

Northfield Village Board Procedural Guidelines
August 2022

Agenda Development and Board Meetings.

- The Village President and Village Manager will work in tandem to set the agenda for all Committee of the Whole and Village Board meetings.
- Board members who wish to have an item placed on an agenda are to contact the Village Manager or Village President to make a request.¹
- If an individual trustee's agenda request is not supported by the Village President, the trustee can seek to have an additional trustee, (2 total) make the agenda request, in writing, to the Village Clerk and it will be scheduled.
- Members of the community who wish to have a matter considered by the Board, should either contact the Village Manager or write to the Village Board at vgroup@northfieldil.org.²
- If any Board member has an issue or concern with any matter that is on an agenda, they should contact the Village Manager or Village President ahead of the meeting. If any changes or clarifications are warranted, all Board members will be provided with new material ahead of the meeting.
- Board members are encouraged to individually discuss outstanding issues, new ideas, or concerns with the Village President or Village Manager prior to raising them at a public meeting.
- Board members are encouraged to ask questions and to express individual viewpoints on agenda items in a respectful and constructive manner. Once a vote has been taken, members are expected to abide by and respect the will of the majority.

Board Concerns.

- A Board member who has a concern about a community issue, a Board packet item, or a departmental issue should contact the Village Manager. Board members should not contact staff members directly (unless associated with a specific ongoing board committee or board project assignment) without first contacting the Village Manager. The Manager will then ensure the appropriate staff member follows up on the concern. The Village Manager is to be copied on any ongoing communications.
- A Board member who has a concern with a matter involving the Village Manager's performance on a specific issue or item should inform the Village President. Based on the severity of the issue, the concern will either be addressed by the Village President directly with the Village Manager or an executive session scheduled to review the concern with the full Board.
- A Board member who has a concern involving ethics, misconduct, or the appearance of impropriety associated with an elected or appointed official should contact either the Village Attorney or Village President.

¹ Items will be scheduled as soon as practicable in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

² The "vgroup" is comprised of the Village President, Village Trustees, and Village Manager.

Community Concerns.

- If a Board member is approached by a member of the community with a concern that is specific to the performance of a particular Village department, they should direct that person to work with the appropriate staff member and their Department Head. If they have been unable to resolve their issue through this normal channel, they should be directed to contact the Village Manager for follow up. Members of the community should always be encouraged to follow the chain of command and work directly with the staff to resolve issues.
- If a Board member is approached by a member of the community who has ethics, discrimination, or mistreatment concerns, they should be directed to contact the Village Manager or Village Attorney.
- If a Board member becomes aware of a serious issue within the community, they should notify the Village Manager immediately who in turn will inform the Village President and Trustees, as appropriate.
- On matters requiring formal Village Board approval, Board members should strive to keep an open mind, listen to all sides of the issue, and refrain from giving individual opinions ahead of the actual Board discussion of the matter. If approached by a member of the community that wants to share their thoughts on a Board matter, they should encourage them to write to the full Board at vgroup@northfiedil.org and/or attend the Board meeting. This helps ensure that all Board members have the same information and materials and that the community member's thoughts are made part of the public record.
- The Village Manager will coordinate with the Village President to respond to e-mails received by the "vgroup." If an e-mail pertains to a Board agenda item, the Village Manager will acknowledge receipt and make the email part of the public record for that item. Individual Board members are discouraged from responding directly to vgroup emails but are encouraged to contact the Village Manager or President with any suggestions as to the best way to respond to a message.
- The Village Manager will update the Board on vgroup responses by forwarding a copy of the actual response to the Board members.
- Board members should refrain from using their official status as Village Trustees in matters that do not pertain to Village business. All questions or concerns associated with other units of government should be referred to that entity's Board (i.e. school, park, library, county.)
- Board members always retain their right to participate in outside organizations, but when doing so, should make sure it is clear that they are acting as an individual and not in their official elected capacity, unless they have been formally designated to represent the Village by the Village President.

Outside Communication

- Board members should not directly contact any governmental agencies, state or federal elected officials, or other municipalities on matters of Village business. All such requests should be made by either the Village President or Village Manager. If a Board member has a close relationship or friendship that might be beneficial to the Village in a particular matter, they should contact the Village President to discuss how to coordinate these communications.

Whenever possible, communications should be between elected to elected person (President to President) and appointed to appointed person (manager to manager).

- The Village President, Village Manager, or the staff member directly managing an issue will be the spokesperson for media inquiries. Board members should refrain from discussing Village matters on social media or with the press without first clearing the interchange with the Village Attorney, Village President, or Village Manager.
- Board members should be judicious in their use of electronic communication and understand that all communications associated with Village business are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Board members should never use any kind of communication to poll Board members or act as a conduit to direct a vote.

Emergency Communications³

- In the event of a community emergency, the Village Manager shall immediately attempt to notify the Village President and Board of Trustees by phone. If the Village Manager is not available to contact the Board, the Village President, Village Attorney, or an emergency operations team member will do so.
- Following the initial notice, the Village Manager will provide the Board with ongoing status reports, by phone or e-mail, until the emergency is fully resolved.
- There is a wide range of emergencies that can occur and they can happen at any time. Notice of any serious emergency will be communicated immediately by the Village Manager or Village President, day or night - 365 days a year. For more minor/routine emergencies (temporary power outages), notices will be provided the next working day.
- Emergency press releases will be prepared by the emergency response teams and shall be subject to the Village President's approval prior to release.

Executive Session

- All material and conversations associated with a closed session should be kept strictly confidential. Board members should not discuss any aspect of these meetings with anyone who was not physically present at the meeting.

³ All emergency operational communications will take place in accordance with the Village's Emergency Operation Plan as approved by the Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security.