



# Village of Manchester, Vermont

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## DRAFT MINUTES

### **Regular Meeting**

**Village of Manchester Board of Trustees**

**Monday, July 1, 2019**

**4:30 p.m., at the Village of Manchester Office, 45 Union Street**

**In Attendance:** President, Brian Knight; Trustees, Nina Mooney, Bill Mariano, Tom Deck; Clerk/Treasurer & Tax Collector, Julia Arvin; Assistant Clerk/Treasurer and Secretary to the BOT, Missy Bell-Johnson

**Absent:** Trustee, Jim Lewis

**Public:** Donald Brodie, Ellen Ogden

**President Knight opened the meeting at 4:30. A quorum was present.**

**Trustee Mooney motioned to approve the minutes from the last Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees held on June 3, 2019. Trustee Mariano seconded the motion and all voted in favor.**

**Ellen Ogden presented documents in support of a three part report to address traffic and the future on Franklin Avenue. She raised several concerns and proposed possible solutions to the amount of traffic and the speed of traffic in this area. She mentioned that she did not anticipate the impact BBA has had on the neighborhood. Pending Act 250 review was discussed as was impact on a stream in the area. All trustees in attendance commented on the concerns. President Knight commented that due to the corner on Franklin that the traffic matters had more to do with quantity of vehicles and not speed. Trustee Mooney stated that there is a safety issue present as there is no room for people to walk. Ms. Ogden requested, and the trustees agreed, that the trustees would consider her possible solutions going forward.**

**Donald Brodie mentioned that the town of Manchester will be hiring a new police chief in the near future and commented that new chief may be more inclined to enforce the speed limit in the Village. President Knight commended Chief Hall for his cooperation and response with previous Village plans to increase traffic patrols in the Village**

**The Board continued on to obtaining updates on outstanding issues:**

- **Mr. Lewis was not present, but President Knight mentioned that there have been no updates from the state in regard to the Route 7A/West Road and Seminary Avenue intersection. It was mentioned that a more formal request may need to be made to**

the BCRC and/or VTrans. Trustee Deck mentioned that BBA had offered to participate in a study.

- Mr. Mariano mentioned that the project at the Equinox was finished.
- President Knight and Trustee Mooney mentioned that there was nothing to report about regarding the Bennington County Courthouse as the judiciary is still in the process of moving out of the building.
- Reports:
  - Mr. Lewis was not present to give the Roads and Trees Report. There was discussion regarding confirmation of projects, possibility of delaying projects, and grant opportunities for past projects. President Knight stated that the time to discuss budget projects is past. Trustee Mariano would like to re-coop the money spent on the Equinox Island project by not completing other projects. It was confirmed that Brightwood and Witherall will be paved as well this year. President Knight explained that the paving company would be here in two weeks. Weather is, and has been an issue. Trustee Deck asked a procedural question regarding not spending budgeted money.
  - Ms. Arvin then presented the Treasurer & Tax Collector Report and distributed written reports which were then discussed. The change in the annual Bennington County Regional Commission dues was explained. Ms. Arvin provided a summary of Village taxes stating they were lower in 2008, 2009 and 2010, then went up a bit and were stable for ten years but that during this period the Village was borrowing up to \$200,000 from the bank each year to meet expenses. The process of borrowing money from financial institutions has not been done since Ms. Arvin became treasurer. She went on to mention that in years when taxes spiked there were big projects including the Union Street Bridge and equipment purchases. Trustee Mariano voiced concern regarding the amount of taxes raised last year. Ms. Arvin mentioned that based on her calculations – taxes are expected to go down this year.

Ms. Arvin then discussed grant writing and explained that it was a time consuming process and it would be helpful to have a designated trustee working on grants. Questions were posed. President Knight explained that grant information comes through routinely and assured the trustees that whenever there is an opportunity, we do apply. He continued by saying that the Village has been successful in obtaining some grants in the past but there is a political aspect to the process. Ms. Arvin then mentioned that the VLCT has workshops for BOT members on various subjects including grant writing.

Ms. Arvin answered questions regarding interpretation of the budget. The topic of discussion then reverted back to ways to keep the budget down. Renting equipment, borrowing equipment from the Town of Manchester and the logistics of the ideas were talked about. President Knight reminded the trustees that the Village does receive payment from the Town of Manchester each year. Ms. Arvin mentioned that there was a big jump in the Highway Budget last year because of a couple of projects that had been put off. President Knight reiterated that it was not a good idea to keep the taxes level for so long. Ms. Arvin then mentioned, on a

positive note, that the Grand List went up slightly this year. There was continued discussion regarding costs inherent in any Village. Having the Town of Manchester take over the Village in everything but zoning and planning was mentioned as was keeping things the way they are but being mindful of spending. Trustee Deck mentioned that while there are residents who like what they receive for their taxes, he feels that more and more residents are tired of the amount of money being spent.

Additional ways to keep spending down were discussed including combining paving projects with another towns in order to get a lower price. Trustee Mariano used upper Ways Lane as an example and explained the Village could have partnered with the Town of Manchester to revamp that intersection but the Village refused.

At 5:26 pm President Knight motioned to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters. Trustee Mariano seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

At 5:45 pm, the trustees exited executive session.

It was announced the Trustee Deck would not be seeking re-election at the Annual Meeting on July 8, 2019. Persons interested in filling the vacancy on the Board of Trustees should attend the Annual Meeting. The trustees are voted by floor vote. Please contact the Village Office with procedural questions.