

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
November 9, 2010**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Deb Billado (Village President); George Tyler, Peter Gustafson, John Lajza, Steve Atwood.
ADMINISTRATION: Dave Crawford, Village Manager; Robin Pierce, Development Director.

I. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Village President, Deb Billado, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Add under New Business:

- Questions and Answers from the Prudential Committee

III. GUESTS AND PRESENTATION

1. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
None.

2. Dan Senecal-Albrecht, CCRPC, Byway Project Update

Dan Senecal-Albrecht gave an update on the Lake Champlain Byway which runs from Alburg to Orwell. The corridor management plan for the Lake Champlain Byway is being updated. A byway is designated for its intrinsic resources. Cell phone audio tours which provide interesting factoids about a community are being added along the byway. Other informational tools include brochures detailing the intrinsic resources of the Lake Champlain Byway, signage, and interpretive panels. Information is also posted on the website. Tradeshow panels on display at conventions provide information in both English and French about the byways in Vermont. Before allocating grant funds, the Federal Highway Administration wants to know how a byway will benefit the traveler and the visitor versus the resident.

There was discussion of proposed kiosk panels on Railroad Ave. to provide interpretive information, welcome information, and current event announcements. Two different options were presented, standard height and low profile. The standard design kiosk allows up to six panels for display of information. There is a clock and globe type lighting on the posts. The height of the standard design allows better visibility for drivers. The low profile design is more of a rural sign design. The view of drivers is blocked much like a shrub can block visibility. There are fewer panels for display. Following discussion, the choice of the Board is the standard height kiosk with the clock. Deb Billado suggested gathering input from the groups involved with the farmers market and Railroad Ave. events.

Diane Tardiff, village resident, asked if some funds could be used to improve the railroad station building, perhaps having the railroad company contribute as well. Dave Crawford briefly explained the ongoing discussions with the railroad regarding the train station. Amtrak and Sprint are tenants in the building. New England Central Railways (owned by Rail America) considers the building to be functional as designed and is not necessarily motivated to change the architecture. The building will be painted and Amtrak will be doing safety upgrades to the platform. If the village can secure funds for a new roof on the building the railroad will not object.

Bridget Meyer, village resident, mentioned a recent trip to Washington, DC by train and the beautiful train stations along the route. The station in Essex Junction stands out as an eyesore, said Ms. Meyer, adding with the proposed development on Park Street and potential relocation of the station there it makes better sense to invest the money on that project. Ms. Meyer also stated that what goes into the downtown area should benefit the downtown so the train station may not be an appropriate location for the Sprint switching station.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Report by Jeff Harton and Bob Willey re: Recreation Dept. Financial Information
Peter Gustafson mentioned his association with the school district as a teacher at ADL for the past 31 years and as a part time employee for many years at the Rec Dept. involved in the soccer program and special events. Mr. Gustafson said as a village trustee he is comfortable with matters of programs through the Rec. Dept., but will be silent in the discussion and vote on the governance issue.

Jeff Harton and Bob Willey, village residents, presented information gathered from CCSU in an effort to help resolve the governance matter. Mr. Harton stated the information was requested under the Right to Know law to confirm if the department is operating fiscally responsibly and has proper oversight whether under the Prudential Committee or the Village Board of Trustees. The Trustees can decide if the information provided is needed or wanted. Bob Willey noted the delay by the Prudential Committee in providing the information was not acceptable. The information must be and is available. There is too much distance between the school board and the Rec. Dept. The Prudential Committee was making decisions that should have come before the Trustees first.

Trustee Tyler noted CCSU as a public institution is audited each year. Mr. Tyler questioned the remark by Mr. Harton about the Rec. Dept. operating in a fiscally responsible manner. Mr. Harton mentioned the \$10,000 telephone bill appearing excessive for a Rec. Dept. Trustee Tyler stated it is unusual for a board dealing with another board to get information from private citizens. The information should be vetted by CCSU and the Rec. Dept. before taking any action. Mr. Harton stated the information has a signature on it. Deb Billado noted the information came from the CCSU board so it has been vetted to a degree.

Jeff Harton submitted the following information received from CCSU, the date requested and the date received:

- Vendor list sent by CCSU in response to the Accounts Payable request. Mr. Harton stated the invoices to the vendor list for the Rec. Dept. is what is needed as well as more detail and explanation of items in each category (i.e. breakout of each expenditure). Mr. Harton said he will be more specific with requests in the future.
- Very short list of accounts receivables compared to \$1.5 million in receipts. On the revenue side one-third of the income is from the daycare program. Mr. Harton questioned the Rec. Dept. being in the business of providing daycare services. George Tyler pointed out the after school program was moved to the Rec. Dept. Brad Luck, Recreation Director, noted the program is licensed by the state. Mr. Luck added various programs are under the same object code. The realignment is to better track expenses.
- Bank balance of \$800 in a petty cash fund for the Rec. Dept. Mr. Harton said he was surprised the Rec. Dept. does not have a checking account at least, and the amount in the petty cash account is nominal which leads to question whether funds are being comingled.
- Number of employees in the Rec. Dept. (seven full-time, six part-time, 460 seasonal of which 300 booked hours and were issued W-2 forms. Mr. Harton stated the Trustees may need the information in consideration of payroll. With the upcoming tax law changes earning over \$600 requires a 1099 filing or withholding 20% of wages.
- Copy of the most recent audit review. Mr. Harton said he has not yet reviewed the audit, but hopefully the audit will show if funds are being comingled.
- Chain of command flowchart showing residents to Village Trustees to Prudential Committee to Rec. Dept. Mr. Harton stated better explanation of the oversight of the Rec. Dept. is needed, such as who answers to whom. Brad Luck stated the Rec. Dept. reports to the CCSU Business Manager who reports to the CCSU Superintendent who reports to the Prudential Committee (members elected by the community). Mr. Harton mentioned the Rec. Dept. being a separate entity. Ryan Hegreness stressed the Rec. Dept. is part of the school district as are each of the separate schools.
- List of expenditures provided in response to the request for the Recreation Parks Capital Fund.
- Short and long term debt of the Rec. Dept. listing the pool and building renovation. There is short term interest expense, said Mr. Harton, but short term debt is not shown. Mr. Harton stated there could have been a misunderstanding in what was being requested so in the future information requests will be very clear and specific.
- List of assets of the Rec. Dept. included buildings, equipment, and improvements. Mr. Harton questioned who owns the pool. Trustee Lajza stated the pool is bonded by the school district. The debt follows the buildings for whoever is the owner. Ultimately the assets are owned by the residents.
- Request for leases produced no leases from CCSU. Mr. Harton questioned the parks being rented out to other entities without a lease or contract in place. Maple

Street Park is a village park being used by the Rec. Dept. There should be a lease between Essex Junction and the Rec. Dept. detailing responsibilities and terms. Dave Crawford stated there is an agreement and a lease. The lease arrangement is for the property and any improvements. If a building roof needs improvement that is part of the Rec. Dept. budget. Brad Luck confirmed there is an agreement.

Trustee Tyler stressed that vetting the information with CCSU will get answers to all Mr. Harton's questions. Also, public institutions are required by law to have a professional audit, and it has to be assumed the auditors verified all accounting practices.

Dan Kerin, member of the Rec Advisory Committee, questioned spending time and money on an audit to satisfy one individual who does not understand what is going on. Jeff Harton said he was billed for the time and materials provided by CCSU. The information was sought because previous requests by the Trustees were not answered by CCSU.

Annie Cooper urged Mr. Harton to get answers from all resources available including the Rec. Dept.

Ryan Hegreness recalled the consensus two weeks ago was that the Trustees and Prudential Committee were going to work together to collect information. CCSU Business Manager gave a thorough presentation on the matter at the Prudential Committee meeting on 11/8/10. The document was publicly available and questions debated. Mr. Hegreness asked what happened to change course, noting there does not appear to be a healthy collaboration. Mr. Hegreness urged continuing with the original approach, board to board. There was continued discussion of the financial information relative to the Rec. Dept. Ryan Hegreness explained some programs that cannot be done in-house, such as pool maintenance, are contracted. Brad Luck explained the childcare program that serves 120 families in the community. Regarding the expense under General Supplies, there is much going on with concessions, administration, the pool, and programs. Jeff Harton suggested a breakdown of items be shown rather than just one account. Brad Luck assured all questions can be answered. The accounts are all audited. The school district does a great job and it is not fair to infer something is not right. Mr. Harton stated the purpose of getting the information is to tighten up, realign, and get more clarification in order to move forward. Trustee Lajza added the goal is to do better management of a great resource in the community. The contract as written may need some changes. Trustee Billado noted in January CCSU and the Prudential Committee are developing budgets and the Trustees are invited to attend the meeting. Mr. Harton stated a more definitive request for information from CCSU will be made in the next week and the information received will be provided to the Trustees.

2. Discussion/Action on Response to Prudential Committee

The draft letter to the Prudential Committee was reviewed. Minor edits were made including deletion of the sentence reading: "The Trustees have indicated that they feel that as part of the discussion of the governance issue it may be concluded that if the EJRP is transferred back to the Village some of the programs would be best left with the school

district to operate.” The statement about the Trustees having a more direct role in the oversight of EJRP operation will be rewritten. There was agreement the Trustees and Prudential Committee need to work cooperatively to resolve the governance issue. Deb Billado suggested the Village Manager work with the Village Attorney to draft a six month extension to the rec agreement prior to the budget meeting with the Prudential Committee in January. The Trustees need to digest the information from Jeff Harton and have the Village Manager continue trying to gather the information from CCSU that was requested by the Trustees. Steve Atwood suggested an ad hoc committee be formed to condense the information for the Trustees. Annie Cooper volunteered to serve on the ad hoc committee.

MOTION by Steve Atwood, SECOND by John Lajza, to establish an ad hoc committee to interface with CCSU to get appropriate information, condense it and bring it to the Trustees, and to invite Jeff Harton and Bob Willey to participate on the ad hoc committee.

DISCUSSION: George Tyler stated CCSU should have the opportunity to clarify and answer any questions before the information comes to the Trustees. There was agreement the data should come from CCSU.

VOTING: 4 ayes, 1 abstention (Gustafson); motion carried.

The Trustees tasked the Village Manager to work with the Village Attorney on an extension of the existing agreement with the Prudential Committee with regard to Rec. Dept. governance. March 15, 2011 is the target date for the extended agreement to be in place.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Presentation on the Rec. Dept. by CCSU Business Manager at the 11/8/10 Prudential Committee

Copies of the presentation were given to the Trustees. It was suggested the ad hoc committee could review the presentation with the CCSU Business Manager to answer any questions prior to the December Trustees meeting. The Prudential Committee and CCSU staff will be invited to the December meeting. Dan Kerin suggested a nonbiased third party group look over the materials. Following discussion the Trustees agreed there needs to be a balance in the members on the ad hoc committee.

VI. VILLAGE MANAGER’S REPORT

The Trustees received a written report on items from the Village Manager.

1. Meeting Schedule

- November 16 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- December 7 @ 6:30 – Special Trustees Meeting
- December 14 @ 6:30 – Budget Day and Regular Trustees Meeting
- January 11 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- January 18 @ 6:30 – Special Trustees Meeting
- January 25 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- February 8 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting

- February 22 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting

Special Meetings/Events:

- December 1 – Light the Village Celebration

2. Tax Sale – 2 Hiawatha Ave.

The property sold for taxes owed. There is a one year redemption period where the property owner can pay the amount due and void the sale. If this does not occur then a tax sale deed will be issued. The situation was explained to the property owner.

3. Amtrak Station Camera

The railroad has not yet agreed to provide funding assistance for the cameras.

4. Website Update

The proposal is to be reviewed by staff.

5. Insurance Review

The village is in good shape with regard to health and general liability insurance.

VII. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS

Peter Gustafson reported on the police station committee meetings. Request for information is being made on any available 20,000 s.f. buildings or three acres of land as potential sites for a new police station. The condition of the existing station is appalling. Committee work will wrap up December 20th.

John Lajza mentioned the school board is wrestling with their website and Facebook.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA & READING FILE

MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by John Lajza, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- 1. Approve Minutes of Previous Meetings (10/26/10, 10/30/10, 11/2/10)**
- 2. Approve Warrants**
- 3. Approve Municipal Plan Update Grant Application and Sign Resolution**
- 4. Approve Amendment of Employees Association Current Contract, Section 6.1.1**
- 5. Reading List Acceptance (Letters & Communications)**
 - **Brownell Library Trustees Minutes & Staff Report 9/21/10**
 - **Planning Commission Minutes 10/7/10 & 10/21/10**
 - **Zoning Board Minutes 10/19/10**
 - **Letter of Congratulations/Pictures from CVE General Manager**
 - **VLCT Issue Paper #7 re: Energy**
 - **CCTA FY10 Annual Report**
 - **Letter from CCMPO re: FY12 Local Share Match**
 - **Information re: Verizon Wireless Antenna Installment at CVE**
 - **Update on WWTF Methane Boiler Installation/Climate Change Grant**

DISCUSSION: Deb Billado commented the library report was thorough and the website shows an increase of 800 hits from 2009 to 2010.
VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by John Lajza, **SECOND** by Steve Atwood, to adjourn the meeting.
VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

RScty: M.E.Riordan