

**VILLAGE TRUSTEES
(DRAFT)**

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
November 24, 2020**

TRUSTEES: Andrew Brown, President; Raj Chawla; George Tyler; Amber Thibeault. (Dan Kerin not in attendance)

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Chris Gaboriault, Fire Chief; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/ Assistant Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: Betsy Dunn; Sabrina Margarete; Russell Mills; Ken Signorello

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

Mr. Mills described communications and concerns with little follow-up from Village staff regarding a resident in his neighborhood who has violated Village ordinances. He detailed a series of communications regarding this issue, beginning in March of 2020. He said he was told the matter was referred to the Village Attorney and the courts many months ago, but no updates have been shared with him or his neighbors about the current status of the situation.

Mr. Teich provided an update on the matter. He said the Village has attempted to serve the tenant notice of violation of the ordinance. He said the tenant is due for a court date but currently the courts are not open for these types of cases. He said the tenant was served an eviction notice from the property owner but evictions have been on hold during the state of emergency in Vermont. Mr. Teich explained that the state courts are supposed to remediate issues such as these and when they are open again, the hope is that this will move forward.

Mr. Tyler requested that Mr. Teich write a summary of the situation to the Trustees.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Update on fire on Densmore Drive

Chief Gaboriault described the November 14th fire on Densmore Drive and the response from the Essex Junction Fire Department and Essex Fire department. He said the fire began at 4 am and was fully involved, with eleven cars on fire when the fire trucks arrived. He said they believe one car was on fire first, and then all others in the carport ignited at the same time from an intense smoke heating flashover. He said the fire was extremely hot; firefighters pulled lines quickly and all firefighters, from both fire stations pumped water at full capacity to prevent it from spreading to other structures. He said all cars and the carport were a complete loss.

The Trustees discussed the fire with Chief Gaboriault. They all expressed appreciation for the firefighters' job performance and gratitude that there was no loss of life. Chief Gaboriault talked with Mr. Brown about the intense heat of the fire. He said it caused first degree burns on firefighters' faces, and second degree burns on one firefighter's arms when they first emerged

53 from the fire trucks. He said it was the most significant fire they have had in ten years. He
54 expressed gratitude for the immediate response of the Essex Fire department, who arrived at
55 the scene almost at the same time as the Essex Junction Fire Department. He also
56 acknowledged the support of Colchester Fire Department, who were on call while they were
57 indisposed. Ms. Thibeault asked if the fire trucks were damaged. Chief Gaboriault said one fire
58 truck's lenses melted by the intense heat but can be replaced. He said some of the cars parked
59 on the street also suffered damage from melting. Mr. Chawla asked about what may have
60 caused the fire. Chief Gaboriault said the fire is considered to be suspicious and an
61 investigation is being conducted. Mr. Tyler asked if there were any concerns with the smoke.
62 Chief Gaboriault said that the fire burned so hot that the smoke went straight up, so there were
63 no problems with it. Mr. Teich said that neighbors of the fire were up and knocking on doors to
64 help alert people. Chief Gaboriault said this was initiated by the police and was helpful so the
65 fire crew could focus on containing the fire.
66

67 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

- 68 a. Approve minutes: November 2, 2020; November 10, 2020
69 b. Check Warrants: #17225 – 11/13/20; #17226 – 11/20/20
70

71 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, to approve the Consent
72 Agenda. The motion passed 4-0.**
73

74 **7. READING FILE**

- 75 a. Board member comments

- 76 • Mr. Brown asked if there were any other community comments or questions.
77

78 Ms. Dunn asked what the total tax change amount with a merger would be if, instead of
79 spreading it out over 12 years, it was all applied at the same time within the first year. Ms. Macy
80 said that, in this scenario, an average home would see a \$320 or \$330 increase in the Town
81 outside the Village. Mr. Tyler explained that the proposal to spread out the amount, would allow
82 the growth in the Grand List to allow for some tax savings.
83

- 84 • Mr. Brown encouraged the Trustees to read the memo re: community development.
85

- 86 b. Essex Rescue Essex Community Annual Report 2020
87 c. Letter of thanks from Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation
88 d. Memo from Robin Pierce re: Village Center
89 e. Upcoming meeting schedule
90

91 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- 92 a. **An executive session is not anticipated**
93 An executive session did not take place.
94

95 **9. ADJOURN**

96
97 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, for the Trustees to adjourn
98 the meeting. The motion passed 4-0 at 7:05 PM.**
99

100 Respectfully Submitted,
101 Cathy Ainsworth
102 Recording Secretary