

1 JOINT MEETING
2 TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
3 VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
4 SELECTBOARD MINUTES
5 November 17, 2015
6

7 **SELECTBOARD:** Max Levy, Chair, Irene Wrenner, Vice Chair, Brad Luck, Michael Plageman,
8 Andrew Watts.
9

10 **TRUSTEES:** George Tyler, Chair, Dan Kerin, Vice Chair, Lori Houghton, Elaine Sopchak.
11

12 **OTHERS PRESENT:** Patrick Scheidel, Town Manager; Doug Fisher, Director of Administrative
13 Services; Lauren Morrissette, Assistant Village Manager/Finance/MIS Director; Greg Duggan,
14 Assistant Town Manager/Town Planner; Dennis Lutz, Public Works Director; Aaron Martin, Utilities
15 Director; Rick Jones, Village Public Works Superintendent, James Jutras, Water Quality Superintendent;
16 Ally Vile, Parks and Recreation Director; Katherine O'Brien; Christina Trasca; Nick Meyer; Diane
17 Clemens, Unified School District Member; Colin Flanders, Essex Reporter.
18

19 Mr. Levy called the Town of Essex Selectboard (SB) meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
20

21 Mr. Tyler called the Essex Junction Trustee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
22

23 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
24

25 Mr. Levy invited those present to join him in reciting the "Pledge of Allegiance."
26

27 **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
28

29 Mr. Scheidel listed the following changes to the Agenda: a Public To Be Heard, a memorandum dated
30 November 5, 2015 from Dana Hanley to the SB regarding Draft 2016 Essex Town Plan Hearing –
31 November 16, 2015 and a revised copy of the 2016 Town Plan Draft with all changes to date.
32

33 **MICHAEL PLAGEMAN MOVED AND IRENE WRENNER SECONDED A MOTION TO**
34 **APPROVE THE AMENDED AGENDA. THE MOTION PASSED 5-0.**
35

36 **GEORGE TYLER MOVED AND ELAINE SOPCHAK SECONDED A MOTION TO**
37 **APPROVE THE AMENDED AGENDA. THE MOTION PASSED 4-0.**
38

39 **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
40

41 There were no comments from the public.
42

43 **BUSINESS**
44

45 **Public Works Administration Consolidation – Dennis Lutz**
46

47 Mr. Lutz introduced the issue. He reviewed the memorandum dated October 28, 2015 from Mr. Lutz
48 and Mr. Rick Jones, the Village Public Works Superintendent, to the SB and Trustees regarding the
49 Follow-up to Memorandum of Agreement between the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction

50 Regarding Consolidation of Public Works Services.

51

52 In accord with the referenced agreement signed on January 13, 2015, an Integration Study was to be
53 prepared for presentation to the Municipal Manager for “...fully consolidating and integrating public
54 works functions within the Town and the Village.” Mr. Lutz walked the members through the
55 memorandum starting with Management and Responsibility on page 2. He emphasized that
56 management of the consolidated Public Works Department for the Village and the Town has to be
57 centralized under one Director for overall supervision of key staff and consultants, coordination of
58 effort, future infrastructure planning, service response and financial accountability/cost control, but
59 decentralized for operations. He said that, from a management perspective, there should be only one
60 Director to avoid questions of authority. He reviewed Attachment #3 Management Line Diagram with
61 the members. He pointed out that the Village/Wastewater quality would fall under the Village Trustees
62 and be supervised by the Municipal Manager. Under this line diagram, the Village would appoint a
63 Village Engineer, which is recommended to be Donald L. Hamlin Consulting Engineers. The Village
64 Engineer would report to the Community Public Works Director as would the two Public Works
65 Superintendents and the Town Engineer. On a daily basis, the expectation is that the two Public Works
66 Superintendents would manage their operations fairly independently within their normal boundaries.
67 However, mutual support would occur either as they need the support or as determined by the Director.
68 The intent is not to micro-manage these two key positions.

69

70 The Village Engineer would continue to provide services as he currently does with respect to contract
71 work, development reviews and request for assistance from the Village Public Works Superintendent.
72 However, the Village Public Works Superintendent can also go to the Town Engineer and the proposed
73 Engineering Technician for engineering assistance. This provides more resources for both the Town and
74 the Village, especially in situations that do not require a higher level of engineering involvement. There
75 are also likely to be situations where the Town may avail itself of the services provided by the Village
76 Engineer.

77

78 Mr. Luck knew that there was great value sometimes in contracting out work and sometimes not and
79 asked if Mr. Lutz did a cost comparison for this model.

80

81 Mr. Lutz felt that the issue was how to maintain the infrastructure and work towards one consolidated
82 service over time. He explained that currently most of the plans and specifications for construction for
83 the Town are in the Geographic Information System (GIS) framework, but Hamlin Consulting holds
84 most of the plans and specifications for the Village. This process has to be merged slowly, and in the
85 future, that contract service many not be needed. However, currently the Town and the Village Public
86 Works Departments independently are stretched. Doing all the work in-house as a consolidated
87 department would be considered crazy. The intent is to maximize the resources from Hamlin
88 Consulting, and then over time, the data from Hamlin Consulting could migrate to the Town GIS
89 system so that both communities' data is on one common database. This process might change the
90 relationship with Hamlin Consulting, but that might be 10 years “down the road” and is a future, long-
91 term decision. Mr. Lutz stated that he learned a lot this past year and that as much as the Village and the
92 Town do things in a similar way, it takes a long time to work together and figure out what works best.
93 Mr. Scheidel added that last year, the Village spent \$179,000 for contracted engineering services, which
94 would be about the same cost with a combined department. He echoed Mr. Lutz saying that there is a
95 lot of Village data with Hamlin Consulting and, in the future, the auditor could do a cost/benefit
96 analysis. Mr. Lutz added that there are ways to cut down on engineering costs for particular problems
97 by knowing when you need those particular services, and gave an example, but he did not think
98 contracted engineering services could be eliminated.

99

100 Ms. Wrenner wondered if the data at Hamlin Consulting is proprietary and asked if it belonged to the
101 Village and the Town. Mr. Lutz replied that it was tricky because Hamlin Consulting produced the
102 plans so they belong to them, but the Village, being a client, has access to those plans. He thought that
103 if Hamlin Consulting wanted to continue its relationship with the communities, then it would want to
104 provide that information. At the same time, for the Town to start from scratch to develop those plans
105 would take a long time.

106

107 Mr. Lutz spoke to the reasoning for hiring an Engineering Technician in a consolidated department
108 scenario. He argued that both communities were running very thin on staff. Mr. Lutz stated that he is
109 only working 4 days a week, and as he approaches retirement, it is necessary to have people in place
110 and to build experience whether or not the departments consolidate. The costs for the Engineering
111 Technician position will be mostly borne through conversion of a vacancy in the Town water/sewer
112 budget during the first year (65% of the estimated salary costs and 100% of any benefit costs). Longer
113 term, the intent would be to fund the position equally between water/sewer/highway and stormwater all
114 under the Town budget. His overall recommended increase this year for the budget as a combined
115 department is a 3.8%, which is an increase of \$42,000. \$25,000 of that \$42,000 is the Technician's
116 salary. The other parts of that increase include cell phone costs, mileage reimbursement and highway
117 and stormwater costs. No added costs were needed for office space for the Technician position. He
118 thought that to be able to consolidate the department for \$40,000 was reasonable to make this work,
119 and Mr. Levy agreed that there needed to be a succession plan for Mr. Lutz.

120

121 Mr. Tyler understood that with a consolidated department, the Town and Village would need to
122 integrate the way they each do capital project planning. He asked Mr. Lutz to address that issue. Mr.
123 Lutz didn't think that there was a problem with having a capital projects planning and a Capital
124 Committee. He would recommend hiring an experienced third party through the Vermont League of
125 Cities and Towns (VLCT) to look at all the roads in the Town and Village and give technical
126 recommendations. Then those recommendations can be discussed at a committee level and a board
127 level to address the political part of the issue so that the community as a whole feels the benefits from
128 the projects. With regard to whether the capital funding should be separate or combined, Mr. Lutz felt
129 that as long as roads are getting fixed and all taxpayers are paying into the tax base, he didn't think it
130 was an issue. If the members choose to make capital planning one entity, then there should be one
131 future solution that encompasses all the needs of the community. Ms. Houghton thought that the boards
132 were far from making a decision as to keeping or removing the Capital Committee in the Village. Mr.
133 Lutz thought that there could be a number of mechanisms the boards could choose, but to have a public
134 entity that looks at the recommendations and provides the boards with good guidance is important. Mr.
135 Tyler interpreted Mr. Lutz' recommendation as being that the Village Capital Committee would evolve
136 and somehow coalesce with a similar process in the Town. Obviously there would be some changes if
137 moving to one capital budget because there would be one community-wide way of looking at this issue.
138 He stated that if they want to change things, then they need to expect things to change. Ms. Houghton
139 felt that the Capital Committee's role was very valuable as it gave the members the ability to explain
140 why one thing is done over the other. She was in favor of the continuation of a Capital Committee in a
141 consolidated capital budget. Mr. Tyler thought that was Mr. Lutz' recommendation as well. Mr. Tyler
142 reminded the members that the Capital Committee is advisory and that the Trustees still hold the
143 authority for decision-making and hold the role of being politically sensitive to the work that needs to
144 get done, and Ms. Houghton agreed. Mr. Scheidel added that factors, such as the ranking of projects or
145 the availability of funding, could supersede the recommendations from the Capital Committee. Mr.
146 Lutz felt that with better data, better decisions will be made that will explain why projects are chosen
147 over other projects.

148

149 Mr. Kerin thought that decisions on how much work is done on roads plays into the cost. He knew that
150 the Village's intent was to spend a little more money up front to save money in the long run. Mr. Lutz
151 felt that was the toughest part of the decision for certain roads. A ½ million dollar project for one road
152 could fund ten other roads, which is why it is necessary to “bounce” designs internally between staff
153 and to check two or three times with each other to determine if a solution is best for a situation. He
154 stated that when there are major investments in a community, you want to make sure to get it as right as
155 possible because you are spending a lot of money. He and Mr. Aaron Martin are constantly “looking
156 over each others' shoulders” to make sure they are making the right investment for the community. He
157 added that somebody is also needed to be “looking over the shoulder” of consultants as well. Mr. Kerin
158 asked if that role would be contracted out. Mr. Lutz replied that, in the Town, it was an internal process
159 between staff. He noted that, in the Village, there isn't that oversight and even though there is nothing
160 wrong with the Village engineer, it is an important step in the process to make sure that there are right
161 solutions for situations. There may be times when there is friction and difference of opinion and during
162 those times, it is ultimately the decision of the Director.

163

164 Mr. Lutz commented on the integration of complaints and requests for service into one system for both
165 communities through the See-Click-Fix program.

166

167 With regard to the next steps, Mr. Lutz confirmed for Mr. Levy that one of the next steps was to have
168 an evaluation matrix as an evaluation tool. Mr. Lutz expressed that he did not think that the
169 consolidated effort would save money at first, but would provide better service to everyone. Once they
170 consolidate and make things efficient, then he felt there would be savings. Mr. Levy understood that the
171 Engineer Technician would enable the consolidation, and Mr. Lutz added that it would free up staff to
172 do some of the management work necessary for consolidation because right now, they are too busy
173 with the day-to-day work. Mr. Tyler recalled Mr. Lutz saying that both communities are stretched very
174 thin with their current work load so Mr. Lutz is not expecting some savings all of a sudden with a
175 consolidation. Mr. Tyler commented that the last few winters, the Town and the Village have had to hire
176 additional workers during the winter to fill the gaps, but not keeping them on as permanent employees.
177 Therefore, he understood that they are not anticipating with consolidation that positions would all of a
178 sudden be eliminated, and Mr. Lutz agreed. Mr. Scheidel confirmed that budgets have always been put
179 together with the understanding of not being over-staffed, keeping control on spending and folding in
180 the work when possible. Mr. Levy asked the other members what their opinions are with this issue. Mr.
181 Tyler stated that there were many parts of the plan that he liked, and he was in favor of moving forward
182 with these recommendations, and the other members agreed. It was confirmed that the general
183 consensus from both boards was that this was a positive direction for the community. There will be
184 some initial costs as resources in both departments are stretched, but over time, with a gradual
185 consolidation, efficiencies would be realized and the community would be working together in a
186 smarter way. The SB and Trustees thanked Mr. Lutz and Mr. Jones for their work for this issue.

187

188 capital Budgeting/Building Financing – Doug Fisher

189

190 Mr. Fisher introduced the issue and reviewed the current listing of Town and Village long-term
191 borrowings (bonds and notes) over the last 25 years that were incurred for the purpose of financing
192 infrastructure improvements including buildings. With regard to the memorandum dated November 11,
193 2015 from Mr. Fisher to the Municipal Manager, SB and Trustees, Mr. Fisher clarified for Mr. Levy
194 that the “starred” bonds listed in the memorandum were paid off. He confirmed for Mr. Levy which
195 bonds belonged to the Town and which bonds belonged to the Village. Mr. Tyler pointed out that the
196 water/sewer/sanitation funding stream was different from the other bonds and came from users.

197

198 Mr. Scheidel asked what a penny generated in the Village. Mr. Fisher replied that Townwide, it
199 generated almost \$250,000 and for the Village, it would generate about \$100,000. It was confirmed that
200 if the Town and Village continued consolidated services, neither would incur the other's existing debt.

201

202 Mr. Fisher stated that the Town has a couple of different ways it funds capital financing. One is
203 operation transfer and one is the capital tax, which is currently 2 cents. The operating transfer is
204 \$314,000 and the capital tax generated \$498,000. He added that in 1994, the Townspeople voted to
205 freeze the debt service rate for capital funding. As a result, the debt service went down and the excess
206 went over to transfer to capital. This went until the Town incurred debt for the new police facility.
207 Therefore, for the next 10 to 15 years, there won't be any excess. The hope is that they will get back to
208 the previous scenario in the future. Ms. Morrisseau explained that the Village has a rolling stock
209 contribution for 2015, which is \$198,000 and \$50,000 for payment of debt for the fire truck. Then for
210 FYE 2016, there is a capital contribution of \$442,000, which increases by 7.5% each year. In the
211 current year, the Village also transferred \$75,000 of their fund balance into its capital funds. Mr. Tyler
212 stated that there is a slight difference in the way each community does accounting and budgeting. The
213 Town looks at capital projects and has a capital tax and the Village does a general funds transfer. He
214 asked about the advantage or disadvantage of doing it one way over the other. Is there a rationale for
215 doing it each way? Mr. Fisher explained that the capital tax in the Town was a Town-wide vote and
216 until it gets voted down, the Town can count on that 2 cents generating that money. He was not sure if
217 the Village's money was subject to a vote each year or was set like the Town. Ms. Morrisseau explained
218 that since 1993, the Village has increased the rate every year to keep up with capital projects. Mr. Tyler
219 added that the Village sets a general tax rate and once that has been generated, they transfer money
220 from the general fund to the capital budget, which is then presented to the voters.

221

222 Mr. Scheidel confirmed for Mr. Levy that this was a presentation of the differences and that future
223 discussions need to happen to determine the best way to finance capital needs for the community as a
224 whole and how to unify their approaches to one approach.

225

226 **Update of Efficiencies Identified to Date**

227 **Public Works**

228

229 Mr. Lutz referred members to Attachment #6, Early Thoughts on Potential Areas for Cost Savings
230 under Public Works Consolidation and Attachment #7, Actions Taken in FYE 2016 With Respect to
231 Public Works Cooperation/Consolidation from his memorandum dated October 28, 2015. He agreed
232 with Mr. Levy that sometimes there isn't a way to put a dollar cost or savings to some of the processes,
233 but that the Town and Village are working smarter with these changes. With regard to the See-Click-Fix
234 program, Mr. Lutz explained that it will take time to implement this program in a consolidated
235 department. Mr. Levy felt that there was a great pilot project of this program being used in the Village,
236 and Mr. Lutz agreed and added that the State is also using this program. Ms. Houghton thought this was
237 a great list, and Mr. Levy appreciated Mr. Lutz' documentation of savings. Mr. Lutz added that there
238 will be more efficiencies to document in the future.

239

240 **Administrative Services – Doug Fisher/Lauren Morrisseau**

241

242 Ms. Morrisseau reviewed the memorandum dated November 17, 2015 to the Trustees, SB and
243 Municipal Manager regarding Finance Department progress in combining services. She listed the
244 Finance operations that have been combined to date. Mr. Fisher gave an example of an efficiency that
245 will occur by cutting paychecks from 4 times a month to 2 times a month. He confirmed with Mr. Levy

246 that the Town and Village cut a lot of paper checks. Ms. Morrisseau said that they are sharing resources
247 and knowledge. Mr. Levy felt that the more they combine best practices, the more efficiencies they'll
248 find. Mr. Fisher agreed that, in the long run as they move forward, there will be more efficiencies.
249 However, it takes awhile to determine a similar process because they are finding that there are a lot of
250 dissimilarities. Mr. Levy asked if they could talk about some of the best practices to go forth. Mr.
251 Fisher explained that this determination was still in process. Mr. Tyler congratulated Mr. Fisher and Ms.
252 Morrisseau for what has already been accomplished. Ms. Morrisseau and Mr. Lutz reviewed the future
253 goals for the combining of finance operations listed in the memorandum. Members noted that there is a
254 lot more work to do, but that Mr. Fisher and Ms. Morrisseau have accomplished a lot already. Mr.
255 Fisher commented on the goal to get all the Information Technology (IT) in one building for both
256 communities. However, they are not ready to eliminate the Village's IT support yet. Mr. Levy
257 commented about being careful and thoughtful about security. Ms. Morrisseau reported that the Village
258 has a new server in the budget next year, so that would have to be taken into consideration. Mr.
259 Scheidel asked if they decided on having one IT area in the operational budget or if this was something
260 to discuss in the future. Mr. Fisher stated that in early drafts, the idea is to have most of the IT costs fall
261 under the Manager's Budget. He thought that they were close to having one composite IT function
262 within the framework of the combined budgets right now, which he thought was very exciting.
263

264 **Municipal Manager Recruitment – Patrick Scheidel**

265

266 Mr. Scheidel introduced the issue and reviewed the document on Recruitment Invitation Town of Essex
267 and Village of Essex Junction Vermont Municipal Manager. He explained that the document included
268 all the comments from interviews he conducted and information from research about consultant work
269 to help with the recruitment and selection of a municipal manager. The Recruitment Invitation includes
270 a draft profile and recruitment schedule. If the boards adopt the Draft Manager Recruitment Schedule,
271 then the first recommended action is to hire a consultant to help with the 6-month process of hiring a
272 new municipal manager to begin work on July 1, 2018. He noted that there will be decisions to fine
273 tune along the way, but that generally this process could be adopted and ready for implementation
274 when needed. He recommended putting aside \$20,000 for the cost of the consultant work for this issue.
275 He recommended that the existing municipal manager should not be part of the decision-making
276 process for the new hire. The consultant would take that role for the boards and help them make a
277 decision, which is standard practice.
278

279 Mr. Scheidel confirmed for Mr. Levy that the decision to hire a municipal manager would be a joint SB
280 and Trustees decision. Mr. Scheidel recommended that all the members of both boards be present for all
281 the interviews as it is an important part of the process. Mr. Scheidel confirmed with Mr. Levy that one
282 attorney would be fine for the review of the contract, but that the boards could decide to have both
283 attorneys review it. With regard to advertising for the position, Mr. Scheidel suggested posting it
284 everywhere including through the VLCT, which would reach a huge applicant pool. He said that
285 salaries, benefits and location will narrow down the pool automatically. He felt that citizen involvement
286 should be included in the first interviews, but confidentiality for the interviewees is important in case
287 people are not ready to expose that they are looking for a new job. He confirmed for Ms. Sopchak that
288 the interviews should take place in Executive Session and that he did not see how it would work any
289 other way. However, part of the first interview process includes a meet and greet where applicants get
290 tours of the facility and meet the staff who have a very important role in this process. The staff can get
291 a good sense of communication skills and knowledge from the applicants and then can provide
292 comments back to the boards. Then when you narrow it down to two or three candidates, you can talk
293 to them about going public and having the press or public available for questions.
294

295 Mr. Scheidel stated that the second interviews are important for background checks and discussing
296 negotiated contracts. He was dismayed to hear from his colleagues that they are accepting 1-year
297 contracts. It would be his recommendation to offer a, what used to be standard, 3-year contract, with
298 renewal points during the 2nd year, to be fair to those applicants thinking about relocating to Vermont
299 and to give the new hire the chance to learn the organization. The intent is to get the best possible
300 candidates who, in return, will give the community their best. He noted that if for some reason the end
301 date for him changes, they can redo the schedule and work backwards.
302

303 Ms. Houghton thought that how the 10 members are going to make the decision should be included in
304 the Schedule. Mr. Scheidel replied that this will be determined by all the members in partnership with
305 the consultant. The consultant will help guide priorities and give input along the way. Ms. Houghton
306 thought it would be helpful for a joint discussion before hiring the consultant to determine how this
307 decision will be made and what type of measurement or matrix they will use at the “end of the day.” Mr.
308 Scheidel replied that consultants have those measurement processes readily available and could make
309 recommendations to the boards or the boards could invent their own process. Mr. Scheidel confirmed
310 for Ms. Houghton that he would include a bullet in the Schedule related to this step in the process. Mr.
311 Levy felt it would be how the boards work together to select the consultant, and Ms. Houghton agreed.
312 Mr. Scheidel also agreed that the boards' first decision is whether or not they want to hire a consultant.
313 Mr. Levy asked how the boards would develop a contract with the consultant. Mr. Scheidel replied that
314 the VLCT has some objective sample contracts. Mr. Levy thought that was another necessary
315 discussion to hold between the boards and agreed with Ms. Houghton that those conversations needed
316 to happen to figure out how they work together as two boards to make these decisions. Mr. Tyler
317 thought it was a good question because just figuring out who among the 10 members would lead the
318 process is a conversation and a good reason to have a consultant. Mr. Scheidel agreed with Mr. Levy
319 that the members could always review the Profile and Schedule and make changes at any time in the
320 future.
321

322 Ms. Wrenner commented that it sounded like Mr. Lutz was going to be training his replacement and
323 asked if Mr. Scheidel saw himself staying after the hiring date to do the same. Mr. Scheidel thought that
324 it was best for the new municipal manager to get a “clean slate” to work with. He said that the new
325 person will have a lot of new things to focus on with a new direction, and there should be no
326 impediments from the past. Mr. Levy felt that Mr. Scheidel, having worked for the Town for 25 years,
327 would be taking a lot of institutional knowledge with him. Mr. Scheidel confirmed for Mr. Levy that if
328 the new hire has any questions for him, he would be happy to share what he knows. Mr. Scheidel did
329 not think the new municipal manager would want that institutional memory as the communities are
330 going in new directions, and there is a lot of positive energy.
331

332 **IRENE WRENNER MOVED AND ANDREW WATTS SECONDED A MOTION THAT THE**
333 **SELECTBOARD APPROVE THE RECRUITMENT PROFILE AND SCHEDULE FOR THE**
334 **MUNICIPAL MANAGER WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT FUTURE EDITORIAL**
335 **ADJUSTMENTS WILL BE MADE.**

336
337 **THE MOTION PASSED 5-0.**

338
339 **ELAINE SOPCHAK MOVED AND DAN KERIN SECONDED A MOTION THAT THE**
340 **TRUSTEES APPROVE THE RECRUITMENT PROFILE AND SCHEDULE FOR THE**
341 **MUNICIPAL MANAGER WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT FUTURE EDITORIAL**
342 **ADJUSTMENTS WILL BE MADE.**

343

344 **THE MOTION PASSED 4-0.**

345
346 **Essex Governance Group (EGG) Committee Discussion – Patrick Scheidel**

347
348 Mr. Scheidel introduced the issue. Members discussed moving forward with the ad hoc committee that
349 was approved by the Trustees and SB at the joint meeting on June 23, 2015. Mr. Levy quoted the
350 following from the minutes: “that the Essex Selectboard engage and advertise for an ad hoc committee
351 to analyze present voting processes including legal and legislative constraints and provide a
352 comparative review of how those voting processes could be restructured within existing and potential
353 new models of local government and school governance to maximize community engagement.” Mr.
354 Levy felt that this was a good mission statement for the ad hoc committee. He noted that the Trustees
355 and SB also elected Ms. Sopchak as the Trustees Representative for this committee and Mr. Plageman
356 as the SB Representative for this committee. Mr. Levy commented that the boards did not talk about
357 the size of the ad hoc committee. Ms. Sopchak preferred no more than 7 members on the Committee,
358 and Mr. Plageman agreed. She felt that the hope was that at least there would be 5 members. She knew
359 that members of the Essex Governance Group (EGG) would be interested and suggested placing an
360 advertisement in the paper. She recommended that she and Mr. Plageman meet to determine a timeline,
361 scope of work and the commitment from the Committee volunteers. She and Mr. Plageman agreed with
362 bringing that result back to the boards for review.

363
364 Ms. Wrenner commented that having experienced being on committees with 7 people, only 3 or 4
365 people show up, and many times there isn't a quorum. She thought that sometimes 7 members is not
366 enough. Mr. Kerin suggested having alternates, like with other committees and boards, for times when
367 members could not attend. Ms. Sopchak pointed out that this Committee would be advisory and not
368 directive. She would hope that, for major decisions, all members would be present, but if only a few
369 people are in attendance then the recommendation from the majority of the people present at the time
370 would be brought forth to the boards. At the same time, she recalled how Mr. Duggan advertised for the
371 Thoughtful Growth In Action Committee (TGIA). Mr. Duggan was really specific up front about the
372 expectations for volunteers. She asked Mr. Duggan if that proved to be effective. Mr. Duggan replied
373 that 28 people are on the TGIA, and there were 22 at the first two meetings. Ms. Sopchak stated she
374 and Mr. Plageman could make a similar effort to be clear about the commitment to “nip that in the bud.”
375 She agreed with Mr. Levy that she and Mr. Plageman would meet to draft an advertisement and bring
376 that to the boards for review.

377
378 Mr. Luck asked about a timeline for this effort. Ms. Sopchak suggested working backwards from winter
379 of 2017 when the 2017 Town Meeting is warned. She thought that this was a fairly long timeline, but
380 wanted to start the process now. She added that there was a lot of legwork done by the EGG group that
381 the ad hoc committee could refer to during its research. Mr. Plageman agreed with this timeline since
382 the boards did not have the kind of time this issue deserves to address it for the 2016 Town Meeting. Mr.
383 Scheidel commented that the boards had a couple of months to establish the group and the ad hoc
384 committee could hold a few meetings before getting serious business started after the 2016 Town
385 Meeting, and Mr. Plageman agreed. Ms. Sopchak confirmed for Mr. Levy that, given the holidays, it
386 was safer to say that a Committee could be formed by the end of January, 2016, and Mr. Scheidel
387 agreed. Mr. Scheidel asked if it made sense to include people who haven't been involved in the EGG
388 process. Ms. Sopchak thought that there may be some people interested who don't know the history of
389 the EGG conversations, but that the Committee could bring them up-to-speed. She thought that would
390 be a new perspective to the group.

391
392 There was consensus from the boards that Ms. Sopchak and Mr. Plageman would meet initially to draft

393 a timeline, scope of work and commitment desired for review by both boards. The goal would be to
394 advertise for the committee and have it formed by the end of January, 2016.

395
396 **School District Consolidation Vote – Max Levy/George Tyler**
397 **Recreation District?**

398
399 Mr. Tyler introduced the issue. He stated that, at the last joint meeting between the Trustees and the
400 Prudential Committee, members acknowledged that pending the results of the community-wide vote to
401 form a regional district (and thus the dissolution of the Prudential Committee and Village School
402 District), the two boards may need to explore the possibility of transferring administrative supervision
403 of the Essex Junction Recreation and Parks (EJRP) to the Village, or some other entity. With the
404 successful outcome of the Regional Education District (RED) vote and unification going into effect
405 FYE June 2017, Mr. Tyler would like to gauge the sentiments of the SB and Trustees for moving ahead
406 with creating an independent, community-wide Parks and Recreation District, which would have
407 oversight by municipal and school leaders, and community members.

408
409 Mr. Tyler expressed that because this has been a sensitive issue in the Village, he wanted to be
410 completely transparent and introduce this concept to the boards and the public before having any
411 discussions about this issue. He asked for the board members' consent to hold a meeting with the
412 Prudential Committee, Trustees and SB sometime in the first 6 months of 2016 to begin the discussion
413 on how the community would approach creating an Essex-wide recreation district together. The intent
414 of that meeting would be to jointly approve creating a study committee whose task would be to identify
415 and frame all issues pertinent to creating this district and develop a plan to be approved by the Village
416 and Town voters in 2017. Mr. Tyler explained that the general concept would be that all recreation
417 programs would stay in place from the user perspective, but changing how it is going to work. Mr.
418 Levy understood that the new Unified School District (USD) Committee would be in place by July 1,
419 2017. Mr. Tyler agreed that the new USD Committee would need to figure out the “nuts and bolts” to
420 present for approval by the voters as would the recreation district. He asked for thoughts and concerns
421 from the other members on this concept.

422
423 Ms. Wrenner suggested moving the vote to November of 2016, which would be a good voter turnout
424 since it is a presidential election as opposed to having fewer voters. Mr. Tyler and Ms. Diane Clemens,
425 a member of the new USD Committee, deliberated on when voters would vote on a new unified school
426 charter. Ms. Clemens confirmed that it would be either March or April of 2017. Mr. Tyler thought a
427 November, 2016 deadline would be too short since a recreation district is a big, complicated task that
428 he anticipated to be staff heavy as well. Mr. Tyler thought that the March or April, 2017 vote should get
429 a lot of attention as well.

430
431 Mr. Luck didn't think there was a conflict of interest at this point with this discussion, but that there
432 might be in the future with his role as a SB member and the Director of EJRP. He was in favor of
433 having another committee to look solely at this topic, similar to the RED Study Committee and TGIA
434 Committee. He asked if Mr. Tyler's request was presuming that a Parks and Recreation District was the
435 answer and that the board members were giving consent tonight towards the creation of a district. Mr.
436 Luck was not sure if that was the question that should be asked. He suggested that the question is how
437 do the two communities want to continue delivering recreation services in the future. He thought that
438 there were many options that could include a district or having it all under the Town or the Village or
439 being under the new USD Committee. He would change this request to studying what works best as
440 they move forward with the changes in the community. Mr. Tyler agreed and apologized if his proposal
441 made it seem as if a Parks and Recreation District is the only solution because nothing has been

442 decided. He anticipated that the discussion at the joint meeting with the Prudential Committee, SB and
443 Trustees would be a big discussion and would start with the simple question of “What do they want to
444 do?” He stated that the Trustees were brought into the discussion by the fact that it owns the land under
445 EJRP. Ms. Houghton asked if the new USD Committee would be invited to the meeting, and Mr. Tyler
446 agreed that it would have to be involved at some point.

447
448 Mr. Scheidel asked what happens if July 1, 2017 comes and there is no decision on the recreation
449 departments? Mr. Tyler thought that something had to be decided because the Village School District
450 will no longer exist. Mr. Tyler was pretty sure that the tone of the RED Committee discussions was that
451 the general understanding was that the new USD Committee did not want to be running a recreation
452 department. Mr. Scheidel and Ms. Clemens agreed with Mr. Tyler.

453
454 Mr. Scheidel had understood that the discussions concluded with having a Parks and Recreation
455 District, which would mean that budget discussions would be easy. If a district is not the conclusion to
456 this issue, then it would impact the budgets. He felt that this process would produce anxiety with the
457 recreation Directors. Mr. Tyler felt that with the huge popularity of both departments throughout the
458 community, it would be madness to think that the departments would be drastically altered. The intent
459 is to depend heavily on the existing staff to tell the boards how to maintain everything just as it is.
460 Perhaps down the road, it could become something else, but there is no intention to “work on the
461 engine.” Mr. Scheidel commented that the end product is consolidated services, but with the recreation
462 departments it is a little more complicated from a legal standpoint. The intent is to have the same high
463 quality, yet be consolidated enough to provide efficiencies to answer any questions from the taxpayers
464 about integrated services. Mr. Levy felt that the ground rule, from a user perspective, is not to change
465 what programs are offered at this time.

466
467 Ms. Vile stated that a vote is 15 months away, which she saw as “fast track.” It seemed to her that the
468 recreation Directors would be need to approach the boards with a consolidated budget, which meant
469 three possible budgets within a year. By this time next year, there needed to be some sort of projection
470 ready to go on a ballot for the voters, and Mr. Tyler agreed. Mr. Tyler confirmed for Ms. Vile that the
471 vote would take place in the spring of 2017, not November of 2017 and that the budget impacts would
472 be part of the bigger discussion. Mr. Fisher suggested that there might be an interim step in the interest
473 of preserving services the way they are now. Ms. Clemens thought the boards should consider having it
474 be voted on in November, 2016 since it would be a presidential election and would be ideal to see how
475 people feel about this issue, and then the April, 2017 vote could be a “back-up” vote. She felt that there
476 were many ways to have checkpoints along the way to include the public, but she agreed that it was 16
477 months away and that the communities need something done. Mr. Tyler clarified that his request
478 tonight was to get permission to reach out to the Directors, Superintendents, the Prudential Committee,
479 the new USD Committee and any relevant parties to arrange a joint meeting. Ms. Houghton felt that
480 March, 2016 was a very busy time for both boards, but felt that March, 2017 would be the latest to
481 address this issue, and Mr. Tyler agreed. Ms. Houghton thought that one key issue was the use of the
482 schools for so many recreation programs. Ms. Vile reassured Ms. Houghton that the Town Recreation
483 Department is not under the jurisdiction of the schools, and it has a great relationship with the schools.
484 Mr. Tyler suggested that this would also be a time when the Town and the Village discusses whether it
485 makes sense to own the property or to transfer it to a Parks and Recreation District. Mr. Plageman
486 asked if a transfer of property could take place after a vote. Mr. Scheidel clarified that the property
487 issue would have to be settled as part of the vote.

488
489 Mr. Scheidel noted that the Trustees, at a previous meeting, had discussed how it was going to finance
490 capital projects, including the recreation department on Maple Street. He wondered if that was a topic

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491 of discussion for tonight as 81 Main Street gets closer to a completion date. Mr. Tyler did not think it
492 would involve the SB unless they were to discuss operational adjacencies and the available space at
493 Lincoln Hall once 81 Main Street is completed. Mr. Scheidel did not want the discussion to be a
494 surprise for any of the board members which was why he raised the issue. Mr. Houghton asked for
495 clarification. Mr. Scheidel said that as 81 Main Street gets closer to its completion date, the boards
496 might want to discuss operational adjacencies between 81 Main Street and Lincoln Hall and capital
497 needs in a consolidated service model. Ms. Sopchak felt that the Trustees did not finish their
498 conversation about capital needs and improvements, and she felt that needed to happen first. Mr.
499 Scheidel understood, but wanted to introduce the idea as they are discussing consolidated services and
500 operational adjacencies. Mr. Tyler asked Mr. Lutz to be sure to let the SB and Trustees know if there
501 are some obvious things that should happen with regard to availability of space and operational
502 adjacencies as they get closer to finishing 81 Main Street. Mr. Tyler did not think a joint meeting would
503 be required for this issue. Mr. Scheidel believed that the topic would include both boards since it
504 included staff from both communities. Mr. Scheidel agreed with Mr. Kerin that the topic includes
505 capital financing and budgeting of buildings and property. Mr. Scheidel added that the formula for one
506 building is not the same for another building.

507
508 There was consensus from both boards for Mr. Tyler to consult with the Prudential Committee, the
509 Parks and Recreation Directors, the Chittenden Central Supervisory Union staff, the municipal manager,
510 the new USD Committee and any other relevant parties in order to prepare an actionable agenda item
511 for a joint meeting with all necessary parties in 2016.

512
513 **CONSENT AGENDA**

514
515 **ANDREW WATTS MOVED AND IRENE WRENNER SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE**
516 **THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH SELECTBOARD MEMBER COMMENTS.**

517
518 **CONSENT AGENDA**

519 **Prudential Committee/Trustees Minutes**

520
521 There were no comments from the SB members.

522
523 **THE MOTION PASSED 5-0.**

524
525 **BRAD LUCK MOVED AND IRENE WRENNER SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT**
526 **9:25 P.M. THE MOTION PASSED 5-0.**

527
528 **ELAINE SOPCHAK MOVED AND LORI HOUGHTON SECONDED A MOTION TO**
529 **ADJOURN AT 9:26 P.M. THE MOTION PASSED 4-0.**

530
531
532
533 **Respectfully submitted,**

534
535 Saramichelle Stultz
536 Recording Secretary

537
538 Approved this _____ day of _____, 2015

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540 (See minutes of this date for corrections, if any).

541

542 _____

543

544 Andrew J. Watts, Clerk, Selectboard

545

546 (THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE NEXT SELECTBOARD MEETING)

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548

549

550

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