

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 25, 2020**

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

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: Seth Cronin; Joe Duncan; Elaine Haney; Aaron Martin; Nathan Pion; John Sheppard; Ramona Sheppard; Ken Signorello; Irene Wrenner

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**

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

With no changes to the agenda, approval was not required.

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

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

There were no comments from the public at this time.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. ***Interview for Bike/Walk Advisory Committee: Seth Cronin**

Mr. Cronin discussed his interest in serving on the Bike/Walk Advisory Committee. He explained that he and his wife live in Essex Junction and both bike and walk to work. He said he is also interested in alternate modes of transportation. Mr. Tyler asked Mr. Cronin about his bike commute to work in Williston and how he navigates it. Mr. Chawla asked Mr. Cronin to talk about his impression of the bike and walk opportunities in Essex. Mr. Cronin said he enjoys the bike path near the outlets and shared a concern about the visibility of pedestrians waiting to cross the road at the crosswalk near Railroad Ave and Main street. Mr. Kerin asked Mr. Cronin how the walk and ride opportunities in Essex compare to other places he has lived. Mr. Cronin said he appreciates that drivers and pedestrians seem to respect each other, pointing out that this is unique. He said Essex is far ahead of other places he has lived. Mr. Brown explained that the Trustees plan to interview another candidate interested in the committee seat on March 10, 2020 and will be in touch with Mr. Cronin of their decision thereafter.

b. ***Interview and appointment for CCTV Representative: RaMona Sheppard**

Ms. Sheppard said that her role as CFO VP of Administration at VPR is in sync with the Channel 17 representative position. She noted that she thinks her budgeting skills could be helpful and that, although she said she had a lot to learn, she thinks the position sounds exciting. Mr. Tyler thanked Ms. Sheppard for connecting with this position. Mr. Brown explained that Ms. Sheppard also was interviewed and appointed to the position by the Town of Essex Selectboard. Ms. Haney suggested language for the Trustees to use in their motion.

ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and GEORGE TYLER seconded, that the Trustees appoint RaMona Sheppard to the Channel 17 and Town meeting Television board.

Ms. Sheppard requested that the Trustees provide guidance to her about when to communicate about the Channel 17 board's activities.

VOTING: 5-0; motion carried.

c. **Presentation on Champlain Water District bond vote and fiscal year 2020-2021 budget**

Mr. Duncan provided a brief overview of the Champlain Water District (CWD)'s FY20-21 operating budget and Capital Improvement Budget for Wholesale and Retail Departments, which were proposed and approved by the CWD Commissioners. He said the wholesale water rate is set at \$2.313/1000 gallons, which is an 8.3 cent increase per 1000 gallons, and the average family will see an increase of 43 cents/month. He invited Essex residents to attend the CWD's annual meeting at 7 PM on Tuesday April 1 if they have questions. Mr. Duncan told Mr. Tyler that, compared to other water districts in the region, the rate is typical, but it is low for the nation. He talked about the approach the CWD takes is to reinvest in infrastructure.

Mr. Duncan then explained the CWD Bond Vote of \$3.5 million. He said the bond would be for two projects: one to create a tank loop that addresses water quality issues and provides a secondary feed/draw line for the Colchester South Tanks; the second project would improve operational efficiencies within the overall transmission system by providing a redundant feed to high service areas. Mr. Duncan discussed how this Bond calculates into the overall CWD water plan, with other debt being dropped to ensure it does not impact taxpayers.

Mr. Brown asked about power activated carbon maintenance, and Mr. Duncan explained preparation strategies for if water is ever, in the future, impacted by contaminants. Mr. Chawla and Mr. Kerin talked about the fact that some people who are not connected to water will also be able to vote on the bond. They compared this to residents with no children in the school who still have the right to vote on the school budget. Mr. Duncan and Mr. Kerin discussed the CWD's strategy to grow within the system versus extending service.

d. **Approve Annual Meeting Warning**

Mr. Brown introduced the annual meeting warning for April 1, 2020.

GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, that the Trustees approve Village of Essex Junction Annual Meeting warning as presented. VOTING: 5-0; motion carried.

6. **CONSENT ITEMS**

DAN KERIN made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, that the Trustees approve the Consent agenda:

- a. Approve minutes: : February 11, 2020
- b. Check Warrant #17186—02/14/2020; #17698—02/21/2020

VOTING: 5-0; motion carried.

READING FILE

- a. Board Member Comments
 - Mr. Tyler asked if the Trustees had any update on the status of the Cannabis Legislation, which would allow Vermont communities to opt-in or opt-out of allowing the sale of cannabis. Mr. Brown said this will be on a joint meeting of the Trustees and Selectboard. Mr. Chawla asserted that the Trustees should also have a discussion separately to talk about what this legislation may mean for the concentrated area of Essex Junction.
- b. Letter from Mary Jo Engel re: Resignation from Tree Advisory Committee
- c. Email from Charles Baker re: I-89 Study initial public meetings
- d. Email from Elaine Haney re: Municipal share of cannabis sales taxation
- e. Brownell Library Strategic Plan: July 2020 - June 2025
 - Mr. Brown complimented the Brownell Library's Strategic Plan as interesting and well done.
- f. Memo from Dennis Lutz re: Town and Village Staff Meeting with Essex-Westford School District Transportation Director
- g. ICMA Vermont Women Leading Government
- h. Brownell Library Staff and Directors Report December 2019 and January 2020

i. Upcoming meeting schedule

7. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

a. ***An executive may be necessary for the appointment of a public official**

An executive session was not required.

ADJOURN

DAN KERIN made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, that the Trustees adjourn the meeting. VOTING: 5-0; motion carried at 7:14 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Ainsworth