

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION WARNING
INFORMATIONAL HEARING: APRIL 6, 2022
AND ANNUAL MEETING: APRIL 12, 2022

INFORMATIONAL HEARING - online only
Wednesday, April 6, 2022 at 7:00 pm

Due to the pandemic, this hearing will be held remotely. Available options to watch or join the meeting:

- **WATCH:** the meeting will be live-streamed on [Town Meeting TV](#).
- **JOIN ONLINE:** <https://zoom.us/join> - Meeting ID: 944 6429 7825; Passcode: 635787
- **JOIN CALLING:** (toll free, audio only): (888) 788-0099 - Meeting ID: 944 6429 7825; Passcode: 635787
- **MODERATOR:** All instructions for conduct of the meeting will be guided by the Moderator.

If you have difficulty accessing the hearing, please call (802) 878-6951 or email admin@essexjunction.org.

On January 25, 2022, the Village Trustees voted to hold the 2022 Annual Meeting entirely by Australian ballot. A public informational hearing on the Articles to be voted on at Annual Meeting will be held according to 17 V.S.A. § 2680. No voting will take place during this hearing. If you wish to make a public comment but do not have the ability to comment remotely during the meeting, please email your comment(s) to the Interim Co-Manager at admin@essexjunction.org.

AGENDA will include:

- Discussion of Article 1 – Adopting the budget
- Discussion of Article 2 – Unrestricted fund balance
- Discussion of Article 3 – Local option tax
- Discussion of Article 4 – Cannabis retailers
- Discussion of Article 5 – Main Street water line bond
- Setting of next Annual Meeting in Article 6
- Announcement of offices up for election in Article 7
- Public to be heard (to be moderated)

ANNUAL MEETING - Australian Ballot

Tuesday, April 12, 2022 7:00 am to 7:00 pm

The legal voters of the Village of Essex Junction are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Essex Community Educational Center on Educational Drive in the Village of Essex Junction on Tuesday, April 12, 2022 to transact the following business by Australian ballot. Said voting by Australian 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 \$6,310,015 for fiscal year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, \$3,890,397 of which is to be levied in taxes against the Village Grand List?

ARTICLE 2. Shall the voters authorize the Village of Essex Junction to maintain and administer an unrestricted fund balance of up to fifteen percent (15%) of the current year General Fund Operating budget, and require any amount over fifteen percent (15%) be used to stabilize subsequent tax rates?

ARTICLE 3. Shall the voters approve the Village of Essex Junction assessing a one percent sales tax, a one percent meals and alcoholic beverages tax, and a one percent rooms tax pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138(b)?

ARTICLE 4. Shall the Village of Essex Junction authorize cannabis retailers and retail portions of integrated licensee establishments in the Village pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 863?

ARTICLE 5. Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the Village of Essex Junction in an amount not to exceed Three Million Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$3,070,000), subject to available grants-in-aid, be issued to finance the cost of replacing the Main Street water line?

ARTICLE 6. Shall the voters approve holding the 2023 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 5, 2023 to act upon any articles not involving voting by Australian ballot and to reconvene on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 to vote for the Village officers and transact any business involving voting by Australian ballot?

ARTICLE 7. To elect Village officers required by law including: Moderator (one year term); one Village Trustee (three year term); one Library Trustee (five year term)?

Dated this 8th day of March, 2022 by the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees.


Andrew Brown
President


Raj Chawla
Vice President


George Tyler


Daniel Kerin


Amber Thibeault

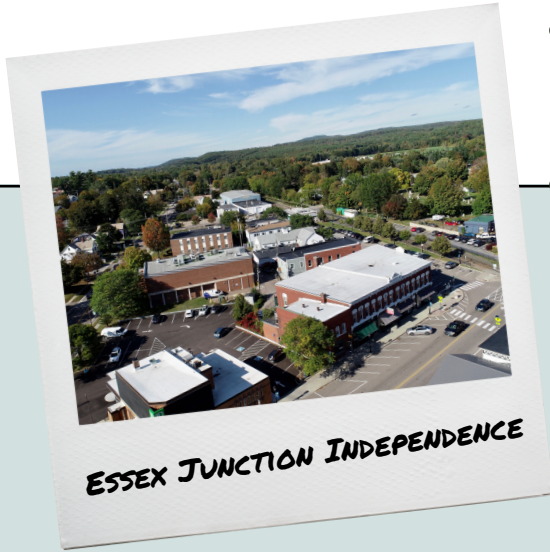
Photo courtesy: Josh Otey



2 Lincoln St.
Essex Junction, VT 05452-3154
admin@essexjunction.org
(802) 878-6944

PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
Burlington, VT
05401
Permit #675

ECRWSS
POSTAL PATRON



The City Charter that was passed in November with 88% support is making its way through the legislature. It passed unanimously in two committees and was supported 148-2 in the full House. The bill is now off to Senate committees and hopefully the full Senate. With approval, it will go to the Governor for signature this spring. **If signed, the City of Essex Junction will be formed on July 1, 2022.**

General Fund Budget Summary						
Department Name:	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Budget	FY23 Budget Proposal	Dollar Change from Prior Year	Percent Change from Prior Year
Revenues						
Property Taxes	3,556,878	3,671,306	3,745,866	3,890,397	144,531	3.9%
General Revenues	310,003	317,188	302,012	753,961	451,949	149.6%
Administration	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	-	0.0%
Community Development	40,795	27,735	28,000	39,000	11,000	39.3%
Economic Development	1,300	-	-	-	-	n/a
Fire	-	50	20	20	-	0.0%
Highway and Stormwater	1,220,847	1,268,388	1,472,880	1,547,062	74,182	5.0%
Library	15,856	15,000	15,500	15,500	-	0.0%
Recreation	32,345	22,897	27,000	12,000	(15,000)	-55.6%
Transfers and Misc.	158,384	112,391	-	-	-	n/a
Buildings	1,678	1,994	-	2,075	2,075	n/a
Total General Fund	5,388,086	5,486,949	5,641,278	6,310,015	668,737	11.9%
Expenditures						
Administration	439,097	485,539	514,791	722,102	207,311	40.3%
Buildings	244,117	279,754	281,300	285,200	3,900	1.4%
Community Development	216,323	231,088	279,840	267,977	(11,863)	-4.2%
Debt Service	313,561	202,734	199,325	195,550	(3,775)	-1.9%
Economic Development	20,093	17,600	49,250	49,250	-	0.0%
Finance	169,766	186,744	187,481	334,415	146,934	78.4%
Fire	345,430	410,849	500,623	482,738	(17,885)	-3.6%
Highway and Stormwater	1,137,166	1,339,679	1,468,880	1,555,062	86,182	5.9%
Library	727,540	706,684	778,306	871,455	93,149	12.0%
Recreation	634,304	730,704	725,654	847,138	121,484	16.7%
Transfers and Misc.	924,870	958,835	655,828	699,128	43,300	6.6%
Total General Fund	5,172,267	5,550,211	5,641,278	6,310,015	668,737	11.9%

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION

Newsletter

ISSUE NO. 45 MARCH 2022

In the whole world, there is
only one **Essex Junction**

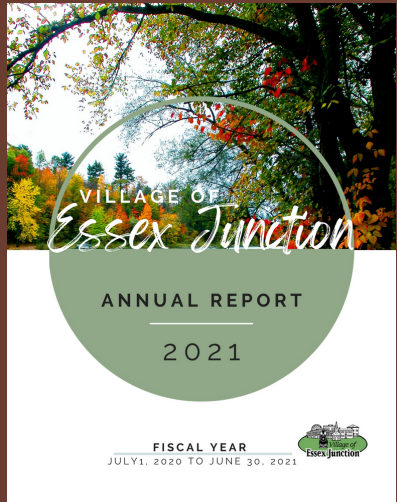
State of the Village Report

By Andrew Brown, Essex Junction Trustees President

Photo courtesy: Bill Boccio



2021 Annual Report



Visit www.essexjunction.org to view the full 2021 Annual Report or send a request to receive one by emailing admin@essexjunction.org or calling 878-6951.

Informational Hearing

April 6 at 7 pm (online only)

Join online at <https://zoom.us/join> or visit www.essexjunction.org for a meeting link.

Join calling (toll free, audio only)
1(888) 788-0099

Meeting ID: 944 6429 7825
Passcode: 635787

Annual Meeting

**April 12 - 7am to 7pm
Essex High School**

More information can be found in this newsletter and online at www.essexjunction.org.

(read more →)

It's important to know that there are four items you will be asked to vote on which differ from the regular annual ballot budget and elections:

- 1) whether to change the unrestricted fund balance max to 15%
- 2) whether to have a local option tax
- 3) whether to allow retail cannabis
- 4) whether to bond for the Main Street water line replacement

These decisions are important to the future of our community. My letter will be brief to allow for additional information on these items to be provided.

The Village of Essex Junction has seen important staff transitions this past year. With the community’s decision to pursue separation from the Town, the Town Selectboard and Village Trustees decided not to continue with sharing one municipal manager, as such, Evan Teich’s contract was not extended. The Trustees extend our sincere appreciation for Evan’s leadership and community spirit. Details of his accomplishments can be found within our Resolution of Appreciation for Evan Teich. With Evan’s departure the Trustees appointed Brad Luck, EJRP Director, and Wendy Hysko, Brownell Library Director, as Interim Co-Managers. The Trustees are thankful these two experienced and accomplished community leaders were willing to take on this additional responsibility and know Essex Junction is in good hands. Please join me in congratulating Brad and Wendy.

With the focus on separating Village municipal management from the Town of Essex we also welcome Colleen Dwyer as HR Director and Jess Morris as Finance Director. Both Dwyer and Morris come to the Village with great experience in their fields and I look forward to working with them in the coming years.

We also said goodbye to retired Water Quality Superintendent Jim Jutras. Jim led the Wastewater Treatment Facility, which serves the Village of Essex Junction, the Town of Essex and the Town of Williston. Under Jim’s leadership the Wastewater Treatment Facility has been recognized by local, state and regional entities as one of the most innovative facilities for environmental excellence. As someone who has no professional or educational experience in this type of operation, I was always thankful for Jim’s ability to take very complex and technical issues and distill them down to a level I could understand. While Jim will be sorely missed, I congratulate Chelsea Mandigo and Bernie Fleury who were promoted to Water Quality Superintendent and Chief Wastewater Operator. I am confident in their capabilities to continue Jim’s legacy.

I want to extend a great thanks to all of our staff for their tireless and at times thankless effort in keeping the Village of Essex Junction the community I love. I also thank all of you for your support, feedback and community involvement. Our community would not be what it is without those of you who call Essex Junction home. I look forward to hearing from you, stay safe and be well.

The Articles Explained

Article 1 – Adopting the budget

You are being asked whether to approve a General Fund budget of \$6,310,015, of which \$3,890,397 will be levied in taxes.

- Budget increase: 11.90%
- Estimated tax rate increase: 3.44%
- Estimated tax increase to \$280,000 home: \$32.20
- Tax rate increase is less than budget increase primarily due to one-time use of revenue of \$375,000 of the total \$3,200,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds the Village has been awarded.
- Primary expense increase drivers are new positions and planned increase in capital transfer. New positions include City Manager, HR Director, Finance Director, and Recreation Customer Service Specialist.

Article 2 – Unrestricted fund balance

You are being asked whether to approve a change in the maximum unrestricted fund balance the Village may maintain at the end of each year.

- Unrestricted fund balance is a “rainy day” fund that can be used in unforeseen, unbudgeted situations.
- Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends maintaining unrestricted fund balance of no less than 16.67%.
- Village’s current maximum is set at 10%.
- Setting threshold of 15% would be in accordance with best practice.
- Any funds over 15% would be used to reduce or stabilize tax rate in future budgets.

Article 3 – Local option tax

You are being asked whether to approve the Village assessing a one percent local option tax on sales, meals & alcoholic beverages, and rooms.

- Local option taxes are an alternative method of raising municipal revenues.
- Items that would be assessed 1% local option tax include meals, alcoholic beverages, admission charges, personal property, lodging, etc.
- In Chittenden County, local option taxes are collected in Burlington, Colchester, South Burlington, Williston, and Winooski.
- Estimated annual revenue: \$600,000 – \$750,000.
- Likely uses include capital expenses: infrastructure replacement, road repaving, sidewalk repair, facility upgrades.
- The Capital Reserve Fund will run out of funds in FY25 without further increases in General Fund transfers, other revenue sources, or delaying planned road and sidewalk construction.

Article 4 – Cannabis retailers

You are being asked whether to approve the Village allowing cannabis retailers and retail portions of integrated licensees to operate in the Village.

- Cannabis retail establishments would be subject to state regulations and inspections.
- Establishments would be subject to local rules that apply to all businesses, including zoning, ordinances, and regulation of signs or public nuisance.
- No special rules can be created for cannabis establishments.
- State law does not allow retail cannabis on a property that abuts or is within 500’ of a school.
- Municipalities with a local option tax can receive tax revenue on retail sales of cannabis.
- An integrated licensee is an establishment that offers retail sales in addition to other cannabis activities such as cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, or testing lab.

Article 5 – Main Street water line bond

You are being asked whether to approve the Village obtaining a bond of up to \$3,070,000 to finance the replacement of the Main Street water line.

- Project will replace the water line on Main Street from bridge next to Town Offices at 81 Main Street, to Champlain Water District water tank off of Upper Main Street.
- Debt payments will be made from Water Fund Capital Reserve Fund.
- Taking on debt will not require any increase in user rates. Current capital contributions are sufficient to cover debt payments.
- Large water line and when it fails the damage is major and costly.
- At least 10 breaks on line over last 30 years.
- Pipe has reached end of its life.