

Village of Olympia Fields Board of Trustees Meeting

Minutes of the Regular Meeting January 11, 2023

Commenced: 7:01 p.m.

Adjourned: 8:24 p.m.

Call to Order & Pledge

President Burke called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The assembly recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Village Clerk Stephanie Mills conducted the roll call and announced that there was a quorum:

Present: Trustees Victor Blackwell, Sandra Finley, Kelvin Oliver, Willis Pennington, Desiree Watkins and Howard White; Village President Sterling Burke; Village Administrator/Chief of Staff Drella C. Savage; Village Clerk Stephanie Mills

Absent: None

Approval of the Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the December 14, 2022, Board of Trustees Meeting:

Trustee Oliver moved, seconded by Trustee Finley, to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2022, Board of Trustees Meeting, as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes (6-0) Motion Carried.

Bills for Approval

January Bills for Approval – \$580,290.75:

Trustee Pennington moved, seconded by Trustee Watkins, to approve payment of the bills for January 2023 in the amount of \$580,290.75.

Roll Call: Ayes (6-0) Motion Carried.

Administration Reports

Report of the Village President – Sterling M. Burke

Commendation: President Burke awarded a commendation to Officer Rhonda Jones for her apprehension of two juvenile suspects for attempted auto theft, which resulted in arrests and charges.

2022 Holiday Landscape Awards–Presentation of Certificates: Mrs. Arlene Burke, Beautification Committee chair, and Trustee Finley, liaison to the Beautification Committee, announced the winners of the Annual Holiday Landscape Awards and presented them with certificates:

- 1st Place: Melvin and Charlene Woods of Wysteria
- 2nd Place: Anthony Mace of The Greens (not present at the meeting)
- 3rd Place: Darryl and Angela Johnson

Mrs. Burke thanked the Village President, the Board of Trustees, and the Public Works Department for their support of the landscape awards program. Mrs. Burke also announced that the Beautification Committee offers Home Improvement Awards throughout the year; she encouraged residents to nominate their neighbors and other Village homeowners who are making improvements to their homes. She noted that nomination forms are available on the Village website. Additionally, Mrs. Burke invited interested residents to apply for membership on the Beautification Committee. She noted that applications are available on the Village website.

HOA Grants: President Burke stated that \$1,000 grants are available to every Homeowners Association (HOA) to use to beautify their subdivisions. President Burke announced effective in 2023, the Village will increase the grant amount to \$2,000 per HOA. In addition to the \$2,000, HOAs will also receive two trees to plant in their subdivisions. President Burke stated that many HOAs are not taking advantage of these funds and encouraged them to do so.

Ordinance 2023-01–Extending the Deadline Established in Section 7(a) of Ordinance 2022-01: President Burke explained that due to circumstances beyond the control of the developers of the 203rd Street/Governors Highway TIF property, it is necessary to extend the deadline for the closing on the sale of the property. President Burke stated that the Village is willing to make this accommodation to maximize the opportunity to get the right type of developer in the area.

Trustee Oliver moved, seconded by Trustee Pennington, to approve the extension of the deadline established in Section 7(a) of Ordinance 2022-01.

Roll Call: Ayes (6-0) Motion Carried.

Economic Development: President Burke provided an update on the progress of several new businesses in the Village, including the Quick Run Shell Station, Little Caesars, and Batter & Berries.

Report of the Village Administrator/Chief of Staff – Drella C. Savage

TIF 2 Eligibility Study–Approval of the release of the Governors Highway/Vollmer TIF 2 Eligibility Study (Draft December 30, 2022) for public inspection:

Administrator Savage explained the necessity of removing the property at 3615 Park Drive (formerly the Internal Revenue Service building) from the existing TIF at Governors Highway/Vollmer Road and placing it and an adjacent property into a smaller, newly created TIF (TIF 2). She noted that by doing so, the Village would be able to maximize the value of the property in anticipation of future development. Administrator Savage asked that the Board of Trustees approve the release for public inspection of a new eligibility study for TIF 2 prepared by Village planner Teska Associates, Inc. She noted that if approved, the study would be available for public inspection for 10 days.

Trustee Blackwell moved, seconded by Trustee Pennington, to approve the release of the Governors Highway/Vollmer TIF 2 Eligibility Study (Draft December 30, 2022) for public inspection.

Roll Call: Ayes (6-0) Motion Carried.

Department Head Reports

- Betty Zigras – Finance Director: No report at this time.
- Derrick Blasingame – Chief of Police: No report at this time.
- John McDonnell – Building Commissioner: No report at this time.
- Terence Acquah – Assistant Public Works Director: Mr. Acquah thanked the Board of Trustees for their support throughout his tenure as interim/acting Public Works Director. He also commented on the Department of Public Works' (DPW) snow removal efforts.

Trustee Pennington thanked DPW for repairing two watermain breaks in the Graymoor subdivision, and Trustee Finley thanked Mr. Acquah for his service as interim director over the past six months.

Trustee Liaison Reports

- Planning & Zoning Commission/Human Resources – Blackwell: Trustee Blackwell announced that the Human Resources Committee would meet on January 26, 2023.

- Public Works/Beautification – Finley: Trustee Finley announced that the Public Works Committee needs members. She noted that DPW plans to participate in a government and municipal hiring event. She also stated that DPW is submitting an application for interns.
- Public Safety/Police Pension – Oliver: Trustee Oliver announced that the Public Safety Committee meeting scheduled for January 3, 2023, was canceled and rescheduled for January 18, 2023.

Chief Blasingame stated that an employment offer had been made to a new female police officer candidate, contingent on her successful completion of certain prerequisites, including a background check. Chief Blasingame noted that 35 percent of the Olympia Fields Police Department's new hires have been female. In response to a query from Trustee Watkins, Chief Blasingame stated that the police department is now fully staffed.

- Finance/Building Department – Pennington: Trustee Pennington stated that he had no finance report but that he is preparing a memo regarding the Village's FY2023–24 budget process.
- Park District/Library Board – Watkins: Trustee Watkins provided an update on Park District events, including Daddy/Daughter Date Night, the Irons Oaks recycling program, and a Lifeline Health Screening planned for March 3, 2023.
- Educational Commission/Community Relations Commission – White: Trustee White invited residents to visit the Community Relations Commission's Facebook page.

President Burke asked that Trustee White coordinate with Mrs. Jessica Washington, Director of Communications.

HOA Concerns: Trustee Watkins informed the Board of Trustees about concerns expressed by HOA presidents relative to a community space for HOA meetings, new resident information, and squatters and renters in the Village.

President Burke noted that the Olympia Fields Park District is available for HOA meetings at no cost.

Trustee Watkins requested a motion to review neighboring municipalities' ordinances on rental property and renters.

Trustee White seconded the motion.

President Burke stated that an ordinance would not be the appropriate mechanism to address the concern. He stated that Building Commissioner McDonnell, in conjunction with the Village planner, would look into the matter and make recommendations.

Trustee Blackwell stated that in lieu of a motion, the Board of Trustees should consult with the administrative staff to further research the issue.

No vote was taken, and the motion failed.

President Burke asked Building Commissioner McDonnell to provide an update on the Village's renter situation at the March Board of Trustees meeting.

Per Building Commissioner McDonnell, there are currently 90 rentals in the Village. He said out of the 1,900 properties in the Village, there have been approximately 70–90 squatters over the course of the past 10 years.

President Burke asked Administrator Savage to research the matter and report back to the Board on this issue. He asked Trustee Watkins to give Administrator Savage a list of the HOA's concerns.

A discussion ensued about the possible limitations on the Village's legal authority to enforce renter standards, due to its non-home rule status.

Finance Director Zigras confirmed that the Village routinely provides new resident addresses (no names included) to HOA presidents. She noted that some may not be receiving the lists due to outdated contact information.

Administrator Savage recommended that HOAs establish generic email addresses and post office boxes to ensure receipt of Village communications.

A discussion ensued about the squatter issue and the limitations imposed on municipalities in removing them.

Miscellaneous Reports

Nothing at this time.

Public Comment

Mrs. Angela Johnson thanked Mr. Acquah for his assistance with a tree issue at the Metra station. She asked Trustee White about other ways that residents can get information about Community Relations Commission events other than Facebook.

Trustee White responded that information is also available via flyers, the newsletter, and the website.

Mrs. Johnson asked Trustee Watkins to inform the Library Board about the broken door on the Little Free Library located at the post office.

Ms. Constance Means, president of the Maynegaiter HOA, requested Maynegaiter resident information from the Village for the purpose of assessments and property upkeep. A discussion ensued about the Maynegaiter reserves fencing along Route 30.

Resignations and Appointments

Nothing at this time.

Adjournment

Trustee Watkins moved, seconded by Trustee Pennington, to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call: Ayes (6-0) Motion Carried.

President Burke adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.