

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 22, 2008**

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

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. Dave Crawford was introduced as the new Village Manager. Mr. Crawford will begin as Village Manager in February.

2. AUDIENCE

None.

3. BUSINESS

Adoption of Village Plan

MOTION by Deb Billado, SECOND by John Lajza, to adopt the Village Plan as presented. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

FY09 Budget

Bert Moffatt, Interim Village Manager, reviewed recommended changes to the FY09 budget to include adding money under Insurance to cover losses, reinstating money for pavement work, and applying a fund balance transfer of \$70,000 (the 5% minimum balance is maintained). The result with the changes is a decrease in the tax rate by one half of a cent from last year's rate. The budgets for Water, Sewer, and Sanitation are level funded. Kudos were extended to Mr. Moffatt for his work on the budget, noting villagers were facing a 34% municipal tax increase with no modification for income sensitivity plus school and town taxes. The annual meeting is April 2, 2008 and the public is urged to attend to make comment and get involved.

Peter Gustafson commented on the high rate increases in insurance year after year. Larry Yandow stated the definition of insurance is "many to help the loss of a few". The Vermont League of Cities and Towns PACIF insurance program wants all municipalities to pay their fair share. Insurance rates are based on losses. Essex Junction has had significant losses (claims) in the recent past and the consequence is higher rates. Without the losses, the rate increases would not be so dramatic. The incidents experienced by the Village are not "at fault" losses, but are incidents such as a building roof or water in a house basement due to a water main break. At some point in the future the Village should hire a loss prevention consultant or company to assess exposure. It was noted the Village is on the right track now with a decrease in losses.

The Board asked Bert Moffatt to compile a list of deferred maintenance items.

Rescue/Pump Truck Proposal

Bert Moffatt noted the capital budget before the Board does not include the purchase of a ladder truck which is a significant item and separate issue from the rescue/pump truck. The Board may consider bonding for the ladder truck. Regarding purchase of the rescue/pump truck, KME provided the best bid for the truck at \$399,992 plus approximately \$40,000 for accessories. Money has already been set aside. The pump truck has been in the capital budget for the past two years, but the purchase was postponed. Additional money was saved (\$5,000) by bidding two trucks at once, one for the Village of Essex Junction and one for Essex Town. Larry Yandow suggested at some point an equipment survey should be done of the fire/rescue equipment in Chittenden County.

MOTION by Deb Billado, SECOND by Peter Gustafson, to approve the purchase of a rescue/pump truck from KME for a price not to exceed \$440,816 without prior approval from the Board of Trustees.

DISCUSSION: The Fire Department was recognized for the diligent work on the truck purchase. Larry Yandow commented restructuring payments to the Rolling Stock Fund is a future discussion for the Board. There were no further comments.

VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

Approve Minutes

January 3, 2008 – Special Meeting

MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by John Lajza, to approve the 1/3/08 minutes as written. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

January 11, 2008 – Regular Meeting

MOTION by John Lajza, SECONDN by Tim Jerman, to approve the 1/11/08 minutes as written. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

Approve Bill List

MOTION by Tim Jerman, SECOND by Deb Billado, to approve the bill list, dated 1/22/08, with checks #10035508 through check #10035599 in the amount of \$329,365.44. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

4. TRUSTEES/STAFF COMMENTS

The Board reviewed correspondence received.

VLCT Recommendation for Municipal Resolution re: Education Funding

Tim Jerman stated he cannot support the status quo in education funding which is what the VLCT resolution is advocating. The focus should be toward a more equitable source of funding. The Board concurred. John Lajza suggested a baseline education menu be outlined which meets basic educational requirements (courses). Larry Yandow mentioned the approach in the State of Michigan whereby each school receives \$9,000 per student and no more. Schools can opt to spend less.

MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by Deb Billado, to table action on the VLCT resolution. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

“Shift/Shaft in Montpelier”

Tim Jerman warned of discussion in the legislature relative to targeted cost savings at the state level (areas such as prisons, state police, transportation, Medicaid, phosphorus issues) being borne by the local municipal property tax.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)

There was discussion of whether the Village should ask for donations from non-profit agencies in the community for use of services and property in the village. It was noted the New England Theological Seminary forwarded a check for \$500 for property in the village owned by the church. Deb Billado pointed out whatever is done relative to payment in lieu of taxes must be done across the board and that includes schools which means the taxpayers will be impacted. It was suggested the payment from the church be announced publicly to see what might follow. Bert Moffatt will handle this matter.

5. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

6. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Rscity: M.E.Riordan