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MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF OLYMPIA FIELDS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES WORKSHOP
Held on February 9, 2015

10 The Board of Trustees Workshop was held on Monday, February 9, 2015, at the Linzey D. Jones
11 Municipal Building and was called to order by Village President Debra Meyers-Martin at 7:00
12 P.M. The assembly recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Village Administrator/Village Clerk, David
13 A. Mekarski called the roll.

14
15 Present: Trustees – Gibson, Nale, Byrd, Hudson, and Waite
16 Village President Debra Meyers-Martin
17 Village Administrator/Village Clerk, David Mekarski
18 Police Chief John Krull

19 Absent: Trustee Oliver.

20 Administrator Mekarski stated that Trustee Oliver is absent due to illness.

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BILLS FOR APPROVAL:

29 Village President Meyers-Martin stated that she has Bills for approval in the amount of
30 \$200,166.53. There is a Cover Memo designating the more significant payouts.

31 **Motion by Trustee Gibson, second by Trustee Nale to approve the payment of Bills for**
32 **February 9th, 2015, in the total amount of \$200,166.53.**

33 **Roll Call: Ayes (5-0) Motion Carried.**

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COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS:

45 Village President Meyers-Martin opened Communications & Petitions at 7:02 P.M. Village
46 President Meyers-Martin stated that yesterday we had a wonderful event at John's American Bar
47 & Grill. It was in celebration of his first year in business here in the Village. She stated that
48 Administrator Mekarski spoke to the energy, the camaraderie, and the residents that were there.
We had a wonderful, wonderful time. At any given point coming in and out there were over 300
people that came through that restaurant. It was absolutely wonderful.

Village President Meyers-Martin stated that Congresswoman Robin Kelly was there. State
Senator Toi Hutchinson was there, along with Village President Meyers-Martin. They were the
hostesses and the bartenders. She stated that we had a great, great time.

Administrator Mekarski stated that it was like our own sense of Cheers. In the decade that he has
been here he has never experienced so much energy, enthusiasm, and camaraderie. You could
barely make it through the aisle of the restaurant. People were saying they love it. It is a great
thing.

Administrator Mekarski stated that this was the Village President's idea for an effort of business
retention and Economic Development. It was a real success.

Trustee Waite stated that the bartenders were very professional. They did a magnificent job.

1 Village President Meyers-Martin thanked Trustee Waite. Administrator Mekarski stated that the
2 Village President makes a good Irish Coffee. Village President Meyers-Martin closed
3 Communications & Petitions at 7:05 P.M.

4
5 **Municipal Smartphone Applications for Constituent Outreach** – Village President Meyers-
6 Martin stated that we are very excited tonight because we have a presentation on Municipal
7 Smartphones. It will be given by Elizabeth Elliott who is a Sales Manager with Constituent
8 Outreach Consultants. Village President Meyers-Martin thanked Miss Elliott for being here
9 tonight.

10
11 Administrator Mekarski stated that he had the opportunity to hear this presentation at the
12 Management and Finance Committee Meeting of the South Suburban Mayors and Managers
13 Association. He asked Miss Elliott to come to the Board. It is an exciting application to get
14 greater outreach to our public with the activities that we are doing at the Board level, at the
15 departmental level, and from a business perspective. He believes that it is bringing democracy at
16 the doorstep.

17
18 Miss Elliott stated that she is with Constituent Outreach Consultants. They are a full service
19 Public Relations and Marketing Communications Company. They are located in the Forest Park
20 area by Oak Park. They have been working with units of government for approximately 20-
21 years. They got involved in the Smartphone Application about five-years ago. There are three
22 main reasons why government is getting involved and turning mobile. 1. Service Requests. If a
23 resident is out in the street and they see a big pothole, they can grab their Smartphone and take a
24 picture of it, and hit GPS location and hit submit. It will go directly to your Public Works
25 Department or whomever you assign that request to. It will come in the form of an email. It
26 keeps your beautiful community well-maintained. It helps with your Public Works. It helps to
27 make your government a lot more efficient and it gets your residents involved. 2. Push
28 Notifications. Miss Elliott gave the example that there is a change in events for the Fourth of
29 July. There are storms and they are going to postpone it to the next day. The Village can send a
30 Push Notification directly to the residents saying that the event will be changed to this time. It
31 will go to their Smartphone as if it were a text. 3. Touch-to-Add-Capabilities, specifically
32 Calendar. If the residents see an event on their App that they are interested in, they click the
33 event and Add-to-Calendar and that will go directly to their calendar on their Smartphone.

34
35 Miss Elliott provided a PowerPoint Presentation to the Board. She stated that everything is
36 customized based on the Village's needs. Residents could notify Public Works of a tree being
37 down, or lights that are out. She stated that a lot of Municipalities include both an Elected
38 Officials Directory and News Feeds and Events within their App. She stated that with regard to
39 the News and Events Feeds, whoever is taking care of the Village's Website internally here, it
40 will automatically be uploaded through an RSS Feed directly to the Village's App. There is no
41 double entry at all.

42
43 Miss Elliott stated that Buffalo Grove incorporated nine different entities of government into
44 their App. They have their schools. They have their Park District. If the resident only wants a
45 Push Notification on the high school for example, they can select the high school and that is the
46 only Push Notification they will get onto their Smartphone. She stated that all of the add ons is
47 part of the maintenance fee. She stated that you can integrate your U-Tube Videos onto your
48 App. When the resident hits on that video, they are not going into U-Tube. They will stay within

1 the Village's App. She stated that down the road the Village could incorporate streaming the
2 Board Meetings into the App as well.

3
4 Administrator Mekarski stated that the Educational Commission is going to be doing a two and a
5 half hour Candidates Debate for High School District 227. That will be going on the Government
6 Access Channel. He stated that is something that the Educational Commission could take
7 advantage of and stream it on the Smartphones. Miss Elliott stated absolutely.

8
9 Trustee Waite inquired of Miss Elliott whether or not this only streams to people who have your
10 phones. Miss Elliott stated that they have to download the App. It can be any Smartphone,
11 Android, i-Phone or Tablet. Administrator Mekarski stated that it is a free App. You can go to
12 the Android Site to get the App or the Apple Store. Miss Elliott stated that it is free to download
13 at the Apple Store or Google Play. There is no advertising at all within the App.

14
15 Miss Elliott stated that in Beecher they incorporated a Business Directory within their App. The
16 goal was to keep their residents spending money in the local community. They have done a
17 wonderful job of spreading the word to their residents. She stated that being a PR Company we
18 have wonderful strategies for the Village to encourage the residents to download the App.
19 Beecher did a fabulous job. They have about 4,000 downloads in that small community. It is a
20 priority of theirs to make sure that the residents are downloading.

21
22 Village President Meyers-Martin stated that we have NIXLE. That gets information out. The
23 Village is having difficulty getting everybody signed up.

24
25 Miss Elliott stated that we will be giving you monthly data as to how many residents have
26 downloaded the Village's App. They can supply data on how many people opened up the news
27 feed, and how many people opened up the calendar of events. If there is a module that the
28 residents are not opening, it would be their suggestion to get it fresh again, and figure out what
29 another goal of the Village might be.

30
31 Administrator Mekarski stated that it would be a fabulous tool for citizens to get involved with
32 the Code Enforcement process. If there is uncut grass, or homes that need repair, they could take
33 a picture of it and give the GPS location. It would go to Reginald Ford. It could be copied to the
34 Building Commissioner and the Village President, or the Liaison in that Department. It would
35 keep everybody informed at the same time. They could follow that through and give a status on
36 it.

37
38 Miss Elliott stated that Schiller Park did a survey module within their App. The Village could do
39 that as well. They were painting the water tower and they wanted feedback from the residents as
40 to what color it should be. They also incorporated coupons from local businesses. When they
41 added the coupons they increased their downloads by about 40%.

42
43 Miss Elliott stated that the flat setup fee is \$1,000.00. The monthly maintenance fee is \$249.00.
44 The maintenance fee would be any software updates from Apple and Google play. It would also
45 include swapping things out that don't work, and things that the Village wants to add. The Board
46 watched a short video.

47

1 Miss Elliott stated that the rates are on the sheet. She spoke with her manager. Since the Village
2 is part of the South Suburban Black Caucus they are able to do some group pricing. She will let
3 the Village know what they can work out.
4

5 Village President Meyers-Martin inquired of Miss Elliott with regard to the pothole example, if
6 everyone sees the pothole and they are clicking into their App, and the emails are going to Public
7 Works, what happens if you have a flurry of 500 emails. She inquired whether or not that is
8 clogging up their email.
9

10 Miss Elliott stated no because it is coming directly to the Village's email. The Village will get
11 the emails but they won't be crazy. On average the Village may get 15 to 20-emails. In speaking
12 with their clients, she stated that there is no issue with regard to clogging at all. They are getting
13 requests, but they are dispersing them and taking care of them sooner than later. She could get
14 the information to the Village as far as how many emails are coming through. Village President
15 Meyers-Martin inquired of Miss Elliott whether or not it would disrupt their system to the point
16 where they are overloaded. Miss Elliott stated no.
17

18 Village President Meyers-Martin inquired of Miss Elliott how the App interfaces with 911. Miss
19 Elliott stated that they don't recommend the App being used for any emergencies.
20

21 Miss Elliott stated that the Village of Hillside incorporated their Police Department into their
22 App. It is for non-emergency things.
23

24 Administrator Mekarski inquired what the initial cost would be to the community. He inquired
25 what is included, and what would be the involvement of the Department Heads. He inquired of
26 the scope of services and the monthly fee.
27

28 Miss Elliott stated that it is a \$1,000.00 one time setup fee. The \$1,000.00 is the building of the
29 App. The \$249.00 a month is any maintenance on the App. The maintenance would be any
30 software updates from Apple or Android and any updates that the Village would like to add to
31 the App, or anything they would like to remove from the App. They have a Promotional Package
32 and they will help the Village promote the App. Their Application Specialist would come to the
33 Village and meet with Administrator Mekarski and the Village's IT person, or the Village's
34 Marketing Communications Person. They have a checklist of what they need from the Village.
35 The meeting can be done in about an hour. They will give the Village information on what they
36 are looking for prior to that meeting. It takes about four to six weeks from beginning to end to
37 build the App. Then they do a pre-launch. The Village would pick people from the Village to
38 download the App and see if there are any glitches. Once that is done and the Village gives the
39 okay, then the App is officially launched on Apple and Android.
40

41 Administrator Mekarski stated that each Trustee is a Liaison to a Committee that advises the
42 Board. We could develop modules for the Community Relations Committee, the Educational
43 Commission, Human Resources and Finance. Their activities and Agendas could be on display.
44 Miss Elliott stated that it is customized to what the Village needs.
45

46 Trustee Byrd stated that 55% of adults have a Smartphone. He inquired of Miss Elliott what the
47 average age group of those adults is.
48

1 Miss Elliott stated the average age is 28 to 54. It is not the young ones. It is the in between.
2
3 Trustee Byrd stated that we have a problem getting people to sign-up for NIXLE. He inquired
4 how we go about getting them to use this. Miss Elliott stated that she can email their PR Packet.
5 She stated that they discussed having a pop up appear when people are on their Smartphone to
6 download the App.
7
8 Trustee Byrd stated that just because you have an App on your phone it doesn't mean you are
9 going to use it. Miss Elliott believes that the service request alone and them promoting that will
10 be key.
11
12 Trustee Byrd stated that this is a very mature community. He is trying to figure out how many
13 people would use the App. Miss Elliott state that she did a Public Service Announcement for
14 University Park with the gentleman running for Mayor and a Trustee. It is a way to educate the
15 community on it.
16
17 Trustee Byrd inquired whether or not the \$249.00 a month still applies even if the Village
18 doesn't make any changes to the App. Miss Elliott stated yes. She will know about the discount
19 tomorrow. That would be off the setup fee. Trustee Byrd inquired of Miss Elliott whether or not
20 there is a long-term contract here. Miss Elliott stated that it is a one-year contract. She stated to
21 give them 30-days notice if you want to terminate it. She stated that no one has done that yet.
22
23 Village President Meyers-Martin stated that we are having difficulty getting 100% or even 60%
24 to sign-up for NIXLE. She inquired of Miss Elliott how proactive her company is in terms of that
25 kind of PR. Miss Elliott stated that once she emails the Public Relations Packet they will have a
26 better idea. She stated that you put announcements everywhere. You put it in the water bill.
27 Beecher had a Fourth of July Parade and they had magnets on the cars in the parade telling
28 people to download the App. There are a lot of different ways. Some of what Beecher did is in
29 their PR Packet.
30
31 Trustee Hudson stated that she doesn't believe that a lot of the people in the community have
32 Smartphones. She stated that mature people tend to get comfortable with the old phones and they
33 don't want to change.
34
35 Village President Meyers-Martin state that certainly is a concern to think about.
36
37 Trustee Gibson stated that in her opinion, the majority of the people that have Smartphones are
38 teenagers, young folk, and even eight and nine year olds. The reason for them to have it is
39 because their parents want them to be at a point where they can get in touch with them if they
40 need to. We have an older community here. Like Trustee Byrd and Trustee Hudson stated there
41 are a lot of people here who don't have Smartphones. They don't want Smartphones. They
42 wouldn't know how to use them if they had them. She believes that the NIXLE Program is going
43 very well. It is free. She stated that we need to think about that. We are a small Village and an
44 older community. We don't have a lot of people right now that have Smartphones.
45
46 Village President Meyers-Martin stated that we just wanted to discuss what is available in terms
47 of technology now for Municipalities. Certainly, it is something that we would have to consider

1 and do due diligence on. Village President Meyers-Martin asked Miss Elliott to let her know
2 about the discount on the setup fee.

3
4 Trustee Gibson thanked Miss Elliott for coming in and letting the Board know what is on the
5 horizon.

6
7 **Village's Data on Home Sales, Vacancies and Foreclosures** – Mr. McDonnell stated that he
8 and Mr. Ford were asked to give some statistics about things that are going on in the Village as
9 they pertain to residential homes. Mr. McDonnell prepared a Memo for the Board that outlines
10 some bullet points of some current things as of February 6th. Mr. McDonnell stated that currently
11 we have 54 homes for sale in the Village.

12
13 Village President Meyers-Martin inquired of Mr. McDonnell if he could just state what the total
14 housing stock is.

15
16 Mr. McDonnell stated that currently we have 1,688 active water accounts. He stated that an
17 additional 91 are vacant properties so they don't have active accounts. There are 75 rental units.
18 There are 54 homes for sale in the Village. He stated that of those 54 homes, 13 are current
19 foreclosed homes. There are 46 homes that are identified as potential homes to go into
20 foreclosure. Those foreclosures could happen 30-days from now or two years from now. It just
21 means that something has been documented that there is something going on with that property
22 that could push it towards a foreclosure. He stated somebody could be doing a Short Sale on it.

23
24 Village President Meyers-Martin inquired of Mr. McDonnell whether or not he has any data on
25 how long it takes for a home that is vacant before it is then occupied. Mr. McDonnell stated that
26 the foreclosed homes are generally taking around two-years to go through the foreclosure
27 process before they get back on the market and they are sold. He stated that there have been
28 some foreclosed homes that people have lived in for over four-years before they actually had
29 people put out of the home due to the foreclosure. Mr. McDonnell stated that our numbers are
30 pretty small considering some of the surrounding areas around us. Our vacant homes are low.
31 Our foreclosure rates are low. Our turnover time that we are actually selling foreclosed homes is
32 very quick.

33
34 Trustee Byrd inquired of Mr. McDonnell whether or not out of the 91 vacant properties, 54 of
35 those homes are for sale. Mr. McDonnell stated most likely, give or take.

36
37 Trustee Gibson inquired of Mr. McDonnell what the procedure is when a person wants to rent
38 their house. She stated for example, if someone owns a house and they just go ahead and rent it
39 to somebody without getting in touch with the Village, what happens.

40
41 Mr. McDonnell stated that as soon as the Village finds out that there is a rental house that has not
42 been inspected, the Village notifies the owner and gives them the information so they can get
43 those inspections taken care of so that the property has a current Certificate of Occupancy. If
44 they don't come forward to do that on their own, then they would be cited and go before the
45 Housing Court.

46
47 Trustee Nale stated that she is finding that throughout the entire Village the housing stock in its
48 entirety seems to be deteriorating. She stated that people that have bought homes don't take any

1 pride in keeping them up. They aren't taking care of their property or the appearance of their
2 home, the gutters, roof, and the driveways with the cracking asphalt. She believes that can be
3 quite a perception problem for people that are driving through the vicinity with the potential to
4 buy a home in the area. She knows that Reggie does a good job as far as Code Violations. She is
5 just speaking that in general, it seems like the care of the homes is deteriorating.
6

7 Trustee Waite inquired whether or not cracks in the driveway are a Code Violation. Mr. Ford
8 stated that cracks in the driveway itself no. If the driveway is deteriorating and you have huge
9 pits and you can actually see it breaking up, yes. They cite it. We drop off Pink Notices. We send
10 letters and then we cite it.
11

12 Trustee Waite inquired how deep the pothole has to be before you send a notice. Mr. Ford stated
13 that there is a difference between the driveway crumbling up and cracks in the drive. Simple
14 cracks in the drive do not bring about a Citation type of process. Mr. Ford stated that he and Mr.
15 McDonnell have been reviewing other Ordinances that other communities have, specifically to
16 address the curb appeal that Trustee Nale is speaking about. He stated specifically dealing with
17 landscaping and the trimming of bushes. They get that complaint quite often. The problem is
18 there is nothing in the Ordinance that says you have to trim your bushes. There is something that
19 says that you have to cut your grass. He stated that they looked at some Ordinances and
20 hopefully they will forward them to the Board to deal with those issues.
21

22 Trustee Gibson stated that some people like a natural setting. They feel that natural plantings are
23 okay. Mr. Ford stated that still has to be maintained. It can't grow and cover the egress or the
24 sidewalk. Trustee Gibson stated that some people think it should.
25

26 Trustee Waite stated that occasionally he will go to his neighbor and tell him the limb from the
27 Ash Tree is going to land on his house. He stated that the whole tree could fall on the neighbor's
28 house. Mr. Ford is aware of the house that Trustee Waite is speaking of.
29

30 Village President Meyers-Martin stated that with regard to what Trustee Nale had stated about it
31 seems like people are not maintaining the upkeep of their homes, in part some of that does have
32 to do with Code Violations. They may not be aware that when you have cracking paint that has
33 to be addressed. She asked Mr. Ford to speak to what that process is like when you are citing
34 people regarding that. She also asked him to speak to the timing on it. She stated that during the
35 winter we don't aggressively go after some of those things because it is difficult to do during the
36 winter. She stated that come spring it is a hard core push.
37

38 Mr. Ford stated that is not quite correct. Right now Mr. McDonnell has Mr. Ford making rounds
39 through the Village. When they see the cracking paint, those letters have already been generated
40 and gone out. They have agreed on a date in which the work has to be done in order to start the
41 process of bringing an individual through the Housing Court. If he waited until May to start
42 doing those rounds, we would give them 30 days to paint the house based on the Pink Notice. If
43 they hadn't done it by that time we would probably give them another week based on the second
44 step which is a letter. Once the letter goes out, a Citation would be issued after that next week or
45 two weeks. When the Citation is written, he has to give them a minimum of 30 days. He stated
46 that if we are in June and their seven days is up on June 20th, and his next Court date is July 15th,
47 he cannot write them a Ticket for the July 15th Court date. He can't get them into Court until
48 August. That is why they start the process now to get the work done.

1 Village President Meyers-Martin stated that she only meant that if there is a violation that you
2 are not requiring people to go out in below zero weather to get the work done. She is aware that
3 they have to begin the process now.

4
5 Mr. McDonnell stated that we started that this year a month earlier. Generally they would start
6 the end of February or the beginning of March. They started a month earlier due to the State
7 Statutes that they have to give them so much time before they give them a Court date.

8
9 Village President Meyers-Martin asked Mr. Ford to explain what happens when they do come to
10 Court. Mr. Ford stated that if they come to Court, the Hearing Officer will hear both sides of the
11 case. We give him the Ordinance that is violated. He looks as to whether it has been complied to
12 and if not, why not. If it has not been complied to, he can issue a fine. Depending on what the
13 violation is, the fine is \$750.00 or \$1,000.00. Once you get them to Court the fine can be issued.
14 Once the fine is issued he can pay it. If he does not pay it, or he does not bring the house into
15 compliance, then the process can start again in another seven days. You do have individuals that
16 have been cited and fined several times. He stated that what ends up occurring if they do not pay
17 there ends up being a Judgment on their Credit Report. That is the leverage they have from a
18 Citation standpoint. Village President Meyers-Martin stated that there are people that don't
19 comply regardless of how many fines or how many Citations have been issued.

20
21 Trustee Hudson inquired that the homes that you are waiting for something to happen because
22 the trees are growing on top of them, where do they fall in this category. Are they vacant? She
23 stated those that we wish that we could tear down.

24
25 Mr. Ford stated that house is on the list but it has been purchased. It was not purchased until late
26 fall. That is why the dumpsters are there now. They should be back and ready to go to work once
27 spring starts. We have spoken to that company. They know that the first thing they have to do is
28 to clear that roof and get the roof repaired. We talked about starting the demolition process on
29 that house when it was purchased.

30
31 Trustee Hudson stated that there is also one on Kedzie. There was a basketball court there. There
32 is someone living there but there is stuff just growing everywhere. Is that something that we have
33 already addressed? Mr. Ford stated yes.

34
35 Trustee Nale inquired at one time didn't we have somebody that would come to the Village and
36 do an inspection to aid these two on broken gutters or cracked pavement at one time as to homes
37 that are deteriorating.

38
39 Mr. McDonnell stated that when he started here five years ago, as he went through house files,
40 he did notice that many years ago the Village must have hired people to come in the summertime
41 and walk the streets. They would walk the streets with a checklist. When he asked about that
42 many years ago, he was told that it caused more problems for the Village. People were
43 complaining that we were infringing on their privacy and things of that nature. The checklist was
44 basically paint, lawn care, bushes, and things like that. He doesn't know how it came to be that it
45 was more of a problem for the Village to do that. That was before he was here. He stated that
46 other Villages that he worked for did do that, and were very successful with that project during
47 the summer months. It seemed to help and it was very cost effective for the Village. At this time
48 he doesn't have those budgeted line items for that type of personnel in the Budget. It is

1 something that the Board could think about during Budget time that we may want to try that
2 strategy again.

3

4 Mr. McDonnell stated that the Village does have a Complaint Form that is on our website. We
5 are working towards having that Complaint Form being transmitted to us instead of hand
6 delivered to us or mailed to us. He stated that probably within a month or so, the residents will be
7 able to go online and fill out the Complaint Form, and it gets sent to us electronically. It ends up
8 in Mr. Ford's email.

9

10 Trustee Gibson inquired of Mr. McDonnell whether or not the people that he spoke about that
11 were here doing that in previous years were paid employees. Mr. McDonnell stated that he
12 doesn't know. He doesn't have any way to look up that record. He is not sure if they were paid
13 employees or if they were volunteers from a school possibly. Trustee Gibson thanked Mr.
14 McDonnell and Mr. Ford for the information.

15

16 **ADJOURNMENT:**

17

18 **Motion by Trustee Gibson, second by Trustee Hudson to adjourn at 8:00 P.M.**

19 **Voice Vote: All Ayes Motion Carried.**

20

21 **Respectfully submitted by Faith Stine.**

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