

**VILLAGE TRUSTEES
(DRAFT)**

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, November 10, 2020**

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

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Ricky Jones, Public Works Superintendent; Jim Jutras, Water Quality Superintendent; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/ Assistant Manager.

OTHERS PRESENT: Charles Baker, CCRPC Director; Kevin Collins; Roseanne Prestipino; Mike Sullivan; Mike Thorpe.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

With no changes to the agenda, no motion to approve was needed.

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. Presentation of Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission Annual Report

Mr. Baker presented the Annual Report of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC). He reviewed the CCRPC's background, board make up, leverage of dues, and representation from the Village of Essex Junction (Community Development Director Robin Pierce, Mr. Kerin and Stormwater Coordinator/Wastewater Operator Chelsea Mandigo). He talked about specific Village projects supported by the CCRPC during the fiscal year, including traffic counts and water quality efforts. Mr. Brown requested the CCRPC's stormwater inspection results and Mr. Baker said he would forward a copy. He also clarified for Mr. Brown that traffic counts are conducted upon request from the municipalities. Mr. Baker talked about work on the VTrans Capital Improvement plan and said he looks forward to providing CCRPC support to the Village for the Crescent Connector. Mr. Baker also discussed county-wide CCRPC efforts on housing and racial equity with the Trustees. He said racial equity, one of eight key strategies of the CCRPC efforts, became a greater focus this year. Mr. Teich and Mr. Brown asked what the CCRPC could do to help Essex make an impact on racial equity and economic inclusion. Mr. Baker said the CCRPC is planning to contract with a partner to help provide substantive equity impact recommendations. He also said housing policies are often not equitable at various levels, so addressing these policies in town plans and zoning may contribute to also addressing equity. He mentioned that the 5-year Building Homes Together initiative is making progress but has made little impact on the Essex vacancy rate. Mr. Chawla asked Mr. Baker how the CCRPC identifies regional activities to focus on. Mr. Baker said projects for the following year are determined every spring based on municipality requests. Mr. Chawla talked with Mr. Baker about community issues he would like the CCRPC to give attention to, including: transportation energy efficiency; creating a healthy, inclusive economy; and public health. They talked about the interrelationship of many of the CCRPC's regional planning strategies within the goals.

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b. Consider approval of bid award for Densmore Drive project

Mr. Jutras introduced the issue of whether the Trustees would approve a bid from S.D. Ireland to complete work on the Densmore Drive project. He said they received six bids for the project and the engineer review found that S.D. Ireland’s bid of \$829,215 was the lowest, responsible bid. He said they would be able to begin reinforcing the project for the winter starting the following Monday. Mr. Jutras discussed the expected FEMA reimbursement for this project and talked about how they address FEMA compliance requirements. He said the engineer of this project has secured all necessary permits.

DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, that the Trustees award the bid for the Densmore Drive culvert replacement to the low bidder, S.D. Ireland, for \$829,215. The motion passed 4-0.

c. Consider approval of bid award for sidewalk plow

Mr. Jones introduced the issue of whether the Trustees would approve a sidewalk machine bid to Chadwick-BaRoss. Mr. Kerin wondered whether the 5-year warranty, included in the bid, was necessary. Mr. Jones explained the importance of this warranty and what is included.

RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, that the Trustees award the bid to Chadwick-BaRoss for a price not to exceed \$131,339.00. The motion passed 4-0.

d. Update on racial equity work and consider appointment of Trustee to planning team

Mr. Teich provided an overview of Essex’s racial equity work, as described in his memo. He said surveys and listening sessions were complete, and a report will be provided from the contracted consultant with results. He said the next step is to plan and apply the information to build Essex as a safe, inclusive place to live and work. He requested an appointment from the Trustees to work on this with staff managers and an appointee from the Selectboard. Mr. Chawla volunteered for the appointment and Mr. Brown volunteered as an alternate.

AMBER THIBEAULT made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, to nominate Mr. Chawla to the planning team for racial equity, policing, and safety in Essex, with Mr. Brown as a second. The motion passed 4-0.

e. Discussion of results from Special Village Meeting about merger with Town of Essex and Australian ballot budget voting

Mr. Brown said the recent vote for merger passed with a three-to-one margin and the Australian ballot budget vote also overwhelmingly passed. He thanked all who were involved with the work related to these votes. Mr. Teich also thanked those involved, especially the efforts of Ms. McNamara-Hill, the Board of Civil Authority members, and poll workers. He said there was an 81% turnout for the election and a 60% turnout for the merger and Australian ballot vote. Mr. Teich pointed out that many people have approached him since the vote, thinking that Essex is now already merged, so he encouraged the Trustees to help clarify this confusion. He said the last listening session for the Selectboard’s version of the proposed unified charter will take place November 16th, and then they will vote on whether to put the question for the charter on the Town ballot in March.

f. *Discussion of evaluation of public employees

This discussion took place during item 7, in Executive Session.

6. CONSENT ITEMS

- a. Approve minutes: October 13, 2020; October 20, 2020 – Joint; October 26, 2020 – Joint; October 27, 2020

b. Check Warrants: #17223—10/30/20; #17224—11/06/20

AMBER THIBEAULT made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed 4-0.

7. READING FILE

a. Board member comments

b. Letter from Greater Burlington Industrial Corp. re: Appropriation Request

c. Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission October Newsletter

d. Memo from Dennis Lutz and Tom Yandow re: Buildings study (INFORMATION)

e. **Memo to employees re: COVID19 update**

- Mr. Teich talked about the new travel restrictions announced by the Vermont governor. Mr. Chawla said he heard there was no place to travel that is safe and he expressed concern with the challenges that may be faced by Public Works this winter due to COVID. Mr. Teich described municipal employees' vigilance to wear masks and ensure social distancing. He said they will consider split shifts and people starting at different times as additional precautions. He said staff will ensure equipment is wiped down and fogged. He hoped for public understanding and patience as they limit access to libraries and public buildings.

f. Email from Janine Burke-Wells re Thanks for Your Contribution to the PFAS Cost Impacts Study

g. **Upcoming meeting schedule**

- Mr. Teich verified for Ms. Thibeault that the budget day is planned to take place on Zoom. He said budget day information would be available beforehand and the Trustees will be invited to schedule a day and time to pick it up.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

a. ***An executive session is anticipated to discuss evaluation of public employees**

ANDREW BROWN made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, for the Trustees to enter executive session to discuss the evaluation of public employees in accordance with 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(3) and to include the Unified Manager, Director of Essex Junction Recreation and Parks, and Human Resources Director. The motion passed 4-0 at 7:38 PM.

RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, for the Trustees exit executive session. The motion passed 4-0 at 7:57 PM.

ANDREW BROWN made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, that the Trustees approve providing one-time bonuses for three EJRP employees of 5%.

9. ADJOURN

DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, for the Trustees to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0 at 7:59 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Ainsworth
Recording Secretary