

Regular Meeting & Public Hearing Agenda
Village of Manchester Board of Trustees
Monday, September 12, 2022, 4:30 pm
Bennington Country Courthouse, 24 Union Street

DRAFT MINUTES

In Attendance: President Tom Deck; Trustees: Jim Lewis and Nina Mooney; Trustee Bill Mariano by phone; Road Foreman Alan Mowrey; Clerk/Treasurer and Tax Collector Donald Brodie; Office Administrator/Asst. Clerk & Asst. Treasurer Missy Johnson; Zoning Administrative Officer Curan VanDerWielen; Jim Henderson (BCRC).

President Deck brought the meeting to order at 4:30 pm and he opened the Public Hearing on the final comment period and BOT approval for the Village of Manchester Energy Plan, changes to the Plan of Development and a new Solar Screening Ordinance. The Planning Commission Chair, Rich Heileman provided some background on the documents. With no questions or comments, Trustee Mooney moved to accept the documents as written. Trustee Lewis seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The zoning administrative officer provided some background.

Mr. Deck made some changes to the order of the agenda so that Mr. Mowrey and Mr. Henderson would not need to stay through the entire meeting. Anything needed to be voted on was also moved up as Trustee Mooney established a need to leave the meeting at 5:30 pm. The date on the agenda was corrected from August 12, 2022 to September 12, 2022. Section #7 (review and possible approval of updated Zoning Application and Fees Schedule) is pulled from this meeting and will be on the agenda for the October BOT meeting. President Deck noted the long length of this agenda and vowed to try to keep it limited in the future.

Jim Henderson from the Bennington Country Regional Commission asked that Mr. VanDerWeilen return a ballot to the BCRC as soon as possible.

A letter received from a Village property owners asking for a new crosswalk in the area of the Equinok and Taconic Avenue was reviewed. Mr. Mowrey provided some information on placement of the sidewalk and what it would take to place it in the area identified. The cost was brought up as an issue as the marble sidewalks would need to continue across this property in order to place the crosswalk. Mr. Heileman mentioned that pedestrian and bicycle safety were long term plans for the Village and he was not sure how this project would fit into that plan. Mr. Mowrey will continue to look into the possibility, including costs of bringing this crosswalk into being and will report back to the BOT.

Jim Henderson discussed the possibility of bringing in a "traffic table" (a version of a speed bump) that may satisfy the need to slow traffic down and act as a cross walk, Marian Haines stated that as a property owner in this area, she would like to see the sidewalk extended. This topic was then tabled until the October BOT meeting.

President Deck then asked if there were any comments on the minutes from the August 1, 2022 meeting of the BOT. No comments or questions were taken. Trustee Lewis moved to approve the minutes. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

President Deck asked for comments or questions regarding a State of Vermont Third Class Liquor License for the Crooked Ram. With no comments or questions taken, Trustee Mooney moved to approve the license. Trustee Lewis seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Mr. Brodie had submitted a written request to formally acknowledge that the BOT had administratively corrected the tax rate approved at the Annual Meeting in July. It was approved from _____ to _____ which lowered the amount of taxes due.

The board then reviewed the Orvis Green Day Jumping Event. It was mentioned that there were concerns about noise at this event and Donald Brodie read a letter to the BOT on the subject of noise. It was mentioned that if the event were to be analyzed by the new Noise Ordinance there would be no problem in approving it. Comments were made that this event is not louder than a BBA field game. The possibility of decibel readings and policing by the ZOA was proposed. The BOT agreed to approve the application but with mention that the equipment be turned off when not in use and when in use, be set at the lowest level possible.

The Board then reviewed possible insurance plans for the office staff. It was mentioned that this cost was an approved budget item. Mr. Brodie mentioned that providing insurance for the staff was important and he recommended the BCBS-VT Platinum Plan as it was currently part of the road crew's benefit package. President Deck agreed with Mr. Brodie. Trustee Lewis moved to approve the plan as presented by Mr. Brodie. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Mr. Henderson from the BCRC then presented the Ways Lane Traffic Study. He noted that the speed set on the study was 5 mph over what the speed limit is on Ways Lane so the report readings should be adjusted accordingly. He explained the parameters of the study and how it worked. The report showed that some mild-moderate speeding existed on Ways Lane during the study period. Ideas for solutions were discussed. It was mentioned that a proposed sidewalk in this area would be very costly and difficult to construct.

Mr. Henderson then went over the Village of Manchester Road Inventory Report that he recently completed for the Village. He mentioned that he will be working with the Road Foreman in implementing the improvement recommended by the State of Vermont standards for storm water run-off/erosion prone areas. He mentioned that grants are available to help cover the costs. It was discussed that some of the areas identified are slightly out of the right-of-way and cooperation will be needed from the property owners before the repairs commence.

Mr. Henderson continued by briefly discussing *the Village of Manchester Transportation and Land Use Study* that was recently presented by the BCRC. It was agreed that Mark Anders (BCRC) would be available, at a future date, to present this report to the BOT. Rich Heileman mentioned that the Planning Commission would like to be involved in this meeting to make recommendations to the board regarding implementation.

Comments and were taken from the public. Continued concern regarding speeding vehicles in the Village was, again, voiced. Mr. Mowrey agreed to look into the possibility of additional traffic signs on Ways Lane but mentioned that he is limited by traffic regulations as to how many signs can be placed. It was also mentioned by Mr. Mowrey that the current speed limit on Ways Lane may have been adopted by the Village Charter. President Deck stated that the challenges the Village faces with speeding will

continue to be discussed until appropriate solutions can be found. Placement of electronic speeding signs was also addressed.

Discussion moved to the review and approval of the updated Village of Manchester Policy Regarding Conflicts of Interest and Ethical Conduct. President Deck and Trustee Mooney thanked Ms. Johnson for her work on this policy. There were no questions or concerns. Trustee Lewis moved to approve the policy as written. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Trustee Mooney excused herself from the meeting.

President Deck provided an update on the Village of Manchester website update and outlined some parameters discussed with a potential website design company in Rutland. He reiterated that the goal was to make the site as user friendly as possible .

The Social Media Policy project was passed to the BOT from the office administrator as the Village's insurance carrier has concerns that should be addressed by top level Village officials before a policy can be written. A draft/sample policy from VLCT was provided to the board by the office administrator. Public comment on this subject included concerns about monitoring the sites and it was mentioned this could be a 24-hour responsibility. President Deck mentioned that preliminary ideas included making any social media postings "one-way" in nature as they would be used primarily for announcements and not used a vehicle for prompting discussion.

The draft Welcome Letter to the Village appointees was reviewed. It was determined no vote was need to approve the draft.

President Deck mentioned that he was currently visiting the Village Office between 4-5 hours/week and he noted that the office was running well. He did mention that it was "tax season" and the staff was busy greeting visitors and taking in tax payments. He also discussed a recent discussion with a concerned resident regarding the hiring of a new staff employee. It has been proposed to have an intern hired to work in the office as an option to bring on an additional employee. He mentioned that this idea seemed to be a reasonable avenue to explore.

President Deck and Alan Mowrey explained how the "Town Allotment" funding works. President Deck mentioned that this money averages to be about \$60,000/year which is, in part, money paid by the State of Vermont to the Town of Manchester. The actual amount of the allotment was previously calculated using a bulky formula. The change in the determination of the funds is on hold pending Town of Manchester Selectboard approval.

Ms. Johnson mentioned that she not prepared an office update, but that tax season was in full swing with the deadline for prompt payment being September 22nd.

Mr. VanDerWeilen provided an update on Zoning and enforcement matters and the ongoing digital formatting project. He alerted the Board to the discovery of correspondence dated around 1900 and explained that these documents would also be part of the digitization project.

Mr. Lewis provide a Road Report and discussed challenges in finding roadside mowing companies. Mr. Mowrey will continue to search for an appropriate fit.

Mr. Brodie provided a brief Tax Collector Report. Payments are coming in steadily with about one-half of the payments received. NEMRC software is working well and is a huge help in processing these payments.

In Old Business, the Noise Ordinance was mentioned and the deadline of September 15, 2022 was reiterated as the deadline for petitions for an official vote on this ordinance. If no valid petition is received by September 15th, the Noise Ordinance will be enacted.

Ellen Ogden and Sue Flannigan thanked the Village for the dips on Franklin/Dillingham and thanked Alan Mowrey for his efforts in this area. Ms. Flanagan reiterated concerns about the housing of Equinox employees in this area and mentioned the lack of response received by the Equinox Hotel when issues arise at this property. She mentioned her concern that the Village Bylaws had been changed at some point to allow group housing.

President Deck mentioned that the issue with this property currently lies with the attorneys. He urged patience as legal matters do not always move more quickly.

Ms. Ogden mentioned that BBA was not in compliance with Act 250 in regard to plantings needed in island surrounding the new parking lot near Franklin and that LED lights were being left on all night (supposed to be on a timer.) Mr. VanDerWeilen mentioned that he would discuss this directly with Ms. Ogden outside of the meeting.

Ms. Ogden brought up her discussion with the BOT at the July 2022 meeting where she asked for assistance with old growth orchard trees in the Franklin/Dillingham area. She asked that that minutes of that meeting be changed to reflect her memory of the meeting. After discussion, it was determined that Ms. Ogden had asked for Village funds and cooperation in saving trees on private land. The Village of Manchester rarely is involved in private property matters. The one tree that was being discussed was later determined to be out of the right-of-way and therefore the Village was/is unable to assist. Ms. Ogden was urged to speak to her neighbors directly about saving these trees.

There being no future business before the BOT, President Deck thanked those in attendance for their active participation and promised, again, to keep the agenda for the October BOT meeting shorter.

The meeting ended at 6:27 pm.

The next Regular Meeting of the Village of Manchester Board of Trustees will be held on Monday October 2, 2022 at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Missy Johnson
Office Administrator