

**REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, September 19, 2023**

As provided by public notice, the Village Board of the Village of Northfield met in the Council Chambers of the Village Hall immediately following the Public Hearing on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, for the Regular Board meeting. The meeting was called to order by President Greg Lungmus at 7:05 PM. The Village Clerk took the roll call.

PRESENT: President Greg Lungmus

 Trustees Barnaby Dinges
 Tom Whittaker
 Matt Galin
 Tracey Mendrek
 Charlie Orth – was ill and participated by telephone
 conference call in the meeting

ABSENT: Todd Fowler

ALSO PRESENT: Attorney Mallory Milluzzi

President Lungmus noted that Village Trustee Charles Orth notified the Village Manager that afternoon that he had become ill and would be unable to attend this meeting in person. He requested to participate in the meeting remotely and by telephone. Trustee Orth identified himself and the Board members confirmed that it was his voice on the telephone. Trustee Mendrek made a motion seconded by Trustee Galin to permit Trustee Charles Orth to participate in the meeting remotely by telephone, due to his illness. All of the trustees were in favor so the motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

The Village President asked the Clerk to read the Consent Agenda items into the record. Those were reported as follows:

1. Approve the Report of Proceedings from the Regular Board Meeting of August 22, 2023 and the Special Board Meeting of August 22, 2023 Village Board meetings
2. Bills and Disbursements from August 1, 2023 to August 31, 2023, in the amount of \$ 651,777.84

Trustee Whittaker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Dinges to approve Consent Agenda items 1 through 2.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter. There was none.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve the consent agenda.

AYES: Dinges NAYS: ABSTAIN: ABSENT: Fowler
Whittaker
Galín
Mendrek
Orth

CONSIDERATION OF A LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH THE WINNETKA PARK DISTRICT FOR USE OF RIGHT OF WAY – NORTHFIELD PARK FENCING

Trustee Whittaker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Orth to consider a License Agreement with the Winnetka Park District for use of Right of Way – Northfield Park fencing.

Community Development Director Gutierrez stated that the Winnetka Park District wanted to replace the existing fencing at Northfield Park. The fencing along the east side of the park is located within the Village’s Lockwood Avenue right of way. Staff was not aware that this fence was within a Village ROW until the Park District submitted a plat of survey with their fence permit application. The Village’s Public Way Use policy requires that the Park District enter into a license agreement with the Village for their use of the Village ROW. Public Works had no objections to the location of the fencing. There are a storm sewer and water main that run in the vicinity of the fence, however, the license agreement would allow the Village to remove any fencing if it is necessary to make repairs. The fencing on the west side of the Park runs within the East Frontage Road ROW which is under the jurisdiction of the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways and would require their separate approval.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter. There was none.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve a License Agreement with the Winnetka Park District for use of Right of Way – Northfield Park fencing.

AYES: Dinges NAYS: ABSTAIN: ABSENT: Fowler
Whittaker
Galín
Mendrek
Orth

CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A PLAT OF SUBDIVISION AND GRANTING REQUESTED VARIATION RELIEF TO THE SUBDIVISION CODE AT 119-123 HAPP ROAD IN THE WIAN SUBDIVISION

Trustee Galin made a motion, seconded by Trustee Whittaker, to consider an ordinance approving a Plat of Subdivision and granting requested variation relief to the Subdivision Code at 119-123 Happ Road in the WIAN Subdivision.

Community Development Director Gutierrez noted that the petitioners, James and Patricia Dietz, were seeking approval of a final plat of subdivision in order to divide the single property at 119-123 Happ Road into two lots. The petitioners were also seeking relief from the following Subdivision Code standards: 1) the 75’ minimum lot width requirement and 2) the prohibition of acute angles at the corners of a new lot. On September 5, 2023, the Plan & Zoning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposed plat of subdivision and associated variations.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

Trustee Galin asked when the Village became aware of this issue. Gutierrez replied that the Village had been aware of this for some time and that Mr. and Mrs. Dietz had been in his office asking about this various times over the years. His understanding was that they wanted to contemplate selling the property and sell the two homes as separate properties.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve an ordinance approving a Plat of Subdivision and granting requested variation relief to the Subdivision Code at 119-123 Happ Road in the WIAN Subdivision.

AYES: Dinges
Whittaker
Galín
Mendrek
Orth

NAYS:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Fowler

CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING CODE TO ALLOW A COMMUNITY HEALTH CAMPUS AS A NEW SPECIAL USE CATEGORY.

Trustee Dinges made a motion, seconded by Trustee Whittaker, to consider an ordinance amending the Zoning Code to allow a Community Mental Health Campus as a new special use category.

Community Development Director Gutierrez noted that the Josselyn Center was requesting certain Zoning Code text amendments to accommodate the variety of mental health services they provide in the buildings at 405 Central Avenue, 495 Central Avenue, 1779 Maple Street, and 1850 Oak Street. Their proposed text amendments would create a new special use

category titled Community Mental Health Campus and would establish a series of performance standards for this use.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve an ordinance amending the Zoning Code to allow a Community Mental Health Campus as a new special use category.

AYES: Dinges NAYS: ABSTAIN: ABSENT: Fowler
Whittaker
Galín
Mendrek
Orth

CONSIDERATION OF A SPECIAL USE ORDINANCE TO ALLOW FOR THE JOSSELYN CENTER TO OPERATE AS A COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CAMPUS AT 405 CENTRAL AVENUE, 495 CENTRAL AVENUE, 1779 MAPLE STREET, AND 1850 OAK STREET

Trustee Whittaker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Dinges, to consider a Special Use ordinance to allow for the Josselyn Center to operate as a community mental health campus at 405 Central Avenue, 495 Central Avenue, 1779 Maple Street, and 1850 Oak Street.

Community Development Director Gutierrez noted that simultaneously the Josselyn Center was seeking special use approval for their specific operations. The proposed text amendments would limit the operating hours for a Community Mental Health Campus to 9:30 p.m. unless otherwise approved by the Village Board. In their proposed Special Use application, the Josselyn Center is seeking to operate their Living Room program at 1779 Maple Street until midnight, seven days a week and the hours of the rest of their programming would be limited to 9:30 p.m. The proposed text amendments would be universally applicable to any entity that provides community mental health services located in the O/R District north of Willow Road. The Special Use approval would be specific to the Josselyn Center and its particular programming, hours, and locations. On September 5, 2023, the Plan & Zoning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposed text amendments and Special Use.

Village Attorney Milluzzi stated that an updated ordinance was circulated to the Board earlier that afternoon. These changes were all technical in nature. Nothing was substantive. It provided just some scrivener's errors that were caught as well as some clarifications on some of the conditions in there. She stressed that the updates to the ordinance were made that afternoon and this updated ordinance was the one being approved.

President Lungmus asked if there were any Board members who wanted to comment on this matter.

Trustee Mendrek asked for a refresher on the Living Room program. Nicky Gallop from the Josselyn Center stated that its main goal was to be a warm, safe, welcoming nonclinical setting and offer an alternative to an emergency room. She noted that two staff members would always be present.

Trustee Galin asked about the 9:30 p.m. unless otherwise approved by the Village Board language and questioned if the Board was locking themselves into always approving. Village Attorney responded that it would not bind the board to any future applicant. She stated that the beauty and design of a Special Use is that each proposal is looked at in its factual scenario and the applicant is obligated to provide data and rationale as to why extended hours should be considered by the Board. In addition, they would need to show that the extended hours would not impact the surrounding neighborhood. She stressed that this is what the special use process is designed for.

President Lungmus noted that the Josselyn Center provides a very important service to individuals in the broader community. He asked Police Chief Lustig if he was good with this in the security arrangement at the Josselyn Center. Chief Lustig replied that because they have two security guards along with their crisis intervention workers, he was good with it. He noted that the police are the backup and become involved when someone becomes very unmotivated in a crisis situation.

Trustee Whittaker stated that it was amazing to see how the Josselyn Center had grown and all of the structures they had acquired. He stressed that mental illness was very near and dear to my heart. He was appreciative of this resource for members of the community, as well as outlying communities, to have a place to go because it is so important.

Trustee Orth stated he thought the Josselyn Center was very important and he was glad to see that the Board was moving forward with it and allowing this very important need to be fulfilled.

President Lungmus asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on this matter.

President Lungmus requested a roll call vote to approve a Special Use ordinance to allow for the Josselyn Center to operate as a community mental health campus at 405 Central Avenue, 495 Central Avenue, 1779 Maple Street, and 1850 Oak Street.

AYES: Dinges	NAYS:	ABSTAIN:	ABSENT: Fowler
Whittaker			
Galín			
Mendrek			
Orth			

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Gavin Blunt said he wanted things over but knew that the bureaucracies do not like to take responsibility so the question is, where are all the ranks? He believed that the rank could slowly start back when the administrations changed. He said that it was alleged that the former Village Manager threatened to quit with the preceding President. He noted that the current circumstances started with one manager. He questioned why the Village Manager was not dismissed immediately by the board for making that statement. He noted that folks have forgotten that Village Managers are public servants serving the citizens. He said that we collectively as citizens, determine the destiny of this Village, not the other way around. The bureaucracy administers it. The threat to quit is an emotional greenmailing of the Village - instilling fear, losing the Village Manager, and all of what? This further reinforces the inappropriate behavior. The extension of her contract for two years. The common thread is a lack of leadership. He stated that they could start with the infamous Amazon incident and then go on to his request for the recall of officials where any two members of the Board could request to add this to an agenda. Then there was the creation of the setting and the reading of the unsavory email at the school. Then some trustees had cease-and-desist legal actions where the President was one of the plaintiffs and did not recuse himself.

Gavin Blunt stated that over the last six or seven months, there have been over 100 Village residents who have demanded transparency, change within the Board, and real leadership. He noted that it was amazing that you open tonight's session saying you will go to counseling and you don't have that long. You had a Village Manager who quit and then used the tactics of fear to greenmail the Village into paying her another \$500,000 to facilitate her reaching her 30-year pension benefits. These events speak for themselves. They represent the failure of the trustees to step up and exercise their own individual shared responsibility to the government and investments of the Village. The trustees have been paralyzed by means of legal tax expenses or misguided alliances or personnel. Further, the use of legal processes to try to intimidate me, a resident of the Village because he has the right to get information via the FOIA process in a timely way because the law states that FOIA requests need to be responded to in five days. Village leadership was inept and they did not even know they violated the law. He noted he had been making FOIA requests and Village leadership and legal had been stonewalling them and labeled him as a voluminous requestor. He noted that 5 days was the law but it had taken the Village 44 days to respond. He noted that a trustee who is a lawyer made a public statement at a caucus meeting about his FOIA requests but left out the fact that the Village was at fault for the delay. He said that this was further amplified by yet another trustee who was quoted for the terminology regarding FOIA laws and disparaged him. He felt the trustees needed to make a public apology. He said that he had been accused of not having the facts and noted that it was not from a lack of trying. He noted that there was now the issue of hiring a Village Manager. He said the Interim Village Manager was being paid \$105 per hour for 1000 hours of service but noted the former Village Manager made \$267 per hour for 1000 hours of service and she has much less responsibility. He was curious if the Village paid a recruiting fee on top of the contract for Mr. Frenzer. He said if that was the case, the Village President failed to disclose that in the last meeting. He noted that this was why there was a problem in the Village there was no transparency as well as a complete failure of leadership. He said that when he last addressed the Board he had asked for 4 things. He asked that a recall of elected officials be added to the agenda. He asked for a resident committee to review all of the Village's finances. He asked that

a special investigation be conducted on the possible interference by the former Village Manager regarding employees potentially leaving Village employment with her. He asked that all FOIA requests be responded to. He said that a failure to address these would result in a letter signed by residents to the Attorney General of the State of Illinois to investigate the Village. He said the Board had failed to address these and noted that the Board just wanted to move on. He noted that the residents were mad because they did not get the information that they asked for and he had experienced this with FOIA requests. He said that he hoped that when this was done, it would lead to better local government and he felt several trustees on the Board genuinely came to do something for the Village. He said he regretted that he had to notify them of the need to preserve all emails, and text transcripts of board meetings and executive sessions. He said that they might be able to stonewall the residents but they will not be able to do this to the Attorney General.

President Lungmus asked if any other member of the public wished to comment.

Resident Chaya Rubenstein noted that the League of Women Voters was holding a Wine & Whine with State Representative, Robyn Gable, and State Senator, Laura Fine, from 5:30 PM-7 PM on October 12th at the Winnetka Public Library Lloyd Room.

Resident Ann Olk asked what the responsibilities of the new Village Manager were. She inquired if they were there as a placeholder or to fix things. She said that an anonymous survey needed to be conducted of the Village employees. She inquired who would be involved in the hiring of the new Village Manager, noting that it needed to be transparent and the public confidence was low.

President Lungmus stated that the entire Board would be involved in the choosing of the next Village Manager.

Interim Village Manager Tim Frenzer stated to keep in mind that he was a part-time employee but he would fix things that could be fixed. He said that with his experience there would be some decisions that he would want to give to the new Village Manager because they need to have the freedom to evaluate staffing and things like that. He noted he would be working closely with the staff and that it had been a great pleasure to get to know them. He said that part of his function was to provide an environment where they feel comfortable and like working. He thought going forward that bringing in the consultant would be critical because typically a municipality might get hundreds of applications. Based on the input received from the Board and community, a consultant will narrow the candidates to a smaller field and then review that with the corporate authorities. This will help narrow the field to the ones that seem most highly qualified or at least have minimum qualifications and go from there. All of the Board will participate in this process and they will help the Board come up with opportunities for community engagement and community involvement. He thought that they would find it to be a very positive experience. He noted that ultimately his job was to make sure that the incoming Village Manager had the best environment to come into and with the smoothest landing to start working full-time for the Village of Northfield.

Resident Kathy Estabrooke inquired what the impetus was for the roundabout.

President Lungmus replied that it was a safety issue because it is a 5 legged intersection. He noted that it is a county right of way so they are in charge of designing that intersection. The Village has had input but it has taken at least four or five years to evolve this plan.

Kathy Estabrooke noted that she put in a FOIA request and found out that in the last 5 years, there had only been 3 accidents at Walnut and Happ, 8 accidents at Orchard and Happ, 18 accidents at Wagner and Winnetka and 33 accidents at Sunset Ridge and Winnetka. She said she was having a hard time justifying the roundabout especially since it was taking away parking spaces from businesses.

President Lungmus noted that the intersection had been by the county and the village for quite a long time and that the argument for a roundabout is it is better and safer for vehicles and individuals.

Resident Kathy Estabrooke stated she thought the need for a roundabout was greater in the other areas where accidents were more prevalent.

Trustee Whittaker noted that he believed that one of the stipulations of the Happ Road corridor improvements by the County was to put in a roundabout.

Resident Kathy Estabrooke noted that in the Plan & Zoning packet she received, she was disappointed about a comment from the staff and Village Attorney made regarding the WIAN subdivision.

President Lungmus stated that the next Board meeting date would be a week earlier changing from October 17, 2023 to October 10, 2023.

Resident Kathy Estabrooke inquired if there could be a permanent time for Board meetings so residents can better manage their time.

Attorney Milluzzi stated that the Committee of the Whole meeting always precedes the Village Board meeting. If the Village Board meeting starts at 7:00 PM, at times the Committee of the Whole meeting will have to stop short for the Village Board meeting. Or if the Committee of the Whole meeting has a short agenda, there is a lull between 6:30 PM and 7:00 PM. She stated the Committee of the Whole meetings often go for one hour.

Resident Carol Ritchell stated that Village Board meetings should start at 7:00 PM as was done in the past.

Administration

Acting Village Manager Frenzer had no comments.

Community Development Department & Building Department

Community Development Director Gutierrez stated that on October 2nd, the Plan and Zoning Commission will hold a hearing on two items. The first is a Special Use for medical office use being proposed for a building at 495 Central. That building is actually under contract

for this new user to be purchased from the Josselyn Center. If that transaction goes through, the Josselyn Center's current use and occupancies would be moved to another building that they own. Secondly, they will be reviewing an amendment to a Special Use that is held by the Three Tarts bakery. They want to expand into an adjacent vacant tenant space over at 301 Happ Road.

Trustee Whittaker asked if there were any updates on the dispensary. Community Development Director Gutierrez replied there was slow activity there.

Finance Department

Finance Director Morley stated there was one correction on the Executive Summary and the YTD revenues are .3% above, not below, the budget. The interest is \$65,000 above the budget since interest rates are high. Last month, there was \$41,000 in interest and if comparing this to last year's rates, this would have only been \$9,700. She noted that next month, she would bring the property tax estimate.

Police Department

Police Chief Lustig stated that the Police Commission had met the day before and reviewed the background investigation on their current candidate and approved him. He will be sworn in on September 26th and introduced to the Board at the next meeting. Another candidate was interviewed and he was issued a conditional offer of employment so this is good news for their staffing. He noticed that two block camera poles or the license plate readers have been installed and he awaits the others to be done.

Resident Gavin Blunt asked why there had not been updates from the Fire/Police Works Department for the last several months. Interim Village Manager Frenzer replied that Chief Nystrand had notified him that day that he was ill so he was excused but could not speak on his absence for any other meetings.

President Lungmus noted there were the following five special Board projects:

- 1) Centennial – Lead by Trustee Mendrek and Trustee Dinges – Trustee Mendrek said there were no updates.
- 2) Wayfinding Signage – Lead by Trustee Mendrek and Trustee Dinges – Trustee Mendrek said there were no updates.
- 3) Sidewalk Committee – Lead by Trustee Galin and Trustee Whittaker – Trustee Galin said that staff was putting together the initial report from their findings and they will be discussing this at their next meeting on September 28th. He said they are having a community workshop on November 8th at 7:00 PM. Trustee Whittaker stressed that they want meaningful community involvement for sidewalks.
- 4) Mid-block Crossings – Lead by Trustee Orth – Trustee Orth stated he and Melissa Jewett were working with the consultant and they continue to move forward.
- 5) Library Campus – Lead by Trustee Fowler and President Lungmus – President Lungmus stated that he and Trustee Fowler had been working with the Winnetka/Northfield Public Library and have exchanged several letters but stressed that it was early in the process. He stated that the library had a Board meeting the previous evening where they discussed the library campus at Northfield. He noted

that they had received a call that day from the Library's Director. The library's lease is expiring next year so they intend to extend the lease for an undetermined amount of time. President Lungmus said they were trying to fully understand how they want to approach the improvement of the library space. He stated that he had written a letter to the Library Board approximately 4 weeks ago and they were waiting to hear back but suspected it would be shortly.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or issues to come before the Board, Trustee Whittaker Galin made a motion, seconded by Trustee Galin to adjourn the meeting.

Upon the following roll call vote, the motion was approved.

AYES: Dinges NAYS: ABSTAIN: ABSENT: Fowler
Whittaker
Galin
Mendrek
Orth

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.