VILLAGE OF
ESSEX JUNCTION NEWS

"In the whole world, there is only one Essex Junction."

Issue No. 34 March 2011

2011 ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 6, 7 PM at Essex High School

FY12 Proposed Budget

Realistic budgeting is the term we have committed to and Village department heads have stepped up to accomplish this goal. The Trustees are proposing a $3,168,456 budget for the 2011-12 fiscal year. That figure represents a 3.85% over the 2010-11 budget. It would increase the tax burden by $28 more per year on the typical village property valued at $266,000. The increase for taxes is $28 per year and $15 of that can be attributed to reduction of the IBM subsidy.

In light of increased library use by Young Adult patrons over the past few years, and the trend of unsupervised youth in Essex Junction, Brownell Library is trying to respond to the needs of pre-teens and teens in our community. We have seen more youth visiting the library on their own after school, evenings, and weekends, sometimes leading to behavior issues. At present, a year-long grant from Vt. Dept. of Libraries (until August) allows us 6 extra hours per month for the YA Librarian to add programs for younger teens and kids, like Lego Building, Star Wars Club, and Wii Games. In cooperation with local organizations serving youth, we have identified demographics in need of opportunities for cultural enrichment and community engagement. Thanks to the grant, Fleming and ADL students, who come to the library while parents are working, are eagerly responding to a greater variety of programs geared to their interests. Library Trustees see a real need to expand the Young Adult Librarian position, from its current 26 hours per week into a 40 hour full-time position to support a fuller spectrum of services and programs geared toward the Young Adult population. Library Trustees worked hard to adjust the budget to accommodate the additional cost of a full-time YA Librarian, so that the total library budget is held to a 5.4% increase.

Unrestricted Fund Balance and Rolling Stock Fund

The Trustees are also asking voters in Article 3 on the Warning to increase the amount of unrestricted fund balance from 5% to up to 15% to meet the recommendations of the auditor and the National Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) to maintain unrestricted fund balance in the general fund of no less than two months of regular general fund operating expenditures. The 15% requested is actually a little less than 2 months of operating expenses; however, it is a more appropriate level for the financial viability of the Village. In addition in Article 4, the Trustees are recommending that the balance of the Rolling Stock Reserve Fund, which funds the purchase of equipment, be increased from $500,000 to $750,000 to reflect the increased costs of equipment since the fund's inception in 1990.

The Village of Essex Junction is fiscally solid and financially sound, though there are still some challenges to be overcome. The Village's total financial and material assets exceed its liabilities even though revenues from IBM, which funded 62% of the Village taxes 20 years ago, have been reduced to 18% in FY11. The IBM subsidy will continue to decline in the next three years until projected revenues from IBM will be approximately 10% from property taxes alone.

The Village government continues to seek out economic and community development initiatives. Tax burdens have been further reduced through the obtainment of a grant totaling $55,497 from the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization to study the feasibility of constructing a connector road from Park St. (Route 2A) to Maple St. (Route 117) ending on Main Street (Route 15). This potential road is now called the "Crescent Connector". The Village match equals $11,100. Without this grant, more of the project's costs may have been placed directly on the Village. We have also been approved for a $21,400 Vermont Emergency Management grant for the replacement of the emergency generator which serves as a backup for the Five Corners traffic lights.

The Village continues to seek other grant monies for a multitude of projects: a multi-use safety path from Central St. to North St. along the railroad tracks, fire hose connections to fire hydrants, the installation of traffic signal pre-emption for the fire department, replacement of the bridge on Main Street, as well as an EPA climate change grant and a community arts grant.

Many Good Things are Happening…

The Village of Essex Junction is engaged in numerous activities that are working to improve our community. There is a new website design and we think the community will be very pleased. As well, the Village has applied for an "Our Town" Community Arts grant to hopefully involve local artists in answering the question: "What does Essex Junction, past, present, and future, mean to you?" In addition to these grant opportunities, the various volunteer-led initiatives such as the Five Corners Farmers Market and Railroad Avenue Recess group have been extraordinarily successful in planning activities like the Train Hop, Prize at the Fives and planting flowers in the downtown, with even more to come this year. It is important to note that the Memorial Day Parade was saved by the efforts of the Recreation Department and many volunteers. Every volunteer is a tremendous asset to Essex Junction and we are extremely grateful to all of them.

JOIN FRONT PORCH FORUM

If you haven't already, sign up for your neighborhood's e-newsletter today. Hear from your clearly identified nearby neighbors and post messages yourself. No fees, no spam, all local. It won't overflow your inbox. There are 9 neighborhoods in Essex Junction which have their own forums: Brickyard, Countryside, Expo West, Fairview Farms, Hiawatha, Indian Acres, Lincoln, Maple and South Junction.

Today, FPF boasts 23,000 subscribers in 60 Vermont towns who get frequent e-newsletters full of postings from neighbors looking for lost cats, wanting to borrow a lawnmower, or organizing potluck suppers. Check it out at Front Porch Forum.com. Online conversations help neighbors connect and build community.

FY 12 PROPOSED BUDGET

GENERAL FUND REVENUES	FY10 Budget	FY10 Actual	FY11 Budget	FY11 Estimated	FY12 Proposed Budget
Unrestricted Fund Balance	59,000	0	0	0	34,587
Property Taxes	2,184,894	2,189,037	2,384,826	2,385,084	2,519,354
State for Pilot & Current Use	1,200	2,418	2,000	2,627	2,000
IBM Subsidy	242,211	242,211	181,664	181,667	121,123
Penalties/Interest Delinq. Taxes	6,000	7,437	7,000	7,000	7,000
License & Zoning Fees	32,000	32,753	30,000	30,000	32,000
Service Fee - Water	99,420	99,420	107,588	107,588	112,993
Service Fee - WWTP	49,710	49,710	53,794	53,794	56,497
Service Fee - Sanitation	99,420	99,420	107,588	107,588	112,993
State District Court Fines	4,000	1,844	2,000	2,000	2,000
State Highway Aid	90,000	98,785	95,000	95,000	95,000
EJSD Tax Collection Fee	48,184	45,456	50,486	50,486	47,000
Lincoln Hall Rentals	140	288	289	289	289
Miscellaneous Fire Receipts	20	4,807	20	880	20
Miscellaneous Street Receipts	3,000	3,631	4,500	4,500	3,000
Miscellaneous Library Receipts	300	614	600	600	600
Essex Town Contribution to Library	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Interest Earnings	5,000	1,188	1,000	1,000	1,000
Miscellaneous Grants	0	63,202	0	5,272	0
CVE Noise Violation Fine	0	1,283	0	0	0
Misc. Receipts	7,500	9,203	7,500	9,000	6,000
TOTALS	$2,946,999	$2,967,707	$3,050,855	$3,059,375	$3,168,456

GENERAL FUND BUDGET SUMMARY

EXPENDITURES	FY10 Budget	FY10 Actual	FY11 Budget	FY11* Estimated	FY12 Proposed Budget
GENERAL GOVERNMENT:					
Administration	521,215	531,322	567,731	578,149	594,352
Transfers & Misc Expenditures	459,982	459,982	455,911	455,911	556,412
Grant & Unanticipated Expenditures	0	62,584	0	5,061	0
Fire Department	247,985	242,262	254,769	254,769	262,326
Library	605,878	597,083	607,703	607,703	640,328
Lincoln Hall	44,084	35,026	44,005	46,646	51,084
Planning Department	237,270	205,698	233,612	216,751	240,452
Economic/Community Development	36,000	19,422	77,860	52,684	57,689
Street Department	794,585	748,661	809,264	831,051	765,813
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	$2,946,999	$2,902,040	$3,050,855	$3,048,725	$3,168,456

The Village does not amend its budget during the year. If a line item in one department is over spent, a surplus in another line item in that department is identified to cover the over-expenditure. If the entire departmental budget is over expended, a surplus in another department will be identified to cover the over-expenditure if available.

Important Dates for Village Residents

April 6, 2011	Dessert Social (No Supper), 6 PM, Essex High School
	Village of Essex Junction Annual Meeting, 7 PM, E.H.S.
April 12, 2011	Village residents vote 7 AM-7 PM, E.H.S.
May 27, 2011	Memorial Service and Candlelight Vigil,
	First Congregational Church, 8 PM
May 28, 2011	Memorial Day Parade, 10 AM
May 31, 2011	Water/sewer bills due (mailed April 29th)
June 3, 2011	Five Corners Farmers Market Opens through Oct. 7
July 4, 2011	4th of July Celebration with Fireworks at Maple St. Park
July 23, 2011	10th Annual Block Party, Railroad Avenue, 4-9 PM

Community Social Before Annual Meeting April 6 at 6:00 PM

Due to the unavailability of the CTE culinary students, the social hour that precedes the Annual Meeting will be desserts, not a supper. The desserts will be provided by a local business, Brickyard Bakery. Please join us!

2010 Annual Report

The 2010 Village Annual Report will be available at the Annual Meeting or may be picked up at the Village office or the Brownell Library. It is also on-line at essexjunction.org. The FY 10 Audit Report is also available on the Village website or at the Village office.

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
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Village of Essex Junction

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