

BRIEF HISTORY OF OAK PARK

I. ORIGIN AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The Village of Oak Park evolved from the purchase of land of early settler Joseph Kettlestrings. In 1837, Kettlestrings, a native of England, paid \$215.98 for 172.78 acres of land in the area now bordered by Chicago Avenue and Lake Street, and Oak Park and Harlem Avenues. Kettlestrings' residence became a haven for worn and weary travelers, going to and from the Chicago market.

In the 1850s, Kettlestrings began to subdivide his land of "Oak Ridge," as it had become known, selling it to "good people who were against saloons and for good schools and churches." By 1871, the population had grown to 500 and the settlement continued to boom as a result of the Great Chicago Fire. At this time, Oak Ridge was renamed Oak Park to match the name of the Post Office serving the area. The name was reinforced further in 1872 when the railroad station serving the area was named Oak Park.

In July of 1901, petitions from citizens were submitted to Judge Orrin N. Carter, sole presiding judge of the County Court of Cook County, in the effort to organize the "Village of Oak Park." In September of that same year, Judge Carter decreed that, in light of the petitions submitted, a special election was to be held on November 5, 1901, regarding the organization of the Village. Based on a majority of affirmative votes in the election, Judge Carter declared the Village of Oak Park as established. In December of 1901, another election was held to elect Village officers. On January 2, 1902, the first meeting of Village officials occurred and on January 25, 1902, Judge Carter ordered, declared and decreed the "Village of Oak Park" duly organized as a village. Oak Park's population was 9889 at the time of incorporation. At the time, Oak Park was approximately half developed, predominantly by single-family residences mixed with large areas of apartment houses and fringed with commercial development.

II. KEY OAK PARK DATES

1673: The explorers Marquette and Joliet traversed the Des Plaines River area inhabited by Pottawatomie, Sac, and Fox Native American tribes

1818: State of Illinois joined the union; Oak Park area made part of Crawford County

1831: Boundaries of Illinois counties changed; Oak Park area made part of Cook County

1833: Kettlestrings claimed the 125 acres that became Oak Park

1835: Kettlestrings built house in what is now Downtown Oak Park

1843: Kettlestrings family moved to Chicago and rented out farm

1855: Kettlestrings family built a home at Grove and Lake and began to sell land

1857: The first school was formed. Cook County gives governance of area to Cicero Township.

1871: Post Office named Oak Park- Chicago fire caused boom in Oak Park real estate; Train station named Oak Park; Oak Park becomes official name of area

1888: Library built

1889: Frank Lloyd Wright built his home in Oak Park

1895: Oak Park attempt to separate from Cicero Township defeated

1902: Village of Oak Park established as a self-governing municipality, with the first elected President, Clerk, and Trustees. A High school district was created.

1904: A new municipal building created (now location of Prairie Court apartments)

1907: Oak Park Hospital created

1914: West Suburban Hospital created

1920: Oak Park population tops 40,000

1929: Village Board approves overnight on-street parking ban

1940: Oak Park Population reaches 66,014

1952: Village Manager form of municipal government approved by voters by a 3-1 ratio in a special referendum

1963: A Citizens Committee for Human Rights and the Community Relations Commission is established

1969: Village Board approves one of the nation's first local Fair Housing Ordinances, outlawing discrimination

1970: Oak Park population is 65,521

1973: Village Board first approves the Oak Park Diversity statement

1976: Village of Oak Park designated All-America City for the downtown mall, Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio and the Housing Center

1977: Elementary School District 97 reorganized to enhance social diversity

1980: Oak Park population is 54,887

1984: Village Board approves ban on possession of handguns

1985: Special referendum to repeal handgun ordinance defeated 8031 to 6358

1990: Oak Park population is 53,648

2000: Oak Park population – 52,524

III. VILLAGE PROFILE

Oak Park is a thriving community of about 52,000 people, known for its architectural heritage. Within its 4.5 square miles live a diverse mix of people of different cultures, races, ethnicities, professions, lifestyles, religions, ages and incomes. Primarily a residential community proximate to the City of Chicago, Oak Park is the birthplace and childhood home of novelist Ernest Hemingway. An annual festival has traditionally been held to celebrate Hemingway's July birthdate with special festivities in 1999, the 100th anniversary of his birth. Architect Frank Lloyd Wright lived in Oak Park from 1889-1909, and 25 buildings in the village were designed by him, including his first public building, Unity Temple, a Unitarian Universalist church. His restored home and studio is open for daily tours. There are many architecturally significant homes, ranging from Victorian to Prairie style, in the village's two historic districts. Other famous Oak Parkers include Edgar Rice Burroughs, the creator of "Tarzan"; Percy Julian, chemist whose research led to the development of Cortisone; Joseph Kerwin, an astronaut on the first NASA Skylab team; Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's; and, Marjorie Judith Vincent, 1991 Miss America.

FORM AND STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

OVERVIEW

Oak Park operates under the council-manager form of government, in which a council, consisting of a president and six trustees, hires a professional manager to oversee the day-to-day operation of government services and programs. In Oak Park the council is known as the Village Board.

For the first 50 years of its existence, the Village of Oak Park operated as a village government with a president and six trustees, who not only set policy, but also oversaw all government operations, from fire and police to public works and finance. These tasks proved to be an enormous undertaking for private citizens who also had full-time jobs. In the early 1950's partisan bickering, divisiveness, poor services, shoddy management, and patronage drove residents to replace this form of government with a more progressive administrative structure.

In 1952, Oak Parkers voted to change their government to the current council-manager form. A referendum on the November 4, 1952, ballot asked, "Shall the Village have a village-manager form of government?" 25,718 residents voted yes, while only 8,018 voted no.

I. COUNCIL MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The council-manager form of government combines the leadership of elected officials with the experience of a professional manager who acts as the administrative and executive head of the government. (See Appendix for more on the Council-Manager Form of Government). The elected officials set Village policy, determine the tax rate and approve the annual budget. The manager serves in the capacity set out by State of Illinois statute as the Village Board's chief adviser, carrying out its policies, recruiting and hiring the government staff and preparing the annual budget for the Board's approval.

Oak Park continues to be incorporated as a village but under a council-manager form of government. As such the Village Board retains power vested in it by the voters, and employs the manager as its full-time executive who carries out the Board's decisions.

A. Village President and Board of Trustees

The Village Board is comprised of seven members: a President and six trustees who are elected at large. The length of each term is four years. With overlapping election terms, only one-half of the Trustees are elected every two years. This ensures some carryover in experience and background on the Board at all times. The Village President is elected at-large and separately from the Trustees. The Village President, by statute and ordinance, has additional several duties such as serving as official signatory for Village expenditures and Liquor Control Commissioner. On September

8, 2015, the Village Board approved an Ordinance amending the Village Code which provided “The President of the Board of Trustees may be referred to as Mayor of the Village. The terms "Village President" or “President of the Board of Trustees” as used in this Code or in any ordinance, resolution, motion or other action of the corporate authorities shall be construed as meaning the Mayor and the term "Mayor" wherever so used shall be construed to mean the Village President or President of the Board of Trustees.” As a result, the term Mayor is used in day-to-day Village communications and the term Village President is used on any and all official actions of the Office.

B. Village Clerk

The Village Clerk also is elected in the general election to a four-year term. The Clerk serves as the recording secretary for the Village Board and as the local election officer for all municipal elections. The Clerk is responsible for the filing, safekeeping and storage of official Village documents and support records including, but not limited to, ordinances, resolutions, minutes, licenses, agreements and contracts.

C. Village Manager

The Village Manager is appointed by the Village Board for an indefinite term, but may be removed from office at any time by a majority vote of the Board. The Village Manager is usually extended an employment agreement with the Village stating the terms and conditions of employment and dismissal. The Board reviews the Manager's performance annually, and any increased level of compensation is determined by the Board at that time.

The primary powers and duties of the Village Manager, as stipulated in state law and outlined in the Oak Park Village Code, are summarized below:

- Enforces all laws and ordinances within the Village.
- Attends all meetings of the Village Board and may take part in discussions, but has no vote.
- Recommends for adoption by the Village Board any action that may be deemed necessary or expedient for the welfare of the Village.
- Appoints and removes all Village employees.
- Employ legal counsel for the Village.
- Exercises control over all Village departments and divisions.
- Prepares and submits to the Village Board budget estimates for the current fiscal year.

- Authorizes the purchase of equipment, material, supplies, and services, not to exceed \$25,000, necessary for Village operations. All purchases and contracts in excess of \$25,000 must have the prior approval of the Village Board and must be secured through competitive bidding or be authorized by a bid waiver. All construction projects of \$10,000 or more require Village Board approval.
- Prescribes rules and regulations regarding the conduct of all Village employees.
- Performs other duties as prescribed by state statute, the Oak Park Village Code, and any ordinance or resolution adopted by the Village Board.

II. HOME RULE AUTHORITY

In 1970, by virtue of a population above 25,000 people, the Village of Oak Park achieved home rule status with the passage of the revised Constitution of Illinois. As a home rule community, Oak Park has the authority to exercise any power or perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs including, but not limited to, the powers to regulate for the protection of the public health, safety, morals, and welfare, and to license, tax, and incur debt. Home rule communities have far greater authority and latitude to make their own decisions than non-home rule municipalities.

Even though the state of Illinois has granted home rule units flexibility and authority to enact taxes, borrow money, regulate local activities, alter their government structure, and seek innovative solutions to local problems, the General Assembly has imposed several restrictions on the use of home rule powers. First and foremost, home rule units may not tax income, earnings, and/or occupations, or license for revenue unless authorized to do so by the General Assembly; define or punish for felonies; or incur debt payable from property taxes that matures more than 40 years from the date of issuance.

Furthermore, the General Assembly may restrict or pre-empt home rule powers by three-fifths majority vote of the legislature.

III. VILLAGE DEPARTMENTS

In addition to the Village Manager's Office and the Office of the Village Clerk, Village Departments have been authorized to administer programs in related functional areas as authorized by the Board.

Departmental Offices and Facilities Locations:

Most of the departments are located at Village Hall at 123 Madison Street. The Police Department is headquartered in the lower level of Village Hall, and has

strategically located satellite substations throughout the Village. The Fire Department has three stations, each with firefighting equipment: the Central Station with administrative offices at North Boulevard and Euclid, the North Station at Augusta between Harvey and Lombard, and the South Station at Garfield and East Avenue. The Public Works Department's main pumping station is 129 Lake Street, the Public Works Service Center is located at 121-131 South Boulevard (under construction) between Harvey and Taylor, and the Parking Services division maintains a downtown parking office on the north side of the ground floor of the Holley Court parking garage and at offices at Village Hall.

The following is a list of Village departments and their primary responsibilities.

Adjudication

The Adjudication Department was established in 2002. The Department hears a wide range of cases involving violations of municipal ordinances that were once heard in the Cook County Circuit Court. Having hearings at Village Hall expedites resolutions, reduces litigation expenses and allows the Circuit Court to focus on more serious offenses. Hearings at Village Hall also are more convenient for residents who wish to contest a ticket or other citation. Regulations, together with the Village of Oak Park Municipal Code, control the conduct of hearings.

Communications

The Communication Department coordinates and distributes all information to the public, including via a newsletter (10 times a year), website, cable television station and news media relations.

Development Customer Services

This is a newly created department in 2013. The Development Customers Services Department oversees building and property standards, neighborhood services such as housing & CDBG programs, planning and historic preservation and business services. The department's emphasis is on projects designed to strengthen the economic and housing base of the community as well as promote its diversity. The department enforces the building, zoning and housing codes, property maintenance inspections of multi-unit residential buildings, exterior inspections of single-family houses, buildings up to three units, inspections of mixed-use commercial/residential buildings, issues all building construction and renovation permits and inspects construction sites. The department administers the CDBG grant program, and several loan and grant program to support single and multi-family residential rehabilitation, security, and diversity. Business Services supports the Village's business licensing efforts and business district relations.

Community Relations

The Community Relations Department is engaged in community strengthening activities, including organizing and coordinating block clubs and parties, community safety programs, special events like *A Day in Our Village*. It enforces the Village's Human Rights Ordinance (Chapter 13 of the Village Code), its Fair Housing Policy and promotes Oak Park's Racial Diversity Policy. The department conducts multi-cultural

training, networks with community agencies and groups, and provides an important link to residents through its customer service personnel and its community outreach and intervention services.

Finance

The Finance Director is the chief financial officer and treasurer for the Village. The Finance Department assures accurate accounting of all Village receipts and expenditures, provides financial trend analysis of various funds, oversees and develops purchasing procedures, prepares financial and budget reports, and maintains financial reporting systems and records. The department also directs water and sewer billing, administers the Village payroll and accounts payable, and oversees the Village Hall cashier's office and mailroom.

Fire

The Fire Department provides emergency services including fire suppression, basic and advanced life support, hazardous materials mitigation, and fire and special rescues. Non-emergency activities include training, public education on topics such as fire prevention and CPR, station tours, pre-fire planning, as well as annual inspections of every commercial and public building in the Village for compliance with fire safety code.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Department support the Village Manager's Office with labor relations, personnel administration, equal opportunity and training. The department is responsible for recruiting and screening of prospective employees, benefits administration, developing and facilitating training programs, and the monitoring of compliance with laws, ordinances, and policies. The department also provides employee relations support for the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners and the Citizen Police Oversight Committee.

Information Technology

The Information Technology Department is responsible for developing, planning, and executing the internal computer information system and services for the Village government. The Department assesses and plans for current and future organizational technology needs and requirements. The Department is also responsible for maintenance and trouble-shooting of the computer systems, and acquisition of hardware and software.

Law

The Village Attorney heads the Law Department and serves as general counsel to the President and Board of Trustees, Village Manager and the Village government. The Law Department directs the services of, and acts as liaison to, all outside counsel retained by the Village under the Village Manager's authority to appoint legal counsel for the Village. In-house legal counsel is responsible for the preparation and review of all legal documents and ordinances, enforcement of municipal code, and defends the Village from lawsuits including civil liability.

Parking & Mobility Services

The Parking and Mobility Services Department oversees the allocation and coordination of parking resources, the parking revenue collection systems and the assessment and monitoring of the maintenance of Village owned parking structures, surface lots, parking meters, pay stations and other parking related equipment. The Department also manages the Village's Divvy bike sharing system.

Police

The Police Department enforces laws, maintains order, and protects Constitutional rights. The Department investigates reported criminal incidents, apprehends violators of the law, preserves the peace, controls traffic and is involved in crime prevention. The department operates under a community policing strategy in providing all of its services. Resident beat officers assigned to each area of the Village provide neighborhood police customer services and problem solving. The department co-sponsors safety programs with neighborhood meetings. With the assistance of non-sworn officers and civilian personnel, the department operates the school crossing guard program, conducts security examinations of multi-family residences, citizen volunteer programs, and emergency dispatching services.

Public Health

The Public Health Department assesses the health status and needs in the Village, investigates health hazards, develops policies to address health issues, and enforces state and local regulations relating to public and environmental health. The department staff offers monthly immunization clinics, flu shots, monthly health and wellness clinics for senior citizens over age 55, HIV testing and counseling, visits to the isolated elderly and case management of pregnant women and young children. Public health nurses also provide health services in schools and engage in community health education efforts. Environmental health personnel inspect all food establishments and other public facilities with a potential impact on health, oversee nuisance control, administer animal control programs, and investigate health-related complaints.

Public Works

The Public Works Department plans and supervises all public infrastructure improvements and provides maintenance for all Village owned properties such as streets, alleys and sidewalks, parking structures and lots, Village governmental facilities and vehicles, and water and sewer lines. The department provides care and pruning for parkway trees, conducts street cleaning, manages recycling and solid waste disposal, and oversees street and alley lighting and traffic control.

Village Manager

The Village Manager's Office administers Village government on a day-to-day basis and coordinates the operations of all the departments as well as external relations. The Village Manager's Office prepares agendas for bi-monthly Board meetings and researches and advises the Board decision making. The Manager executes the policies and goals of the Board.

IV. VILLAGE ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The Village of Oak Park Village Board has created by ordinance approximately 25 standing citizen boards, commissions and committees appointed to provide recommendations and advice to the Board on matters of public policy. When vacancies occur on these advisory bodies, the Citizen Involvement Committee interviews, Villagers who have volunteered to serve by filling out application forms. The Committee makes recommendations to the Village President, who makes the formal appointments with the consent of the Trustees. The Village Clerk coordinates the selection and appointment process. Village Board Members and Village staff are designated to serve as liaisons and support for the Commissions and Committees, and occasionally as a member.

A. BOARD CREATED AND APPOINTED ADVISORY COMMISSIONS

The following are the Village Board's advisory bodies created by ordinance, with members appointed by the Village President and ratified by the Trustees:

Board of Local Improvements

A creature of state statute, municipalities wishing to pay for public improvements by special assessment or other special taxation must do so through the recommendation of this Board. Chaired by the President of the Village and comprised of at least two other elected members of the Board. Convened only when necessary.

Building Codes Advisory Commission

The Building Codes Advisory Commission Electrical Commission, a new commission established in 1999, advises and makes recommendations on Code amendments, updates, and interpretations to the Village of Oak Park's Director of Code Administration. There are 5 members who each serve 3-year terms. The membership of the Commission includes a registered architect, a license plumber, a licensed electrician, an HVAC contractor, and a fire protection contractor or a design professional with experience in one of those subjects.

Citizen Involvement Committee

The Citizen Involvement Committee encourages citizen participation in government and related activities. There are 15 members who each serve 3-year terms.

Citizens Police Oversight Committee

The Citizens Police Oversight Committee evaluates complaints about police conduct, department discipline and interpersonal/community relations. There are 7 members who each serve 3-year terms.

Civic Information Systems Commission

The Civic Information Systems Commission, was formed to advise the Village Board on technology, information management/resources and policy issues within Village government and in the Village and on issues related to cable and telecommunications providers who use or are seeking to use the Village right of way, The Commission shall consist of seven (7) members, including a chairperson to be

appointed by the Village President by and with the consent of the Board of Trustees. Terms shall be for a three (3) year period on a staggered basis with approximately one-third (1/3) of the Commission appointed each year.

Community Design Commission

The Community Design Commission studies ways to enhance the attractiveness of the Village, including walkways and other public property. Its tasks and projects include mini-gardens, "Cavalcade of Pride", providing design advice and developing resource material to aid in private property development. The Commission hears the requests for sign regulation variations. There are 13 members who each serve 3-year terms. The Forestry Commission was collapsed into this commission.

Community Development Citizens Advisory Committee

The Community Development Citizens Advisory Committee evaluates funding requests and formulates recommendations to the Board for the annual allocation of Federal Community Development Block Grant funds for economic revitalization activities targeted to low and moderate income individuals. There are 9 members who each serve 3-year terms.

Community Relations Commission

The Community Relations Commission was created in 1963 to assure all residents of equal service and treatment. The Commission works to improve inter-group relations without regard to race, sex, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, marital status, familial status or disability. It works to ensure good human, race and community relations and reduce tensions, and acts as a hearing panel for resolution of discrimination. There are 15 members who each serve 3-year terms.

Disability Access Commission

The Disability Access Commission advises the Village in facilitating full participation in community activities by disabled residents, to bring disabled persons into the mainstream of Oak Park life by recognizing that disabled persons can lead proud and productive lives, to promote universal access throughout the Village, and to heighten public awareness to the needs of Villagers with disabilities. There are 9 members who each serve 3-year terms. The Chief Building Inspector/Access Advisor for the Village of Oak Park is an ex-officio member of the Commission.

Environment and Energy Commission

The Environmental and Energy Advisory Commission addresses environmental and energy conservation concerns, and works for a pollution-free environment in Oak Park. The Commission develops methods to promote recycling and to reduce and manage solid waste. There are 9 members who each serve 3-year terms, one of whom is a high school student.

Farmers Market Commission

The Farmers Market Commission oversees and promotes Village efforts in outdoor food and produce marketing. The Commission conducts the market in downtown Oak

Park from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturdays, June through October. There are 11 members who each serve 3-year terms.

Board of Fire and Police Commissioners

The Fire and Police Commission supervises appointment and promotion eligibility lists and holds disciplinary hearings regarding the two departments. Serves the civil service role for public safety employees set out by state statute. There are 3 members who each serve 3-year terms.

Firemen's Pension Board

Under state statute, the Firemen's Pension Board provides for and distributes pension funds to retired and disabled firefighters and to widows and minor children of deceased firefighters. There are 9 members who each serve 3-year terms.

Board of Health

The Board of Health is an advisory body to the Director of the Department of Public Health and the Village Board, and as such has the authority to make recommendations as to such rules, regulations, and orders as it may deem necessary for the preservation and improvement of public health and for the prevention/preservation of disease. There are 7 members who each serve 3-year terms; one of the members may be a high school student.

Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission, established in 1972, evaluates proposals affecting the Village's two historic districts. Its founding led to the creation of the two districts: Frank Lloyd Wright Historic District and the Oak Park District. The Commission considers compatibility of development with long-range preservation of historical sites and recommends sites for historic landmark designation. The Commission also reviews building permit applications affecting historic landmarks and properties in the two historic districts and throughout the Village. There are 11 members who each serve 3-year terms.

Housing Programs Advisory Committee

The Housing Programs Advisory Committee reviews applications for housing bond loans, the diversity assurance program and security improvement grants and evaluates the Village's residential housing programs. There are 7 members who each serve 3-year terms. Two of the seven members are members of the Village Board.

Liquor Control Review Board

The Liquor Control Review Board investigates and reviews all applications and renewals of liquor licenses and advises the Local Liquor Control Commissioner. There are 5 members who each serve 3-year terms. The Local Liquor Control Commissioner, who is also a member of the Village Board of Trustees, serves as a non-voting ex-officio member of the Review Board.

Plan Commission

The Plan Commission makes on-going revisions to the Village's comprehensive plan and provides direction and control for growth and development in Oak Park. Serves as a Zoning Commission relative to amendments, rezoning and special use permits. There are 9 members who each serve 3-year terms. Six of the members must have training as design professionals.

Police Pension Board

Under state statute, the Police Pension Board processes and distributes pension funds to disabled or retired police officers and the surviving spouses and minor children of deceased officers. There are 5 members who each serve 2-year terms.

Transportation Commission

The Transportation Commission hears parking and traffic concerns and makes recommendations for improving them, for the administration and enforcement of traffic regulations and for public education about traffic safety. The Commission reviews proposals and makes recommendations for placement of cul-de-sacs and diverters. There are 7 members who each serve 3-year terms.

Zoning Board of Appeals

As authorized by state statute, the Zoning Board of Appeals rules on zoning variance petitions, special use permits, and appeals of interpretations of the zoning ordinance. There are 7 members who each serve 5-year terms.

B. OTHER VILLAGE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEES

The following are Village of Oak Park Committees or Boards comprised of Village staff or citizens or agencies not necessarily created by the Board and not Board appointed:

Chairperson's Committee

This Committee is comprised of all the Chairpersons of all the Village Boards, Commissions and Committees. It discusses the state of operations of the Village Commissions and Committees and provides an opportunity for sharing information about Commission and Committee experiences and priorities, and projects. It meets every two to three months, chaired by the Village President.

Day in Our Village Committee

The Day in Our Village is a festival held annually in June. Its purpose is to bring citizens together in a project that highlights the various activities and organizations in Oak Park. The Committee is filled annually by citizen volunteers organized by the Community Services Department.

Management Council

The Management Council is comprised of the chief administrative manager of each of the six Oak Park taxing bodies. The Council meets monthly. The meetings are intended to serve as a mechanism to ensure regular communications between the governmental bodies in Oak Park and explore opportunities for cooperation.

Oak Park Council of Governments

The Oak Park COG has met since the early 1970's and is convened by the Village President every other month when school is in session. The council is comprised of the chief elected and appointed administrative official of each of the six Oak Park taxing bodies. Meetings are informal and are intended to keep the organizations up to date on each other's activities. It is not a formally incorporated body and has no separate staff or expenses.

V. VILLAGE AFFILIATED OR RELATED LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

A. OAK PARK TAXING DISTRICTS

Taxing bodies have separately elected Boards and under state law have authority to approve their own budgets, and levy taxes. There are six districts with taxing authority in Oak Park, including the Village. The other five are listed below:

Oak Park Public Library

(834 Lake S.; 383.8200)

The Oak Park Public Library system has an elected Board of four members, a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Finance Officer. It develops its own budget, but by state law, the Village sets the tax levy for the library. In addition to the main library and office at 834 Lake Street, the library operates the Maze Branch at 845 Gunderson and the Dole Branch at 255 Augusta.

Park District of Oak Park

(218 Madison St.; 383.0002)

The Park District of Oak Park has been a separate legal entity from the Village since 1991, and as such develops its own budget and tax levy. It operates the public parks and recreational centers in Oak Park. It administers recreational programs targeted to youth and senior citizens. It has a five person elected Board consisting of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Commissioner.

Oak Park Elementary School District #97

(970 W. Madison St.; 524.3000)

District 97 operates the 10 public elementary schools in Oak Park. Its seven person elected Board consists of a President, Vice President, and five Members. The Board establishes its own budget and sets its own tax levy.

Oak Park/River Forest High School District #200

(201 N. Scoville Ave.; 383.0700)

District 200 operates the Oak Park-River Forest High School. Its seven person elected Board consists of a President, Vice President, Secretary, and four Members. The Board of Education establishes its own budget and sets its own tax levy.

Oak Park Township

(105 S. Oak Park Ave.; 383.8005)

Oak Park Township is a unit of local government with the same boundaries as the Village, but with different functions and responsibilities. The Township authority lies

mostly in social service delivery. It has an eight person elected administration consisting of the Supervisor, Assessor, Collector, Clerk, and four Trustees. The Township is divided into the following departments: General Assistance, Mental Health, Unified Services, Senior Citizen Services, and Youth Services. The Township Assessor works in conjunction with the County Assessor to evaluate property values for tax purposes.

VILLAGE BOARD RULES OF PROCEDURE

I. REGULAR & SPECIAL MEETINGS

By adoption of an annual resolution, regular meetings of the Village Board are held at the Village Hall Council Chambers on the first and third Mondays of each month, at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise ordered at a regular meeting. If the regular meeting falls upon a legal holiday, the meeting is held the following day at the same time and place. Due to schedule coordination problems arising from holidays and summer travel, there is typically only one meeting per month during April, August and December, and that meeting is usually the first Monday of the month.

Special meetings may be held at any time for any legal purpose, on call of the President or any two or more Trustees. Meeting notices and agenda must be posted and sent to applicable media that have filed an annual request at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. No business may be transacted at the special meeting except that for which it is called, unless the entire Board is present and all members agree to the transaction of other business.

II. QUORUM

A quorum for the transaction of business by the Village Board consists of four Trustees or the President and three Trustees.

III. POWERS OF THE VILLAGE BOARD

The powers of the Village Board are purely legislative except as may be otherwise provided by any other act or by any Article of the Illinois Municipal Code other than Article 4 of the Illinois Municipal Code. The Board approves payment for all expenses and liabilities of the Village.

IV. POLICY ORIENTED ACTION

The rules of order and parliamentary practice comprised in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order govern the conduct of Village Board meetings unless the rules have been superseded, in whole or in part, by action of the Board. Customarily, Village Board meetings are conducted by way of motions, resolutions, and ordinances.

A. Motions

A motion is used to request that an action be taken into consideration by the Village Board. Unlike resolutions and ordinances, motions are considered the most informal method of council action.

After a motion has been proposed and seconded, the President before debate must state it. Once stated, the motion is deemed to be in possession of the Village Board and may be withdrawn by the person making the motion at any time before a vote by consent of the Board has been made. Regardless of the action taken, all motions must be noted in the minutes of a meeting.

B. Resolutions

A resolution is used to legislate an action that is either temporary in nature, provides authorization for an activity such as executing an agreement, grants a special privilege, or expresses an opinion of the Village Board such as on extending sympathy or requesting action of other governmental units.

When state statute directs that action on a particular subject be taken by ordinance, the passage of a resolution cannot be substituted in its place, nor can a resolution be used to repeal, amend, suspend, or modify an ordinance.

C. Ordinances

An ordinance is a permanent rule of law. Ordinances must be passed in accordance with procedures specified by state statutes, applicable Board rules and the Village Code. The Village Clerk must note the date on which the ordinance was passed and published. All ordinances take effect immediately upon publication, unless otherwise provided for by law and directed in the ordinance.

All ordinances passed by the Village Board must be signed by the President, attested by the Village Clerk, and recorded in a book or pamphlet specifically designed for publication purposes. Ordinances imposing any fine, penalty, imprisonment or forfeiture, or making any appropriation, must be published and become effective ten days after adoption unless the ordinance provides it is effective immediately.

D. Public Hearing

A public hearing must be held before certain types of ordinances can be passed by the Village Board; e.g., zoning variances and special uses, annexation agreements, special assessments, tax increment financing (TIF) redevelopment and adoption of the annual budget. Notice of a public hearing must be published a set number of days prior to the hearing depending on the type of hearing.

Preparation of Board Agenda

The Village Manager is responsible for preparing the agenda for all regular Village Board meetings. The Village Manager, with input from the President and Board of Trustees, compiles agenda items as well as background memorandum during the two weeks before a meeting. All actions to be taken by the Village Board are reviewed as to form by the Village Attorney.

VII. SUNSHINE LAWS

The Illinois General Assembly has enacted two major pieces of legislation, the Illinois Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act, (commonly referred to as the "Sunshine Laws") designed to provide full access to units of local government in Illinois. The general purpose of the Open Meetings Act is to ensure that the actions of public bodies are taken openly and that their deliberations are conducted openly. The Freedom of Information Act, on the other hand, is designed to ensure public access to records assembled, gathered, produced, and disseminated by public

bodies, except for certain statutory exemptions. .

A. Open Meetings Act

The Illinois Open Meetings Act requires all Village Board, Village Committee and Commission meetings to be open to the public. A meeting is defined as any gathering of a majority of a quorum of the members of the public body held for the purpose of discussing public business. All final actions must take place in open rather than in closed or executive sessions. All meetings required to be public must be held at specified times and places that are convenient and known to the public and for what purpose of the meeting the meeting is being held. Meetings of more than two members of the President and Board of Trustees are subject to the Open Meetings Act.

B. Closed Meetings/Executive Sessions

The following are examples of topics are examples of subjects that State Law identifies as permissible for discussion in an executive session which is closed to the public:

- Collective bargaining negotiations
- The purchase of lease of real property
- The setting of a price for the sale or lease of property owned by the Village
- Pending litigation
- Review of executive session meeting minutes

C. Other Meetings of the Board

The Village Board can convene special meetings in addition to its regular meetings. The Village Board has traditionally chosen to call special meetings on a fairly systematic basis, usually on the Mondays or other days when regular Board meetings are not held. These meetings can either be meetings of the full board or structured as subcommittee meetings. This type of meeting of the full board is called a study session. Sometimes they are referred to as committee of the whole meetings. They are subject to the same public notice, purpose, quorum, and minutes requirements of regular meetings. The Village Board has typically used the full board study sessions or subcommittee meetings to review a given issue in greater depth than the time available at regular meetings. Votes are not taken. The public is open to attend study session meetings. The study session meetings are traditionally divided into subject areas and led by members of the Board as designated by the Village President. The Village Manager and staff as well as respective Department Heads generally serve as the staff liaisons for study session meetings.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

I. INTERACTION WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

The Communications Director is primarily responsible for the Village's interaction with the new media. The role of the Communications Department is to coordinate news media and public information activities to ensure accuracy and consistency of messages. All media questions regarding the Village of Oak Park are to be answered in consultation with the Communications Director, by the Village Manager or designee, or by the Department head in coordination with the Village Manager's Office. A Village employee with the most expertise in the matter also may be designated by the Village Manager's Office and Department head to respond to an inquiry, but media inquiries to employees should first be routed to the Department head and Village Manager's Office. Media inquiries to Village President and Board of Trustees received at Village Hall also should be coordinated by the Communications Director for referral to the appropriate elected official. In addition, the Village Manager's Office is responsible for distributing news releases, social media messages and maintaining the official municipal government web site.

II. OP/FYI NEWSLETTER

The OP/FYI newsletter is distributed nine times each year by U.S. Mail to all Village residential addresses. Copies also are available at Park District facilities, public library branches and at Village Hall. Copies are provided to the business associations and Housing Center as well, in addition to being posted on the Village website, oak-park.us. The newsletter is a means to communicate important information about Village operations directly to residents, particularly on subjects not covered by local new media and to residents who do not subscribe to local newspapers. Issues addressed in the OP/FYI may include topics such as parking procedures, schedules for neighborhood meetings, free screenings offered by the Health Department, dates of Village-sponsored events, issues on which public comment is requested, key Village Hall developments and information about ongoing Village programs that are not likely to be deemed newsworthy by local media, but are important to Village residents.

III. VOP INFO LINE 708.383.6400

The Village of Oak Park Info line provides prerecorded information on specific topics, such as the schedule of Village meetings and events. info line material can be added and deleted as needed, so subjects will vary. The Info line also has a directory of Village Departments and employees. During Village Hall hours (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday - Friday) a caller can choose to speak with a Village employee for more details and information.

IV. VOP INTERNET WEB SITE

The Village of Oak Park maintains a web site designed to provide the public with basic information about the Village of Oak Park government. The address is oak-park.us. A series of drop-down tabs offer direct access to specific pages within the site. Visitors also may use a keyword search feature to quickly navigate to specific areas within the site. The site is managed in-house by the Communications Department.

V. VOP INTRANET WEB SITE

The Village maintains a staff intranet web site, accessible internally only by those on the network. This site provides information of value to employees, including policies and procedures, various forms and news. This site is maintained and updated by the Communications Department.

VI. VOP E-NEWS INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Communications Office created and maintains a system that distributes news updates via e-mail to a subscriber list. Anyone interested in receiving the periodic news alerts can sign up at oak-park.us and be added to the distribution list. Names also can be removed from the list in the same manner.

VII. VOP-TV

The Village launched its own government access cable channel in January of 2000. The station was established under rules established by the Federal Communications Commission for government-access television and operates under rules created by the former Telecommunications Commission and approved by the Village Board. VOP-TV appears on Comcast channel six and AT&T Uverse channel 99. In addition to original programming produced in-house, all Village Board meetings are broadcast live and replayed several times on the station. VOP-TV also maintains a bulletin message system with information about Village services and activities. Over the past few years, VOP-TV increasingly has shifted emphasis to the Internet, vastly expanding audience reach over that of traditional cable television. The Village maintains its own [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) channel and streams and archives Village Board meetings on the website. The Village Manager's Office oversees VOP-TV operations through the Communication Department.

VIII. Public Safety Community Notification System

An agreement with vendor RapidNotify allows the Village to deliver important public safety information directly to residents via telephone, email and text message. To participate, residents simply complete a brief online registration process. Residents who don't have online access can sign up by calling the Emergency Preparedness Division of the Health Department, which oversees the program. Messages are initiated by the Village via a web-based interface that does not require staff to be onsite should an emergency notice be necessary. A decision was made when the program was launched to keep its use to important public safety messages, including snow emergencies and mosquito spraying. The intent of keeping the system focused on public safety is to ensure residents would not become desensitized to messages from the Village.

IX. Social Media

The Village was an early adopter of social media as a tool to broaden the ability to talk directly with residents. A staff member within the Communications Department is assigned the specific duties of maintaining an active presence on both [facebook](#) and [twitter](#). The Village also has a [Pinterest](#) presence where a growing range of photo albums are posted, each depicting various categories of Village life.

ETHICS

I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Village that its employees and elected and appointed officers should, in all cases, exercise their judgment and performance of their duties for the sole benefit of the citizens of the Village. To this end, all such persons should avoid accepting or retaining any economic benefits or opportunities that could impair or present an actual threat to the exercise of independent judgment. It is further the policy of the Village that all appearances of impropriety be avoided.

II. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Every elected and appointed officer and employee should perform his or her duties with impartiality and without prejudice or bias for the benefit of all citizens of the Village. No officer or employee will give or make available to any citizen, including other officers or employees of the Village, any consideration, treatment, advantage, or favor beyond that which is available to every other citizen.

A. Interest in Village Contracts

The Village of Oak Park prohibits any elected officer, paid or unpaid, to have any interest directly or indirectly in any contract, work or business of the Village, except as permitted by 65 Illinois Compiled Statutes 5/3-14-4 of the Illinois Municipal Code.

B. Disclosure of Interest in Legislative Action

Any member of the Village Board who has financial interest or personal interest in any proposed legislation before the Village Board must disclose on the record of the Village Board the nature and extent of such interest. Personal interest includes an interest arising from blood or marriage relationships, or close business or political association.

C. Disclosure and/or Use of Confidential Information

No elected or appointed officer or employee will, without proper legal authorization, disclose confidential information concerning the property, government or affairs of the Village or use such information to advance the financial or other private interest of the officer or employee or others. Contents of Closed or Executive Sessions of the Board are also confidential.

III. STATE GIFT BAN AND ETHICS ACT

In 1998, the State of Illinois enacted a gift ban law that applies to both state and local governments. It has recently been found to be unconstitutional.