



TRUSTEES MEETING NOTICE & AGENDA
TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2017 at 6:30 PM
LINCOLN HALL MEETING ROOM, 2 LINCOLN STREET

1. **CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG** [6:30 PM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **APPROVE AGENDA**
4. **GUESTS, PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS**
 - a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
5. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - a. Update on Pearl Street Link Project and Crescent Connector/Parking – Robin Pierce
6. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. Bid Award for Hillcrest Road/Prospect Street Sidewalk Project – Lauren Morrisseau
7. **MANAGER’S REPORT**
 - a. Trustees meeting schedule
8. **TRUSTEES’ COMMENTS & CONCERNS/READING FILE**
 - a. Board Member Comments
 - b. Minutes from Other Boards/Committees:
 - Planning Commission 3/16/17
 - Capital Program Review Committee 4/4/17
 - c. Press Release re: Paving of Class One Roads by the VT Agency of Transportation
 - d. Memo from CCPRC re: Public Hearing Notice to Review FYE 2018 UPWP and Public Participation Plan Amendments 5/17/17
9. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 - a. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting 3/28/17
 - b. Expense Warrant #17038 dated 3/30/17 in the amount of \$62,604.49
 - c. Expense Warrant #17039 dated 4/7/17 in the amount of \$113,359.62
 - d. Approve Accounts Receivable Abatement for WWTF
10. **JOINT MEETING WITH ESSEX SELECTBOARD – 7:30 PM**
 - a. Discussion of whether to continue the shared Municipal Manager arrangement and how to proceed with Manager recruitment.
11. **ADJOURN**

Meetings of the Trustees are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Village Manager’s office at 878-6944.

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
April 11, 2017**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: George Tyler (Village President); Elaine Sopchak, Andrew Brown, Dan Kerin, Lori Houghton [via telephone].

ESSEX SELECTBOARD: Max Levy, Mike Plageman, Andy Watts, Sue Cook, Irene Wrenner.

ADMINISTRATION: Pat Scheidel, Municipal Manager; Lauren Morrisseau, Finance Director/Assistant Manager; Doug Fisher, Director of Administrative Services; Greg Duggan, Assistant Town Manager/Planner.

OTHERS PRESENT: Mary Jo Engel, Kevin Collins, Marla Durham, Sharon Kelley, Darryl Stultz, John Sheppard, Barbara Higgins, Paula DeMichele, Colin Flanders (Essex Reporter).

1. 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.

2. AGENDA CHANGES/APPROVAL

Add to New Business: Memo on Bid Award for Hillcrest/Prospect Street Sidewalk Project.

MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Elaine Sopchak, to approve the agenda as amended. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

3. GUESTS, PRESENTATIONS, PUBLIC HEARINGS

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

4. OLD BUSINESS

1. Update on Pearl Street Link Project & Crescent Connector/Parking
Pearl Street Link Project

Robin Pierce reported the bid for the Pearl Street Link project should be to the Trustees by April 25, 2017 for approval. The work will start thereafter. It is hoped to complete the project by the end of August. Signs will be posted and regular updates given on the village website to communicate information on the project to the public.

Crescent Connector

Robin Pierce stated effort continues to get the signaling information from the railroad. The appraiser has looked at the site. The village is discussing with the railroad the potential of buying the land rather than leasing the land. Upgrade of streetlights to match the streetlamps in the village will be at the village's expense. It is not likely the crescent connector project will start this summer.

George Tyler noted the owners of property to the west of the rail line have included the crescent connector in the plans for their property.

Parking Lot behind Road ResQ

Robin Pierce reported the estimated cost for improvements to the parking lot behind Road ResQ to make the lot more like a municipal parking lot for public use is \$5,000. Dan Kerin suggested using accrued funds from the penny set aside that was approved by the voters (a public hearing would have to be held on how the money will be used). Pat Scheidel mentioned that public funds are being used to improve private property. George Tyler recommended asking to spend \$10,000 rather than \$5,000, in case the parking lot estimate is too low and to allow for a cushion. Then if a lower amount is spent, the funds will remain. The board concurred with his recommendation.

The Trustees decided on two public hearings, on April 25 and May 9, regarding proposed uses of the one-cent economic development fund.

Robin Pierce said a map showing where public parking is located in the village is being done. Dan Kerin mentioned taking steps to prevent people from using the parking spaces like those behind Road ResQ for long term parking. Robin Pierce said signage can be posted to not allow overnight parking. Lori Houghton pointed out some local businesses/property owners allow after hours parking and that information should be included in the parking plan. Elaine Sopchak said we need a list of the parking signage in the village to determine if more or different signage is needed.

5. NEW BUSINESS

1. Bid Award for Hillcrest/Prospect Street Sidewalk Project

George Tyler said the estimate for the Hillcrest sidewalk project that was budgeted in the Capital Reserve Fund is higher than the bids received. The Trustees are not obligated to spend the amount estimated for the project. The savings could move other capital projects forward.

MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Elaine Sopchak, to award the bid for the Hillcrest/Prospect Street Sidewalk Project to Don Weston Excavating, Inc. for \$189,423.25. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

Robin Pierce mentioned Fred Kinney is willing to meet with the Trustees to discuss TIF funding. A meeting will be scheduled.

6. MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Meeting Schedule – Regular Trustees Meetings @ 6:30 PM

- April 25, 2017
- May 9, 2017
- May 23, 2017
- June 13, 2017
- June 27, 2017

- July 11, 2017
- July 25, 2017

- * May 27, 2017 @ 10 AM – Memorial Day Parade
- * July 4, 2017 @ 6 PM – July 4th Celebration at Maple St. Park
- * July 15, 2017 @ 4 PM – Block Party & Street Dance

2. Meetings

Meetings with staff and organizations are ongoing. The collective bargaining process is underway with the Employees Association.

7. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS & READING FILE

1. Board Member Comments

- Andrew Brown thanked staff for the successful annual meeting results.
- George Tyler said he will follow up with Robin Pierce on parking and signage. Consistent signage must be used.

2. Reading File

- Minutes:
 - Planning Commission 3/16/17
 - Capital Program Review Committee 4/4/17
- Press Release re: Paving of Class 1 Roads by VTrans
- Memo from CCRPC re: Public Hearing to Review FYE2018 UPWP and Participation Plan Amendments 5/17/17

8. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Andrew Brown, SECOND by Dan Kerin, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

1. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting(s), 3/28/17
2. Expense Warrant #17038, dated 3/30/17, in the amount of \$62,604.49.
3. Expense Warrant #17039, dated 4/7/17, in the amount of \$113,359.62.
4. Approve Accounts Receivable Abatement for WWTF.

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

MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by Elaine Sopchak, to recess the Board of Trustees meeting until 7:30 PM. VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

9. JOINT MEETING WITH ESSEX SELECTBOARD

The Trustees held a joint meeting with the Essex Selectboard to discuss continuing the municipal manager model and the recruitment process.

Continue with Municipal Manager Model

Doug Fisher distributed responses from town department heads to five questions about consolidation and the shared manager model. Mr. Fisher also distributed information on cost savings through FY17 with the unified manager since 2014 (\$236,000 for the town and \$392,000 for the village), with the finance department and clerk since 2015 (\$167,000 for the town and \$18,000 for the village), with storm water and public works

since 2016 (\$183,000 for the town and \$96,000 for the village). For FY18 and beyond, the savings per year for the unified manager is \$66,000 for the town and \$103,000 for the village, for finance and clerk is \$46,000 for the town and \$40,000 for the village, for storm water and public works is \$70,000 for the town and \$25,000 for the village. Total savings is \$182,000 for the town and \$168,000 for the village.

The following comments were made:

- George Tyler said the general sense is to move forward with consolidation.
- Max Levy spoke in support of continuing with consolidation, checking what is working and making adjustments. Having consolidated departments with a manager separate from the departments that are not consolidated does not seem workable.
- Andy Watts spoke about looking at what consolidation looks like in the end, and if some services cannot be combined then they remain separate. A governance model is needed for the departments not consolidated. The municipal manager would manage the consolidated pieces.
- Lori Houghton agreed with having a unified manager, noting there is strong support in the village for continued consolidation. The boards need to discuss governance and equal representation. This should be done before moving forward with more consolidation so everyone has equal representation which will not be the case if all departments are consolidated under the town. Also, there are unquantifiable benefits to having a shared manager such as communications between the two boards and opportunities for grants. Having a shared manager ensures the boards are working hand-in-hand.
- Elaine Sopchak agreed governance should be discussed as the first priority. The Trustees and the Selectboard need to be equally represented when making decisions. Regarding tax equity, it appears consolidation has resulted in efficiencies and savings for village residents and approximately 50% of the town. Work should continue on savings and efficiencies, and if consolidation becomes too difficult to achieve at some point then the effort to consolidate should stop because there may not be a savings going forward.
- Dan Kerin agreed the governance issue needs discussion including legal aspects and charter changes. The process will be lengthy and does not need to move fast.
- Sue Cook spoke in support of consolidation where it makes sense. An assessment to determine where consolidation makes sense is needed so results can be quantified. All should be on the same page with the meaning of consolidation which is a convergence of two municipalities into one. Equity of services needs to be ensured. The movement toward tax equity is a key tenet. The municipal manager should have one office with support staff in the two separate locations.
- Andrew Brown said he is in favor of continued consolidation in the areas that make sense and in a method that makes sense with services the same or better than today. There must be equity for both the village and town.
- Mike Plageman said governance is the issue at the top of the list. It is the duty of the boards to ensure every citizen has equal representation throughout the Essex community. Early consolidation efforts were the easiest to achieve, but now the more difficult areas must be handled and handled with thoughtful consideration

and discussion with a slow, methodical approach. Having dual managers managing what is consolidated is unworkable and unfair. Also, a different and better way to educate the public on the consolidation effort is needed. Rules on how to educate the public will be very important and must be fair, unbiased, not slanted, but just presenting the facts and letting the public decide.

- Irene Wrenner stated truthful communication means appointing boards that decide tricky issues in a manner where people feel they have representation. Appointment of committees must be thoughtful and intentional so there are equitable outcomes. There are departments best operated by the village separately which may not need a municipal manager for oversight. A charter change should not be made until all this is worked out. There are intangibles that need to be measured. Staff burnout is an issue. Not having full staffing just to say money is being saved is not good. Departments, like the fire departments, should not be pressured into becoming part of the consolidated organization, but can stay as separate teams and work together. Now that there are some metrics there can be checking and adjusting with the consolidation.

Process with Municipal Manager Model

The following comments were made:

- George Tyler said a process is needed to fill the municipal manager position because the village charter says the Trustees will appoint a manager. Perhaps the process for hiring and firing should be codified to avoid a situation where the Trustees and the Selectboard do not agree on the municipal manager.
- Irene Wrenner said a job description is needed and performance appraisals should be done on a regular basis which has not been the practice. Discussion of the municipal manager model can continue, but there should be representatives from outside the village involved and it must be acknowledged that an individual who wants to manage two sizable municipalities may not be found.
- Elaine Sopchak suggested doing a 360 evaluation of the manager that includes both boards. The municipal manager model is the way forward.
- Mike Plageman agreed regular performance reviews should be done and the search for a unified manager should continue. The model will work and there are candidates with the skill set that is needed.
- Andrew Brown said the unified manager model should continue with both boards evaluating the individual. Both boards need to have the same decision making power on hiring, evaluation, and firing. Presently the Trustees do not have the ability to enter into a contract with a manager, but can end the contract. The Selectboard can enter and end a contract and therefore can take away the municipal manager from the village. Going forward this cannot be the situation.
- Sue Cook said the model needs to be flexible and take what is working, add to it and eliminate what is not working. The model must satisfy all the needs. The candidate must be the best for both communities. A strong transition plan is also needed.
- Dan Kerin urged learning from the past, but looking to the future. The municipal manager needs to be someone who can adapt and accept change and move with the flow as the community changes and evolves. Regarding performance

evaluation of the manager, the staff is the best to provide information because they work with the manager every day. The manager needs to reach down to all employees not just department heads and listen to all input.

- Max Levy spoke in support of the shared manager model especially as the consolidation model moves forward, but this does not have to be codified. A memorandum of understanding could be done. The evaluation process needs to be included. Both boards working together to search and hire the special individual to be manager is the immediate focus.
- Lori Houghton stated the municipal manager and the process to hire should move forward.
- Andy Watts said the municipal manager model should be for management of consolidated services. “Guide to Recruiting a Municipal Manager”, dated June 8, 2015 and the April 2015 handbook for evaluation of a municipal manager are good resources that were previously provided to the Selectboard.
- Pat Scheidel recommended hiring a professional recruiter as the first step in the process to hire a municipal manager. The recruiter will help the two boards make decisions on the job description and performance evaluation, interview process, and contract terms. The recruiter will want the two board to be unanimous in their decisions. The process will take three to five months.

Conclusions

- The shared manager model will continue.
- A professional recruiter will be hired. The parameters must be defined (recruitment region, when the manager needs to be in place, etc.)

Pat Scheidel will forward to both boards a list of recruiting agencies and where ads for the recruiter should be placed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Lori Houghton, to adjourn the meeting.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

RScty: M.E.Riordan