

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
May 25, 2010**

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

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**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 to Consent Agenda:

- Memo from Julie Potter, CCMPO, dated 5/24/10, regarding revisions to the All Hazards Mitigation Plan relative to safety concerns if the Route 2A Bridge is temporarily closed to traffic.
- Emails from Chris Chiquoine, dated 5/24/10, regarding improvements to the noise waiver process.

Reorder:

- Public hearing on water/sewer rates to follow discussion of Maple Street Park baseball field changes.

**III. GUESTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

1. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

There were no comments from the public at this time.

2. Discussion of Maple Street Park Baseball Field Changes

A memo from the Prudential Committee was sent to the Trustees requesting that no action be taken on the baseball field matter at this point in time. Brad Luck, Essex Jct. Parks & Rec Director, explained the ongoing effort to find open green space at Maple Street Park (38 acre parcel) and the consideration given to relocating the baseball field to behind ADL School. ADL School would like to have their team field at the school. Presently, the school uses the baseball field at Maple Street Park as their home field. There is a multitude of other users of the field including Little League, youth football, Babe Ruth baseball, men's leagues, and others. The baseball field has lights which are not used often. Concern from the public has been expressed about converting the field to multi-use open space. The project is on hold at present. There is a meeting on June 10<sup>th</sup> of the Recreation Advisory Council (6:30 PM, Rec Building, 75 Maple Street) to hear concerns. A new plan will be determined and presented to the Prudential Committee. The Trustees will be kept informed.

***PUBLIC COMMENTS***

Dan Meskill, Drury Drive, expressed concern that other baseball fields in the village will be taken out of use because a determination has been made the fields are not used often enough. Also, the Essex Rec Dept. should be notified of the proposal to eliminate the baseball field at Maple Street Park because they have an interest in use of the field. Regarding the lights and the dugouts, these facilities are there through the efforts of donations and volunteers. The Eagle Scouts will not be building dugouts at the ADL ball field, assured Mr. Meskill.

Mark McDowell, 77 Cascade Street, clarified the ball field is the village's field, not ADL's field. In 1970, the softball league installed the lights at the field. Lots of money has been invested in this landmark since the 1970s, stressed Mr. McDowell, and it is ridiculous to consider throwing that away. The field is used frequently by many teams throughout the week and weekends (baseball, fall ball, football, men's leagues, pickup games, individuals playing catch, and such). If usage is the issue, then perhaps the pool should be closed because it is not used for nine months out of the year, commented Mr. McDowell. Regarding limited night use, the park closes at 9 PM and in summer there is longer daylight so the lights are not needed. Mr. McDowell said the baseball teams were simply told that the field would not be available as of June 1 and to find another field. Also, the Rec. Dept. requires the teams to pay for the chalk for the field and to do their own liming. It is felt the department should handle these tasks. ADL's field is not comparable to the ball field at Maple Street Park and there is lots of green space in the village including the tree farm, Hiawatha School, and ADL School, said Mr. McDowell speaking against removing the ball field at Maple Street Park.

Ralph "Lefty" Guillette, Essex, spoke in protest of removing the ball field. Mr. Guillette recalled when he started a baseball school in 1987, free of charge, at the field about to be destroyed. There were 30 little league kids, aged 6 to 10, having a blast playing baseball. Mr. Guillette said the kids should be asked about losing the field. Destroying the field will be destroying the possibility of playing ball for some kids. Getting rid of the field will be hurting the kids. Most kids if given the chance want to play baseball. Mr. Guillette recalled when the residents and children picketed Burlington to maintain Roosevelt Park and the fields are there today.

Cindy Godin, 42 Pearl Street, expressed disappointment about the way the public was notified of the plan for the ball field. The matter should have been presented to the taxpayers so there could be input. A substantial amount of money (\$20,000) was put into the field by Little League in 2008 (grass in-field, baseline and backstop fences, drainage, and irrigation). The ADL field is very wet and cannot replace the ball field at Maple Street Park. There is much demand for the ball field. Ms. Godin presented a signed request (450 signatures on the form now and 500 anticipated by submittal) that a letter of support from the Trustees to save the ball field be drafted. Deb Billado noted the Prudential Committee asked to hold any correspondence on the topic until the Prudential Committee has made a decision. Dave Crawford suggested tabling the matter to a date specific.

There were no further comments.

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Peter Gustafson, to table action on the Maple Street Park ball field until the Trustees meeting on June 29, 2010 when the direction of the Prudential Committee and Rec. Dept. is better known. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

3. Public Hearing: FY11 Water/Sewer Rates

The public hearing was opened at 6:54 PM. Dave Crawford reported the proposed rate increase for water, sewer, and sanitation (combined) is 6.6%. The impact on the average user is an increase of \$46 per year. Flow through the treatment plant is down, but expenses remain consistent which is driving up the rate. Flow was down last fiscal year as well (the increase covers that shortfall as well). Funds (\$37,000) from the set aside account is being applied to avoid an even steeper rate increase. The remaining funds in the account will be used in FY11 for the same purpose. Infiltration in the village system is 25% (national average is 15%). Hamlin Engineering will study the matter. There was further discussion of infiltration (unmetered water flow through the system), rate per cubic foot paid by members of the tri-town committee (Williston, Essex, Essex Jct.), prior rate increases (one ramification of holding the rates when the property reappraisal was done is a steeper increase now), factors affecting flow (dry weather, less usage, conservation measures), and increase in the wholesale cost of water (mainly because IBM had a major decrease in water use). The irony is that less water is being used, but the user is paying more for it. There is a state tax on water use. Williston and Essex have less infiltration possibly due to newer pipes than the village. The village has taken steps to mitigate infiltration (sealed cracks, lined pipes, repaired manholes, and such). The village's water use through the meters is 25% less than the flow through the treatment plant after the volumes from Williston and Essex are subtracted. Sump pumps in houses that drain into the sewer pipe is one source of unmetered flow. The flow in manholes will be measured as another step to determine sources of infiltration. The formula for infiltration is the amount of flow in 1,000' of one inch diameter pipe per mile. The village has 38 miles of pipe, ranging in size from eight inches to 32", 1,300 manholes, and 1,600 catch basins (not connected to the sewer system). Rick Hamlin, Village Engineer, noted the water/sewer systems in Williston and Essex are 28 years old which is newer than the village's pipe system. Mr. Hamlin explained sources of infiltration (storm water, drainage) and the plan to determine the steady flow rate. There were no further comments. The hearing was closed at 7:35 PM.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Review Revised Personnel Regulations

Dave Crawford noted amendments to Articles I through VI (covering General Rules for Public Officials, Employees, and Volunteers, Employee Rules and Regulations, Full Time Employees, Non-Association Employees and Contractual/Exempt Workers, Salaried Employees, and Volunteer Firefighters) and suggested tentatively adopting the regulations as amended.

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Peter Gustafson, to tentatively approve the amendments as noted in Articles I through VI covering General Rules for Public**

**Officials, Employees, and Volunteers, Employee Rules and Regulations, Full Time Employees, Non-Association Employees and Contractual/Exempt Workers, Salaried Employees, and Volunteer Firefighters with final approval to follow review of the remaining articles in the Personnel Regulations. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

Larry Yandow reported on the meeting of the VLCT Health Trust. Drastic changes in insurance will supersede any employee agreements. There are many lawsuits filed against the single payer insurance proposal. Vermont's Congressional delegation is in support of the single payer system, but if this goes into effect VLCT Health Trust will be out of business.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Appointments to Village Boards and Commissions**

**MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by Larry Yandow, to accept the appointments to village boards and commissions as noted in the memo from Dave Crawford, dated 5/21/10, including the following:**

- Diane Clemens - Planning Commission, three year term ending 6/30/13
- Martin Hughes, Bruce Murdough - Zoning Board, three year term ending 6/30/13
- John Lajza, Paul Craven (alternate), Robin Pierce (2<sup>nd</sup> alternate), Dave Crawford (3<sup>rd</sup> alternate) - CCMPO, two year term ending 6/30/12
- Ron Gauthier, Dave Crawford (alternate) - CCRPC, two year term ending 7/13/12
- John Lajza, Deb Billado (alternate) - CSWD, two year term ending 5/31/12

**DISCUSSION: It was noted there is still a vacancy on the Planning Commission. Thanks and appreciation for the interest in continuing to serve the community was extended to the individuals who were appointed.**

**VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

There was mention of having a joint meeting with the Trustees, Planning Commission and Zoning Board.

**2. Approve Manager's Annual Appointments for FY11**

**MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by Larry Yandow, to approve appointment of the following outstanding individuals as recommended by the Village Manager:**

- Clerk/Treasurer/Tax Collector – Susan McNamara Hill
- Village Attorney – Dave Barra
- Village Fire Chief – Chris Gaboriault
- Village Engineer – Hamlin Engineering

**VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

Rick Hamlin, Hamlin Engineering, thanked the Trustees for the re/appointment as Village Engineer. Mr. Hamlin said his staff is looking forward to continuing to provide service to the village. Many of the employees live in the village and take pride in providing service to the village and working with the village staff.

### 3. Approve Extended Coverage for Dependents

Dave Crawford explained the health insurance coverage would extend to dependents of employees who are still in college, for example. The extended coverage option would be available to all employees. The cost to extend the coverage from June 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010 is \$5,000. The Trustees may want to consider continuing the option beyond that date. The Employees Association contract is up for renegotiation on 1/1/11.

**MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by John Lajza, to approve extended health insurance coverage for dependents to 12/31/10.**

**DISCUSSION: John Lajza mentioned the cost of the coverage (\$5,000) in consideration of a very tight village budget. It was noted the extended coverage will cover gaps covered by COBRA now.**

**VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

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

### 1. Meeting Schedule

- June 7 @ 6:30 – Special Trustees Meeting – Champlain Leadership Group
- June 8 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- June 29 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- July 20 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- July 27 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- August 10 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- August 24 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- September 14 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- September 28 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting

### 2. Update on Improvements by Train Station

Sawyer Joecks, Management Assistant, reported benches and planters built by students at the Essex Technical Center are in place and looking good. The cost was \$1,000 for materials and labor. New England Central Railroad will likely cover the cost, but the invoice is being held until it is certain Amtrak will move forward with planned improvements to the station (painting/paving the platform) otherwise volunteers will have to be organized. A volunteer group calling themselves “The Village Planters” will put plants in the planters by June 1 (for the farmers market) and maintain the plants through the season. Sprint is drafting a lease for use of the glassed portion of the train station for a model train display. The area will have to be monitored for litter and such. Public Works will collect the benches and planters at the end of the season for winter storage.

Larry Yandow mentioned there have been comments about spending taxpayer money on improvements to private property. Sawyer Joecks reiterated the railroad will pay for the benches and planters and volunteers are doing the work.

### 3. Grant Update

Sawyer Joecks reported a grant has been submitted to CCMPO for a sidewalk on Lincoln Street going toward St. James Place. The energy grant that was received has been fully

expended to pay for the thermal analysis, replacement of the thermostat, new windows and doors, and insulation at Lincoln Hall. Application has been made by the Fire Dept. for a grant to pay for a traffic pre-exemption system, replacement of the generator at Lincoln Hall, and other equipment upgrades.

4. Manager's Conference

Dave Crawford reported the recent conference in Middlebury for municipal managers was enlightening. One idea that was discussed is considering/committing to a capital budget before the operating budget.

5. Meeting with CVE

Emails from Chris Chiquoine regarding noise waivers were acknowledged. Dave Crawford said staff is in the process of finalizing the waivers. Discussion at the meeting with CVE included their development plans for the site, impact of the state sales tax issue, local option tax and the need for capital projects. The meeting was productive and a good working session. CVE's annual report is available for public viewing.

6. Charter Change Signed by Governor

A photo of Governor Douglas signing the bill for the village charter change was circulated.

7. Pearl Street Project

The Pearl Street project is in the final stages of award. The project was recognized as a great cooperative effort, especially between the Village Engineer (Hamlin) and VTrans (Ande DeForge).

**VII. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS**

None.

**VIII. CONSENT AGENDA & READING FILE**

**MOTION by Deb Billado, SECOND by John Lajza, to approve the consent agenda as follows and with the addition of the memo from Julie Potter, CCMPO, dated 5/24/10, regarding revisions to the All Hazards Mitigation Plan and emails from Chris Chiquoine, dated 5/24/10, regarding the noise waiver process:**

- 1. Approve Minutes (5/4/10)**
- 2. Approval Warrants**
- 3. Reading List Acceptance (Letters & Communications)**
  - **Letters from Essex Police & CVE re: Pearl St. Multimodal Plan**
  - **Planning Commission Minutes 5/6/10**
  - **Articles in Champlain Business Journal re: Essex Jct. businesses**
  - **Invitation to Leadership Champlain Group Presentation, 6/8/10**

**VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by John Lajza, that the Board of Trustees go into Executive Session to consider legal matters, contract negotiations and**

personnel matters, and potential budget changes related to personnel issues where premature general public knowledge would clearly place the Village at a substantial disadvantage, and to invite the Village Manager, Dave Crawford, and the Management Assistant, Sawyer Joecks, to attend. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:05 PM.

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

Executive Session was adjourned and the regular meeting reconvened at 9:29 PM.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

*RScty: M.E.Riordan*