



# Village of Burr Ridge

Mayor Gary Grasso

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September 10, 2022

Dear Community:

This is an update from my message on September 8, and also contains a comment about Governor Pritzker's office disparaging Burr Ridge after unilaterally sending refugees to the Village without advising us. All that the Village has asked for, after belatedly learning of the arrival of the refugees, was better notice and information so we could provide for their stay and answer understandable questions of residents and businesses. This information has been hard to come by – and remains so. We will accommodate the refugees and provide the safety they – and all people – deserve. Some of our residents and businesses have reached out to donate food and supplies as well as offer possible employment opportunities when it is appropriate. The situation is not about the refugees, who are seeking a better life in America than the one they left. We wish them the best and hope they will forever remember their introduction to that better life began in Burr Ridge.

Until late Friday, neither the Governor's office, Cook County, nor the City of Chicago reached out to the Village. I finally made contact with the Legislative Liaison of the Illinois Department of Human Services yesterday and have received contact information of State staff involved in the refugee issue. I also have visited the Hampton Inn twice, including this morning. Here is what we have learned since Thursday:

- The State of Illinois is paying for the refugees' accommodations.
- The Illinois Department of Human Services has a representative at the Hampton Inn 24/7 investigating opportunities for placement and facilitating asylum proceedings. This representative has been invited to the Village Board meeting on Monday.
- The Food Bank of Greater Chicago has provided necessary meals to the refugees.
- Village resources are sufficient to assist the refugees and monitor the premises. If you need emergency or non-emergency services, our staff are prepared to assist you.
- No Village tax dollars have been spent housing or feeding the refugees.
- Last February, the State housed Afghan refugees at the Hampton Inn (without informing the Village) after the Afghans went through screening and processing at immigration centers elsewhere; housing opportunities were located around the country, and those that came to the Hampton Inn were there only temporarily until housing was ready.

Yesterday, the Governor's office issued a statement that inferred the Village was xenophobic for reacting to the placement of the refugees in our community without information or notice. Such an ill-advised comment exemplifies the combativeness the Governor's office has shown anyone who questions the actions of the State – from the lengthy closure of the state during the pandemic without the Legislature's concurrence and now the disrespectful manner his office is treating the Village and its residents. Burr Ridge is a diverse community: "A Very Special Place." We believe the refugees will agree.

Sincerely,  
Mayor Gary Grasso