



Call To Order: Supervisor Bonnie Kahn Ognisanti called the Board Meeting of February 06, 2023 to order at 7:00 PM.

Pledge: The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll call: Clerk Levy called the roll (*A quorum was present*).

Supervisor Bonnie Kahn Ognisanti	Present
Clerk Charles Levy	Present
Trustee Donald Gelfund	Present
Trustee Mark Collins	Excused
Trustee Peggy Tolleson	Present
Trustee Kitty Kendrick	Present
Assessor Scott Bagnall	Present

Staff Members:

Administrator Rick Krier	Present
Township Attorney Ross Secler	Present
Deputy Clerk Sandie Capsuto	Present
Public Relations Director Mike Isaacs	Excused

Trustee Gelfund **moved** and Trustee Kendrick **seconded** to approve the minutes from the January 23, 2023 Board Meeting. **Motion passed by roll call. All Ayes.**

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT: Supervisor Kahn Ognisanti thanked Deputy Clerk Sandie Capsuto and Accounts Manager Bert Brooke for stepping up today to fill in for two staff members who were absent. She acknowledged how well we work together as a team.

The bill that we are advocating for to make the General Assistance program more flexible and expansive is moving through the necessary stages to get filed. State Senator Villivalum's office sent the TOI lobbyist, Taylor Anderson, the draft copy from LRB (Legislative Research Bureau) today. She is hopeful that it will be ready to file in both state chambers by the end of the week, at which point this board can begin drumming up sponsors. Additionally, State Representative Olickal is helping us work

with the SOS office to expand the required documents for folks experiencing homelessness to make the process of obtaining a necessary state ID less burdensome. She had a fruitful conversation with Cook County Clerk Karen Yarbrough at the Township Clerk's event and will follow up with her office this week to see what we can do together to increase the chances of getting help for our unhoused neighbors. The hope is that this will remove barriers to getting an ID for these individuals so that they can then move forward in efforts to improve their situations. For example, filling out a job application, setting up a bank account, cashing a check, or securing housing, etc.

Supervisor Kahn Ognisanti asked that our board and staff members share the flier that Jenny Steiner Araque and Mike Isaacs posted to increase sponsorship of the Niles Township Fun Run. All proceeds go directly to support school supplies for students receiving free and reduced lunch in our schools. She stated that we have successfully increased the amount of supplies that we have given out since 2020, and we are hoping that this year continues that trend. She continued with "If we are truly successful, then we will reach EVERY student, which is our hope". These fliers can be found on our social media pages and it is very easy to share from there.

In February of 2022, The Bipartisan Policy Center issued a report entitled Strengthening Child Nutrition Programs which listed as one of its primary goals "ensuring all children, regardless of household income, have access to nutritious foods to allow them to learn and grow by providing school breakfast, school lunch, afterschool meals, and summer meals to all students at no cost." That means free lunch and breakfast at schools in times of hardship and in times of plenty.

During the COVID crisis, Congress gave waivers to schools, allowing them to serve free meals to all students, regardless of income. The waivers were extended for two years, which meant nearly all children in America could get free school breakfast and lunch, no matter their family income. The Census Bureau found that as a result of this program, coupled with Extended SNAP benefits, childhood hunger fell by 7 percentage points since 2020. Now both programs are set to expire, regardless of this important finding.

She questions what type of country we are to allow a program to expire that has proven successful in its goal of decreasing childhood hunger. She continued with "we know that children who go through the school day hungry are not as able to concentrate and learn. We know this through academic research and also as a direct result of lived experience". "...we preach and believe that public school is the great economic equalizer. We espouse the ideal that all children have an equal access through education to class mobility. When we will not put our money where our purported values are, then I have to question the sincerity of those values".

Right now, there are so many families with students in our schools who, because of the waivers, have never had to fill out the paperwork that was previously required. There are also many parents in our diverse community who come from other counties and have no idea that this is an option available for their children or that it is a requirement to

have food provided for their kids. Many parents do not know how to do it, or even that this program exists.

A few states have been proactive in creating their own programs to provide funding for unstigmatized free lunch programs in their schools. At present, Illinois is not one of them. I know the hearts of the legislators in our districts and am confident that they would work to expand a similar program for our students in Illinois, if the state budget allows. I sent all of their offices inquiries about this today. However, in the meantime, I remind our residents that Niles Township is here to help fill the gap. We will be sending out a letter to our school districts reminding them that our food pantry is here to help and that no one needs to go hungry as long as our doors remain open. At least, not while this board sits in these chairs.

REPORTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Clerk Levy: Our township sponsored the TOCC (Townships of Cook County) meeting this past February 2nd, 2023 at L. Woods Restaurant. We had a great turnout of thirty three people including five people from the County Clerk's Office. We had nine representatives from Niles Township including State Representative Kevin Olickal. Clerk Karen Yarbrough spoke about the upcoming elections. There is no primary election in February 2023 for the residents of Niles Township as the offices that are running are uncontested, however, citizens will be able to vote in this coming April's election.

Clerk Yarbrough explained that she was a former supervisor of a township and is a strong advocate for townships. She expressed that she and her office will continue to strongly support local townships, as townships provide many services to their communities that other municipalities do not cover.

Assessor Scott Bagnall: Tax bills: The first installment 2022 tax bill would normally be in people's mailboxes by February 1. We are now hearing that the bills will be in the mail by the end of February or the beginning of March. But they have been available online since December, 2022.

2nd Installment 2021 bills were six months late. Now the 1st installment 2022 bill will be a month late. Late tax bills do not do the taxpayer any favor. The taxing bodies may incur extra, unanticipated, and unbudgeted, costs - which will be passed on to the taxpayers.

These 1st Installment bills are due to be paid by April 3rd, 2023.

Exemptions: Assessor Bagnall stated that typically we would be in the process of filing exemptions right about now. The County must specifically open for filing of exemptions. We do not have a certain date yet. We cannot process exemptions until the County opens. Getting exemptions filed on time will take on more importance year after year because of the recapture, re-tax, law.

Appeals: There was a thought that house values would decrease during the 2019

triennial reassessment, when in fact the values rose dramatically as people moved out of the City to avoid the riots and the mortgage interest rates were low enough that buyers were paying way over the list prices. This could cause some out of sync assessed values. That is why appeal of 2022 assessed value reassessments is going to be important.

Other property tax issues. A 350 unit Evanston apartment building has been listed for sale. This makes three large Evanston apartment buildings within four months. The assessed values of some large Evanston apartment buildings were increased by in excess of 250% during the 2019 reassessment.

Old Orchard has announced plans to create a residential community on the mall. The existing commercial buildings are assessed at 25% of fair cash value. Residential property is assessed at 10% of fair cash value. In essence, residential fair cash values will need to be three times the commercial values to keep the same tax base. And that is not taking into consideration increased school and services costs on account of a commercial to residential conversion.

It is possible that the exemption filing period and the Board of Review Niles appeals period will be at the same time.

Trustee Tolleson: Trustee Tolleson represented our township at the District 69 Morton Grove and Skokie Schools Cohort on the Health Fair Committee. As a result, Niles Township Government will host a table at their Health Fair that will be held before the end of the school year.

Trustee Kendrick: No Report.

Trustee Gelfund: No Report.

Trustee Collins: Excused

STAFF REPORTS:

ADMINISTRATOR: Administrator Krier reminded everyone that we will have two students from Oakton Community College visit our next meeting to discuss how the scholarships have helped them. This will be a photo opportunity, so board members may wish to dress for the occasion.

At the next board meeting members of the board will be voting on passing the acceptance of the handbook which has been made available for board members to review. Supervisor Kahn Ognisanti thanked Trustee Tolleson for her diligence in reading through it to check for any errors. Our legal counsel, Ross Secler gave input into the

handbook as well as our insurance companies to check for liabilities.

Township Lobby Day is coming up in Springfield, Illinois on Wednesday, April 26, 2023. Our Township Supervisor, Bonnie Kahn Ognisanti has already signed up; if anyone else is interested in attending this, let Administrator Rick Krier know so he can make arrangements for people to stay at the hotel. The deadline to register for this is April 19th, 2023, however, for those waiting to the last minute, there may not be hotel rooms still available.

FOOD PANTRY REPORT: While developing the budget, the department heads were contacted for their input. Tony Araque, the manager of our Food Pantry submitted a four page report! Administrator Krier asked for a summary report of the year. At this point, it looks like the food pantry is managing well with the staff they have. Now that COVID is no longer having a huge impact on us, we'll need to see how things develop.

We have reached out to MCC Academy, the Muslim schools located in Morton Grove and Skokie. At present time, our Food Pantry does not have a lot of Hilal products for our Muslim clients. The principal, some students and staff brought some donations and took a tour of our Food Pantry. We are going to put a section in our Food Pantry to display Hilal food for clients wishing to have access to those products. The students from the MCC Academy will help keep these shelves stocked with Hilal products.

Administrator Krier explained that in our fourth quarter (January, February, and March) of last year's budget we had 1.2 million dollars from tax money and \$900,000.00 came in March. There was an additional \$190,000.00 for GA. The new tax money will be coming in April. We are okay for now with our cash flow, and we will not have to borrow any money to cover services we provide. We are not sure whether or not we will be getting the \$900,000.00 that we received last year in March. We may need to transfer money accordingly, however, we will not be borrowing money and therefore not having to pay any additional interest.

SENIOR LEGAL ADVISOR: Please see the report attached at the back of this report.

SOCIAL WORK REPORT: Please see the report attached at the back of this report.

LEGAL ADVISOR: No Report.

PUBLIC RELATIONS OUTREACH COORDINATOR: Excused

BILLS PAYABLE: Trustee Kendrick **moved** and Trustee Gelfund **seconded** to approve the distribution of funds from January 20, 2023 through February 2, 2023 for the Town Corporate Fund for \$55,262.73 and for The General Assistance Fund in the amount of \$9,735.25 equaling a total of \$64,997.98. **Motion passed by roll call. All Ayes.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: Trustee Gelfund **moved** and Trustee Tolleson **seconded** to: Approve the posting and display of a tentative Township Budget and Appropriation Ordinance (FY 2023-2024) and direction to the township Clerk to schedule a Public Hearing for March 13, 2023. **Motion passed** by roll call. **All Ayes.**

Supervisor Kahn Ognisanti **moved** and Trustee Kendrick **seconded** to approve Skokie United for a service provider award of \$5,000.00 for this fiscal year. **Motion passed** by roll call. **All Ayes.** Supervisor Kahn Ognisanti went on to explain that Skokie United in partnership with the Skokie Public Library, School Districts 219 and 69 along with the Village of Skokie will use all of the funding provided for the Juneteenth Celebration. The theme will be Love, Literation, Life. This will cover the education and entertainment cost (hiring speakers and performers) throughout the one day celebration. There is money available in that line item for this fiscal year's budget.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion to: Enter into a closed session. To discuss minutes of meetings lawfully closed under the open meetings act, whether for the purpose of approval by the body of the minutes, or for semi-annual review of the minutes "pursuant to Section 2(c)(21) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act".

The Regular Board meeting was paused at 7:32 p.m.

Present: Supervisor Kahn Ognisanti, Clerk Charles Levy, Administrator Rick Krier, Attorney Ross Secler, Trustee Don Gelfund, Trustee Kitty Kendrick, Trustee Peggy Tolleson, and Assessor Scott Bagnall.

Supervisor Kahn Ognisanti said no action was taken in the executive session.

Return to open session at 8:28 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: Trustee Gelfund **moved** and Trustee Kendrick **seconded the motion** to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:29 p.m. **Action: All Ayes.**

The next regular board meeting will be held on Monday February 27, 2023 at the Niles Township Government Building.

Respectfully Submitted,


Charles Levy, Clerk