

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
TUESDAY APRIL 22, 2025  
VILLAGE HALL BOARD ROOM

CALL TO ORDER: President Hofeld called the meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 7 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: President Hofeld led trustees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Clerk Marilyn Thomas called the roll. Those present were Village President Richard Hofeld, Trustee Vivian Harris-Jones, Trustee Jay Heiferman, Trustee Phillip Mason, Trustee Lauren Roman and Trustee Allisa Opyd. Trustee Julie Willis was absent.

President Hofeld introduced staff present: Village Manager Napoleon Haney, Village Attorney Chris Cummings, Director of Community and Economic Development Angela Mesaros, Director of Public Works Josh Burman, Police Chief Denise McGrath, Fire Chief Bob Grabowski, Director of Finance Amy Zukowski and Assistant Village Manager Terence Acquah.

MINUTES: The minutes of the regular board meeting of April 8, 2025, and a public hearing on the Harwood TOD TIF on April 8, 2025, were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion was made by Trustee Opyd and seconded by Trustee Mason to approve the minutes as presented.

**Roll Call: AYES --Trustees, Harris-Jones, Heiferman, Mason, Roman and Opyd. NAYS –None. Motion carried.**

CLAIMS LIST: The Claims List in the amount of \$845,248.54 was presented. There were no questions from the Trustees.

A motion was made by Trustee Mason and seconded by Trustee Harris-Jones to approve the Claims List as presented.

**Roll Call: AYES --Trustees Harris-Jones, Heiferman, Mason, Roman and Opyd. NAYS –None. Motion carried.**

President Hofeld said three items totaled 56 percent of the Claims List: \$301,231.42 to the City of Chicago Heights for Lake Michigan water; \$94,038.42 to FH Paschen SN Nielsen & Associates for work done on Martin Avenue, including the addition of Tivoli lights; \$77,642.28 to Thorn Creek Basin Sanitary District.

HEAR FROM THE AUDIENCE: Resident Amy Crump addressed the board on the need to protect elections. She stressed that changes from within can weaken institutions as the rich are able to have their messages heard over others. She urged an end to private funding in elections.

About a dozen people addressed the board on a proposal from Rabid Brewing, now located on Bretz Drive, that has an interest in a space in the American Bagel Plaza, 3003-3025 183rd Street. There was no proposal before the board at this time, but the supporters shared with the board that Rabid is a special Homewood place that has given back much to the community and other organizations,

including the Knockouts roller derby team. A bigger space would help the brewery thrive and deserves the board's serious attention, the supporters argued.

**Kristen Salkas** told the board she appreciated the professionalism Public Works Director Josh Burman showed her when she asked for assistance when a bench was removed. She also asked how the board's Request for Proposals re: water pollution at the Prairie Lakes stormwater detention area at Izaak Walton Preserve would be addressed. She did not believe the information presented suggested the firm would be looking for a source of the pollution. Manager Haney said two RFPs are being considered and that the scope of the work will look at all issues arising from concerns about water pollution, including considering a source.

**PRESENTATION:** Finance Director Zukowski said her department continues its work with Burns & McDonnell Engineers as it studies the needs of the Water & Sewer Fund and how to best finance needed improvements. The fund is an enterprise fund and must be self-sustaining. The board last did a cost analysis 10 years ago.

She introduced David Naumann, financial analyst with Burns & McDonnell, who told the board nationwide the cost for water is going up an average of 5 percent. He also assessed the village's future needs, including its investment in removing lead lines, and how best to offset the rate increases.

Mr. Naumann said Scenario 1 is for the Village raise water rates an average of 7.5 percent each year. Water usage in the South Suburbs is 4,000 gallons per user per month. Naumann said water usage is dropping through conservation efforts, but the fund will need that additional revenue to cover worker costs, infrastructure and regulatory requirements.

Mr. Naumann said the Board could consider a 10-year plan that would include small increases over that timeframe, rather than one large increase. And, the increase would help the Village cover its expected \$101.6 million capital expense to remove the lead lines over the next 10 years. That is about three-quarters of the Village's infrastructure expense; and a \$20 million projected cost for a new water tower and water main replacement.

Increasing rates over a longer period would give the village the right liquidity for these projects. Debt service coverage is a concept that has revenues balancing against expenses. He suggests that it be a minimum 1.25 percent.

Mr. Naumann said the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is making loans available at zero percent interest. The Village can apply for those. The Village also may consider selling revenue bonds. Cash funding capital is about \$1 million per year. The fund now has \$7 million, but that is not sufficient to cover future expenses.

Mr. Naumann said one plan is to increase water rates by as much as 7.75 percent per year; a 7.5 percent increase would mean an additional \$3.66 per month on household bills the first year and increase to about \$4 per month after that. If the Village increased the rate just for lead line replacement, Mr. Naumann estimated the rate would go up \$3.25 per month. It would be higher if the Village does not get the IEPA zero percent loan. IEPA has other options, but it is not a guarantee that Homewood would qualify. Homewood could also consider a non-home rule sales tax.

There is a possibility that some federal funding for the lead service line mandate could get reduced, and Mr. Naumann said it is hard to predict out 10 years for future inflationary rates and what the markets will do.

Mr. Naumann said he will continue to study Homewood's needs and the market and will come back to the Board with other options in the next month or two. He reiterated that the Board should consider a rate increase soon.

Trustees thanked Mr. Naumann for his presentation. Trustee Roman asked for clarification on the suggested water rate increase of 7.5 percent. Naumann said it would be, on average of \$4 a month for 12 months for a typical household using 4,000 gallons. Initially, it could be a little less (\$3.66). The plan would call for that amount of increase each year over the 10-year period to get the Village through the lead line replacement, \$100 million, and the other water system improvements.

President Hofeld said the Village has a 25-year contract for its water supply, so the Village knows what that cost will be long-term. What will change is the cost of labor, utilities, and capital improvements.

In answer to a question from Trustee Roman, Mr. Naumann stated that the water study assumes that the Village will receive increased revenue in future years from communities that purchase water from Homewood. However, this increased revenue would not include costs for lead service line replacement since the service lines in question only serve Homewood water customers.

Omnibus Vote: Consider a motion to pass, approve, authorize, accept, or award the following item(s):

- A. M-2353/Renewal of Outdoor Liquor Licenses: Pass an ordinance waiving requirements governing outdoor alcohol sales for certain licensees; and approving the issuance of 11 Permits for Sale of Alcoholic Beverages Outdoor, valid from May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026 upon payment of the permit fee.
- B. Renewals of Scavenger and Limited Scavenger Licenses: Approve the renewal of the scavenger licenses for Homewood Disposal, Allied Waste Transportation, Inc., and Waste Management, Inc.; and, the limited scavenger licenses for Midway Building Supply, Tri-State Disposal, D&P Construction Co., Inc., and Total Disposal.
- C. R-3220/Class 8 Real Estate Tax Classification/Homewood Disposal Service, Inc.: Pass a resolution supporting and consenting to a Class 8 Cook County tax classification for the Homewood Disposal Service, Inc. property at 1501 175th Street owned by Star Investments, LLC.
- D. M-2354/Solicitation of Bids/17701 Bretz Drive: Pass an ordinance directing the Village Manager to utilize the bid process as articulated in 65 ILCS 5/11-76-2 for the sale and redevelopment of the vacant property at 17701 Bretz Drive.
- E. Bid Award/Custodial Services/Multisystem Management Company: Award the bid for Option #3 for custodial services at Village-owned facilities to Multisystem Management Company of Chicago, IL, the lowest responsible bidder, in an amount not to exceed \$41,600.
- F. Budget Amendment/Village Security Camera System Project/Imperial Surveillance Inc.: Approve a budget amendment in the amount of \$33,249.60 to the general fund for the Village Security Camera System Project; and approve a change order with Imperial Surveillance, Inc. of Arlington Heights, IL, for the inclusion of an additional camera site to Phase 1 of the Village Security Camera System Project and to cover the cost of additional cloud link subscriptions to remedy connectivity issues.

Before the vote, President Hofeld invited questions from the audience. Christopher Craddock asked why the Board was approving the Class 8 Cook County Property Tax Extension for Homewood Disposal when it just listened to a report on how it will be necessary to raise water rates. President Hofeld said those are two different charges. President Hofeld explained that the Class 8 incentive involves property taxes, not water rates, is one of the ways the Village is able to keep businesses in town. Homewood faces considerable competition for businesses that could move to Indiana or Will County where taxes are lower. Mr. Craddock argued the tax incentive would push the burden onto homeowners. President Hofeld said the water fund must be self-sustaining and is not affected by property taxes as Mr. Craddock implied would happen if Homewood Disposal got a Class 8 extension. Granting the Class 8 extension does not change the overall tax levy amount. Manager Haney offered to meet with Mr. Craddock to answer his questions and concerns.

Trustee Mason asked about the custodial contract – it adds 2 additional days a week for services during the winter months. Director Burman said that was necessary because of the salt and dirt tracked into the buildings during winter.

Trustee Roman addressed Mr. Craddock's concerns about the water rates, saying the 7.75 percent increase was the worst-case scenario.

A motion was made by Trustee Opyd and seconded by Trustee Mason to accept the Omnibus Report as presented.

**Roll Call: AYES --Trustees Harris-Jones, Heiferman, Mason, Roman and Opyd. NAYS –None. Motion carried.**

General Board Discussion: Fire Chief Grabowski asked the community to light up the Village as it marks 15 years since the death of Firefighter Brian Carey. Red lights are available at the Village Hall and Fire Department for the week of April 27 through May 4.

Trustees said the recent annual spring cleanup efforts were outstanding. Thanks went to Marla Youngblood, events coordinator, and Public Works Department for coordinating the cleanup.

Trustees also thanked the community for coming to the meeting to share their opinions and concerns.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: A motion was made by Trustee Opyd and seconded by Trustee Roman to enter into executive session to discuss: Collective bargaining under 5 ILCS 120/2(c)2.

**Roll Call: AYES --Trustees Harris-Jones, Heiferman, Mason, Roman and Opyd. NAYS –None. Motion carried.**

The board moved to Executive Session at 8:20 p.m.

The board returned from Executive Session at 8:35 p.m.

A motion was made by Trustee Opyd and seconded by Trustee Mason to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees.

The meeting adjourned on voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Thomas  
Village Clerk