

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 24, 2012**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: George Tyler (Village President); Dan Kerin, Mary Morris, Lori Houghton, John Lajza.
ADMINISTRATION: Dave Crawford, Village Manager; Lauren Morrisseau, Finance Director.
OTHERS PRESENT: Jack Behlendorf, George Dunbar, III, Diane Clemens, Nick and Bridget Meyer, Jason Starr (Essex Reporter).

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:

- Action on Lincoln Street sidewalk
- Flood Insurance information
- Information to be added to the Manager's Report
- Revised Management Assistant position description
- Capital plan update
- Revised proposal for use of the Land Acquisition Fund
- Information on the Amtrak station project

III. GUESTS AND PRESENTATION

1. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

Jack Behlendorf, 18 Aspen Drive, acknowledged the effort by staff and the Board of Trustees in developing the budget for the good of the citizens of Essex Junction. Mr. Behlendorf who is chairman of the U46 School Board spoke of working collaboratively on items of common interest.

2. Public Hearing: FY13 Proposed Budgets

The public hearing was opened at 6:35 PM. George Tyler announced the proposed FY13 budget is \$3,358,874 and noted the following:

- \$40,000 of the \$90,000 increase is fund transfers specifically for the ladder truck;
- \$24,000 increase is to convert a part-time Management Assistant position to full time;
- \$15,000 increase in the Street Dept. is for capital outlay and rental;
- \$18,000 is inflationary increases and salary/benefit change across departments.

There was discussion of the Management Assistant position. Responsibilities include working with community volunteers to help increase the quality of life in the village and bring more people to the downtown area, communications, and writing grants. To date

the position has been filled with interns (UVM graduate program) so there is transition each year which will likely be eliminated by creating a full time permanent position. There was agreement the job description for the position must be clear to ensure the work is focused on the strategic goals of the Trustees and the village. Lori Houghton said she does not see the additional value of going to a full time position at this time. Much has been accomplished with the position being part-time. John Lajza pointed out grant writing requires a lot of time as do the other responsibilities. Mary Morris suggested leaving the position part-time with the opportunity to rework expectations and build up to a solid position with more focus on what is expected. Dan Kerin concurred. There was discussion of increasing the budget slightly to allow more hours (increase from 25 hours to 35 hours). The Finance Manager will adjust the budget to reflect the position with 30 hours. Presently the position is funded out of the economic development line item.

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Mary Morris, to maintain the Management Assistant position as part-time and continue to work on the job description in the course of the year. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

George Dunbar, III, made the following comments/observations:

- The base number for the budget is good.
- An explanation of the use of the Land Acquisition Fund (\$420,000) is requested. George Tyler explained the plan is to transfer \$320,000 to capital reserves to be used for capital projects in the village and rolling stock, and to leave \$100,000 in the Land Acquisition Fund. The Trustees would have discretion to use up to \$25,000 of the \$100,000 toward the purchase of land without first getting voter approval. In the past to decrease impact on the village budget the annual contribution to the Land Acquisition Fund has not been fully funded. This year only \$15,000 will be put into the fund. George Dunbar suggested the money could be used for distressed properties.
- A revised capital plan showing everything that is being pulled in should be brought forward to the voters. Mr. Tyler stated a capital project committee is to be formed to review the capital projects in the village, set priorities and make recommendations.
- The paving budget shows an increase from 5% to 22%. Dave Crawford explained the village is behind in paving Class 2 and 3 roads. If all the money needed for paving is put in the budget there would be a deficit. Continued delay of retreatment of the roads will result in rebuilding the roadbeds which is very expensive.
- The budget as a reflection of priorities and the priorities that are being stated are infrastructure and repairs yet there are increases in personnel costs in all areas except the Street Dept. Dave Crawford explained there is an open position in the Street Dept. and a portion of the funding for salary and benefits was allocated to the contract for winter maintenance. Workers in the Street Dept. typically take vacations in the summer so some summer work hours are lost. Lauren Morrisseau clarified the entry level full time position is being held open and a portion of the funding for the position will be spent this year in the contract services area. The

cost in part time hours has increased because there is a part-time worker in the department.

Diane Clemens made the following comments/observations:

- It appears her street is no longer on the paving list, but the street has not been paved and is in very bad shape.
- Confirm that the voters will approve the transfer of money from the Land Acquisition Fund. George Tyler assured the voters must approve the transfer as well as the Trustees expending up to \$25,000 from the fund without prior voter approval should an opportunity arise.
- To moderate the tax impact and help keep the operational budget as is the IBM reduction in payment could be covered with money from the Land Acquisition Fund. John Lajza noted the Trustees did consider this, but felt it more prudent to use the money to catch up on infrastructure maintenance and repair.
- Sidewalks need more attention and cones should be set up at crosswalks to alert motorists to stop for pedestrians.
- The Planning Commission is updating the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance and is counting on planning grants (Building Healthy Communities) for the work, but the grant money is not reflected in the budget. George Tyler noted budget grants are listed in another section of the annual report, not as part of the budget. The village received an Orton grant which is like a community planning grant and it is hoped to provide some of that function. The schedule for updating the comprehensive plan is being pushed out to work with the Orton process. Update of the zoning bylaws and incorporating the interim flood regulations will not be nearly as comprehensive and expensive as the major rewrite was. There will be some advertising and legal costs.
- The Management Assistant position should remain part-time. The position is an excellent way to train the interns. Turnover is fine because fresh viewpoints and energy are brought to the position.

Bridget Meyer made the following comments/observations:

- The Trustees are commended for their hard work at a thankless job.
- The capital committee idea is good and should expand to do more in the realm of economic development. Groups could meet and report to the Board of Trustees occasionally. Ms. Meyer said she will submit ideas and incentives for the groups. Getting more public involved may mean more ready support for the capital items.
- Improving the infrastructure in the village and Public Works is good because if the sidewalks are lost then walkability in the village is lost. John Lajza noted capital project costs have increased so the contribution may need to be increased. Lauren Morrisseau stated the contribution increased from one cent on the tax rate to 3.7 cents. Money for the capital fund is transferred from the general fund.

Nick Meyer made the following comments/observations:

- The logic of addressing streets and sidewalks to maintain the walkability of the community is understandable. Lauren Morrisseau stated there is \$372,000 in the budget not including the transfer from the Land Acquisition Fund.

George Tyler noted the Essex Town budget is proposed to increase 3.5% which impacts the village taxpayer. The village tax is proposed to increase 2.15%. There were no further comments. The public hearing was closed at 7:42 PM.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Continued Discussion of FY13 Proposed Budget

Comments noted during the public hearing on the budget (see Item III.2 above).

2. Discussion of Grants for Lincoln Street Sidewalks and Lighting Improvements
Grants from CCRPC (\$118,640) and the State of Vermont (\$220,000) were received for the Lincoln Street sidewalk and lighting improvements. Local match to the CCRPC grant is \$29,660 and to the state grant is \$55,000. The match money is in the budget.

MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by John Lajza, to authorize the Village Manager to sign the documents to accept combining the two grants offered.

DISCUSSION: The Management Assistant will help facilitate the grants.

Nick Meyer urged providing the opportunity for public input and working with the Development Director on the design element.

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

3. Land Acquisition Fund

MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by John Lajza, to accept the language for distribution of the Land Acquisition Fund as noted in the staff memo, dated 1/24/12, with the amendment to Item #3 to delete “or Capital Equipment as in our Rolling Stock Fund. The Board needs to decide the amounts to go to each fund.” and to authorize the Village Manager to send the language to the Village Attorney for review and final approval. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of Interim Flood Hazard Area Regulations for NFIP

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Lori Houghton, that the Board of Trustees hereby adopt the Interim Inundation Hazard Area Regulations to enable the Village of Essex Junction to join the NFIP by resolution as a free-standing chapter under the interim adoption process 24 VSA Chapter 117 Section 4415 with the amendments requested. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

VI. VILLAGE MANAGER’S REPORT

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

1. Meeting Schedule

- January 31 @ 6:30 – Special 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:

- March 7 – Special Meeting with Prudential Committee
- April 4 – Village Annual Meeting
- April 10 – Australian Ballot Voting

2. Community Shelter Meeting

Mary Morris and George Tyler will attend the meeting on January 31, 2012 to discuss the issue of homeless people in the village and town (scope of the problem and available resources). Library staff is organizing the meeting.

3. Ladder Truck MOU

Legal opinions from both the town and village attorneys advise the transfer of funds from the town to the village is a legal transaction between the two entities and public involvement is not necessary. The public is involved indirectly via election of members to the Selectboard and Board of Trustees.

4. Railroad Crossing

New England Railroad has indicated that if the NECR process for design and installation of the railroad crossing for the crescent connector is followed (VTrans will approve the NECR design) and the village covers the cost then the crossing can be built.

5. Amtrak Station

A meeting with the UVM engineering students is scheduled on 1/30/12 to review the scope of the project. Two professional engineers (Rick Hamlin and Tim Dahl) have volunteered their time and expertise. The original construction plans for the train station (built in 1959) have been received.

6. Box Culvert Project at 81 Main Street

UVM engineering students will work on the culvert at 81 Main Street as a class project.

7. Thank You from Chris Gaboriault

Fire Chief Gaboriault sent a note of thanks to the Board for their support.

8. Radon Kits

A notice will be published in the newspaper announcing radon kits are available.

9. Annual Farm Show

CVE will host the annual farm show, a major agricultural event for the state.

VII. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS

- John Lajza reported CCRPC updated the TIP and included the following:
 - Funding for the crescent connector and the scoping study for Railroad Street,

- Scoping for the Pearl Street project from Post Office Square to the fire station,
- Path from Railroad Street to the high school.
- Dan Kerin reported a presentation on the police facility was given to the Essex Selectboard on 1/23/12. Two sites are under consideration (IBM on Maple Street and Ehlers on Route 15) for the LEED Silver facility.
- Lori Houghton urged public hearings on the town and village budgets should not be back to back because it is difficult for people to be out two consecutive nights.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA & READING FILE

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

- 1. Minutes of Meeting 1/10/12**
- 2. Approve Warrants**
- 3. Reading List Acceptance (Letters & Communications)**
 - **VLCT Local Government Day 2/15/12**
 - **VLCT Town Meeting Tune Up 2/22/12**

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

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION and/or ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by John Lajza, to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and contract negotiations where premature public knowledge would place the village at a substantial disadvantage, and to invite the Village Manager to attend. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

The regular meeting was adjourned and Executive Session convened at 8:30 PM.
Executive Session was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

RScty: M.E.Riordan