

VILLAGE TRUSTEES

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, April 28, 2020

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

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Sarah Macy, Assistant Manager/Finance Director; Charles Cole, Fire Department Chief.

OTHERS PRESENT: Ken Signorello; Margaret Smith; Liz Subin; Irene Wrenner.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Andrew Brown called the meeting of the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees back to order at 9:46 PM, from a recess after Joint Business with the Essex Town Selectboard.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Mr. Duggan added a new agenda item 5b, to Approve the Annual Meeting Warning. The following business items changed as follows: 5c, Approve street vending permit for Mr. Ding-a-ling Ice Cream (tabled 04/14/2020); 5d Approve Lamoille Street Waterline and Roadway Improvements bid; and 5e, Discuss how to help local businesses. Mr. Duggan also added budget handouts for item 5a and a memo and Annual Meeting warning for new item 5b.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, to approve the agenda, as amended. The motion passed 5-0.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

There were no comments from the public at this time.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Update on Village Annual Meeting

Mr. Duggan pointed out multiple options for scheduling the Village Annual Meeting, detailed in the memo included with this business item. There was no discussion on this item.

b. Approve Annual Meeting Warning

Mr. Duggan explained coordination efforts between the Essex Westford School District's (EWSD) voting and the Village Annual Meeting. The Essex Clerk and EWSD agreed to plan a combined vote for June 2, running from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mr. Duggan discussed state law that requires an annual meeting to be held within 30 to 40 days of it being warned. He said the Trustees could warn it for June 2 during this meeting. All votes would be cast by ballot, as is currently being allowed by the state, and the clerks are encouraging people to vote by absentee ballot. An informational meeting would be held remotely on June 1.

The Trustees discussed various ways to protect poll workers from COVID-19 during voting hours. These included having barriers at the tables, masks and hand sanitizer available and foot traffic carefully directed. Mr. Brown and Mr. Chawla suggested mailing the ballots to active voters instead of holding the vote at the school, now that the Governor allows this, to promote health and safety. Ms. Macy said the expense for this mailing would need to come out of the FY20 budget in an estimated amount of \$5000. Mr. Duggan relayed that the Clerks would prefer to avoid this based on the practical challenges posed with preparing a mailing of 15,000 ballots with return envelopes. Mr. Chawla wondered whether the Clerk's office would consider

54 recruiting new volunteer poll workers, considering the aging population and vulnerability of the
55 current group; Mr. Teich agreed to look into this. The Trustees also discussed the merits of
56 establishing a drive-up voting process. The majority of the board was in favor of not sending
57 ballots but, instead, implementing a drive-through option and carefully planned traffic flow to
58 alleviate risk.

59
60 Mr. Brown asked if the Trustees would propose changes to the budget, previously approved for
61 this vote, in consideration of COVID-19. The Trustees made no budget changes.

62
63 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by ANDREW BROWN, to warn the Village**
64 **Annual Meeting for Tuesday, June 2 and an informational meeting about the budget for**
65 **Monday, June 1. The motion passed 5-0.**

66
67 **b.c. Approve street vending permit for Mr. Ding-a-ling Ice Cream (tabled 04/14/2020)**

68 Mr. Teich said that since the vending permit for Mr. Ding-a-Ling Ice Cream was tabled during
69 the Trustees’ previous meeting, the business’s owner, Mr. Hathaway, provided answers and
70 assurances in response to an email sent to him by staff. The Trustees discussed these
71 assurances as well as their continued concerns with approving this street vending permit during
72 the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of the Trustees were reassured by the information
73 provided by Mr. Hathaway. Mr. Chawla requested the Trustees table the permit approval until
74 the governor gives further direction with this age group, then revisit it at each meeting until
75 advisement is granted. Mr. Teich relayed a conversation he had with Police Chief Garey, who
76 pointed out that Mr. Ding-a-Ling Ice Cream would still need to follow the social distancing rules
77 in effect during their time of their operation, if the permit is granted. The majority of the Trustees
78 agreed that, if they approve the permit, they should inform Mr. Hathaway of their concerns and
79 strict expectations of ensuring social distancing.

80
81 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, to approve the permit for Mr.**
82 **Ding-a-Ling.**

- 83 • Ms. Thibeault requested that, in the event Chief Garey receives any complaints about the ice
84 cream truck, these complaints be provided to the Trustees, where they may decide whether the
85 permit will continue.
- 86 • Ms. Thibeault also requested that the permit only be granted once the business’s Certificate of
87 Insurance is on file with the Clerk’s office.

88
89 Mr. Tyler and Mr. Kerin approved the friendly amendments to the motion, which Mr. Brown
90 summarized to read:

91
92 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, to approve the permit for Mr.**
93 **Ding-a-Ling, contingent upon the Certificate of Insurance and that any complaints the**
94 **Police Department receives come to the Trustees, with regard to Mr. Ding-a-Ling and social**
95 **distancing. The motion passed 4-1 by roll call, with the dissenting vote by Mr. Chawla.**

96
97 **e.d. Approve Lamoille Street Waterline and Roadway Improvements bid**

98 Mr. Brown asked whether the Trustees had any concerns with awarding the Waterline and
99 Roadway Improvements bid. Hearing none, he called for a motion.

100
101 **AMBER THIBEAULT made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, that the Trustees award**
102 **the bid for Lamoille Street Waterline and Roadway Improvements to Don Weston**
103 **Excavating for the amount of \$419,850.00. The motion passed 5-0.**

104
105 **d.e. Discuss how to help local businesses**

106 Mr. Tyler introduced a letter he drafted to the owners of local restaurants and bars to gather
 107 their ideas for how the Trustees can support businesses moving forward with reopening and
 108 getting through the COVID-19 restrictions. The Trustees discussed the possibility of using
 109 some of the economic development fund to support businesses. Mr. Kerin agreed with the idea
 110 of reaching out to businesses but encouraged the Trustees to broaden the scope to include
 111 other non-essential businesses. The Trustees discussed the possibility of offering businesses
 112 creative solutions by being flexible with ordinances. Mr. Tyler said they may want to consider
 113 identifying strategic locations and public areas to encourage outdoor pop-up businesses. He
 114 said he would engage the 29 Village bars and restaurants first, then more businesses.
 115

116 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

117
118 **AMBER THIBEAULT made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, that the Trustees**
119 **approve the Consent Agenda:**

- 120 a. Reappoint representatives to Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission Planning
- 121 Advisory Committee
 - 122 • To reappoint John Alden and Robin Pierce as Essex Junction’s representative and
 - 123 alternate, respectively, on the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission’s Planning
 - 124 Advisory Committee.
- 125 b. Approve minutes: April 14, 2020
- 126 c. Check Warrant #17195—04/17/2020; #17196—04/24/2020

127 **The motion passed 5-0.**

128
129 **7. READING FILE**

- 130 a. Board Member Comments
- 131 b. **Letter from Arbor Day Foundation**
 - 132 • Mr. Tyler commended the Tree Committee for achieving the Tree City USA distinction from
 - 133 the Arbor Day Foundation.
- 134 a. Letter from James L. Jutras re: Comments on Solid Waste Rules
- 135 b. Letter from Eamon Twohig re: Village of Essex Junction; Sold Waste ID-124; Results and
- 136 Response to PFAS testing
- 137 c. Brownell Staff and Directors Reports – February, March

138
139 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- 140 a. An executive session is not anticipated

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142 **9. ADJOURN**

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144 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by ANDREW BROWN, that the Trustees adjourn**
145 **the meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 10:39 PM.**