

January 7, 2006 (approximate)
Greetings, everyone.

Thank you to everyone who attended last evenings meeting. I look forward to the process ahead and working with each of you.

To begin with, the Town Hall was booked so I have taken the liberty of setting our meetings at the Woodstock Union High School Rhoda Teagle Library. Our first meeting will be held this coming Wednesday, January 11th, 5:00 pm. I am planning on no more than 1 _ hours. As we discussed last night, I have booked this room weekly for our meetings, but realize that votes were rushed last night and I am happy to discuss a different meeting schedule on the 11th.

This email is going out to everyone who signed up for the committee and not just those who attended last evening. For those who could not join us, the following is a brief synopsis of our meeting. The Vermont Council on Rural Development will be sending us a comprehensive transcript of last night, which I will pass along as soon as it is received.

Present: Bruce Gould, Marilyn Spaulding, Steve Carter, Nick Heyniger, Paul Highberg, Jan Noskey, Grettie Howe, Joe Dinatale, Susan Inui-Kelly, Wittie Lynn, David Schwartzman, Marion Koetsier, Mark Curran, Trish Compton, Phil Swanson, Candace Coburn, Steve Jeffrey (Executive Director of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns), Greg Federspeil (Stowe, Vt).

Bruce Gould started us off by giving us a background on the study chaired by Tom Hayes – “Report of the Village-Town Merger Study Committee”. The committee consisted of four residents of the town and four residents of the village. The committee was specifically asked not to give recommendations and to just present facts. I am sending a scanned copy of this document as a separate email to you or you may pick up a copy at the Town Hall. It is my hope to review the study – or at least parts of it - at next Wednesday’s meeting.

Phil Swanson then spoke to us on where the town and village are today – which services are merged, which are separate.

Steve Jeffrey discussed the history of Villages separating from towns, but have now been merging back together for many of the same reasons that prompt us to meet.

Greg Federspeil reviewed the recently successful Stowe merger, which took three tries before it passed. Greg spoke on how their community focused on respecting, honoring and celebrating the history of both the village and the town.

Roundtable discussion ensued, with the following results:

- ◇ Very strong public support needed.
- ◇ Study states 100% support of town and village boards needed, but this was questioned.
- ◇ Convincing both the town and village that identities will not be taken away
- ◇ Two big issues – money and control
- ◇ Change in board members?

It was pointed out, and the study states this clearly, that the merger does not need to include the police portion. The merger could occur, the village could be designated as a “policed zone”, and only village residents would pay for this service. Steven Jeffrey noted there are several models for this type of merger.

Our action steps were defined as follows:

1. Planning

A. Research – get the facts straight for all committee members so we are all passing along a consistent, clear, correct message. How did other towns handle this.

B. Timeline

1. Committee Organization

A. Define subcommittees

B. Appoint members

1. Outreach campaign and education

A. People talking to people.

B. Vt Standard

C. Info booklet available at local businesses.

1. Article(s) warned.

2. Write the merger plan for the vote.

Our agenda for next Wednesday’s meeting:

1. Meeting called to order

2. Introductions
 3. Begin the Planning Process
 - Review report for pros and cons
 - Identify our message
 - Look at timeline
 1. Identify items for next meeting
 2. Meeting adjourned
- See you all next Wednesday.

Minutes to the meeting of January 11, 2006

Present: Bruce Gould, Marilyn Spaulding, Steve Carter, Nick Heyniger, Jan Noskey, Grettie Howe, Joe Dinatale, Susan Inui-Kelly, Wittie Lynn, Dennis Shillen, David Schwartzman, Mark Curran, Priscilla Pannel, Corwin Sharp, Candace Coburn

Not Present: Paul Highberg, Marion Koetsier, Trish Compton, Patrick Crowl, Byron Kelly, Liza Deignon, Sally Shane, Patsy Mathews, Allen Dougherty, Alison Clarkson, Jirah Billings

I would like to note before I start that the minutes of our meetings are open to any and all who wish to read.

1. We began the meeting with introductions. While much of this was covered in our meeting of January 5, 2006, it was important to get a feel where each person stood on the merger. Please respond to this email if any facts are incorrect.
 - Nick Heyniger- Town resident – has lived here for 8 years. Nick was an officer in the Foreign Service then lived and worked in Montreal. Nick stated he is thrilled to work on a grass roots effort to create unified board to that will be able set and achieve goals.
 - Grettie Howe: A life long resident of Woodstock who lives in the town and owns a business in the village. Grettie wants to see a merger succeed to have a say in decisions that affect the business district.
 - Bruce Gould: You name it – he’s served on it. His grandparents have been here since the 1800’s – he has live both in the village and the town- currently in the town. Bruce supports a merger. Having two boards is redundant. Talent is wasted and the situation creates an adversarial situation. Let’s get rid of the overlap- there is no good reason to continue the way we are.
 - Wittie Lynn: Owns a business in the village and lives in the town. Wittie is also frustrated that she has no say in decisions that affect the business district. She also sees friction between the town and village and wishes it wasn’t so.
 - Priscilla Pannel: Has lived in Woodstock for 13 years and currently owns a home in the village. Priscilla would like to see one board for the town and village. As it stands, decisions are slow coming and nothing gets done. Additionally feels that police should be in both the village and town.
 - Corwin Sharp: Village resident. Wants to see things simplified – two governmental bodies to run one community seems unnecessary. “Government is best which governs the least”.
 - Susan Inui-Kelly: Has live here for 8 years, lives in the village and owns a business in the village. Stated that as she becomes familiar with the

community, it seems to make sense to operate as one – issues can be more straightforward.

- Dennis Shillen: Attending to get more information. Discussed that the response time from Bethel is very long, so it seems a waste not to consolidate. Compared our issue to Miami who faced(es) the same issues but on a larger scale. There should be one umbrella under which services are provided.
- Steve Carter: Resident of the town for 10 Years. Discussed that you must play the cards you are dealt- separation in the 1800's happened for specific reasons but times have changed. We need to identify the elements we have in common. Interesting that our tax code in Montpelier for the state is the same # - town or village....they do not recognize two separate entities.
- Mark Curran : Town resident. Worked in Rhode Island (Brown University)- has owned a home here for over 25 years and is now here full time. Still formulating where he stands on the issue. Discussed that he has brought this up at the South Woodstock store – bad feelings from the 1980's when for a short time there was police protection and the policeman on duty got caught using his floodlight to lure deer. Ugh. (that's an editorial comment)
- Jan Noskey: Town resident has lived in our community for 20 years. Came here “cold” – no job – just felt that location first, then all will follow. While separation might have made sense back when, now lines are blurred and merger is important. One of our biggest challenges is change and the fear thereof.
- Candace Coburn: Village resident. Family home in Killington since 1963. Moved here full time in 1979 – married local John Langhans and was instantly related to _ the town. Served on many boards. Feels merger is in best interest of the community but was asked to serve on this committee versus having strong feelings for or against. Received several phone calls since last week - equal calls at this point for and against.
- Joe Dinatale: Village resident. Has lived here since 1990. Feels two entities is a waste. On a personal level, feels there is a divisive attitude in our community that is not healthy. While the money issue is valid, our challenge is the fear of the loss of identity.
- David Schwartzman: Has lived here since 1948. Has watched our community evolve over the years and sees that the village and town are still distinct. He is not pro merger and has joined this committee to know what is going on. Feels that the police issue can and should be separate from the merger, and does not want town to have police. Wants to know that his money is well spent.

Just to give a count, as far as I can tell this committee is comprised of 26 Woodstock residents, of which 16 have homes in the town and 10 have homes in the village. Of these members, 18 are pro merger, one still deciding, one against and 6 have signed up but have not been able to attend.

1. General consensus is that this committee's purpose is to have the merger placed on the ballot and successfully passed.
2. Nick read from an article where Michael Ricci was quoted giving a time line for a merger of 20 years.
3. General consensus that our target for placing the merger on the ballot is for March of 2007. While this was viewed by some as aggressive, especially when the Trustees are not on board, this is our goal at this time.
4. General consensus that this committee will meet weekly, 5:00 p.m, Woodstock Union High School Rhoda Teagle Library.
5. It was requested of all members of this committee that they put in writing prior to next weeks meeting what they feel are the obstacles in front of us and offer solutions to each obstacle.

6. Assignments:

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| 1.011106 | Nick volunteered to head up the effort to produce a pamphlet that will be mailed to all residents. |
| 2.011106 | Joe Dinatale and Corwin Sharp volunteered to head the effort to discuss with each trustee where they stand regarding terms and to get a sincere feel of sentiments regarding the trustees. |
| 3.0111.06 | Wittie Lynn volunteered to receive all emails from committee members on #6 above – obstacles and solutions – and have these combined and ready for our next meeting. Wittie's email is wittielynn@aol.com |

Agenda for 01/18/06:

1. Report from Joe/Corwin
2. Discussion and formulation of plan.

3. Report from Wittie
4. Discussion and formulation of plan.
5. New assignments

See you on the 18th, 5:00 p.m.

Candace

January 18, 2006 Meeting Minutes

Present: Steve Carter, Jan Noskey, Grettie Howe, Susan Inui-Kelly, Wittie Lynn, David Schwartzman, Mark Curran, Priscilla Pannell, Corwin Sharp, Paul Highberg, Marion Koetsier, Byron Kelly, Tom Rutkowski, Candace Coburn

1. Discussed merger conversations with various people over the past week.
Overwhelmingly pro-merger, but the attitude seems to be “Let’s just get this done”. Whether or not to include the police as part of the merger is more varied in the response.
2. Corwin discussed findings on where the Trustee situation stands. The end result of the discussion was the consensus that having 5 Trustees that are open and respectful to dialogue is, of course, the best-case scenario. Corwin will try and pinpoint who truly is interested in running in the upcoming elections and names were passed on of any and all that we might have heard are or would be interested in the openings. It was also brought up that it would be beneficial to all if those interested would have some sort of forum to state their qualifications and platforms – obviously the Vermont Standard would serve well for this need. It was stated that it is not our intention as a committee to endorse any one candidate. However, we do need to have a feel of where the Trustees stand as the merger report was clear on the need for support from both boards. We also discussed where the merger stands with the Trustees as of this moment. Fred Hunt (who helped write the merger report) stated that he was present in a meeting where the Trustees and Selectboard acknowledged that if you took the police piece out of the merger, they would be agreeable to putting it to a vote. However, Byron Kelly, also a part of that committee and was present at the same meeting, differed and it was his recollection that this was not the case. Marion Koetsier questioned if we should let the current Trustees know that there might be other candidates. This idea will be pursued if and when other candidates are identified.
3. Susan presented her findings on legalities of how the merger can be presented to the voters. Both boards must pass a vote to put to a vote. Susan emailed her findings and also passed out printed copies.
4. Wittie presented a report on committee member’s thoughts on obstacles and possible solutions. Very interesting and Wittie will send it in an email to all members. Wittie will also reformat and place the comments into groups – this will help us identify areas of concern and their possible solutions.
5. Jan Noskey discussed the apparent myth that the Village and Town will lose their identities when the reality is that the merger is just a change in how we do business and has nothing to do with essence and character.
6. Mark Curran brought up that in other successful mergers, the success of the village

had (has) a direct impact on the success of the town. We then discussed how this was also the case in our community, just not so apparent. The perception seems to be that our businesses all thrive which is just not the case. This includes not only our businesses right in the center of the village, but also the Woodstock Inn and Resort, our largest business in town and a major part of our tax base.

Business has been declining and this needs to be recognized.

7. Paul Highberg shared a PowerPoint presentation he developed for the affordable housing group. Paul offered to do the same for our committee, which is very much appreciated, as the presentation is a great information tool and could be utilized in many ways.
8. Consensus on the committee that I will write a letter to the editor – emailed out first to committee members for input – to keep our community up to date on the merger. *** This is added: after reading the Vermont Standard today, I propose to wait a week or so before we send in a letter to the editor – it's sometimes good to give space so people aren't too inundated with information. If anyone feels otherwise, let's have an email discussion...
9. Byron brought up the point that we are tied very closely to community identity. Some in our town feel they aren't really a part of our village, but if they were to think about it there are few who don't use what the village offers – be it church, the Masonic Temple, the grocery store, the Town Hall theatre, Pentangle events. It is easy to take things for granted.

See you next week – Wednesday, January 25, 2006 5:00 pm Rhoda Teagle Library

Agenda:

1. Report from Corwin and Joe
2. Report from Wittie
 - a. Identify priorities
 - b. Begin to formulate plan
1. Pamphlet update from Nick
2. Review letter to the Editor

January 25, 2006 Meeting Minutes

Present: Steve Carter, Sally Shane, Jan Noskey, Susan Inui-Kelly, David Schwartzman, Priscilla Pannell, Corwin Sharp, Byron Kelly, Tom Rutkowski, Grettie Howe Candace Coburn

1. Jan Noskey agreed to clip out and keep any articles on the Village/Town merger.
2. Corwin (along with Joe Dinatale who's job keeps him from attending meetings) reported on the Village Trustee nominees. Corwin called those he has heard are interested, introduced himself not so much to ascertain pro or against the merger, but rather "are you considering running and amenable to a public forum prior to the election of trustees?". Names being recognized include – Marie or Rob Hanson, Joe Dinatale (not interested), Sally Garmon, Joe Boyd (wants to know who else is running) , Deb Pelkey, Alan Dougherty (not likely), Tom Ahern (not interested), Kim or Peter Vollers (both not interested), Jim Smiddy (not interested), Candace Coburn, Cary Hollinsworth (maybe), Joyce Shaw, Rob Wallace (not interested). Grettie Howe is running for the selectboard.
3. At the last Trustee meeting, they voted that one must declare two (? – not sure if that is correct) weeks prior to the Village meeting – effective in 2007. For this year, the Trustee's endorsed a date.
4. Proposed letter to the editor was reviewed. Suggestions and corrections were made and the final letter will go in next week's Standard.
5. Discussed Witte Lynn's report – excellent job – thank you. Sally Shane suggested we divide into break out groups at the next meeting – good idea and the groups are at the end of these minutes.
6. Nick gave us a pamphlet update and passed out the outline. Nick asks that we review / edit / make suggestions. He focused on the Frequently Asked Questions and requests we put effort into this area. We will be looking for assistance with the printing and layout.
7. The idea of sending out a survey was discussed. Corwin brought up the fact that just the writing of the questions is best done by professionals and can be costly. The VCRD might have some ideas on this. Susan Inui-Kelly offered to check into this for us.

Agenda for February 1, 2006

1. Report from Corwin/Joe on upcoming elections.
2. Susan Inui-Kelly update on assistance with surveys.
3. Better define the name of our committee – I've received two suggestions –
 - Town-Village Merger Action Group
 - Task Force on Town-Village Merger
1. Wittie Lynn's report does a great job at pulling together the multitude of issues and thoughts on the merger. The purpose of tonight's breakout sessions is to start fine tuning our message and strategies.
 - Knowledge / Awareness, Fear, Education: Nick H, Mark C, Marion, Joe D
 - Community Identity, Fear, Education: Wittie Lynn, Jan N, Byron, Susan
 - Money/Taxes, Fear, Education: Steve C, David S, Sally S, Priscilla, Trish C
 - Police, Fear, Education: Marilyn, Candace, Corwin, Tom R, Grettie

Each group will report back to the committee after a 20 minute discussion with recommendations on how to proceed in each area.

See you tonight at 5:00

February 1, 2006 Minutes **Town Village Merger Task Force** (check out the name!)

Just a note- I will be unable to attend the meeting of February 22nd.

Present: Steve Carter, Nick Heyniger, Jan Noskey, Grettie Howe, Joe Dinatale, Susan Inui-Kelly, Wittie Lynn, Sally Shane, Marian Koetsier, Byron Kelly, David Schwartzman, Mark Curran, Tom Rutkowski, Candace Coburn

1. Susan Inui-Kelly reviewed possible Trustee candidates. Most mentioned previously are a no. New name in the mix is Ann Debevoise. Not sure of Charlie Kimbell.
2. Susan also reviewed her efforts to get assistance with a survey. Steve did respond that there is no template as each community is unique. Susan asked again if there are any Steve can share just as a starting point – waiting to hear back from him. Wittie added that on the Community Identity committee they are also looking at the possibility of a survey – we should coordinate. Sally recommended and will follow up on the Tuck School assisting us in this area. We realize the semester has already started, but any help would be appreciated even if it is just “fine tuning”. Discussion on going door to door – Wittie brought up that you can send a survey out and then just go door to door for those who did not respond.
3. Discussion about the name of our committee – see heading. And yes, it is alphabetical.
4. Nick emphasized the pamphlet and that he expects each member to get back to him ASAP.
5. We then broke out into groups:

Knowledge / Awareness, Fear, Education: Nick H, , Marian, Joe D, Byron,
Community Identity, Fear, Education: Wittie Lynn, Jan N, Susan
Money/Taxes, Fear, Education: Steve C, David S, Sally S
Police, Fear, Education: Tom R, Candace, Grettie, Mark C

-Government and Representatives will tackled at a later date.

Mark reported on the Police issue:

- It was the consensus of this small group that a merger that includes very basic (emergency only) police coverage should be part of the final proposal. To be able to call in an emergency is critical to many and to merge without this component just doesn't make sense. However, an acceptable cost is crucial to the success of the merger. Byron offered to submit a report that will address this. While costs were addressed in the merger report, Byron's report will help us in further understanding this component. It is clearly recognized that the merger report states that the police do not have to be a part of the merger.

Nick reported on the Knowledge and Awareness issue:

Two main thoughts:

- 1. Good idea to be in touch with the Community Identity task force.
- Both knowledge and awareness means developing the tools needed to broaden awareness. –Pamphlets, surveys, informal meetings with people.

Susan reported on the Community Identity issue:

- Take a look at the first 5 bulleted items in Wittie's report – they are good examples of folks in the Village fearful of losing identity and control. In trying to find how to converse with these people, come up with good examples of issues that have processes in place that will not change – zoning, historical district, planning – there are very few unknowns to be scared of. It could be a case of Village people are so scared of what the Town might do, and Towns people are so scared of what the Village might do that they are misidentifying what the actual issues might be. Therefore, help people realize that instead of taking an adversarial stance, you might find that you are really allies.
- Getting on the same page is of the utmost importance.

Steve reported on the Money/Taxes issue:

- When you focus on the questions, you realize you need the model and there are many assumptions that go into the model that we need to identify, along with other major issues facing our community – Route 4 reconstruction, municipal parking, etc. If merged, these will be borne by a broader set of shoulders.

In discussing the model, specifically writing the language of the proposal to be put forth to the voters, Steve volunteered to look at some that have already been written:

Here's the link to the Northfield document-

<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/DOCS/2000/ACTS/ACTM008.HTM>

Agenda for February 8, 2006

1. Candidate update – Corwin/Joe
2. Tuck School update – Sally.
3. Pamphlet update – Nick.
4. Updated police study – Byron.
5. Please be thinking about the order of what needs to happen – we have so many ideas floating around. Let's work on breaking this all down into small parts - many of which were recognized above - and setting some deadlines for completion.

February 8, 2006 Minutes **Town Village Merger Task Force**

Present: Steve Carter, Nick Heyniger, Bruce Gould, Grettie Howe, Wittie Lynn, Sally Shane, Byron Kelly, Paul Highberg, Cary Hollingsworth, David Schwartzman, Mark Curran, Corwin Sharp, Candace Coburn

Addendum- also spoke with Sally Miller (Comm Identity) and Phil Swanson (old models of proposals)

1. Candidate update. Ann Debevoise and Joe Boyd are not interested at this time. Cary Hollingsworth has expressed interest in running – he will declare early if he decides to run.
2. Sally Shane reviewed contacting the Tuck School to assist with writing a survey. Dean Pike’s office declined, stating that the project is not business oriented enough for them accept. Referred Sally to Gail Taylor in the marketing school. They, too, decline (email received 2/8/06). Tom Debevoise has received quite a bit of information and will review to see if anything might help us.
3. Nick reviewed the pamphlet and scolded us – he needs input and cannot continue until he receives our ideas. Please look at his handout for content first – then we can fine tune the details.
4. Discussed where the Selectboard stands on the police issue. Bruce Gould reported that the Selectboard will be moving forward. They will be “going down a road that when we’re done will have changed something – what that something is is yet to be seen”. The Selectboard feels that if a merger won’t bring change, they will have to bring it on themselves. The question came up of why do they feel this way now? Bruce responded that they must look into it due to the number of complaints they have received regarding the lack of police and the changing nature of our roads and drivers.
5. Byron presented his report and made it clear that the proposal put forth shows the cost with no change in Village coverage and -0- revenues (from tickets), showing a net cost of around \$142,000. Zero revenues and no change in the Village certainly may not be the case should the Town have coverage. Byron can provide reports that easily show periods of time where police coverage can be shared – not added as the reports proposed budget shows. Byron stated that it is his perception that many people want very basic coverage – should they need to call the police, they want to hear “Thank you, we are en route”. People do not want to hear excuses and that there will be no response. Byron feels certain that in a few years there won’t be a huge growth in the Police Department as some community members are fearful will happen. If anything, he sees that there are savings to be had. David Schwartzman backed up what Byron said in this area – likening it to situations that come up at work and that the same amount of staff can deal with them. Byron also discussed how the State Police has a “snow day policy”. On days with dangerous driving conditions, they will only respond to accidents with fatalities. They do not have the staff to cover the many accidents that occur on these days.
6. It was decided to review the video of the Merger Committees presentation of their report to the Trustees and Selectboard next week.
7. Steve Carter will begin to work on the model of the proposal to the voters. Nick

suggested we set deadlines as we work on the model.

Agenda for February 15, 2006

1. Candidate update
2. Video
3. Begin to set the model of the proposal to the voters.

February 15, 2006 Minutes **Town Village Merger Task Force**

Present: Steve Carter, Nick Heyniger, Grettie Howe, Wittie Lynn, Byron Kelly, Susan Inui-Kelly, Marilyn Spaulding, David Schwartzman, Jan Noskey, Mark Curran, Corwin Sharp, Tom Rutkowski, Candace Coburn

1. Candidate update: Cary Hollingsworth has declared that he is running for Trustee opening.
2. David requested the minutes of February 8th be changed to reflect that what he said was “The entity is not required to plan for a third level of crisis planning.”
3. We watched the video of Tom Hayes’ presentation of the Merger report to the Trustees and the Selectboard. Some notes I jotted down while we watched: Tom reported that the committee could not assess level of support. There are efficiencies to be gained. A merger would clarify how money is spent instead of having “two pots”. Number one task of our committee should be “what is the community support?” Jeff had 3 questions for a survey – 1. Should our elected officials pursue? 2. Should our elected officials not pursue. 3. I don’t have enough information.
Nick mentioned his “surprise or amazement” re: interest groups. This is how democracy happens. Discussion ensued regarding Jeffrey Kahn’s comment on wanting the board to be more proactive – adhococracy should not be the perception.
4. Steve passed out a sheet where he had lifted the paragraph headings from the Northfield merger so that we could see the main areas and not get so bogged down in the details. Discussion on should these details be set first, before we put any information out? Different views here. Steve said he would research this topic more – What constitutes a plan?
Wittie proposed that as a group, prepare a document that is less legalese and more friendly.
Jan is working on a project where she is taking the objections that we came up with and is going through the merger report to pull information that addresses the objections. Wittie suggested that Jan email this to all.
5. Wittie brought up the topic of the survey and because she did, we appointed her head of the survey committee (thank you, Wittie). Byron will try to get us copies of old surveys.

Agenda for March 1, 2006 meeting:

1. Candidate update
2. Steve- pulling a plan together
3. Wittie – starting the survey

Please note – I will not be able to attend on March 15th .