

***Minutes Of The Regular Meeting Of The Board Of Trustees For The Village Of University Park, Will And Cook Counties Illinois, Held Tuesday, March 8, 2016 At #90 Town Center Drive In The Village Of University Park***

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Covington called this regular meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 7:12 p.m.

Village Clerk Dee Jones announced that Trustee Larry Brown contacted her, and stated that he would be unable to attend the meeting tonight due to personal injury, and requested to attend the Board meeting electronically.

Mayor Covington poled the Board to see if there were objections to Trustee Larry Brown attending the meeting electronically. With no objections noted, Clerk Jones connected Trustee Larry Brown via cell phone.

**B. ROLL CALL**

Mayor:	Vivian E. Covington	Present
Trustees:	Larry B. Brown	Present (electronically)
	Paula C. Wilson	Present
	Milton C. Payton	Present
	Keith J. Griffin	Present
	Joseph E. Roudez, III	Present
	Oscar H. Brown, Jr.	Present

Also present were Acting Village Manager Johnna Townsend, Attorney Lorian Glennon, Finance Director Sharon Floyd, Police Chief John Pate, Parks & Recreation Director Keely Childress, Public Works Director Gary Richardson, Deputy Fire Chief Brian Chellios, and Village Clerk Dorothy R. Jones.

**C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Covington led the audience in the Pledge Of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Trustee Roudez moved, Trustee Griffin seconded a motion to approve minutes of the regular meetings held January 26, 2016 as presented.

**Roll Call On Minutes of January 26, 2016**

Ayes: Trustees Larry Brown (electronically), Wilson, Payton, Griffin, Roudez, and Mayor Covington.  
Nays: None  
Absent: None.

***Motion To Approve Carried.***

Trustee Roudez moved, Trustee Payton seconded a motion to approve minutes of the regular meetings held February 9, 2016.

Trustee Wilson stated that at that meeting she noted the changes on page 6 regarding F2c and F2d regarding the 50/50 split between the general fund and the other half of the funds will be used as an incentive. She questioned the 50/50 split, and asked Finance Director Floyd if this was appropriate.

Ayes: Trustees Larry Brown (electronically), Wilson, Payton, Griffin, and Mayor Covington.  
Nays: None  
Absent: None.  
Abstained: Trustee Roudez.

***Motion To Approve Minutes of February 9, 2016 Carried.***

**G-1: MAYOR'S REPORT**

**Presentation By Rex C. Stengle Relating To Proposed Development Near The I-57 And University Parkway/Stuenkel Road Interchange.**

Mayor Covington introduced Mr. Rex Stengle, a real estate broker who has plans for development near our I- 57 corridor.

Mr. Rex Stengle addressed the Mayor and Board, and stated that he represents Dr. Powell and other property owners with vacant land in University Park. He stated that currently they have three properties for sale, one is 65 acres, and they want to develop at the South East corner of Stuenkel Road/University Parkway. He stated that he has been in contact with three gas stations looking to locate at that area. He stated that they can offer financing on property on University Parkway/Exchange, and some assistance on the 65 acres. He further stated that they would like to be the brokers for our grocery store property in the town center, and that he has been in contact with a company who is interested, and they also have 9 acres of vacant land next to the center. Mr. Stengle stated that the Village said they are looking for economic development in the area around the I 57 interchange, he would like input from the Board and residents on what they feel their needs and desires are for that area.

Trustee Griffin asked if Mr. Stengel had a time for this project. To which he responded not at this time, but asked if the Board would consider an extension of the TIF.

**E: GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mrs. Bridget Franklin offered her condolences to Trustee Griffin and his family in the loss of Trustee Griffin's grandson; she stated that she is disgusted with the appearance of the Village, especially the Multi-family buildings; the appearance and lack of personnel and service at Family Dollar Store area; voiced her concerns with the recent job layoffs; she asked if There are plans for the kids and the community in light of the financial condition of the Village, and stated that our kids and community deserve better. She further stated that she had heard that the State has come in, and took over the Village.

Mayor Covington responded that the Village has no control over the operations of Family Dollar.

Acting Village Manager Townsend responded that the State has not come in and took over the Village; the Village is in the process of reconciliation of the finances and TIF accounts; they are looking at all of the programs for the children, because the children deserve the program, and the daycare before and after program has not been canceled. She emphasized the status and impact of the layoff as it relates to the departments of police, fire, public works, and parks and recreation. Noting that contrary to what might have been stated, our police department is above minimal staffing. Therefore, the safety of our community is not jeopardized.

Ms. Townsend stated that as the Acting Village Manager she needs input from the Public on what programs they would like to see kept, because financially the Village, at this time and in the near future will not be able to operate as in the past.

Parks and Recreation Director Keely Childress responded that they are working to find ways to keep the programs; the before and after daycare program in on-going; the summer daycare program is still on schedule, and they are hoping and praying to restore and rebuild our community.

Monee Township Assessor and Village resident Ms. Sandra Heard addressed the Board and voiced her concerns stating that change is needed; that everyone needs to understand that the Village of University Park operates under a Managerial form of government, with the Board members as legislators, charged to work in the best interest of the community, and the Village Manager has control of the daily operations of the Village. She stated that we cannot be divisive, but we must work together and get back on track. She announced that the finance committee meeting would be held on March 16, 2016 at 7 PM here in number 90 Town Center Dr.

Mayor Covington thanked her for her positive comments.

**General Public Comments – continued:**

Mr. Curtis McMullen stated that he is a 22 year resident of this Village who is disenchanting, disheartened, and very angry with the condition this Village is now in; he stated that the elected officials were elected to do a job, and had done nothing but bring us down, and he wants change now.

Ms. Kari Boykin addressed the Mayor and Board and stated that since the Board of Trustees minutes are not posted on the website, she would like to know how she could obtain a copy of the minutes that are not posted.

Village Clerk Jones responded that she would have copies of those minutes available for Ms. Boykin available the following day.

Ms. Gina Williams voiced her outrage at the condition we are in, and the way things are being done. She stated that the Mayor is one voice, and one vote; she stated that she is tired of the Board voting against the Mayor, the behind the door deals as took place with Ancel Glink, who took the Village for almost \$1 million dollars, and the extended contracts of Lafayette Linear, and the police chief. She further stated that the Village would not be in this predicament if Bola was still here, and that they brought Johnna Townsend to be a puppet for more back door deals.

Mr. Larry Wayne stated that we need to elect new blood, and four of them need to go. He stated that enough is enough, and we need to get rid of the garbage sitting before us.

Ms. Heather Bielke commented that she was there to support the before and after school program. She stated that she moved away from the Village because of the conditions at the Brittany Woods Apartment Complex where she lived. She stated she is concerned that the previous employees with the daycare program have been taken away and service provided by front office staff. She asked to know how this was a cost savings move.

Mrs. Rhonda Campbell stated that she was a 14 year before and after daycare program employee who has now been laid off. She asked the Board if they were made aware of the deficit because layoffs began. She stated that during the process she was given conflicting information from Director Childress, Supervisors Neva Jenkins, and Acting Village Manager Townsend, so now she asked how they can lay them off and replace with department heads. She stated that she was told that she had no bumping rights, and she received no encouragement from her supervisor, and asked if perhaps this is because Ms. Jenkins is the daughter of one of the Trustees.

Parks and Recreation Director Keely Childress responded that what Ms. Campbell is discussing is personnel. However, she is pushing for daycare programs for the kids to continue.

**General Public Comments – continued:**

Acting Village Manager Townsend responded that AFSCME local 3837 contract dictates seniority in layoff situations, and that part-time employees have no bumping rights of full-time employees. She also stated that the lay-offs are temporary for some parks and recreation programs and employees.

Ms. Cynthia Hudson offered her condolences to Trustee Griffin and his family in their recent loss; she stated that she is praying for those who lost their jobs; she stated that we must become a united people (UP) and work together to move this Village forward; she offered her help in any way she is needed, especially in any fundraising efforts that the Village might put forth. She also encouraged everyone to get out to vote in this upcoming election.

Mrs. Gloria Barnett-Brookins commented that she was embarrassed at the way the Village communicated this situation. She stated that she stopped coming to the Board meetings because they were too stressful, and viewing them on cable is not an option, and she wonders why the complete agenda packets are not posted for the public to see prior to the meetings. She commented on the fact that over the past five years this Village has had six attorney firms, five Village Managers, and three police chiefs, and everyone wonders what happened. She stated that currently there are 8 federal law suits pending against this Village; that she never saw any decrease in spending, and she is angry and embarrassed; she wants more transparency, and wants the officials to do their jobs.

Mrs. Mary Truss commented that she is a public access user and that she had volunteered to tape the meetings of the Board of Trustees and show the meeting on her YouTube program; she stated that she does not get paid for her services, but the gentleman from the Village gets paid, while the information is not on the local cable station as it should be. She stated that neither she nor the gentleman at the cable studio have the skill sets to do the job as Christel Allen did.

Neosha asked to know where the funds collected from participants in the before and after daycare, and the baseball and football programs are being used.

Mrs. Childress responded that the Village does not operate the baseball and football programs, and that the summer day camp is in place.

Mrs. Bobbie Greer voiced her concerns with the safety of the community with the lay-off of three (3) full-time police officers, and four (4) part-time police officers. She asked if there was any other way to prevent the layoff of police officers

**General Public Comments – continued:**

Police Chief Pate responded that he became aware of the budget problems when he first started as Chief; that he has had weekly meetings to cut operating costs, and that he asked the FOP to make concessions, but they said no, and opted for the lay-offs. Therefore, they had to lay off officers in order to make payroll for the remainder of the department. He assured the public that the Police Department is operating above minimal staffing, and have the assistance of Will and Cook Counties Sheriffs if ever needed.

Trustee Griffin stated that he too hates the fact that the Village had to resort to layoffs, and that with the exception of Trustee Wilson the entire Board was aware of the financial condition. But nothing was done to adequately address the matter.

Mayor Covington stated that she is touched with the layoffs of employees and police officers, and the cancellation of the kids programs. She stated that she is giving her salary back to the Village, and asked the Trustees to freeze their salaries.

A parent commented on the information that she received last week that they would need to find a place for their kids, because the daycare program was being shut down. Now she hears that the program will be on-going. However, they want the same teachers. She asked to know where the money they pay is going.

Finance Director Sharon Floyd responded that all cash funds go into the general fund for operation. She also stated that the before and after daycare program operates at a deficit every year, and the Village supplement that program.

Rev. Reginald Williams, Pastor First Baptist Church of University Park reminded the residents, Governors State University Students, and members of the Board that there is a lot of unused land in this area; that the airport is coming, and the I 57 interchange is open, and if we don't come together that will be no growth, and University Park will be left behind.

Mayor Covington responded to Mrs. Brookins relating to the Board agenda posting, and commented on the family dollar store issue. She also stated that Mrs. Mary Truss, Mrs. Star Lawson, and Mrs. Mildred Morgan had threatened the Manager of American Bagel, after they misrepresented themselves, if he did not contribute to them for a function they were having. She stated that they stated that they would ruin the business on social media. She further stated that she paid for the food that was available at the Informational Forum that she sponsored, and that she has contacted Andy Shaw of the BGA, and Attorney General Madigan to curtail the actions of the Board, because she constantly attempts to bring things to the Village, but is blocked on all sides; that Bola Delano was a woman who had two master degrees from Oxford and was making changes, but they got rid of her; Congresswoman Kelly has offered police protection for our town if needed. She also stated that she will be in Washington D.C. in April for a conference, and that she will be holding Coffee with the Mayor the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month.

**General Public Comments – continued:**

Trustee Payton commented that there is enough blame to go around regarding our financial condition; he stated that the problem has existed for twenty years, as a result of improper budgeting and mismanagement of TIF revenue. He stated that we were all aware of a 2.5 million dollar deficit, and we tried to sale bonds, acquire a line of credit, which was originally approved, but was later withdrawn by the bank, and now we are where we are where the bonds have not been sold, funds depleted, and we have a double 6 rating. He stated that there is a much bigger picture that what has been told.

Trustee Oscar Brown responded to each individual who made comments, naming them individually. He stated that he accepts their criticism and apologized for the financial condition of the Village. He renewed his pledge to continue to work for, and make decisions in the best interest of the Village.

**F-1: UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**F-2: NEW BUSINESS**

**F-2a: First, Second and Third Readings - Ordinance Authorizing A Revised Employment Agreement For The Position Of Acting Village Manager Between The Village Of University Park And Johnna L. Townsend**

Trustee Roudez moved, Trustee Payton seconded a motion to approve first, second and third readings of this ordinance.

Trustee Wilson referred to the change in the Village hall hours, and asked if this would result in a modified work schedule for Acting Manager Townsend.

Acting Village Manager Townsend responded that the new hours that Village Hall is open would be Monday through Wednesday from 9 AM until 5 PM; Thursdays from 9 AM to noon, and closed on Friday. However, on those days she would keep her normal work schedule.

Trustee Payton commented on the negative comments that have been made about Acting Manager Townsend's qualifications to be the Acting Village Manager, and stated that of approximately 25 years of Village Managers, Ms. Townsend is probably the best he has seen. He stated that previously he led the charge to bring in Bola Delano, who was the Mayor's selection for Village Manager, and on paper she has an excellent resume; but she proved to be a disappointment. He read the resume of Ms. Townsend which included several years of corporate experience, personal business owner and executive liaison to the Mayor and Board of Trustees or several years.

**F-2a – continued:**

Trustee Larry Brown commented that Ms. Townsend sets the tone, and he applauds her for her progressiveness and dedication in trying to keep this Village moving forward, despite our financial situation.

Village Treasurer Dilworth stated that he agrees with the comments of Trustee Payton.

Ayes: Trustees Larry Brown (electronically), Wilson, Payton, Griffin, Roudez, Oscar Brown, and Mayor Covington.

Nays: None

Absent: None.

***Motion To Approve Carried***

**Ordinance Number O 2016 – 06.**

***;F-2b: Resolution Authorizing the Use By Village Of Fifteen Thousand And No/100 Dollars (\$15,000.00) Of Motor Fuel Tax Funds For Design Engineering For The Will County CDBG Project For Sandra Drive Storm Sewer Removal And Replacement And Related Items And Designated As Section 16-00028-00-Dr.***

Trustee Griffin moved, Trustee Roudez seconded a motion to approve this resolution.

Ayes: Trustees Larry Brown (electronically), Wilson, Payton, Griffin, Roudez, Oscar Brown, and Mayor Covington.

Nays: None

Absent: None.

***Motion To Approve Carried***

**Resolution Number R2016 – 09.**

**G REPORTS OF MAYOR, TRUSTEES, CLERK, MANAGER, APPOINTED OFFICIALS, and COMMITTEES**

No additional comments made.

**H. ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCHEDULED MEETINGS**

**I. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Trustee Roudez moved, Trustee Griffin seconded a motion to move into Executive Session for purposes of litigation (eminent or pending), personnel and sale/rental of Village property at 10:05 p.m.

Ayes: Trustees Larry Brown (electronically), Wilson, Payton, Griffin, Roudez, and Mayor Covington.  
Nays: None  
Absent: Trustee Oscar Brown.

***Motion To Approve Carried***

The Board returned from executive session at 11:54 pm with nothing to report out...

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Payton moved, Trustee Roudez seconded a motion to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees at 11:55 PM.

***Motion to Adjourn Carried by Unanimous Voice Vote.***

*Respectfully Submitted,*

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*Dorothy R. Jones, MMC, RMC  
Village Clerk*