



Village of Manchester, Vermont

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**Regular Meeting of the Village of Manchester Board of Trustees
Monday, December 5, 2022 at 4:30 pm
Village of Manchester Office, 45 Union Street, Manchester Village**

DRAFT MINUTES

In Attendance: President Tom Deck, Trustees: Jim Lewis, Anthony MacLaurin, Nina Mooney; Clerk/Treasurer/Tax Collector Donald Brodie; Assistant Clerk/Treasurer and Office Administrator Missy Johnson; Zoning Administrative Officer Curan VanDerWeilen

President Deck brought the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

President Deck asked to add two items to the agenda under “New Business”:

- **Holiday Wreaths, and,**
- **Investment Committee**

Trustee MacLaurin moved to approve the minutes from the November Meeting of the BOT noting that it was determined that Trustee Mooney and Trustee MacLaurin did not have conflicts of interest when the vote was taken at the November meeting for the settlement with Equinox on the Battenkill. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Rich Heilemann spoke on behalf of the Planning Commission (“PC”). He asked for the BOT’s support of the PC’s work with the Town of Manchester and the Bennington County Regional Commission in obtaining one of two potential grants that would cover costs associated with a scoping study for bike path construction within the Village. The potential placement of the bike path and cost of the study with Village matching funds were discussed. Mr. Heilemann expressed the PC’s desire to see the bike path plan expanded to include off shoots to other roads in the Village. President Deck moved to support the scoping study and to set aside \$6,000.00 in the 2023/24 budget for the Village portion of the matching funds. Trustee MacLaurin seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Ms. Johnson provided a brief update on the Website Improvements project. The contractor is suggesting that a new website may be necessary. A conference call or Zoom meeting will be set up in the coming week to discuss this development further.

Reports:

Ms. Johnson provided a written copy of the administrator’s Winter Project List. President Deck provided background for the requested project list. Suggestions were made. She then explained the state Earned Sick Time Act and mentioned that with the recent changes in required hours, the office staff was now eligible for this benefit. It was estimated that the amount of sick time for each office staff member would be around 36 hours per year. She mentioned that the parameters of the requirement would be combined with the upcoming personnel manual. It would also be necessary to coordinate with the road foreman to assure the road crew was also compliant with the act.

Moving on, Ms. Johnson mentioned, that at last count, there were 9 properties identified that had not been properly coded by the Town Assessors Office and, therefore, were not included in the Village 2022/23 Grand List and did not receive tax bills – some for more than one year. Some of the residents had already reached out to the staff regarding payment and she is currently in the process of notifying other affected property owners and working with them on payment plans if needed. It was noted that this was an unpleasant experience for all involved and that the Town had assured her that this problem had been identified and rectified.

Mr. VanDerWielen reviewed his written report and his Winter Project List. Questions were posed and answered. Comments were made on the digitization project. Mr. VanDerWielen then provided a brief overview of an affordable housing symposium he recently attended in Wilmington.

Mr. Lewis mentioned that 3 sugar maples will be delivered on Thursday. The trees will be planted in the ROW at the Congregational Church, the Village School and Orvis Flats. It was recommended and enthusiastically agreed, that the budget should include more money for tree planting next year. A representative from the state will be in the Village on Thursday to review the proposed crosswalk near the entrance to the Ekwanok County Club. He mentioned that not much salt had been used so far this year. Trustee MacLaurin asked if the board could have a list of duties the road foreman handles each month. Trustee Lewis mentioned that the foreman maintains a detailed log of daily activities and events. Trustee MacLaurin mentioned that he would like a list. It was mentioned that plans should begin in anticipation of the road foreman's future retirement.

Mr. Brodie provided a Clerk/Treasurer & Tax Collector report. He mentioned that delinquent taxes were still coming in. He stated that more personalized letters would be going out to the major delinquencies. He is working with the Town of Manchester on a program for tax sales. More information will be forthcoming. In regard to investments, he hopes to be able to transfer funds from the Highway and Heavy Equipment Funds to Fidelity in near future.

In Old Business, President Deck updated the board on a recent meeting with the new president of the Equinox on the Battenkill Homeowner's Association in regard to its request for an increase in the amount of a Village contribution for the repair of the Union Street pavement project in 2019. Background on the matter was provided. Mr. Campbell also provided background from his involvement during his tenure as president of the BOT. The Trustees asked for clarification on the amount being requested. President Deck mentioned that he would like to go into executive session to discuss the matter. Mr. Campbell objected stating there was no reason the matter could not be worked out in open meeting. Mr. Campbell spoke for several minutes on the history of the project and the initial request from EOB, the meeting with EOB representatives with the Village road foreman, as well as a more recent conversation he had with the foreman. He provided that, in his opinion, the amount requested from EOB should be paid out. Residents of EOB pay property taxes and are Village citizens and deserve this assistance. Mr. Campbell opined that the current request is reasonable and urged the board to seriously consider the offer that was made.

Trustee MacLaurin asked the board to vote on the requested amount and stated that he supported Mr. Campbell's comments. Trustee Mooney stated that she thought the amount was fair. President Deck moved to provide payment to Equinox on the Battenkill in the amount of \$5,728.00. Trustee MacLaurin seconded the motion and a majority of the trustees voted in the affirmative. Trustee Lewis abstained. Mr. Campbell requested to know why Mr. Lewis abstained. Mr. Lewis opined that he did not need to state a reason. After continued pressure to provide a reason, Trustee Lewis stated he had a conflict of interest.

President Deck updated the board on possible replacements for Trustee Mariano. He stated that he wanted someone who wants to be "all in." Immediate plans are to continue to reach out to a persons of interest. He would like to possibly recruit from existing committees. He noted that work on the BOT is considerably less than on some other committees.

New Business:

- a. **Holiday Wreaths:** It was discussed that weather patterns are more favorable for snow next week and that the road crew may only be available to assist in putting up the wreaths for a few more days. Trustee MacLaurin volunteered to work on this project with the road crew. The board thanked him for his willingness to assist.
- b. **Investment Committee:** Mr. Brodie stated that checks are being sent out to Fidelity and that the Employee Benefit fund is currently invested in fixed income. He discussed Fidelity providing copies of confirmations and monthly statements. The difficulty in getting the Village office copies of statements was discussed. It was suggested that Mr. Lewis complete a "G" form to assist.
- c. It was noted that the new sandwich board signs came out nicely.

There being no further business before the BOT, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 pm.

The next Regular Meeting of the BOT will be held on Monday, January 9, 2023. *Please note this date is a change to the regular scheduling due to the New Year holiday.*

Respectfully Submitted,
Missy Johnson, Office Administrator