Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2019

TRUSTEES: Andrew Brown, President; George Tyler, Vice President; Raj Chawla; Dan Kerin; Amber Thibeault.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Courtney Bushey, Assistant Finance Director; Chris Gaboriault, Fire Chief; Robin Pierce, Community Development Director; Brad Luck, Essex Junction Recreation and Parks Director; Allyson Vile, Essex Parks and Recreation Director; Wendy Hysko, Brownell Library Director; Hannah Tracy, Brownell Library Assistant Director; Megan Allison, Brownell Librarian; Susan Pierce, Brownell Librarian; Jim Jutras, Water Quality Superintendent; Ricky Jones, Village Public Works Superintendent; Dennis Lutz, Public Works Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Irene Wrenner

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG
Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES
No changes were made to the agenda.

3. APPROVE AGENDA
With no changes to the agenda, a motion to approve was not needed.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD
No inquiries were made.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS
a. FY21 Budget Work Session
Sarah Macy provided the Village Trustees with a brief overview and highlights of the proposed budget. The proposed FY21 Village General Fund budget is $5,344,193, a 3.47% or $179,280 increase over the FY20 approved budget of $5,164,913. This increase would be funded by a slight increase in funding from the enterprise funds ($10,009), an increase in funding from the Town of Essex ($82,435) and a 2.44% increase in the tax levy ($86,835).

8:40 AM, Fire: Chris Gaboriault, Fire Chief presented a budget that is down approximately 1.5 percent. Chief Gaboriault explained that in order to maintain a paid call department, there is a need to plan for a new fire building with dorm space, or to add dorm space to the already existing building. Mr. Chawla asked Chief Gaboriault about a desired timeframe for completion of dorm space. Chief Gaboriault responded that within a 5-year time frame, hiring a consultant to take a look at the community as a whole would be the next step. Mr. Teich expanded on the discussion to inform the board that the recent space study covered building space only, where a fire study would be more specific to the work performed, staffing and the needs to maintain systems. Ms. Thibeault liked the idea for inclusion of a gym membership reimbursement for firefighters in the budget.
9:10 AM, Administration, Finance, Debt: Sarah Macy began with a presentation on the Village debt and capital projects. The Village Pool Debt has been retired in FY20, driving the large decrease in the debt segment. The funds from the Pool Debt of $107,843 have been moved to the Transfers & Miscellaneous segment to help fund the proposed capital transfer increases for FY21.

For Administration, staffing and services levels are projected to remain stable with a 1.8% overall increase. To assist human resources with properly filing and archiving staff documents, changes and adjustments, the Administration department budget includes a new cost for a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) at $3,075. This system is charged on a monthly, per employee basis and would be shared between the Town and Village based on the number of employees. FY21 has a reduction of approximately $10,000 for the Pay & Classification Study, which is required every other year by the Essex Junction Employees Association Contract with the Village of Essex Junction. Finance is working internally to brainstorm ways in which to stabilize the budget impact of moderate cost items that recur on a timeline greater than annually.

For the Finance Department, Ms. Macy emphasized the need for proper budgeting software that will serve as a research and archiving database with a decreased opportunity for human error. Currently, the Finance Department uses Excel to budget. Ms. Macy asked for an authorization to pursue options. Several of the board members encouraged Ms. Macy to continue exploring options to replace the current system.

10:15 AM, Break: Mr. Brown excused the members to take a short break.

10:30 AM, Economic and Community Development: Robin Pierce, Community Development Director stated that as the work on the Crescent Connector continues, there will eventually be more room to host and plan events. Due to the loss of events such as steAmfest and the Five Corners Farmer’s Market, Mr. Brown brought up a request by a couple of residents for the Town and the Village to put money together to host a winter community supper event. Mr. Brown suggested that a better idea might be to create a community advisory committee to bring in events such as art festivals and community gatherings. Mr. Kerin mentioned that there is a difference between events created for local residents and events that attract people from outside communities. The Trustees agreed to discuss the idea of an advisory committee further at a later time. Mr. Brown suggested that the topic could be discussed when Brad Luck, Recreation Director, presents later in the day. Mr. Pierce continued with his budget presentation and updated the Trustees on current projects.

11:00 AM, Recreation, Senior Center: Allyson Vile provided the Trustees with an overview of how the Senior Center operates with funding. Mr. Luck emphasized that as an enterprise fund, the funds are managed by the municipality. There was a brief discussion regarding how trips with the seniors impact the budget.

Mr. Luck moved on to present the Recreation budget. The new communications position in the department has made a marked difference in planning and promoting activities. Mr. Brown brought up the concept of an advisory community events committee with Mr. Luck and asked if he thought that this would be a worthwhile idea. Mr. Teich, Mr. Chawla and Mr. Brown shared ideas regarding activities for the committee to undertake such as fundraising for events and handling event logistics. Mr. Brown said that he would like to see Mr. Luck come back to the next Trustees meeting to discuss further.
Mr. Luck continued to present the proposed budget for recreation, including funds set aside for an electronic sign and updating the playground and pool chairs. The board members discussed the need for signage not only at the recreation facility, but at the Town Offices at 81 Main Street and at Five Corners. Mr. Brown suggested a decision on signs should not be made at this time in order for further discussion to take place on a plan for the three locations that is cohesive and meets the needs for each location. Mr. Luck requested that the funds for the sign remain in the budget for capital use, whether for a sign or for other capital needs of the department. The board discussed the capital needs of recreation as well as the capital needs of other departments and budgeting transparency. Mr. Luck stated that reinvestment in capital needs according to the capital plan is necessary to prevent having to turn to bonding for upkeep projects. Moving on to the program budget, Mr. Luck reminded the board that all events such as Pumpkin Palooza, the Easter Egg Hunt and the Train Hop are all funded from recreation overhead and are not funded from taxpayer municipal program dollars.

12:15 PM, Break: Mr. Brown excused the members to take a lunch break.

12:45 PM, Library: Wendy Hysko, Brownell Library Director, and Hannah Tracy, Brownell Library Assistant Director, presented the Brownell Library budget. Ms. Macy added a few points about building needs. Ms. Hysko stated that structural work on the building has been addressed and now concentration can be more on building efficiencies. Mr. Tyler asked about future expansion needs. Ms. Hysko responded that she does not foresee the need to consider building renovations for expansion at this time.

1:20 PM, Revenues: Ms. Macy presented a draft revenues budget to the Trustees and stated that all but three of the revenue lines remain unchanged. The Trustees discussed capital projects at length.

2:10 PM, Waste Water Treatment Facility: Jim Jutras, Water Quality Superintendent, presented the Wastewater Treatment Facility’s proposed budget and provided some updates from the department. Mr. Jutras explained that the Tri-town Joint Review Committee has not reviewed the draft budget and that there may be some adjustments.

2:30 PM, Sanitation: Ricky Jones, Public Works Superintendent, joined Mr. Jutras at the table to present the Sanitation budget. Ms. Macy explained several key points and changes. Mr. Jones updated the board on the use of the new Super Sucker 5000 truck.

2:45 PM, Water: Mr. Jones, Public Works Superintendent, continued presenting with the proposed budget for Water and provided updates from the department.

2:50 PM, Highway: Ms. Macy and Mr. Jones presented the proposed Highway budget and the most prominent changes and adjustments. Mr. Jones pointed out the increase to the Traffic Control line item is due to the additional time involved for needed line striping.

3:10 PM, Buildings: Ms. Macy began the presentation of the Buildings budget. Mr. Lutz provided a list of assessments the new Buildings Manager, Tom Yandow, has been working on for buildings in both the Town and the Village.

3:30 PM, Wrap-up: Mr. Tyler mentioned the importance of dealing with Lamoille Street. Ms. Macy and Mr. Teich thanked the Trustees for participating in the budget day process.
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**

Amber Thibeault made a motion, seconded by George Tyler, to approve the Consent Agenda.

a. **Check Warrant #17175—11/27/19**

Motion passed 5-0.

7. **READING FILE**

a. **Board Member Comments**

Mr. Tyler confirmed the Finding of Local Necessity Hearing date and time was set for December 17th at 3:00 PM.

Mr. Teich and the Trustees thanked Ms. Macy and Ms. Getchell for their efforts and work on the budget work session.

b. **Letter from James Jutras and Dennis Lutz re: 3 Ac rule comments**

c. **Upcoming meeting schedule**

8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

An executive session was not necessary.

9. **ADJOURN**

Raj Chawla made a motion, seconded by Amber Thibeault, to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0 at 3:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy Getchell, Assistant to the Manager