

CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION

WARNING

Informational Hearing – Online Only
Monday, April 1, 2024, at 6:00 PM

Available options to watch or join the meeting:

- **WATCH:** the meeting will be live-streamed on Town Meeting TV.
- **JOIN ONLINE:** Join via Zoom.
- **JOIN CALLING:** (toll free, audio only) 1(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 or email admin@essexjunction.org.

Under the City of Essex Junction Charter, voting in the Annual City Meeting is entirely by Australian ballot. A public informational hearing on the Articles to be voted on at the 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 City Manager at admin@essexjunction.org.

AGENDA will include:

- Discussion of Article 1 – Adopting the budget
- Discussion of Article 2 – Veteran's Exemption
- Discussion of Article 3 – Economic Development Fund
- Discussion of Article 4 – Next annual meeting date
- Announcement of offices up for election in Article 5
- Public to be heard (to be moderated)

Annual Meeting - Australian Ballot Tuesday, April 9, 2024 – 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM

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 9, 2024 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 \$12,004,124 for fiscal year July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, \$11,110,346 of which is to be levied in taxes against the City Grand List?

ARTICLE 2. Shall the voters of the City of Essex Junction set the property tax exemption for disabled veterans at Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000.00), as allowed by 32 § 3802(11)(C), said exemption to remain in effect for future taxable years until amended or repealed by the voters?

ARTICLE 3. Shall the voters approve extending the one-cent Capital Improvement tax (also known as the Economic Development tax), as established in 2016, to be reconsidered at the annual meeting in 2027?

ARTICLE 4. Shall the voters approve holding the 2025 Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at which time the voters shall vote by Australian ballot for the election of officers, the voting on the City budget, and any other business included in the warning for the meeting?

ARTICLE 5. To elect City officers required by law, including a Moderator (one-year term), two City Council members (three-year terms), and two Library Trustees (one five-year term and one three-year term)?

Dated this 28th day of February 2024 by the Essex Junction City Council.

 Raj Chawla, President
 Amber Thibault, Vice President
 Marcus Certa, Clerk
 Andrew Brown
 Elaine Haney



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2023 Annual Report

To view the full 2023 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.

INFORMATIONAL HEARING

April 1, 2024
6 PM

The public informational hearing will be held remotely via Zoom. No voting will take place during this meeting. Information to join the Zoom meeting can be found at www.essexjunction.org/meeting/informational-hearing-04-01-2024.

ANNUAL MEETING

April 9, 2024
7 AM - 7 PM
Champlain Valley Expo,
Blue Ribbon Pavilion, 105 Pearl Street

The 2024 City Annual Meeting will be held entirely by Australian ballot. More information on the budget and articles can be found online at <https://bit.ly/EJAnnualMeeting24>.



THE CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION

NEWSLETTER



Raj Chawla,
City Council President

Serving as your City Council president this past year has been an exciting learning experience for our newly formed City and me. I want to express my gratitude to everyone who has contributed their time and expertise to ensure our transition from Village to City went smoothly. This includes those who serve on our advisory committees and boards and our amazing staff. We have now completed the transition, and all departments are separated from the Town of Essex.

This year has also been a year of change. Howard Kimball, a long-time employee at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, recently retired after 39 years of service to the Village and City. Howard received several awards for his work during his time with the plant, and we appreciate his dedication. I also want to extend a

A MESSAGE FROM THE CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

sincere thank you to Andrew Brown for his 12 years of service to our community as a Village Trustee and City Councilor, his leadership on the Village Capital Committee, and various roles through the years. I appreciate the patience and guidance he shared with me during my time on the board. The Council also welcomed Marcus Certa for his first term on the City Council and Elaine Haney, former Village Trustee who has returned as a City Council member.

Our transition from Village to City has resulted in renewed interest in volunteer opportunities for City committees and boards. There are many opportunities to participate in shaping our community, and all are welcome and encouraged to participate. We currently have various openings on committees like the Police Community Advisory Board and the Housing Committee. Stipends are available for all positions. There will also be more opportunities to participate in shaping the future of

Essex Junction as we look forward to a committee that will investigate potential future governance models for the City.

This month, we're wrapping up work on the City's first community vision and five-year strategic action plan. Our staff and a volunteer steering committee have been working with Future iQ since September and engaging with City residents to create a plan for the City's future. I hope you've had a chance to share your vision and ideas along the way. If not, you still have time. Our second survey is currently open, and we would appreciate your feedback. The survey and more information about the project can be found here: <https://bit.ly/EssexJunction>. I'm looking forward to reading the final report.

A long-awaited project, the Crescent Connector, will open later this summer. The Crescent Connector is a road that bypasses the Five Corners intersection between Main

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and Park Streets and is designed to reduce congestion and wait times. It will also provide the ability to reimagine the Five Corners intersection and Main Street. Also, we'll start renovating 2 Lincoln Street, our City offices, while we continue preparing for the Amtrak train station renovation.

We’ve had exciting announcements regarding Global Foundries. In February, the company announced it would receive \$125 million in federal funding and another \$4.5 million in state funding to update the Fab 9 plant to produce next-generation gallium nitride semiconductors. Late last year, a consortium of public and private entities, including Global Foundries, was awarded Tech Hub designation from the federal government as part of the federal CHIPS Act, creating opportunities to leverage up to \$75 million in additional federal funding. These investments reinforce what we already know: that our community and Vermont offer a world-class workforce ready to compete globally.

It’s been wonderful to see so many people out and about enjoying our busy downtown, new businesses opening, and folks spending time in our coffee shops and restaurants. Spring is just around the corner, and I’m looking forward to biking around the City again. As always, please reach out to the City Council members (citycouncil@essexjunction.org) if you have any questions or concerns.

THE ARTICLES EXPLAINED

UPDATE ON CHARTER CHANGES FROM 2023

Last year, the voters approved four Charter Changes. These included two changes to Section 206, Conflict of Interest, Section 302, Moderator, and Section 401, City Meetings & Elections. The legislature is currently considering these Charter changes. These Charter changes will only take effect if the legislature approves them. Because of this, you will see a question asking to elect a moderator (Article 5) and vote on the Annual Meeting date (Article 4).

ARTICLE	
1	<p>You are being asked whether to approve or not approve a General Fund budget of \$12,004,124, of which \$11,110,346 will be levied in taxes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">FY25 City General Fund (GF) budget of \$12,004,124 is a 5% or \$582,953 increase over the FY24 budget of \$11,421,171.The proposed budget would result in an estimated City General Fund property tax rate of \$0.9807 compared to \$0.9199 in FY24, which is a 6.6% increase.The projected City tax cost for a \$280,000 property in FY25 is an increase of \$170 over FY24.

ARTICLE	
2	<p>You are being asked whether to approve or not approve setting the property tax exemption for disabled veterans at \$40,000.00.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">State law mandates a minimum \$10,000 property tax exemption for veterans. Cities and towns may vote to increase the exemption up to \$40,000 in the municipal grand list.The \$40,000 property tax exemption for disabled veterans was previously done under the Town of Essex. Now that we are no longer part of the Town of Essex, the City needs to consider whether or not it wants to increase the disabled veterans’ exemption to \$40,000.Any increase in exemption shall take effect for the taxable year for which it was voted and shall remain in effect for future taxable years until amended or repealed by a similar vote.
3	<p>You are being asked whether to approve or not approve extending the one-cent Capital Improvement tax (also known as the Economic Development tax).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The one-cent Capital Improvement tax was approved by voters in 2016. In 2021, voters approved renewing it until 2024.If extended, the tax will be imposed through FY26.In the past the one-cent Capital Improvement tax have been used for public parking improvements including signage, utilities, and bike racks.
4	<p>You are being asked whether to approve or not approve to hold the 2025 Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 8, 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">As mentioned earlier, the City Charter change that the voters approved last year has yet to be approved by the legislature. This means voters will have to decide on the date we will vote for the 2025 Annual Meeting.

FY 25 BUDGET SUMMARY

	2022								
	Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	\$ Change	% Change	
Revenues									
Property Taxes	3,745,866	3,745,838	3,890,397	3,838,114	10,420,986	11,110,346	689,360	7%	
General	302,012	331,797	753,961	719,495	631,530	632,664	1,134	0%	
Administration	50,000	147,004	50,000	50,000	-	-	-	n/a	
Clerk	-	-	-	78,159	105,008	71,464	(33,544)	-32%	
Information Technology	-	-	-	-	14,000	-	(14,000)	-100%	
Community Development	28,000	38,332	39,000	43,529	79,158	47,000	(32,158)	-41%	
Economic Development	-	12,000	-	3,750	4,000	-	(4,000)	-100%	
Fire	20	10	20	-	10	-	(10)	-100%	
Streets	1,396,627	1,395,993	1,469,044	1,467,739	153,500	132,500	(21,000)	-14%	
Stormwater	76,253	76,553	78,018	78,018	-	-	-	n/a	
Brownell Library	15,500	15,446	15,500	39,101	500	650	150	30%	
Recreation	27,000	20,560	12,000	11,074	12,479	9,500	(2,979)	-24%	
Buildings	-	1,993	2,075	1,822	-	-	-	n/a	
Total Revenues	5,641,278	5,785,526	6,310,015	6,330,802	11,421,171	12,004,124	582,953	5%	
Expenditures									
Administration	514,791	616,435	722,102	650,577	611,570	688,830	77,260	13%	
Legislative	-	-	-	-	83,333	102,244	18,911	23%	
Clerk	-	-	-	-	306,750	256,470	(50,280)	-16%	
Finance	187,481	246,434	334,415	397,127	504,300	589,118	84,818	17%	
Information Technology	-	-	-	-	153,650	228,611	74,961	49%	
Assessing	-	-	-	-	77,810	89,568	11,758	15%	
Community Development	279,840	245,022	267,977	266,785	482,813	396,078	(86,736)	-18%	
Economic Development	49,250	46,360	49,250	23,363	40,000	-	(40,000)	-100%	
Fire	500,623	493,366	482,738	480,139	545,484	530,292	(15,192)	-3%	
Health and Human Services	-	-	-	-	2,977,293	3,057,361	80,068	3%	
County/Regional Functions	-	-	-	-	346,883	354,376	7,493	2%	
Streets	1,392,627	1,396,426	1,465,044	1,553,853	1,566,556	1,552,923	(13,633)	-1%	
Stormwater	76,253	72,848	90,018	26,691	167,484	230,850	63,366	38%	
Brownell Library	778,306	743,380	871,455	837,311	964,134	1,016,569	52,435	5%	
Recreation	725,654	781,797	847,138	935,806	1,100,479	1,131,553	31,074	3%	
Buildings	281,300	313,583	285,200	304,962	390,749	350,655	(40,094)	-10%	
Debt	199,325	199,363	195,550	195,624	402,528	392,053	(10,475)	-3%	
Transfers and Misc.	655,828	682,620	699,128	724,079	699,356	1,036,574	337,218	48%	
Total Expenditures	5,641,278	5,837,633	6,310,015	6,396,316	11,421,171	12,004,124	582,953	5%	



*FY 22 and 23 include only the Village budget, while residents also contributed approximately 42% of the Town of Essex’s budget in these years. FY 24 marks the first City budget.

To view the entire budget visit the website at <https://bit.ly/EJAnnualMeeting24>.

Board & Committee Meeting Schedule

City Council
2nd & 4th Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.
2 Lincoln Street & Online

Planning Commission
1st Thursday, 6:30 p.m.
2 Lincoln Street & Online

Development Review Board
3rd Thursday, 6:30 p.m.
2 Lincoln Street & Online

Police Community Advisory Board
3rd Tuesday, 6 p.m.
81 Main Street & Online

Capital Program Review Committee
1st Tuesday (Quarterly), 6 p.m.
2 Lincoln Street & Online

Bike/Walk Advisory Committee
3rd Monday, 7 p.m.
2 Lincoln Street & Online

Tree Advisory Committee
3rd Tuesday, 4:30 p.m.
2 Lincoln Street

Tri County Sewer Committee
3rd Thursday (Quarterly),
10 a.m. Online

Brownell Library Trustees
3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Brownell Library