



Village of Manchester, Vermont

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Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Monday, April 3, 2023 at 4:30 pm
Bennington County Courthouse, Rte. 7A & Union Street, Manchester

In Attendance: President Tom Deck; Trustees: Jim Lewis, Nina Mooney, Peter Mull;
Clerk/Treasurer and Tax Collector Donald Brodie; Assistant Clerk/Treasurer and Office
Administrator Missy Johnson

Public: Rich Heilemann, Sarah McClintock, Audrey Kolloff, Max Levis, Tajlei Levis, Keld
Alstrup, Tom Scarnecchia, David Baer, Oliver Levis, Gaviel Levis, Scott Russell, Claudie Burns

DRAFT MINUTES

President Deck opened the meeting at 4:30 pm.

The agenda order was changed by moving the Special Meeting until after the approval of the State of Vermont Liquor Licenses to allow for the late appearance of a couple of residents who wished to be heard in person and were running late for the meeting.

Trustee Mull moved to approve the Minutes from the March 6, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Questions were posed regarding current bylaw revisions and a grant that was mentioned by the BCRC representative. The scope of the project was explained and the grant that is being used for this project was confirmed as one approved by the BOT in 2021. A draft is expected by June. The process for confirmation of the changes was reviewed. President Deck reiterated that having grants for projects may be a positive but that the reporting and record keeping can be time consuming and problematic. He urged restraint and due diligence when grants are proposed. He stated that not every grant is a good fit for Village needs. He continued by praising the work the Planning Commission has been doing.

Trustee Mull asked if the list provided by the agenda contained the last of the Village businesses needing State Liquor Licenses for the coming year. Ms. Johnson confirmed in the affirmative. Mr. Brodie asked if the Wilburton Liquor License Application could be tied to the approval of their Annual Event Permit. Several board members and Ms. Johnson stated that this was not possible. Trustee Mooney moved to approve the following State of Vermont Liquor Licenses: Inn at Manchester, The Wilburton Inn, Curate Café, The Equinox Resort and Spa, The Taconic Hotel/Copper Grouse and The Reluctant Panther. Trustee Mull seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Trustee Lewis moved to suspend the regular meeting and President Deck seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

President Deck brought the Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees to order. At review was the Annual Special Events Permit for the Wilburton Inn's indoor and outdoor celebrations during 2023/24 including events held on the mansion terrace and in the seasonal tent. The applications include a request for a variance to the Village of Manchester Noise Ordinance to play amplified music outdoors during some events until 11:00 pm.

Ms. Tajlei Levis introduced herself and her family and provided information on the history of events at the Wilburton Inn and stressed the importance of hosting weddings to their business. She expressed that it was important to the business to be a good neighbor and reiterated that the Inn had been working with sound engineers on a solution to ongoing noise complaints. Questions were posed as to why the Equinox had been granted their noise variance and it was explained that the Equinox had 1 complaint in the last year with 400 events. The Wilburton statistics were estimated to be 27 events with more than 15 complaints.

Public comment was taken with many asking to have the number of events limited for the following year. It was mentioned that the location of the property is what is causing the issue. President Deck mentioned that he wanted to see a compromise made by The Wilburton that would, at least, partially satisfy the neighbors. He stated that The Wilburton was doing a good job of staying within the law but that they were not being good neighbors as far as this issue is concerned. Other public comments included noise coming from the property after the events, with guests continuing to party into the morning hours. Ms. Levis stated that she was not aware of this problem but would look into it. Concern was also raised that when there are noise problems, phone calls to the inn go unanswered. President Deck mentioned that he could not speak for the entire board but that he would like to see a written list of concessions from The Wilburton before he could make a decision on these applications.

Discussion continued between the Levis family and some of the neighbors. President Deck stated that in order to continue to attempt to mediate this matter, those present should remember to address him only, and not engage in dialog with each other. Some on the board mentioned that they were not in a position to limit the number of events. The three challenges were mentioned to be: the noise level, the timing of the events and the number of the events. Trustee Mull moved to table the applications so that The Wilburton could prepare a written compromise that addresses the noise level, timing and number of events per year. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. The Special Meeting regarding The Wilburton Annual Event Permits and Noise Ordinance variance was continued until the May 1, 2023 and will be part of the Regular Meeting of the Village of Manchester Board of Trustees.

Trustee Mooney moved to resume the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees. Trustee Lewis seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Ms. Johnson reviewed the changes proposed by Village counsel to the Draft Personnel Manual/Policy and whether the proposed changes were adopted to the draft document or not. President Deck thanked Ms. Johnson for her work on this project and moved to adopt the manual/policy in its latest form. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

The 2023 Paving Bids were opened. The board determined that the bids needed to be reviewed by the Road Foreman and tabled a vote on this matter until the May 1st board meeting. It was confirmed that the paving would not take place until school is out for the summer and that a board member will be requesting that BBA provide some financial assistance with this project.

It was noted that Trustee Lewis, as road commissioner already took care of the Town of Manchester's request to post police license plate reading/recording cameras on an existing lamp pole in the island in front of the Equinox Hotel. It was also noted that the company who erected the camera used their own pole and did not notify the Village, or the Town of Manchester, before installing the camera. Trustee Mull moved to formally allow the Town of Manchester Police Department to install the camera as requested. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Ms. Johnson provided an administration report. The office is getting busier as spring gets underway. She is assisting with zoning matters, working on month, quarter and year end financial reports and bookkeeping, working on the VLCT audit, ARPA reporting and is coordinating a deep clean of the office.

Mr. Lewis provided a zoning report. Permits are starting to pick up.

Mr. Lewis provided a road and tree report. The new truck is here although we continue to have problems with it. Salt consumption was under budget this year. Alan is scheduled to have knee surgery next Monday. He is not expected to lose much work. Discussion regarding budget items ensued.

Mr. Brodie provided a clerk/treasurer and tax collector report and reminded the board that the first budget meeting is next Monday. He asked that the board come ready to discuss road, trees, sidewalks and stone walls at this, first, meeting.

In Old Business, Mr. Scarnecchia reminded the board that the new website needed additional work. President Deck mentioned continued work on the site was scheduled. Ms. Johnson thanked everyone for their patience with the website while the office is short staffed and mentioned that continued comments and suggestions were welcome.

In New Business Ms. Kolloff mentioned a proposed cell phone tower installation in the Town of Manchester and asked the board to issue a statement against the installation. Mr. Deck mentioned that residents in attendance at this meeting were also residents of the Town of Manchester and if they wished to oppose the installation they were urged to do so. Mr. Deck said he and the board would give thought to a letter in opposition.

Ms. Kolloff discussed mini-grants provided through the BCRC and stated that one of the grants offered would offset the cost of the mailer that just went out. President Deck reiterated that care needs to be taken when asking for grants. Ms. Johnson stated that the money was rarely "free" with partial payments due from the Village and, usually, a great deal of work in reporting once the grant has been paid out.

At 6:40 pm Trustee Mull requested to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters and a potential legal matter. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

At 6:59 pm the board exited executive session. Trustee Lewis moved to approve a pending discussion with the new Town of Manchester manager. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

The meeting immediately adjourned.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees is currently scheduled for Monday, May 1, 2023 at 4:30 pm at the Bennington County Courthouse, Village of Manchester.

Respectfully Submitted,
Missy Johnson
Office Administrator