

**MINUTES OF A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
OSWEGO VILLAGE PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OSWEGO VILLAGE HALL
100 PARKERS MILL, OSWEGO, ILLINOIS
June 25, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

President Ryan Kauffman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Board Members Physically Present: President Ryan Kauffman; Trustees Tom Guist, Karin McCarthy-Lange, Karen Novy, and Jennifer Jones Sinnott.

Board Members Attending Electronically: Trustee Andrew Torres

Board Members Absent: Trustee Kit Kuhrt

Staff Physically Present: Dan Di Santo, Village Administrator; Jean Bueche, Asst. Village Administrator; Tina Touchette, Village Clerk; Jason Bastin, Police Chief; Jennifer Hughes, Public Works Director; Andrea Lamberg, Finance Director; Rod Zenner, Development Services Director; Joe Renzetti, IT Director; Kevin Leighty, Economic Development Director; Madeline Upham, Management Analyst; Bridget Bittman, Communications Manager; and James Murphy, Village Attorney.

CONSIDERATION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS ON ANY REQUESTS FOR ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION IN MEETING

President Kauffman noted that Trustee Torres would like to electronically attend tonight's meeting. Trustee Torres submitted the necessary documents to the Village Clerk.

A motion was made by Trustee Jones Sinnott and seconded by Trustee McCarthy-Lange to approve Trustee Andrew Torres to electronically attend the June 25, 2024 Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Aye: Tom Guist Karin McCarthy-Lange
Karen Novy Jennifer Jones Sinnott

Nay: None

Absent: Kit Kuhrt, Andrew Torres

The motion was declared carried by a roll call vote with four (4) aye votes and zero (0) nay votes.

Trustee Andrew Torres attended electronically at 6:01 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM

Public Forum was opened at 6:01 p.m. There was no one who requested to speak. The public forum was closed at 6:01 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

E.1 Ethics Workshop

Asst. Village Administrator Bueche addressed the Board regarding ethics. At the direction of the Village President, on April 2, 2024, the Village Board held an Ethics Workshop during the Committee of the Whole meeting. During the workshop, the Village Board directed staff to prepare ordinances amending Village Code sections 1-5-4 and 1-6-2 related to employee supervision and terms of employment, which were subsequently approved on April 16. At the workshop, the Board also discussed potential regulation of Village Board campaign contributions. The Board

directed staff to bring back options pertaining to disclosure, rather than regulation, of Village Board campaign contributions including a draft conflict of interest policy statement. The purpose of adopting such a policy, should the Board decide to do so, would be for transparency to the public and to avoid the appearance of impropriety. There have not been any allegations of impropriety; this discussion is being held proactively. The following are disclosure options for Village Board consideration:

- 1) Stay status quo – do not require disclosure of campaign contributions and rely on existing State regulations.
- 2) Stay status quo – but provide a link on the Village website to the State website listing State reported campaign contributions in excess of \$5,000 as required by State Law.
- 3) Change the Village Code to require that campaign contributions be reported to the Village Clerk and posted on the Village website.
 - a. The dollar threshold to be reported if under \$5,000 would need to be determined.

Staff has also replicated a draft conflict of interest statement from the Village of Arlington Heights for Board review. The only modification to the draft statement, removes the phrase “direct or indirect” and includes “any” regarding other personal interest. The following is the proposed statement:

Chapter 18 – ETHICS

Sec 1-18-6. – Conflict of interest.

The Village President and Village Trustees shall, at all times, avoid the appearance of impropriety. No elected or appointed official or employee of the Village, whether paid or unpaid, shall engage in any business or transaction or shall have a financial or any other personal interest which is incompatible with the proper discharge of their official duties in the public interest or would tend to impair their independence of judgement or action on the performance of their official duties. When recusing oneself on any matter, the elected official shall state the reason for such recusal.

Board and staff discussion focused on intent; link to website for easier access to political contributions; transparency is positive; option 2 will not require reporting for anything under \$5,000; following State law; \$5,000 threshold is for all contributions and not individual amounts; thought there was going to be an option for under \$5,000; option 3 is fair; proving the link and moving on; controls are handled through the State; holding everyone accountable; creating a form that includes a to and from and submitting to the Village Clerk quarterly; option 3 has a threshold that needs to be determined; need to provide staff direction; only contributions over a certain dollar amount; shouldn't give more to staff to do; feels like we are governing something that isn't broken; why are we taking away productive work from staff; people who want to find this information will look for it; it shouldn't be staff's responsibility; don't think it's a burden for staff to make a form; creating a form with \$250 or more to be reported; supporting option 3 unless consensus is option 2; contributions of \$500 or more to be reported; how option 3 will be audited and enforced; whether this applies to candidates or Board members; not sure how it will be enforced; Arlington Heights is the only other community doing option 3; whether we should ask the community first; only a few people will look into contributions; we are local and not State; move on and do what's in the best interest; 1st amendment rights; don't think anyone is hiding anything; whether people may not donate if their name is on the sheet; need to ethically make a decision; talk to the ethic attorney; so many moving parts with how people do business in the community; we're doing this based on hypotheticals; trying to legislate on hypotheticals; previous Village President took money from developers; campaign violations happen all the time; candidate should have this type of disclosure; it doesn't happen on the local level; if there is something going on then it needs to be explained; not proper to take money from developers doing work in the community; voting based on contributions did not happen; it's not illegal, it's unethical; not pretending that this is not going to burden staff; if you feel this is a valid use of staff time, then vote on it; majority don't have campaign accounts; don't know the legalities of compelling a candidate to disclose; penalty up to \$5,000 for violations or removal from position; Arlington Heights

code violations; difficult when something is not reported; need to be transparent on their own; providing the link in the newsletter; education and/or notifications; reporting contributions of \$500 or more in the annual Statement of Economic Interest; list in the disclosure form and report to Village Clerk; sunshine and transparency; need to report quarterly versus annually; see the reporting phasing out; would rather do a link; whether there should be a change to the language in the ethics code; gift ban; Trustee Torres will review further and see if needs to be changed.

Board provided the following consensus:

- Option #2- provide a link on the Village's website
- Conflict of Interest language is approved

Staff will bring back an ordinance that amends the Ethics section of Village Code. There was no further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

CLOSED SESSION

There was no closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Tina Touchette
Village Clerk