

**PRELIMINARY MINUTES**

**VILLAGE OF LUDLOW  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**TUESDAY, JULY 2, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**HEALD AUDITORIUM**

**Village Trustees Meeting – Zoom Link**

**Meeting ID: 984 2249 8745**

**Passcode: 045593**

**One tap mobile**

**+13126266799, 98422498745#,,,,\*045593# US (Chicago)**

**+16469313860, 98422498745#,,,,\*045593# US**

**Dial by your location**

**<https://zoom.us/j/98422498745>**

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

Bob Brandt, Chairman

Justin Hyjek

Julie Nicoll

**STAFF:**

Brendan McNamara

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Scott Baitz

Kathy Grant

Brett Sanderson

Michelle Brandt

Logan Nicoll

Shannon Stark

Michael Gadway

Melissa Rockhill

Jean Strong

Peter Girouard

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
  - A. Bob Brandt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He led with the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Consideration of any Changes, Additions or Removals to the Agenda
  - A. Brendan McNamara said no changes were needed.
3. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting

- A. Bob Brandt noted that the minutes to be approved are from June 4, 2024
- B. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by Julie Nicoll to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on June 4, 2024 as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. Comments from Citizens

- A. Melissa Rockhill said the group that she is representing – Black River Valley Resources has worked with a group of students from Dartmouth on the culverts in Cavendish – access and cleaning. They are willing to expand into Ludlow. She said that they have also been working with MARC and will provide the information they gather to MARC.
- B. Brendan McNamara said he will talk to Ron Tarbell about this. He said that he is familiar with this project.

5. Allocation Review and Possibly Approve

- A. 42 Cedar Drive - 1 additional bedroom for total of 5 bedrooms
  - i. Brendan McNamara advised that a request for a change in allocation from 4 bedrooms to 5 bedrooms. The owner planning to sell the house and wants to change it to 5 bedrooms
  - ii. Julie Nicoll said that Diane Knight said that the situation with the HOA has been resolved.
  - iii. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by Julie Nicoll to increase the sewer allocation from 4 to 5 bedrooms. Motion passed unanimously.**

6. Electric Light Department Board of Commissioners Appointments

- A. Brendan McNamara advised that we have received 6 letters of interest: Andrea Lehtonen, Mary Barton, Jean Strong, Earl Washburn, Logan Nicoll and Peter Girouard.
- B. Shannon Stark said that the commission is down by 2 members and without them, there is no quorum. They have had to cancel the last 3 meetings. She said they have not had a budget for the last 6 years. She suggested that the new board members should have knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order and the financial situation of the department. Only registered village voters may be appointed and she would like to see "new blood."
- C. Bob Brandt said that 3 of the applicants are present tonight and he asked each to tell the board why they are interested in the commission.
  - i. Peter Girouard said he has knowledge of electrical and thinks that it is important that we keep the Electric Company. He wants to see things done right.
  - ii. Logan Nicoll said he understands Robert's Rules of Order and budgets. He said that he has been urging the Village and Town to merge noting the administrative inefficiencies. He said that Ludlow Electric is a big piece of the puzzle. The village residents love having a local electric utility and want to see it continue. It is an important to the fabric of utilities around the state to push back against GMP. We are a model for other towns.
  - iii. Jean Strong that for the last year, she has been attending most of the Ludlow Electric meetings and has seen the chaos and wants to help. She has been on the Select Board and many other boards in Ludlow.
- D. Bob Brandt advised that this board will appoint 2 members to the commission who will serve until the town meeting in March. They may then run for the positions.
- E. Justin Hyjek asked how the Electric Commission works.
- F. Brendan McNamara said it is the governing body of the Electric Company.

- G. Shannon Stark said that as it stands now, they Electric Commission can't do anything. She said that the General Manager and Superintendent report to the Commission.
- H. Justin Hyjek asked if the GM and Superintendent report to her.
- I. Shannon Stark said she has received some emails; from the office and attorney. She said the attorney will not just be handling union negotiations.
- J. Brendan McNamara said that as Municipal Manager, he gets copied in on emails. There is a lack of quorum and then it falls to the Trustees. There are a number of outstanding items and it is imperative that the board make these appointments.
- K. Justin Hyjek asked if the Electric Department is unionized.
- L. Shannon Stark said no, but they are in negotiations.
- M. Brendan McNamara said that pending meetings regarding the union can't happen without a commission.
- N. Justin Hyjek asked if all of the applicants are rate payers and local registered voters.
- O. Brendan McNamara said yes. He noted that of the 6 letters of interest, 3 are here tonight.
- P. Justin Hyjek asked Jean Strong when this all started.
- Q. Jean Strong said Shannon would know better, but 3 were elected. She said that she had only seen one full board meeting. One person resigned, and then another and they didn't have a quorum.
- R. Shannon Stark said they were elected in March. She said Bob Brandt resigned and then Pete Pollender resigned.
- S. Justin Hyjek asked Brett Sanderson his suggestion.
- T. Brett Sanderson said they need to get the full board, get the finances straightened out, how to operate. He said there were struggles and changes were made. If the town and village merge, he suggests increasing the commission to 5 members.
- U. Shannon Stark said without having a budget for 6 years, they are running at a deficit.
- V. Justin Hyjek said this is a huge issue for the town and village.
- W. MOTION by Julie Nicoll and seconded by Justin Hyjek to appoint Jean Strong to the Electric Light Board of Commissioners. Motion passed unanimously.
- X. MOTION by Bob Brandt and seconded by Justin Hyjek to appoint Logan Nicoll to the Electric Light Board of Commissioners.
- Y. Julie Nicoll recused herself from the vote.
- Z. Motion passed unanimously.
- AA. Bob Brandt asked them to see Ulla Cook before they take their positions.
- BB. Julie Nicoll said she appreciates the interest and there are a lot of committees being formed in Ludlow at this time.
- CC. Justin Hyjek said the Merger Committee was formed last night.
- DD. Brendan McNamara said they are advisory committees and can still add to that committee.
- EE. Jean Strong said that Electric Commission board meetings are open to the public and are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at 4:30 p.m.

7. Department Head Reports

- A. Justin Hyjek said he wanted to thank the Highway and Buildings and Grounds departments for putting in the crosswalks.
- B. Julie Nicoll said she concurs.
- C. Brendan McNamara said there had been some issues with some of the signs. He said the one by the Health Center is on a curve and the one by Shell is serving its purpose.
- D. Shannon Stark said that tractor trailers are still using Pleasant Street, even though there are signs saying they are not allowed. She said they say their GPS routes them that way.
- E. Justin Hyjek said that it behooves the town to reach out to GPS about that.
- F. Sewer Department

- i. Brendan McNamara noted that they down again and are working in it. He said that last month they added treatment to the effluent. He said when less people are here, they need to add treatment. He said there is a lull from the end of winter through July 4<sup>th</sup>. It will be on the upswing now.
  
8. Discussion of Change of Procedure for Municipal Public Meetings
  - A. Brendan McNamara said that Select Board discussed this at their meeting last night. He said that Justin Hyjek had attended a VLCT seminar. He said Justin Hyjek met with him to discuss it. It streamlines some of the rules that are in Robert’s Rules of Order and can encourage more public participation.
  - B. Justin Hyjek said that Robert’s Rules of Order are more stringent, have nuances, include time limits on comments, do not allow interjections and have people raise their hands. He said that VLCT drafted this document and it has stood the lawyers’ tests. It is open-ended for smaller meetings, is less stringent and complies with State statutes.
  - C. Bob Brandt said that the abbreviated rules are posted on the VLCT website.
  - D. Brendan McNamara said he would like to put this on the August agenda and will draft and present a Ludlow version at that meeting. He suggested that the “Community Rules” be printed and included with meeting agendas. They will also be posted on bulletin boards and be readily accessible.
  - E. Julie Nicoll asked if they would have to be adopted at Town meeting.
  - F. Justin Hyjek said they would apply to all town meetings.
  - G. Brendan McNamara said that would include town meeting.
  - H. Julie Nicoll asked about the DRB.
  - I. Justin Hyjek said that because of its quasi-judicial status, these are not recommended for the DRB.
  
9. Aged Receivables
  - A. Brendan McNamara advised that they are making good headway and 90 to 100 of the outstanding are on payment plans. We have shut-off some and they have been rectified. We are in a good place.
  
10. Municipal Manager Updates
  - A. New Fire Chief
    - i. Brendan McNamara said that Ben Whalen started officially on July 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - B. Timber Inn
    - i. Brendan McNamara said that asbestos was found in 2 bathrooms and removal and the abatement is scheduled for July 16th and demolition the following day.
  - C. Fireworks
    - i. Brendan McNamara said the fireworks will be on Friday, July 5th at Okemo Base are. There will be food and music.
  - D. Sundays at Veterans’ Park Music Series
    - i. Brendan McNamara said that Gypsy Reel was there this past Sunday.
  - E. Dog Park
    - i. Brendan McNamara said that we received funding from Vermont Community Foundation for

the relocation of the Dog Park to West Hill. They will have 2 separate structures – one for smaller and one for larger dogs. Springfield Fence is doing the work

F. RIVER Presentation and Public Forum

- i. Brendan McNamara said that last night representatives from MARC (Regional Planning Commission) informed us of the RESILIENCE INITIATIVE FOR VERMONT EMPOWERMENT AND RECOVERY (RIVER) program. The program is intended to help with flood recovery funding. They will hold a public forum here on July 17<sup>th</sup>. They will help facilitate projects for the town and village. One large one in the village is the Commonwealth Avenue culvert. That project is estimated at \$3,000,000 to \$4,000,000.
- ii. Justin Hyjek said he implores the town and village to get the word out about the forum and program.
- iii. Shannon Stark asked if it would also pertain to land.
- iv. Justin Hyjek said it is accessible to private citizens, but to contact Chris Yurek about land.

11. Other Business

A. Mill Street Bridge

- i. Justin Hyjek asked about progress on the Mill Street Bridge
- ii. Brendan McNamara said it is scheduled to be complete by September/October.

B. ARPA Funds

- i. Justin Hyjek said that after last night, it left us with \$2,000.00 for the Village.
- ii. Brendan McNamara said we never made those allocations because we are waiting for the paving numbers for the access road. The Village is responsible for the trestle down.

C. Crosswalk under Trestle on Andover Street

- i. Justin Hyjek asked about putting in a crosswalk under the trestle.
- ii. Julie Nicoll said they had tried, years ago and were told it was a state highway.
- iii. Brendan McNamara said the state highway begins at the digital speed sign. He will check into it.
- iv. Justin Hyjek said if we are putting money into Dorsey Park, we should have a crosswalk.
- v. Logan Nicoll said that the town just missed a funding program from VTRANS. He said he can get traffic data for them and what the state would recommend for that location.
- vi. Peter Girouard said there are no sidewalks by that bridge, and people cross at Pond Street. A crosswalk under the bridge won't help.
- vii. Justin Hyjek said it would help slow drivers down and help people cross. He said he would like the town to be more pedestrian friendly.
- viii. Shannon Stark asked about a walking bridge.
- ix. Brendan McNamara said that state would have an issue with that.

D. City Planner – Grant Writer

- i. Justin Hyjek said that the town should consider hiring a planner/grant writer. He said we are missing out on many grants.

12. Set Date for Next Meeting – August 6, 2024

- A. Next meeting August 6, 2024.

13. Sign Warrant Orders

- A. Warrant orders were signed

14. Possible Executive Session

- A. Bob Brandt said he would like a short Executive Session for Personnel.
- B. **MOTION by Julie Nicoll and seconded by Justin Hyjek to enter into Executive Session for Personnel. Motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Board entered into Executive Session at 6:54 p.m.
- D. Board exited into Executive Session at 7:04 p.m.

15. Adjourn

- A. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by Julie Nicoll to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisha Klaiber

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Bob Brandt, Chairman of Trustees

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Julie Nicoll

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Justin Hyjek, Vice Chair