

Village of Manchester

Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting: Monday, November 1, 2021 at 4:30 pm

Village of Manchester Offices, 45 Union Street, Manchester

In Attendance: President Orland Campbell, Trustees: Jim Lewis, Brian Maggiotto, Bill Mariano and Nina Mooney; Clerk/Treasurer & Tax Collector Donald Brodie; Assistant Clerk/Treasurer and Office Administrator Missy Johnson

President Campbell opened the meeting at 4:30 pm. He expressed that he was pleased to see so many people at the meeting and stressed the need for people to become involved in local government.

Trustee Lewis moved to approve the minutes from October 4, 2021. Trustee Mariano seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Ms. Johnson thanked the members of the public who were present for attending and asked to reserve some time at the end of the discussion on possible approval to start discussions with the Town of Manchester on a possible merger.

President Campbell summarized the discussion the board had at the October 4, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees regarding the consideration of reimbursement to Equinox on the Batttenkill (EOB) for repair of problems stemming from the paving of Union Street in the fall of 2020. Paul Carroccio added information to the provided summary. Questions were asked of both parties and were answered. The amount of money allocated (\$2,000.00), but not yet voted on by the BOT, is considered by EOB to be insufficient to rectify the paving issues. Trustee Lewis and Trustee Mariano both expressed the need to speak with the road foreman again before a final vote would be taken on this request. President Campbell suggested that a Special Meeting of the BOT be warned for this discussion. The matter was then tabled until the next warned meeting on the subject.

The new parking signs at the Village Post Office have been put up.

President Campbell updated all on a slip and fall incident occurring in the driveway to the American Museum of Fly Fishing and indicated that the Village was not at fault and will not accept liability for the incident.

President Campbell then provided a brief history of the discussion on the possibility of approving discussion with the Town of Manchester for possible future merger of the Village of Manchester with the town. He indicated the plan was to discuss the possibility with the town to ascertain their thoughts on taking over some part(s) of the Village governance and to then move forward from that point if they agreed. He stressed that he was only interested in obtaining information about potential benefits and non-benefits of a merger, while exploring possibilities. He stressed that any merger would be a complicated process and a number of hurdles would need to be overcome including a vote by both the Town of Manchester and the Village of Manchester before such a merger would occur.

It was mentioned that other towns and villages in the state have successfully merged, and one current merger not going as well. Also mentioned was merging all Village governance but the zoning and planning department.

Attendees asked a number of questions regarding various aspects of this possibility. President Campbell mentioned that he had spoken informally to the Town Manager and that he had been open to the idea.

Concern was voiced by several people that should a merger take place, that the Village atmosphere would be lost over time. There was concern over the marble sidewalks, the rock wall and the potential loss of the Village Post Office. Merging all but zoning and planning did not seem a good idea to some as they felt that those departments would be lost, as well, as time went on.

Some residents called for more open and relaxed meetings; stating that if this type of plan were to go forward that it would be imperative that the public remain well informed. The board generally agreed that if residents want to stay involved with this matter (and other Village matters) that they need to continue to come to the regular meetings. Concern was voiced about apathy in the Village and the lack of public involvement at all Village meetings.

Some attendees stated that they believed going into discussions with the Town of Manchester open to possibilities but not limited by a specific agenda would not be a good idea. They felt it was important to define ideas before starting a conversation. This group also wished to have additional meetings on this proposal in order to get more input from Village residents.

After additional discussion, questions and some answers, Anthony MacLauren read a statement to the board in opposition of a merger. Keld Alstrup noted that what was occurring was a healthy discussion, but that he felt a lack of interest from the board and the community, and that not enough was being done to protect Village assets and the atmosphere.

It was generally agreed that the term “merger” would be dropped from this discussion in the future. No motions were taken on this agenda item and it was agreed that no motions would be entertained on this subject without further conversations in warned meetings.

Please note: There are hard copies of emails from Village residents and business owners on file at the Village Office regarding this matter including a hard copy of Anthony MacLauren’s statement.

Discussion continued on ideas for ARPA funds. More information will be available to the Village in the near future.

Three mature trees have been purchased by the Village under the approved budget for 2021/22. Locations for the trees have been selected and they will be planted soon. Trustee Mooney mentioned that BCRC has information on assistance for municipalities planting trees.

President Campbell reviewed the efforts being made by the Village in respect to the State Clean Water Act and talked about the upcoming road inventory. A contract with Jim Henderson to complete the needed inventory was reviewed. Trustee Lewis moved to hire Jim Henderson to complete the necessary inventory. Trustee Mariano seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Trustee Lewis provided the Road and Tree Report. Salt contracts were signed. Statements for the sidewalks have been received and the expenses were within

budget. A Village road crew employee has resigned and candidates are being reviewed.

The plan for the holiday wreaths was outlined by President Campbell. President Campbell will be assisting the road crew and Ms. Haines in getting the wreaths placed. Trustee Maggiotto volunteered to assist.

President Campbell mentioned that the way the Village Office is being run may be changing.

In other business:

- Keld Alstrup read a Riverbend Drive property owner's letter of concern regarding noise originating on River Road. Comments were made. The need for businesses to have seasonal Special Events Permits for amplified music was mentioned. The desire to have a noise ordinance was discussed. Comments were made regarding the difficulty of enforcing ordinances once they are passed.
- Trustee Mooney discussed speeding vehicles on Franklin Avenue. She noted that BBA's agreement with Act 250 on keeping the use of this parking area limited to teachers and buses was not being enforced by the school. President Campbell mentioned that he still needed to speak with the Chief of Police of the Town of Manchester regarding BBA matters.

There being no further business before the board, Trustee Mariano moved to adjourn. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The meeting ended at 6:01 pm.

The next Regular Meeting of the Village of Manchester Board of Trustees is currently scheduled for Monday, December 6, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,
Missy Johnson, Office Administrator