

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
May 27, 2008**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** Larry Yandow (Village President); Deb Billado, John Lajza, George Tyler. (Peter Gustafson was absent.)  
**ADMINISTRATION:** Dave Crawford, Village Manager.

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**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board met in Executive Session prior to the regular meeting to interview candidate(s) for vacancies on the Zoning Board.

**I. CALL TO ORDER (regular meeting) & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**II. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**III. GUESTS/PRESENTATIONS**

1. Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)  
Garret Mott (CCRPC Chairman), Justin Dextrateur (CCRPC Vice Chairman), and Greg Brown (CCRPC Director) addressed the Board. Garret Mott announced the retirement of Greg Brown at the end of June. Charlie Bauer from New Castle City, Delaware will replace Mr. Brown. Mr. Mott also announced the end of his term as CCRPC Chairman.

Greg Brown reviewed the CCRPC FY2009 Work Program, noting the program gives a clear picture of how diverse the activities and responsibilities of the CCRPC are, ranging from housing to emergency management to natural resources to land use planning. CCRPC has little authority so goals are achieved by good persuasion and good data. CCRPC has two broad areas of responsibility: 1) providing technical assistance to municipalities from mapping to updating zoning bylaws and plans to special programs; 2) doing a regional plan and programming that blends 19 different municipalities from Buels Gore to the City of Burlington. The work plan is an educational tool for the commissioners, municipalities, and the state. The plan shows work that is carried forward as well as new tasks. CCRPC has limited staff and funding for all the work so there are only four new tasks listed for 2009. The format of the work plan was reviewed. Each task is outlined in the plan and slotted into a program area. The timeline, key strategies, oversight, partners, staff, deliverables, and funding sources for each task are listed.

John Lajza commented there does not seem to be a designed approach to regional safety relative to county growth and the interface with transportation (i.e. circumferential highway). Mr. Lajza asked how people and property will be protected. Mr. Brown noted CCRPC has been involved in emergency management technical assistance by providing

administrative support to the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to strengthen and better coordinate emergency management in Chittenden County. CCRPC assists with state programs from the local Department of Homeland Security office to Vermont Emergency Management to activity at the regional level. Mr. Brown described how CCRPC helped build a communication bridge between emergency services and police, and worked with the Dept. of Public Safety on training for public officials. FEMA funds supported the efforts. CCRPC is always looking for grant opportunities. Garret Mott mentioned CCRPC prepared hazard mitigation plans for all towns in the county. These plans will be updated on a regular basis. John Lajza observed housing is a big issue for CCRPC, but the plan does not show where the housing will be located and how emergency services will support the plan. The information needs to move to the CCMPO to show support for the need for the circumferential highway, for instance. Justin Dextrateur briefly reviewed the scenario planning exercise for the county to get a glimpse at future land use. John Lajza urged the inclusion of coordination of emergency services. Larry Yandow pointed out each emergency response group has a distinct territory. The groups (fire, public safety/police, emergency services) need to come together. Greg Brown agreed to the need to create bridges between the disciplines to talk about common issues. There is coordination among the different services. Training is to the same standard. The same organizational framework and protocol to respond to emergencies is used. It must be kept in mind that the organizations are mainly staffed by volunteers with limited amounts of time for training and to perform equipment maintenance duties. Garret Mott added there is a countywide apprehension of anything looking like county government (towns want to maintain local control) and this works against region-wide cooperation in many instances. Greg Brown stated CCRPC does know who has what emergency equipment and where the equipment is located in terms of mapping. John Lajza asked that the emergency/rescue equipment inventory be forwarded to Dave Crawford, Village Manager.

Garret Mott discussed the issue of substantial regional impact (SRI). A municipality must have their plan approved by CCRPC if they want to charge impact fees. Act 250 says if a project has substantial regional impact and the regional and municipal plans are in conflict then the regional plan takes precedence. A task force of members from the county drafted a definition of “substantial regional impact”. There will be two public hearings held prior to adoption of the language. The first hearing will be in June. Essentially the definition states a conflict exists when the regional plan is more specific than the municipal plan. Act 250 District Environmental Commission decides if there is a conflict between the plans, not CCRPC. Research shows there have only been four cases of conflict in Chittenden County since 1970 where there was substantial regional impact. The regional plan is broad and general while municipal plans are more specific so a problem in Chittenden County is not anticipated, but CCRPC wants to be prepared with the language. Tom Weaver, CCRPC representative for Essex Junction, spoke in support of the draft definition as a more realistic and better way to describe conflict.

## 2. Presentation/Review of Brownell Library Five Year Plan

Members of the Brownell Library Long Range Planning Committee addressed the Board. Attendees included Christine Packard, Linda Costello, Genevieve Melle, Penny Pillsbury,

Elaine Sopchak, and George Tyler. George Tyler commented positively on the significant number of people involved in updating the plan and the high level of enthusiasm. The Brownell Library Trustees are vigorous in updating the plan every five years in order to better serve the public. The library is in a transitional phase. On-line services are offered as well as extensive children's programming. There is great use of the expanded building space. The recent survey showed people use the library for books and access to the on-line service. Staff and the library board try to identify key hours of operation and apply resources wisely. People feel the library staff is very helpful and the material is organized. The library offers a homey, welcoming atmosphere. Most of the patrons of the library are from Essex Junction. Wireless internet service for laptops is available. Staff and the library board want to better advertise adult and young adult programs offered at the library.

The Village Trustees extended thanks and appreciation to the Brownell Library trustees, library staff, and volunteers for their effort in putting together the five year plan. Deb Billado urged promotion of Front Porch Forum to library patrons. Christine Packard suggested a display about Front Porch Forum be set up at the library to inform people with sign up sheets readily available.

George Tyler asked if high use of the library by children/students after school continues. Penny Pillsbury confirmed this, noting simple after school snacks are available and catchy, intriguing programs are offered. The library is a nice option to the Teen Center for some.

Elaine Sopchak noted the library trustees attend the Vermont Library Conference, trustee conferences, and town officers training sessions. All look to the Brownell Library for programs, training, and leadership. Brownell Library has a high profile in the State of Vermont.

Christine Packard mentioned the successful spelling bee held during the spring time at the library and challenged the Village Board of Trustees to enter next year's spelling bee (next spring) along with the teams from the library (staff, trustees, and teens).

Penny Pillsbury mentioned a few activities planned in the near future. There is a group of people interested in Civil War sites in Essex and Essex Junction (who lived where before leaving for the war). Memorial Hall is reserved for a Civil War Artifact Road Show in November to coincide with Veteran's Day. Also, area art teachers are coming together to design a puzzle piece as part of an Art Fits Vermont project.

Linda Costello commented positively on the impressive circulation rate of the Brownell Library (175,000 books) and the advantage of having a library in the community to promote reading. Deb Billado mentioned finding a hook to get pre-teens (twens) into the library, noting the vast amount of text messaging that goes on. Penny Pillsbury suggested some sort of social messaging program could be developed.

### 3. Legislative Update

Rep. Tim Jerman commended Linda Beaugardus, Ann Gray, and Kathy Reese for the great job on the Memorial Day vigil and parade. It was wonderful to see 7<sup>th</sup> graders interacting with World War II veterans.

Rep. Jerman reported on work done by the legislative this past session relative to Essex Junction. The CLA bill was passed and \$1 million will be rebated on the Essex Junction school tax. There is also a prebate provision to allow appeal for this year only. In the capital bill land owned by the state around the soccer fields at the tree farm on Old Colchester Road will be sold to the village and town for one dollar. The state is selling the buildings and the village and town have right of first refusal. The two vote provision for school budgets survived the House and Senate this session, but there will be further debate next session. Due to the school vote discussion the focus was taken off eliminating the property tax. This item will be the first bill submitted next year. Regarding the budget, the legislature agreed to look at alternatives to meet infrastructure needs, such as bonding. The issue of phosphorus will be back for discussion next session. Waste water treatment plants are exempt from having to squeeze out the last drop of phosphorus from the water when the real culprit is farming by streams. The corrections bill dealt with the facility in St. Albans, half-way houses, and integrating prisoners into the community. It was noted Essex Junction has the highest number of prisoners released to home detainment. The housing bill that was passed makes it easier to build in downtown areas. The rental registry concept did not have support. Relative to fire safety a burn building will be built at Vermont Technical College for training purposes. There was also a bill requiring photoelectric sensors in new housing and when a house is sold. Houses should have an ionization, photoelectric (sometimes these two are combined in one unit), and carbon monoxide detectors. There were also bills on juvenile justice (will be a rewrite) and energy efficiency. There was no movement in the Senate on home rule. There has been discussion of the “shire” concept for regional collaboration. The charger change bill was before the Government Operations Committee (Local Government Committee no longer exists), and it is difficult to get a controversial bill passed because there are so many other bills needing to be addressed and not enough time in the session, explained Rep. Jerman, adding his view that charter changes passed locally should be passed by the legislature. John Lajza stated charter changes need to be voted on the floor as a requirement.

George Tyler asked about Catamount Health. Rep. Jerman said the program did not get the numbers (enrollment) this year because people with pre-existing conditions were not covered and the insurance was expensive, but the health plan is a step in the right direction. Implementation will be slow. Mr. Tyler asked about momentum on consolidation of schools/districts as a means to control school funding increases, noting potential negative impact as a result of the failure of the vote for consolidation of the Essex Junction and Essex Town schools. Rep. Jerman assured debate on the matter will return next session.

The Board extended thanks and appreciation to Rep. Jerman for all his efforts with the CLA bill. Appreciation was also extended to Rep. Hunt for his hard work on the Appropriations Committee. Deb Billado asked if there is any effort to limit access to

legislators by lobbyists so the legislators can do their work. Rep. Jerman stated the lobbyists in many instances are like staff to the legislators. The lobbyists often know the history of the issues and cannot make mistakes at risk of losing their position.

Rep. Jerman reported re-licensing Vermont Yankee will be debated next session. There are many difficult issues. The energy future of Vermont is right around the corner.

4. Comments from Public on Items not on Agenda  
None.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

#### **VI. VILLAGE MANAGER'S REPORT**

##### **1. Verbal/Written Report**

- Board retreat is June 5, 2008 beginning at 5 p.m. Next regular meeting is June 10, 2008.
- Five Corners improvement project continues to progress on schedule. A break in the gas line occurred and Pearl Street was closed for one hour. Fire and mutual aid response was excellent. Regarding the railroad crossing installation, the correct product from the supplier is being shipped (what was installed does not meet specifications). Pending change orders include a septic tank by Essex Carpet on Park Street and the control box by the railroad crossing.
- Memorial Day clean up went well.
- The switch from Fairpoint to Sovernet for telephone service will be a cost savings.
- “Clickable” TV on Channel 17 is now available. An interview with Dave Crawford is on the schedule.

#### **VII. TRUSTEES COMMENTS & CONCERNS**

##### **1. Board Member Comments**

Larry Yandow mentioned trash in the Fairview development on village property and cutting trees for a temporary bike path. Dave Crawford will confirm the homeowners association is aware of the boundary line.

#### **VIII. CONSENT AGENDA**

##### **1. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting (5/13/08)**

##### **2. Approval of the Warrants**

##### **3. Accept Reading List (letters & communications)**

- VLCT 2008 Town Fair Notice
- VLCT 2009 Legislative Policy Development/Committee Nomination Form
- Minutes of 5/1/08 Essex Junction Planning Commission Meeting

##### **4. CVE Proclamation: “Champlain Valley Fair Day August 23, 2008”**

5. Approval of Paving Bid Award

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by George Tyler, to accept the consent agenda as presented. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

The Board signed the CVE Proclamation.

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

1. Contractual Issues
2. Legal Issues
3. Personnel Issues

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Deb Billado, to go into Executive Session to discuss contracts, legal, and/or personnel matters, and to invite Rep. Jerman to attend. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:15 p.m.

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by George Tyler, to adjourn Executive Session and reconvene the regular meeting. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

Executive Session was adjourned at 11:28 p.m.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Deb Billado, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

*RScty: M.E.Riordan*