

**APPROVED MINUTES - SPECIAL BOARD MEETING  
PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK  
HELD ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2011 AT 7:00 P.M.  
IN ROOM 101 OF OAK PARK VILLAGE HALL**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

President Pro Tem Brewer called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Trustees Hedges, Lueck, and Tucker; President Pro Tem Brewer

ABSENT: Trustees Johnson and Salzman; President Pope

**III. AGENDA APPROVAL**

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda for the meeting. Trustee Tucker noted that Item B, Citizen Survey Review and Results would be moved ahead of Item A, Audit Presentation as discussed. A voice vote was taken and the agenda was approved as amended.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**V. BUDGET DISCUSSION CONTINUED**

**B. Citizen Survey Review and Results**

Village Manager Tom Barwin explained that the National Citizen Survey was developed to provide a statistical view of resident opinions on community and services provided by local government. In addition, the Village has used this to monitor services and to understand the priorities of residents as well as aid in the budget process regarding adding and reducing resources.

Assistant Village Manager Rob Cole gave a background of the survey. He stated that 39% of residents responded, indicating that the expected level of participation is 25%-40%. Mr. Cole commented that the highlights would be discussed but the full survey report would be available online.

One of the guidelines for comparison with prior years is looking at items that have a 10% minimum variation. Mr. Cole noted that overall quality of life in Oak Park has experienced a 10% gain since 2004. Community inclusiveness, which includes sense of community, acceptance of diverse backgrounds and place to raise children, is also trending up since 2000. For the transportation category, there has been a 16% increase in ease of bicycle travel throughout the community and Oak Park is well above the national average regarding ratings of access to transit, both

bus and rail. Oak Park's overall appearance, rate of population growth and overall quality of businesses have also demonstrated significant gains between 2000 and the current year. With respect to public safety, 10% or greater gains were experienced in citizen perception of police, fire and ambulance or emergency medical services. Mr. Cole noted that despite these positive ratings, perceived ratings for violent crime has been trending downward but added that the rating of perceived safety in Downtown Oak Park, during the day and at night, is much higher than the national benchmark.

Another area that the study focused on was the rating that citizens provided to Village employees that they have had contact with during the past year. Mr. Cole spoke about the five key drivers that influenced citizens' perception of service and noted that the overall rating declines if any one area receives a lower rating. Although virtually all areas improved by 10% or more since 2000, the actual score of approximately 70% to 75% indicates that two to two and a half of those five key drivers did not score as high as others. He added that a customer service program that staff has been working on may help develop more positive results from members of the community

In the area of technology and sources of information about the Village, Mr. Cole stated that from year to year across the nation the biggest source of information for people is their friends and neighbors. He indicated that this reveals a high degree of trust and interaction among residents and contributes to the overall social network in Oak Park. Mr. Cole noted that the next highest rated source was the OPFYI. In addition, there is a significant difference between the older and younger populations: older residents read OPFYI and younger residents rely on social media and email for information. Mr. Cole commented that 96% of residents owned cell phones, 65% had landlines, and 89% had internet access in their homes.

Mr. Cole referred to the Action Chart created by the National Research Center and explained that this reflects which items are trending in one direction or another or have statistically been analyzed as key drivers of citizen opinions. The key drivers in this chart are planning and zoning, police services and public schools. Suggested focus areas for improvement based on these results are economic development, specifically retail, job growth, street maintenance and sewers, traffic enforcement and continued emphasis on quality of service experiences. Those that would benefit from greater attention before the next survey are adjudication, code enforcement and sidewalk maintenance, all of which are trending downward. Although trending up, alley maintenance, building permit review, services to low-income residents and parking services could use improvement.

Mr. Cole concluded by stating that the vast majority of the ratings were well above the national benchmark.

Trustee Lueck expressed concern that the rating for courtesy was lower than some of the other public service ratings. She asked Mr. Barwin if he had any sense of why this was happening, as it is not difficult for people to understand why they must be polite to those who are requesting services. Mr. Barwin responded that the training programs to the general employee group have been dramatically reduced; areas with higher ratings such as the Police Department adhere to a very aggressive

training program. He added that the process of reinstating those programs will be a significant area of focus in the first half of 2012. He also stated that the Village is changing hiring practices by trying to take on applicants with friendly and helpful personalities in addition to having the basic qualifications.

President Pro Tem Brewer spoke about the low rating of economic development and asked what this might be attributed to. Mr. Cole indicated that the rating regarding overall quality of new development in Oak Park was low. He suggested that contributing factors may be dissatisfaction with specific projects that have been completed or ones that are in the planning stages. He added that there was also some level of concern regarding the rate of retail growth and job growth in the community.

#### **A. Audit Presentation**

Chief Financial Officer Craig Lesner stated that as required by law, the Village engages an external auditor to review their financial records and to provide the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, which reviews fund balances and cash positions, among other things.

Dan Berg of the auditing firm of Sikich, LLP described the audit process.

Trustee Hedges noted that last year, the Board emphasized completing the audit in a timely manner, which is by June 30, and asked why this did not occur. Mr. Berg stated that this year there were some additional challenges, such as assisting the Village with preparing changes in capital assets. Reconciling grant expenditures and receivables from the Federal government, State and County was performed after the initial audit timeframe as well. Trustee Hedges suggested that the processes and resources be looked at to meet that requirement next year.

Mr. Berg explained the purpose of testing the internal controls, noting that it is required by the Single Audit Act, which is a portion of the audit that produces a report submitted to the Federal government. He stated that the Village has \$143 million in net assets, of which \$128 million are capital assets that cannot be liquidated. The net assets that are unrestricted and available for spending are currently negative. He added that number has gone down significantly from the prior year but still needs improvement in the next year. Mr. Berg also noted that the Village significantly improved the unreserved balance of the General Fund, which is almost \$4.9 million, adding that it was a little over \$1 million last year. The Enterprise Funds, water sewer and parking, also increased substantially. In addition, the Village contributed \$5.77 million to its Police and Fire Pension Funds the past year, noting that this amount will not decrease anytime soon.

Mr. Berg commented that an area that needs attention is Village cash balances. Because of the downturn in the economy, many of the revenue receivable accounts have increased. Contributing factors include delays in payments from the State of Illinois and from County tax receipts.

Mr. Berg answered questions from the Board.

It was moved and seconded to accept the Report of the Auditor.

The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: Trustees Hedges, Lueck, and Tucker; President Pro Tem Brewer

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Trustees Johnson and Salzman; President Pope

The motion was approved.

### **C. Final Budget Wrap-up**

Mr. Barwin stated that the purpose of this item is for any final questions or requests for information before final adoption of the budget. He noted that responses to questions from trustees have been consolidated into a document that is included in their packets this evening.

Mr. Barwin spoke about the water rate increase from Chicago and said that the Village has written to the City of Chicago asking for additional information and recommending that these rates be programmed over a longer period of time. No response has been received. He stated that the Village has little choice but to pass through these increases. A number of municipalities will be meeting to share information regarding this issue and any responses from Chicago will be forwarded to the Board immediately. Mr. Barwin commented that the basis of this issue is a 100-year old court case that states Chicago needs to charge suburban communities whatever they charge their residents. He added that it appears that the municipalities that are supplied water from Lake Michigan are not only paying for that but for maintaining the infrastructure of the entire city system.

President Pro Tem Brewer asked if a response was anticipated before final adoption of the budget. Mr. Barwin said that the Chicago pass-through will be included as there is no indication that they are going to change their position. Should this change, however, the Village may immediately lower the rate.

Mr. Barwin summarized the highlights of the budget. Final adoption was scheduled for November 28.

## **IX. ADJOURN**

It was moved and seconded to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 P.M. on Thursday, November 10, 2011.

**SUBMITTED AND RECORDED IN THE OFFICE OF:**

By: MaryAnn Schoenneman  
Interim Deputy Village Clerk

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Teresa Powell, Village Clerk