

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 24, 2009**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Peter Gustafson, George Tyler, John Lajza. (Larry Yandow and Deb Billado were absent.)

ADMINISTRATION: Dave Crawford, Village Manager.

I. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOTION by George Tyler; **SECOND** by John Lajza, to appoint Peter Gustafson to assume the duties of chairman in the absence of Village President, Larry Yandow.
VOTING: unanimous ; motion carried.

Trustee Gustafson called the meeting to order at 6:30 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. Comments from Public on Items not on Agenda

Alden Bartlett read a proposal, dated 2/12/09, to allow the Lincoln Hall annex to be converted to a community center available for meetings to nonprofit groups with ties to Essex Junction. The Senior Club would be able to continue to occupy the space during their established hours. Mr. Bartlett said he is a member of a computer club which holds monthly meetings. About six to eight people attend the meetings. The club would on occasion need to plug a computer into the wall during a meeting. The club would provide its own coffee and donuts. The club offered to set up computers and allow the seniors to use them in exchange for use of the space for a monthly meeting. Dave Crawford noted past attempts to get a collaborative effort going with the Senior Club. There have been some communication glitches, but it is felt something can be worked out. Mr. Bartlett stressed his interest is not to limit the space to the Senior Club exclusively. The building is the property of Essex Junction and should be available to other groups. The Senior Club can lease the space during the day and others can use the space at other hours.

The Trustees will take the request under consideration. John Lajza observed this is an opportunity to review the lease for the next fiscal year so something can likely be worked out.

2. FY08 Audit Report by Fred Duplessis with Sullivan Powers & Co.

Fred Duplessis reported the Village is in full conformance with generally accepted accounting principles. Net assets total \$1,932,977 (much is designated). The General Fund balance is \$313,776 which is up from last year by \$100,000, but the FY09 budget will use \$70,000 and with application to the proposed budget there will be a balance of around the 5% level recommended to be maintained. Budget amount was \$2,739,923 of

which \$2,658,093 was expended. Amount collected in taxes and fees was \$2,798,592. The Water Fund decreased from last year as did the Waste Water Fund (this fund is trending toward the negative). The Sanitation Fund increased. A snapshot of the financial situation for the Village is outlined in the Management & Discussion section of the auditor's report. Recommendations from the auditors include the following:

- Implement procedures to ensure the work by the Finance Director is reviewed for completeness and accuracy. The Village Treasurer and Village Manager could review the work.
- Develop an equitable and reasonable charge for services provided by the General Fund to the Water, Waste Water, and Sanitation funds.
- Evaluate and document the internal control process.
- Implement a fraud policy.
- Implement a policy requiring a second employee to review reports and bills before being sent, and document the review.

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by George Tyler, to accept the FY08 audit report as presented by Fred Duplessis, CPA, Sullivan Powers & Co. VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Discuss and Adopt FY10 Budget Revisions

Dave Crawford noted items totaling \$3,450 were found that should be included in the budget. Changes to the Administration Budget include the clickable agenda from Channel 17 (Communications line item) and Employee Recognition Day (Holiday Expense line item). The two cent increase in the budget includes one cent that makes up for last year's budget and one cent to support this year's budget.

MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by John Lajza, to accept the amended budget for FY10 in the amount of \$3,064,487 which is a 10.7% increase over last year's budget of \$2,768,954.

DISCUSSION: It was noted the increase looks harsh because last year's budget was down from the prior year. In comparison to other communities in Chittenden County, the budget for the Village, a high service community, is excellent and one of the lowest of all budgets that is supported by the village taxpayer.

VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discuss and Adopt Annual Meeting Warning

2. Discussion of Village Charter Amendments

Dave Crawford noted ballot questions include charter changes to allow the Village President position to be elected by the Board of Trustees versus the voters in general, and to establish a Vice President position. Public hearings are required for the charter changes. A warning has been drafted to announce public hearings on March 10th and March 24th, 2009. There is information in the next village newsletter regarding the charter changes.

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by George Tyler, to approve the warning for the Village of Essex Junction Annual Meeting to be held on April 1, 2009 with Australian ballot voting on April 14, 2009. VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Peter Gustafson, to approve holding public meetings to discuss Articles 7 & 8 regarding charter changes to elect the Village President and Vice President on March 10, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. and March 24, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

George Tyler further explained the charter changes and urged the public to attend the public hearings in March to voice their comments. John Lajza urged the voters to attend the Essex Town Annual Meeting on March 2, 2009 and vote on the local options tax proposal.

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Peter Gustafson, to approve the village newsletter as drafted to be sent out 2/26/09. VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

The newsletter will be posted on the village website.

VI. VILLAGE MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Meeting Schedule

March 2 at 7:30 PM – Annual Town Meeting
March 3 from 7 AM to 7 PM – Voting by Australian Ballot (Town of Essex)
March 10 at 6:30 PM – Regular Trustees Meeting
March 24 at 6:30 PM – Regular Trustees Meeting
April 1 at 7:00 PM – Annual Village Meeting
April 14 from 7 AM to 7 PM – Voting by Australian Ballot (Essex Junction)
April 14 at 6:30 PM – Regular Trustees Meeting
April 28 at 6:30 PM – Regular Trustees Meeting
Week of May 4 - Manager on vacation
May 12 at 6:30 PM – Regular Trustees Meeting
May 26 at 6:30 PM – Regular Trustees Meeting

2. Manager's Meetings/Activities:

- Met with library board. Suggested to hold a potluck dinner to improve communications between both boards (library and village trustees) and discuss issues of mutual interest. An offer made to an individual to fill the Assistant Librarian position vacated by Kent LaCombe. Mr. LaCombe was recognized for his excellent service while at the library.
- A quorum was not present at the recent CCMPO meeting. It is suggested the Trustees appoint two alternates (Dave Crawford and Robin Pierce) to the CCMPO to help assure there is a quorum available for meetings.
- There was discussion of cooperation in policing at the Chittenden County Manager's Meeting. There was also discussion of a Williston, Colchester, Essex committee on the circ highway, and sale of capacity at the WWTF to Williston.

- The date for a community forum involving residents of Central Street, business owners, police, and village staff has not been set as yet. Community Justice Center will facilitate the forum.
- Having the Governor direct discretionary funds in the Recovery Act to communities based on per capita was suggested at Government Day in Montpelier.
- Lt. Governor Dubie was briefed on initiatives in Essex Junction involving rail and Pearl Street.
- There is a group interested in trails on the tree farm property. Essex Town is investigating tree clearing since cutting has not been authorized.
- The Trustees need to review their draft report for the Annual Report.
- Positive economic impact is anticipated by the recently announced facility to be located at IBM.
- Traffic light poles for Five Corners are expected to arrive at any time.
- Streetlights are on a timer.
- Briefing on this year's budget includes over expenditure of the General Fund by an estimated \$25,000 due to a diminishing revenue stream and unanticipated expenses (boiler in Lincoln Hall, snow removal and salt use, over time pay, cost of plow blades). Budgets are tight in the Water and Sanitation departments. Deficit anticipated in the WWTF budget due to a \$40,000 loss in the revenue stream and a \$25,000 impact from increase in chemical costs. The wholesale rate may have to be readjusted in May.
- A list of projects to be done with stimulus funding (Recovery Act) has been drafted. Copies will be available of the presentation on improvements to Pearl Street, downtown initiatives, and the crescent connector in the village.

VII. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS

1. Board Member Comments/Concerns

John Lajza noted a tremendous amount of activity is taking place in the village. The Board supports the efforts of staff. CCMPO supports the effort. The Village is attempting to be proactive and has many initiatives.

George Tyler announced the March 2, 2009 Essex Town Annual Meeting at Essex Educational Center, noting all villagers are members of the town and are encouraged to attend the meeting to discuss the budget and the local options tax. Dave Crawford pointed out both boards (Essex Selectboard and Village Trustees) support the local options tax. Every tax dollar from outside the borders of the town and village will lighten the burden on tax dollars.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA & READING FILE

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by George Tyler, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- 1. Approval of Minutes (2/10/09)**
- 2. Approval of Warrants**
- 3. Zoning Board Minutes of 1/20/09 & 2/17/09**
- 4. Planning Commission Minutes of 2/5/09**

5. Reading list acceptance (letters/communications)

- Article in Champlain Business Journal re: Vermont Neighborhoods Program
- Memo from Vermont Department of Housing & Community Affairs re: Town of Colchester Application for Growth Center Designation
- Letters from IBM re: Local Options Tax
- Thank you from Library for Employee Appreciation Party
- Letter from Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development re: Vermont neighborhood Designation for Roscoe Court

VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by George Tyler, that the Board of Trustees go into Executive Session to consider pending contract negotiations and personnel matters, and charter and potential budget changes related to personnel issues where premature general public knowledge would clearly place the Village at a substantial disadvantage, and to permit staff to be present for this session. VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

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

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by George Tyler, to adjourn Executive Session. VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

Executive Session was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by George Tyler, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: 3 ayes; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

RScty: M.E.Riordan