

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
October 29, 2019**

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:** Andrew Brown, Chair; George Tyler; Dan Kerin; Amber Thibeault; Raj Chawla

**ADMINISTRATION & STAFF:** Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager; Robin Pierce, Development Director

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Tim Shea (CVE), Patrick Murray (EWSD Board & Selectboard), Annie Cooper (Selectboard), Matthew Heller, Luke Tornadi, Elijah Massey, Linda McKenna, Diane Clemens (Planning Commission), Margaret Smith, Dave Treston (KSV), Erin Faggant (KSV), Sara Serabian, Kim Chase, Mike Plageman, Jacob Dawson (Vermont Digger), Irene Wrenner, John Sheppard, Jeff Benjamin

1. **CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/ CHANGES**

Mr. Teich requested that the following be added to the agenda:

5d: Request to waive purchasing policy bid requirements for FEMA grant SCBA purchase.

**RAJ CHAWLA made a MOTION, and GEORGE TYLER seconded that the Trustees amend the agenda. VOTING: 5-0; motion carried.**

Mr. Brown noted that CCTV was scheduled to film the meeting, as they normally do, however they are not present.

3. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

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

Patrick Murray, member of the Essex Westford School Board and the Selectboard, noted that on November 19<sup>th</sup> the school board will be holding a Pie and Pie Chart event. The Board will be baking pies, holding a pie contest, and using the event as an opportunity to educate the public on the budgeting process. He invited everyone in attendance to the event.

4. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

**a. \*Interview for Village Bike/Walk Advisory Committee: Elijah Massey**

\* Mr. Massey agreed to an open session interview by the Trustees for a position on the Village Bike/Walk Advisory Committee. Mr. Brown asked Mr. Massey to explain his interest in serving on the Committee. Mr. Massey stated that his family had moved to Essex Junction in August, attracted to the walkability of the community. He discussed his lifelong interest in walking and biking. Mr. Massey noted that he works as a program specialist with the USDA, and that some of his work professionally has to do with walking and biking access in Vermont communities. Mr. Tyler asked Mr. Massey what he liked and did not like about walk and bike friendliness in the Village. Mr. Massey stated that he found it much easier to walk in the Village than in previous communities that he lived in. He stated that he had attended a Bike/Walk Advisory Committee meeting and liked their enthusiasm. He also noted a concern that the bike lanes on Pearl Street disappear at Five Corners.

Mr. Chawla stated that there are some planning and development projects coming up, and that it would be great to keep the Bike/Walk Advisory Committee involved in the process by giving feedback to the Planning Committee and Trustees. He thanked Mr. Massey for his interest in volunteering.

Mr. Massey asked when a decision would be made. Mr. Brown stated that it would most likely be sometime after the Trustee's November 12 meeting.

**b. Approve Champlain Valley Expo Sound Indemnification Agreement and Financial Contribution Agreement**

Mr. Teich noted that the financial contribution from the Champlain Valley Exposition (CVE) is set at \$15,000, the same amount as it was last year. He stated that this agreement is set for two years, rather than five, due to the potential merger vote in 2020.

Mr. Chawla asked how the \$15,000 contribution amount was set. Mr. Tyler said that it has been the same since at least the early 2000s, and directed the question to CVE Executive Director Tim Shea. Mr. Shea noted that it was developed before he began working for CVE. He believes that it was a joint decision between the Village Trustees and CVE Board of Directors. Mr. Tyler noted that CVE provides a lot of community resources, such as free use of the space for residents and non-profit groups. Mr. Teich noted that there is the perception that CVE makes a lot of money, but that is not necessarily the case. It is important to the Village that they maintain and invest in their property.

Mr. Chawla noted that he would expect the contribution to have gone up since the early 2000s. When inflation is considered, we receive less and less each year. He stated that the contribution should increase by at least half the rate that our tax rate does. Ms. Thibault noted that she saw a provision stating that it is possible that the Village would get less money in the agreement. Mr. Teich noted that this would only occur if the Town of Essex also requested financial contributions from CVE, and that this would not happen. He also noted that this agreement does not need to be approved tonight.

Ms. Thibault asked if there was a separate agreement for police services. Mr. Teich indicated that there was, and that CVE paid overtime rates for officers who were specifically assigned to their events.

Mr. Tyler noted that this contribution from CVE is voluntary. Essex High School used to hold their graduation there at no cost, and the municipalities have used the space for events as well. He looked at it like a tax stabilization agreement, as it encouraged businesses to invest in themselves. Mr. Chawla noted that some very expensive events are also held at CVE, and that the idea that a business is being run out of a nonprofit is confusing. He agrees that it is an asset to the community, but does not agree with keeping the contribution the same year after year.

Mr. Brown noted that he would like to see an increase happen without jeopardizing the relationship with CVE. Mr. Chawla suggested a modest increase yearly, to go along with the budgetary increases in the Village.

Mr. Shea suggested that CVE might be amenable to a CPI (consumer price index) increase. He noted that CVE loves seeing community events happen on the property. Mr. Kerin noted that he did not want there to be a perception of a "quid pro quo" agreement between the Village and CVE. Mr. Chawla noted that it is normal for large non-profits to provide donations in lieu of taxes. He noted

that CVE events do have an impact on the Village's infrastructure. Mr. Kerin noted that CVE's impact can be positive as well, noting that local businesses get additional customers during CVE events.

Mr. Brown noted that additional information may be needed before the agreement is approved. Ms. Thibeault noted that she had many questions as well, and stated the importance of public input. She suggested that this be tabled until an evening with a lighter agenda.

The issue was tabled until a future meeting.

**c. Acceptance of FEMA grant for Fire Department**

Ms. Macy noted that this grant will allow the Fire Department to replace all of their self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) units. She has already accepted it due to timing constraints, however will return it should the board not approve.

**GEORGE TYLER made a MOTION, and DAN KERIN seconded that the Trustees approve the acceptance of the FEMA FY18 Assistance to Firefighters Grant to the EJFD. VOTING: 5-0; motion carried.**

**d. Request to waive purchasing policy bid requirements for FEMA grant SCBA purchase**

Ms. Macy noted that federal grant requirements require two quotes for purchases under \$150,000. She requested that the Village hold a sealed bid for this purchase. This will allow the equipment to be the same between the Village and Town Fire Departments.

**GEORGE TYLER made a MOTION, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded that the Trustees approve a waiver of the Village purchasing policy bid requirements for the FEMA grant SCBA purchase. VOTING: 5-0; motion carried.**

**5. CONSENT ITEMS**

**AMBER THIBEAULT made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, that the Trustees approve the Consent Items:**

- a. Appoint Planning Commissioner Steven Shaw to the Village Capital Program Review Committee
- b. Approve minutes: October 8, 2019
- c. Check Warrants #17168—10/11/19; #17169—10/18/19

**VOTING: 5-0; motion carried.**

**6. READING FILE**

- a. Board Member Comments  
None.
- b. Memo from Tammy Getchell re: Champlain Valley Expo Sound Reports
- c. Memo from Robin Pierce re: Village Train Station
- d. Letter from Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services re: Building Communities Grants Award
- e. VTDigger, "As Vermonters leave small towns, Burlington region grows
- f. Letter from Oryza Group re: Announcement of Planned Action
- g. Vermont League of Cities & Towns Delinquent Tax Collectors Workshop
- h. Upcoming meeting schedule

7. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

a. None

8. **ADJOURN**

Andrew Brown called for a five minute recess at 7:10. The Board will reconvene at 7:15 PM to hold a joint meeting with the Essex Selectboard.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Darby Mayville