1. **CALL TO ORDER** [7:00 PM]

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
   a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
   a. Update on website revisions—Rob Paluba & Greg Duggan
   b. Follow-up discussion from Strategic Advance
   c. Creation of “why merge” elevator speech
   d. Update from Governance Subcommittee
   e. Approve web address for merger website
   f. Determine role and authority of Governance Subcommittee as steering committee for public outreach
   g. Appoint alternates to Governance Subcommittee
   h. Approval of column about consolidation

6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
   a. Approval of minutes: June 3, 2019

7. **READING FILE**
   a. Board Member Comments
   b. Memo from Annie Costandi and Chelsea Mandigo re: Awarded Projects under the CCRPC FY20 Unified Planning Work Program
   c. Email from Liz Gamache re: thoughts on questions posed by George Tyler
   d. Letter from Adam Basford re: Update Concerning Announcement of Planned Action

8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
   a. An executive session is not anticipated

9. **ADJOURN**

Members of the public are encouraged to speak during the Public to Be Heard agenda item, during a Public Hearing, or, when recognized by the Chair or President, during consideration of a specific agenda item. The public will not be permitted to participate when a motion is being discussed except when specifically requested by the Chair or President. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings, like all programs and activities of the Village of Essex Junction and the Town of Essex, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Unified Manager’s office at 878-1341.

Certification: 06/21/2019
Memorandum
To: Trustees; Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager
Cc: Staff Communications Committee
From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Rob Paluba, IT Director
Re: Update on website revisions
Date: June 21, 2019

Issue
The issue is informing the boards about progress on municipal website revisions and sharing the results of a resident survey about the Town and Village websites.

Discussion
The IT Department continues to work with CivicPlus on creating a new Town website. A mock-up of the website can be viewed at http://vt-essex.civicplus.com/ (please note: the web address will change when the website goes live; the website is not functional, and is available at this point for the purpose of reviewing design).

Rob Paluba will present the draft website at the joint board meeting for review and comment from board members.

A survey made available to residents in May and early June garnered 81 responses. The results of the survey are attached. Staff will use the feedback as progress continues with building the new website.

Cost
n/a

Recommendation
This memo is for informational and discussion purposes.
Essex & Essex Junction website survey
May & June 2019

Q1

Would you like to see a redesigned website for the Village of Essex Junction? (www.essexjunction.org)

Answered: 80  Skipped: 1

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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<td>21.25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>41.25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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Would you like to see a redesigned website for the Town of Essex? (www.essex.org)

Answered: 80   Skipped: 1

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<thead>
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<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<td>57.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>26.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Would you prefer to have A) one home page for the entire Essex community, from which you can then access Town, Village, and unified municipal government functions; or B) separate websites for the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction municipalities?

Answered: 81  Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One home page</td>
<td>54 (66.67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction websites</td>
<td>27 (33.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4 – Other Responses:

Showing 23 responses
Some kind of "where to go for what" glossary - I never know if things are town or village responsibility
5/31/2019 9:57 PM
Updated links to all of the above. Quite often town websites are updated for a period of time and not for a long time after. A succession plan must be in place and the assignment of these tasks must be laid out to the person in charge. Thanks!

5/30/2019 8:17 PM

Zoning and other related maps with overlays

5/30/2019 8:09 PM

Links to other town features, such as the Libraries, parks and rec, schools, post offices, etc. as well as a Chamber of Commerce (do we even have one??) which would have local businesses and their sites. Our area has so much to offer... its such a shame to not know all that is going on and miss out.

5/30/2019 7:54 PM

It may seem overly particular, but the Town's website currently uses opaque URLs; I would like to strongly advocate for meaningful URLs. For example, the Village's URL for ordinances and regulations is https://www.essexjunction.org/codes/municipal-code/. The Town's URL for ordinances and regulations is https://www.essex.org/index.asp?SEC=EB31A508-77F8-4D9B-92A3-92BA017F367F&type=B_BASIC. The latter just doesn't have a semantic connection (in any way!) to what it leads to, while the former pretty much tells you exactly what you'll be getting.

5/30/2019 6:31 PM

(Town site - not a resident nor have a vote in the Jct/8-2.) Urls for the site pages that make sense and are easier to share/find/bookmark. A search that works better. No PDFs so that everything can be searched. An archive to find older projects & docs/maps. A site structure that makes sense instead of links to more pages that contain links, then contain more links. A homepage like Jct where current events are front/center & easy to see. Contact info where our reps actually reply to us. They more often do not seem to respond to emails, maybe thinking another rep has replied when they haven't, so a clear system to know that our messages & input is heard. No listings to contact PC, so if it's only SBoard emails listed, when residents email, residents should at least get a 'received'. (Staff replies every time, which is great!) Thank you!

5/30/2019 11:07 AM

1) A page of contacts for various issues / concerns/ questions. 2) List of town officials with job descriptions and contact info 3) Parks info and trail maps 4) Library pages with upcoming events 5) local businesses listings

5/17/2019 4:48 PM

I really would just like updates on committee meeting minutes, board anything that is involving any public issues, and actual responsiveness from board when you email them? Some are great others will literally ignore you in a massive group email about actual issues they're discussing. So I guess ANY attention to communications duties of public officials would be great. But yeah minutes. And online offerings instead of attached PDFs for everything. Which I think isn't totally legal. Also videos or live-streams of meetings with comment area for questioning the board. The comment idea seems dicey but in a live setting it's now very normal so why aren't we there or looking at how to be there?

5/8/2019 7:44 PM

Office hours on front page

5/7/2019 9:20 PM

Drop down list from main tabs for Essex Junction.

5/6/2019 6:30 PM

Online property cards please!

5/3/2019 1:48 PM

more interaction and information
5/3/2019 8:27 AM

Easy-to-access information on board meetings, minutes, and activities of each department. Also, a repository of documents, studies, and information about the town.

5/3/2019 8:03 AM

link to the Design FFve Corners slideshow

5/2/2019 10:36 PM

minutes and meeting agenda/staff report are VERY important (for me) to have on the website.

5/2/2019 8:56 PM

1. Please fix the parks and rec sign up. I recently had to renew my Indian Brook pass and that site is AWFUL to use and so obviously outdated that I suspect there are security vulnerabilities. 2. One thing I use your site for is to find departmental phone numbers and business hours. It is currently easy to find this info. Please keep this on the site and easily available.

5/2/2019 8:08 PM

Links to various departments

5/2/2019 7:36 PM

Contact Information (phone and email) for all offices/positions with people's name that is easy to find

5/2/2019 6:54 PM

Selectboard meeting minutes

5/2/2019 6:49 PM

All policy's and documents dated.

5/2/2019 6:09 PM

Maps, property transfers

5/2/2019 5:57 PM

Social media presence must be added for both communities. The ability for business owners to find and fill out forms online and pay fees online should be added. This capacity has been addressed by Burlington and Rutland's "Start a Business in a Day".

5/2/2019 4:57 PM

And easy way to find who to contact about different issues.

5/2/2019 4:44 PM

Please provide any additional comments the Town and Village should consider when developing a new website(s).

Answered: 48  Skipped: 36

Showing 46 responses

It's really hard to find information on either of the two websites. They don't seem frequently updated.

6/4/2019 1:25 PM
Make the nav simpler. It's hard to find things or departments on the current sites.
6/1/2019 9:23 AM

The Junction website is pretty nice. The town website is less helpful. Especially recreation lacks a lot of links and really, without the brochures, signing up for some activities is impossible. At least I haven't figure it out yet.
5/31/2019 9:57 PM

one page would be great!
5/31/2019 6:42 PM

N/a
5/31/2019 9:16 AM

Simple design, with more features.
5/31/2019 6:11 AM

Incorporating things that bind the communities, and bring people closer.
5/30/2019 8:19 PM

A succession plan - who will be in charge of it? What happens if that person leaves? How many people will have access to changes? Who is in charge when it is a weekend, or evening and inquiries come in? How often will the webpage be updated?
5/30/2019 8:17 PM

New site should be design mobile first. I noticed you guys have google analytics (GA) installed on your site. You prob can check the data on this. Also GA should give you guys a wealth of info to go off of. My contact info is below, but feel free to reach out to me rebelaznboy@gmail.com as I am a Web Developer and do this as a career. Would love to help in any capacity. Thanks.
5/30/2019 8:08 PM

Can you do things like apply for town park / parking permits as well as applications for scholarships or things like purchasing classes or tickets for events? Using the magazines sent home are great to look at, but inconvenient to use when making payments... it’d be nice to pay for things and have a way to print out our Great Escape tickets or class / camp registration online.
5/30/2019 7:54 PM

Easier layout for users, online forms
5/30/2019 7:43 PM

X
5/30/2019 7:36 PM

Mobile friendly.
5/30/2019 6:56 PM

The question #3 above was answered as "one combined website" in hopes that one server and one software platform can unify the design and behavior of the two websites, but I want to be transparent that for the most part, I would expect that a combined website would have two copies of just about everything. For instance, I would still want two pages (or two sections on one page) for the ordinances and regulations, rather than trying to interleave them in some way.
5/30/2019 6:31 PM

Look up the directs or tips for solid web sites, i.e. nothing deeper than three clicks in. The Town Library should have its own site.
5/30/2019 11:00 AM
keep it simple
5/29/2019 2:20 PM

keep it simple organize by category for ease of selection
5/28/2019 2:39 PM

Consider different appearance re: computer, tablet, smartphone
5/25/2019 9:24 AM

It would be nice to see Essex Free library have a page of it's own similar to Brownell’s
5/17/2019 4:48 PM

Links to the other community, from each other.
5/11/2019 6:04 PM

An easy to find link with the electronic records searchable database to find names linked to addresses. I find it on occasion, then have trouble locating it all over again.
5/10/2019 6:02 AM

I actually built a sample site for Essex that sought to improve community engagement when I was in grad school. If anyone wants to look at the ideas I can send them the scope outline and design sheet, etc. I called it “the Junc” but I guess this might be controversial - I was playing also with the idea of a juncture of two communities. But it did have a very train/industrial look that I’m not sure would jive. But for the class I did have to do a content outline - and it was from a citizen who wanted easier engagement’s standpoint. My email
5/8/2019 7:44 PM

Until such time that the municipalities are combined, it is easier to have the separate websites.
5/7/2019 9:20 PM

Suggest that the design and content of the website be segmented into serving, first, the residents of the unified municipality, conscious that the resident base brings with it two potentially significant orientations to the unified entity whether their history has been village or out-of-village based, and two, to entice and serve the information needs of prospective residents and businesses that have been identified by the Community and Economic Development commissions as prime prospect for the desirable rational growth of the unified Essex municipality.
5/6/2019 7:13 PM

I appreciate there being some info about parks. It would be way more helpful, though, if there were more detail about the accessibility features of the parks. What arts are wheelchair accessible? What parts, if any, are at least partially fenced in (helpful for planning with multiple kids, or kids who tend to bolt and may not have good traffic/road/parking lot safety skills?)? Where are any bodies of water, and is there a fence or any type of barrier?
5/3/2019 2:25 PM

There is currently too much hunting to get to the Essex Free Library. The library should be able to have its own web page. I should not have to go to the town web site to access the library. It is very cumbersome. Glad you are going to fix it.
5/3/2019 12:12 PM

Make the website the one-stop shop for anyone looking for info about the Town and Village, and make sure people know that’s where to look.
5/3/2019 8:03 AM

It is easy to use the way it is. Why change it if it isn't broken.
keep updated and working smoothly, use smart dates and fill-ins
5/2/2019 10:36 PM

Make it easy to follow and find things.
5/2/2019 9:00 PM

needs to NOT have a lot of bells and whistles - ie easy to view with a low bandwidth provider. IE nothing like the Burlington Free Press website which nearly takes down our computer if we try to view it.
5/2/2019 8:56 PM

For question #3 you forgot to include the option of "I don't care" honestly if both sites were good I'm not sure it would matter to me if there is one or two. One thing that is important to me is, if you are going to invest in rebuilding, Is to please have a plan for properly maintaining and improving the site. Don't build it, ignore it, and then rebuild it when it becomes bad due to neglect. Websites need a lot of care to remain relevant, useful, and secure.
5/2/2019 8:08 PM

There should be as much similarity between the two sections (Town and Village) as possible. Ease of navigation, user experience, and utility will hopefully also be top considerations.
5/2/2019 7:38 PM

Revamp the library and parks websites please. They are very fluffy and unappealing/ hard to find information.
5/2/2019 7:36 PM

The Village website is more updated and user friendly. The Town site looks like a throwback to the 90s and I sometimes struggle to find what I want.
5/2/2019 7:32 PM

It should be mobile friendly
5/2/2019 6:54 PM

Until we merge leave it separate, tax inequality divides us and should be carried as a theme throughout the two jurisdictions. Unite pages when it’s more than a facade, otherwise you’re hiding our ugly truth.
5/2/2019 6:49 PM

easy less clicking on links to open meeting agendas and minutes
5/2/2019 6:46 PM

Add organizational information . Add budget info. Like the past agenda, meeting minutes, format. Add FOIA information. Update how to appeal information .
5/2/2019 6:09 PM

Links to relevant websites
5/2/2019 5:57 PM

would like ease of use and accessibility to be in mind when redesigning sites
5/2/2019 5:55 PM

I think the Town Rec department needs a better website like the Village. It is hard to navigate and find items.
5/2/2019 5:22 PM

Keep our web sites separate unless it is eventually voted to merge. Which I hope never happens!
One hub makes sense. Seem to be the most efficient method and effective way to consistently communicate to the public given all that is now shared, unified, and merged.

This is a complex problem - to build a website that allows for transition from two distinct communities to one community, while preserving identities in the interim.

Please keep it a clear and clean design! Nothing worse than all bells and whistles that don't work on different platforms/browsers.
How old are you?

Answered: 81  Skipped: 0

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<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
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<td>3.70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>12.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
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<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>12.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>25.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>15.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Would you be interested in serving on a focus group for a new website(s)? If so, please provide the following information:

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<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address 2</td>
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<td>State/Province</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Number</td>
<td>88.46%</td>
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If you are interested in serving on a focus group, please let us know a little bit about you (check all that apply).

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<tr>
<td>Essex resident (Village or Town outside the Village)</td>
<td>96.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex business owner (Village or Town outside the Village)</td>
<td>3.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work in Essex</td>
<td>11.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work in Essex but live elsewhere</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospective Essex resident (Village or Town outside the Village)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospective business owner (Village or Town outside the Village)</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>Responses</td>
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Total Respondents: 26
If you would like to be entered into a drawing for a $25 gift card, please provide the following information:

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<td>Address 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>City/Town</td>
<td>95.65%</td>
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<td>State/Province</td>
<td>95.65%</td>
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<td>ZIP/Postal Code</td>
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<td>Country</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email Address</td>
<td>93.43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone Number</td>
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</table>
Memorandum
To: Trustees; Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager
Cc: Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager
From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager
Re: Follow-up discussion from Strategic Advance
Date: June 21, 2019

Issue
The issue is for the boards to have any follow-up discussion from the June 22 Strategic Advance work session.

Discussion
The boards may wish to discuss the Strategic Advance work session.

Cost
n/a

Recommendation
This memo is for informational and discussion purposes.
Memorandum
To: Trustees; Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager
Cc: Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager
From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager
Re: Creating a “why merge” elevator speech
Date: June 21, 2019

Issue
The issue is whether the boards want to task with Governance Subcommittee with creating a “why merge” elevator speech.

Discussion
The idea has come up that following the Strategic Advance work session, the boards may want to develop talking points for why they want to have a community-wide vote in November 2020 in whether or not to merge the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction – in essence, an elevator speech.

Rather than having the full boards create such a speech, the Governance Subcommittee could draft the talking points for approval by the full boards.

Cost
n/a

Recommendation
It is recommended that the Trustees/Selectboard authorize the Governance Subcommittee to draft a “why merge” elevator speech, for final approval by both boards.
Memorandum
To: Trustees; Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager
From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager
Re: Update from Governance Subcommittee
Date: June 21, 2019

Issue
The issue is providing the Trustees and Selectboard with an update from the Governance Subcommittee.

Discussion
The Governance Subcommittee has met three times since the last joint Trustee and Selectboard meeting, and can provide an update to the full boards. Much of the Governance Subcommittee work has been working with market research firm KSV to plan a public engagement effort, with surveys and focus groups.

A schedule of the engagement effort is attached.

Cost
n/a

Recommendation
This memo is for informational purposes.
Town of Essex Merger
Proposed Schedule of Research Activities
June 13, 2019

Phase 1: Initial Qualitative Survey to Residents (June 14 – July 18)

- KSV to develop survey draft – Fri 6/14 – Tue 6/18
- Essex review of survey draft – Wed 6/19 – Fri 6/21
- KSV survey revisions – Mon 6/24 – Tue 6/25
- Essex final review/approval of survey – Wed 6/26 – Fri 6/28
- KSV survey programming – Mon 7/1
- Survey link to Essex for deployment – Mon 7/1
- Data collection – Mon 7/1 – Mon 7/15 (15 days)
- KSV to develop survey report – Tue 7/16 – Wed 7/17
- Presentation of survey findings – Thu 7/18

Phase 2: Focus Groups (July 8 – August 22)

Recruiting

- KSV to develop recruitment screener – Mon 7/8 – Tue 7/9
- Essex review of screener – Wed 7/10 – Fri 7/12
- KSV revisions to screener – Mon 7/15 – Tue 7/16
- Essex final review/approval of screener – Wed 7/17 – Thu 7/18
- KSV to program screener – Fri 7/19
- Screener link to Essex for deployment – Mon 7/22
- Screener live in field – Mon 7/22 – Wed 8/7 (17 days)
- KSV scheduling of focus group participants – Mon 7/22 – Wed 8/7
- Recruitment grid sent to Essex – Thu 8/1
- Essex feedback on recruitment grid – Thu 8/1 – Mon 8/5
- KSV follow-up/confirmation with focus group participants – Mon 8/5 – Mon 8/12
- Final recruitment grid to Essex – Thu 8/8

Discussion Guide Development

- KSV to develop focus group discussion guide(s) – Fri 7/19 – Tue 7/23
- Essex review of discussion guide(s) – Wed 7/24 – Fri 7/26
- KSV discussion guide revisions – Mon 7/29 – Tue 7/30
- Essex final review/approval of discussion guide(s) – Wed 7/31 – Fri 8/2
Focus Groups

- **Focus group dates – Tue 8/13 – Thu 8/15**
  - If we do two groups per day over three days, we recommend that groups take place from...
    - 6:00pm - 7:30pm
    - 7:45pm - 9:15pm
  - If we do three groups per day over two days, we recommend that groups take place from...
    - 4:00pm – 5:30pm
    - 6:00pm - 7:30pm
    - 7:45pm - 9:15pm
- KSV to develop focus group report – Fri 8/16 – Wed 8/21
- Presentation of focus group report – Thu 8/22

Phase 3: Post-Groups Quantitative Survey (August 23 – October 17)

- KSV to develop survey draft – Fri 8/23 – Wed 8/28
- KSV revisions to survey - Fri 9/6 – Tue 9/10
- Essex final review/approval of survey – Wed 9/11 – Fri 9/13
- Survey programming – Mon 9/16
- Survey link to Essex for deployment – Tue 9/17
- Survey in the field – Tue 9/17 – 10/4 (18 days)
- KSV to develop survey report – Mon 10/7- Wed 10/16
- Presentation of survey report – Thu 10/17
Memorandum

To: Selectboard and Trustees; Evan Teich, Unified Manager
CC: Rob Paluba, IT Director; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager
From: Ann Janda, Merger Project Manager
Re: Merger website update
Date: June 21, 2019

Issue
The issue is to provide the Selectboard and Trustees with an update on a merger website, and for the Selectboard and Trustees to choose a web address for the merger website.

Discussion
Staff has looked into creating a stand-alone website dedicated to providing public education regarding the proposed 2020 merger vote. This web page will provide easy-to-understand information on:

- What is being proposed
- An infographic of what is being proposed and the process
- Some history
- Past merger attempts
- The current governance structure
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
- Links to the studies and reports associated with the current proposal

Staff plans to use Weebly to create the website. Weebly is fairly straightforward and staff can build and maintain the website in-house. CivicPlus, the platform for the new Town website, would not be ready to launch a merger website until August or September. By using Weebly, the merger website will remain separate from the Village and Town municipal websites, although the municipal website home pages will contain links to the merger website.

Staff has reserved three web addresses as the potential home of a merger website:

- Essexmergervote2020.org
- Essexmerger2020.org
- Essexmerger.org

Essexmerger2020.org is descriptive of the site, without being overly long.

The Governance Subcommittee recommends that the merger website address be Essexmerger2020.org.

Cost
The three web addresses have already been reserved for $130/year.

Recommendation
It is recommended that the Selectboard and Trustees approve the use of www.essexmerger2020.org as the address for a merger website.
Memorandum
To: Trustees; Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager
Cc: Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager
From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager
Re: Determine role and authority of Governance Subcommittee and staff for public engagement process with KSV
Date: June 21, 2019

Issue
The issue is whether the Trustees and Selectboard will authorize the Governance Subcommittee to make decisions as the steering committee to KSV for public outreach, and whether staff can give final approval to documents vetted by the Governance Subcommittee.

Discussion
Market research firm KSV has presented a busy, comprehensive schedule for the surveys and focus groups to gather public input on governance change. The schedule requires relatively quick review and approval of survey questions and focus group screening tools and questions. If the full Trustees and Selectboard are required to meet to give approval, and to continue with the public engagement schedule, several more meetings will be required.

If the Governance Subcommittee can review survey and focus group questions, the process can continue on schedule without requiring the full boards to meet. The process and schedule will be further supported if staff can review and give final approval to documents based on input from Governance Subcommittee meetings – essentially, affirming what was discussed at the Governance Subcommittee meetings.

Cost
n/a

Recommendation
It is recommended that the Trustees/Selectboard authorize the Governance Subcommittee to make decisions as the steering committee to KSV for public outreach.

It is further recommended that the Trustees/Selectboard authorize staff to give final approval to documents vetted by the Governance Subcommittee.
Memorandum
To: Trustees; Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager
Cc: Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager
From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager
Re: Appointing alternates to Governance Subcommittee
Date: June 21, 2019

Issue
The issue is whether the Trustees and Selectboard will appoint alternates to the Governance Subcommittee.

Discussion
With only four members, the Governance Subcommittee has faced challenges with scheduling and quorums. At a recent meeting, only two subcommittee members were able to attend. Although no decisions needed to be made at that meeting, the situation could arise in the future where a decision is required and not enough members are present. To avoid that issue, the Trustees and Selectboard could appoint alternates to the subcommittee.

Cost
n/a

Recommendation
It is recommended that the Trustees/Selectboard appoint alternates to the Governance Subcommittee.
The Town of Essex Selectboard and the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees have been meeting jointly for the last several months, preparing for a dialogue with the Essex community regarding our consolidation efforts going forward. In June 2018 both boards created a joint governance subcommittee tasked with researching potential new governance structures. In December, after researching and vetting over a dozen possibilities, the subcommittee recommended two options to consider: a single municipality with one charter, and a single municipality with one charter that includes up to two special districts. Another option is the current governance structure we have now: two separate municipalities with separate charters, sharing some municipal services under contract.

In order to narrow down the choices, the subcommittee considered how each governance model answered a particular set of questions, among them: Does this model reduce the number of times residents have to vote? Does this model reduce or eliminate duplicate services? Does this model allow for better integrated planning? Asking these questions helped the subcommittee identify potential governance structures that would best suit our community’s needs.

There are many additional decisions to be made alongside the choice of governance structure. How will municipal departments be organized? How many people should be on the new governing board and how should they be elected? How will we address capital budgeting? How can we ensure appropriate levels of taxation across the entire community? Both the Selectboard and Trustees have ideas about the answers to these questions, but we need community input to ensure we are on the right track. We need to know what is important to community members from every corner of the Town and Village, and what they want to see in their local government.

This is where you come in.

Recently the boards hired market research firm Kelliher Samets Volk (KSV) of Burlington to help us collect your opinions, concerns, and aspirations for your local government. The joint governance subcommittee, along with Town and Village staff, will be working with KSV on a robust outreach program to collect this information. This process will start in July and end in October. KSV will also review the results of several recent Town-wide efforts, including the reports of the Heart & Soul, Essex Governance Group (EGG), and Thoughtful Growth in Action (TGIA) initiatives.
The first step will be a community-wide qualitative survey. This survey will ask questions related to residents’ awareness of and interest in merging Town and Village government services. It will ask about what residents consider to be our most pressing issues, and the perceived benefits and challenges of merging, and will offer an opportunity to provide comments. The survey will be distributed widely through email, municipal websites, Front Porch Forum, and social media. Printed copies will be available at the libraries, municipal offices, and the senior center. We hope that you will fill out the survey, and share it with your neighbors—it is essential that folks provide their input into the future of our community.

Following the survey, there will be six focus groups, and another, different survey. We will write more about these opportunities for input over the next few weeks. We are raising your awareness now so that you can keep an eye out for the survey and participate from the start.

The Selectboard and the Trustees are looking forward to hearing from residents all over the Town and Village. We want to hear your concerns, your expectations, and your questions. When the survey comes your way, please be sure to fill it out and also share it with your neighbors and friends.

We’d like to thank The Essex Reporter for providing us with this column space to communicate with Essex residents on a regular basis about our consolidation initiative. Stay tuned for future updates, and if you have any questions, please reach out to us at ehaney@essex.org and abrown@essexjunction.org. You can also reach out to our municipal manager, Evan Teich, at eteich@essex.org.
The Town of Essex Communication Policy applies to all elected and appointed board, committee, and commission members. The goal of the policy is to ensure that Essex residents receive accurate and timely information.

Any communication – be it email, telephone, in person, on social media, or otherwise – should be considered public unless subject to a statutorily listed and invoked exemption to the public records law.

I. Public Communication

Selectboard: The Selectboard may choose to speak as a unified group on official matters. Selectboard members may also choose to speak as individual members. In speaking as an individual member rather than on behalf of the entire Board, the member should endeavor to clearly make the distinction. For example, Board members should consider utilizing the following phrase or a similar one: “The Selectboard has taken position ____. My position is ____.” In instances where no vote has been taken, no member of the Board should express an opinion as if it were the position of the entire Board.

Board members uncertain of the accuracy of technical or factual information are encouraged to work with staff, through the Manager’s office, to obtain factual and complete information.

Formal positions of the Selectboard, or calls or questions seeking the official opinion of the Selectboard, should be referred to the Chair unless another Board member has been designated by the body. When responding to an email comment or question Selectboard members are encouraged to copy the Chair or other Board member designated by the body.

Elected and appointed board, committee, and commission members must be mindful to prevent email conversations from inadvertently violating Open Meeting Law. At no time should a quorum of members have a discussion regarding Town business, with the following exceptions, as set forth by 1 VSA § 312 (g):

- Communications to schedule a meeting, organize an agenda, or distribute materials to discuss at a meeting;
- Clerical work;
- Staff work assignments;
- Routine day-to-day administrative matters, if no action is required and no money appropriated or spent;
- Site inspections; or
- Quasi-judicial deliberations.

All members of an appointed board, committee, or commission are responsible for ensuring that any information conveyed by an individual member is accurate and complete. Members are
encouraged to work with the relevant staff to obtain factual and complete information. Official communication related to a board, committee, or commission should be through the Chair or other member designated by the body. Chairs of appointed boards, committees, or commissions are encouraged to notify the Selectboard Chair and Manager of any response to media inquiries.

II. Responses to Public Comments

The U.S. Supreme Court has consistently held that in accordance with the First Amendment citizens have a right to criticize government regardless of the quality or accuracy of the criticism. When a citizen chooses to run for local elected office, inherent in that decision is acknowledgment that in the course of discharging governmental responsibilities one’s words and actions may be publicly criticized or condemned, and that the criticism or condemnation may be unfair, inaccurate, or politically motivated. The elected official does not have recourse to the same legal protections from defamation that a private person may as long as the criticism pertains to government-related issues.

This policy is not intended to discourage any elected or appointed official from exercising that individual’s First Amendment rights. However, board, committee, and commission members must always keep in mind that, due to the public nature of their roles, their personal online communications can be perceived as also official communications or positions of the Selectboard and Town. Therefore members must practice discretion when communicating online.

The Town of Essex supports and promotes an open exchange of views on community and government issues taking place in a broad array of physical and digital forums. Elected and appointed officials are encouraged to participate in these exchanges when such participation is valuable to the overall dialogue. Any response should be in accordance with the following protocol:

Selectboard: As the elected officials representing all residents of Essex, Board members may participate in the above referenced exchanges or dialogues as individuals. To the extent practicable, such participation shall conform to this policy regardless of forum. If an individual Board member does participate, that member should inform the other Board members of this participation. When responding to inaccurate or deliberately misleading information, Board members are encouraged to work with the Manager to ensure that any information provided by the Board member is accurate.

Appointed officials (members of other boards, committees, and commissions): Appointed officials may participate in the above referenced exchanges or dialogues as individuals. Representation of official Town policy or proposals, unless otherwise determined, should be left to members of the Selectboard (via the Chair) or Manager. To the extent practicable, such participation shall conform to this policy regardless of forum.

Approved by the Essex Selectboard on May 18, 2015. Amended May 6, 2019.
Town of Essex Selectboard

Elaine Haney, Chair

Patrick Murray, Clerk

Andrew J. Watts

Dated May 6, 2019.

Max G. Levy, Vice Chair

Annie Cooper
SELECTBOARD: Elaine Haney, Chair; Max Levy; Patrick Murray; Annie Cooper; Andrew Watts
TRUSTEES: Andrew Brown, President; George Tyler; Amber Thibeault (Dan Kerin and Raj Chawla were not in attendance)

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Sarah Macy Finance Director/Assistant Manager; Ally Vile, Parks & Recreation Director; Adriane Martin, Parks & Recreation Program Coordinator; Chelsea Mandigo, Stormwater Coordinator/Wastewater Operator; Darren Schibler, Planner; Sharon Kelley, Zoning Administrator; Robin Pierce, Village of Essex Junction Community Development Director

OTHERS PRESENT: John Alden; Natalie Braun; Diane Clemens; Maura Collins; Colin Flanders; Jim Fry; Liz Gamache; Lori Houghton; Jen Knauer; Phil March; Greg Morgan; Melanie Needle; Margaret Smith; David Skopin; Jake Tran; Mia Watson; Irene Wrenner

1. CALL TO ORDER
Elaine Haney called the Town of Essex Selectboard back to order from their recess, and Andrew Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Trustees to order. They entered into the Special Joint Meeting of the Village of Essex Junction Trustees and the Town of Essex Selectboard at 7:40 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES
Mr. Duggan asked to add item 5i to the agenda to discuss entering into a contract with a market research firm. Mr. Duggan also asked to add item 8a, in relation to this, an anticipated Executive Session to discuss awarding a contract.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL
MAX LEVY made a motion, and PATRICK MURRAY seconded, that the Selectboard approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed 5-0.
ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and GEORGE TYLER seconded, that the Trustees approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed 3-0.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD
a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
There were no comments from the public.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS
a. Recognition of Chelsea Mandigo for Stormwater Award from Green Mountain Environmental Association
The Selectboard and Trustees recognized and congratulated Chelsea Mandigo, on her honor of receiving the Stormwater Award from the Green Mountain Environmental Association, for outstanding performance in stormwater management and/or education, and significant contribution to the stormwater field. Ms. Mandigo said the award recognizes her contributions in the field of maintaining water quality. Ms. Haney acknowledged Ms. Mandigo’s highly specialized skills. The board members gave Ms. Mandigo a standing ovation.
b. Recognition of Adriane Martin for Young Professional Award from Vermont Recreation & Parks
The Selectboard and Trustees talked with Ally Vile in recognition of Adriane Martin. They congratulated Ms. Martin on the honor of her receiving the Young Professional Award from Vermont Recreation & Parks, given to individuals who exhibit leadership, creativity, and have made significant contributions to the field of parks and recreation over time. Ms. Vile explained that during Ms. Martin’s 5 years with Essex Parks and Recreation she has increased student involvement and intern mobilization and was recently chosen as the Chair Elect for the State Conference in 2020. The board members gave Ms. Martin a standing ovation.

c. Update from Champlain Water District (CWD) and introduction of Joe Duncan as CWD General Manager—James Fay
Mr. Fay introduced Mr. Duncan as the new CWD Manager. Previously, Mr. Duncan was the Chief Engineer and Assistant General Manager. He will begin his new role with CWD on July 1. Mr. Duncan explained that he is looking forward to continuing positive communications with the Selectboard and Trustees in this role. The board members and Trustees thanked Mr. Fay for his decades of service.

Mr. Fay discussed the benefits of the CWD governing structure with Mr. Watts. The CWD includes one elected commissioner (one vote) per city/town. He said there are also 28 employees to supply all 12 water districts, with only one Human Resources employee, one Finance Director and one Receptionist. Mr. Fay did not think that Mr. Watts’ suggestion of sharing back-office functions with other service organizations would be possible.

Mr. Duncan talked with Mr. Brown about his interest in continuing the district’s successful, proactive approach toward asset management and maintenance. Mr. Levy asked Mr. Duncan why Comparative Retail Water Rates in Essex Junction are lower than the rates in the Town of Essex and asked for clarification of sharp water rate fluctuations in the past. Mr. Duncan explained that water rates are calculated from the wholesale rate, with consideration of operational maintenance and water investment debt within the different municipalities. He also discussed the impact GLOBALFOUNDRIES’ water use has on rates, explaining that their high water use allows for more economical rates, but when their water use goes down, fixed rates increase to make up the difference. Similarly, when IBM closed, the significant change in water use caused sharp fluctuations in rates. Mr. Fay pointed out that over the past 10 years rates have increased for the average family by $4.17. He also explained that CWD has been carefully managing a capital reserve fund to ensure effective asset maintenance. He said that 2 months of the CWD operating budget is fund balance.

d. Planning for June 22 Strategic Advance work session—Jen Knauer
Ms. Knauer, moderator for the June 22 Strategic Advance work session, discussed the draft agenda with the Selectboard members and Trustees. She summarized key points from Liz Gamache’s presentation at the previous joint meeting and requested feedback on the strategic advance agenda’s menu of topics. These potential agenda topics include:

A. Opportunity to hear from staff
B. Articulate shared rationale/ vision for merger
C. Define division of roles and responsibilities
D. Develop tasks, key decision points and timeline leading up to November 2020
E. Determine how decisions will be made
F. Confirm communications plan
G. Board/Trustee discussion and clarification of next steps
To inform the day’s activities, the Selectboard and Trustees agreed to provide Ms. Knauer relevant, available information, such as established timeline points around legal dates for ballots, and suggestions from the marketing firm. Mr. Tyler will provide the draft communications plan, begun by the Joint Committee on Unification as well as relevant research and any key questions that need to be resourced at the Strategic Advance. They also agreed on three public comment periods of 5 to 10 minutes at morning, midday and at the end of the day, with time carefully allotted to speakers based on an initial raise of hands of all who wish to speak within the set timeframe.

Mr. Tyler hoped that operational and governmental matters remain clear so discussions of conceptualization will not be hindered by discussions of day-to-day matters. He wondered if having so many stakeholders present might be too ambitious. Ms. Knauer, Mr. Duggan, Mr. Brown and Mr. Teich talked about the benefits of staff presence and roles they might play during the day. Ms. Knauer clarified that staff input can be valuable when conceptualizing different futures. She clarified that the staff knowledge of real-life implications should be seen as a resource base available during the day to help streamline the process of conceptualization. Mr. Teich and Mr. Brown pointed how valuable it is for staff to hear board enthusiasm and learn about what decisions need to be made.

Mr. Murray hoped significant time would be spent on item B, so the discussion around vision and rationale of merger options can go into depth. Mr. Brown discussed the importance of items E, C and G to inform the development of an infrastructure of how decisions will be made. Mr. Watts would like to discuss what should be in the communications plan.

Ms. Cooper confirmed with Ms. Knauer that the agenda would have clear timeframes around the central topics to be used in the day’s design and Ms. Thibeault hoped there may be breakout sessions. Ms. Knauer explained that there will be multiple open discussions with easel sheets utilized to visualize trends. A recap at the end of the day will be prioritized.

e. **Update of development fees—Dana Hanley & Robin Pierce**

Ms. Haney requested this item be moved to after Item 5g on the agenda to allow guests at the meeting to present first.

GEORGE TYLER made a motion on behalf of the Village Trustees, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, to rearrange the agenda as described by Selectboard Chair Elaine Haney. The motion passed 3-0.

MAX LEVY made a motion, and ANNIE COOPER seconded, to move item 5e to after 5g. The motion passed 5-0.


Mr. Brown recused himself from this discussion because the topic pertains to the work of his employment, which may suggest a conflict of interest. He passed his Village Chair responsibilities to Mr. Tyler for the purpose of this discussion.

Mr. Schibler and Mr. Pierce provided a summary of the Town and Village Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) and Action Plan. Mr. Schibler walked through a PowerPoint overview that provided the context, driving questions, data sources and margin of error for the study, as well as the goals and findings. The goals are that “everyone should have access to a home that is
affordable (<=30% of household income); is a desirable type and size; located to support
walking, biking and public transit; meets special needs (ADA, senior care, recovery support,
low-income, etc.); available without discrimination.” The findings included demographic trends
of Essex, including Essex Junction, that show increasing population, shrinking household
size, more seniors and young adults, increasing ethnic diversity, stagnant incomes and
increasing cost burden. Mr. Schibler discussed the finding that lower end jobs cannot or can
just barely afford rent or a home mortgage in Essex, so these employees mostly live outside
of Essex and commute to work. Mr. Schibler summarized the trends for rental housing as well
as homeownership, noting that affordability is an issue and renters often cannot access
homeownership. He also discussed trends for housing for the elderly, special needs housing
and homelessness. He described the recommended action plan, which would establish a
Joint Housing Commission; revise the land use regulations (consider inclusionary zoning);
reduce development fees for affordable housing projects; establish a housing trust fund; and
partner with housing developers and non-profits.

Maura Collins, an Essex resident and Executive Director of the Vermont Housing Finance
Agency (VHFA), thanked the Village of Essex Junction for supporting an application that
enabled VHFA to revamp their housing data website. She gave credit to Essex staff for
generating the Housing Needs Assessment and Action plan and said she has discussed the
proposal of establishing a joint housing commission with the Trustees and Selectboard. She
also spoke with the Economic Development Commission and with ecumenical faith-based
groups about this. Ms. Collins sees the formation of a housing commission as a great first
step in tackling housing needs in the area. VHFA staff participates in many local municipal
housing commissions and they are willing to provide support and to work in partnership with
Essex to move forward with a full community action plan.

ANDY WATTS made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, that the Selectboard accept the
Town and Village Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan. The motion passed 5-0.

AMBER THIBEAULT made a motion, seconded by ANDREW BROWN, to accept the Town
and Village Housing Action Plan.
After discussion with Mr. Teich and Mr. Tyler, and upon legal counsel from the Village
Attorney, Mr. Brown recused himself from this vote. Because there was no voting quorum, no
vote could take place. Trustees not present will review the video of this meeting and a vote on
this topic will be taken at the next Trustees meeting where there is a quorum.

Amber Thibeault withdrew her motion.

State Representative Lori Houghton pointed out that VHFA and other housing agencies in
Vermont have pushed for the State to address the issue of people who are financially eligible
but still not qualifying for Federal Housing Vouchers. As a result, language in the current state
budget will ensure that legislators dig into this topic to better understand the Federal Housing
Assistance available to the state and to strategize how to best use it.

Ms. Needle, the Senior Planner for the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
(CCRPC), introduced the Essex Community Enhanced Energy Plan (ECEEP) and walked
through a PowerPoint presentation. The Energy Committee, Essex staff and both planning
commissions were instrumental in the development of the ECEEP. She said that Act 174
gives greater say to municipalities to permit renewable energy initiatives or enhanced energy
planning and the regional planning commissions can review and approve enhanced energy
plans. She pointed out that Vermont’s energy goals by 2050 are pushing municipalities to make big changes in heating, energy, transportation and housing. Ms. Needle provided an overview of Vermont’s total source energy use (20% renewable in 2017) in multiple areas. She also gave an overview of suggested implementation actions. She noted strategies for building renovations or new developments; thermal and energy efficiency education and infrastructure; ease of use of alternative energy transportation; access to alternative modes of transportation; and siting of land use for renewable energy generation. She discussed energy targets and analysis developed by the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation for Essex with metrics and targets that show trajectories for changes in areas like the number of people who switch to electric vehicles or begin using alternate heating and power sources for electricity.

Ms. Haney suggested that at a future date, when there is time for discussion and more individuals from the Energy Committee in attendance, Ms. Needle should return to the Selectboard and Trustees to discuss the implementation strategies embedded in the ECEEP in more detail. Ms. Needle pointed out that this plan will be an appendix to the draft Village 2019 Comprehensive Plan being voted on by the Essex Junction Planning Commission, which will then be sent to the Trustees the week of June 10th for approval, followed by a public hearing in July. The Comprehensive Plan is scheduled to go to the Trustees for adoption in August. The Town will be able to use the ECEEP in its Comprehensive plan when the time comes and, in the meantime, can use the report to support aligned initiatives.

**MAX LEVY made a motion, and PATRICK MURRAY seconded, that the Selectboard accept the Essex Community Enhanced Energy Plan. The motion passed 5-0.**

**e. Update of development fees— Darren Schibler & Robin Pierce**

Mr. Schibler and Mr. Pierce introduced the issue of considering alignment of development fees between the Village of Essex Junction and the Town of Essex. In the proposal, Phase 1 would align administrative and deliberative fees. Then, later, Phase 2 would examine impact fees.

Mr. Tyler hoped to learn more about the underlying logic for this proposal and for how development fees are determined by the Town. He expressed concern that this step could change the way impact fees are used toward development goals in the Village and that it is contradictory to efforts toward tax stabilization. Mr. Pierce explained that impact fees are rarely used in the Village, in order to encourage development.

Ms. Haney discussed with Mr. Levy and Mr. Duggan how Town impact fees are currently determined, how the fees are used for capital funding, and the role of the Economic Development committee with this. Zoning Administrator Sharon Kelly shared that there has not been an increase in Town fees for a long time and there is room for the Town to have discussion with the Village on this.

Mr. Schibler and Mr. Pierce discussed the day-to-day administrative benefits of aligning administrative and deliberative fees. Mr. Brown suggested aligning these first, under Phase 1, and holding off on Phase 2, because it warrants more discussion between the Selectboard and Trustees. Ms. Haney pointed out that the topic of impact fees may come up during capital budgeting conversations in the unification process. Mr. Duggan suggested that the topic could be included in timeline planning that takes place at the Strategic Advance.

**ANDY WATTS made a motion, and Max Levy seconded, that the Selectboard authorize the Community Development Departments to create a proposal for parity between the two fee**
schedules of administrative and deliberative fees, which would be considered by the two legislative bodies at a later date. The motion passed 5-0.

GEORGE TYLER made a motion that the Trustees authorize staff to jointly study and elaborate the goals of administrative and deliberative fees between the Village and the Town.

Mr. Brown suggested utilizing the Selectboard's motion, for unity, noting that Mr. Tyler's request for elaborated goals be included in the work Community Development Departments' work. Ms. Haney observed that Mr. Tyler's motion did come up with a proposal for new fees.

GEORGE TYLER withdrew his motion.

ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, that the Trustees authorize the same motion as the Selectboard. The motion passed 3-0.

h. Discussion of voting timeline for November 2020 vote on governance change—

Evan Teich

Mr. Teich discussed the timeline of the unification merger plan, including deadlines that must be met according to state statutes, at the state and local levels, in order to get a vote on the ballot for November 3, 2020. Elaine Haney requested information of if the holiday date deadline can be changed without missing other required deadlines. Mr. Levy pointed out that this phase of the unification process begins in August 2020, which means all of the details that go into this process will be ironed out before then. Mr. Watts noted that the decision of which merger plan to go with will determine who votes. He and Mr. Brown talked about the importance of consulting with legal counsel regarding this phase of the timeline. Mr. Brown suggested that the Trustees and Selectboard read state statutes related to these deadlines.

i. *Hire market research firm for public engagement around governance change—

Greg Duggan

Mr. Duggan explained that staff interviewed six market research firms for the governance change outreach efforts. He suggested that the Selectboard members and Trustees enter into executive session to discuss and select a firm to contract with.

6. CONSENT ITEMS

a. Approval of minutes: May 28, 2019

Mr. Watts suggested the minutes be changed from “Monday, May 28” to “Tuesday May 28”.

GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, that the Trustees approve the Consent agenda with the change suggested by Mr. Watts. The motion passed 3-0.

7. READING FILE

a. Certificate of Merit to Village of Essex Junction from Vermont Planners Association
b. Town of Essex/Village of Essex Junction Report for Calendar Year 2018: Progress on Implementation of All-Hazards Mitigation Plan
c. Job Description: Merger Project Manager (Long-term, temporary, part-time)
d. Board Member Comments

- Mr. Watts noted how much reading there was in this meeting's reading file and suggested some of the documents could have been provided farther in advance.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION
a. *An Executive session to discuss entering into a contract with a firm to conduct public
engagement efforts about governance change.

ANDY WATTS made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, that the Selectboard make the
specific finding that premature general public knowledge of the Town’s position
concerning the proposed contract discussion would put the Town at a substantial
disadvantage. The motion passed 5-0.

ANDY WATTS made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, that the Selectboard enter into
executive session to discuss contracts pursuant to 1. V.S.A. 313(a)(1)(A), to include the
Trustees, Unified Manager, Deputy Manager, and Finance Director/Assistant Manager. The
motion passed 5-0 at 10:00 p.m.

GEORGE TYLER made a similar motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, on behalf of
the Essex Junction Trustees. The motion passed 3-0 at 10:00 p.m.

MAX LEVY made a motion, seconded by PATRICK MURRAY, for the Selectboard to exit
executive session. The motion passed 5-0 at 10:33 p.m.

GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, for the Trustees to exit
executive session. The motion passed 3-0 at 10:33 p.m.

ANDREW BROWN made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, for the Trustees to
authorize the Unified Manager to execute a contract with KSV for public engagement
around governance change, and to return to the boards for approval if the contract
exceeds $40,000. The motion passed 3-0.

ELAINE HANEY made a motion, seconded by MAX LEVY, for the Selectboard to authorize
the Unified Manager to execute a contract with KSV for public engagement around
governance change, and to return to the boards for approval if the contract exceeds
$40,000. The motion passed 5-0.

9. ADJOURN

GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, for the Trustees to
adjourn. The motion passed 3-0 at 10:35 p.m.

ELAINE HANEY made a motion, seconded by MAX LEVY, for the Selectboard to adjourn.
The motion passed 5-0 at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Ainsworth
Recording Secretary
MEMORANDUM

TO: Selectboard, Trustees, and Evan Teich, Unified Manager
FROM: Annie Costandi, Stormwater Coordinator/Staff Engineer
       Chelsea Mandigo, Wastewater Operator/Stormwater Coordinator
DATE: June 13, 2019
SUBJECT: Awarded Projects under the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission’s FY20 Unified Planning Work Program

The Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction were awarded the following 3 projects under the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission’s (CCRPC) FY20 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

- Both the Town and Village received funding for inspecting older stormwater pipes to generate a condition assessment report and infrastructure replacement plan in various locations. The focus areas in the Town will be Old Susie Wilson Road/Painesville, Sand Hill Road, and Forestdale. The focus areas in the Village will be River St, Countryside Development (Aspen Dr., Beech St., Tamarack Dr., Countryside Dr.), Fairview Farms Development (Hubbell’s Falls Dr., Juniper Ridge Rd., Fairview Dr., Sycamore Ln., Hawthorn Cir.). Each project was approved for $45,000 which includes a 20% local match of $9,000.

- The Town received funding for a scoping study for the feasibility of a multiuse path and stormwater improvements along Tanglewood Drive. The study was approved for $39,000 which includes a 20% local match of $7,800.

These projects are scheduled to be completed within the FY20 work program. The Town and Village will collaborate on the condition assessment to ensure the final documents are comparable and allows the communities to budget and prioritize repairs. Supporting documentation on the projects is included with this Memo.
I would suggest we put it in the reading file for our next joint board meeting. I don't want to make a big deal of it but on the other hand she had an important perspective. As I'm sure you're aware, it's nice for a manager to have a responsible and accessible connection to the board as well as an elected voice that can speak for the whole community. As she points out, a mayor is always elected at-large and usually tends to look at things holistically, just as managers are required to do. It might be worthwhile for us to revisit the idea. But ... if no one is inclined to do so, that's fine too.

Good morning, Evan.
Below are a few of my thoughts on the questions posed by George.

1. As a former mayor, can you elaborate on any advantages or disadvantages of the mayoral/council form of government vs the traditional town selectboard/manager?

In St. Albans the Mayor:
• is elected at-large while six City Councilors represent six separate wards
• votes, but does not have veto power
• is unpaid, volunteer position; City Manager responsible for administration & operations
• serves a two year term while City Councilors serve staggered three year terms
• is one of eight mayors in Vermont; member of Vermont Mayors’ Coalition

Advantages:
• High profile position locally because it is the only at-large elected seat
• Recognized in community as top elected position of the voters, whereas, selectboard chairs are elected by the selectboard
• In St. Albans, the council elects a president who works closely with mayor
• The buck stops with the mayor and city manager
• Mayor & Council primary focus is on policy issues & City Manager performance
• Operational performance expectations and issues are brought forward to City Manager
• Mayor is primary liaison between Council and City Manager
• Point of escalation for issues that aren’t being resolved by City Manager
• Many people more likely to “call the mayor” than city manager, therefore mayor is often the intake source for issues (many of which are operational in nature and are referred to City Manager for attention)
• High profile because there are only seven other municipalities with Mayors; mayors get more media attention than select board chairs
• Lots of common ground with other mayors around downtown/village center development, water quality issues, policing, opiates & public safety
• Vermont Mayors’ Coalition has been highly effective advocacy group on muni issues in Montpelier

Disadvantages:
• In my experience, the disadvantages have been few.
• Generally speaking, I think selectboards with at-large representation are better in small, rural communities

1. What advantages did you have as mayor vs a selectboard chair?

• I had the clear backing of the voters who elected me which differs from selectboard chairs who are elected by their board.

3) I note that St. Albans city was at one time a village within St. Albans town, which now functions as an independent town with it’s own selectboard. I assume you, as city mayor, had many interactions with the St. Albans town selectboard, so could you reflect for a moment on any comparative issues of note?

The breakup of the village and town 100 years ago led to many conflicts and mistrust that have plagued both communities. The main source of conflict has been around ownership of the water/wastewater system and has been a source of major distraction preventing the two municipalities from working more cooperatively. Over the past ten years, we’ve worked to increase trust and collaboration between the boards. This has resulted in improved services for both communities in the areas of police, fire, and recreation. The water/wastewater conflict has become less dominant.

It’s also important to recognize different interests – the more urban nature of the City (2 square miles with a downtown) vs. the rural nature of the Town (70++ square miles).

During my tenure as mayor, relations between city and town were marked by increased collaboration on the one hand and lawsuits brought by the town over wastewater on the other hand. The City has a larger staff, budget and higher level of activity than the town. Because of this, the City has been in a position to lead in terms of economic development, strategic planning and community development. I believe this has set an expectation in the community for the Town to follow suit and the skill sets and positions of recently elected select board officials reflects this.
In a nutshell: the distinction between City & Town matters to some, but overall we think increasingly of one St. Albans (with 2 municipalities). The past poor relationship between the two munis has led to a huge amount of unnecessary resource deployment (money and staff), not to mention it has been a distraction taking the focus away from progress at times. The benefits of a strong relationship far outweigh the cons!

4. Additionally, St. Albans has 6 distinct voting wards for each of the city council seats. We are wrestling with the question of having voting wards vs. districts vs. at-large elections. Do you see any advantages/disadvantages to a particular electoral format?

I think it’s beneficial to have a mix of at-large and district positions. In St. Albans we accomplish this with an at-large mayor. I sometimes wonder if we should add 2 at-large council positions, but then I worry about the increased size of the board making it less effective. District or ward representation helps to bring forward issues (especially quality of life issues) that might otherwise go unnoticed (potholes, noise, trees, etc).

Liz

Liz Gamache, LLC
802.730.3424

George's Questions:

The Essex Junction/Essex Town governance subcommittee examined a range of options for consolidating and reconstructing the village and town governments. One of the options we considered and rejected was forming a city with a mayor and council. Elected officials in the village and town have only ever directly experienced the traditional council/manager government, so I personally feel that we might have been a little biased and hasty in not giving this option a more thorough analysis. So my question: As a former mayor, can you elaborate on any advantages or disadvantages of the mayoral/council form of government vs the traditional town selectboard/manager form of government? What advantages did you have as mayor vs a selectboard chair? I note that St. Albans city was at one time a village within St. Albans town, which now functions as an independent town with its own selectboard. I assume you, as city mayor, had many interactions with the St. Albans town selectboard, so could you reflect for a moment on any comparative issues of note? Also - for the sake of background -- St. Albans city has a population of about 7K and a footprint of about 2 square mile within the town. Essex Junction (independent of Essex Town) has a population of +10K and a footprint of 4.5 square miles, so the city and the village are roughly similar in size and density of development.
Additionally, St. Albans has 6 distinct voting wards for each of the city council seats. We are wrestling with the question of having voting wards vs. districts vs. at-large elections. Do you see any advantages/disadvantages to a particular electoral format?

Thank you and, once again, I'm very appreciative and envious of the excellent job you all did rebuilding your city center.

George Tyler
6/13/2019

Evan Teich, Unified Manager
81 Main Street,
Essex Junction, VT 05452-3209

Re: Update Concerning Announcement of Planned Action

Dear Manager Teich:

The Oryza Group (Oryza) currently provides support to the DHS U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in Essex (30/38 River Road), Vermont, as a U.S. Government contractor, pursuant to Service Center Operations Support Services (SCOSS) (the “Contract”). The award for the new SCOSS Contract”) has not yet been announced, however, an extension has been granted.

Following up on my March 26th letter informing you of the May 31, 2019 lay-off, the lay-off has been postponed because the U.S. government has extended the current contract. At this time, we do not yet know the final revised completion date. We will notify you of the revised contract completion date once it is received from the USCIS.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Adam Basford, Program Manager