



**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

2 Lincoln Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Tuesday, March 26, 2019
6:30 PM

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1. **CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG** [6:30 PM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **APPROVE AGENDA**
4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
 - a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. Grant application for Class 2 Paving Grant—Aaron Martin
 - b. Memo and attachment re: new municipal website
 - c. Transition to paperless invoicing—Sarah Macy
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approval of minutes: March 12, 2019—Special Meeting; March 12, 2019—Regular Meeting
 - b. Check Warrants #17138—03/15/19; #17139—03/22/19
 - c. Approve Banner Application for 2019 Vermont Quilt Festival
 - d. Approve 2019 Champlain Valley Exposition Banner Applications
7. **READING FILE**
 - a. Board Member Comments
 - b. Email from Lawrence Sudbay re: Amtrak Plans
 - c. Joint Safety Committee Policy with edits
 - d. Email and attachment from Dennis Lutz re: FEMA Discovery Meeting and Questionnaire
 - e. Email from Kaitlin Hayes re: resignation from Planning Commission
 - f. Upcoming meeting schedule
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - a. An executive session is expected for discussion of a real estate issue
9. **ADJOURN**

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Certification: 03/22/2019
Date Posted

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**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 26, 2019**

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

ADMINISTRATION: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Town Manager; Rick Jones, Public Works Superintendent; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/ Assistant Village Manager; Tammy Getchell, Assistant to the Manager; Aaron Martin, Utilities Director/ Town Engineer; Robin Pierce, Village Community Development Director; Rob Paluba, IT Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Irene Wrenner; Paul Hansen

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**

Mr. Teich provided two documents to add to the Reading file: a resident email regarding the website, to be added as item 7g, and an update from the Essex Area Senior Center (EASC) to be added as item 7h.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

**MOTION by Dan Kerin, SECOND by Andrew Brown, to approve the agenda, as amended.
Voting: 4-0; motion carried. Lori Houghton not yet in attendance.**

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

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

There were no comments from the public

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. Grant Application for Class 2 Paving Grant- Aaron Martin

Mr. Martin provided an overview of Public Works' grant application to the 2020 Town Highway Paving Grant program from the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTRANS). This grant would be used to offset the construction costs associated with repair and overlay of a 5,333-foot long continuous section of West Street, between the intersection with South Street and the West Street Extension. Mr. Martin explained that West and South streets are heavily traveled and have endured heavy wear and tear. He provided an overview of the costs associated with the project, with grant funds covering \$175,000 of the \$328,800 project. He said that the department has a good track record with securing this grant. Once the application is submitted, they should know of the award within a month.

Mr. Tyler wondered what would happen if the grant does not come through, and if there is funding already in the capital budget for this project. Mr. Martin explained that although this project was not originally lined up for this year, it has become urgent. If the grant does not come through the project would need to be significantly downsized. Mr. Brown pointed out that if the state passes legislation for increased funding for roads, this is the type of project that would benefit.

MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by Lori Houghton, that the Trustees support the staff's application for the Town Highway Paving Grant funds. Voting: unanimous (5-0); motion carried

b. Memo and Attachment re: New Municipal Website

Mr. Duggan and Mr. Paluba presented an overview of steps taken toward the launch of a new municipal website. They talked about the goal of improving community-wide communications, customer service and staff efficiency related to IT and communications. Mr. Duggan said the website would implement one landing page with a shared theme/ branding look. He described improved customer service by utilizing one search bar to search all departments. Mr. Duggan described staff efficiencies related to increased ease of use when posting information. He acknowledged that, in retrospect, staff should have met with the Trustees and Selectboard prior to signing a contract with CivicPlus to design and host the site, but the arrangement was made in the interest of progressing the communications plan at a time when other topics were taking up the bulk of the Trustees and Selectboard meetings. He said next steps for the project include attending the Joint meeting of the Trustees and Selectboard on April 9th, reviewing survey responses and beginning more in-depth design discussions.

The Trustees all expressed concern with the way the website redesign transpired. They thought the change was happening too fast, without enough opportunity for them to be involved. The Trustees described their satisfaction with the current Village of Essex Junction website and talked about having put careful thought into its design and functionality. Mr. Tyler pointed out that the Trustees prefer to prioritize local contracts. Ms. Houghton said that rolling out a new website would suggest the two municipalities are one already, although full consolidation has not come to fruition yet. Mr. Kerin agreed and predicted that it may lead to confusion on the part of the residents. Mr. Tyler talked about the cultural differences between the two municipalities, stressing that Trustees need to be more involved with processes related to making big changes. Ms. Houghton wondered if the Town of Essex could move the new website forward without the Village of Essex Junction.

In terms of the new website goals and functionality, the Trustees acknowledged the value of improved customer service, reduced IT time, and effective web support. Mr. Brown wondered what would happen to the shared website if consolidation does not take place. Mr. Paluba explained that the CivicPlus contract includes a condition that the group could do a complete redesign in four years at no additional cost. Mr. Teich talked about the staff's perspective that managing multiple sites is a challenge. He encouraged the shared website option because it would be easier to navigate, easier to update and easier to target messaging through. Ms. Haney wanted to know what would need to be done if the two municipalities were to move forward separately. Mr. Duggan said that they would need to know very soon because this would affect the architecture of the website redesign.

Paul Hansen addressed the Trustees to express his continued interest in working with the municipalities as they proceed with website planning. Mr. Hansen is the owner of Ecopixel, the Essex-based company that designed and helps maintain the current website for the Village of Essex Junction.

c. Transition to paperless invoicing- Sarah Macy

Ms. Macy presented the issue of staff needing to adopt a more efficient system for processing invoices. She walked the Trustees through a flow chart of steps staff go through to process each invoice for payment, noting that, on average, they process 12,500 external invoices annually. Current invoice processing steps are manual and include making multiple copies of invoices; driving paperwork between offices to stamp, verify and sign; conducting duplicate steps in multiple

offices and relying on paper storage. Ms. Macy presented an overview of efficiencies possible by using ReadSoft, an online program, to support invoice processing. By uploading invoices to this program, half of the steps currently required to process them would be eliminated. ReadSoft would identify all pertinent information, then automatically email individuals who need to view, approve and verify the invoice. Once approved, invoice data exports directly into the NERMC accounting system and checks would be cut weekly. Auditors, then, will be able to pull invoices for testing remotely.

Ms. Macy discussed the cost of ReadSoft, about \$6,500 annually, based on the number of invoices processed. She explained that she is very familiar with the system, having rolled it out in another municipality within her career. She has sent videos of about the software's functionality to Essex Town and Essex Junction staff and they have been overwhelmingly positive in their response.

Mr. Tyler wondered if the online service would compromise security and Ms. Macy reassured him that Mr. Paluba and she do not see any security problems. Ms. Haney clarified that Ms. Macy hopes to implement the system in FYE20. The Trustees commended Ms. Macy for her insight, enthusiasm and outstanding vision for efficient work strategies.

6. CONSENT ITEMS

MOTION by Andrew Brown, SECOND by Lori Houghton, to approve the consent agenda:

- a. Approval of minutes: March 12, 2019—Special Meeting; March 12, 2019—Regular Meeting
- b. Check Warrants #17138—03/15/19; #17139—03/22/19
- c. Approve Banner Application for 2019 Vermont Quilt Festival
- d. Approve 2019 Champlain Valley Exposition Banner Applications

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

7. READING FILE

a. **Board Member Comments**

Mr. Tyler invited Mr. Teich to share a manager's report. Mr. Teich discussed Essex Area Senior Center (EASC) updates, noting that Nicole Mone-St.Marthe is serving as the Interim Director, while the search continues for a new Director. He talked about the improvements made to the EASC senior van deployment room, their newly-organized storage room and the move to re-establish committee-led efforts. He also noted that Ms. Macy will be coaching them on how to read and manage their budget.

Ms. Houghton shared that the house passed a bill to move forward with commuter rail plans. The bill is now in the senate for consideration.

In response to residents' concerns about the wear and tear of the municipality's infrastructure, Mr. Brown wondered if the Trustees would consider a drastic increase to the Capital Plan. He suggested they consider a contribution of \$1 million per year (an increase of \$242,000) or taking out a bond for expenses related to the full rebuild of some roads and aging infrastructure. Mr. Kerin was opposed to raising the tax rate by 20% and Ms. Macy explained that the municipality would pay \$420,000 in interest on a 20 year \$1.4 million bond at current rates. Mr. Tyler discussed the benefit of establishing a local option tax. Ms. Haney, Mr. Tyler and Mr. Kerin discussed conducting a straw poll on the issue at the Village Meeting, and surveying residents on the website.

- b. Email from Lawrence Sudbay re: Amtrak Plans
- c. Joint Safety Committee Policy with edits

- d. Email and attachment from Dennis Lutz re: FEMA Discovery Meeting and Questionnaire
 - e. Email from Kaitlin Hayes re: resignation from Planning Commission
 - f. **Upcoming meeting schedule**
- Ms. Haney extended her gratitude to Ms. Getchell for the new, color-coded version of the calendar.
- g. Email from Jess Wisloski re: website suggestions
 - h. EASC Updates from Nicole Mone-St.Marthe

8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a. An executive session is expected for discussion of a real estate issue

MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by Andrew Brown, that the Trustees enter into executive session for the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(2) and to include the Unified Manager, Assistant Manager, and Community Development Director. Voting: unanimous (5-0); motion carried at 8:01pm

MOTION by _____, SECOND by _____, that the Trustees exit executive session. Voting: unanimous (5-0); motion carried at _____pm

9. **ADJOURN**

MOTION by _____, SECOND by _____, to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

The meeting Adjourned at 8:28 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Ainsworth