

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRESIDENT
AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF MORTON GROVE
RICHARD T. FLICKINGER MUNICIPAL CENTER COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SEPTEMBER 26, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

- I. Village President Dan DiMaria convened the Regular Meeting of the Village Board at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Village Hall.
- II. Village Clerk Eileen Harford called the roll. Present were Trustees Saba Khan, Rita Minx, Ashur Shiba, John Thill, Connie Travis, and Janine Witko.

III.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Trustee Minx moved to approve the Minutes of the September 12, 2023 Village Board Meeting as presented. Trustee Khan seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously via voice vote.**

IV.

SPECIAL REPORTS

1. Swearing-In of New Firefighter Steve Congenie
 - a. Mayor DiMaria welcomed Mike Simkins, Fire and Police Commission Chairman, to the podium to swear in Morton Grove's newest firefighter, Steve Congenie. Mr. Simkins then invited Steve and his family to the podium, along with Chief Ensign, Mayor DiMaria, and Trustee liaison Travis. Steve introduced his fiancé and his mother.
 - b. Mr. Simkins said that Steve began his employment with Morton Grove in June of 2023. He did two weeks of orientation before going to the nine-week NIPSTA Fire Academy. Prior to onboarding, he completed the Lutheran General Paramedic Program while working on with a private ambulance service. Steve grew up in Villa Park with his parents, Leo and Kari, his older brother, Leo, and younger sister, Maria. He attended Willowbrook high school and later moved on to Cornell University. He was part of Cornell's wrestling team during his four years there. After earning his bachelor's degree in government and communications, he worked in business for several years prior to his pursuit of the fire service.
 - c. Mr. Simkins said, personally, Steve is very proud of and dedicated to his family. They are deeply rooted in service to others, with his dad completing his 29th year in Chicago public schools and his currently pursuing a doctorate degree in nursing. His siblings have also show great success in their fields of veterinary medicine and cancer research, respectively.

IV. **SPECIAL REPORTS** (continued)

- d. Steve's fiancé, Jamie, is also a teacher and has selflessly supported his passion for the fire department since the very beginning. Steve is grateful for his family's support and says he could not have forged his path without them. He is very excited as he begins his journey with the Morton Grove Fire Department—he'll be the first ever firefighter/paramedic in the family!
- e. Mr. Simkins then administered the oath to Steve and Chief Ensign pinned on Steve's badge. The Board and assemblage congratulated Steve and welcomed him enthusiastically. Mayor DiMaria thanked Chief Ensign for all that the Fire Department does, and thanked the Fire and Police Commission for the good work they do.

V. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

NONE

VI. **PLAN COMMISSION REPORTS**

NONE

VII. **RESIDENTS' COMMENTS (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)**

NONE

VIII. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- 1. **Proclamation: Fire Prevention Week**
 - a. Mayor DiMaria proclaimed October 8–14 as "Fire Prevention Week." The 2023 Fire Prevention Week's theme is "Cooking Safety Starts With YOU." He noted that fire is a serious public safety concern, and that cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the United States. Two of every five home fires start in the kitchen, with 31% of these fires resulting from unattended cooking, and more than half of reported non-fatal home cooking fire injuries occurred when the victims tried to fight the fire themselves. The mayor said that children under five face a higher risk of non-fire burns associated with cooking than being burned in a cooking fire, and encouraged residents with children to turn pot handles toward the back of the stove, always keep a lid nearby when cooking, keep a three-foot "kid-free" zone around the stove, oven, and other things that can get hot and to watch what they're heating and set a timer to remind them they are cooking. Mayor DiMaria urged all residents to check their kitchens for fire hazards and use safe cooking practices during Fire Prevention Week and throughout the year.

VIII.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (continued)2. Fire Department Open House

- a. Speaking of the Fire Department, Mayor DiMaria announced that the MGF is hosting its second annual open house for the community. It's an excellent opportunity for residents to connect with the fire department. There will be tours of Station 4, giveaways, interactive activities for kids, live demonstrations, and opportunities to see the fire apparatus and equipment up close. The open house is happening on Saturday, October 7, from 11am to 2pm at Fire Station 4, 6250 N. Lincoln Avenue. He hoped to see everyone there.

3. Fall Leaf Collection Beginning Soon

- a. Mayor DiMaria stated that the Public Works Department will begin the annual Fall Leaf Collection Service, starting on October 16 and running to December 1. The Village is requesting that residents place leaves in the street by the curb and away from parked cars the day before their regularly scheduled street sweeping and refuse pick-up day. As a reminder, residents should NOT include other landscaping debris, such as grass clippings, bushes, flowers, or branches in leaf piles. These items damage equipment and cause delays in completing leaf collection. The Village will only pick up leaves. Residents are cautioned not to park on top of leaf piles. Many parts on the underside of a vehicle, specifically the exhaust system, generate a great amount of heat, which could ignite the leaves.
- b. If residents choose to place leaves in containers for collection with their regular Groot trash pickup, the following procedures should be followed: A dedicated 34-gallon can or biodegradable yard wastepaper bag must be used. Please DO NOT use plastic bags for yard waste. Also, each container or branch bundle must have a yard waste sticker attached to it.

4. Halloween Trick-or-Treat Hours

- a. Mayor DiMaria announced that trick or treat hours in the Village will be from 3:30 to 7:00pm on Tuesday, October 1. Household participating in trick or treating are asked to turn on their porch or outdoor lights during the authorized hours. Households not interested in participating should turn off their porch lights and minimize exterior lighting. Trick or treaters should only visit homes that have their porch/outdoor lights on.

IX.

CLERK'S REPORT

- 1. Clerk Harford reported that the October Senior luncheon will be at the Civic Center on October 6 with the theme "Bring a Friend." Seniors should reserve a spot by calling 847-868-5928.
- 2. Senior Programming has recently engaged with Oak Street Health (a division of CVS Health) to offer blood sugar and cholesterol screenings to local seniors. Health professionals will be at the Civic Center on the 3rd Thursday of every month at 10am to provide the service. No appointment is necessary and the screenings are free.

IX. **CLERK'S REPORT** (continued)

3. Also, as a reminder, the Morton Grove Senior Ride Share Program is supported by funds through the SafeLIGHT Foundation and private donors. The program offers free Lyft ride to registered residents who are at least 65 years old. A total of 60 MG senior "households" are currently registered and receiving services. As of the end of August, a total of 228 rides have been provided since the program's inception in late 2022. Scheduled rides are provided to grocery stores, pharmacies, and medical appointments within MG. Rides are also available to medical appointments at most area hospitals and medical buildings. The Program will continue as long as funds are available.

X. **STAFF REPORTS**

A. Village Administrator:

Village Administrator Czerwinski had no formal report this evening.

B. Corporation Counsel:

Corporation Counsel Liston had no formal report this evening.

XI. **TRUSTEES' REPORTS**

A. Trustee Khan:

Trustee Khan had no formal report this evening.

B. Trustee Minx:

Trustee Minx had no formal report this evening.

C. Trustee Shiba:

Trustee Shiba had no formal report this evening.

XI. **TRUSTEES' REPORTS** (continued)

D. Trustee Thill:

Trustee Thill had no formal report this evening.

XI.

Trustee Travis:

E.

Trustee Travis announced that the Community Relations Commission (CRC) would be rolling out the Winter Adopt-a-Planter program, and they're hoping all Village residents and businesses will participate by signing up to decorate and care for the large Village planters located at the train station, Civic Center, and along Dempster Street and Waukegan Road. This program provides residents an opportunity to show pride in our community by adopting a planter to decorate and care for over the season. She noted that the majority of planters will include a 4-foot tall live evergreen tree for residents to decorate. And, new this year, some of the planters on Waukegan Road will have Red Twig Dogwood bushes planted in them as a permanent display. There will also be a few planters in various locations with a unique winter plant display. Instructions will be provided on how to decorate these planters. Online registration ends November 10, 2023, or when all the planters have been adopted. For more information, please call 847-663-3007 or email CRC@mortongroveil.org.

F. Trustee Witko:

Trustee Witko had no formal report this evening.

XII.

OTHER BUSINESS

NONE

XIII.

WARRANTS

Trustee Khan presented the Warrant Register for September 26, 2023 in the amount of \$384,734.50. She moved to approve the Warrant Register as presented, seconded by Trustee Thill.

Motion passed: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan aye
Tr. Thill aye

Tr. Minx aye
Tr. Travis aye

Tr. Shiba aye
Tr. Witko aye

XIV.

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

1. **Rudolf Vilk, 7508 Emerson.** Mayor DiMaria reminded Mr. Vilk to speak on a new topic and to be respectful in his speech, not condescending.
 - a. Mr. Vilk said he had talked to a couple of trustees who told him that Mr. Czerwinski is not a liar. Mr. Vilk said they are wrong and they are liars too. Mayor DiMaria requested that Mr. Vilk take his seat.
2. Trustee Witko asked if she could comment on Mr. Vilk's diatribe. She said, "I would like to speak to the audience regarding Mr. Vilk's comments. Those of you who attend or watch Village Board meetings online regularly are aware that Mr. Vilk has attended and speaks at almost every meeting for at the least the past five years. Most of his complaints relate to code enforcement issues such as his property, his water bill, or his obligation to obtain a vehicle sticker for his vehicle. The Village has addressed these issues with him repeatedly, in writing, during personal conferences, and at public Board meetings. He is very aware of the Village's answers to his questions—he just doesn't like the answers.
 - a. Those of you watching our meeting perhaps for the first time may question why we don't respond to Mr. Vilk, or they view our responses to him as short. Please understand, when we choose not to respond, it is not out of disrespect to Mr. Vilk. Past experiences show that any time we choose to communicate with him one-on-one, he picks out a comment or comments and twists the facts to make the Board and staff look nefarious.
 - b. Mr. Vilk's latest complaints are regarding a Resolution to sell obsolete fire department equipment. The Legislative Summary of the Resolution clearly explains what was being sold—20-year old fire hose—and stands for itself. This document, along with all documents pertaining to each Board meeting, are public and can easily be found online. Mr. Vilk took the term "personal property" out of context, and, in turn, called our Trustees and staff liars for trying to explain to him that "personal property" in this sense only means property that is NOT real estate... not property belonging to any particular individual.
 - c. We work very hard for the residents of Morton Grove, and, as residents ourselves, do everything we can to help Morton Grove be the best it can be while remaining open and honest. If anyone has any questions, please reach out to myself, Mayor DiMaria, or any of the Board members."

XV.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business being brought before the Board, Trustee Minx moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Trustee Witko. **Motion passed unanimously via voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

PASSED this 10th day of October, 2023.

Trustee Khan
Trustee Minx
Trustee Shiba
Trustee Thill
Trustee Travis
Trustee Witko

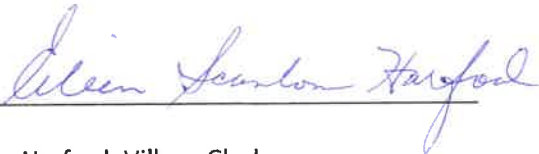
Aye
Aye
Aye
Aye
Aye
Aye

APPROVED by me this 10th day of October, 2023.



Daniel P. DiMaria, Village President
Board of Trustees, Morton Grove, Illinois

APPROVED and FILED in my office this 11th day of October, 2023.



Eileen Harford, Village Clerk
Village of Morton Grove, Cook County, Illinois

Minutes by Teresa Cousar

