

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
December 10, 2019**

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:** Andrew Brown; George Tyler; Raj Chawla; Amber Thibeault  
(Dan Kerin not in attendance)

**ADMINISTRATION and STAFF:** Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/  
Assistant Manager; Robin Pierce, Community Development Director; Brad Luck, Parks & Recreation  
Director

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Cindy Dohman; Scott Fay; Erin Knox; Bridget Meyer; Mike Nester;  
Gabrielle Smith

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 added an email from Karen Dolan, regarding the Gather at the Table community event, to item 5a. He also added an email with attachments from Robin Pierce, regarding the revised ordinance, to item 5c.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

**GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, that the Trustees approve the agenda to include the additional documents. VOTING: 4-0; motion carried.**

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

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

Bridget Meyer expressed her intrigue about the multiple executive sessions Village Trustees have entered to discuss real estate matters. She looks forward to hearing an update about these.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. **Consider funding request for Gather at the Table community event**

Ms. Meyer described the Gather at the Table event as a time for Essex Junction residents to get to know each other, while enjoying food, organized activities and entertainment for all ages. She said the event, taking place January 11th at the Essex Westford School District (EWSD) high school, is a collaborative effort of multiple community partners, including the EWSD, Heart and Soul and others. Ms. Meyer noted that when this event proves to be a success, she expects other, new community building opportunities will also be scheduled.

Mr. Tyler requested a breakdown of funding for the event. Ms. Meyer explained said that revenue received and expected include \$1500 from the schools, \$1500 from the Village of Essex Junction, \$1500 from the Town of Essex, \$500 from Heart and Soul, \$250 from Westford and a Donation from Mansfield Place. She explained that this revenue would cover the event and seed future events. She clarified to Mr. Chawla that she does not anticipate this request to be an annual request, noting the possible formation of a "booster club". Ms. Meyer discussed the event's marketing plan with Ms. Thibeault. Erin Knox pointed out the multigenerational facet of the event, bringing school families together with community members who may not have children at the school. Ms. Meyer and Ms. Dohman discussed various groups who will be involved at the event

supervising activities. Mr. Brown and Mr. Chawla agreed that a more formal process for funding future events such as these should be developed by the Trustees.

**GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, that the Village donate \$1500 to help with the Gather at the Table event and that the funds come from the new programs line in the economic development budget. VOTING: 4-0; motion carried.**

**b. Discussion of creating an advisory committee and funding for community events**

Mr. Teich presented the issue of whether the Trustees want to establish an advisory committee to help vet, coordinate and develop strategies to sustain successful Village Center and community events such as the SteAmFest and the 5 Corners Market. Mr. Luck discussed already-established events offered through Parks and Recreation, which are paid for from their program fund. The Program Fund, he clarified, is Parks and Rec. revenue from the Essex Pool, etc. Mr. Luck agreed that a committee to vet and recommend new events to the Trustees is a good idea. These would be funded initially by the general fund's Economic Development budget.

Mr. Chawla advocated for the development of this advisory committee, explaining the benefits of having a group of advisors to bring forward new ideas and to tend to event sustainability. He would like the committee to consider events for the Village center but not to exclude greater Essex. Mr. Brown and Mr. Luck also discussed the benefits of keeping a Village orientation, but with flexibility for event locations. Mr. Tyler discussed justifications for the Economic Development's programs fund to remain separate from the Parks and Rec Program fund. Mr. Chawla suggested the committee reach out to underrepresented groups for event ideas and Mr. Brown discussed how the committee may help with issues of social isolation. Ms. Meyer said the committee should be involved with ensuring that groups who receive funding report back to the Trustees, or the committee, about the highlights, challenges, next steps and outcomes of their events.

The Trustees agreed to move forward with creating an advisory committee for community events. Mr. Teich and Mr. Luck said they will begin developing a guiding charter so the committee can formally appoint members. Mr. Chawla agreed to serve as a Trustee appointee to the committee as it gets established.

**c. Adopt ordinance regulating earth work in the Crescent Connector right-of-way**

Mr. Teich introduced the issue of whether the Trustees would approve an addition to the Village Ordinances for the Connector Road right-of-way. He justified this proposal based on the impact of 150 years of railroad activity on the parcel. Mr. Pierce noted Stone Environmental's corrective action plan on treating urban soils as justification for adding the ordinance. He said it will ensure that people who work along this section are informed of the Department of Environmental Conservation's expectations when working with certain types of lands, including wearing personal protective gear during digging or moving soil and, if the soil is spread elsewhere, that it must be capped.

Before moving forward with approving the ordinance, Mr. Brown requested that the suggested violation fee increase from \$500 per day to at least twice as much. He also requested that the ordinance be reviewed and approved by Mr. Jutras. Mr. Teich said that they are waiting to hear back from the Department of Environmental Conservation about a few details as well. Mr. Chawla clarified with Mr. Pierce that any new costs associated with the requirements in the ordinance would be covered by Crescent Connector funds from the State of Vermont. Mr. Brown suggested that if any other questions from the Trustees come up, regarding the ordinance, they should forward these to Mr. Teich.

d. **Update on Densmore Street Closure – Evan Teich**

Mr. Teich discussed the destabilization of the Densmore Drive road bed and sidewalk areas, as materials underneath the surfaces have continued to erode since the October 31<sup>st</sup> flood and wash-out. He described the current condition of this section of road, and talked about assessments conducted by the the State of Vermont and engineers. Mr. Teich explained that the road's washed out subsoil must be removed from the stream bed and that plans for road construction, including the replacement of two culverts, will ensure that stormwater can properly flow. Mr. Teich said the timeline for construction is affected by the challenge of securing asphalt during the winter. He explained plans for partial road closure of this section, keeping the upstream portion of road and sidewalk open because they are stable, according to engineers, but the downstream portion closed to ensure safety. This closure will be marked with signs that identify weight limits so no large trucks use this open portion of the road. Mr. Teich said that funding request applications are being submitted to FEMA and the State of Vermont, through Section 404 of the State Code, regarding impaired stream sections.

Mr. Brown expressed concern that any part of this section of Densmore Drive would remain open, when subsoil erosion seems to be continuing and the current detour is safe and working. Mr. Teich assured the Trustees that, because the erosion is only on one side of the road, the engineers said it should be safe to keep the other lane and sidewalk open. He said that they will keep the option to close the whole section if something else is discovered during construction, but with emergency access needs, they want to avoid full closure of the road. Mr. Brown encouraged staff to provide regular updates about the road to the housing development next to this portion of road. Mr. Chawla encouraged staff to continue to keep pedestrian needs in mind during construction. Mr. Tyler requested an update on the status of the application from FEMA, when one it is received, and clarified with Mr. Teich that they will use discretionary funds for the project until these new funds are secured. Mr. Teich pointed out that discretionary fund expenses would most likely be reimbursed by the new funding from FEMA. Mr. Brown and Mr. Teich spoke briefly about the importance of upkeep and upgrades to the Indian Brook Reservoir's dam, at the head of the river that meets Densmore Drive.

e. **\*Discussion of real estate matter**

This discussion took place in executive session, item 7a.

6. **CONSENT ITEMS**

**GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, that the Trustees to approve the Consent agenda with the exception of the minutes:**

a. Approve minutes: December 4, 2019

Ms. Macy requested that the Trustees table approval of these minutes so she could review them.

b. Check Warrants #17176—12/6/19

**VOTING: 4-0; motion carried.**

**READING FILE**

a. Board Member Comments

- Mr. Brown pointed out that a discussion of the VT League of Cities and Towns' Cannabis Resolution will be scheduled for an upcoming meeting.
- Mr. Tyler brought up concerns that the library is seeing increased traffic of individuals looking for Village office support and he wondered if there would be a way to staff the office more consistently. Mr. Chawla agreed this discussion should take place and Mr. Brown suggested it go on the January 28 Trustees' meeting agenda.

- Ms. Thibeault pointed out that the next Trustee meeting and Joint meeting, scheduled for December 17, will make a long day of meetings, due to the 3pm Special Meeting also scheduled that day. Mr. Tyler said that the Governance Subcommittee meeting update could take place at the Selectboard Meeting on December 16 and Ms. Macy said that the FY19 fund balance assignments can be postponed for the following Trustee meeting. Staff agreed to consider cancelling these meetings, with these adjustments. Mr. Chawla suggested scheduling a meeting on December 23<sup>rd</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup>, if something comes up that needs more immediate attention.
- b. Memo from Claudine C. Safar, Esq. re: Condemnation Hearing, Crescent Connector Parcels
- c. Memo from James Jutras re: Vermont Phosphorus Innovation Challenge (VPIC)
- d. Letter from Chittenden County Assistant Judges re: Pre-Budget Meeting
- e. Email from Gwynn Zakov re: Vermont League of Cities & Towns Cannabis Resolution
- f. Memo from Robin Pierce re: Village Center Development
- g. Upcoming meeting schedule

7. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a. **\*An executive is anticipated to discuss real estate**

**ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and GEORGE TYLER seconded, that the Trustees enter into executive session for negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(2), to include the Unified Manager, Finance Director/Assistant Manager, and Community Development Director. VOTING: 4-0; motion carried at 7:48 p.m.**

**ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and GEORGE TYLER seconded, that the Trustees exit executive session. VOTING: 4-0; motion carried at 8:02 p.m.**

**ADJOURN**

**ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and GEORGE TYLER seconded, that the Trustees adjourn the meeting. VOTING: 4-0; motion carried at 8:02 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Cathy Ainsworth