



# Winooski Valley Park District

**Ethan Allen Homestead**

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## **Minutes for December 17, 2019 Board of Trustees Meeting for Winooski Valley Park District**

The meeting began at 4:30 PM.

**Present:** David Crawford (South Burlington), Sonja Schuyler (Jericho), John Nittler (Williston), Aaron Keech (Burlington), Susan Gilfillan (Colchester) Nick Warner (WVPD Executive Director) Lauren Chicote (Programs Director),

**Absent:** Erin Dupuis (Winooski), "To be Named" Essex Trustee.

**October Meeting Minutes at 4:35 PM:** Minutes of the October 2019 meeting were reviewed and accepted by the board without change. (note that November's meeting was canceled due to weather conditions)

**Public Comment Period at 4:40 PM:** There was no Public present.

**Agenda Changes at 4:40 PM:** No changes were made in the agenda.

**Financial Reports for EAHM and WVPD at 4:40 PM:** The financial report from the WVPD was presented and discussed. Similar to the October 2019 meeting report, the current report indicated a negative balance to date (\$138,300.8699,430.11) given the fact that member Towns had yet to make their contributions as of this date. Since then contributions have been received from Essex, Williston, Colchester, Burlington and South Burlington. The end of December represents the end of the first half of the WVPD's fiscal year and the staff reported that they are on budget with a possible over expenditure on health insurance. The report was approved.

The Ethan Allen Homestead Museum financial statements—the profit and loss statement for January-October 2019 and the balance sheet as of October 31, 2019 were reviewed and approved. Within the statements, EAHM presented a report on fund raising efforts by EAHM including a summary of their donor and sponsor list to demonstrate their attempt to diversify their funding and expand programming.

**Discussion with Zoe Richards, Burlington Wildways Coalition at 4:50:** Zoe Richards was invited to give an overview of their work. The Wildways Coalition promotes getting people out to protected areas to appreciate nature while visiting in a manner that conserves fragile ecosystems. She reported that Burlington has 49% of its area listed as open areas and 25% as conservation areas so there are substantial opportunities for residents to enjoy nature close to town. She discussed the importance of the Winooski River Trail and encouraged the Trustees to undertake this 5.5 mile hike to truly appreciate what the area offers in terms of recreation. WVPD is the fiscal agent for the Burlington Wildways.

**Updates on Town reports, Trustee recruitment, Derway project at 5:00 PM:** WVPD Executive Director Nick Warner reported that member Towns have been very receptive to his

reports given the increased importance being placed on water quality and the growing impact of climate change. Specific updates include:

- Derway Cove has been cleared of all buildings and concrete. The docks have been removed and it has received a Clean Site Certification. Rehabilitation will begin in the spring.
- Parking at the Trinity Baptist Church in Williston has been secured for visitors to access the Jacob's Parcel. An agreement is being finalized with the church as well as with the Town of Williston concerning the Parcel's management.
- The entrance to the Wolcott Family Natural Area has not been completed. It was also noted that there are issues with wild parsnip that need to be addressed in this area.
- Discussion with Winooski are ongoing concerning the management of the Memorial Park and their payments to WVPD.

Nick also reported progress in working with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) in establishing a mobile trail maintenance and construction crew. The idea is to have one crew that can service various parks as needed versus the previous system where towns had to contract with a crew for 4-8 weeks. This new arrangement will allow towns to have more flexibility on the use of the crew and accordingly the amount they spend on its utilization.

The naming of a Trustee for Essex is still in process.

**Discussion on proposed changes in WVPD educational programs at 5:25PM:** Lauren Chicote, Program Director, presented a proposal to make major changes to WVPD's educational programs. The change will eliminate the summer camps as they exist today and rather offer supplemental field trip opportunities (fee based) to other camps, schools and year-round programs. This proposal is based on the reality that the summer camps require a tremendous amount of staff time and do not generate the returns to justify their continuance. The proposed alternative will build on the success of the current programs, improve the use of staff and other WVPD resources, and have a neutral funding impact.

Trustees discussed the proposal and questioned the impact on community members who depend on the camps, the impact of reaching disadvantaged students, and the likely reaction of member Towns. It was explained that most participants are from Burlington and there have been very few disadvantaged kids who have participated. To minimize any impact, WVPD will notify past campers of the change and develop an outreach campaign to camps and schools to promote this new service. It was also suggested that working through schools to identify disadvantaged or lower income students likely to participate. The proposed changes were approved by the Trustees.

**Executive Session for Real Estate at 5:45PM.**

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.

**Next Meeting:** The date for the next meeting will be January 21, 2020 at 4:30 PM.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:

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John Nittler: WVPD Trustee-Williston