

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
October 25, 2011**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** George Tyler (Village President); Dan Kerin, Mary Morris, Lori Houghton, John Lajza.  
**ADMINISTRATION:** Dave Crawford, Village Manager.  
**OTHERS PRESENT:** Elaine Sopchak, Roberta Penchina, Elizabeth Villa, Linda Waite-Simpson, Bridget Meyer.

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

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

**II. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

Additions to the agenda:

- Letter from Village President to Ray LaHood, Federal Department of Transportation, regarding TIGER III application (New England Gateway Project).
- Memo from Village Manager regarding suggested motions.
- Information for inclusion in the Manager's Report.

**III. GUESTS AND PRESENTATION**

1. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

There were no comments from the public in attendance.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Update on Circ Alternatives/Crescent Connector

- The CCMPO Circ Alternative Task Force process will continue with some caveats.
- Crescent Connector is one of the high rated projects in the program.
- The process is not complete; there could be some revision.
- Next meeting is November 10, 2011 to decide the projects to forward to VTrans.
- The list of projects submitted to the task force includes improvement and upgrade at the intersection of 2-89/Route 2A, Severance Corners work, and Exit 16 remake. Paving Class 1 roads has a low rating, but is on the short list. The railroad branch line (increase weight and speed limit from Essex Jct. to Burlington) is on the short list.
- Choices will be based on funding alternatives including federal funding.
- Tropical Storm Irene had tremendous impact on the state (\$1 billion). FEMA reimbursement is capped at \$100 million per incident. The state does not want to lose momentum, but there is uncertainty about funding.
- Final list of projects must be on the Governor's desk by December 1<sup>st</sup>.

2. Update on Village Haven Issue

George Tyler summarized the following:

- Residents of Loubier Drive have the impression they could appeal to the Board of Trustees to reinstate access (curb cut) to their backyards.
- Legal opinion is the Planning Commission decision is final and not subject to Board of Trustees revision. The Land Development Code authorizes the Trustees to modify curb cut approvals per Section 509 and Section 705. There is no authority for the Trustees to take action with regard to the road under discussion.
- The developer is presently working through getting the approvals so the road can be turned over to the village, but the developer can also decide to keep the road private.
- When the road is turned over to the village and becomes a public road, residents can approach the Trustees for access to their backyards.
- The legal opinion can be forwarded to those who signed the petition if and when the road becomes public.

Ed Payne, Loubier Drive, recalled the agreement with Brad Dousevicz for access and that when the cedar trees were planted Mr. Dousevicz was shown five areas to keep open which was done. The access points were used until the “close the gaps” request from the village and then Mr. Dousevicz was forced to plant additional cedars that blocked the access points. Mr. Payne questioned how the village can ask the developer to plant the trees and close the gaps if the street is private, noting that by removing just five trees the needed access for residents would be provided. Dave Crawford explained the Public Works Director and Development Director determined what was needed in order for the road to be accepted by the village (which included planting more trees). The cedars were planted in anticipation of turning the road over to the village. Mr. Payne stated the original plan said hardwoods planted at 40’ spacing. Cedar hedges were not mentioned until the developer said he would plant hedges to hide the fence, and that is when the residents requested the openings.

Following further discussion the Trustees wanted the Planning Commission to confirm the original plan was followed with the development. George Tyler commented the request by the residents is for gaps in the cedar trees and not for a curb cut. Staff will further research the matter.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Report on Annual Meeting Attendance**

Elaine Sopchak reviewed suggestions drafted by the advisory committee to try to increase attendance at the village’s annual meeting, such as:

- Reinstating the potluck dinner
- Offering free childcare
- Providing free transportation for senior citizens
- Doing more advertising and newspaper articles
- Having weekly questions/answers in the newspaper
- Providing more engaging meeting materials
- Having a consistent theme across department reports that make up the annual report

- Engaging schools in civic lessons (review the history of annual meetings and the village and town; have students attend the meeting with their parents)
- Coordinating with other events/activities, such as picking up Girl Scout cookie orders, presenting awards and recognition to citizen volunteers, and others
- Using social media
- Providing follow up information after the meeting (answers to questions, results of surveys, and such)

Next steps include choosing some readily achievable items and formulating a plan of action. Bridget Meyer mentioned urging friends and neighbors to attend the annual meeting. One suggestion is to open the floor to general discussion of topics chosen by attendees following conclusion of business at the annual meeting.

## 2. Discussion/Action on Health Insurance

Dave Crawford reported there are two health insurance plans that are recommended following research by staff. The plans closely match what the village currently offers. The village premium will be 2% higher. The deductible is higher. The recommendation includes the village paying 85% of the deductible. The cost paid by the employee will increase for family, two-person, and single subscriber plans. The increase to the village for health insurance coverage will be 9.7% rather than 15% budgeted in FY12. Staff feels there is obligation to keep within the parameters of not making the matter a negotiation issue with the Employee Association. The matter can be further discussed in Executive Session.

**MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by John Lajza, to go into Executive Session to discuss the employee health benefit package. VOTING: prior to the vote the motion was withdrawn to complete regular meeting business before convening Executive Session.**

## 3. Discussion/Action on E-Mail Project

Dave Crawford explained the proposed system will electronically archive, sort, and search information as well as support email in-house (on the village server). The difference in cost between Option 1 and Option 2 is a firewall that needs to be in place if the system will be accessed by the public. A new server is not included in the cost estimate. The expense is considered a capital expense until the system is operational and then the expense becomes an administrative expense. Dave Crawford stated there are indications from the state that there are retention policies that are needed, and the village needs to create this. The subject matter, not the media, controls the retention.

George Tyler asked if there were any incidents that required a search of emails. Dave Crawford said a request was received, but after agreement with the requestor not carried out. Lori Houghton asked what other towns do and the system they use. Dave Crawford stated most have a full time staff person handling the work. The village is behind in its electronics capacity. Department heads have complained about the coordination of computers.

There was continued discussion of the proposed system and the cost (\$12,000). The Trustees wanted more clarification before authorizing the expenditure. The Trustees do support a new server if staff needs more server capacity. There was mention of creating a policy on retention of information and then determining the needed infrastructure. Mary Morris stated email is too narrow a focus. The Trustees need to look at right-to-know and records retention requirements, but also need information on the capability of the current infrastructure, the complaints received, who maintains the system, and costs. In order to plan properly a long range and mid range plan for IT infrastructure that includes the email component is needed. George Tyler noted staff can have search capability for little cost. It may be prudent to wait until a policy is set by the state on retention before taking action. Lori Houghton suggested collaborating with the town, especially if there is IT staff with the town. Dan Kerin added VLCT and the state may offer assistance as well. John Lajza urged examining the matter thoroughly. The cost may be nominal for the capabilities provided.

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

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

### **1. Meeting Schedule**

- November 8 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- December 5 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- December 13 @ 6:30 - Regular Trustees Meeting
- December 27 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- January 10 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- January 24 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- February 14 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- February 28 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- March 13 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- March 27 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- April 10 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- April 24 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting

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

- December 7 – Light the Village Celebration and Train Hop
- December 13 – Budget Day
- March 7 – Special Meeting with Prudential Committee
- April 4 – Village Annual Meeting
- April 10 – Australian Ballot Voting

### **2. Jonathan Williams Resignation**

Jonathan Williams is taking a position with VLCT and resigning his position with the village as Management Assistant.

## **VII. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS**

- George Tyler reported the ordinances pertaining to chickens, buildings, and noxious weeds are ready for review by the Trustees and public hearing. Staff will forward the draft ordinances to the Trustees prior to the 12/5/11 meeting and a public hearing will be scheduled after that meeting.
- Lori Houghton suggested a citizen committee be formed and charged with reviewing how the village generates revenue and gathering ideas.

#### **VIII. CONSENT AGENDA & READING FILE**

**MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by John Lajza, to approve the consent agenda as presented:**

- 1. Minutes of Previous Meetings (9/27/11 & 10/11/11)**
- 2. Approve Warrants**
- 3. Sign Resolution for Municipal Planning Grant to Update Comprehensive Plan**
- 4. Approve Banner Application for Vermont International Festival 12/2-12/4/11**
- 5. Reading List Acceptance (Letters & Communications)**
  - **Planning Commission Minutes 10/6/11**
  - **CCRPC Annual Report**
  - **Water Quality Door Notices**

**VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.**

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

**MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by John Lajza, that the Board of Trustees go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters, specifically Employee Association negotiation preparation, real estate issues, and change in health plans and ramification on negotiations where premature general public knowledge would place the village at a substantial disadvantage, and to invite the Village Manager to attend. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.**

Executive Session was convened at 9:10 PM. The regular meeting reconvened at 10:12 PM.

**MOTION was made and SECONDED to approve the health plans as proposed and to ask the Manager for more information regarding cost sharing of the deductibles for the next meeting on November 8, 2011.**

**VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.**

The regular meeting was adjourned at 10:15 PM.

*RScty: M.E.Riordan*