

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
July 26, 2011**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** George Tyler, Dan Kerin, Lori Houghton, John Lajza.  
**ADMINISTRATION:** Dave Crawford, Village Manager; Jonathan Williams, Management Assistant.  
**OTHERS PRESENT:** Diane Clemens, Nick Meyer, Jaye O'Connell, Susanna Olsen, Jason Starr, Kevin Collins.

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**I. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**II. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

Add under "Old Business":

- Circumferential highway alternatives.

Add under "Manager's Report":

- Information on the crescent connector and brief on projects from the Management Assistant.

**III. GUESTS AND PRESENTATION**

1. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

There were no comments from the public.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Discuss Trustee Replacement Process

Following discussion the Trustees agreed the deadline for receipt of letters of interest for the vacant position on the Board of Trustees should not be extended. The following potential interview questions were drafted:

1. Would you change the annual meeting format by voting the budget by Australian ballot, for example?
2. South Burlington has initiated a moratorium on development. Should the village limit in-fill and higher density development? Should the village limit and direct growth?
3. What do you feel should be the priorities of the Board of Trustees? What do you feel is the Number 1 priority to be addressed and how would you propose accomplishing that priority?
4. What is your response with regard to the tax equity issue between the village and town?
5. In times of a tight budget would you expand, repair, fix municipal infrastructure due to a competitive bid environment or tighten the budget?
6. What are your thoughts on the process and outcome of the Pearl Street improvements?

7. What is driving you to apply for the Trustee position now when elections were just held?

2. Update/Possible Action on Circumferential Highway Alternative Projects

Dave Crawford reviewed maps showing proposed projects as alternatives to the circumferential highway to be discussed at the meeting on 7/28/11. Selected projects will be added to the Governor's budget to be sent to the legislature. The state will only support projects that are specific alternatives to the circumferential highway, not bike paths and such. Dan Kerin commented some of the projects on the list appear not to be true alternatives to the circumferential highway and traffic alleviation. Dave Crawford pointed out 30,000 cars go through the five corners intersection daily. The projects on the list provide alternatives for the drivers.

In the village the land must be surveyed for the crescent connector to determine boundaries, owners, easements (cost is approximately \$100,000). The cost of the entire roadway is approximately \$5 million. Federal and state funding will be sought.

The consensus of the Trustees is to support the projects for the village and those in other towns influencing the village. John Lajza noted there is concern by all the communities that the circumferential highway still needs to be built to address traffic, and there is willingness to continue to pursue the project. It was observed that the crescent connector shows that even with the circumferential highway there is still a traffic problem in the community.

3. Discuss Questions for Public at August 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting

The Trustees will list action items and projects in process and invite comment from the public at the August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting to be held at Maple Street Park (start time is 5:30 PM). "Hot items" include the crescent connector, voting the budget by Australian paper ballot, tax equity between the village and town, downtown development projects, and the property maintenance ordinance. The public will be asked to rank the items on the list. The meeting on August 16<sup>th</sup> and discussion items will be advertised on the village website, Front Porch Forum, Facebook, in the local newspaper and on posters at Maple Street Park.

4. Discuss Property Maintenance and Vacant Building Control

There was discussion of the draft ordinance for vacant structures that pose a health or safety issue as well as blight on the village. The ordinance includes fines ranging from \$1,000 up to \$10,000. A three member committee appointed by the Board of Trustees will hear complaints and recommend action to the Trustees. There was discussion of having a citizen committee and agreement if the language of the ordinance is clear and succinct then there is no need for a citizen committee. Following further discussion there was agreement the committee should include a member of the Planning Commission, Board of Trustees, and staff.

Diane Clemens and Nick Meyer, members of the Village Planning Commission discussed the difference between regulation via the Land Development Code and ordinance.

Development issues or violations of a building permit are typically handled by the Code. Vacant structures/dangerous buildings are handled by municipal ordinance. The case against the violator must be supportable by the law. There was discussion of buildings in disrepair because the owner cannot or will not do necessary maintenance and vacant or abandoned buildings in the village. Nick Meyer mentioned a rental inspection program would help counter landlords who maintain their property in a state of disrepair. Enforcement is key.

Next steps with the ordinance include drafting language to handle vacant and abandoned structures. An update will be provided to the Trustees in September, 2011.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Set FY12 Tax Rate**

Dave Crawford pointed out the estimated tax rate at the village annual meeting was \$.2437 and the actual rate is \$.2432.

**MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by John Lajza, to set the village tax rate for FY12 at \$.2432. VOTING: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.**

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

The Trustees received a memo on items in the Manager's Report.

### **1. Meeting Schedule**

- August 2 – Interviews for Board of Trustees vacancy
- August 9 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- August 16 @ 5:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting (Maple Street Park)
- September 13 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- September 27 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- October 11 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- October 25 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- November 8 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- November 22 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- December 13 @ 6:30 - Regular Trustees Meeting
- December 27 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting

#### **Special Meetings/Events:**

- October 6 – VLCT Town Fair, Killington
- December 7 – Light the Village Celebration and Train Hop

### **2. Project Updates per Memo from Jonathan Williams, dated 7/26/11**

Jonathan Williams, Management Assistant, provided a brief update on the progress of projects including the Orton Foundation Heart and Soul Grant, generator grant, camera installation at the bus/train station, and a grant for sidewalks on Lincoln Street.

### **3. Ladder Truck**

The purchase of a ladder truck is a future agenda item for the Trustees and Essex Selectboard.

4. Main Street Paving

Paving work on Main Street will begin 7/28/11 at 5 AM at the railroad tracks.

5. Anonymous Comment on Sandwich Board

Staff is investigating the matter.

6. Ground Bees

The village will share in the cost to eradicate a nest of ground bees by the Unsworth property because the farmers market is in the area.

**VII. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS**

George Tyler reported on the meeting to decrease suspicious activity by the Amtrak train station. There is a reduction of activity due to increased surveillance. Security cameras and signs have been installed and should also help. Essex Community Justice Center will make graffiti and vandalism reparation part of an offender's retribution. There has been discussion of moving the police officer crossing guard to the train station after school rather than at the five corners intersection.

**VIII. CONSENT AGENDA & READING FILE**

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Lori Houghton, to approve the consent agenda as presented below:**

1. Approve Minutes of Previous Meetings (BCA 6/28/11)
2. Approve Warrants
3. Approve FY11 Audit Agreement
4. Approve and Sign Proclamation of Champlain Valley Fair Day 8/27/11
5. Approve and Sign F-35 Resolution
6. Reading List Acceptance (Letters & Communications)
  - VLCT Town Fair Information and Registration 10/6/11

**VOTING: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.**

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION and/or ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Dan Kerin, to adjourn the meeting.**

**VOTING: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM.

*RScty: M.E.Riordan*