

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
October 9, 2018**

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:** George Tyler (Village President), Andrew Brown, Lori Houghton, Dan Kerin, Elaine Sopchak

**ADMINISTRATION:** James Jutras, Water Quality Superintendent; Sarah Macy, Assistant Finance Director; Lauren Morrisseau, Assistant Manager and Village/Town Finance Director; LouAnn Pioli, Coordinator of the Essex Senior Center; Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Ally Vile, Director of Essex Recreation and Parks

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Laurel Ashley, Charlie Baker (Executive Director of CCRPC), Jeannine Cote, Anne-Marie Dennis, Rose Drost, Pauline Giancola, Michael S. Giancola, Anna Gravel, Bernardine Haslaon, Fran Hogan, Howard Hogan, Connie Marshall, Breda Ruthie, Jean Young, Irene Wrenner (Town of Essex Selectboard), Cathy Ainsworth (Recording Secretary)

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 ADDITIONS/ CHANGES**

Addition of *General Fund Capital Reserve Plan* spreadsheets for Agenda Item 6e

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

**MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Andrew Brown, to approve the agenda, amended to include the *General Fund Capital Reserve Plan* spreadsheets. Voting: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.**

4. **GUESTS, PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS**

a. **Comments from public on items not on the agenda.**

None

b. **Charlie Baker, Executive Director of Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), re: FYE 18 Annual Report**

Mr. Baker reviewed the CCRPC FYE 18 Annual Report with the Trustees. He noted that the Commission is made up of representatives from all of the municipalities who, collectively, pay dues of \$245,000. This is matched by federal and state grants. He pointed information about projects conducted over the past year with Essex Village, including local capital programs, water projects and regional activities. Mr. Baker clarified that the RFP process, for the Unified Work Program, is somewhat competitive but most projects are able to be funded. He said that Essex tends to ask for less funding than other municipalities who are the same size or larger. He stated that there would be no negative impact on the number of projects funded if the Town and Village unified. He suggested that Essex make greater monetary asks, commending them on the effective needs analysis processes conducted by Essex administrators.

Mr. Tyler wondered if the commission could forecast any increases or decreases in funding from the Federal Government. Mr. Baker said that there have been no cuts but some increases in Federal funding, and that the Circ. Highway Alternative projects are in the legislature's budget for committed funding toward capital projects. Mr. Tyler praised the CCRPC's Economics of Housing meeting he attended for being very informative and helpful and Mr. Baker said there is a Housing Trust Fund session scheduled for October 20<sup>th</sup>.

## 5. **OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Discuss Senior Center Growth and Needs**

Ally Vile, Director of Parks and Recreation and Lou Ann Pioli, Coordinator of the Senior Center, shared an analysis of the Town of Essex center's history, growth and future needs, compiled by request of the Trustees. They discussed the Center's attendance and Mr. Tyler noted that the number of people served, currently 303, has tripled in three years. They pointed out that their Senior Van Service is the only one offered in VT, free to residents. They said that seniors are attracted to Essex because of local senior housing, the opportunity for free, senior transportation and the opportunities provided by the Senior Center.

Mr. Tyler asked Ms. Vile and Ms. Pioli to share the Senior Center's biggest needs and areas for growth/ expansion. They said greater space, more day trips, increased kitchen space, increased meal offerings, more parking and evening van use would make a big difference. The biggest need they identified was for more staffing to offer evening programs and to assist Ms. Pioli in Coordination activities. Currently Ms. Pioli is supported by volunteers who serve hundreds of hours to assist in many of these tasks.

Ms. Houghton asked for clarification on how the van services are managed. Ms. Vile said paid van operators are supported by call center volunteers and the whole program is supervised primarily by Ms. Pioli. She and Ms. Pioli provided details about the application process for new riders and processes to reimburse drivers through multiple departments, based on which events the van is being used for.

Ms. Houghton asked for clarification of how Essex Parks and Recreation (EPR), Essex Junction Recreation and Parks (EJRP) and the Senior Center are interconnected or differ in their offerings to seniors. Ms. Vile and Ms. Pioli described interagency collaboration and movement toward their goal of shared registration policies, ages, rates, and registration software. They detailed various discrepancies in these areas until the goal is reached. They also discussed hiring and staffing processes for drivers. Mr. Teich said that the upcoming proposal to co-locate EPR and EJRP may help streamline operations.

Mr. Brown wanted to know if there are any other constraints on Senior Center operations. Ms. Pioli said her job, as a union job with overtime, does not provide scheduling flexibility so she regularly works overtime hours. She also pointed out that more parking and handicapped accessible doors and bathrooms are ongoing needs.

Ms. Houghton offered to send the trustees a study conducted and published by the VT Department of Aging and Independent living.

Pauline Nichola, a Member of the Senior Center, expressed concern with the first paragraph on page 4 of the Senior Center memo that says a “reduction of programs and Senior Center hours” would be considered as an alternative to cost increases related to the overtime. Ms. Nichola described that, from the members’ point of view, this strategy is not acceptable. Ms. Vile and Mr. Teich described Ms. Pioli’s hours and reimbursement, noting that the position has grown from 20 hours to 40 hours and that it now includes benefits. Ms. Nichola suggested the Trustees hire a new part-time position as a solution to staff overtime. Mr. Tyler agreed that the Trustees should consider this suggestion.

Annemarie Dennis, discussed concerns related to parking, handicapped parking and handicapped accessibility to the Senior Center building. She said she has a petition, signed by over 100 seniors, that requests handicapped buttons on the door of the building. She also encouraged the Trustees to approve at least three more parking spaces to be designated for the Senior Center and requested a progress update on planning for a van parking and drop off area. Mr. Teich responded that the Van drop off strategy is in Public Works and has run into challenges related to fire truck lanes and crumbling concrete. He acknowledged the ongoing challenge of parking capacity with so many departments currently using the lot. Mr. Tyler said they will continue to work on this. Ms. Houghton suggested, and Mr. Teich agreed, that Public Works provide an update to the Trustees on progress being made with these items.

**b. Revised Consent Letter Amtrak ADA Stations Program**

George Tyler reviewed a letter, written by Amtrak, regarding the ADA station upgrade of the Village of Essex’s train station. He noted that the design of this project has been inclusive and thorough. He noted that Robin Pierce, Jim Jutras, Rick Jones and Rick Hamlin have signed off on the upgrade. Mr. Teich said that when the construction is taking place, in 2019, the project will be significant.

**MOTION by Andrew Brown, SECOND by Dan Kerin, that the Village Trustees authorize the Village President to sign the Amtrak ADA Station upgrade. Voting: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.**

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Amendment to FYE 19 WWTF Capital Reserve Plan**

Jim Jutras discussed the current status of grants and funding available for the Wastewater facility’s Phosphorous Innovation upgrades. These upgrades were approved by the Trustees in May, 2018. With grant funds now awarded, versus expected, Mr. Jutras pointed out that there is a revenue gap toward the purchase of a Hydroflow unit for the project. He explained the functions of this unit and described long-term cost savings that would result from its use. Mr. Jutras requested the Trustees modify the FYE 2019 Capital Plan to include \$30,000 toward a sole source purchase of this unit from the manufacturer of these products. He clarified that this will not put any grant funds at risk.

**MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by Lori Houghton, that the Trustees modify the FYE 2019 Wastewater Facility 2019 Capital plan to include \$30,000 for purchase of a Hydroflow unit and that the Unified Manager be authorized to sign the incentive pending any legal review, if deemed necessary.**

Mr. Tyler praised the Village of Essex Junction for being the recipient of the Governor's Phosphorous Innovation Challenge Grant for this project.

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

**b. Review and Discuss Draft Purchasing Policy**

Lauren Morrissette, Finance Director and Assistant Village Manager, explained the proposed Purchasing Policy. Ms. Morrissette said the Policy was revised as part of alignment efforts between the Town of Essex and the Village of Essex Junction. She said the drafting process was collaborative and included Department Heads. The process considered the Purchasing Policies of the Town and Village, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) model and an example from Golden Colorado. Ms. Morrissette walked the committee through numerous components, including new thresholds for authorizations to purchase; clarity on exceptions related to emergencies, recurring purchases, repair parts and specialty items; and processes to appoint Village and Town attorneys, engineers and auditors. Mr. Teich pointed out that devising this policy was a thorough process and it should allow work to be more efficient. Mr. Brown wondered how the changes to purchasing will effect trustee involvement in approval processes. Ms. Morrissette said that the budgeting process will still fall with the Trustees but purchases outside of the approved budget, only in an amount \$40,000 or more, will require Trustee approval. Mr. Brown pointed out that the "prequalified bidder" portion of the Policy may be strengthened by including a shortlist of suggested vendors to support bidders who are hoping to grow in capacity. Ms. Morrissette said that the previous policy had a "prequalified bidder" process for bids of over \$250,000 and agreed to revisit this rule to include in the policy. The Trustees discussed the change in precedent, posed by the Policy, related to awarding bids. They described the reasons why they consider their current bid approval practice to be one of their core responsibilities. Ms. Morrissette said that Public works, not the Selectboard, has historically awarded bids in the Town. She agreed to include the Trustee bidding process for expenses over \$40,000 into the new policy. The vote on this policy will be conducted at the joint Trustee and Selectboard meeting scheduled for October 11.

**c. Review and Discuss Draft Records Retention Policy**

Sarah Macy, Assistant Finance Director, explained the Records and Retention Policy and Finance Department Retention Plan, which is inclusive of the Village and the Town. The Vermont State Archives and Records administration (VSARA) workshop and their model records schedule helped inform the drafting process. The Policy applies to all records except for those at the Police Department. Attachment A applies only to the Finance Department. The trustees discussed the average retention rates of records, preferred practices related to emails and clarification on the use of texting. The vote on this policy will be conducted at the joint Trustee and Selectboard meeting scheduled for October 11.

**d. Amendment to the Personnel Regulations**

Evan Teich explained that, as a result of the restructuring process, the position "Assistant to the Manager" should be added to Appendix VI of the Village of Essex Junction Personnel Policy. The new hire to this position began this week as an Exempt Employee.

**MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by Lori Houghton, that the Trustees adopt the proposed revisions to the Village of Essex Junction Personnel Guidelines. Voting: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.**

**e. Set FYE 20 Budget Goals**

Mr. Tyler asked for guidance from Ms. Morrisseau and Mr. Teich that may help inform priorities for the FYE 20 budget. Ms. Morrisseau and Mr. Teich said that, in their work toward alignment between the Town and the Village, they identified the need for an in-house Property Maintenance Superintendent position for all of the buildings in the Village. They also explained that they would like to move all the Worker's Compensation and Insurance budget lines into the Finance line, as is done in the Town, with the exception of highway bills. They later clarified that moving these lines encourages greater efficiencies and a standardized approach. The Trustees discussed and clarified the proposal of a Property Maintenance Superintendent. Mr. Tyler expressed hesitation to investing in efforts that may move money from capital projects.

Elaine Sopchak reiterated the importance of increased investments in the Senior Center and requested Mr. Teich devise a proposal for addressing the concerns raised. Ms. Houghton and Mr. Kerin reiterated this need for a Senior Center investment strategy. Mr. Kerin pointed out the challenges related to being at maximum capacity with parking around Lincoln Hall.

Ms. Sopchak said that Channel 17 is planning to double their standard funding request, due to changes in their viewership and decreased reimbursements from Comcast and Telecom. She recommends that the Trustees consider a regular 3% increase for this service over time instead.

The Trustees scheduled the "Budget Day" on December 19, 2018.

Mr. Brown presented the Capital Plan, which was discussed at the Capital Program Review Committee Meeting on October 2, 2018. He and Ms. Morrisseau walked the trustees through the General Fund Capital Reserve Funding & Fund Balance chart, pointing out that, if the transfer from General Fund remains at 7.5%, the plan would result in a -\$304,109 deficit in FYE 24. Mr. Brown showed the Trustees that 15% would keep the plan solvent while also addressing the scheduled projects. He said that the current increase of 7.5% costs a \$280,000 home owner \$6 per year, while a 15% increase would result in \$12 in this year. The Trustees weighed the option of using a Bond to address this deficit. They discussed the challenges posed by either measure, with consideration of the Town and Village consolidation possibility. Mr. Brown explained that the Capital Plan was ranked through a process that identified the top priorities to be included in the FYE 20 budget and all estimates assume a 5% inflation increase each year.

Ms. Sopchak mentioned that a 3% increase each year could be a solution for the Champlain Valley Exposition (CVE) pilot to prevent an unpredicted jump in this funding request. Mr. Teich said that they are also negotiating that the CVE increase their contribution to police costs. He said he would look at the 3% increase suggestion.

Mr. Tyler summarized that suggestions and topics considered in this discussion, in addition to the goal of level service with an increase to cost of living, will contribute to the construction of the FYE 2020 budget.

**6. MANAGER'S REPORT****a. Trustees Meeting Schedule**

October 11, 7:00 pm Joint Meeting with Selectboard at 2 Lincoln St.

October 23, 6:30 pm Regular Meeting

November 13, 6:30 pm Regular Meeting

November 27, 6:30 pm Regular Meeting

December 11, 6:30 pm Regular Meeting

~~December 25, 6:30 pm Regular Meeting\*~~

January 8, 2019, 6:30 pm Regular Meeting- Review FYE 20 proposed budgets

January 22, 6:30 pm Regular Meeting- Public hearing on FYE 20 budgets & capital programs

February 12, 6:30 pm Regular Meeting- Adopt FYE budgets and capital programs

\*The Trustees agreed to cancel the December 25 meeting

**8. TRUSTEES' COMMENTS & CONCERNS/ READING FILE****a. Board Member Comments**

- Mr. Kerin discussed concerns he has received regarding the long length of the light signal on Park and South Street, considering the limited traffic in that area. Mr. Teich agreed to discuss options for sensors for this intersection with Dennis Lutz.
- Ms. Houghton attended a meeting with the Police Department that highlighted successes in their collaboration with Howard Center's Community Outreach Team.
- Elaine and Mr. Teich attended an Essex Rescue meeting that highlighted the important contributions made by this group. They shared that, with increased senior housing, the district will continue to see increased ambulance runs.
- Elaine mentioned that the Selectboard approved a canine pilot program for the Essex Police. The dog is trained and has a successful track record in search and rescue and drug searches (excluding marijuana).

**b. Minutes from other boards/committees:**

- Tree advisory Committee 9/18/18
  - Brownell Library Board 9/18/18
  - Selectboard and Trustees Subcommittee on Governance 9/19/18
  - Capital Program Review Committee 10/2/18
- c. Letter from Curt Carter, GBIC Vice President, re: thank you for contribution  
No discussion
- d. Email from Jessie Bordeau re: CSWD Reuse Zones  
No discussion
- e. Thank you from Kristen Humbarger re: SteAmfest 2018  
No discussion
- f. Winter Operations Plan 2018-19  
No discussion

**9. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Brown suggested two amendments to the minutes dated 9/25/18, both in section 4d: After the word "since", on the first line of the second paragraph, replace "2006. She and her husband have" with "2006, when her children were in". On the third line of the second paragraph, replace "she started the area's Train Hop" with "she was part of a handful of concerned neighbors who started the area's Train Hop."

**MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by Lori Houghton to amend the minutes, as suggested by Andrew Brown. Voting: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.**

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

- a. Approve Minutes of previous Meeting 9/25/18**
- b. Expense Warrant #17115 dated 9/28/18 in the amount of \$222,084.12**
- c. Expense Warrant #17116 dated 10/5/18 in the amount of \$110,220.10**

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

**10. ADJOURN**

**MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by Dan Kerin, to adjourn the meeting.  
Voting: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.**

The meeting Adjourned at 9:15 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Cathy Ainsworth