

The legal voters of the City of Essex Junction are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Champlain Valley Exposition in the Blue Ribbon Pavilion, 105 Pearl Street in the City of Essex Junction on Tuesday, April 14, 2026 to transact the following business by Australian (paper) ballot. Said voting by Australian (paper) ballot to begin at 7:00 AM and close at 7:00 PM.

ARTICLE 1. Shall the voters approve an annual General Fund Budget in the amount of \$12,921,469 for fiscal year July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027, \$11,891,682 of which is to be levied in taxes against the City Grand List?

ARTICLE 2. Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the City of Essex Junction in an amount not to exceed Thirteen Million, Nine Hundred and Sixty Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$13,960,000.00) be issued under Chapter 53 of Title 24, Vermont Statutes Annotated, payable from the City's general fund, derived from the taxation of real property for a period not to exceed thirty years, and subject to reduction by available grants-in-aid or other funding sources, be issued to finance the cost of constructing a public works facility (the Project)?

ARTICLE 3. Should the compensation paid to the City Council members change from \$2,500.00 a year to \$3,600.00 a year starting July 1, 2027.

ARTICLE 4. Shall the voters approve an amendment to the City of Essex Junction Charter that changes the City Council President's annual compensation to be twenty-five percent (25%) more than the annual compensation paid to the other City Council members? (strikethrough represents a deletion, and underline represents an addition):

Subchapter 2: Governance Structure

Section 205. Compensation -

(a)(1) The President of the Council shall be paid an annual compensation that is twenty-five percent (25%) more than the annual compensation paid to the other Council members.

ARTICLE 5. Shall the voters approve an amendment to the City of Essex Junction Charter where compensation paid to the City Council members adjusts annually, effective July 1 of each year, in a manner consistent with any percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for the Northeast Region, as published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for the most recent calendar year? (strikethrough represents a deletion, and underline represents an addition):

Subchapter 2: Governance Structure

Section 205. Compensation

(a) Compensation paid to the Council members shall be set by the voters at the annual meeting, adjusted annually, effective July 1 of each year, by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for the Northeast Region, as published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for the most recent calendar year, with a minimum of

ARTICLE 6. Shall the voters approve an amendment to the City of Essex Junction Charter that states that the City Council shall appoint a Charter Review Committee, at least once every 12 years, to conduct a comprehensive review of the City of Essex Junction Charter? (strikethrough represents a deletion, and underline represents an addition):

Subchapter 12: AMENDMENT OF CHARTER AND INITIATIVES

Section 1202. Charter Review Committee

The City Council shall appoint a Charter Review Committee at least once every twelve (12) years for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive review of this charter. A majority of the Committee's members shall be residents of the City who are not members of the City Council.

ARTICLE 7. Shall the voters authorize a planning loan through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for a project in the Water Enterprise Fund to be used for service line material identification and nonlead service line validation as required by federal drinking water regulations in an amount not to exceed \$892,771 to be financed over a period not to exceed ten years?

ARTICLE 8. Shall the City of Essex Junction voters approve a one-cent Social Services Contributions tax to support social service organizations, such amount being reasonably necessary and for the support of programs to benefit City of Essex Junction residents?

ARTICLE 9. Shall the voters authorize payment of real property taxes in equal installments on March 15 and September 15 by physical delivery or electronic payment to the tax collector by close of business on that date?

ARTICLE 10. To elect City officers required by law including: two City Council member (three-year terms) and one Library Trustee (five-year term)?

Dated this 11th day of March, 2026 by the Essex Junction City Council.

Amber Thibeault, President; Marcus Certa, Vice President; Tim Miller, Clerk; Elaine Haney; Brian Sheldon



2 Lincoln St.
Essex Junction, VT 05452-3154
802.878.6944
www.essexjunction.org

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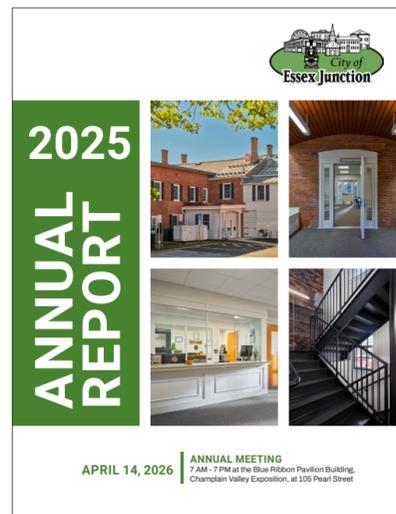


ECRWSS
POSTAL PATRON

APRIL 14, 2026

ANNUAL MEETING

7 AM - 7 PM at the Blue Ribbon Pavilion Building, Champlain Valley Exposition, at 105 Pearl Street



To view the full 2025 City of Essex Junction Annual Report visit the City's website at www.essexjunction.org/departments/finance/annual-reports. You can also request to receive a printed copy by emailing admin@essexjunction.org or by calling 802-878-6944.



ISSUE NO 49 MARCH 2026

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



If I had to sum up the last year in four words, it would be "Meet Me on Main." Even as the snow continues to fall around us, the City is still buzzing about this event.

What started as an idea, as the Council participated in their 1st annual retreat, was brought to life by our party planning extraordinaires, EJRP. We couldn't have asked for better weather, not one but all four Saturdays in a row. Walking around, I saw adults participating in date night while sipping a beverage from El Gato's food truck and tons of kids of all ages enjoying the bouncy castles, magicians, concerts, and other activities provided by EJRP. People still stop me to ask when the next one will happen...stay tuned...it's coming.

Also, at the retreat, the Council reiterated its commitment to public participation and engagement as the top priority. This year, we included several public forum events during regular City Council meetings, either as the sole basis of the meeting or as a separate section within the meeting. Councilors participated in several events to meet residents where they were at and answer questions and concerns. These events included, but are not limited to, National Night Out, Pumpkin Palooza, Meet Me on Main, Brownell Library's Friday night potluck, the 100th anniversary of Brownell Library kick-off event, the Hiawatha Block Party, and the Train Hop.

The City Council, with the assistance of City staff, held a food drive when utility payments were due to benefit Aunt Dot's, and is hosting one for Heavenly Pantry now through March 30, 2026. During these events, the Council also hosted a booth for residents to meet the councilors.

Public engagement and participation remain a priority for the Council into the new fiscal year, and beyond. All council members' emails and phone numbers are available online at www.essexjunction.org. We welcome the opportunity to talk to our neighbors. Please feel free to reach out.

See you at Meet Me on Main 2026.

Amber Thibeault,
City Council President



FY27 GENERAL FUND BUDGET SUMMARY

ARTICLE 1

You are being asked whether to approve or not approve a General Fund budget of \$12,921,469, with \$11,891,682 to be raised through property taxes.

This budget represents a 4.0% or \$502,228 increase from FY26 \$12,419,241 to FY27 \$12,921,469. This increase is supported mostly with an increase to the City tax levy of \$11,891,682 or 4.3%.

The proposed budget would result in an estimated City General Fund tax rate, plus the tax agreement rate and economic development rate, of \$1.0624, compared to \$1.0202 in FY26, which is a 4.1% increase. The projected City tax cost for a \$280K home in FY27 is an increase of \$118 per year over FY26.

ARTICLE 2

You are being asked whether to approve or not approve issuing up to \$13,960,000 in general obligation bonds or notes to pay for a new Public Works facility.

The current buildings are beyond their serviceable life and no longer adequate to support the Public Works Department's daily operations.

The main building, with parts dating back approximately 80 years, suffers from outdated construction materials and designs that fail to meet modern standards.

The current facility faces many deficiencies, including limited storage space for expensive and environmentally sensitive equipment, and inadequate heated storage, risking damage and delays - especially during winter emergencies. Additionally, there are operational inefficiencies caused by having functions spread across three separate buildings.

Staff facilities are also woefully inadequate, with combined bathroom and storage spaces, no dedicated locker or shower rooms, and a lack of break and training areas.

The main building's low ceilings make it impossible to maintain larger vehicles properly, and the facility does not meet current life-safety or accessibility codes.

ARTICLE 3

You are being asked whether to approve or not approve raising the City Council Member's annual minimum pay from \$2,500 to \$3,600.

The Essex Junction Governance Committee recommended increasing the annual minimum pay due to the time, work, and responsibilities required of the Council. They also believe the increase could help more people consider running for office.

ARTICLE 4

You are being asked whether to approve or not approve an amendment to the City Charter that would provide the Council President a 25% higher stipend than other members.

This amendment would add to Subchapter 2: Governance Structure, Section 205, Compensation, of the City Charter: "The President of the Council shall be paid an annual compensation that is twenty-five percent (25%) more than the annual compensation paid to the other Council members."

The Essex Junction Governance Committee recommended this change because the Council President has additional duties and time commitments justifying a 25% higher stipend.

ARTICLE 5

You are being asked whether to approve or not approve an amendment to the City Charter that would adjust the Council stipends annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

This amendment would change Subchapter 2: Governance Structure, Section 205, Compensation, of the City Charter. Removing (strikethrough) and adding (underlined) the following text: "Compensation paid to the Council members shall be set by the voters at the annual meeting, adjusted annually, effective July 1 of each year, by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for the Northeast Region, as published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for the most recent calendar year, with a minimum of ..."

The Essex Junction Governance Committee recommended this to remove the Council's ability to raise its own stipends and to set a regular way to increase them.

Linking stipend increases to the Consumer Price Index makes the process consistent and keeps the decision separate from the Council.

ARTICLE 6

You are being asked whether to approve or not approve an amendment to the City Charter that would require a comprehensive Charter Review every 12 years.

This amendment would add to Subchapter 12: Amendment of Charter and Initiatives, Section 1202 Charter Review Committee, of the City Charter: "The City Council shall appoint a Charter Review Committee at least once every twelve (12) years for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive review of this charter. A majority of the Committee's members shall be residents of the City who are not members of the City Council."

The Essex Junction Governance Committee recommended this to ensure the City Charter is fully reviewed at least every 12 years.

ARTICLE 7

You are being asked whether to approve or not approve authorizing a planning loan through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for lead service line inventories. The loan amount would not exceed \$892,771 and would be financed for a period of up to ten years.

In 2023, voters authorized a loan for Essex Junction's Lead Service Line inventory and replacement plan. The inventory and plan are complete and approved.

There are now new United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) lead and copper rules that require the City to conduct further investigation, including non-lead service line validation (by 2034) and service line material identification (by 2037).

The state has funding available now through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. The City is eligible for partial loan forgiveness for this phase of the work. With loan forgiveness the expected repayment amount would be about \$400,000.

ARTICLE 8

You are being asked whether to approve or not approve the creation of a Social Services Funding Program and a one-cent tax to support local social service organizations.

Before the City separated from the Town in 2022, Village taxpayers contributed to a similar social services program through the Town budget (dating back to 1987). Since separation, Essex Junction has not had a dedicated program or funding mechanism for social service appropriations.

The funds would support social, health, and human services organizations to benefit Essex Junction residents.

A one-cent tax would generate approximately \$113,000 (based on the FY26 grand list).

This question would be brought to the voters at each Annual Meeting for reconsideration.

ARTICLE 9

You are being asked whether to approve or not approve of the City's proposal to stop accepting postmarks as proof of on-time tax payment.

The City Charter does not specify how or when tax payments must be delivered. Because of this, the City follows state law 32 V.S.A. § 4773(b), which allows postmarks as proof of on-time payment.

Given operational changes at the US Postal Service, postmarks have become a less reliable indicator of an on-time payment. Currently, the City does not accept postmarks as proof of on-time payment for utility bills.

The City is receiving payments weeks past the due date. Penalties and interest must be applied the day after payments are due. Accepting postmarked payments requires staff to manually reverse penalties or interest for each customer and apply the payment. These adjustments require documentation and supervisor verification for internal controls and audit.

	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget	2027 Budget	\$ Change	Change
Revenues								
Property Taxes	10,420,986	10,433,476	11,110,346	11,145,692	11,405,931	11,891,682	485,751	4%
General	3,456,044	3,507,965	632,664	948,334	721,705	785,864	64,159	9%
Clerk	105,008	76,404	71,464	86,023	78,035	63,800	(14,235)	-18%
Information Technology	14,000	14,000	-	-	-	-	-	n/a
Community Development	79,158	76,720	47,000	43,330	75,000	45,000	(30,000)	-40%
Economic Development	4,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a
Fire	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	n/a
Streets	153,500	168,729	132,500	134,810	127,500	127,220	(280)	0%
Brownell Library	500	21,948	650	17,526	900	900	0	0%
Recreation	12,479	9,267	11,000	7,975	10,170	7,003	(3,167)	-31%
Total Revenues	14,245,685	14,308,518	12,005,624	12,383,689	12,419,241	12,921,469	502,228	4%

	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget	2027 Budget	\$ Change	Change
Expenditures								
Administration	611,570	627,915	688,830	586,001	735,309	761,756	26,446	4%
Legislative	83,333	48,646	102,244	61,424	99,150	88,251	(10,900)	-11%
Clerk	306,750	262,588	256,470	264,184	268,921	261,444	(7,477)	-3%
Finance	504,300	482,589	589,118	526,823	621,777	677,648	55,871	9%
Information Technology	153,650	259,205	228,611	194,066	211,551	238,513	26,962	13%
Assessing	77,810	79,310	89,568	91,967	96,075	147,890	51,815	54%
Community Development	482,813	320,506	396,078	365,009	425,610	438,750	13,140	3%
Economic Development	40,000	6,005	-	28	-	30,000	30,000	n/a
Fire	545,484	537,675	530,292	513,638	543,037	553,642	10,605	2%
Public Safety and Services	2,977,293	2,973,733	3,057,361	2,897,815	3,235,493	3,516,597	281,104	9%
County/Regional Functions	346,883	316,733	354,376	360,754	445,901	442,929	(2,972)	-1%
Streets	1,566,556	1,572,099	1,552,923	1,445,544	1,583,502	1,653,741	70,239	4%
Stormwater	167,484	163,921	230,850	194,831	-	-	-	n/a
Brownell Library	964,134	915,181	1,016,569	1,003,167	1,047,704	1,082,917	35,213	3%
Recreation	1,100,479	1,065,014	1,131,553	1,167,090	1,135,776	1,095,086	(40,691)	-4%
Buildings	3,215,263	375,786	350,655	351,407	362,720	409,974	47,254	13%
Debt	402,528	394,916	392,053	367,446	375,943	361,365	(14,578)	-4%
Transfers and Misc.	699,356	3,456,126	1,036,574	3,898,816	1,230,770	1,160,967	(69,803)	-6%
Total Expenditures	14,245,685	13,857,948	12,004,124	14,290,010	12,419,241	12,921,469	502,228	4%



To view the full proposed FY27 General Fund Budget visit the City's website at www.essexjunction.org/departments/finance/budget.



Photos of the current Public Works facility. For additional photos and a video tour of the full facility, visit the City's website at www.essexjunction.org/news/publicworksfacility2026.

Photos (L-R) A Public Works truck that almost touches the top of the current building; The outside of the current Public Works facility with equipment outside; The entrance to the current Public Works facility.