

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 27, 2015**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Dan Kerin, Andrew Brown, Elaine Sopchak, Lori Houghton. (George Tyler was absent.)
ADMINISTRATION: Pat Scheidel, Municipal Manager; Lauren Morrissette, Assistant Manager & Finance Director.
OTHERS PRESENT None.

1. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Additions to Manager's Report:

- Thoughts on potential areas for cost savings with consolidation of services.
- Questions and answers on highway service, 81 Main Street and administrative services.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

MOTION by Andrew Brown, SECOND by Elaine Sopchak, to approve the agenda as amended. VOTING: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.

4. GUESTS, PRESENTATIONS, PUBLIC HEARINGS

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

2. Adjustment to the FY2016 Water Fund Budget

Lauren Morrissette explained the adjustments to the Water Fund budget to reflect the wholesale rate by Champlain Water District (3.4% increase) and an increase in the state water supply fee (13%).

3. Public Hearing: FY2016 Proposed Budget

The public hearing was opened at 6:35 PM. Lauren Morrissette highlighted the following in the FY2016 proposed budget:

- The General Fund excluding debt service shows an increase of \$107,139 (3.1% increase over the FY2015 budget). Debt service shows an increase of \$154,814 (225.6% increase over FY2015 budget). Total dollar increase is \$261,953.
- General Fund and debt service for FY2016 is \$3,799,390 (increase of 7.4% from the FY2015 budget).
- Increases to the budget are attributed to salaries, vehicle maintenance, winter maintenance (salt), right-of-way leases, contribution to capital funds, health/other insurance, and miscellaneous other increases. Storm water expenses of \$42,500 were moved to the town.

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- Challenges with the budget include contributions to the capital and rolling stock funds, right-of-way lease for the multi-use safety path, salt and vehicle maintenance costs, and increase in costs for uniforms, pagers, overtime, and merit pay in the Employees Association agreement.
 - Water Fund for FY2016 is \$3,393,933 (increase of 5.3%).
 - Wastewater Fund for FY2016 is \$1,834,060 (increase of 2.0%).
 - Sanitation Fund of \$456,147 is 1.5% lower than the FY2015 budget amount.
 - Challenges with the enterprise funds (water, waste water, sanitation) include estimating costs, waste water treatment plant bond payment, and water meter replacement. Water, waste water, and sanitation rates for the average user show an increase of 2.4% from FY2015 rates. Capital projects include water meter upgrades, manhole rehab, and the water line on North Hillcrest.
 - Capital funds include reserve funds, bonded projects, rolling stock, water, wastewater, and sanitation capital funds. The total proposed spending for capital funds is \$8,675,933.
 - Capital reserve projects include the Railroad Ave. water line and roadway, carpet in Brownell Library, restoration work on Lincoln Hall, paving, crescent connector road, and the Pearl Street sidewalk link. Total capital project cost is \$6.3 million less grant funding of \$5.8 million for a cost to the village of \$454,417.
 - Bonded projects for FY2016 totaling \$1.7 million include Maple Street drainage pipe, Briar Lane reconstruction, water line and sidewalk, Hillcrest drainage and North Hillcrest water and drainage. The cost of the bonds to village taxpayers with a home of \$280,000 assessed value was \$17.92 in Year One (FY2015) and \$57.96 in Year Two (FY2016) then decreasing each year thereafter.
 - Purchase of a diesel dump truck is budgeted for \$144,000.
 - Tax appropriation is decreasing because the town will be funding the highway budget. The result is a decrease in the village tax rate of 15.6% (.2830 cents in FY2015 to .2388 cents in FY2016). The town rate will increase 16.6% from .4034 cents in FY2015 to .4703 cents in FY2016. The net change to the village/town municipal taxes for a village resident is \$63 or 3.3%.
 - Cost saving initiatives include combining services (tax billing, highway, finance), delay in filling a full time position in the Street Dept., and seeking grants.
 - In FY2015, Village municipal tax is 12% of the tax pie (town is 18%, school is 67%, parks & recreation is 3%).

Pat Scheidel suggested the Trustees hear a presentation from Max Levy on the town budget at the February 10, 2015 meeting. The budget is positive for both the town and village and should continue to improve as large cost centers level out. The village budget shows an increase, but villagers will only be paying once for public works services. Mr. Scheidel said he is confident there will be savings realized in the future and though at this point in time the savings cannot be pinpointed exactly, the governing boards and administration have a fiduciary responsibility to the present and future.

There were no further comments. The public hearing was closed at 7 PM.

5. OLD BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

1. Letter of Support for Bike-Walk Advisory Committee

MOTION by Lori Houghton, SECOND by Andrew Brown, to authorize Dan Kerin as acting Village President to sign the letter of support for the Bicycle Friendly Community application as drafted. VOTING: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.

Lori Houghton mentioned the need to educate motorists that the village is a pedestrian friendly community and drivers need to stop per state law for pedestrians in crosswalks. Ms. Houghton suggested cones or signs noting fines and reminding drivers of the law could be posted. Other ideas discussed included flashing beacons and flags at crosswalks for pedestrians to wave when crossing the road. Staff will investigate the matter.

2. Annual Report Dedication and Cover

MOTION by Elaine Sopchak, SECOND by Lori Houghton, to approve the dedication to Willis Racht and cover of the village annual report for 2014 as presented. VOTING: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.

7. VILLAGE MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Meeting Schedule

- February 10, 2015 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- February 24, 2015 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- March 10, 2015 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- March 24, 2015 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- April 14, 2015 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- April 28, 2015 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting

Special Meetings/Events:

- April 1, 2015 @ 6 PM – Village Community Supper
- April 1, 2015 @ 7 PM – Village Annual Meeting
- April 14, 2015 – Australian Ballot Voting

2. Personnel Report

- Larry St. Peter is resigning as of February 6, 2015 to work for the Town of Colchester.
- Recruitment and selection profile for the Library Director position is published and resumes have been received. The interview process will begin to fill the position by July 1, 2015.

3. Information on Potential Areas of Cost Saving and Q&A on Consolidated Services
The information is posted on the town webpage and available to the public.

4. Budget Presentation

Max Levy will do a presentation on the town budget at the Trustees meeting on 2/10/15.

5. Whitcomb II Discussion on the 57 Acres

The Trustees can remove the item from the table at the next meeting to ask and answer any questions.

8. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS & READING FILE

1. Board Member Comments

- Lori Houghton requested that the minutes from the Essex Economic Development Committee be provided to the Trustees.
- Andrew Brown suggested Greg Morgan be invited to present a recap of activities by the Economic Development Committee to the Trustees.
- Andrew Brown mentioned the reply by Robin Pierce on the Essex Group Facebook page regarding potholes and road condition in the village and suggested there be follow up with plans for pothole repair long term.
- Elaine Sopchak requested an update on the status of the business liaison group be given.
- Elaine Sopchak reported on the visit to the Statehouse by the economic development group to watch the legislature in action. Greg Morgan and Max Levy did a great job testifying before the House Commerce Committee on economic development issues.
- Dan Kerin reported the recent outreach meeting on consolidation of services held at the First Congregational Church went well.
- Dan Kerin reported the Principal at the Educational Center is receptive to the idea of having students do a mural on the plywood boards that will surround the site at 4 Pearl Street during construction. Mr. Kerin will further discuss the idea with the developer.

2. Reading File

- Minutes
 - Tree Advisory Committee 1/20/15

9. CONSENT AGENDA & READING FILE

MOTION by Andrew Brown, SECOND by Elaine Sopchak, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

1. **Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting 1/13/15**
2. **Approve Warrants Check #10050760 to Check #10050826 totaling \$434,637.21.**

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

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Andrew Brown, SECOND by Lori Houghton, to adjourn the meeting.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.