responds based on proximity to a station within a designated district to ensure the shortest response time possible. Mutual Aid agreements with neighboring communities are currently being reviewed. The Rolling Meadows Mutual Aid agreement has been finalized. A new station alerting system is being phased in to help improve response times.

Chief Koeppen highlighted the larger fires to which the Department responded and their successes.

In order to reduce injuries, the Department is looking to install a new "power cot" system in its ambulances. Each system costs \$56,000 installed. One will be installed in 2016 with others to follow if it is successful. Each unit must be built into the vehicle so it does not release the stretcher in event of a crash.

The Fire Department will undergo an evaluation by the Insurance Services Office in 2016. The Department anticipates holding its Class 2 designation, but still aspires to a Class 1 designation.

President Hayes said the Fire Department is its most impressive in action and he is very proud of it.

Trustee Glasgow said he is impressed by the performance and quality of the Fire personnel and the job they do. Chief Koeppen said to attain a Class 1, the ISO wanted a 5<sup>th</sup> fire station on Walnut and Frontage Road, which didn't make sense as Palatine has one nearby on Route 53. They also wanted another fork engine and ladder company and for the Department to add personnel.

Trustee Scaletta noted the cost of the "power cot" system. He said the Department does wonderful prevention and education work. The open house isn't just about opening the doors; it's truly informative and educational. He said he also appreciated the Department visiting schools and institutions to spread the word.

Trustee Rosenberg suggested the backup ambulances could be spared the new "power cot" system or have a modified one to reduce costs. He asked if realignment of fire districts might help spread out calls. Chief Koeppen said they do look at realignment and will look at it again but they also have to maintain certain response times from the station. Trustee Rosenberg noted some discrepancies in the amounts of mutual aid. Lt. Manthy said the most important consideration in Mutual Aid agreements is response times. He said

with Rolling Meadows, the Village gave up some of those areas without sacrificing response times and Rolling Meadows gave up some of theirs.

Trustee Farwell thanked the Department for their support of Katie project. So far, 115 homes have been fitted with smoke detectors.

Mr. Recklaus noted that it is hard to become a first time Fire or Police Chief. Chief Koeppen enjoys the management side of the job and is passionate about his team and their development. He's a natural leader and it shows.

## **V. OTHER BUSINESS**

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Scaletta moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m. Trustee Rosenberg seconded the motion. The motion carried.