

**VILLAGE TRUSTEES
(DRAFT)**

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
December 22, 2020**

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

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Tammy Getchell, Assistant to the Manager; Chelsea Mandigo, Stormwater Coordinator/ Wastewater Operator; Robin Pierce, Community Development Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Annie Cooper; Frank Naef; Judy Naef; Meghan O'Rourke; Mike Thorne; Irene Wrenner

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:31 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. and Mrs. Naef described their experience of multiple incidents with neighboring construction vehicles blocking their driveway and their street, Park Terrace. They said it has caused them heartache, duress, stress, and difficulty getting to their doctor appointments. They told the Trustees that traffic challenges have been happening on their street for many years, but it escalated with recent, new construction. Mr. and Mrs. Naef described their inability to exit their driveway and challenges they face every time they leave or return to their home, due to trucks parked in their one-way street. Mrs. Naef said they have called the police for help, but nothing has changed. They added that recently when construction start time was approved for 6 am, they were not notified in advance. They asked the Trustees what they should do.

The Trustees talked with Mr. and Mrs. Naef about their concerns. Mr. Brown said the police are the appropriate contact for them when they are facing these challenges. Mr. Tyler suggested mobile parking signs but Mr. Naef said these are already being used and are not working. Mr. Tyler asked if being able to drive the other way on the one-way street would help and Ms. Naef said this would not solve the driveway and street blocking problem. Mr. Chawla apologized to Mr. and Mrs. Naef and said he is appalled by the situation. He said he would make sure the conversation about this issue continues.

Mr. Teich and Mr. Pierce talked with Mrs. and Mr. Naef. Mr. Teich said he would discuss the matter with the police department and asked Mr. Pierce to talk with the owner of the building to request he monitor the construction workers' use of the road more closely. Mr. Pierce provided his phone number to Mr. or Mrs. Naef should they have any further issues.

Ms. Cooper commented that she was frustrated to hear about Mrs. and Mr. Naef's situation and said she would like to know who owns the building that is allowing this behavior.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Interview and possible appointment: Annie Cooper, Bike/Walk Advisory Committee

53 The Trustees interviewed Ms. Cooper for the Bike/Walk Advisory Committee. She described
54 relevant experience discovering all of the ways people can get around without a car in Essex,
55 with her children when they walked to school, and for herself when she walks or rides her bike.
56 Ms. Cooper said she is interested in the Bike/Walk Advisory Committee to help Essex residents
57 be able to better navigate walking and biking. She said she liked Darren Schibler’s and Owiso
58 Makuku’s discussion about connecting points and the possibility of map making. She said she
59 believes foot and bike path interconnectivity can empower people. Mr. Tyler asked if there is an
60 improvement she would like to see and Ms. Cooper said she started a petition to establish a
61 flashing-light, pedestrian right-of-way at a dangerous crosswalk in the Village. She told Ms.
62 Thibeault that the term and meeting times of the position work well for her. Mr. Chawla thanked
63 Ms. Cooper for her willingness to be on the committee and said she could bring a pedestrian-
64 focused perspective to interconnectivity.
65

66 **b. Presentation of Town Meeting TV annual update**

67 Ms. O’Rourke, Town Meeting TV (TMTV) Channel Director, provided TMTV’s annual update
68 and funding request. She discussed TMTV’s municipal meetings recording and archival
69 services and described technical adaptations for virtual meetings during COVID-19. She said
70 TMTV’s new station number is 1087 and recordings are available on the website and YouTube.
71 She requested level funding for FY22 and provided a multi-year overview of costs and funding
72 requests. She said the request would be for 36 meetings. She explained a large drop in
73 revenue from Cable over the past five years. Ms. O’Rourke said TMTV is exploring, along with
74 Mr. Paluba, ways to move forward, post-pandemic, in a hybrid online/live meeting model. She
75 talked about TMTV’s grant-funded internships, advocacy, and community outreach.
76

77 The Trustees discussed Ms. O’Rourke’s update. They all agreed that the hybrid meeting model
78 sounded promising. Mr. Teich said staff were excited to see increased public engagement
79 when the meetings went online. Ms. Thibeault clarified with Ms. O’Rourke that the level funding
80 number for FY22 in the request looks different because of different fiscal year periods between
81 the municipality and the TMTV. Mr. Tyler asked about how Comcast changing their station from
82 channel 15 to one in the thousands has affected them. Ms. O’Rourke said people did not know
83 where to find the station and the settlement gave only \$3000 to market and rebrand. She said
84 all public access stations are now collaborating on a statewide channel.
85

86 Ms. Cooper expressed thanks to Ms. O’Rourke and TMTV staff for their work.
87

88 **c. Consider approval to accept grant award for stormwater outfall stabilization project on
89 Rosewood Lane**

90 Ms. Mandigo described the Rosewood Lane stormwater outfall stabilization project and the
91 Better Roads Grant for municipal roads to reduce stormwater runoff. She said the Chittenden
92 County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) conducted a runoff inventory of hydrologically
93 connected road segments and found seven outlets that need to be addressed, one of which is
94 the Rosewood Lane location. She said the Regional Planning Commission provided support to
95 design the location’s stabilization plan and she described the work it would entail. She said the
96 estimate is \$23,671, the grant request is \$19,725.84, and the local match will be 20%, at
97 \$3,945.16. She said the grant approval notification would be received in July 2021, and the
98 project would take place during the Summer/Fall of 2021.
99

100 The Trustees discussed the project and the grant with Ms. Mandigo. Mr. Brown asked if there
101 would be ramifications if the grant is not received. Ms. Mandigo said the match money would go
102 to a separate stabilization project. She said there will be no ramifications because the State
103 requires 15% of the priority projects to be completed by 2023 and they are well on their way to

104 meeting this goal. Mr. Kerin asked how much of a role homeowners play in stormwater runoff.
105 Ms. Mandigo said a regional education project has interns monitoring outfall and if there are
106 changes, area residents receive education on runoff. She said people often affect outfalls when
107 they discard yard debris. Mr. Kerin asked if the Village owns the property where this outfall
108 stabilization will take place. Ms. Mandigo said the Village owns the pipe but the property does
109 not yet have an easement. She said they are working on securing one.
110

111 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, that the Trustees grant**
112 **permission to accept this grant and to authorize the Unified Manager to sign a Better Roads**
113 **grant agreement for this outfall stabilization project. The motion passed 5-0.**
114

115 **d. Discussion and potential action on increasing stipend for Trustees and other appointed**
116 **board members**

117 Mr. Teich reopened the discussion of increasing stipends for Trustees and other appointed
118 board members as a follow up to the Village Budget Day discussion. He said increasing
119 stipends would need to be a separate question on the ballot and if the article does not pass,
120 there would be excess money in the budget. He said making stipends available could entice
121 more people to join committees. Ms. Thibeault clarified that Trustee stipends would require a
122 vote, but other stipends are at the discretion of the Trustees.
123

124 The Trustees discussed whether or not it is important to maintain privacy around who receives
125 the stipends. Mr. Kerin suggested that anyone who receives a stipend should be undisclosed
126 so volunteers avoid stigma or embarrassment. Mr. Chawla asked how the Public Records Act
127 would affect privacy. Mr. Teich said he would ask this question to legal counsel. Mr. Brown said
128 that if they provide all appointed board members stipends, it could solve the problem. Mr. Kerin
129 suggested that the Trustee stipend be comparable to the Selectboard members' stipends.
130

131 Ms. Wrenner asked for clarification on what the current Trustee stipend is (\$500) and what the
132 proposed stipend would be (\$1000). She said that in the past, some Selectboard members
133 chose to not accept the stipend.
134

135 Ms. Cooper said a person she knows recently asked whether there was money associated with
136 these public service positions. She said the money can be helpful and agreed that equal
137 stipend rates are a good idea.
138

139 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

- 140 a. Approve minutes: December 8, 2020; December 9, 2020
141 b. Check Warrants: #17229 – 12/8/2020; #17230 12/11/2020
142

143 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, to approve the Consent Agenda.**
144 **The motion passed 5-0.**
145

146 **7. READING FILE**

147 a. Board member comments

- 148 • Mr. Brown wondered if a Microsoft Teams meeting link could be made accessible directly
149 on the website to make it easier for the public to get into the meetings.
150 • Mr. Brown said, in response to seeing a large uptick of foot traffic during the pandemic,
151 whether a change could be made so both sides of Class 3 streets could be plowed this
152 winter. Mr. Tyler agreed with this idea but wondered whether Public Works has the capacity
153 to do this. Mr. Chawla said other municipalities are doing creative things to respond to the
154 increase in walkers and said he will put the issue on the next Bike/Walk Committee agenda.

- 155 a. Letter from Governor Scott to Susan McNamara-Hill

- 156 • Mr. Brown congratulated Ms. McNamara-Hill for this recognition of her efforts related to voting
157 during the pandemic.
- 158 b. Memo from Dennis Lutz re: Status of current Capital Projects
- 159 • Mr. Tyler said he would like to ask voters for permission to use land acquisition and the
160 Economic Development Fund to complete the park near Firebird Café and he requested this
161 item be on the next meeting agenda. He said it is important to make more space available
162 during the spring and summer of the pandemic. He said the Village needs new, usable public
163 space to keep up with current housing development. Mr. Kerin agreed with this suggestion.
- 164 c. Green Mountain Power Hydro Dam #19 licensing letter
- 165 d. Christmas Tree Pick-up 2020
- 166 • Mr. Teich said Christmas Tree pick up will be January 4-8. He reminded people to take off all
167 ornaments before putting their trees out.
- 168 e. Connecting toward Recovery and Renewal November 2020
- 169 f. Upcoming meeting schedule
- 170

171 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- 172 a. **An executive session is not anticipated**
173 An executive session did not take place.

174

175 **9. ADJOURN**

176

177 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, for the Trustees to adjourn the**
178 **meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 8:23 PM.**

179

180 Respectfully Submitted,
181 Cathy Ainsworth
182 Recording Secretary
183