

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 8, 2008**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Larry Yandow (Village President); Deb Billado, Tim Jerman, Peter Gustafson, John Lajza.
ADMINISTRATION: Bert Moffatt, Interim Village Manager; Jeff Arango, Development Director.

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Village President, Larry Yandow, called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. AUDIENCE

None.

3. BUSINESS

Meeting with State Representatives

Rep. Peter Hunt and Rep. Tim Jerman reviewed the list of legislative priorities drafted by the Village Trustees. Rep. Jerman said he is most optimistic about CLA legislation coming to fruition. There was brief discussion of the issue of Common Level of Appraisal. Deb Billado pointed out CLA is based on income and prebate payment so not everyone will receive a tax credit (the credit if received will be reflected on the tax bill). Rep. Hunt urged any changes to legislative bills be submitted as soon as possible. Reps. Hunt and Jerman said they will be meeting with other legislators to discuss the issue of tax fairness. The easiest approach is a local solution so it is hoped the two municipal boards (Essex/Essex Junction) can meet and resolve the matter, but it is good the legislature is aware of the ongoing tax inequity. There was mention of the volunteer fire department quickly becoming a thing of the past. The need to complete the circumferential highway was stressed. John Lajza stated the highway EIS is remiss in looking at regional safety which should be an integral part of any transportation improvement. Rep. Jerman in regard to the expense of the circ highway project noted the state is backed up in terms of fixing existing roads and bridges, and to do nothing with these is very expensive. John Lajza asked about bonding to fix infrastructure. Rep. Jerman said this is possible, though not painless. Revenue bonding (gas tax, tolls, gas guzzler tax) has been discussed. Rep. Hunt stated the transportation committee is discussing bonding. The Governor is committed to no tax increase though. There will be difficult choices to make, and the decision will likely come down to "need" versus "want". People are not able to pay the cost of heating oil for their houses and this must be addressed first. There was also mention of federal funding for improvements on Route 2A, Route 15, and Route 117 and the availability of state matching money. It was noted local communities can pay the match rather than using state money. There was discussion of public transportation. Rep. Hunt stated buses are not being effectively used (most are nearly empty of passengers) and questioned how long the current service should continue before a better way to fund the service is found rather than having the state continue to

fund a system that is not working. John Lajza agreed the bus system needs more study to make the system more efficient (maximize routes to reduce travel time). Feeder lines and smaller buses, having a terminal in Winooski should be considered. Deb Billado spoke against funding public bus service through the property tax, and felt the wording of the bill should be clarified so it is clear the objective is to move away from funding via property taxes. Rep. Jerman mentioned phosphorus reduction legislation and the efforts to take waste water treatment plants which are not the problem to a higher level (very expensive). John Lajza commented farmers cannot financially install the mechanisms to stop phosphorus so perhaps state funding should be directed toward stemming agricultural run off. Rep. Hunt commented on affordable housing, noting nonprofit organizations and builders should work together rather than compete against each other for funding. With regard to economic development, Rep. Hunt mentioned the 400 jobs slated to be eliminated by the Governor through attrition (150 jobs this year and 250 jobs next year). Legislators want assurance from the administration about the impact on services to the people by this action. The permitting process in Vermont and the problems created were also mentioned. Deb Billado asked why Home Rule is always on the list of legislative priorities. The representatives noted it is difficult for the state to give up power. Municipalities continue to keep the item on the list. Rep. Jerman commented positively on the open accessibility of the Governor and legislators to the citizenry.

Public Hearing: Updated Village Plan

The public hearing on the updated Village Plan was opened at 7:45 p.m. There were no comments. The hearing was closed at 7:47 p.m. The Board will take action on adoption of the updated plan on 1/22/08.

Lake Champlain Byway Resolution and Appointments

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Deb Billado, to accept the Lake Champlain Byway Resolution as presented. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

The Board signed the resolution. Jeff Arango will serve on the byway committee as the representative from Essex Junction.

Channel 17 Proposal

Deb Billado suggested the proposal be a separate article on the ballot at the annual meeting. The public can discuss the service at the annual meeting. John Lajza spoke in support of the on-demand/clickable meeting technology and urged the Board to support the service. Money from the budget for the Village Advancement Committee could be used to pay some of the cost this year. The meeting service is an extension of the village webpage. It was noted a link is needed from the village website to the meetings (the Advancement Committee will handle this matter).

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Deb Billado, to endorse the on-demand/clickable meeting service offered by Channel 17 and authorize expenditure of \$3,060 for the annual cost of coverage for village meetings, and further, that a report on the use of the system by viewers will be secured from Channel 17.

DISCUSSION: Bert Moffatt pointed out a report at the end of the pilot program will be available. The service will be publicized on Channel 17, in the *Essex Reporter*, the *Burlington Free Press*, and the Front Porch Forum. Peter Gustafson spoke in support of reviewing participation numbers before the year is over.

VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

Approve Minutes

December 11, 2007 – Regular Meeting

MOTION by Peter Gustafson, **SECOND** by John Lajza, to approve the 12/11/07 minutes as written. **VOTING:** 4 ayes, 1 abstention (Yandow); motion carried.

Approve Bill List(s)

MOTION by Peter Gustafson, **SECOND** by John Lajza, to approve the bill list, dated 12/20/07, with checks #10035377 through check #10035459 in the amount of \$354,080.18. **VOTING:** 4 ayes, 1 abstention (Yandow); motion carried.

MOTION by Peter Gustafson, **SECOND** by John Lajza, to approve the bill list, dated 1/8/08, with checks #10035460 through check #10035507 in the amount of \$265,743.16. **VOTING:** 4 ayes, 1 abstention (Yandow); motion carried.

4. TRUSTEES/STAFF COMMENTS

The Board reviewed correspondence received.

Annual Meeting Location

The annual meeting and community dinner will again be held at the high school.

2008 Memorial Day Parade Benefit Dinner facilitated by EBPA

February 16, 2008 at the VFW on Pearl Street. The cost is \$20 per person.

5. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Deb Billado, **SECOND** by Tim Jerman, to go into Executive Session to discuss contracts and other legal matters. **VOTING:** 5 ayes; motion carried.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:05 p.m.

MOTION by Peter Gustafson, **SECOND** by John Lajza, to adjourn Executive Session and reconvene the regular meeting. **VOTING:** 5 ayes; motion carried.

Executive Session was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by John Lajza, **SECOND** by Deb Billado, to instruct the Interim Village Manager to have the Village Attorney draft a contract for the position of Village Manager with Dave Crawford. **VOTING:** 5 ayes; motion carried.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by John Lajza, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Rscdy: M.E.Riordan