



BOARD OF TRUSTEES
JOINT MEETING WITH THE ESSEX SELECTBOARD
AGENDA
MONDAY, MAY 4, 2015 AT 7:30 PM
ESSEX POLICE DEPARTMENT, 145 MAPLE STREET, ESSEX JUNCTION, VT 05452

1. **CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG** [7:30 PM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **GUESTS, PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS**
 - a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
 - b. Planning/Zoning Consultants Presentation – Greg Duggan/Consultants
4. **BUSINESS**
 - a. Essex Governance Group Discussion – Pat Scheidel
 - b. Joint Stormwater Discussion – Dennis Lutz
 - c. Spring/Summer/Fall 2015 Work List – Dennis Lutz
 - d. Bid Award for 2015 Paving – Dennis Lutz
 - e. Approve Amendment to Motor Vehicle Ordinance – Pat Scheidel
5. **TRUSTEES COMMENTS/READING FILE**
 - a. Memos from Heart and Soul re: Update on the Future of Voting in Essex
6. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - a. Real Estate Contracts
7. **ADJOURN**

Meetings of the Trustees are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Village Manager's office at 878-6944.

Memorandum

To: Town of Essex Selectboard
Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees
Patrick C. Scheidel, Municipal Manager
From: Greg Duggan, Interim Assistant Town Manager GSD
Re: Essex Planning Governance project
Date: April 30, 2015

Issue

The issue is whether the Selectboard and Trustees should move forward with the Essex Planning Governance project, which will consist of a community-wide discussion about the best planning and zoning structure for the future of Essex.

Discussion

The Heart & Soul of Essex project showed that Essex residents care deeply about planning, zoning, and development issues. Thoughtful Growth emerged as one of the community's top six values. Another of the values, Community Connections, called for "unified planning between village and town governments." The proposed Essex Planning Governance project seeks to further explore the community desire to address thoughtful growth and unified planning.

Currently, the Village and the Town outside the Village each has a planning commission and a zoning board of adjustment. The planning governance structure makes it difficult to create a single vision for the community and build toward that vision. As a result, the FYE 2016 budget includes funding for a project that aims to explore the current governance structure, consider alternatives, and make recommendations to the Selectboard and Trustees of how Essex can best plan as one community.

The project consultants will provide additional details about the project at the May 4 Selectboard and Trustees meeting. As proposed in the scope of work, the consultants would meet with staff and key stakeholders and review local resources to design a community engagement plan. Engagement would likely entail a community-wide kick-off event, followed by several meetings of a smaller working group consisting of municipal staff, board volunteers, residents, and others. The working group would weigh different scenarios, make recommendations and propose an implementation plan. The working group's findings would be presented at another community-wide workshop. The project is expected to conclude in early 2016.

A steering committee – consisting of the Selectboard chairman, the Village president, the municipal manager, the administrative services director, and the interim assistant town manager – has already met with the consultants. The steering committee will continue to work with the consultants to guide the design of the project.

Cost

The project will cost \$15,980. The Town has included \$16,000 in the FYE 2016 budget for the project.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Selectboard and Trustees move forward with the planning governance project.

ESSEX PLANNING GOVERNANCE PROJECT

What is the project & why does it matter?

This project would explore ways to improve the planning governance structure in both the Town and Village. The project stems from the belief, highlighted by the Heart & Soul of Essex project, that the community wants a shared vision that honors and builds on the unique identities of the village and the town outside the village. Moving towards a shared vision, however, is complicated by the current planning structure of two Planning Commissions and two Zoning Boards. This project would explore what different planning governance models could look like and which ones would be a good fit for Essex. The concept for the project was first presented to the Selectboard in December 2014 as part of the budget approval process.

What would be considered part of planning governance?

The project would examine ways to restructure the current Planning Commissions and Zoning Boards of Adjustment. That examination would include but would not be limited to these bodies' responsibilities and relationships to each other, the appointment of members, how the bodies interface with the broader community, how they are supported by local staff, and any legal or funding implications.

What is the project's proposed timeline?



Who would be doing the work?

The Community 

Provides input on desires for planning governance and principles to guide governance options

Working Group 

Dives into details and trade-offs of governance options and makes a recommendation to Selectboard & Trustees

Steering Committee 

Guides project design and implementation and manages consultants

Selectboard & Trustees 

Make final decision about project recommendations

Consultants 

Facilitate public process, design governance options, support project communications and produce final report

What is the project budget?

The project budget is \$15,980 plus the time of town staff and project volunteers.

For more info contact:

Greg Duggan, Town Planner at gduggan@essex.org or 802-878-1343

**Delia Clark
Confluence**

Delia Clark's work focuses on engaging citizens in their communities through place-based education, and facilitating community visioning, planning and dialogue. She is a frequent trainer, speaker, and facilitator in these areas throughout the United States and Central/Eastern Europe, for organizations that include the National Park Service, US Forest Service, QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment, Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, Shelburne Farms, and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

Delia co-founded Antioch New England Institute of Antioch University and also co-founded and served as Executive Director of Vital Communities. She is the co-author of [*Questing: A Guide to Creating Community Treasure Hunts*](#) published by University Press of New England, and also published in Hungarian, Polish, and Czech; as well as several manuals on civic engagement, community visioning and place-based learning, that have been translated into six languages.

Ariana McBride

Ariana McBride is a community planner with more than a decade of experience in community and organization development. Over the course of her career, she has worked with small cities and towns in all five New England states on projects including downtown master plans, open space and recreation planning, comprehensive plans and new village development. She splits her time between her private consultancy and as the Director of Strategic Capacity Building for Ninigret Partners (NP), a boutique economic design firm.

Previously, Ariana was a Senior Associate at the Orton Family Foundation where she managed demonstration projects in New England. In this role, she designed community selection processes and trained partner communities in the development and implementation of community projects. Ariana co-developed the Foundation's Heart & Soul Community Planning approach, which emphasizes citizen engagement, collaborative decision making and local capacity building. Prior to the Foundation, Ariana worked for the RI Economic Policy Council where she focused on developing a place-centered approach to economic development.

ESSEX, VT

Scope of Work: Reimagining Essex's Planning Governance

Prepared by Delia Clark & Ariana McBride

Updated April 1, 2015

Project Understanding: It's our understanding that the Town of Essex, Vermont is interested in exploring changes to planning governance across the Town and Village. Options could include but are not limited to combining some of these boards and creating a Design Review Board separate from current planning commissions and also considering how local commissions interface with the broader community. The impetus for this exploration is two-fold: 1) to help the Town and Village move towards a shared vision that honors the unique identities of the Village and the Town outside the Village and 2) to how to improve services at the same or reduced cost.

Scope: The following table lays out key components for this project based on our understanding of the effort and our experience with similar work:

ACTIVITY	TIME EST	COST	STAFF LEAD
Project research and planning meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person kick off meeting with Steering Committee Presentations to Selectboard & Village Trustees Review of recent Town efforts that inform the project as well as statewide resources Design of a detailed engagement plan 	24 hours	\$2,040	Primary: Ariana Secondary: Delia
Informational Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare interview protocol for discussions w/VT communities who have made recent planning governance changes OR w/experts on key planning governance issues Conduct up to 6 interviews Produce summary report 	8 hours	\$680	Primary: Ariana Secondary: Delia <i>Assumes local partners will assist with identifying interviewees</i>
Working Group Formation & Orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare "job description" Coach local partners on recruitment Conduct confidential orientation interviews w/ all members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare interview protocol Conduct up to 12 interviews Produce summary report of interviews Prepare for and hold group kick off meeting prior to Community Workshop 	23 hours	\$1,955	Primary: Ariana Secondary: Delia <i>Assumes local partners would be responsible for identifying key informants and helping with scheduling phone interviews; Kick off meeting would occur on same day as community wide workshop.</i>
Community wide workshop/kick off <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare agenda and materials for a 	24 hours	\$2,040	Primary: Delia Secondary: Ariana

<p>community event geared towards a larger audience. The goal of this event would be to confirm people’s desire to move towards a shared vision, educate about current planning governance, and engage in a conversation about how people would like to see planning governance improved. It would also introduce people to the project process and illustrate ways they can be involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate event (estimate of 2 hours) • Document event 			<p><i>Assumes local partners would be responsible for identifying priority participants and reaching out to them.</i></p>
<p>Focus group sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for, hold and document a series of 4 focus group sessions geared towards a group size of 8-12 participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Session 1: Issue Framing & Design Principles – discussion of the issue based on informant interviews, community workshop and precedent research from other places. Will use discussion to clarify understanding of the issue and develop principles to guide development of scenario options. ○ Session 2: Scenario Planning – presentation and discussion of structure scenarios. Will use discussion to inform design of a preferred scenario including key implications/actions for its implementation. ○ Session 3: Preferred Scenario Actions & Implications – presentation and discussion of preferred scenario. Will use discussion to improve on the preferred scenario and outline recommendations and next steps to implement preferred scenario. ○ Session 4: Next Steps – discussion and agreement on recommendations and next steps to implement preferred scenario. • Conduct related research as necessary (e.g. best practices from other towns) 	56 hours	\$4,760	<p>Primary: Delia Secondary: Ariana</p> <p><i>Assumes local partners would be responsible for identifying priority participants and reaching out to them.</i></p>
<p>Community wide closing workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare agenda and materials for a community event geared towards a larger audience. The goal of this event would be to present the Focus Group’s recommendations, get feedback and discuss next steps. • Facilitate event (estimate of 2 hours) 	24 hours	\$2,040	<p>Primary: Delia Secondary: Ariana</p> <p><i>Assumes local partners would be responsible for identifying priority participants and reaching out to them.</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document event 			
Final Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce final report that will synthesize process and findings from all activities 	8 hours	\$680	Primary: Ariana Secondary: Delia <i>Assumes final product will be an electronic PDF.</i>
Project Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a communications plan Develop and maintain project website Assist w/ project branding and info sheets 	17 hours	\$1,445	Primary: Ariana Secondary: Delia <i>Assumes a local partner would be spokesperson for the project, lead in press releases, co-marketing & info sheets</i>
Community Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coach local partners on ways to share project outcomes with broader community. Options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational workshops Neighborhood meetings Online forums 	4 hours	\$340	Primary: Delia Secondary: Ariana <i>Assumes education activities would be designed and implemented by local partners; additional work beyond coaching would require a separate scope of work.</i>
TOTAL	188 hours (23.5 days)	\$15,980	

Timeline: Based on the Town’s desired completion date of November 2015 and our known time commitments we propose the following schedule:

	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February
Project research and planning meetings												
	3/25: Planning Meeting											
Informant Interviews												
			Summary by end June									
Working Group Recruitment & Selection												
			Initial selections by mid July									
Working Group Interviews												
				Summary by end August								
Community wide workshop/kick off												
					9/1-10: Target dates for workshop							
Focus group sessions												
						Weeks of 9/27, 10/25, 11/15, 12/6						
Community wide closing workshop												
									1/4-1/14: Target dates for workshop			
Final Report												
											1/29: Final report delivered	
Community Education												
											TBD	

[DRAFT]

Essex Planning Governance Project

Working Group Member “Job Description”

Do you have ideas on how to improve the way Essex plans for development, growth, and conservation? Are you willing to work collaboratively to explore and recommend a new path forward? Do you want to play an important role in the future of Essex? Then this Working Group could be for you.

Project Background

The Town of Essex Selectboard, in partnership with the Village of Essex Junction Trustees, recently launched an effort to explore ways to improve the planning governance structure in the Town and Village. The project’s impetus is the belief, highlighted by the Heart & Soul of Essex project, that the community wants to move towards a shared Essex vision that honors and builds on the unique identities of the village and the town outside the village. Moving towards a shared vision, however, is complicated by the current planning structure of two Planning Commissions and two Zoning Boards. This project will explore what different planning governance models could look like and which ones would be a good fit for Essex.

Working Group Purpose & Membership

While the project will invite the entire community to participate it will also rely on a smaller, focused volunteer group to study the issue in depth and come up with a recommendation for the Selectboard and Trustees to consider. Membership to this Working Group is open to any resident of Essex. We’ll be looking to balance individual characteristics and overall group dynamic. Here are the qualities we are looking for:

IDEAL CHARACTERISTICS

Individuals	Able to have an open mind Able to work collaboratively in a small group setting Knowledgeable about local governance or willing to learn Represents an essential perspective (e.g. board experience, staff expertise, resident, business owner, etc.)
Group Dynamic	Represents a diversity of perspectives on local governance Reflects the diversity within the community Includes a mix of people who can collectively see the big picture and focus on the details Will be seen in the community as more than just the “same ten people” (i.e. will have some members who are newer to participating in these kinds of community conversations)

The Commitment

All Working Group members agree to participate in all of the following activities:

- **Initial Interview (July-August):** All members will have a confidential interview where they will share their current thoughts, questions and concerns on Essex’s planning governance. A summary report of key themes across interviews will be compiled and shared with the Group at its Orientation Meeting (not attributing ideas to any particular interviewee).

- **Group Orientation (ADD DATE):** This meeting will occur just prior to the first community-wide workshop. It will be a chance for members to meet each other, review the Interview Summary and ask questions.
- **Community Workshop #1 (ADD DATE):** This workshop's goal will be to confirm Essex residents' desire to move towards a shared vision, educate about current planning governance, and engage in a conversation about how people would like to see planning governance improved.
- **Issue Framing & Design Principles (ADD DATE):** This session will review past town conversations on planning governance, best practices research, and input from the first community workshop. Participants will use this information to clarify the planning governance issues and to develop a set of principles to guide the development of planning governance scenarios.
- **Scenario Exploration (ADD DATE):** This session will focus on a presentation and discussion of several planning governance scenarios developed based on input at the first session. The conversation will inform the design of a preferred planning alternative including key implications and necessary actions for its implementation.
- **Preferred Scenario Planning (ADD DATE):** This session will focus on a presentation and discussion of a preferred alternative developed from the last session's work. The conversation will aim to improve the preferred alternative recommendation and outline steps to implement it.
- **Next Steps (ADD DATE):** This session will focus on discussion and agreement on final recommendations and next steps to implement preferred alternative.
- **Community Workshop #2 (ADD DATE):** This workshop's goal will be to present the Working Group's recommendations, get feedback and discuss next steps.

Each of the working group meetings should last for approximately 2 to 3 hours. The Community Workshops should last for approximately 2 hours.

How to Apply

Send a letter of interest to Greg/Ariana/Delia. Describe interest in planning/zoning/local governance, any experiences with the Town or Village planning process, and whether the candidate lives in the Village or Town outside the Village.

TO ADD PROCESS BASED ON STEERING COMMITTEE DECISION.

ESSEX PLANNING GOVERNANCE PROJECT – RESOURCE LIST

Town & Village resources

- 2011 Town Plan: http://www.essex.org/index.asp?SEC=F26C4F56-7772-4C46-A6D5-CC16F104E061&Type=B_BASIC
- Village Comprehensive Plan: <http://www.essexjunction.org/boards/planning-commission/comprehensive-plan/>
- Town charter: <http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/fullchapter/24APPENDIX/117>
- Village charter: http://www.essexjunction.org/fileadmin/files/Ordinances_Codes/Village_Charter.pdf
- Heart & Soul of Essex
 - Project summary: <http://heartandsoulofessex.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Project-Summary-2.21.14.pdf>
 - Neighborhood Conversations Report (and values): <http://heartandsoulofessex.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/NeighborhoodConversationReport2.pdf>
- Essex Governance Group: <http://heartandsoulofessex.org/about-2/essex-governance-group/> (link provides info about EGG and leads to more info about the group's recommendations)
- Memo, "Forming a DRB," Dana Hanley, 8/16/11: attached PDF
- Minutes, Selectboard 11/17/03: attached PDF
- Memo, "Exploration of a Development Review Board," Pat Scheidel, 11/6/03: attached PDF
- Memo, "Development Review Boards," Herb Durfee, 2/1/02: attached PDF
- Town and Village zoning and subdivision regulations – I'm debating if these would be useful at this point; if you want them I can provide links.

Statewide resources

- "Vermont Planning & Development Act," VSA Title 24, Chapter 117: <http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/chapter/24/117>
- "DRB vs. ZBA," Vermont Natural Resources Council: <http://vnrc.org/resources/community-planning-toolbox/land-use-planning-in-vermont/drb-vs-zba/>
- "Essentials of Local Land Use Planning and Regulation," Vermont Land Use Education & Training Collaborative: <http://www.vpic.info/Publications/Reports/Essentials/EssentialsBlackWhite.pdf>
- "Planning Commission," VLCT: <http://www.vlct.org/vermont-local-government/understanding-town-offices/planning-commission/>
- "Zoning Board of Adjustment and Development Review Board," VLCT: <http://www.vlct.org/vermont-local-government/understanding-town-offices/zoning-board-of-adjustment-and-development-review-board/>
- "Planning Manual for Vermont Municipalities," Vermont Planning Information Center: <http://vpic.info/PlanningManual.html>
- "Creating a Development Review Board," VLCT: http://www.vlct.org/assets/Resource/Tech_Reports_Papers/TP_03_drb_07-07.pdf

Neighborhood planning

- Burlington, VT
 - PlanBTV (links to neighborhood planning initiatives, i.e. Waterfront/Downtown, South End): <http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/PlanBTV>
 - Neighborhood Planning Assemblies: <http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/Neighborhood-Services/Neighborhood-Planning-Assemblies>
- Golden, CO: <http://www.cityofgolden.net/government/departments-divisions/planning-and-development/> (links to Community/Neighborhood Plans, Neighborhood Associations)

Miscellaneous Resources

- Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission: www.ccrpcvt.org
- Town & Village of Enosburgh (recently adopted joint Comprehensive Municipal Plan):
<http://villageofenosburghfalls.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Enosburgh-Unified-Comprehensive-Municipal-Plan-2015.pdf>

Essex Governance Group Report Executive Summary, February 2015

In fall, 2014, the Essex Governance Group explored with residents ways Essex can continue to improve civic engagement and governance, with a focus on budget decision-making and voting. Through a community-wide survey and public forum, EGG identified a number of strong themes. EGG findings and recommendations are briefly summarized below. For more information please see the full report at www.heartandsoulofessex.org

FINDINGS

1. More Effective Communication is Needed

Citizens want Essex leaders and staff to communicate with them in ways that are more:

- Explicit, clear, and open
- Proactive, with information well in advance of decisions
- Online, with a more active web presence
- Innovative in using a variety of media
- Direct, responsive, and accountable
- Two-way, with respectful exchanges

2. Inclusion is Critical

Citizens are concerned about low turn-out both at town meeting and local ballot voting. Many reported feeling barriers to participation.

3. High-Quality, Informed Decision Making is Greatly Valued

Citizens value face-to-face decision making. They appreciate hearing directly from leaders, and want the community to be informed and engaged.

4. Essex Could Create its Own Model

Participants in EGG forum and survey are open to creating a new model for local democratic decision making, choosing the elements that work best for Essex.

5. Residents Value the Power and Immediacy of Direct Democracy

Citizens value their power at town meeting, and want to be able to see the clear, immediate results of their participation.

6. Same Day Voting, and a Call for Simplicity

Each spring, Town residents vote three separate times (Village residents five times). Citizens would like all votes on local issues to occur on the same day.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Launch Proactive Communication Program

Adopt an Essex Public Engagement Protocol, train and affirm expectations of staff, revamp website, and host informal community meetings.

B. Empower Neighborhoods

Create Neighborhood Assemblies to serve as official advisors to the municipality.

C. Switch to Enhanced Town Meeting / Australian Ballot Hybrid

Enhance Town Meeting with improved participation options. Citizens would continue to have the power to amend the budget unless Town Meeting attendance is below a specific level.

The final budget would be voted by Australian ballot 45 days after Town Meeting. Additional changes: ballot would include a survey for citizen comment; Town Meeting date would be changed so as not to coincide with school break.

D. Institute Same-Day Voting

Create a staged plan to combine voting dates, and combine Town/Village Meeting dates

ESSEX GOVERNANCE GROUP PARTICIPANTS

THANK YOU! The Essex Governance Group was made up of a dedicated group of volunteers, many of whom contributed dozens of hours of their energy and expertise to this effort. The facilitators wish to thank them for their energy, expertise, collaborative spirit and commitment to community. The following people attended one or more of the series of Essex Governance Group meetings between August and December, 2014:

Bob Bates

Dorothy Bergendahl

Andrew Cimonetti

Ben Gilliam

Tim Kemerer

Ron Lawrence

Max Levy

Brad Luck

Deb McAdoo

Greg Morgan

Toni Morgan

Roberta Penchina

Bruce Post

Pam Schirner

Gabrielle Smith

Elaine Sopchak

Saramichelle Stultz

Liz Subin

Jess Wisloski-Martin

Irene Wrenner

Vanessa Zerillo

Special thanks to EGG's "Essex Democracy and You" small-group facilitators:

Annie Davis • Tina Logan • Brad Luck • Stephanie Ratte • Gabrielle Smith • Elaine Sopchak • Saramichelle Stultz • Liz Subin

EGG Co-Facilitators and Report Co-Authors:

Susan Clark is a community facilitator focusing on community sustainability and engagement. She is coauthor of *Slow Democracy: Rediscovering Community, Bringing Decision Making Back Home* (Chelsea Green, 2012, with Woden Teachout), and *All Those In Favor*, a book about Vermont town meetings (RavenMark, 2005, with Frank Bryan). She has taught community development at the college level for ten years, and serves as town meeting moderator in Middlesex, Vermont.

Susan McCormack works side by side with organizations and communities to engage people in productive conversations that lead to change. She serves as a Senior Associate with Everyday Democracy and the Community Liaison for Creating Community Solutions, part of the National Dialogue on Mental health. She recently co-coordinated the Heart & Soul of Essex, a two year citizen led initiative funded by the Orton Family Foundation to identify shared community values, foster collaboration among two linked municipalities and increase civic participation.

Essex Governance Group Final Report

February, 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary

2. Introduction

How we got here. Report scope.

3. Context

“What time is it” in American communities?

“What time is it” in Essex?

4. Essex Governance Group: Purpose and Process

5. Essex Democracy: Data and Infographics

6. EGG Survey

7. EGG Findings

8. EGG Recommendations

9. Conclusion

10. Appendices

Appendix A: Portland, Oregon Participation protocol

Appendix B: EGG Survey results, coded

Appendix C: Forum agenda and “Four Approaches”

Appendix D: Forum small-table results, coded

Appendix E: List of EGG Participants; Facilitator/Author Bios

1. Essex Governance Group (EGG) Report: Executive Summary

In fall, 2014, the Essex Government Group explored with residents ways Essex can continue to improve civic engagement and governance, with a focus on budget decision-making and voting. Through a community-wide survey and public forum, EGG identified a number of strong themes. EGG findings and recommendations are briefly summarized below. For more information please go to www.heartandsoul.org

EGG FINDINGS

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Create a staged plan to combine voting dates, and combine Town/Village Meeting dates.

2. Introduction

Essex Governance Group: How We Got Here

The Essex Governance Group (EGG) is a project supported by the Town of Essex, Heart & Soul of Essex, and the Orton Family Foundation.

The project was initiated in summer, 2014, when a group of residents concerned about low turnout at Town and Village annual meetings approached the Town Selectboard and Village Trustees about moving budget approval from the traditional Town/Village Meeting format to Australian ballot (ballot-box voting). This group, calling itself “Budget to Ballot” (B2B) pointed out that median voter turnout at Town Meeting since 2005 is 1.5% of registered voters (it’s 1.9% for Village Meeting). Median voter turnout for Australian ballot voting after Town Meeting during this same period was 8.9% (8.3% for the Village). The group requested that the Selectboard help Essex move toward a combined town meeting/Australian ballot system (with a proposed budget figure determined at town meeting, and final approval of budget decided by Australian ballot), and that the Towns’ ballot voting and the three Town-related school budget votes all occur on the same date.

Both the Selectboard and the Trustees agreed that the issues raised by B2B were important, and that’s when Heart & Soul of Essex was brought on board.

Heart & Soul of Essex, a multi-year community effort supported by the Orton Family Foundation, has the goals of engaging community members in dialogue, creating a vision based on what people are saying, and activating community members to take action towards that vision. During Essex’s two-year Heart & Soul community planning process, “Community Connections” emerged as one of six core values of Essex. Heart and Soul participants have extensive experience convening community conversations, and agreed to help engage the community on this question. With funding from the Town of Essex, Heart & Soul of Essex and the Orton Family Foundation, facilitators Susan Clark and Susan McCormack were hired to co-facilitate the effort.

Heart & Soul members joined with members of the B2B group, town and village officials, and interested residents to carry out this work. The newly formed Essex Governance Group (EGG) met throughout the fall to plan and implement a community exploration about decision-making and voting on the budget in Essex. The exploration included a community-wide survey and forum. This report summarizes the results of those efforts.

EGG Report Scope

EGG's findings and recommendations are offered with the understanding of the report's scope and limitations.

- *Time Frame:* The group was charged with completing its work within a four-month time-frame, including planning and carrying out the group's goals and activities, and processing and reporting findings. Limitations of both time and staffing necessarily circumscribed the project's scope.
- *Research Tools:* The EGG Survey and Forum participants were self-selected and likely represented more highly engaged citizens (from all perspectives). While the Survey Monkey tool protects against multiple responses from the same computer, there is no way of knowing whether anyone repeated the survey using multiple devices. Not surprisingly, the online Survey had over seven times the participation of the Forum (450 compared with approximately 60). Even given these limitations, the thoughtful comments recorded through both the Survey and Forum reveal important patterns and offer valuable insights about residents' concerns.
- *Town and Village:* In most cases, the EGG research did not differentiate between citizens' experience in the Town and the Village. While some survey comments reflected specific feelings about Town and Village governance, most data was collected about "Essex" in general.
- *Citizen Focus:* Just as the 6/2014 Morris and Carr "Shared Services" Assessment focused on an internal (staff) perspective, EGG's work focused on Essex residents at large. EGG benefitted from active participation by the Selectboard, Village Trustees and even one School Board member, and the facilitators were also grateful for valuable interviews with the Town/Village Manager, Assistant Manager, and Town Clerk. While the EGG project did not have the capacity to conduct interviews with additional Town and Village staff, this report is offered with appreciation for the knowledge and professionalism of both the Town and Village staff. We hope that through its emphasis on citizen collaboration, this report will support and enhance their important work.
- *Process:* EGG participants agreed on a decision-making protocol, and decisions were made by this protocol. Given their busy lives, not all participants were able to attend all meetings; however, all meetings were reported via email so those who could not attend could weigh in on decisions. The EGG report is the best representation of the group's consensus the facilitators could create given these limitations.

3. Context: “What Time Is It”?

Bill Grace of the Center for Ethical Leadership notes that when working for positive change, it is important to ask “What time is it?” What is the context in which we find ourselves, and what factors will affect our work?

What time is it in American communities?

The big picture is important. Across the U.S., in the aftermath of the “Great Recession,” citizens are struggling economically. Simultaneously they are also struggling democratically, with public confidence in government hitting all-time lows. As federal programs are cut, communities are trying to determine how to do more with less—less money, and less of the citizen confidence they’ve long relied on.

At the same time, citizens’ expectations about decision-making are rapidly changing. Today’s citizens are web-savvy, and possess an extraordinary ability to research issues and self-organize more effectively than at any point in history. The Internet and the “Open Source Revolution” have created dramatic changes in both the business and non-profit worlds, and citizens are now developing a different view of leadership in the public sphere as well. Reliance on “experts” is giving way to decentralized, bottom-up strategies that reward innovation and information sharing. Increasingly, citizens expect to be treated as collaborators, and appreciate systems that look less like a hierarchy and more like a wiki.

The answer emerging in many communities—and now being brought forward as “best practice” by leaders in public administration—is to use creative methods for engaging citizens in decision making.

The National League of Cities represents 19,000 cities, towns and villages across the U.S.; at its recent annual conference, fully one-third of its “Leadership Training” workshops involved “public engagement.” The International City/County Management Association conference recently featured an entire track on “engaging citizens,” and a third of their university workshops related to public engagement. And at the 2012 American Society for Public Administration conference, the major gathering of all public administration schools in the country, the conference theme was “Redefining Public Service through Civic Engagement.”

Through a combination of process tools (outreach, more creative meeting structures, targeted power sharing, etc.) and technical tools (online communication, increased access to information), communities are redefining their local democracy for the 21st Century.

Essex, like every other community, must find the unique recipe that suits it best.

What time is it in Essex?

Essex finds itself in a time of significant change. EGG members created a list of some of the activities affecting citizens in Essex—some positive, some deeply challenging.

- **Shared Services:** The 6/2014 Morris & Carr Shared Services Report suggested a number of significant changes to the way the Town and Village work. Town and Village leaders and staff are working hard to take appropriate action, most immediately in the area of Public Works. Meanwhile, some citizens are expressing concerns about what the changes will mean (“is it a pseudo-merger?”). They wonder how to have a voice in the process.
- **Budget Hits:** The 2010 Census showed that incomes in some neighborhoods dropped 10%, and many Essex residents are expressing concerns about taxes and the cost of living. At the same time, Essex Rescue, the VNA and Winooski Valley Park District are just a few of the organizations likely to ask for increased financial support from the community.
- **Significant development:** Residents will experience the complications of construction in the next several years including the Crescent Connector (federal project), repaving Route 15 (state project), bike lane/sidewalk expansion on Pearl Street, and a new bike path by the train station. The Town has set aside \$1.5 million to renovate 81 Main Street. In the private sector, there will be construction of a major new building at 5 Corners, and new housing developments happening outside the Village with implications for traffic, town character open space, schools, etc.
- **School system concerns:** Like other Vermont communities, Essex is facing changing demographics and rising per-pupil costs. A study of consolidated governance is being discussed.
- **IBM / Global Foundries:** Residents are waiting to see what changes may occur with the shift in this major local employer.
- **Planning:** Village officials, with assistance of Heart & Soul of Essex and urban designer Julie Campoli, are carrying out “Design Five Corners,” a strategic planning effort to enhance the physical quality and economic vitality of Essex Junction’s Village Core.
- **Heart & Soul:** The Essex Heart & Soul process recently wrapped up its two-year visioning process. Essex has an immediate opportunity to build on this work, as well as take advantage of the citizen-facilitators trained through Heart & Soul. The Heart & Soul Board and participants are working to maintain momentum, and determine how best to implement the vision that Essex residents communicated.

- **Community Calendar:** One of the newest projects of Heart & Soul is an online centralized calendar of all community events. Ideally this will help all sectors plan and communicate more effectively. www.essexcalendar.org

It is in this complex environment that the Essex Governance Group launched its work.

4) Essex Governance Group: Purpose and Process

Essex Governance Group participants determined the following priorities:

EGG Purpose

Engage people in a conversation about ways Essex can continue to improve civic engagement and governance.

EGG Goals

1. LEARN what motivates and/or prevents people from participating
2. INFORM people about Essex's current governance system
3. GATHER ideas from people about potential improvements
3. CREATE a set of recommendations to help the community improve governance and increase civic participation

EGG Scope / Focus

- Form of town meeting & village meeting (e.g traditional floor meeting, representative town meeting, hybrid, etc.)
- Voting options for town and village budgets and other issues (e.g. floor vote, Australian ballot)
- Ways to increase informed civic engagement in town

Note: The group agreed that while the following topics may arise in our discussions and we must understand the relationship between these and our work, the group would *not* focus on:

- Town-Village merger
- School governance and funding structure
- Forms of governance outside of town/village structure (city, etc.)

EGG Timeline

1. Convene organizing committee - August 2014
2. Planning - June through early September 2014
3. Outreach - August thru October 2014
4. Conversation - late October 2014
5. Synthesis - November 2014
6. Report due - end of year 2014

EGG Proposed Outcomes

1. Deepen citizen engagement and understanding around governance
2. Activate citizens to participate in the civic life of Essex
3. Identify top priorities for improvements in governance and/or civic participation
4. Report back to the community (elected officials and the public) with a set of recommendations for improving governance and/or civic participation in Essex

EGG Research

In order to help the community have an informed discussion, and for use by the Town/Village on their websites and other citizen education, EGG participants researched the following:

1. Voting statistics
 - Essex voting rates for national elections vs. other VT communities
 - Percentage of voters who vote in local ballot-box elections in Essex vs. comparable places
 - Essex voting on national issues vs. local Australian ballot voting
2. Essex Voting schedule
3. Structure of municipal bodies in town/village/school systems
4. Budget overview
5. Citizen opportunities to participate in decision-making
6. A Brief History of Essex's Government (why it's set up with Village, Town)
7. Discussion materials on Town Meeting, Australian Ballot, Representative Town Meeting, NH hybrid system

Outreach Tools

1. Community-Wide Survey

EGG issued an online survey during October. Over 450 residents of Essex Town and Village participated in the survey, and provided a great deal of information about current voting and civic engagement.

Survey Goals:

- Learn what motivates and prevents people from participating
- Assess people's level of interest in governance issues
- Identify community values/priorities regarding governance and civic participation

2. Community Forum

On Saturday, November 8 EGG hosted an interactive "Essex Governance and You" community forum (noon-4:00). It was attended by about 60 leaders and residents from both the Town and Village.

Forum Goals:

- Share and discuss the results of the community survey

- Identify key priorities and generate suggestions to strengthen civic participation/community voice
- Inform people about Essex's current governance model and share stories about other governance models
- Gather feedback about potential governance changes

Forum Process: Led by facilitators Susan Clark and Susan McCormack, the Forum was a chance for EGG members to share and discuss the results of the survey with the community. Forum participants also learned about current governance in the Town and the Village, and then spent time weighing the benefits and challenges of four different voting methods: Town Meeting and Australian Ballot, which are currently in use in Essex; Representative Town Meeting, which is used in Brattleboro, VT and in Massachusetts; and a Meeting-Ballot Hybrid approach used in New Hampshire ("SB2"). (See Appendix "Four Approaches" document.) After working in small groups, the participants came together and shared their favorite ideas for encouraging more citizen participation in local voting. Based on the survey results, they also brainstormed ways to build on Essex's high level of community mindedness, and ways to increase transparency in municipal government.

5) Essex Democracy: Data and Infographics

The Essex Governance Group asked itself, “What do people need to know in order to have a productive conversation about Essex governance?” Below are highlights from the Nov. 8 “Essex Democracy and You” forum presentation answering this question.

“If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday.” Pearl Buck

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ESSEX TOWN AND ESSEX JUNCTION....

HOW WE CAME TO BE.



June 7, 1763—Town of Essex, a 36 square mile area, was chartered by Gov. Wentworth of NH Province by power granted to him by King George III.



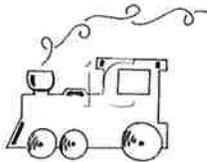
1783—Permanent settlement in Essex began.



1786—First Town Meeting with a population of 772 (26 families). Citizens voted to create a tax to repair the roads.



1801—School districts formed; Village area named School District #1 (aka “Hubbells Falls School District”)



1850—Railroad arrived, known as Painesville (named in honor of Gov. Paine), which subsequently created greater population density.



1853—Vermont Central Railroad and Vermont/Canada Railroad “junctioned” its lines.

1862—Railroad station officially re-named Essex Junction



1893 - School District #1 (area of 4.6 sq. miles around the train station) added another layer of government, in addition to the Town government, by legislative approval known as the Village of Essex Junction for “voluntary taxation with added necessary services of a densely populated area” (Frank Bent, 1963). Owners of less developed farmland did not have to pay for the services they didn’t need. This taxation structure has been in place ever since.

(Fig. 1)

History and Demographics

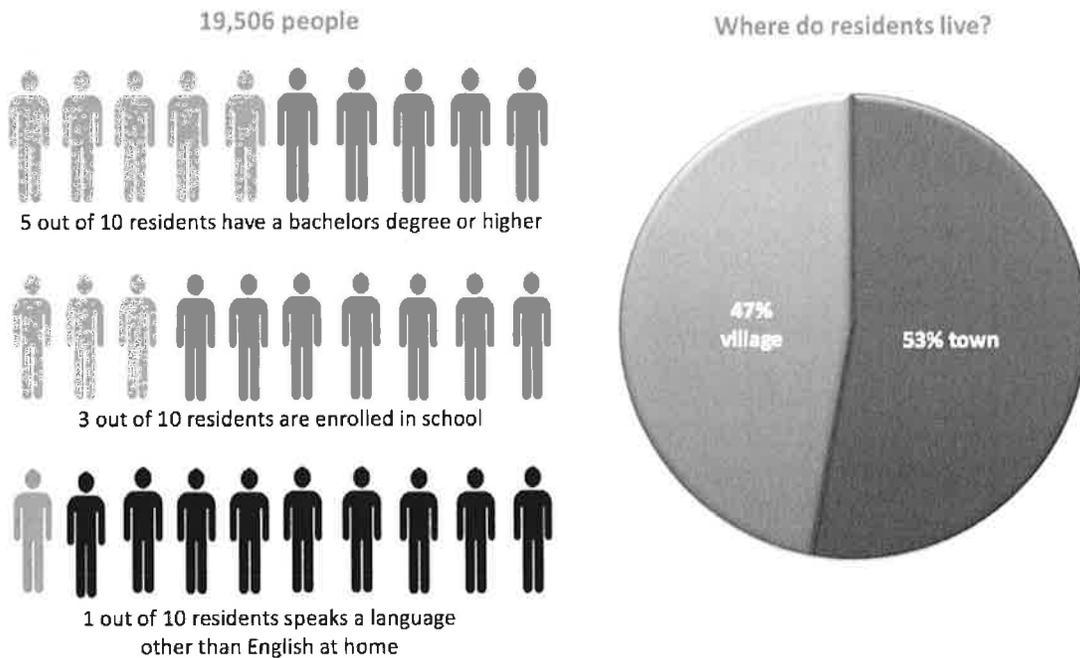
We began with the basics, offering a brief history of the Town/Village relationship (Fig. 1, above). We also included a map of Essex that indicated the boundaries of the Village and Town, reminding participants that people who are residents of the Village are also residents of the Town.

Essex's population is now close to 20,000, with a well-educated and increasingly diverse citizenry split almost evenly between Village and Town (Fig. 2, below).

WE ARE ESSEX



ESSEX IS THE STATE'S 2nd LARGEST TOWN AND IS MORE EDUCATED AND DIVERSE THAN VT AS A WHOLE.



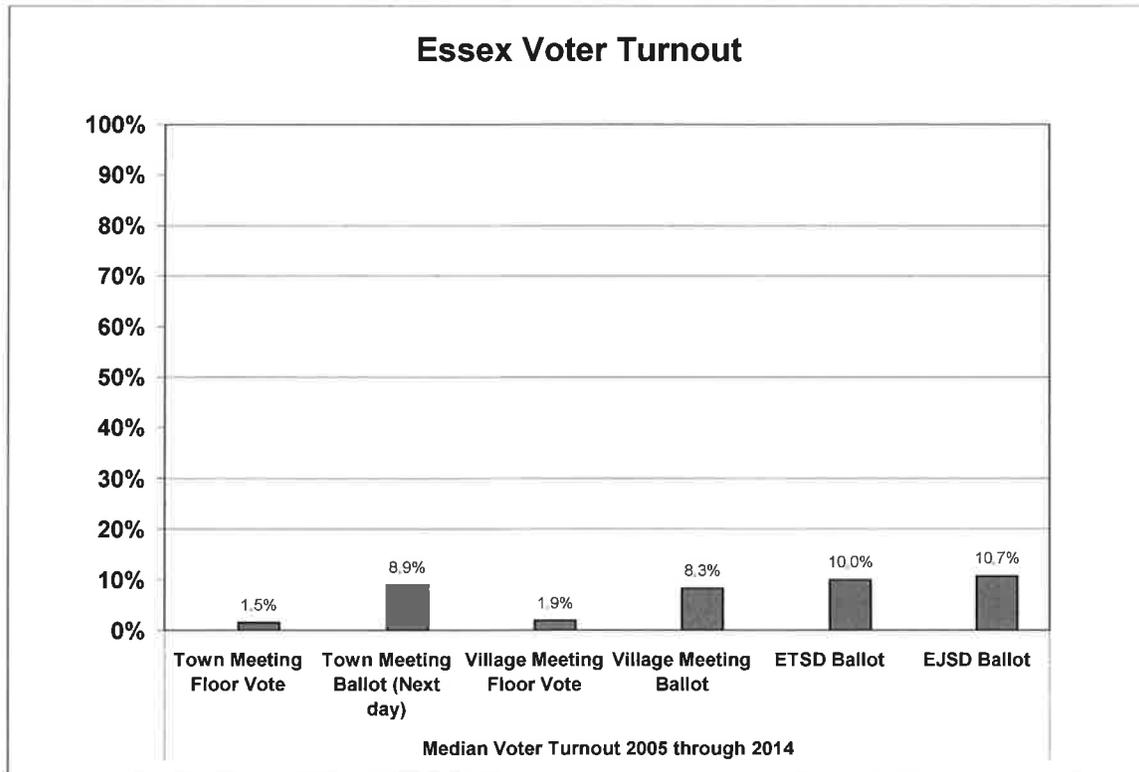
(Fig. 2).

Town Meeting and Ballot-Box Voting

Figure 3 (below) shows the range of Essex voter turn-out on local issues.

- Essex's votes on the Town and Village budgets occur at town meeting, face-to-face deliberative gatherings. The median voter turnout for the Town Meeting between 2006-2014 was 1.5%. At the Village Meeting, the median turnout was 1.9%.

- Essex also votes on some Town and Village issues by Australian ballot. The median voter turnout between 2006-2014 for these ballot-box votes was 8.9% (Town) and 8.3% (Village).
- Essex votes on school budgets by Australian ballot. The median voter turnout between 2006-2014 for these ballot-box votes was 10% (Essex Town School District) and 10.7% (Essex Junction School District).



(Fig. 3)

Essex's Numbers in Perspective

It is important to look at Essex's voting data in perspective.

- Even in the important and exhaustively publicized U.S. presidential elections, across the country voter turnout hovers at about 55% of eligible voters. Meanwhile, turnout is even lower on local issues: in elections for city council, mayors, and local bond issues across the country, participation seldom exceeds 25%, and is often dramatically lower—in the single digits.
- Research on Vermont's traditional, face-to-face town meetings (see *Real Democracy* by Frank Bryan) reveals two key facts about town meeting attendance, both of which are relevant to Essex:

Size matters. Vermont is the second most rural state in the nation, with well over half of its population living in towns of under 2,500. In small towns, town meeting attendance often reaches 30% or higher. However, across Vermont, town meeting consistently achieves higher per capita turnout in small towns than large ones. Recent data from meetings held between 1999–2011 shows town meeting attendance statewide averaged 13.1 percent, and analysis shows that increasing town size accounts for over half of the decline in town meeting attendance since 1970.

Essex is the largest town in Vermont still to govern through a traditional floor meeting.

Issues matter. The “Essex Voter Turnout” chart shows median attendance, which means that half the meetings have above this attendance, half below. Median (rather than mean) attendance is helpful because it doesn’t skew the number by averaging in unusual highs or lows in attendance. However, it is important to note that like every other town, Essex does see spikes in attendance.

For instance, in 2010 in the Village, attendance more than doubled with 4.2% coming out for that meeting. In 2005, the Essex Town School District ballot box voting spiked to 16.5% and the Essex Jct. School District had over a 24% turnout. In 2008, almost 53% of the Towns’ registered voters turned out to vote on the Town Meeting ballot. If Essex follows the patterns of other Vermont towns, then it was a controversial or especially interesting or compelling issue that drew the larger number of voters to participate. This is useful information when considering how to improve public engagement.

How does Essex’s turnout compare with other towns?

Fig. 4 (below) shows that Essex voter turnout for *national elections* in November compares favorably with that of other cities and towns in the area.

In contrast, Fig 5 shows Essex’s ballot-box voting on *local issues* compared with other Vermont towns. Knowing that population can affect participation, EGG chose the largest communities in Vermont for comparative data. The Chittenden County town of Shelburne (18th largest) is also included for comparison.

As this chart shows, Essex’s ballot box voting on local issues is comparatively low. This seems to indicate that Essex’s town meeting attendance is not the only issue. Even when voting by ballot, Essex has room for improvement in engaging citizens in local issues.

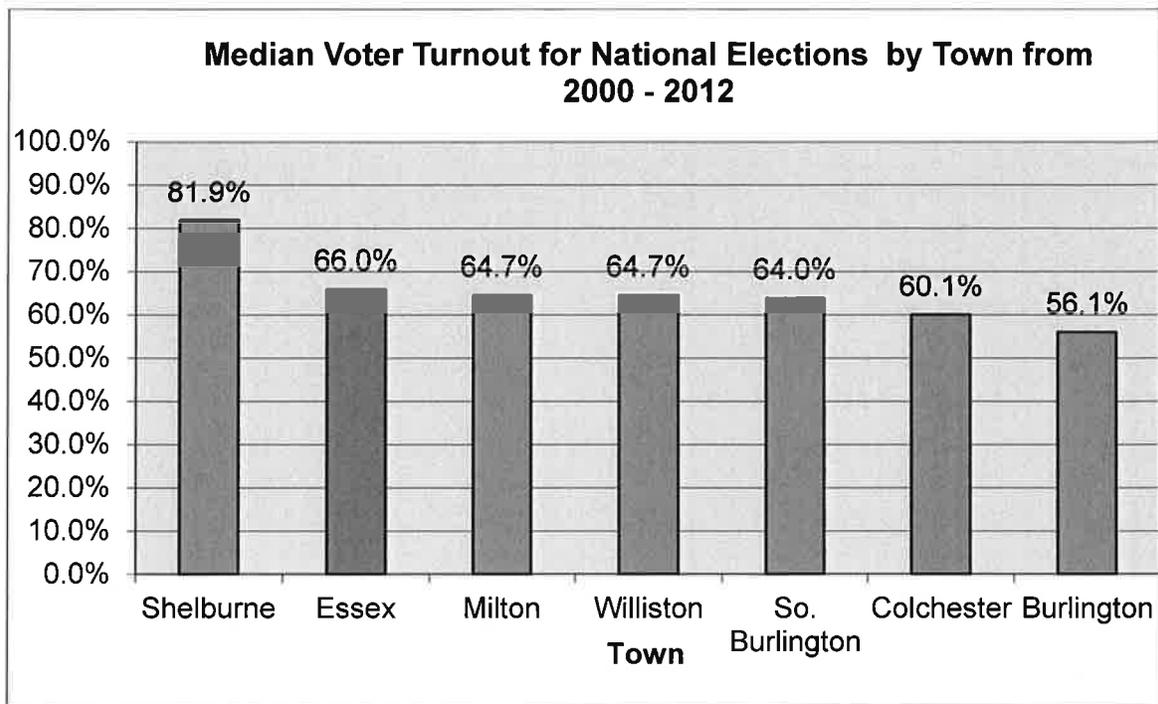


Fig. 4

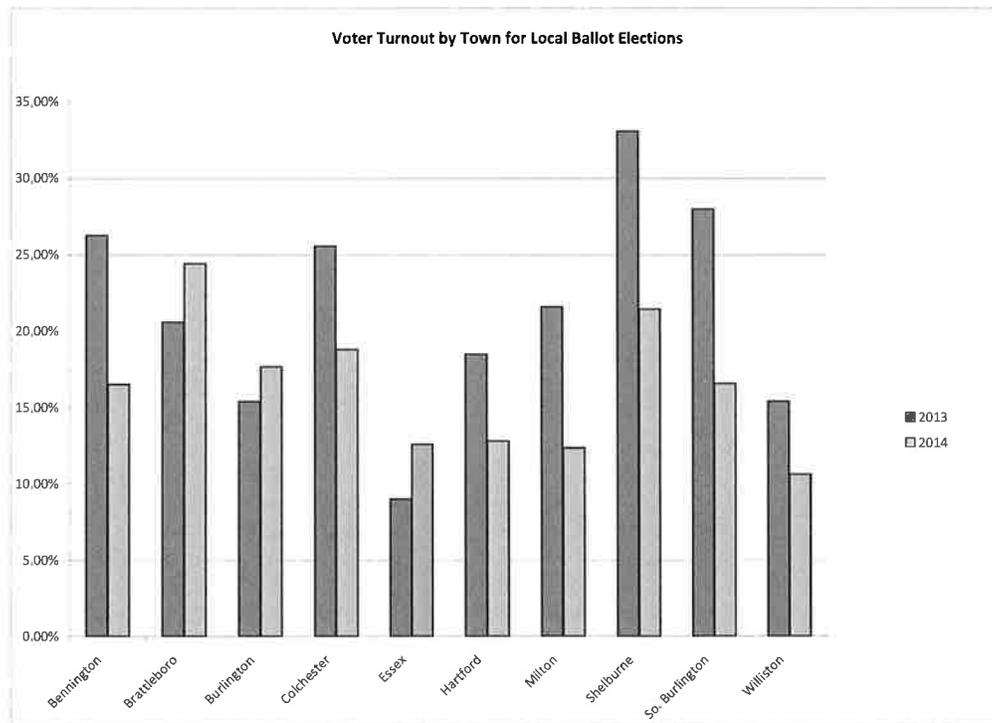


Fig. 5

The Role of the Essex Voter in Local Budget Decisions

Figure 6 (below) shows the two key roles for Essex voters in local budget decision:

- Electing the Selectboard and Village Trustees, who, in their executive branch roles, work with the staff to propose a budget; and
- Deliberating on, potentially amending, and voting on the budget at Town or Village Meeting. In this role citizens are, on issues of governance and finance, the legislative branch of local government.

In addition, citizens can participate in a range of ways including serving on committees, attending public meetings, and contacting local officials.

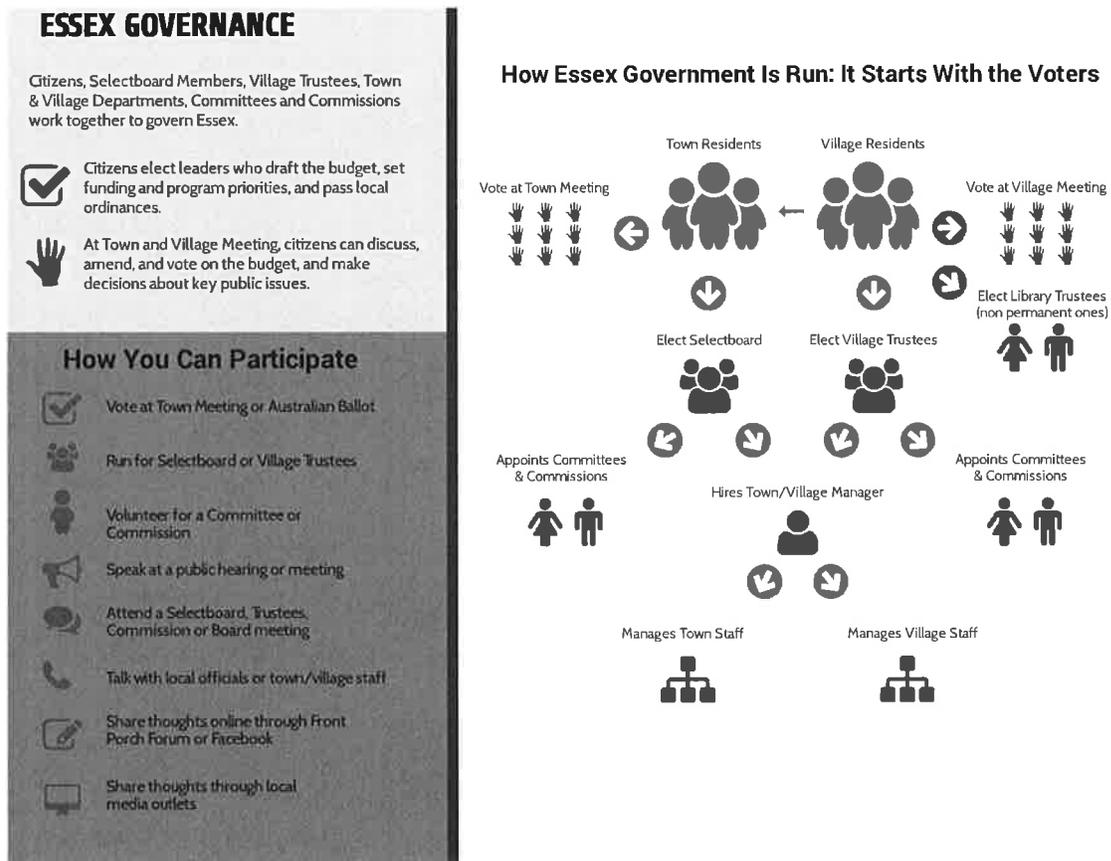


Fig. 6

Figure 7 (below) offers additional information on Essex voting. Of particular note, Essex has an unusually high number of local votes each spring. Including Town Meeting and Village Meeting, Essex residents currently vote on five separate budgets: Town Municipal; Village Municipal; Village Schools (K-8); Town Schools (K-8); and Essex High School and Center for Technology–Essex (9-12)—a total of three votes for Town residents, five for Village residents.

Essex votes on over 80% of local spending by ballot.

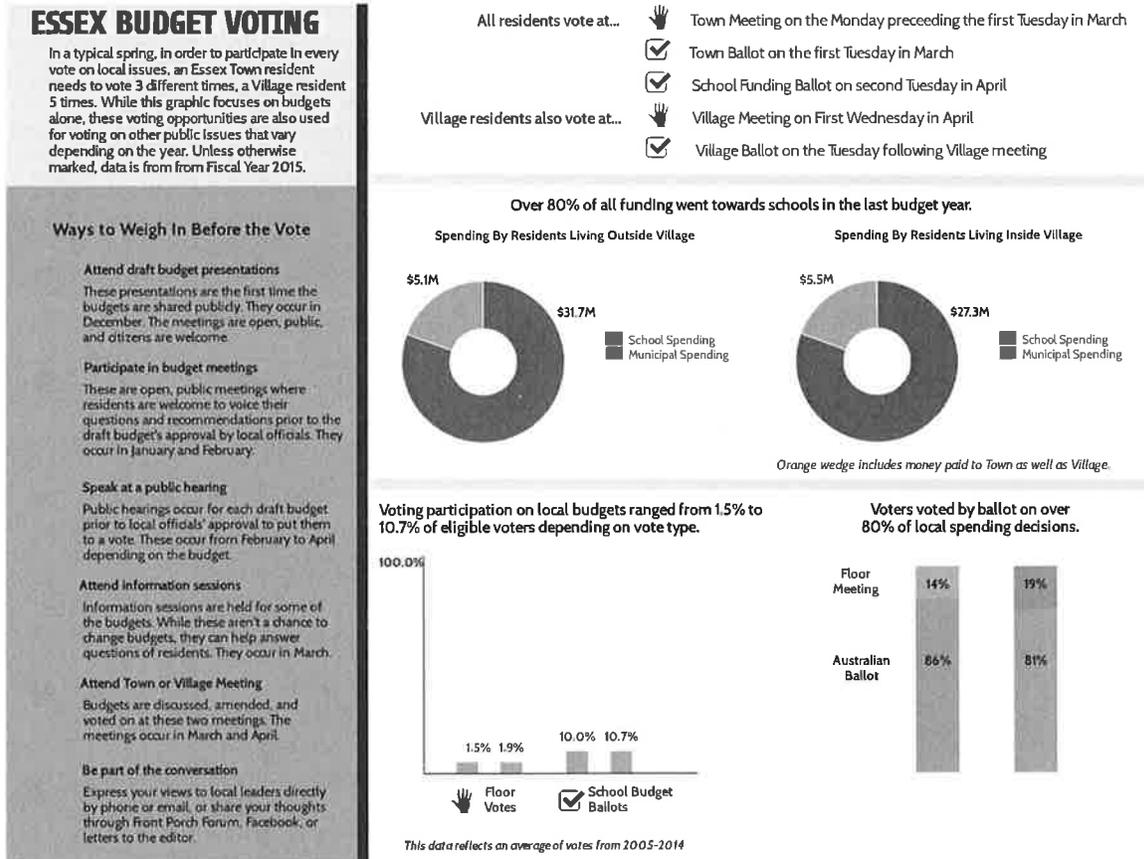


Fig. 7

Does Essex's system present any barriers to voting and participation? To learn what motivates and prevents people from participating, assess people's level of interest in governance issues, and to identify community priorities regarding governance and civic participation, EGG launched a community-wide survey about local democracy.

6) EGG Survey

Survey Highlights

1. Over 450 Essex residents answered the survey.
2. Results indicate that respondents participate in our community and feel local decisions are important.
3. Even among this engaged group, many don't attend town meeting or vote in local elections.
4. Respondents identified several barriers to participating.
5. Several strong themes emerged, including the desire for more collaboration, transparency and inclusion.

Figure 8 depicts key findings from the EGG Survey.

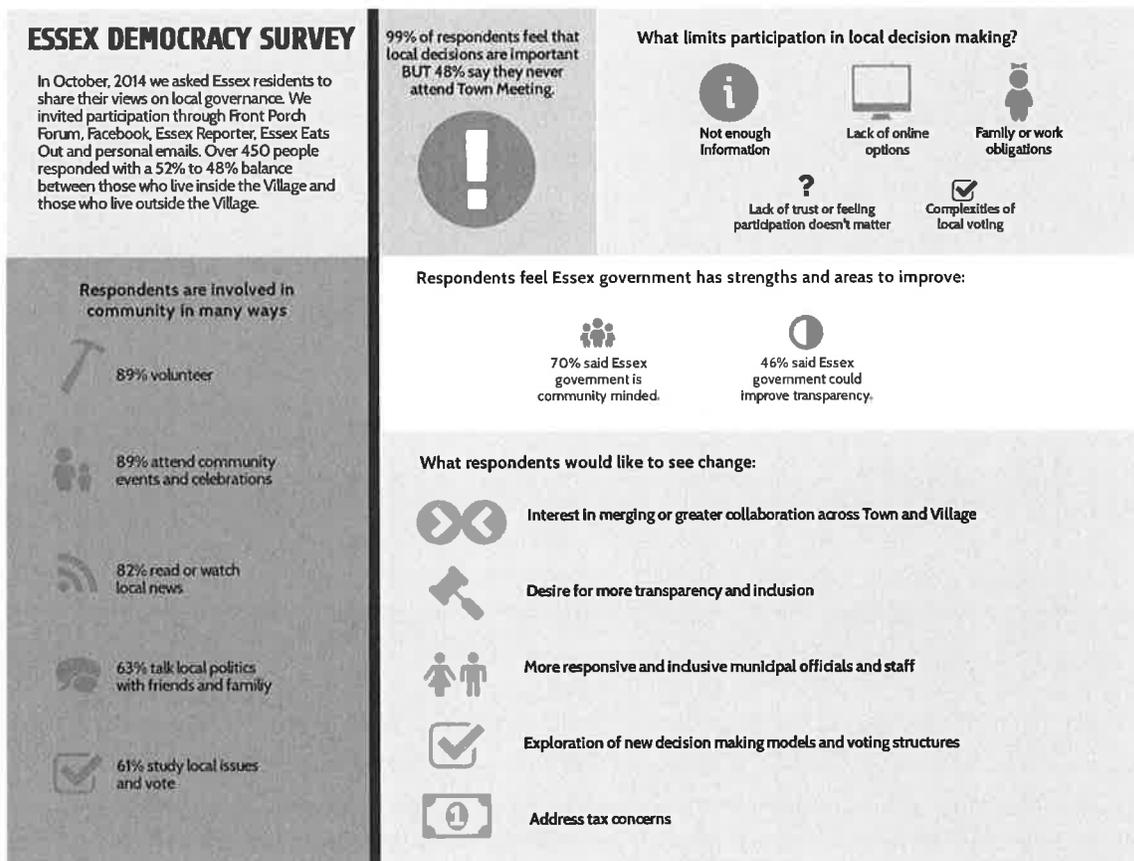


Fig. 8

Detailed Survey Findings

1. Over 450 Essex residents answered the survey.

- This online survey was fielded between October 6-26, 2014.
- It was publicized through Front Porch Forum, Facebook, personal e-mails from EGG committee and their networks, posters, and the *Essex Reporter*. Volunteers also attended Essex Eats Out and provided paper copies.
- 456 people filled out the survey.
- Respondents were self-selected, providing a non-scientific “snapshot” of community.
- Participation was representative across Town and Village (47% and 51%)
- Most respondents were between the ages of 35-64 (over 70 %). There were 48 respondents under age 35 (12%), and 61 over age 65 (15%).
- More women than men filled out survey (59% women, 39 % men).
- 92% identified as white - 4% people of color.
- Most people who filled out the survey had an income between \$50,000 and \$125,000 (56%). 16% had income under \$50,000.
- 6% of survey respondents reported that they had graduated from high school, 34% graduated from college, 41% graduated from graduate school.

2. Respondents do participate in our community, and feel local decisions are important.

- A strong majority of respondents are engaged with local issues (not surprising since this was a self-selected group). 89% volunteer, 82% read or watch local news. A majority of people (over 60%) talk local politics and study local issues
 - Respondents said they want to be informed and shape community decisions. They feel a sense of responsibility to the community.
 - Respondents are more likely to participate in informal ways (volunteering, celebrations, community meetings) rather than formal ways (serving on a board, attending town meeting, voting).
 - 99% of respondents feel that local decisions are somewhat or very important.
 - Respondents seem more motivated by their caring about the community (83%) and feeling of responsibility towards the community (68%), than by a desire to restrain spending (22%) or keep tabs on local officials (37%).
 - 40% say there are no barriers to participation (which indicates that 60% perceive some barriers).

3. Even among this engaged group, many don't attend town meeting or vote in local elections.

- 48% say they never attend town meeting.
 - People who never go to town meeting cite similar barriers to people who sometimes or always go to town meeting.
 - The majority of people who never go to town meeting do volunteer (70%) but at a lower rate than people who attend town meeting (89%)
- Respondents who never go to town meeting vote **somewhat less** in national elections than those who attend town meeting (85% sometimes or always vs. 96% sometimes or always).
- Respondents who never go to town meeting vote **a lot less** in local elections (57% sometimes or always vote vs. 94% sometimes or always vote).
- Respondents who never go to town meeting feel much less sense of responsibility for community than those who do attend (55% vs. 80%).
- This is especially true for young people (ages 18 - 34). Young people participating in the survey express similar motivations and barriers to participation as all ages, with a few differences:
 - The opportunity to shape the future is a stronger motivator for young people than for all ages (77% vs. 58%).
 - Lack of information and online opportunities is a bigger barrier for young people (info. 54% vs. 32%).
 - Two places where there are big gaps in participation between young people and everyone else is voting and going to town meeting.
 - 28% of young people say they study issues and vote vs. 60% of all respondents.
 - 78% young people never attend town meeting vs. 48% of all respondents.

4. Respondents identified several barriers to participating.

(Respondents could choose as many as applied, so percentages do not add up to 100%)

- No barriers (40%)
- Lack of information (32%)
- Lack of online opportunities to participate (23%)
- Some people express lack of trust and feeling that participation won't make a difference (11% and 13%)

- Multiple votes and confusion about voting was a barrier for some but not many (10% or under)

5. Several strong themes emerged, including the desire for more collaboration, transparency and inclusion.

- Two values stood out well above the others when respondents were asked what local government does well, and where there is most need for improvement:
 - 70% of respondents say “Community minded” is a strong value of local government
 - 46% say “Transparency” is the area most in need of improvement
- When asked in an open-ended question what change people would most like to see, five key ideas show up in the data
 - **A) Interest in merger and/or more collaboration (96 mentions)**
 - merge town and village
 - increase collaboration
 - improve planning processes
 - **B) Desire for more transparency and inclusion (48 mentions)**
 - Communication & Engagement
 - More proactive and innovative ways to share information, including the use of technology and online platforms
 - More opportunities for shared decision-making
 - More opportunities to leverage the skills and expertise of community members
 - **C) More responsive and inclusive leadership (23 mentions)**
 - Concerns that elected, appointed officials and/or staff may have priorities that are not aligned with the community
 - Sense that leaders are not listening or responsive to the diversity of opinions and voices in the community
 - **D) Exploration of new decision making models and voting structures (34 mentions)**
 - suggestions for different models of governance
 - interest in moving voting to Australian ballot along with comments about streamlining voting processes
 - **E) Address tax concerns (24 mentions)**
 - Interest in lowering taxes
 - Streamline and unify town and village as a way to lower taxes

While all of these results are worthy of attention, only the middle three were within EGG's defined scope of work. The November 8th forum provided an opportunity to discuss these key priorities:

- Desire for more transparency, inclusion and responsive leadership
- Interest in new models of decision making & voting structures (i.e. the four approaches to town meeting voting; see Appendix).

7. EGG Findings

The following is a summary of EGG's combined findings from the October Survey and November 8 Forum.

1. More Effective Communication is Needed

Communication is the most prominent strand running through the Essex Governance Group's findings.

When identifying barriers to participation in Essex, survey respondents named "lack of information" most often (32%), and "lack of online opportunities to participate" second most often (23%). Even though 82% of survey respondents said they read or watch local news, many did not feel they were getting the information they wanted in order to participate.

When respondents were asked about how government most needs to improve, "Transparency" was named most often (46%).

At the Nov. 8 EGG Forum, small-table discussions were asked to shed more light on the meaning of "Transparency" in Essex. A number of important themes emerged, as discussed below. The theme of communication re-emerged repeatedly under other topics throughout Forum discussions.

Participants identified several key aspects of communication needs:

A. Explicit Communication

Participants asked for more accurate, clear, and open communication. This area was identified separately by all six small groups. Examples included timely and clear explanation on government minutes and agendas so that a person who did not attend the meeting would understand what happened; clearer numbers around total impact of tax bills; and clarity around how citizens can access information.

B. Proactive Communication

Participants at all six tables used terms like "intentional outreach," "finding ways to connect with citizens," and "being forthright with significant changes in advance." At the end of the Forum, the small groups were asked for their "top ideas," and three fell into this category, asking leaders to *go out to the people* with new, innovative outreach.

C. Online Communication, Open Data

It is no surprise that Essex, long-time home of IBM, is also home to many tech-savvy citizens with high expectations for online communication. All six tables named this as a priority. Four of the groups' "top ideas" called for a stronger web presence. Participants indicated interest in all of Essex's data being open to the public, with two "top ideas" naming Burlington's Open Data Initiative as a model. Of the two Forum

participants who offered ideas of “what I’d like to do now,” one volunteered to host a conversation about how to strengthen Essex’s online communications.

D. And Beyond Online

Participants expressed concern that government reach out in other ways (not all residents use the internet). Strengthening collaboration with the media was mentioned. Some noted that local press coverage needs improvement.

E. Direct Communication with Leaders, Accountability

Participants value responsiveness: the ability to communicate one-on one with their leaders, and for town officials and staff to provide information directly to citizens. This was named as an advantage of traditional town meeting, the hybrid model, and representative town meeting, and a disadvantage of ballot-box voting. They also called for accountability measures, such as tracking of suggestions and complaints to ensure that communication is honored.

F. Active Listening: Responsive, Respectful, Engaged Communication

Both leaders and citizens value productive two-way engagement. Participating leaders described the value of “knowing our constituents”; meanwhile, citizens asked for “open-minded listening,” and for leaders to be “receptive to ideas and input from community.”

2. Inclusion is Critical

The majority of survey respondents (almost 60%) indicated that they felt barriers to participation in local elections and decision making.

As stated above, the most often-cited barriers related to communication. Many survey respondents also cited family or work obligations as limiting their participation. Respondents indicated a mix of other reasons, including not feeling their participation matters, not trusting the system, and confusion about voting.

Those who participated in the Forum expressed strong concerns about the **inclusiveness** of Essex’s system. All six tables listed multiple issues regarding inclusion, with a heavy emphasis on the drawbacks of town meeting and the relative merits of Australian ballot voting, including parallel advantages of the hybrid option since it includes Australian ballot. Participants expressed concerns about intimidation at town meeting due to complicated rules/procedures, TV cameras, and loud or impolite people. They cited a variety of advantages offered by Australian ballot including absentee ballot, voting by mail, and 12-hour voting.

Participants voiced worries about **low numbers** in both voter turnout and meeting participation. Some expressed concern that the hybrid method (SB2) would depress town meeting turnout even further.

Participants also called for more **demographic diversity** in participation, including socio-economic, cultural, geographic, and age diversity. Youth was of particular concern. The EGG Survey revealed that young respondents (ages 18-34) were significantly less likely to vote and attend town meeting than older residents. One Forum group's "top idea" was to help youth become more involved, engaged and informed.

3. High-Quality, Informed Decision Making is Greatly Valued

In addition to ensuring that all citizens have the opportunity to participate and vote, Forum participants emphasized that decision-making processes must be of high quality.

The advantages of **deliberative decision making** were raised at all six tables. Traditional town meeting was especially named as offering the opportunity to exchange ideas, hear new opinions, and correct misinformation. However, town meeting was also criticized as potentially causing hasty decision making. Participants expressed some frustration with town meeting management.

Another key element identified at all Forum tables, in keeping with earlier concerns about communication, is the need for **informed and engaged voters** and citizen education. Informed participation was cited as an advantage of town meeting and representative town meeting, while participants bemoaned the lack of participation at informational meetings before Australian ballot voting. They cited the lag-time between discussion and voting as a potential advantage of the hybrid method.

High-quality decision making also means balanced participation, and all tables mentioned uneasiness with the possibility that **special interest groups** could hijack a process.

In another commentary on the importance of methodology, participants saw the choice of decision-making models as a potential element in **building community** (cited as an advantage of town meeting not seen with Australian ballot), or in dividing it (representative town meeting's need for new districts was seen as potentially fractious).

Most tables indicated that a key element of community-minded governance is **balance**: weighing the desires of the few with the needs of the whole, and making decisions based on the greatest long-term good.

Efficiency was also a concern, with most tables naming **costly re-votes** as a down-side to Australian ballot.

4. Essex Could Create its Own Model

A significant number of Forum comments centered on alternative models for democratic engagement.

Of particular interest was the idea of representing citizens at the neighborhood level. Most tables named creating stronger neighborhoods, grassroots efforts or “hyper-local” emphasis as an advantage of the representative town meeting model. Two of the six tables named **Neighborhood Assemblies** such as those used in Burlington as one of their “Top Ideas.”

Most tables suggested **creative improvements** in the existing system. One group wondered whether instead of focusing on dramatic changes in voting, Essex should improve the existing system through technology and other participatory techniques. Another noted that the town selectboard is already making improvements but it will take time to see changes.

Other suggestions included:

- Reducing re-votes (for instance, by having a “no” vote automatically revert to the current budget).
- Improving town meeting participation by changing the time of town meeting, issuing specific invitations, and otherwise reducing barriers.
- One “Top Idea” was using technology (e.g. Skype) to allow remote meeting attendance/participation.
- Providing a way for voters to give specific feedback to leaders after ballot-box voting. One group’s “Top Idea” was to allow citizens to give budget feedback by incorporating a survey into the ballot.

All six tables named two-way communication between municipal leaders/staff and residents as an important **alternative to formal hearings/meetings**. “Build bridges, not walls” was one comment; another was “lots of avenues for two-way communication in a user-friendly form.” Several groups called for more topical community forums such as those hosted by Heart and Soul. (In Forum evaluations, when asked “How helpful would it be to have more of these kinds of community conversations in Essex?” 81% of respondents said that it would be “helpful” or “extremely helpful.”)

Non-formal participation is an important element not only of community, but what local government means to citizens. When asked “how do you participate in our community,” survey respondents were more likely to participate in informal ways (volunteering, celebrations) than in formal ways (e.g. serving on boards).

However, when Forum participants were asked “What does government being community minded mean to you?” almost all groups named support of non-formal activities such as grassroots organizations, block parties, Farmer’s Market, and concerts. For many citizens, the border between informal “community” and formal “government” is fuzzy; these comments indicate that each side of the line can benefit from the energy of the other.

Four comments wondered whether Essex should consider a **city form of government**, with one group naming neighborhood assemblies reporting to a Mayor as a “top idea.”

5. Residents Value the Power and Immediacy of Direct Democracy

All six tables named **citizens' direct democratic power** as an advantage of traditional town meeting, such as the ability to amend. "Direct democracy: we are the legislators" was a repeated sentiment, and the lack of amendment power was cited as a downside of Australian ballot. "Adding a layer" between voters and their decision making was seen as a negative element of representative town meeting, with a fear of centralizing power to an elite few. Several named Vermont's long local tradition as a positive element of town meeting. At the same time, some complained that citizen power is actually *not strong enough* at town meeting; it's "hard to make real changes," and "amendment power is limited."

Most tables appreciated the **immediacy** of town meeting. "The work is done when the meeting is done" was a common sentiment. In contrast, the hybrid model creates a two-step process, and with Australian ballot, "a no-vote means a revote."

6. Same Day Voting, and a Call for Simplicity

In a typical spring in order to participate in every local vote, Town resident need to vote three different times, and Village residents, five times. Survey results indicated that while it wasn't the top concern, the complexities of voting were a barrier to participation. At the Forum, four tables offered comments indicating their interest in **same-day voting**. Two groups named same-day voting as one of their "Top Ideas."

Simplicity and clarity was a common thread in other areas, seen especially as an advantage of ballot-box voting. One group's "Top Idea" was "Simplify: Governance, communication, education (of municipal issues, budgets)."

All six tables expressed some trepidation about the **implementation** of one or more of the new decision-making models discussed. The hybrid (SB2) model raised the most apprehension about implementation, with representative town meeting a close second. Clearly, any changes should be made with caution, and with confusion and upheaval kept to a minimum.

8. EGG Recommendations

The Essex Governance Group recommends the following actions. They are intended as a “package.” In particular in the case of the first three recommendations, the success of each will be enhanced by the others. For those recommendations that cannot be acted on immediately, EGG recommends that Essex leaders commit to a timeline to move forward.

- A. Launch Proactive Communication Program**
- B. Empower Neighborhoods**
- C. Switch to Enhanced Town Meeting/Australian Ballot Hybrid**
- D. Institute Same-Day Voting**

A. Launch Proactive Communication Program

Essex residents value their government’s “community minded” nature, and have expressed a strong desire for more two-way communication with leaders and staff. Ideally proactive communication does not need to add to the overall workload of officials and staff, but instead can enable leaders to succeed at existing tasks more effectively with the understanding and active support of the public.

Action steps:

1. Public Engagement Protocol

Create, adopt and implement an Essex Public Engagement Protocol for use by all departments (see sample protocol from Portland, Oregon in Appendix). The protocol allows staff and community members to implement appropriate public engagement for each municipal project.

2. Training

Train current municipal leaders and staff in best public engagement practices, to ensure that proactive citizen participation is a meaningful part of everyone’s job.

3. Hiring and Performance Expectations

Incorporate public engagement skills and expectations into all municipal job descriptions, hiring expectations, and performance reviews.

4. Website

Revamp websites and link Town/Village online presence, based on citizen and staff input

5. Informal Meetings

Convene quarterly, informal get-togethers for residents to meet with elected municipal officials and staff. Bring the meetings to places where people may already be gathered (e.g. a bar, a school play, a community event).

B. Empower Neighborhoods

While Essex residents want to improve inclusivity, many also value face-to-face, deliberative decision making and direct democracy. The immediacy of local decision making is inspiring to youth, and local issues like parks interest young families. Devolving power on specific planning and budgeting decisions to the neighborhood level would build on Essex's "small town feel" and community engagement while bringing in new participation. (Burlington's Neighborhood Planning Assemblies may be a useful model.)

Action step:

1. Create Neighborhood Assemblies

Create Neighborhood Assemblies to make recommendations on neighborhood and municipal issues (such as planning, development, lighting and safety). The Assemblies would serve as official advisors to the municipality (in alignment with the recommended public engagement protocol—see recommendation A-1 above). Invite leaders to attend Neighborhood Assemblies.

C. Switch to Enhanced Town Meeting/Australian Ballot Hybrid

After considering a variety of options for deliberating and voting on budgets, EGG recommends changes that incorporate participants' strong interest in inclusivity while building on Essex's robust community-mindedness. The proposed hybrid model is purposefully paired with a powerfully enhanced town meeting, with the goal of protecting it from the reduced participation often experienced in New Hampshire's larger hybrid (SB2) towns. A minimum attendance requirement ensures that amendments can not be made by a tiny minority. Changes (especially to the charter) should be carefully coordinated to create the least confusion for Essex citizens.

Action steps:

1. Upgrade the current Town Meeting to an "Essex Democracy Day"

Essex Democracy Day would have the elements of the current Town Meeting, but with improved participation options (e.g. could include remote town meeting participation), and also could include a congress of Neighborhood Assemblies, a facilitated community forum on a key issue, and a dinner and celebration.

2. Amendment Requirement

If attendance at Town Meeting is high enough (equal to or greater than the median town meeting attendance during the past 10 years from 2005 through 2014), citizens attending that Town Meeting will continue to have the power to amend the budget. This meeting determines the final budget number to be sent to the voters of Essex for

approval by Australian ballot. (Note: if attendance is below this percentage, then that particular year's Town Meeting would be informational only, with no power to amend.)

3. Amended budget voted on by Australian ballot

Final budget is sent to voters of Essex for approval by Australian ballot vote, to be held 45 days after Town Meeting.

4. Survey included with ballot

A survey should be included with the ballot, to allow residents the opportunity to offer comment.

5. Town meeting date

Change the date of town meeting so it doesn't happen right after school break.

D. Institute Same-Day Voting

In a typical spring in order to participate in every vote on local issues, Town residents must vote three different times, and Village residents five times. Complexities of local voting were named as a barrier to participation. Forum participants also expressed concern that each individual vote does not convey the overall impact of their property tax. Because Essex's voting involves five separate municipal units and separate municipal clerks, this change must be made with careful, coordinated planning. It will increase work for local clerks' office, and so will require additional staffing to ensure that they can maintain their traditionally high standards and low incidence of voter problems.

Action step:

1. Create a staged plan to combine voting dates and Town/Village Meeting dates.

Over a specified time, institute same-day voting with all budgets voted on the same day. (This is not a proposal for a single ballot; voters would receive multiple ballots.) This process would also include combining Town and Village Meeting dates.

9. Conclusion

By inviting residents to reflect on concerns about voting and decision-making around the municipal budget through this EGG process, the Town, Village and Heart & Soul of Essex have collaborated with community residents to uncover multiple pathways for building the capacity of our community to engage residents in meaningful ways and incorporate their voices in important decisions about our future.

When Essex embarked on the Heart & Soul process several years ago, the goal was to identify a set of shared values. Six core values emerged, and during this process, it was also discovered that the Heart & Soul of Essex was filling an important gap as a convener (of public conversations), a connector (connecting citizens with local government, building relationships among Town and Village staff and other community organizations), and a champion (ensuring community values are incorporated into decision making). The recommendations from the EGG report actually offer a road map for building these roles into the fabric of our community's public life. This alignment is an unexpected but promising outcome of the work of the Essex Governance group.

The Essex Governance Group respectfully offers EGG's Findings and Recommendations to the Essex Selectboard and the Essex community as a whole. We hope the community's voice is heard through the Findings, and that the EGG Recommendations will serve as a useful guide for action.

Essex leaders are in a position to strengthen the civic life of the community, and hundreds of residents have expressed their interest and support for improvements. The time is right. The Essex residents who contributed to EGG's work stand ready to help.

10. Appendices

Appendix A: Portland, Oregon Participation protocol

Appendix B: Survey results, coded (link)

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bMuzDpTcC-3ntXqXuAYbU6AxiGv2c8DNuNRSjuJfPOg/edit?usp=sharing>

Appendix C: Forum agenda and "Four Approaches"

Appendix D: Forum small-table results, coded

Appendix E: List of EGG Participants, Facilitator/Author Bios

Public Involvement Toolkit



November 2006

**Submitted by:
The Mayor's Bureau Innovation Project #9:
Public Involvement**

Eileen Argentina and Jo Ann Bowman, Co-Chairs

Guidelines for Using this Toolkit

Introduction

The Bureau Innovation Project #9 team, an initiative of Mayor Potter that began in June 2005, developed this toolkit. A team made up of both city staff and public members developed the tools based on research and discussion of models from around the world. It was important to the team to develop a model that would be easy to apply to all city bureaus and create consistent expectations for the public, yet not limit the creativity or flexibility of public involvement staff.

Before the Toolkit:

Before a public involvement staff person starts using the toolkit, there are activities that should normally occur in the overall public involvement project. The Process Overview demonstrates a typical public involvement process¹. More about general steps and guidance for performing public involvement is available in the City of Portland's Outreach and Involvement Handbook, the third edition of which will incorporate the Toolkit.

First, project managers – be they public involvement staff, general project managers, or consultants – should perform, at the very least, an assessment of the project or initiative that includes the following:

- An environmental scan for related mandates, plans and other directives that may have bearing on the project,
- An initial stakeholder assessment, including considering whether this project may disproportionately affect a particular community or traditionally underrepresented community.
- A review of the goals and purposes of public involvement for the project, and
- An evaluation of resources available for the public engagement component of the project.

Once this preliminary review is complete, the toolkit can be drawn upon to further define the public involvement approach most suited to the particular project. The toolkit can also be used multiple times throughout the span of a project to assess options in a project's phases or to reassess in the event that circumstances change or modifications are needed.

How to use the Toolkit:

This toolkit is designed to be used, ideally with participation from a representative stakeholder group, to assess the optimal approaches and methods for engaging the public in a project or initiative. It is applicable to development and planning projects as well as policy explorations and general public education.

¹ Appendix A, page 4 of Toolkit

Consisting of a series of questions intended to clarify public interests and needs in the engagement process followed by a spectrum of approaches matched with tools and methods, this toolkit can help with identification of prospective options. Used with a stakeholder group, it can also help develop early public commitment to project success as public members participate in the development of the public process. The suggested steps for using the toolkit are as follows.

The Facilitated Stakeholder Meeting:

Step 1: Asking the Questions

Once an environmental assessment (see above) has been completed, convene a stakeholder meeting. Bringing together stakeholders with diverse perspectives and interests helps insure that the resulting involvement will respond more readily to community needs and values.

Referring to the list of questions², pose each question and allow all participants to answer the question in turn. If the group is very large, dividing into multiple small groups of 6-10 is recommended. As participants answer the question, the facilitator should place a check mark in the appropriate box. When all participants have answered, the facilitator moves on to the next question and each subsequent question in turn.

The facilitator should take care to ensure all voices are heard and that no answers are discussed or judged during this process. It is a free-flowing question and answer period, and all answers are equally valid.

Step 2: Assessing the Answers

Once all the questions have been answered in this manner, after thanking participants for their input, the facilitator should get agreement that the next step is to assess the group's general majority view on each question. The facilitator assessing the answer patterns, averaging them to determine a probable midpoint, and then affirming this with the group can informally accomplish this. Another option is to assign a number value to each answer and then average the answers for a mathematical average.

Step 3: Overall Scoring or Scale Assessment

After each question has been assessed and the average answer plotted, the facilitator should work with the group to come up with an overall score or location on the scale for the project. Some answers may seem to have opposing scales for this purpose. It is better not to focus on this, but to work with the group to determine a general rating or characterization of the project that will help point to the type of engagement and tools of engagement are warranted.

The questioning exercise can result in multiple positive outcomes. The facilitator, who is likely the public involvement manager for the project, will have a much better sense

² Appendix B, page 5 of Toolkit

of stakeholder views and issues. If the outcomes of the questions conflict with the limitations of mandates driving the project, this early warning system will help daylight potential sources of conflict so they can be dealt with early on. In addition, engaging stakeholders in discussing the community interest and positions regarding the project can result in early education as well as participation.

Step 4: Using the Spectrum

Once the project assessment using the questions is complete, the group can turn to the spectrum³ to discuss levels and methods of engagement. Usually, the facilitator will suggest a “landing place” for the project on the spectrum based on the question discussion, the question-by-question scores, and the overall score or outcome.

The group should discuss and come to agreement on the level of public involvement dictated for the project by the assessment. The ultimate choice need not conform directly with the “score” from the questioning exercise. It is important that the level of involvement take account of the answers to the questions but also other associated factors of the project – mandates, timelines, resources, geographic scope, etc.

Step 5: Determining the Appropriate Tools and Methods

Once the group has agreed where the project falls on the spectrum and understands the purposes and roles associated with the result, the facilitator can lead a discussion of likely tools and methods⁴ for ensuring public engagement at the determined level. This is the point in the exercise where stakeholder participation can be particularly effective in providing insights of which project staff may be unaware and in matching tools and methods to the community in which the engagement is to take place.

What Follows:

Putting the toolkit to use early in a project is an important step in developing a public involvement plan. Following these initial planning steps, staff should develop a public involvement plan that includes timelines, goals, benchmarks, and a detailed budget for the project’s involvement components. Common steps following the toolkit exercise are:

- Complete and gain approval for the public involvement plan
- Share the plan with your initial stakeholder group and incorporate feedback
- Launch and implement the plan
- Evaluate and revisit the plan as warranted
- Ensure evaluation of the plan’s success, especially with the initial stakeholder group
- Assess and report on successes and lessons learned

³ Appendix C, page 6 of Toolkit

⁴ Appendix D, page 7 of Toolkit

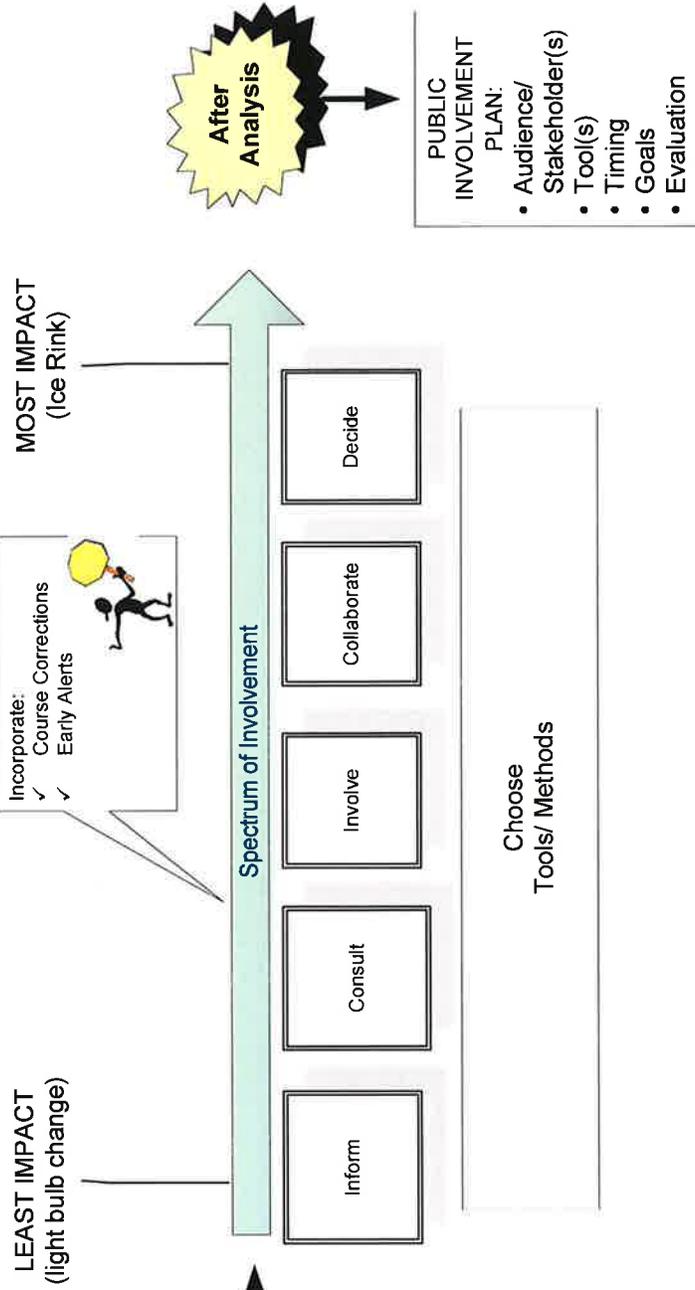
Additional Resources

1. Outreach and Involvement Handbook
(<http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=98500>)
2. IAP2 website (www.iap2.org)

APPENDIX A PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TOOLKIT, PROCESS OVERVIEW

NOTES:

- ✓ This model should apply to any project, no matter where it comes from
- ✓ Assumption: process should be able to deal with 90% of the issues that come up



Inception of Project

Characteristics:

- ✓ Origin of the project (its history & prior decisions)
- ✓ Timeline
- ✓ Cost/Budget
- ✓ Scope
- ✓ Policy background
- ✓ Precedent/Mandate
- ✓ Urgency *
- ✓ Level of community interest

* perhaps hardest to identify due to limiting factors

Levels of Impact

Assessment Questions	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1. What is the anticipated level of conflict, opportunity, controversy, or concern on this or related issues?					
2. How significant are the potential impacts to the public?					
3. How much do the major stakeholders care about this issue, project, or program?					
4. What degree of involvement does the public appear to desire or expect?					
5. What is the potential for public impact on the proposed decision or project?					
6. How significant are the possible benefits of involving the public?					
7. How serious are the potential ramifications of NOT involving the public?					
8. What level of public participation does Council and/or bureau directors desire or expect?					
9. What is the possibility of broad public interest?					
10. What is the probable level of difficulty in solving the problem or advancing the project?					

DRAFT Public Participation Spectrum

Level:	Public Participation Goal:	The City will:	Tools* to Consider:	The Community:
Decide	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.	<i>Implement what the public decides.</i>	#5 Committees #6 Feedback Mechanisms #8 Community Driven & Organized #9 Techniques & Methods	Decides
Collaborative	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	<i>Partner with public in each aspect of decision.</i>	#6 Feedback Mechanisms #8 Community Driven & Organized #9 Techniques & Methods	Partners
Involve	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	<i>Work with the public to ensure that their concerns are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</i>	#5 Committees #6 Feedback Mechanisms #7 Formal Hearings/Forums #8 Community Driven & Organized	Participates
Consult	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.	<i>Keep the public informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</i>	#3 Events/ Meetings #5 Committees #6 Feedback Mechanisms #7 Formal Hearings/Forums	Contributes
Inform	To provide the public with balanced & objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.	<i>Keep the public informed.</i>	#1 Information/ Notification #2 Publications #3 Events/ Meetings #4 Community Education	Learns

*Refer to “Public Involvement Tools, by Category” on the next page for the full list of techniques.

Adapted from IAP2’s Public Participation Spectrum (www.iap2.org)

DRAFT – October 2006 – Bureau Innovation Project # 9, City of Portland



Public Involvement Tools, By Category – BIP #9

#1 Information/ Notification	#2 Publications	#3 Events/ Meetings	#4 Community Education	#5 Committees	#6 Feedback Mechanisms	#7 Formal Hearings/ Forums	#8 Community Driven & Organized	#9 Techniques & Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisements • Advertisements, Newspaper Inserts • Advertisements, Transit Ads • Bill Stuffer • Clerical Information Contact • Email • Info Centers & Field Offices • Information Hot Line • Information Repositories • Media: Comics, Community Media/Cable Access, Feature Stories, Podcasting, Radio, TV • News Conferences • Postcards • Press Releases • Soap Box • Staffed Displays • Tabling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures • Fact Sheets • Issues Papers • Mailings • Newsletters • Reports • Review Drafts • Websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Fairs • Community Forums • Design Charrettes • Door to Door/Canvass • Field Trip • Groundbreaking Ceremonies • Meetings with Existing Groups • Meetings, Virtual • Neighborhood Walks/Strolls • Open Houses • Roadshow • Summits • Tours • Open Houses • Virtual Open Houses • Web-based Meetings • Workshop, Computer-Facilitated • Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings to Neighborhood & Community Organizations • Brown Bags • Door to Door/Canvass • Panels • FAQ's • Field Trip • Media: Feature Stories & Editorials • Speakers Bureau • Staffed Displays • Tabling • Trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committees • Citizen Juries • Commissions & Boards • Established Groups & Committees • Expert Panels • Task Forces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment Cards • Community Feedback Board • Door to Door/Canvass • Fishbowls • Focus Groups • Handheld Voting • Interviews • Large Group Study • Media, Blogs • Online Testimony • Polling: Computer-Based, Deliberative • Response Sheets • Surveys: Exit/Follow-up, In Person, Intercept, Internet, Mailed, Telephone • Tabling • Virtual Room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Forums • Online Testimony • Public Hearings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee Klatches/ House Parties • Community Facilitators • Form New Community Group • Meetings, Community Initiated • Small Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consensus Building Techniques • Deliberative Dialogue • Design Charette • Future Search Conference • Network with Leadership (esp. cultural groups) • Open Space Technology • Outside Consultant/Facilitator • Popular Education • Role-playing • Samoan Circle • Study Circles • Technical Information Contact

Dine & Discuss: Essex Democracy & You

Essex High School • Saturday, November 8, 2014

W*elcome to today's conversation! Essex residents agree: Community connections are important to us. We like to get together with our neighbors, volunteer, and stay informed. We also want to have a say in public decisions. But what is the best way to engage Essex citizens in decisions that affect them?*

Currently, citizens decide and vote on the municipal budget during the town and village annual meetings. Today's forum provides an opportunity to explore this and other approaches to decision making and voting. We'll also share the results of our recent survey. You'll see what motivates our participation in Essex democracy -- or what prevents it. Recent survey respondents also named important governance values. What do you think? Can we do better? And if so, how? We welcome your ideas! Thanks for coming and for being a part of this important discussion.

Your neighbors on the Essex Governance Group

Forum Agenda

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Noon | Welcome & Introductions |
| 12:25 | Lunch |
| 12:45 | Setting the Context <ul style="list-style-type: none">· How it Works: Overview of Essex's Local Government Structures· Community Voices: Overview of <i>Essex Democracy and You</i> Survey Results |
| 1:30 | Table Conversations <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Exploring Four Approaches to Local Decision-Making and Voting· Sharing Ideas to Strengthen Civic Participation |
| 3:30 | Celebration <ul style="list-style-type: none">· "Greatest Hits" from Table Conversations· Door Prizes! |
| 4:00 | Adjourn |

Supported by Town of Essex Selectboard • Heart and Soul of Essex • The Orton Family Foundation. Visit www.heartandsoulofessex.org following the forum for additional information.

Approach One:

Traditional Town / Village Meeting

O*verview:* Since before the state's founding, Vermont's townspeople have governed themselves by town meeting—face-to-face deliberative decision making. Essex residents value community, and want institutions that help increase trust, connection, and volunteerism—and town meeting, proponents say, is one of them. Town meeting is an important training ground for citizen leadership. It helps residents understand government, hear the complexity of viewpoints, and weigh trade-

offs. Here, citizens can discuss and make amendments to the budget. Elected leaders and staff can explain their work, hear our concerns, and citizens can hold them accountable. Town meeting isn't a ballot box. For decisions regarding governance and finance, it is the town's legislature, and every participant is a legislator. When controversial issues arise, people value having this system where they can come together, deliberate, and make real changes on issues they care about.

Necessary steps? No action needed, since this is Essex's current system. However, supporters say improvements could strengthen this model. The Village has recently reinstated a community dinner and offers childcare, and is considering moving to a Saturday meeting. Other possibilities include: improving privacy by allowing written comments and using in-meeting paper ballots; making meeting information more accessible; and increasing outreach and civic education.

Trade-offs

- Because citizens have the power to change (amend) items at town meeting, the wording and dollar amounts are not finalized until the vote of the people at the meeting. For this reason, absentee ballots cannot be printed ahead of time. This leaves out anyone who cannot attend the meeting.
- Participating in town meeting is a challenge for anyone who fears public speaking, or is intimidated to express new or unpopular views in public. Diverse cultural, educational, or socioeconomic backgrounds can make speaking up even more difficult.
- Essex is the largest town in Vermont to govern through a traditional town meeting. Large towns generally get lower per capita meeting turnout, and Essex's median attendance hovers below 2%. Even though town meeting is open to all, the final result could be affected by an unrepresentative minority of voters. This can cause dispute about meeting outcomes or create cynicism about government.

Approach Two:

Australian Ballot

O*verview:* Many Vermont towns have switched to ballot box or “Australian ballot” voting for their budget or for all town issues. Some believe Essex should do the same. Essex has gotten too big for town meeting, they say, pointing to the small percentage of voters participating in town and village meetings. Weeknight meetings are challenging for working people, and evening or weekend meetings are difficult for elderly people and

families with young children. Essex should remove all obstacles to participation, and do everything possible to allow citizens from every walk of life to vote. This means giving people the privacy of a voting booth and offering all-day voting. Australian ballot also means Essex could offer absentee voting to people who are ill, or out of town due to work, school, or serving in the military.

Necessary steps? Change the Town and/or Village charter to adopt Australian ballot.

Trade-offs

- Through deliberation, citizens have the opportunity to change other people’s minds, and they might hear new arguments and change their own minds. However, ballot-box voting lacks the educational benefit of public give-and-take. Very few people attend the informational meetings that precede Australian ballot voting.
- With Australian ballot, voters give up the power to amend the budget. Instead of deliberation and amendment, citizens are limited to saying “yes” or “no” to proposals handed down to them by leaders.
- Voters may defeat the budget while giving leaders no clear directions on what changes they want. This means one or many costly re-votes. Often turn-out is lower for each successive re-vote, which is less democratic.

Approach Three:

Meeting-Ballot Hybrid (NH/SB2)

Overview: In New Hampshire, over 60 towns have adopted “SB2” (named after Senate Bill #2 that created it). Under this system, each spring towns hold a “deliberative session” where voters can discuss and amend the budget. About a month later, this budget is voted on by citizens at the ballot box (absentee ballots are available). Supporters say SB2 is the

best of both worlds, allowing for a face-to-face deliberative town meeting, but also the fairness of a ballot-box budget vote for everyone. SB2 was adopted in many NH towns when it was put in place in 1995, primarily in the larger towns in southern NH, although in recent years the number of towns adopting it has leveled off. It has never been used in Vermont.

Necessary steps? Change the Town and/or Village charter to adopt this system.

Trade-offs:

- Its detractors argue that SB2 is actually the worst of both worlds—all the problems associated with town meeting, combined with the disadvantages of Australian ballot.
- Knowing that they will be able to vote on the budget by ballot, even fewer voters may attend the town meeting. A 2012 study of 27 sample New Hampshire SB2 towns showed that half of them had voter attendance of below 2% at their deliberative session, with large towns (over 2,000 voters) having attendance as low as 0.4%.
- Lower attendance can leave the budget even more vulnerable to manipulation by fringe interest groups. Instead of the budget crafted over time by town leaders and staff, the final budget sent on for public approval can include changes made by a tiny number of voters. This can create frustration for both local officials and ballot-box voters.

Approach Four:

Representative Town Meeting

(Brattleboro model)

O*verview:* Every Town Meeting Day in Brattleboro, voters go to the polls and elect 155 neighbors to represent them at Brattleboro's annual town meeting, which is held three weeks later. Representative Town Meeting (RTM) features the fairness of the ballot box—voters elect representatives to speak for them (absentee ballots are available). RTM also features the benefits of a deliberative floor meeting. Empowered citizens give the issues direct public scrutiny, and local officials hear from, and respond directly to,

community members. As towns grow, many voters may find the details of governance less relevant. With RTM, neighbors with the most interest in local issues can be elected by voters to speak for them. Representatives are elected from districts within the town (Brattleboro is divided into three districts), and during the year, town meeting representatives can hold district meetings to discuss issues with citizens. Used in Brattleboro since 1960, RTM is also widely used in Massachusetts.

Necessary steps? Change the Town and/or Village charter to adopt Representative Town Meeting.

Trade-offs

- With Representative Town Meeting, citizens can still attend town meeting and speak, but they no longer have a direct vote on the issues. They elect people to represent their views. However, if citizens do not agree with an RTM decision, there is a five-day window in which they can petition for a town-wide vote.
- RTM may create more work for local staff. Staff has to prepare detailed packets of information before the meeting, and staff has to keep track of which seats are up for election and who is running.
- Essex would need to create new Representative Town Meeting districts, which could confuse voters.

**Essex Governance & You Forum, 11/8/14
Small Group Work, Coded by Topic**

COLOR KEY: Table number: Facilitator/Recorder

*Asterisks = all colors/tables represented in this category

“Group’s Top Idea” = every group was asked at the end of the forum to name its 1-2 top ideas. These are identified and sorted here by category.

RED: Table 1 (Gabrielle)

BLUE: Table 2: Tina Logan (incl. Kimberly Gleason’s notes)

PURPLE: Table 3: Annie Davis

GREEN: Table 4 (Stephanie Ratte, Elaine Sopchak)

BROWN: Table 5 (Brad Luck)

ORANGE: Table 6 (Sam)

BLACK: “Top Idea” Group source unclear

1) COMMUNICATION (110)

***EXPLICIT COMMUNICATION – ACCURATE, CLEAR, HONEST (25)**

(CM) Explicit - share accurate information, clear, honest

(CM) More explanation of agendas and minutes

(CM) Clear numbers around our total tax bills

(CM) Communication improved to be more clear and given in context

(TR) Improve meeting minutes and agendas to be more informative and reader-friendly to those not a part of that committee or commission

(TR) Residents would know who to ask

(TR) Residents would understand what they have the right to know (vs. privacy, legal restrictions, etc.)

(CM) Communication is better

(CM) Making local government information more complete, timely, and explanatory

(TR) More access to information

(TR) Fewer back room deals being cut

(TR) Executive sessions limited to lawful purposes

(TR) We might have less cynicism

(TR) Stop inside and back-room deals.

(CM) Have comprehensive meeting minutes timely published

(CM) Have all town meetings recorded and available in various mediums

(TR) Clear statement of total impact of the taxes on the ballot

(TR) Restructure our selectboard meetings [minutes?] so there was more discussion of what is discussed – after each agenda item

(TR) True meeting means decisions not made in advance, people’s voices are heard

(TR) Gov’t elected officials consistent in message

(TR) Joint meeting minutes – more detailed

(TR) Allowed to look at everything government does

(And more Transparency...)

(CM) transparent

(CM) More thorough and transparent communication

(CM) Transparent to community

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Reducing perception of pre-meeting deals/agreements

***PROACTIVE COMMUNICATION (17)**

(-AB) People not always aware of how to find information or become more educated. It's complicated in Essex.

(CM) More access to public meetings that are well publicized

(CM) Proactive explanation of current or upcoming issues, concerns (cited emails from Irene Wrenner as helpful)

(CM) More timely communication outreach

(TR) Increased awareness, engagement and finding ways to connect with citizens

(CM) Government should push information to residents rather than a pull for information from residents.

(TR) Better pre-event coverage.

(-TM) People don't know about it

(CM) Intentional outreach and communication

(TR) Any changes proposed to Planning Commission is mailed to the neighborhood affected—general notice is not enough

(Pking lot): TM NOT the only place for people to provide opinion. Gov't needs to offer more opportunities to do so.

(CM) Village weekly e-newsletter

(TR) Gov't officials being forthright with significant changes in advance

(CM) Accessibility and ease of consuming information

(CM) Outreach: More innovative ways, more outreach

(CM) Grassroots efforts – go to where people are

(TR) Sending press releases / "civic book"

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Tell people about government events/issues ahead of time, using many means, so citizens can provide input before decisions are made. Example, Saxon Hill

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Civic "Cliff Notes"

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Leaders going to the people – new, innovative outreach

***ONLINE COMMUNICATION (16)**

(CM) Improve website/s

(TR) More available data (open data)

(TR) Improve and increase IT capacity

(TR) Merge services and websites

(CM) Posting documents / information

(CM) Modernizing to [have] more online access to increase civic participation

(TR) Online profiles

(CM) Using social media like Front Porch Forum and Facebook to communicate within the and across neighborhoods.

(CM) Information on Facebook, website, and Front Porch Forum

(TR) Open data website like Burlington 2.0

(TR) Drill-down details website

(TR) Web links to minutes, agendas, background info, posted on front page of municipal and school sites

(TR) Online meeting participation – dialogue – two-way communication

(CM) One website and/or link to each other (Village/Town)

(CM) Increase technology access to links better

(CM) Village weekly news – make links work! Social media

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Open Data Initiative (like Burlington's) – on website, good reporting in town papers, transparency

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Web site improvement, links between Town/Village sites, Internet total presence

I'LL DO IT NOW: Help improve web presence (Ron)

GROUP'S BEST IDEA: Open data. Data driven, tracking, FAQ, better agendas/minutes clearly understood by residents. Burlington model—look at their website

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Prominent display on homepage of minutes, agendas, videos, and background info for schools and municipality. Greater detail than just minutes and agendas.

***DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH LEADERS (11)**

(-AB) Don't always know "why" if a budget is defeated.

(-AB) No feedback for why it failed

(-AB) When a budget fails, it doesn't tell the board why

(-AB) It doesn't provide a means for the community to guide the board or provide public recommendations.

(+TM) Elected officials can understand why people are unhappy/want change

(+TM) Hear from elected and municipal officials

(-AB) No feedback to elected officials

(+SB2) Town officials chance to provide info before ballot voting

(+RTM) More like to talk with rep informally, who can then act formally

(+TM) Residents and leaders [can get] clarification

(-AB) Reps don't get feedback

RESPONSIVE REPS, REPRESENTATIVENESS (7)

(+RTM) Have a rep to call directly.

(+RTM) Potentially easier and more responsive than current representation.

(+RTM) Lets people feel confident someone who's really interested represents them

(+RTM) We can't all be everywhere and be well informed – good to have some who can represent

(+RTM) Meetings with representatives

(+RTM) Can choose someone with same agenda

(+RTM) Increase diversity of opinions—better representation across the town

OUTREACH, MEDIA (BEYOND "ONLINE") (8)

(-AB) Local press is problematic. Can't be relied upon for complete and "objective" information

(CM) Don't miss connecting with and providing information to those who are off-line. Capture these residents through other means, for example, Essex Eats Out. Remember that not everyone has access to technology.

(TR) Old and new means of communication done better.

(TR) A more robust relationship with Channel 17 for resident subscription

(TR) YouTube channel

(TR) Vibrant local newspaper that would cover local issues of importance with thoroughness and accuracy

(TR) Have citizens tell elected officials how else to communicate to them beyond what is happening now

(CM) Flyers

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: open data on website, also good reporting in town papers, transparency

GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY, RESPONSIVENESS, AVAILABILITY (10)

(CM) Being accountable and owning the response

(CM) Responsive

(CM) Available and "findable" by residents. This can be hard with volunteer leaders.

(CM) Known process for resident calls, emails – how are responses handled? Better tracking and accountability

(TR) More tracking (complaints, concerns, ideas from residents)

(TR) Add a section to the five year plan that would specifically tie an outcome to this Forum - the Town would develop a plan to improve transparency based on the priorities from this forum.

(TR) residents would have answers to all of their questions

(CM) Honoring what the community means and what they say

(CM) When people voice their opinions, the elected officials follow through

(CM) Try to put residents first

LEADERS ENGAGED WITH COMMUNITY (6)

(CM) Being engaged with the community

(CM) informed

(CM) observant, paying attention

(CM) Knowing our constituents

(CM) Officials / leaders are accessible

(TR) In France neighborhood meeting with mayor there on street corner. Use that as a model

LISTENING, RESPECT, WELCOMING (10)

(CM) willing to listen to diverse points of view and to all constituents.

(CM) Listening

(CM) Showing respect to the "little people" by treating them as equals or better.

(CM) A culture of acceptance, mutual respect and openness

(CM) Community engagement in the form of mutual respect between community members and municipal staff (Good staff management within local government makes a difference)

(CM) Being open-minded

(CM) Receptive to ideas and input from community

(TR) Gov't officials listening to constituents

(CM) Feeling welcome to go to public meetings

(CM) Better spaces and environment at public meetings

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Show respect to all citizens/residents when they come to a meeting so that they are/feel heard.

2) INCLUSION, NUMBER/DIVERSITY OF VOTERS/PARTICIPANTS (70)

***INCLUSION (32)**

(-TM) Some do not have tolerance to listen to group-specific agendas.

(+AB) Most available

(+SB2) Input more possible than Town Mtg

(-TM) Freezes people out; impractical, not inclusive

(-TM) Only informative to those who attend

(-TM) Inaccessible – no absentee ballot

(+AB) Convenient, accessible to all

(+AB) Multiple modes/ways to place vote (early by mail, visit clerk, ballot box)

(+AB) Privacy

(+SB) Allows absentee ballot

(-RTM) Possibility of alienation of those interested in participating if their representative is their only vote

(-TM) there are barriers to attending such as time, other job and family commitments

(-TM) It doesn't capture all voters' viewpoints.

(+AB) Allows accessibility to voting through absentee, 12-hour voting

(-TM) Not democratic (if you can't be there)

(-TM) Barriers: time, format, public speaking

(+AB) Include everyone who wants to vote

(+SB2) Includes everyone who wants to vote

(+SB2) Opportunity for more community participation

(CM) All voices heard, not just the usual suspects

(-TM) Essex population becoming more transient—is town meeting best format for them?

(-TM) Must be present to win

(-TM) Those who don't feel comfortable don't go

(+AB) Absentee (example, those in Army)

(+AB) 12 hours to vote

(+SB2) Win-win – best of TM and AB –[Still opportunity for input but] everyone can go to polls

(+SB2) More inclusive

(-TM) Limits access to voting for many people

(-TM) Negativity to final vote if they weren't able to participate

(-TM) Doesn't encourage all types of people to speak

(+AB) More inclusive for residents

(+AB) Increases opportunity

***NUMBER OF VOTERS/PARTICIPANTS (20)**

(-TM) Very small participation (many prefer not to be involved for a variety of reasons), but Essex has changed re: population

(+AB) Everybody can vote

(-TM) Low turn-out

(+AB) Potential to increase public participation

(-SB2) Towns with larger population—participation was lower in the meeting

(+RTM) Participation is higher

(+RTM) Australian ballot can still be permitted

(+AB) In theory, this method increases participation.

(+AB) Allows for consistent, habitual voting

(+SB2) Could give us the best of both worlds if we could get more voters to come?

(-SB2) Sounds like a good idea but does it bring out any more voters?

(+AB) Leads to increase in participation

(+AB) AB after TM for officers would bring more voters out for officials too

(-SB2) Statistics re: lower turnout at TM

(+RTM) More participation

(-RTM) Total number might end up less than current participation

(TR) Higher participation at gov't meetings

(+AB) Increases number of votes

(+SB2) Increases voter opportunity, Australian ballot

(-SB2) Fewer people go to deliberative session

DIVERSITY, DEMOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION, NEW RESIDENTS (12)

(CM) Have boards, committees, and commissions reflect the local demographic (more diversity)

(CM) Aware of socio-economic, cultural, diversity, age, etc.

(+RTM) Better geographic representation of population

(CM) Increase demographic participation

(CM) Getting our youth involved more, for their input on issues

(-TM) attendance is not a good representation of our town and village demographics.

(+AB) As our demographics change, minorities might feel more included and have the opportunity to be involved.

(-RTM) Would minorities be fairly represented?

(-TM) Hard for non-English speakers

(-TM) Lack of diversity

(CM) Welcoming new groups to our community

(CM) Explaining process of government when moving to community (Welcome Packet, civic “cliff notes”)

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Getting our youth more involved, engaged, informed

INTIMIDATION (6)

- (-TM) interest groups can ... harass groups or individual attendees
- (-TM) Complicated rules / procedures
- (-TM) Intimidating
- (-TM) TV cameras—intimidating
- (-TM) People not always polite
- (-TM) Loud and passionate people are intimidating

3) QUALITY OF DECISION MAKING (76)

***DELIBERATION (20)**

- (+TM) Opportunity to correct misinformation
- (+TM) Dynamic with those present
- (+SB2) Better than Australian ballot because of interaction face to face (+TM) Face to face
- (+TM) Advantages of deliberative process among voters.
- (+TM) Hear other people's opinions
- (-AB) Not time deliberative
- (-AB) No conversation
- (+SB) Balance—deliberative (yet protects from small interest groups)
- (+RTM) May be more robust deliberative process
- (+TM) Lively debate
- (+TM) Coming together
- (+TM) Face-to-face with neighbors
- (-AB) No face-to-face (if only AB)
- (+TM) education occurs at the meetings-people come in, speak and learn, viewpoints are shared and new ideas are gained.
- (+TM) It is an exchange of ideas.
- (+TM) Your ideas are heard if you talk
- (+TM) Hear other opinions
- (+TM) Ability to discuss
- (+TM) Allows open dialogue between residents on particular line item
- (+SB2) Still have deliberative session

HIGH-QUALITY, RESPONSIVE DECISION MAKING (9)

- (-TM) Potential hasty decision making
- (-TM) Decision making becomes arbitrary
- (+AB) No arbitrary amendments in the moment
- (-SB2) More preparation involved with a shorter preparation period
- (+RTM) Potentially can handle more on the agenda
- (-TM) Need "Any Other Business" (AOB) agenda item
- (-TM) More than just budget
- (-TM) Success can depend on moderator managing civility
- (-TM) Last-minute snap decision for some

***CITIZEN EDUCATION / INFORMED & ENGAGED VOTERS (17)**

- (CM) More awareness for open discussions
- (TR) More education on public issues and around opportunities for public participation
- (-AB) Votes might not be educated even if more of the public votes.
- (TR) People feel engaged
- (-AB) Not enough attendance at info meetings
- (+SB2) Voice at meeting/people can learn more and vote later
- (+SB2) Delay gives time to give feedback
- (+RTM) More knowledgeable participants e.g. FPF
- (CM) Education, education, education
- (Prking lot): Frustration with school budget AB informational meetings – not enough turnout, not feeling effective
- (+TM) Educated participants
- (+TM) Watching
- (-AB) Voters wait until in the booth to consider question (uninformed)
- (CM) Increasing awareness
- (-AB) Doesn't solve problem of informed voters
- (Gen'l): Keep town meeting, but increase information to voters
- (Q): How to increase informed voters? How to get info out to voters?

***INTEREST GROUP/MINORITY RULE (12)**

- (-SB2) Fringe group can amend budget beforehand
- (-TM) Vocal minorities, “government by wisecrack”
- (+AB) Can't be captured by a fringe group
- (+SB) Balance—(deliberative) yet protects from small interest groups
- (-TM) interest groups can dominate the meeting
- (General question): How often do special interest groups influence the budget in a meaningful way?
- (-TM) Small minority can make changes
- (-RTM) Still potential for local minorities
- (-TM) Small/special interest groups amending
- (-SB2) Opportunity for manipulation by small group to get something on budget or to rally against ballot vote
- (+RTM) Equal voice—no small group take-over
- (CM) Not beholden to special interests

COMMUNITY-BUILDING vs. DIVISIVENESS (6)

- (+TM) Community building
- (CM) Act as common wheel
- (+TM) Opportunity to bring people together – not just about budget
- (-AB) Doesn't bring community together in a small-town way
- (-RTM) The need to create districts could be fractious.
- (-RTM) Could possibly cause more division and confusion in community

GOVERNMENT LONG VIEW, BALANCING NEEDS, FAIRNESS (7)

(CM) Proactive on issues related to the community

(CM) Putting long term interests of community ahead of short term interests (i.e. infrastructure, business competition, zoning/planning developments)

(CM) Balancing the desires of the few with the needs of the whole

(CM) Taking the long view

(TR) Fair and equitable distribution of resources and power

(CM) Makes decision on greatest long-term good

(CM) Embraces Heart & Soul values

COST OF RE-VOTES (5)

(-AB) A defeat at the polls could be very costly, back to the table

(-AB) Expense of re-votes

(-AB) 2nd and 3rd votes are expensive

(-SB2) Cost of additional votes

(-AB) Could drive up re-votes

4) NEIGHBORHOOD, DIY/LEGO AND OTHER MODELS (55)

NEIGHBORHOOD-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT/STRENGTH (11)

(+RTM) District meetings with representatives

(CM) Taking advantage of neighborhood planning councils / assemblies

(+RTM) This might draw people together in neighborhoods.

(+RTM) People would gather to discuss, meet, vote for representatives, and gather input from people.

(+RTM) Create stronger, more connected neighborhoods.

(+RTM) Representation from neighborhoods

(+RTM) Hyper-local issues get attention

(CM) Honoring neighborhoods

(TR) Neighborhood Assemblies

(+RTM) Representative of area/neighbors

(+RTM) Grassroots effort

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Neighborhood Assemblies

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Expanding and institutionalizing grassroots public participation. Burlington Neighborhood Planning Assemblies model, Neighborhood watch

DIY / LEGO, CREATIVE IMPROVEMENTS (16)

(+AB) Other vehicles exist for education or to convince others of issues

(+AB) Attendance perhaps [could be] increase[d] at informational meetings

(+SB2) Interaction can happen without this informally

(+AB) Means of providing feedback can be designed

(General question): What are some different hybrid models we could consider? Could we develop our own model/approach?

(General themes): We discussed the possibility of not making dramatic changes to our voting structure but instead making changes to our existing system through: Use of technology to include all residents by reducing barriers and expanding opportunities.

(-TM) Currently scheduled on the best day?

(**TM General**): Lots of opportunities to **IMPROVE** town meeting

(-AB) Assumption that an “no” = re-vote

(-AB) Y, N or keep current

(+SB2) There are examples in other states to observe

(Parking lot): Suggestion box during AB for why people voted no

(Pking): Skype informational meetings

(TM General): More personal invites to Town Meeting could help Get people there, like today's Forum

(TM General): Town Meeting – Australian system for revote so limit number of re-votes

(TR) Town SB is making improvements, but will take a while to see those changes

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Remote meeting attendance/participation (Skype)

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Budget feedback on the budget ballot: Cast vote and have space for a survey question

***2-WAY COMMUNICATION, CREATIVE FORUMS (12)**

(CM) multiple, diverse channels of two-way communication between municipal leaders and staff and residents

(CM) Forums (topical)

(CM) Public meetings/participation

(CM) Heart and Soul

(+SB2) Could there be multiple meeting times and venues in community to reach more voters?

(TR) Informal, regular means of 2-way communication

(CM) Maximize feedback from the community

(CM) Build bridges, not walls

(TR) Two-way communication vs. formal meetings

(TR) More community forum opportunities

(CM) Lots of avenues for two-way communication in a user-friendly form

(TR) Two-way communication

VOLUNTEERISM, COMMUNITY GROUPS, NON-FORMAL PARTICIPATION (12)

(TR) Volunteer opportunities would be easy to find

(CM) Grassroots organizations

(CM) Institutionalize events

(CM) Block parties

- (CM) Essex Independence Day / Charter Day
- (CM) Fewer vacancies on our committees
- (CM) Street party
- (CM) Farmers Market
- (CM) Parks & Rec
- (CM) Concerts
- (CM) Community calendar
- (CM) Grassroots effort, i.e. bike groups, Farmer's Market

OTHER MODELS (4)

Other models: Burlington (5th model?) - districts would need to be designated. How to become a city.

- (CM) Someone elected to have a vision, like a mayor
- (TR) Could an elected official, like a Mayor, improve accountability and transparency?
- (CM) Have a mayor and wards / districts for better governance
- GROUP'S TOP IDEA:** [Neighborhood Assemblies, break up communities into 100-120 homes as in Front Porch Forum.] These groups elect a representative to go to the Mayor and act as a board

5) DIRECT DEMOCRACY: POWER, IMMEDIACY (40)

*** CITIZEN POWER, DIRECT INDIVIDUAL AUTHORITY (23)**

- (+TM) Town Mtg as a vehicle to cut budget by general, with concerted effort
- (-TM) Hard to make real changes at Town Meeting
- (-RTM) Want to speak for oneself and not spoken for by rep
- (-RTM) Does not provide for individual engagement and participation
- (+TM) Close as you can get to democracy
- (-TM) Amendment power is limited
- (-AB) Can't amend the budget
- (-RTM) Removing one more step with individual authority
- (+TM) You can vote at the meeting
- (-SB2) It doesn't give voters a reason to come to town meeting because voting doesn't happen there.
- (-RTM) Constituents might strongly disagree with representative's viewpoints and voting.
- (+TM) Direct democracy: We are the legislators
- (+SB2) Keeps teeth in Town Meeting for amendments
- (-RTM) A level removed from voting
- (+TM) Ability to amend
- (-AB) Opportunities to question/challenge—no formal way
- (+SB2) Win-win – best of TM and AB --Still opportunity for input [but everyone can go to polls]
- (+RTM) Voice at table
- (-RTM) Additional layer of bureaucracy
- (-RTM) Defeats one person, one vote concept (on budget)
- (-TM) Feel like can't change much, can't say particularly where money goes
- (-AB) No opportunity for amendments

(-RTM) Adding a layer

CLIQUE ELITE (2)

(-RTM) Centralization of power to a certain few

(-RTM) Could result in a “Super Board” or clique-like environment.

IMMEDIATE RESULTS (10)

(+TM) Spontaneous problem solving that works.

(+TM) Immediate

(-SB2) Two-step process-more time consuming

(+TM) The work is done when the meeting is done

(-AB) The process has a non-finality to it. A no-vote means a revote.

(+TM) Meeting ends with a budget

(-AB) Process of info meetings very long timeline

(+TM) Budget done at end of night

(+TM) Impact a decision at last minute

(+TM) Approve budget that night

TRADITION (5)

(+TM) Huge VT tradition

(TM: unclear if this is a +, - or neutral) We are the largest “town” in Vermont.

(+TM) 250 year tradition unlike any other

(-AB) Ends town meeting possibly

(+TM) Tradition

6) SAME-DAY VOTING, SIMPLICITY, IMPLEMENTATION (35)

SAME DAY VOTING (8)

(CM) Have one day of voting for everything.

(+AB) Timing—could fit into school vote

(+SB) Timing could line up with school vote

(+AB) Tie in with school vote

(TR) Having all budget votes on same day

(-RTM) Doesn't change number of times to vote

(CM) Voting: Same-day voting – make it a more simple process

(Q): How to change number of votes!

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: Same day voting

GROUP'S TOP IDEA: One vote on one day for everything

SIMPLICITY/CLARITY, CONVENIENCE (10)

(CM) Simplify the structures for governance and communications

(-RTM) Confusion could lead to apathy

(+AB) Simplicity of Y/N

(+AB) Convenience

(+RTM) Less confusion

- (+AB) People are comfortable with it
- (+AB) Black and white results (clarity)
- (+SB2) Hear and discuss once, not at series of budget meetings
- (+AB) Simple and straightforward
- (-SB2) Voting a month later
- GROUP'S TOP IDEA:** Simplify: Governance, communication, education (of municipal issues, budgets)

IMPLEMENTATION CONCERNS & QUESTIONS (17)

- (+AB) Charter change not scary
- (-SB2) Look at Colchester model. Take care on number of charger changes.
- (-RTM) Hard pressed to find enough representative. How would that "look like" in Essex?
- (-RTM) Implementation more difficult and time consuming
- (-RTM) Drawing the districts could be a major issue? What criteria are used to draw the districts?
- (?RTM) How do/would districts get determined in a Representative Town Meeting approach?
- (-SB2) Implementation
- (-SB2) Does this need state law?
- (-SB2) What happens if budget fails? Another 2-meeting cycle? Just AB?
- (-SB2) Clarifications about implementation details very important for this group
- (-TM) If more people went, how long would meeting go?
- (Q): More info about Brattleboro model
- (Q): SB2 – Timeframe look like
- (-SB2) Sounds great but doesn't work
- (-RTM) Increase costs
- (-RTM) Unanswered questions to this approach
- (Q): How did Brattleboro come up with 155 reps in Approach 4?

7) ADDITIONAL TOPICS

VILLAGE-TOWN CONNECTEDNESS (7)

- (CM) Connecting different sections of our governance
- (CM) Town / Village collaborations
- (CM) Websites: similar look and feel for both communities (Village & Town)
- (CM) Town have same communications as Village

MORE WORK FOR MUNI STAFF (2)

- (-RTM) More work for municipal staff
- (-RTM) Extra staff work? (questionable for some)

SATISFACTION (1)

- (P'king): Why people aren't voting: Representative is doing their job (i.e. people aren't participating because they are satisfied)

FOUR DECISION-MAKING APPROACHES: DOT VOTING RESULTS

After the small-group discussions regarding the four decision-making approaches, Forum participants were asked to indicate their preferences about the decision-making methods by dot voting. Participants were asked to rank each method, “movie review”-style, from a low ranking of one star to a high ranking of four stars.

DOT RESULTS:	1 STAR	2 STARS	3 STARS	4 STARS
Town Meeting	22	10	12	9
Australian Ballot	11	18	15	9
Hybrid (SB2)	12	12	13	16
Representative TM	16	12	12	13

Although this is a relatively small number of votes (53) from a self-selected group of participants, a few patterns are suggested:

- Traditional Town Meeting had the most 1s (“very unfavorable”)
- Town Meeting and Australian ballot tied for the fewest 4s (“very favorable”)
- Hybrid had the most “very favorable”
- Representative TM had a relatively high number of 1s (“very unfavorable”), but also a relatively high number of 4s (“very favorable”)

Take-aways:

- Many Forum participants are dissatisfied with Town Meeting. However, not many participants see Australian ballot as the most appealing alternative. Many Forum participants seem interested in exploring other alternatives. The hybrid model garnered the most interest, and representative town meeting the second most.

Memorandum

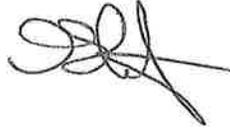
TO: Patrick C. Scheidel, Municipal Manager
Town of Essex Selectboard
Village of Essex Junction Trustees

CC: Rick Jones, Loren Ward, Jim Jutras, Aaron Martin

FROM: Dennis Lutz, P.E., Town Public Works Director

DATE: 15 April 2015

SUBJECT: Spring/Summer/Fall 2015 Work List



ISSUE: The issue is for the Selectboard and Trustees to receive input on Town work projects planned or underway during the next six months, some of which cross municipal jurisdictions, and provide feedback regarding the work plan.

DISCUSSION: Every year, for at least the last 15 years, Public Works has provided the Selectboard with a list of work items for the spring, summer and fall seasons. The document is updated periodically during the summer so that Selectboard members are aware of the activities of the Department and can better answer citizen's questions. Starting a few years ago, the document was placed on the Town website so the public has direct access to the status of the current work program.

This year's plan accompanies this memo. One significant change is that there are now a number of projects or work tasks that more directly involve Town/Village coordination and involvement. These have been highlighted on the list. It is very clear that coordination between the Village and Town Public Works Departments is already significant, even without full consolidation.

One element of the joint highway agreement calls for fuller explanation of the role of a consolidated public works department. One way to provide this information is through a documented work task list that is specific to and current with the Town's Public Works operation. In my opinion, the best way to gauge the scope of an organization's operation is to look at the work actually being undertaken and the people/positions responsible within the organization to get the work done.

It should be noted that although some work tasks are listed as a single item, they actually involve many individual tasks. For example, daily complaints/requests for service on page 7 is only a single item and yet calls are received on a continuous basis that each may require investigation and potentially some added work. A single water line break requires not only an immediate fix but possibly new curbing, sidewalk, lawn restoration and road repaving – all over an extended period of time.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the Selectboard and Trustees provide input on Town work projects planned or underway during the next six months, especially as they may impact on future consolidation of public works of highway services.

B=Buildings; G=General work such as admin/engineering; S/W=sewer/water; Storm=stormwater
 H=Highway; L=Landfill; Paths/Walks

NOTE: Darkened cells indicates a change in status from previous reports; **yellow highlighted projects denote Village involvement/coordination**

TYPE	ASSIGNED STAFF/CONSULTANT	PROJECT OR TASK	STATUS
B	Dennis/Loren	Interior space separation at the highway garage	Work 80% complete on room separation. Some added work needed to replace hot water heater tank, add a kitchen sink and rearrange counters in break room. Work being done by employees, contractor and plumber.
B	Dennis	Increase interior lighting at Memorial Hall (no budgeted funds)	On hold for future year; no funds
B	Dennis	Fort Water Tower repairs to upper window area, stairs rehab and grouting of walls \$50,000 in designated capital funds less engineering design costs of \$6,350 or \$43,650 available	Design plans 90% complete by Dubois and King; insufficient funds are available to do the project, even in phases. No recent action on part of the Historical Society to seek grants;. The Town project is on hold pending further decisions by the Selectboard.
B	Dennis /Aaron in coordination with Municipal Manager and other designated department heads	Buildings and Space Utilization at the Tree Farm	No work currently underway for use of residence-building and large storage-building by Town departments; Residential building is slowly degrading and has been broken into and copper piping has been stolen. Public Works will relocate Town paper records from landfill building to the large storage building at the old Tree Farm and further denote space within the building for storage by Town departments.
B	Assistance as needed by Dennis and Aaron in coordination with Doug Fisher/Town Manager and Scott and Partners Architects	81 Main Street building rehabilitation	Work with architect on final design plans and specifications; work with Consultant and State on environmental site issues; assist as needed.

B=Buildings; G=General work such as admin/engineering; S/W=sewer/water; Storm=stormwater

H=Highway; L=Landfill; Paths/Walks

NOTE: Darkened cells indicates a change in status from previous reports; yellow highlighted projects denote Village involvement/coordination

B	TBD	Memorial Hall improvements per the Capital Plan - \$12,852 available	Investigate feasibility of small kitchen area and/or lights for platforms. Utilize Memorial Hall Committee for input. Currently on hold
B	TBD	Library Deferred maintenance per the Capital Plan - \$30,000 available	Meet with Ann Pietta to determine most appropriate use of funds; develop contract for work or assist Library in developing new projects list.
B	Dennis/Aaron/ Allie/ Loren	Site rework to make use of old Police Storage building and expand winter salt storage capability	Develop plan for more efficient use of space and to provide for separation of site use by Parks and Recreation, Highway, and Water/Sewer. Also, find appropriate space for senior buses. Project may involve minor site plan change with approval from PC.

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G	Dennis/Rick Jones/Lauren	Public Works Consolidation Phase 1	Collect and analyze historical/operational data on both departments, and contact other communities
G	Dennis	Public Works Consolidation Phase 2	Research best PW practices APWA and management practices
G	Dennis /Rick Jones/Lauren	Public Works Consolidation Phase 3	Look for and initiate any joint programs aimed at improving efficiencies or reducing costs
G	Dennis	Public Works Consolidation Phase 4	Develop report for both Boards by 1 November 2015.
G	Aaron/ Consultant	Revise Public Works Specs	Final draft 99% completed after review of document by engineering consultants and product vendors. Final changes to be made by the consultant – Lamoureux and Dickinson. Anticipate the document will be ready for the Selectboard and PC by early June 2015. No major change in direction but complete upgrade of details and use of more current materials.
G	Dennis/Annie	Engineering/storm-water summer help	Summer interns interviewed and two selected – both residents of Essex – one from UVM and one from Clarkson. Will begin work on 15 May 2015 and will work both in the Town and in the Village.
G	Aaron/Annie summer interns	New traffic studies and counts	Locations identified for summer interns to do; check equipment and program status
G	Aaron/Annie/ summer interns	Perform maintenance/ inspect existing traffic counters; train interns in operation of equipment (annually in spring); perform counts	To be done
G	Jerry/Aaron	Investigate and provide recommendation for fleet maintenance computer program	Recommendation on what to purchase or use - currently not a priority
G	Annie/Aaron VLCT - safety	Arrange and conduct safety training and safety	Develop schedule for new year. Some training being done through on-line

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		meetings	training courses set up by VLCT. Courses also being done through contract with outside vendor - up to 8 hours of required training. Training sessions were opened to the Village Highway and Wastewater staff but Village staff did not participate. Required Flagger training will be set up and offered to the Village to participate.
G	Aaron - safety	Request courtesy inspection by VLCT of Town facilities before requesting VOSHA inspection	Request as needed and follow up on all recommendations
G	Dennis/Loren Ward/Rick Jones	Revise winter operations plan (annually)	Begin work on new Winter Operations Plan that defines Village and Town winter operations in one document; also update current practices components
G	Chris/Loren/Ally/Annie	Green-Up day activities (annual event)	Locations and work force planned for day's pick up.
	Chris/Jerry/Kenny/Bob Whitten	Convert current MSDS program and sheets to new system; review all products	Update as new products come in; full review to be done by 1 July 2015
G	Dennis/Ally/Loren	Coordinate flowers and plantings for intersections and greens (annually)	Coordination done - work being done by Tyler Atwood, temporary employee in PW (2 nd year)
G	Dennis	Develop baseline operating budget for 2017 without consolidation with Village	Budget preparation to begin in August on stand-alone budget
G	Dennis/Rick Jones/Lauren	Develop Town-Village consolidated operating budget for 2017)	Budget preparation to begin in August on consolidated budget
G	Dennis	Develop Capital Budget for 2017 (annually)	Capital Budget process to begin in October for FYE17
G	Dennis	CCRPC UPWP request for scoping study on VT117	Request sent to CCRPC based on request from Essex Economic Development Committee – Project on the UPWP but not currently funded – may be funded in spring/summer of 2016 if funds are available

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G	Dennis/Aaron	UPWP Work Request to the CCRPC for Allen Martin/VT15 intersection scoping study	The project is in the UPWP for coping study to begin after July 1, 2015.
G	Dennis/Rick	UPWP Work Request to the CCRPC for Town and Village road assessment and condition study	The project is in the UPWP but only funded to start the study during mid 2016
G	Dennis	CCRPC requested traffic counts or other data (Town + Village)UPWP request	Work approved and in the UPWP, most counts will be in the Village; counts in Town outside the Village are generally current
G	Dennis/Aaron	Development reviews and inspections	Ongoing- maintain list of open projects; number of reviews have remained relatively constant over the past 6 months; periodic inspections being done on Bouffard Subdivision on Brigham Hill Road, congregate housing off VT15 near Butlers Corners, Senecal facilities off Susie Wilson Road
G	Aaron	Letters of Credit	Ongoing -- Maintain current list and do inspections as required by schedules
G	Dennis	Develop long-term Succession Plan for the Department	Conceptual plan developed and discussed with Town Manager
G - Circ Hwy Scoping Project	Dennis	CENTS study with CCRPC and Colchester	Study completed and approved. Phase 3 projects contain no guaranteed State funding. Schedules and priorities being worked on by CCRPC, VTRANS and Town Public Works Directors
G - Circ Hwy Scoping Project	Dennis	VT 117/North Williston Road intersection and North Williston Rd floodplain	Study completed and approved. Phase 3 projects contain no guaranteed State funding. Schedules and priorities being worked on by CCRPC, VTRANS and Town Public Works Directors

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G - Circ Hwy Scoping Project	Dennis	VT 15 Park and Ride lots investigation along VT15 from Essex Way east to Jeffersonville	CCRPC to manage with input/coordination from Essex and other Towns – Peter Keating CCRPC contact. Town with CCTA will pursue use of Essex Shoppes parking lot. Meeting with Peter Edelmann was positive and agreement/plan being worked on by respective parties.
G	Dennis/Annie	Town street lighting analysis and plan	Town staff and committee work completed; project approved by Selectboard; installation/conversion schedule in hands of GMP
G	Dennis/Aaron	Input to Planning Commission on changes to Subdivision and Zoning regulations	Public Works involvement done
G	Dennis/Aaron	Develop a new gravel road impact fee	In goals for this year
G	Aaron	Develop new curb cut ordinance, revised permit form and investigate potential for curb cut fees	In goals for this year
G	Aaron	Develop a right of way utilization ordinance and fee schedule if applicable for use of the Town right of way	In goals for this year
G	Dennis/Aaron	Investigate utilization of mobile device like IPAD to purchase and use for systems management	One new device – Panasonic Tough Pad purchased and being used for the summer by interns to collect data; will be used again this summer for the same purpose.
G	Dennis/Chris/Shannon	Provide more information to residents on summer public works programs and initiatives	Underway
G	Dennis/Aaron/Shannon/Doug/Rick Jones/Robb/Chris/Jim Jutras/Rick Gary	Integration of communication systems between the Village and Town and upgrade of the Town's Public Works infrastructure mapping and	Improvements are needed to the Town Public Works computer systems and to expand that system to include the Village Public Works. The Village wastewater treatment plant is upgrading their IT systems.

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		computer data bases	This may be a great opportunity to solve both the Public Works IT issues and the wastewater treatment plans systems. This is a high priority need!!!!
G	Dennis	MPO Transportation Action Grant Study -- Part 1 Susie Wilson Lighting Study	Work completed by consultant. Some Town lights converted to LED. Capital funds set aside in the amount of \$35,000 for further corridor conversion of street lighting. Project on hold pending PW report review. Intent is to proceed with completion of LED street lighting along this roadway using funds previously set aside for this purpose. Schedule for summer of 2015.
G	Dennis/Aaron	Traffic radius concern for large trucks turning at the intersection of Kellogg road onto Gauthier Drive	Design plans being done by Roger Dickinson, anticipate design plans by mid spring/ funding for project uncertain at this time.
G	Loren/Chris/Dennis/Rick Jones/Rick/Doug/Shannon	Daily Complaints/Requests for Service	Document, address and respond using computer tracking program; work with Village and IT to investigate totally integrated complaint and work order system into GIS
G	Dennis/Aaron	Develop framework for pre-approved contract work for small projects and emergency assistance	Research being collected on existing programs in place by State and other municipalities

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S/W	Dennis/Aaron/ Doug	Look into alternative methods for billing sewer/water charges	High priority action for future water/sewer budgets. Will hold on further study until the bond vote costs are finalized with the Village (timing and amount) and a higher percentage of installed new meters is met.
S/W	Dennis/Aaron	Prepare budget for FYE17	To be started in February of 2016
S/W	Dennis	Submit budget and rate structure to Board for FYE17	To be done in April of 2016
S/W	Aaron/Shannon/ Bob Whitten	Water system inventory and mapping	Work completed and maps current; process continuous as new sections are added or older sections are modified
S/W	Aaron/Shannon/ Bob Whitten	Sewer update on inventory of assets	Work completed and maps current; process continuous as new sections are added or older sections modified
S/W	To be determined	Model water system	Water model completed for lower pressure zone (Susie Wilson Road area); higher pressure zone (Essex Center) study underway by Aldrich and Elliott and 90% complete.
S/W	Aaron	Perform water and sewer loss rate study	ongoing
S/W	Aaron/Forcier Aldrich	Wastewater flow metering	Work completed; ongoing testing and verification
S/W	Aaron/Bob Whitten/summer intern	Service tie drawings	Material has been scanned from paper to PDF file by street. It has been put into the portable computer and is in use by the field crews. A new, heavy-duty field laptop was secured by the Town and will be issued to the sewer/water foreman.
S/W	Dennis/	Colchester-Essex water tank	Tank project completed and on-line
S/W	Bob Whitten	Adjust sewer manholes that are too high or that need repair	To be reviewed during the summer months and fixed prior to next winter
S/W	Chris/Bob Whitten	Delinquent shut-offs	List to be provided from Finance to Public Works in July. Phone calls will then be made to encourage users to pay. Marking and door notices on

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			shut-off to start late. Remaining users who have not paid will be shut off following state requirements.
S/W	Aaron/Bob Whitten	Water fire flow testing	Hydrants flow tests being conducted again this summer concurrent with flushing of water mains. Work usually done in 2 nd half of summer
S/W	Aaron	Resolve grease problem at pump stations	Summer interns in 2008 developed a database of grease producers and produced handouts on commercial handling of grease. Determine how best to proceed with commercial establishments.
S/W	Aaron	Resolve grease problem in specific area of sewer lines	Town and industry worked together to reduce grease in the system, through increased pre-treatment at the facility. Facility now appears to be in compliance.
S/W	Dennis/Aaron	Sewer connections – Rosewood Trail and Tanglewood Drive	Monitor costs and report to Selectboard on actual costs incurred by each resident: 35 Tanglewood - \$1,200 37 Tanglewood - \$1,800 36 Tanglewood - \$2,200 2 Cindy Lane - \$1,900 1 Cindy Lane - \$1,400 Note: In a letter to Tanglewood residents on 18 Sept 2007, the Town advised the residents that this cost might run from \$2000 to \$4000. The Town staff was criticized for estimating these costs too low. The average cost to date is \$1700 per lot.
S/W	Aaron	Update/changes to inter-municipal agreement with Village on sharing of pipelines in the Village	Continue discussions with Village on the issue; not a priority at this time
S/W	Aaron/Doug	Switch over to new meters and meter readers	Ongoing replacement with larger number anticipated for replacement this summer aiming for 350 to 400 meters for replacement in this time frame with increased budget funding for meters

Work List of Spring Summer and Fall of 2015

15 April 2015

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S/W	Dennis with checks by Aaron	Maintain list of approved sewer and water connections not yet connected	List completed and updated into an excel spreadsheet.
S/W	Dennis	Sewer and Water Ordinances	No revisions proposed this year. Changes likely in 2016 with change to rate structure
S/W	Dennis/Aaron	Sewer cost request from Plaza Park Condo Assoc. on Blair Road	Cost estimate developed and provided to Association per letter request to the Selectboard; nothing heard in 3 years; it appears that project is dead once again due to costs that residents are unwilling or unable to pay
S/W	Aaron	Inventory existing command and control devices at pump stations for future upgrades	Work completed; looking at budgets in future years for upgrade of command and control systems to reduce number of call-outs and reduce costs
S/W	Aaron/Dennis	Private Water Systems transfer to Town	A number of requests have come to PW over time asking that the Town take over private water lines -- one feeds the old IBM complex owned by Pizzigalli off River Rd; others involve water lines in Essex Green and Royal Park; Pizzigalli has initiated work to add valves to effect the transfer previously approved by the Selectboard. The transfer of this water line to the Town will likely occur in the summer of 2015
S/W	Aaron	Pump Station Analysis	Almost all the Town's pump stations have been modified over time with respect to electrical wiring and alarms; some are not up to current code; an internal study is being done of the deficiencies at each station so that a complete list can be obtained and priced for future inclusion in budgets.
S/W	Dennis/Aaron	Temporary help	Need to advertise for summer position to help in water/sewer

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S/W	Aaron/ Doug/Dennis	Resolution of water bills for those advised to run water through service lines, reconnection of some services now fed through above ground lines, resolution of added costs (\$50,000 unbudgeted) for contractor assistance this winter on broken water mains	Work underway to resolve issues
S/W	Aaron	Water line improvements in lower end of system – Fort, Susie Wilson, Kellogg area	Consultant hired to perform scoping type study to evaluate alternative locations for new interconnect to CWD transmission lines to improve flow and pressure in that area of Town. Report provided by Aldrich and Elliot and under review by staff.

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Storm	Dennis/Annie	Comply with Town NPDES Phase 2 permit year 12	Report completed and forwarded to State by April 1, 2015
Storm	Dennis/ Annie	Notification of Intent Report submittal to Comply with Town's New NPDES Phase 2 permit	New NOI completed and submitted to the State by due date of 3 June 2013.
Storm	Dennis / Annie	Storm water Management Plan submittal to Comply with Town's New NPDES Phase 2 permit	New Storm water Management Plan completed and submitted to the State by due date of 3 June 2013.
Storm	Dennis/summer help/Annie	Inspect selected storm pipe catch basins, outfalls and treatment systems in the Town per NPDES Phase 2 permit	Work to be done during the summer with interns. Expanded to areas in the Village as well as more detailed evaluation of storm water systems associated with expired permits.
Storm	Dennis/ Annie/Jim Jutras	Implement Flow Monitoring Plan with the State per NPDES Phase 2 permit	The legislature authorized the VT Agency of Natural Resources to conduct the monitoring and bill the MS4 permittees. A draft state plan was circulated for comments and comments have been made by Jim Jutras.
Storm	Dennis/ Annie	Develop Flow Restoration Plan for Sunderland Brook per NPDES Phase 2 permit	Watershed Consulting Engineers has submitted a 90% draft report. Report is under review with the expectation that it will be ready to go in final form to the Selectboard by early to mid –summer. Final report must be approved by the State as part of the MS4 permit requirements.
Storm	Dennis/ Annie	Develop Flow Restoration Plan for Indian Brook per NPDES Phase 2 permit	Watershed Consulting Engineers has submitted a 90% draft report. Report is under review with the expectation that it will be ready to go in final form to the Selectboard by early to mid –summer. Final report must be approved by the State as part of the MS4 permit requirements.
Storm	Dennis/Annie	Storm water requirements under proposed new permit for LID and stream buffer protection standards per the	Working with Community Development Staff and CCRPC staff to meet the new proposed regulations so changes are incorporated into the

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		NPDES Phase 2 permit	overall document change process. Note: The CCRPC has included this work item in their Work Plan.
Storm	Dennis/Annie	Expired permits review and decision on Town responsibility per NPDES Phase 2 permit	Ordinance was passed. Implementation will take place over the summer of 2015 to try and meet State deadline of October 1, 2015. Review of 22 expired permits underway to group them into 1 of 4 categories: 1) those that are totally in the public domain and that the Town will accept 2) those that need further field checks 3) those that involve shared responsibility that we will have to meet with and discuss that have no tie to the Flow Restoration Plans and 4) those that involve shared responsibility that we will have to meet with and discuss that have a tie to the Flow Restoration Plans. These all have to be resolved with the Selectboard before the reporting date to the state of October 1, 2015.
Storm	Dennis/Annie	Stormwater Coordinating Committee	Ongoing -- Assist members of the Committee with development of Town storm water policies
Storm	Dennis/Annie	State general permit issued on unimpaired waterways	Inspections will be done in 2015 by summer interns
Storm	Dennis/Annie	Work with other communities on meeting storm water education per NPDES Phase 2 permit	RSEP work items and meetings; memo sent to members and CCRPC to try and consolidate some permit programs under a CCRPC storm water Committee; New MOU signed
Storm	Dennis/Annie	Work with other communities on meeting storm water public participation requirements per NPDES Phase 2 permit	Chittenden Stream Team work items and meetings; memo sent to members and CCRPC to try and consolidate some permit programs under a CCRPC storm water Committee. Ann Costandi is co-chair of the Stream team along with Chelsea Mandigo from the Village.

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Storm	Loren/Rick	Clean catch basins and drains	Determine if catch basin cleaning can be coordinated with the Village to save funds later this summer.
Storm	Loren	Identify need for storm drain for purchase	Pipes for FY2015 and FY2016 to be ordered.
Storm	Dennis/Annie/ Loren/Aaron	Reconstruction of catch basins – construction and planning	Determine extent of effort based on interns inspections and input from PW employees; hire contractors to perform work.
Storm	Dennis/ Gregg /Annie	Develop stormwater program for Conservation Committee involvement	Involve the Conservation Committee with the required actions on the impaired waterways once those permit items have been identified and issued
Storm	Dennis/ Annie	Training of employees	Training program to be developed for FYE2016
Storm	Annie	Update stormwater web page and information	Do every 4 to 6 weeks or when major changes occur such as the new NPDES permit; flyer prepared for Town meeting on the rain garden at the new Park and Ride
Storm	Dennis/summer interns/Annie	Water Quality Testing	Added testing on chlorides to be done this summer.
Storm	Dennis/Loren/ Annie	Fern Hollow erosion and adjacent swales on nearby streets	Erosion still taking place and worse in some areas due to heavy rains in May and July. Spring inspection needed to determine if more work is needed this summer
Storm	Dennis/ Annie	Woodland II pond expansion (Indian brook discharge)	Lamoureux and Dickinson prepared design plans to meet 2002 State guidelines; State approved the project for compliance; project put on the shelf until the Flow Restoration Plan identifies the projects to be undertaken to meet the TMDL
Storm	Aaron	Metal culvert under Susie Wilson Road south of Ewing Place	Investigate and televise to establish condition and recommend plan this summer for correction in a future year.
Storm	Aaron/Annie	TV flooded storm drain areas in Sunset and Londonderry and plan to correct problems	Design plans completed and submitted for review. In-house review occurring now. Will need to determine availability of funds to do

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H	Dennis/ VTRANS – Patty Colburn	Essex STP 5400 (7) VT280/VT2A Susie Wilson Road –Phase 2 (CIRC)	Plans under design by VTRANS; construction to be advertised in calendar year 2017
H	Dennis/ VTRANS – Patty Colburn	Williston –Essex STPG SGNL (46) Intelligent Transportation System Improvements (CIRC)	VTRANS in-house design- design work associated with conceptual plans scheduled to begin in the spring of 2015 – 3 years to complete
H	Dennis/ VTRANS – Patty Colburn	Essex STP 5400(10) VT117/North Williston Road intersection improvements (CIRC)	Current plan is for VTRANS to do in- house. PE funding in FYE17. Using safety funds
H	Dennis/ VTRANS – Patty Colburn	Essex STP 5400(11)VT15/Susie Wilson Road/Kellogg road Corridor and Intersection Improvements (CIRC)	VTRANS plans to issue a contract for the design work. Proposed Funding for FYE16 for Preliminary Engineering. Actual project not likely until FYE21
H	Dennis/ VTRANS – Patty Colburn	Essex STPG 030-1(22) VT15/ Sand Hill Road intersection (CIRC)	Plans under design by VTRANS; construction to be advertised in calendar year 2019; soil borings for signal pole footing design underway and 100% completed.
H	Dennis/Annie/ interns	New 5 – year Highway Management Plan	Completed in the fall of 2013
H	Aaron	Class II paving grant – Allen Martin Drive and small portion of Sand Hill Road (to Margaret St)	Not awarded in FYE2013, 2014 or 2015. Resubmitted in 2016 for \$175,000 in State funds +20% Town match. Will know in late April if grant awarded
H	Loren	Street Sweeping	Spring sweeping started on April 12, 2015
H	Dennis	Road Reconstruction and Paving Projects (see list below)	May be combination of Town forces/contract forces and paving contractor
H	Aaron/ Loren	Crack Sealing	Crack sealing to be done again in the summer of 2015 with locations currently under consideration
H	Aaron	Baker St overlay	Bids to be opened on April 17,2015
H	Aaron	Craftsbury Court overlay	Bids to be opened on April 17,2015
H	Aaron	Allen Martin Parkway (portion) overlay	Bids to be opened on April 17,2015

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H	Aaron	Ridge Road overlay	Bids to be opened on April 17,2015
H	Aaron	Margaret St overlay	Bids to be opened on April 17,2015
H	Aaron	Sand Hill Road (portion from Margaret St to Allen Martin Pkwy) overlay	Bids to be opened on April 17,2015
H	Aaron/Dennis/Rick	Combination of Village Streets to include Corduroy Road, Vale Drive, Countryside Drive, Tamarack Drive, Countryside Drive Entrance, in part or whole list	Bids to be opened on April 17,2015. Bid for Village is based on a price per ton for all roads; Town bid is project specific
H	Dennis	Intersection actuation control at the Circ/Essex Way	Project under design but currently on hold; timing changes appear to have helped and there may not be a need to install these at this location but possibly on Susie Wilson Road.
H	Loren	Striping/ internal and contract work	Price quotes to be requested for striping of Susie Wilson and Kellogg Roads, last years cost was \$10,660 through Scotts Striping
H	Loren	Locate, price and buy gravel (annual)	Ongoing
H	Denis/Chuck Vile	Identify areas where select replanting of trees is needed	To be programmed
H	Dennis/Aaron	Look at replacing Indian Brook culvert with new culvert or concrete box	Requests made to VANR and Corps of Engineers to meet onsite and evaluate need for permits and discuss what changes the permitting agencies may require. The culvert has failed and the replacement may be costly due to size/ location/ state and federal requirements
H	Loren	Locate, price and buy winter sand	Completed for FYE2016
H	Dennis/Loren	Calcium Chloride liquid for summer	Ongoing
H	Loren/Dennis/Chuck Vile	Identify dead trees early that need to be taken down or areas that need	To be determined

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		significant trimming	
H	Aaron/Loren	Contract for sidewalks and curbing	Insufficient funds to do much curbing or sidewalk repair – only most essential portions will be done such as safety hazards. Equipment and forms purchased for Town to do small sections with internal work force; also Town purchased a portable walk-behind concrete grinder to grind down sections that need it rather than replacing sidewalk Areas in most need of repair to be identified in the spring for summer work
H	Dennis/Loren	Blasting contract	None planned at this time for FYE2015 or FY2016
H	Highway crew	March-April clean-up to include; mud season repairs, branch clean-up from winter storms, mailbox complaints, etc	Work underway
H	Highway crew	April-May to include; blast/paint winter equipment; grade roads, winter clean-up on lawns, etc	Work underway
H	Highway crew	May-August grade roads and chloride, stripe, gravel overlays, patch pave, complaints, ditching, hauling of material, etc	Work being planned
H	Loren	Identify areas along with work crew needing special attention this summer – see below	
H	Loren	Replace road and driveway culverts as identified	Work underway
H	Loren	Identify areas along gravel roads that need ditching and establish schedule to accomplish	Work underway— a section of Lost Nation is the first major area being done this summer
H	Aaron/Loren	Subbase rebuild of gravel roads at specific locations	To be programmed

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H	Loren	Pull berms on back roads	Work Underway
H	Loren/Aaron/ Dennis	Identify areas for selective overlays and rebuild	Evaluation underway
H	Loren	Wash bridges	To be done late spring
H	Loren	Patch problem areas on paved roads	Ongoing
H	Dennis/Loren	Mowing - contract for back roads and roadsides in non-built-up area	First cut to be done in late May/ June second to be done in early August
H	Dennis/ Loren	Summer temporary help	Two summer temporary help hired
H	Aaron	Complete Streets documentation for Town vault filing	To be prepared

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L	Consultant	Semi annual landfill testing required as part of closure order	spring testing to be done
L	Dennis/Loren	Landfill cleanup of waste soil area	Ongoing process to keep area free of excess waste material
L	Dennis	Leaf composting operation by CSWD at Essex Landfill	CSWD has abandoned the use of this portion of the site for leaf composting and the Town/CSWD have informed the State that the permit will not be renewed. The leaf debris and other composting material brought to this site some years ago has composted on its own but it may contain some of the same contaminants that created an issue with CSWD compost a few year ago. The Town will over time remove the material and bury it on site to free up the use of this area for miscellaneous material storage.
L	Dennis	New State landfill testing requirements	Review new procedures once they have been adopted. There may be an opportunity to cut back on extent of required testing. Discuss with State
L	Loren	Grass cutting on lower area	Scheduled for Sept time frame

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Paths/ Walks	Dennis/ summer interns	Construction of street pave crossings at designated intersections with enhancement grant monies (old project)	Evaluation done and report prepared for the Selectboard
Paths/ Walks	Aaron	Construction of path along VT2A from Old Colchester Road to Pinecrest Drive	Project low bidder is Don Weston at \$173,250. Project uses State/federal grant with local share at 20%. Work to begin during week of 20 April 2015. Complete by end of summer.
Paths/ Walks -Circ project	Dennis/ VTRANS – Patty Colburn	Colchester –Essex NH 030-1(34)- VT15 multi-use path from Susie Wilson Road to Winooski (CIRC	Design by consultant. Conceptual plans have been developed and the project is getting environmental permits. Construction anticipated in calendar year 2019; public hearing recently held on project at St. Mikes
Paths/ Walks	Aaron/Greg	Towers Road sidewalk from VT128 to Clover Drive	Grant applied for and received from VTRANS. Stantek awarded competitive design contract (bid); total project costs estimated at \$358,000 (design, ROW, construction)
Paths/ Walks	Aaron/Greg	Pinecrest Sidewalk from VT128 to Suffolk Lane	VTRANS grant awarded to Town to do design and construction; grant award awaiting project being placed on the CCRPC TIP; once on TIP, project will be advertised for design services. Grant is for \$286,215 –with an 80%/20% split.
Paths/ Walks	Dennis	Enhancement grant application for path/stormwater/linear park near Rite-Aid/ Senecal Congregate Housing	Not awarded; project is on indefinite hold
Paths/ Walks/ CCRPC UPWP	Dennis/Dana/ Greg/Ally/Robin from Village/ Trails Committee	Scoping study to update Town and Village Comprehensive Bike Path Plan	Study completed and accepted by PC and Selectboard. Key is to find funding for the implementation of projects and determining which projects should be submitted for competitive grants
Park- paths	Dennis/Contract	Park and path area along VT15 in area of congregare housing from near Essex	Hired Bushey and Sons to re-grade, topsoil, seed and mulch for continuation of linear park along

Work List of Spring Summer and Fall of 2015

15 April 2015

B=Buildings; G=General work such as admin/engineering; S/W=sewer/water; Storm=stormwater

H=Highway; L=Landfill; Paths/Walks

NOTE: Darkened cells indicates a change in status from previous reports; yellow highlighted projects denote Village involvement/coordination

		Way to NBT Bank property	VT15 work completed in fall of 2014
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Memorandum

TO: Patrick C. Scheidel, Municipal Manager
Town of Essex Selectboard
Village of Essex Junction Trustees
CC: Rick Jones, Loren Ward, Aaron Martin
FROM: Dennis Lutz, P.E., Town Public Works Director
DATE: 20 April 2015
SUBJECT: Award of Paving Bids



After reviewing paving bid prices for last year by the Village and the Town, it was recommended by the Town Public Works Department that one paving bid be let for both communities. The results may not be totally conclusive but they appear to support the value of this approach.

The Town has historically bid its paving differently than the Village. The Town bid has been organized for a detailed price per ton and quantity on each project with award going to the lowest overall bidder on all projects combined. This is the typical method used for standard construction projects. The low bidder for the Town last year provided an overall average price per ton bid of \$69.33/ton without Sand Hill Road and an overall average price per ton bid of \$65.62/ton with Sand Hill Road included. Sand hill Road was optional depending on whether or not the Town received a VTRANS Class 2 paving grant. We did not.

The Village has historically bid a list of roads with an upper budget limit to be spent and has asked the bidders to provide a cost per ton to accomplish the work. The Village bid price last year was \$72.90 per ton. Depending on the type of roads to be paved, the costs can be very different from project to project and community to community. However, the Town's per ton prices were approximately 5 to 10% below the Village's.

For this year's bid, the Town retained its format but included the Village's paving as an added line item. No pre-bid total amount to be spent was included in the Village's line item -- just a list of roads, the specifications and a total tonnage. One bidder was to be chosen for all the work -- whether or not the price per ton was lower or higher on Village projects than Town projects. It is the only way to insure fair and competitive bidding.

The bid tab is attached and it shows a per ton bid price in the Town and in the Village on all the bid projects (except Allen Martin Drive) at a price of \$66.50 per ton (for the low bidder). The Allen Martin Drive /Sand Hill Road projects are even lower at \$60.40 per ton. At a bid price of \$66.50 per ton for comparable roads, the costs are lower by almost 9% in the Village over last year and by 4% in the Town.

It would be a mistake to suggest that by just adding quantity, we were able to effect better prices. There are just too many other variables, including the price of oil, location of projects and types of project that can impact prices. However, the bid prices are lower for both communities and in my opinion, the joint paving bid should be continued in the future. I believe that the savings are real and that both communities benefitted from this approach.

**Town of Essex, Vermont
2014
Paving Bid**

BASE BID	Description	Quantity	Unit	REJECTED See Note 1 F. W. Whitcomb		REJECTED See Note 2 Pike		ST Paving		LOW BIDDER ECI		S.D. Ireland		Project Bid Average	
				Unit Price	Unit Total	Unit Price	Unit Total	Unit Price	Unit Total	Unit Price	Unit Total	Unit Price	Unit Total	Unit Price	Unit Total
Paving Project 2015-P1 - Baker Street	Type III B.C. Pavement (1.5 Inch Thick)	251	Ton	\$ 80.00	\$ 20,080.00	\$ 81.50	\$ 20,456.50	\$ 71.00	\$ 17,821.00	\$ 66.50	\$ 16,691.50	\$ 82.10	\$ 20,607.10	\$ 76.22	\$ 19,131.22
	1.0-Foot Grass Shoulder Restoration	500	LF	\$ 2.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 0.50	\$ 250.00	\$ 1.60	\$ 800.00	\$ 1.50	\$ 750.00	\$ 1.50	\$ 750.00	\$ 1.42	\$ 710.00
	1.0-Foot Gravel Shoulder	1500	LF	\$ 1.25	\$ 1,875.00	\$ 0.50	\$ 750.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1.50	\$ 2,250.00	\$ 1.05	\$ 1,575.00
	Total				\$ 22,955.00		\$ 21,456.50		\$ 20,121.00		\$ 18,941.50		\$ 23,607.10		\$ 21,416.22
Paving Project 2015-P2 - Craftsbury Court	Type III B.C. Pavement (1.5 Inch Thick)	235	Ton	\$ 81.00	\$ 19,035.00	No Price		\$ 71.00	\$ 16,685.00	\$ 66.50	\$ 15,627.50	\$ 82.10	\$ 19,293.50	\$ 76.42	\$ 17,958.70
	Total				\$ 19,035.00		\$ 19,152.50		\$ 16,685.00		\$ 15,627.50		\$ 19,293.50		\$ 17,958.70
Paving Project 2015-P3 -Allen Martin Parkway	Type III B.C. Pavement (1.5 Inch Thick)	235	Ton	\$ 80.00	\$ 18,800.00	No Price		\$ 71.00	\$ 16,685.00	\$ 66.50	\$ 15,627.50	\$ 82.10	\$ 19,293.50	\$ 76.22	\$ 17,911.70
	1.0-Foot Gravel Shoulder	1400	LF	\$ 2.00	\$ 2,800.00	No Price		\$ 1.00	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 1.50	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 1.20	\$ 1,680.00
	Total				\$ 20,200.00		\$ 19,852.50		\$ 18,085.00		\$ 17,027.50		\$ 21,393.50		\$ 19,591.70
Paving Project 2015-P4 - Ridge Road	Type III B.C. Pavement (1.5 Inch Thick)	293	Ton	\$ 79.00	\$ 23,147.00	No Price		\$ 71.00	\$ 20,803.00	\$ 66.50	\$ 19,484.50	\$ 82.10	\$ 24,055.30	\$ 76.02	\$ 22,273.86
	1.0-Foot Grass Shoulder Restoration	1000	LF	\$ 2.00	\$ 2,000.00	No Price		\$ 1.60	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1.50	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1.50	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1.42	\$ 1,420.00
	Total				\$ 25,147.00		\$ 24,379.50		\$ 22,403.00		\$ 20,984.50		\$ 25,555.30		\$ 23,693.86
Paving Project 2015-P5 - Margaret Stret	Type III B.C. Pavement (2.0 Inch Thick)	810	Ton	\$ 72.00	\$ 58,320.00	\$ 81.50	\$ 66,015.00	\$ 71.00	\$ 57,510.00	\$ 66.50	\$ 53,865.00	\$ 72.10	\$ 58,401.00	\$ 72.62	\$ 58,822.20
	Cold Planing (1.5 Inch Depth)	6500	SY	\$ 1.35	\$ 8,775.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 1.75	\$ 11,375.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 1.82	\$ 11,830.00
	Total				\$ 67,095.00		\$ 79,015.00		\$ 68,885.00		\$ 66,865.00		\$ 71,401.00		\$ 70,652.20
Paving Project 2015-P6 - Allen Martin Drive	Type III B.C. Pavement (2.0 Inch Thick)	1911	Ton	\$ 70.00	\$ 133,770.00	\$ 63.15	\$ 120,698.76	\$ 69.70	\$ 133,196.70	\$ 60.40	\$ 115,424.40	\$ 69.70	\$ 133,196.70	\$ 66.59	\$ 127,253.49
	Durable 4 Inch Yellow Line, Type I Tape	4500	LF	\$ 7.25	\$ 32,625.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 9.00	\$ 40,500.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 3.20	\$ 14,400.00	\$ 5.09	\$ 22,905.00
	Corporate Drive Intersection Crosswalk	1	LS	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 14,400.00	\$ 14,400.00
	1.0-Foot Gravel Shoulder	9000	LF	\$ 0.75	\$ 6,750.00	\$ 0.50	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 0.75	\$ 6,750.00	\$ 1.50	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 0.90	\$ 8,100.00
	Traffic Control	1	LS	\$ 4,750.00	\$ 4,750.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 3,390.00	\$ 3,390.00
	Total				\$ 194,395.00		\$ 148,198.76		\$ 204,696.70		\$ 147,874.40		\$ 185,096.70		\$ 176,048.49
Paving Project 2015-P7 - Sand Hill Road	Type III B.C. Pavement (2.0 Inch Thick)	457	Ton	\$ 70.00	\$ 31,990.00	\$ 67.01	\$ 30,823.57	\$ 69.70	\$ 31,852.90	\$ 60.40	\$ 27,602.80	\$ 74.80	\$ 34,183.60	\$ 68.38	\$ 31,250.57
	Durable 4 Inch Yellow Line, Type I Tape	950	LF	\$ 7.25	\$ 6,887.50	\$ 3.00	\$ 2,850.00	\$ 9.00	\$ 8,550.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 2,850.00	\$ 3.20	\$ 3,040.00	\$ 5.09	\$ 4,835.50
	Corporate Drive Intersection Crosswalk	1	LS	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 14,400.00	\$ 14,400.00
	1.0-Foot Gravel Shoulder	1900	LF	\$ 1.50	\$ 2,850.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 0.75	\$ 1,425.00	\$ 1.50	\$ 2,850.00	\$ 1.15	\$ 2,185.00
	Traffic Control	1	LS	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,570.00	\$ 2,570.00
	Total				\$ 61,227.50		\$ 44,123.57		\$ 64,302.90		\$ 43,477.80		\$ 63,073.60		\$ 55,241.07
Paving Project 2015-P8 - Village of Essex Jct.	Corduoy Road	724	Ton												
	Vale Drive	362	Ton												
	Countryside Drive	592	Ton												
	Tamarack Drive	576	Ton												
	Countryside Drive Entrance	274	Ton												
	Total	2529	Ton	\$ 74.00	\$ 187,146.00	\$ 66.90	\$ 169,190.10	\$ 71.00	\$ 179,559.00	\$ 66.50	\$ 168,178.50	\$ 69.70	\$ 176,271.30	\$ 69.62	\$ 176,068.98
TOTAL BASE BID					\$ 597,200.50		\$ 525,368.43		\$ 594,737.60		\$ 498,976.70		\$ 585,692.00		\$ 560,671.22

Actual \$ 598,600.50 Actual \$ 525,349.32

Avg. Unit Price for Pavement \$ 72.76 Per Ton

Note 1. The 1.0-Foot wide gravel shoulder unit total for 2015-P3 was not added correctly, the actual total is \$2,800.00, and the total for this project was not added correctly. The actual Total Base Bid is \$598,600.50

Note 2. The Unit Price for the individual line items for projects 2015-P2, 2015-P3, 2015-P3 was not provide, just a total price. Furthermore, the pavement unit total for 2015-P6 was not added correctly, the actual total is \$120,679.65, for a Total Base Bid of \$525,349.32



Patrick Scheidel
Municipal Manager
PatS@essexjunction.org

2 Lincoln Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
www.essexjunction.org

Office: (802) 878-6944
Fax: (802) 878-6946

MEMORANDUM

TO: Village Trustees
FROM: Pat Scheidel, Municipal Manager *PCS*
DATE: May 4, 2015
SUBJECT: Amendment to Motor Vehicle Ordinance

Issue

The issue is whether or not the Trustees amend the Motor Vehicle Ordinance to eliminate the one-way section of Park Terrace.

Discussion

The request was brought to us by a citizen on School Street (see letter from Linda McKenna.) The Village Attorney recommended amending the ordinance for the duration of the construction at 4 Pearl Street (see email.) This means the ordinance would have to be amended again after the building is completed.

An amendment to the Municipal Code takes 60 days to be effective, which would be July 3, 2015 (see amendment.)

Cost

There is no cost associated with this issue.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Trustees approve the amendment to Chapter 8, Section 830(g) in the Essex Junction Municipal Code.

**NOTICE OF AMENDMENT TO THE
ESSEX JUNCTION MUNICIPAL CODE**

In accordance with V.S.A. Title 24, Sec. 1972, notice is hereby given to the residents and those interested in lands in the Village of Essex Junction that on May 4, 2015 the Trustees of the Village adopted the following amendments to the Municipal Code. (Text to be deleted is in brackets [], new text is underlined.)

Delete Section 830(g) of Chapter 8. Motor Vehicle Regulation:

~~[(g) Operation of any type of vehicle, motorcycle, or other form of common conveyance in an easterly direction on **Park Terrace** from School Street to the westerly driveway of the Chittenden Bank is prohibited. (adopted 4/10/90)]~~

This ordinance shall become effective on the 3rd day of July 2015, unless 5% of the qualified voters of the Village, by written petition filed with the Village Clerk no later than June 18, 2015, request that the voters of the Village disapprove the amendment at a duly warned annual meeting or special meeting.

Dated at Essex Junction, Vermont, the 4th day of May, 2015.

Susan McNamara-Hill
Village Clerk

Questions about this amendment may be addressed to the Village Manager, 2 Lincoln Street, Essex Junction, VT, or by calling 802-878-6944 or email admin@essexjunction.org.

Patty Benoit

Subject: Question about suspending motor vehicle ordinance

Patty:

The best way to accomplish the goal would be to adopt an amendment to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance suspending section 830(g) for the duration of the construction. After the need for suspension is over, adopting another amendment removing the suspension makes sense as well.

A personal waiver is not recommended.

I hope this answers the question.

Dave

David A. Barra, Esq.

Law Offices of David A. Barra, PLC
PO Box 123, 26 Railroad Avenue
Essex Junction, VT 05453-0123
E-mail: dbarra@barralaw.com

Phone: [802-879-8102](tel:802-879-8102)

Fax: [802-879-0408](tel:802-879-0408)

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April 7, 2015

Linda McKenna
9 School Street
Essex Junction, Vermont 05452

RECEIVED

APR 13 2015

Village of Essex Junction

Mr. Scheidel,

We met a few weeks ago, and you thoughtfully listened to the issues that I have been facing in my home and at this location. I won't repeat those issues here, but I have some new developments.

1. Since meeting with you, my exterior sewer pipe broke, requiring complete excavation and replacement. It feeds from the house to the street on Park Terrace. I am aware that the age of the pipe was a factor, but I am also sure that the heavy equipment that moved over it and parked on it during the 3 months in the fall and for the last month plus during current construction at 5 corners were factors. The heavy destruction of the bank including jack hammering out the vaults also caused further damage to my cellar and the sewer. The evidence I have is that the repair occurred in two stages, both including camera footage inside the pipe. The first stage of the repair depicted a functioning attachment to the main. The second stage, a week later, depicted complete severance of my pipe from the main. The cost of that repair was \$20,000.
2. For the last few weeks, we have had many large and heavy construction vehicles traveling up Park Terrace from the construction site. I know that the weight limit of the road is not built for them. (That was also a huge factor in the 3 months of water and sewer replacement on School Street in the fall as the huge caterpillar and delivery vehicles also used Park Terrace daily.) There have also been several times when construction vehicles have traveled the wrong way on Park Terrace.
3. I am having an increasingly difficult time getting to my home. I am not allowed to enter my (Park Terrace) driveway from School Street because it is one way. However, I have also been having trouble entering from the foot of Park Terrace as cement trucks and other large vehicles are often exiting from Park Terrace onto 2A, and there is no room to enter the street as a

second vehicle. I have spoken to the police about this and they referred me to you for a possible solution. Would it be possible for me to have a "residence only" waiver for the duration of the construction which would allow me to enter Park Terrace from School Street just to my driveway? I think this situation only effects three households.

I can be reached at mckenna.linda@gmail.com and 802-879-4307. I would appreciate meeting with you again to talk about these issues unless you think that I should take them up elsewhere. If that is the case, please inform me as to where.

Respectfully,

Linda McKenna

agency or company shall be prima facie proof that such person, rental agency or company was in control of the automobile at the time of such notice.

- (c) It shall be sufficient notice of violation for a law enforcement officer to leave written notice on an official form securely on the vehicle indicating the violation, the time and date of the violation, the location of the violation, and the registration number of the vehicle, and such other information as seems appropriate.
- (d) "Parking," for these purposes, shall mean leaving a vehicle at rest with or without an operator in attendance unless otherwise provided.
- (e) The Public Works Department, the Fire Department of the Village of Essex Junction, or any lawful police official of the State of Vermont, are hereby authorized to remove and tow away, or have removed and towed away, by commercial towing service, any vehicle illegally parked in any place where such parked vehicle violates this chapter, creates or constitutes a public nuisance, creates or constitutes a traffic hazard, blocks the use of fire hydrants, obstructs or may obstruct the movement of emergency vehicles, or interferes with the free flow of traffic, or has three or more unpaid violations. In addition to towing, a police officer may issue a ticket in accordance with Section g.
- (f) A vehicle so towed away to storage under the provisions of this chapter may be redeemed by the owner of the vehicle upon the payment of all towing charges, storage charges, or other expenses incurred in the moving of the vehicle, except that the charge of towing each vehicle shall not exceed an amount as established by the Village Manager. The operator of the commercial towing service may hold such vehicle until such charges have been paid. In addition, any vehicle towed due to three or more outstanding violations shall be required to pay all fines prior to their vehicles being released to them by the commercial towing service.
- (g) Any person who violates the provisions of this chapter may be ticketed for such offense by any lawful police official of the state of Vermont as listed below:
 - Twenty-five dollars per violation
- (h) The Village may choose to have a vehicle towed to a location other than a commercial storage facility and may choose to bear the cost of such towing (i.e. to clear streets for special events).
- (i) The provisions of this chapter are declared to be separable in that any provision declared to be invalid shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions.

SECTION 830. ONE WAY STREETS:

- (a) Operation of any type of vehicle, motorcycle, or other form of common conveyance in an easterly direction on the road between **Lincoln Street** and **Main Street** in front of Banknorth shall be prohibited.
- (b) Operation of any type of vehicle, motorcycle, or other form of common conveyance in an easterly direction on **River Street** shall be prohibited between the hours of 3:00 P.M. and 5:30 P.M. and 7:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. At all other times, two-way traffic is authorized. (Amended 1/9/01)
- (c) Operation of any type of vehicle, motorcycle, or other form of common conveyance in a southerly direction on **Summit Street** is hereby prohibited.
- (d) Operation of any type of vehicle, motorcycle, or other form of common conveyance in a westerly direction on **Prospect Street** between Lincoln and Summit Streets is hereby prohibited.
- (e) Operation of any type of vehicle, motorcycle, or other form of common conveyance in a northerly direction on **School Street**, north of Pearl Street between Pearl Street and

- Lincoln Terrace, is hereby prohibited.
- (f) Operation of any type of vehicle, motorcycle, or other form of common conveyance in an easterly direction on **Lincoln Place** between Railroad Street and Lincoln Street is hereby prohibited. (amended 3/14/06)
 - (g) Operation of any type of vehicle, motorcycle, or other form of common conveyance in an easterly direction on **Park Terrace** from School Street to the westerly driveway of the Chittenden Bank is prohibited. (adopted 4/10/90)
 - (h) Operation of any type of vehicle, motorcycle, or other form of common conveyance in a westerly direction on **Mill Street** is hereby prohibited. (adopted Nov. 24, 1993)
 - (i) Operation of any type of vehicle, motorcycle or other form of common conveyance in a southerly direction on **Ivy Lane between Main Street and Central Street** is hereby prohibited. (Adopted on Nov. 9, 1993, amended 6/24/03)

On the streets of Essex Junction designated as one way streets and on those streets where, by appropriate pavement or street markings, more than one lane of traffic is designated in the same direction, it shall become lawful to overtake and pass said vehicle proceeding in the same direction on either side thereof. The operator of any such vehicle, upon any such street shall, before turning his vehicle from one traffic lane into another traffic lane, indicate by hand signal or directional light, his intentions so to do, and shall turn into the other lane only after using due care and caution to avoid accidents. When traffic lanes are so marked to indicate their use for a right turn only, left turn only, through traffic only, or a combination of the above of same, no person shall operate a vehicle except in the direction so indicated by such markings. Proper notice on the streets as indicated above shall be accomplished so that the operator of any vehicle, motorcycle, or other form of common conveyance, may be aware of the provisions of this Ordinance.

SECTION 835: BICYCLE PATH

No motorized vehicle of any type shall operate on any bicycle lane or path, trail or sidewalk or municipal open space, except for a vehicle entering or exiting a driveway on Main Street between its intersection with Brickyard Road and Fairview Drive (with the understanding that motorists shall yield to pedestrians or bicyclists using the bike path). (Amended 11/14/00, 10/23/01 & 6/10/03)

SECTION 840: PROHIBITED RIGHT-HAND TURNS

- (a) No Vehicle of any type, motorcycle or other form of common conveyance shall make a right-hand turn at any time at the following locations:
 - (1) the stop bar at the **Five Corners** from **Main Street** onto **Lincoln Street**. (adopted June 22, 1993).
 - (2) From **River Street** onto **Stanton Drive**.
- (b) No Vehicle of any type, motorcycle or other form of common conveyance shall make a right hand turn at times when an illuminated sign indicating **NO TURN ON RED** is displayed to drivers at the following locations:
 - (1) from **Pearl Street** onto **Park Street** (at the Five Corners Intersection)
 - (2) from **Park Street** onto **Maple Street** (at the Five Corners Intersection)
 - (3) from **Maple Street** onto **Main Street** (at the Five Corners Intersection)
 - (4) from **Lincoln Street** onto **Pearl Street** (at the Five Corners Intersection)
 - (5) from **South Summit Street** onto **Pearl Street**
 - (6) from **Pearl Street** onto **South Summit Street**

MEMORANDUM

To: Town of Essex Selectboard, Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees, Orton Family Foundation

Re: August Update on the Future of Voting in Essex (Now called Essex Governance Group)

Date: August 27, 2014

1. Heart and Soul of Essex (H&S) presented a proposal for a community wide conversation about the future of voting in Essex on July 14, 2014. The proposal was accepted by a vote of 5-0. H&S hired Susan Clark and Sue McCormack to facilitate the process.
2. H&S sent a draft letter of agreement to Pat Scheidel on July 30th, 2014. The letter was sent to the Town attorney for review but has not been returned and signed. Funds (\$5,000) have not been released from the Town. H&S has received \$5,000 from the Orton Family Foundation for this process.
3. The first meeting was held on August 20th, 2014. We had 9 members of the Budget to Ballot group, 4 members of H&S and 7 interested community members and elected officials. We agreed that we would:
 - a. Convene a diverse steering committee
 - b. Design the engagement
 - c. Hold public conversation(s)
 - d. Design a survey for the community
 - e. Synthesize public input (key themes, specific action ideas)
 - f. Create recommendations
 - g. Keep community and municipalities informed
4. We hope this will lead to
 - a. More creativity and civic leadership
 - b. More knowledge (more informed voters/more informed leaders)
 - c. More engagement and voting opportunities
 - d. More collaboration and efficiency/simplicity
5. The second meeting was held on August 28th, 2014. There were 16 people in attendance. The goal was to form a robust steering committee and agree to the proposed project content and timeline.
6. The agreed upon **PURPOSE** is: To engage people in a conversation about ways Essex can improve civic engagement and governance.
7. The Next Steps are to activate work groups (Communications/Outreach, Participation recruitment, Meeting logistics, research to inform discussion guide, and follow-up (data synthesis, recommendations etc.)
8. The next meeting is scheduled for September 15th, 2014.

Thank you for your support.

Respectfully submitted by Liz Subin

August 27, 2014



To: Town of Essex Selectboard, Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees, Orton Family Foundation

Re: Update on the Future of Voting in Essex (Now called Essex Governance Group)

Date: October 15, 2014

1. The Essex Governance Group (EGG) has been meeting regularly since the last update submitted on 9.27.14.
2. The EGG is a group of local leaders and residents working to engage Essex citizens in a conversation about ways we can continue to improve civic engagement and governance.
3. We have learned that:
 - Under 2 % of our community attended town/village meeting last year
 - Under 14 % of registered voters voted in the last local elections
 - In a typical year, in order to participate in every Local, State and National vote, an Essex Town resident needs to vote 4 different times, a Village resident 5 times.
 - Our elected officials, board and commission members, and town meeting participants, do not reflect the growing ethnic diversity of our community.
4. A SURVEY is available on-line that asks questions about how people engage in their community and what barriers exist that keep people from participating. Close to 220 people have responded.
5. A community forum will take place from noon to 4 p.m. on **Saturday, Nov 8th at the EHS cafeteria** to talk with Essex residents and local leaders about how we vote in Essex - now and in the future
6. We have activated work groups (Communications/Outreach & Participation recruitment, Meeting logistics, research to inform discussion guide, and follow-up (data synthesis, recommendations etc.) and each group is meeting outside the regular EGG meetings.
7. A press release has been sent to the Essex Reporter with information about the project and ways to take the survey. Flyers and posters are being distributed around the Town outside and inside the village with information about the forum.

Thank you for your support.

Respectfully submitted by Liz Subin