



VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES  
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

2 Lincoln Street  
Essex Junction, VT 05452  
Tuesday, June 25, 2019  
7:00 PM (or immediately  
following Village Trustees Meeting)

E-mail: [manager@essex.org](mailto:manager@essex.org)

[www.essexjunction.org](http://www.essexjunction.org)  
[www.essex.org](http://www.essex.org)

Phone: (802) 878-1341

The Selectboard and Trustees meet together to discuss and act on joint business. Each board votes separately on action items.

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 \_\_\_\_\_ *Amitchell*

**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 GSD  
**Date:** June 21, 2019

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**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**

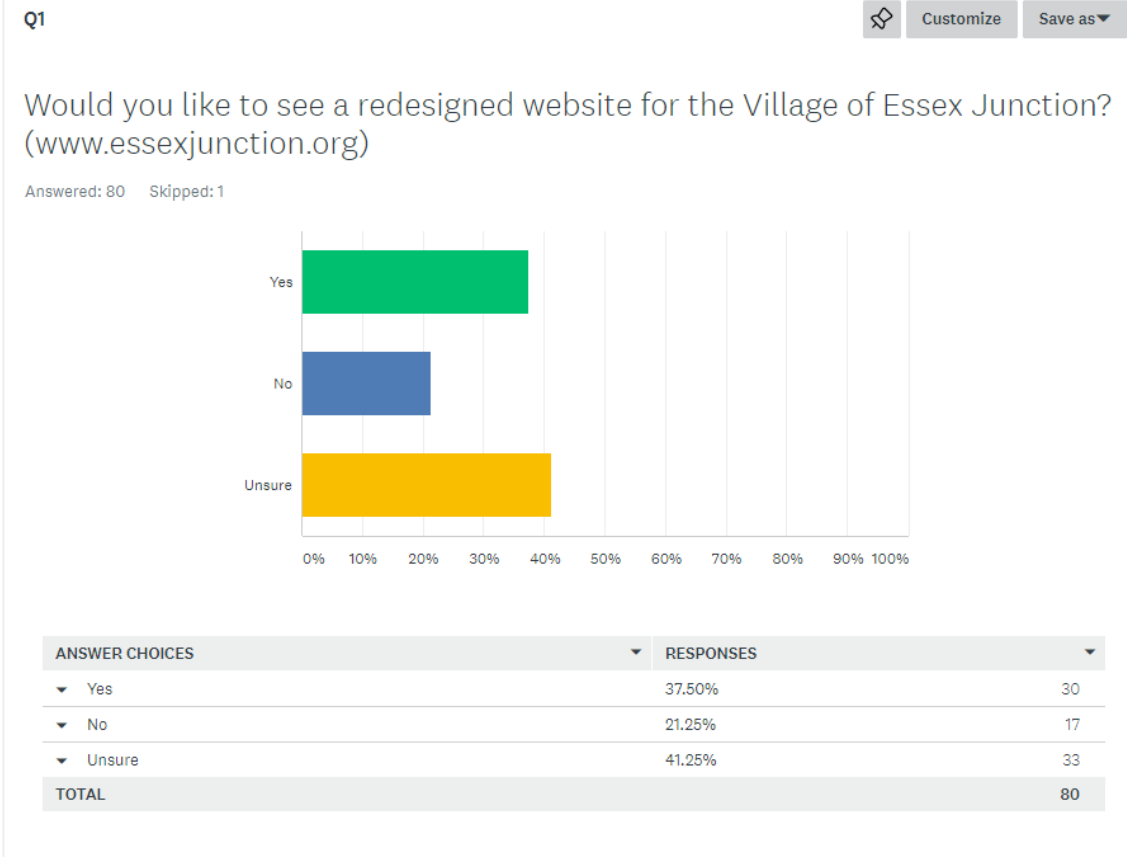
n/a

**Recommendation**

This memo is for informational and discussion purposes.

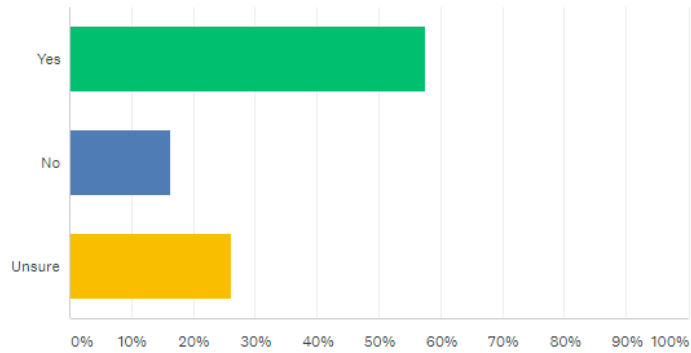
# Essex & Essex Junction website survey

May & June 2019



Would you like to see a redesigned website for the Town of Essex?  
(www.essex.org)

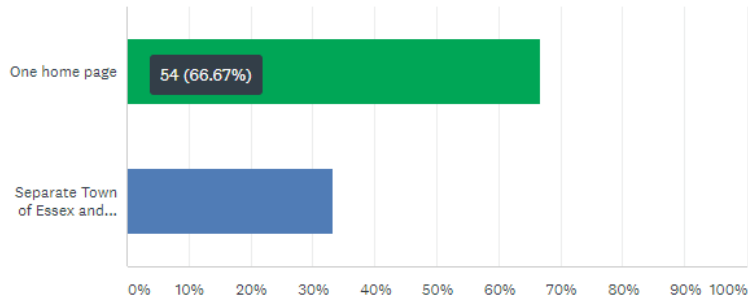
Answered: 80 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	57.50% 46
No	16.25% 13
Unsure	26.25% 21
TOTAL	80

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?

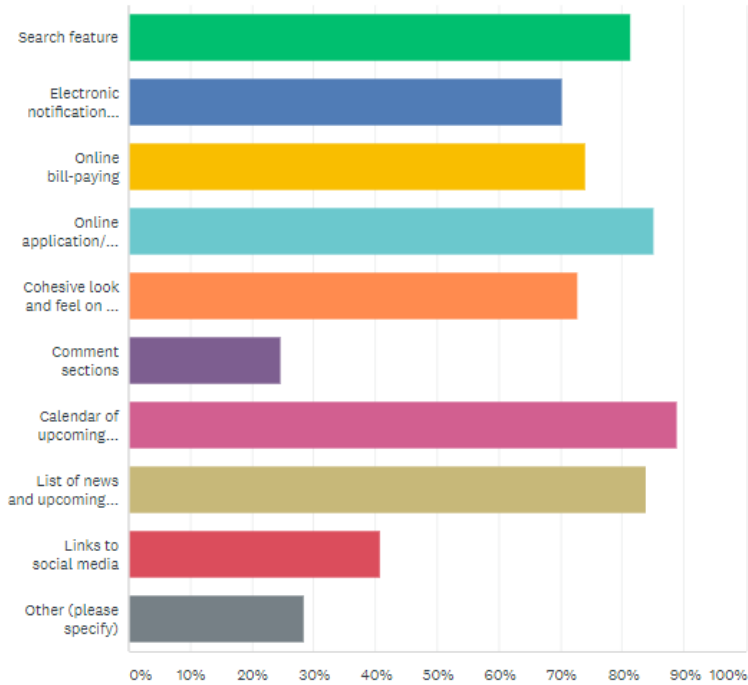
Answered: 81 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
One home page	66.67%	54
Separate Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction websites	33.33%	27
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>81</b>

What features would you like to see on your municipal website(s)? Check all that apply.

Answered: 81 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Search feature	81.48% 66
Electronic notifications for board/committee meetings, emergencies, events, etc.	70.37% 57
Online bill-paying	74.07% 60
Online application/registration forms (e.g. building permit, recreation programs, etc.)	85.19% 69
Cohesive look and feel on all pages	72.84% 59
Comment sections	24.69% 20
Calendar of upcoming meetings and events	88.89% 72
List of news and upcoming events	83.95% 68
Links to social media	40.74% 33
Other (please specify)	Responses 28.40% 23
Total Respondents: 81	

**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](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

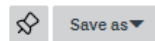
Social media presence must be added for both communities. The ability for business owners to find and fill out forms online and pay fees online should be added. This capacity has been addressed by Burlington and Rutland's "Start a Business in a Day".

5/2/2019 4:57 PM

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

5/2/2019 4:44 PM

Q5



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

Answered: 46 Skipped: 35

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.

5/2/2019 11:41 PM

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!

5/2/2019 5:12 PM

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.

5/2/2019 4:59 PM



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

5/2/2019 4:57 PM

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

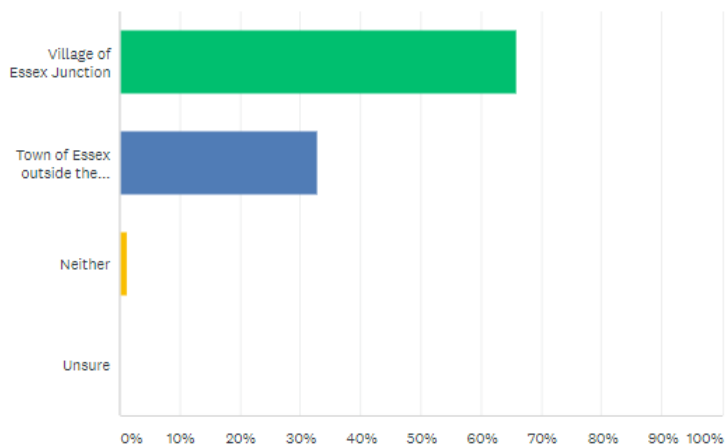
5/2/2019 4:44 PM

Q6

 Customize  Save as



Do you live in the

Answered: 79 Skipped: 2



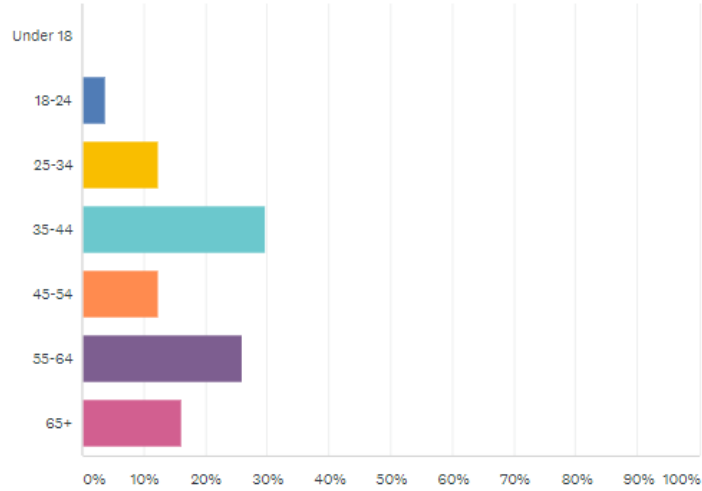
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Village of Essex Junction	65.82% 52
▼ Town of Essex outside the Village	32.91% 26
▼ Neither	1.27% 1
▼ Unsure	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>

Q7

 Customize  Save as ▾

## How old are you?

Answered: 81 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Under 18	0.00% 0
▼ 18-24	3.70% 3
▼ 25-34	12.35% 10
▼ 35-44	29.63% 24
▼ 45-54	12.35% 10
▼ 55-64	25.93% 21
▼ 65+	16.05% 13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>81</b>

Q8

Save as ▼

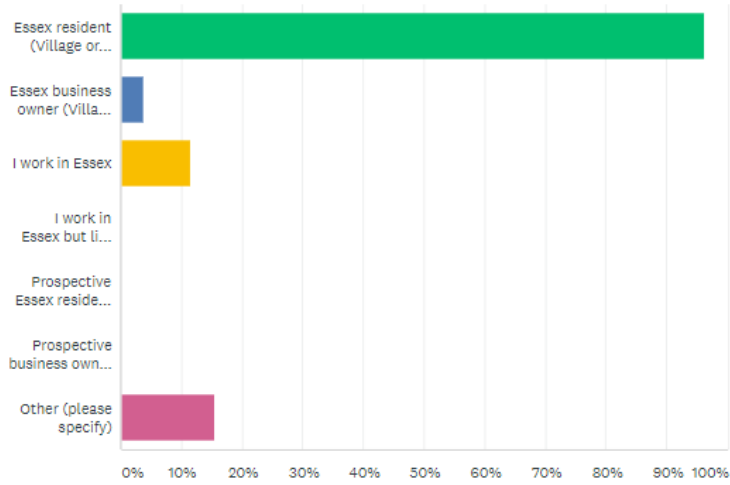
Would you be interested in serving on a focus group for a new website(s)? If so, please provide the following information:

Answered: 26 Skipped: 55

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Name	Responses	100.00%	26
Company	Responses	0.00%	0
Address	Responses	0.00%	0
Address 2	Responses	0.00%	0
City/Town	Responses	0.00%	0
State/Province	Responses	0.00%	0
ZIP/Postal Code	Responses	0.00%	0
Country	Responses	0.00%	0
Email Address	Responses	92.31%	24
Phone Number	Responses	88.46%	23

If you are interested in serving on a focus group, please let us know a little bit about you (check all that apply).

Answered: 26 Skipped: 55



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Essex resident (Village or Town outside the Village)	96.15% 25
Essex business owner (Village or Town outside the Village)	3.85% 1
I work in Essex	11.54% 3
I work in Essex but live elsewhere	0.00% 0
Prospective Essex resident (Village or Town outside the Village)	0.00% 0
Prospective business owner (Village or Town outside the Village)	0.00% 0
Other (please specify)	Responses 15.38% 4
<b>Total Respondents: 26</b>	

Q10

Save as ▼

If you would like to be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift card, please provide the following information:

Answered: 46 Skipped: 35

ANSWER CHOICES ▼		RESPONSES ▼	
Name	Responses	100.00%	46
Company	Responses	0.00%	0
Address	Responses	95.65%	44
Address 2	Responses	15.22%	7
City/Town	Responses	95.65%	44
State/Province	Responses	95.65%	44
ZIP/Postal Code	Responses	95.65%	44
Country	Responses	0.00%	0
Email Address	Responses	93.48%	43
Phone Number	Responses	95.65%	44



**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

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**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

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**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

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**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
- **Essex review of survey – Thu 8/29 – Thu 9/5 (accounting for Labor Day weekend)**
- 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](http://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](http://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

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**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 *GSD*  
**Re:** Appointing alternates to Governance Subcommittee  
**Date:** June 21, 2019

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**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.



Column title: Working towards a greater Essex

This installment title: Consolidation process enters the public participation stage

Written by Elaine Haney, Town of Essex Selectboard Chair and Andrew Brown, Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees President

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](mailto:ehaney@essex.org) and [abrown@essexjunction.org](mailto:abrown@essexjunction.org). You can also reach out to our municipal manager, Evan Teich, at [eteich@essex.org](mailto:eteich@essex.org).

<b>Town of Essex Communications Policy</b>	
<b>Revision Number:</b> 2.0	<b>Town of Essex Selectboard</b> <b>Adopted on:</b> 5/18/2015
<b>Revision Date:</b> 5/6/2019	
<b>Effective Date:</b> 5/6/2019	

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.

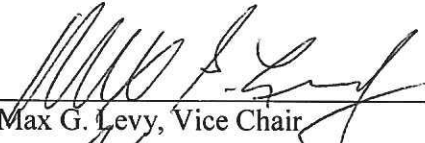
**Appointed officials (members of other boards, committees, and commissions):** Appointed officials may participate in the above referenced exchanges or dialogues as individuals. Representation of official Town policy or proposals, unless otherwise determined, should be left to members of the Selectboard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

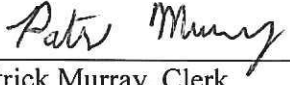
Approved by the Essex Selectboard on May 18, 2015. Amended May 6, 2019.


Town of Essex Selectboard

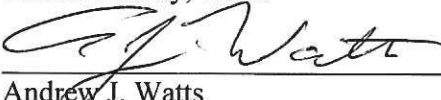
Dated May 6, 2019.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Elaine Haney, Chair

  
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Max G. Levy, Vice Chair

  
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Patrick Murray, Clerk

  
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Annie Cooper

  
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Andrew J. Watts

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**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES  
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD  
DRAFT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, June 3, 2019**

**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.

- 55 b. **Recognition of Adriane Martin for Young Professional Award from Vermont Recreation**  
56 **& Parks**  
57 The Selectboard and Trustees talked with Ally Vile in recognition of Adriane Martin. They  
58 congratulated Ms. Martin on the honor of her receiving the Young Professional Award from  
59 Vermont Recreation & Parks, given to individuals who exhibit leadership, creativity, and have  
60 made significant contributions to the field of parks and recreation over time. Ms. Vile explained  
61 that during Ms. Martin's 5 years with Essex Parks and Recreation she has increased student  
62 involvement and intern mobilization and was recently chosen as the Chair Elect for the State  
63 Conference in 2020. The board members gave Ms. Martin a standing ovation.  
64
- 65 c. **Update from Champlain Water District (CWD) and introduction of Joe Duncan as CWD**  
66 **General Manager— James Fay**  
67 Mr. Fay introduced Mr. Duncan as the new CWD Manager. Previously, Mr. Duncan was the  
68 Chief Engineer and Assistant General Manager. He will begin his new role with CWD on July  
69 1. Mr. Duncan explained that he is looking forward to continuing positive communications with  
70 the Selectboard and Trustees in this role. The board members and Trustees thanked Mr. Fay  
71 for his decades of service.  
72
- 73 Mr. Fay discussed the benefits of the CWD governing structure with Mr. Watts. The CWD  
74 includes one elected commissioner (one vote) per city/town. He said there are also 28  
75 employees to supply all 12 water districts, with only one Human Resources employee, one  
76 Finance Director and one Receptionist. Mr. Fay did not think that Mr. Watts' suggestion of  
77 sharing back-office functions with other service organizations would be possible.  
78
- 79 Mr. Duncan talked with Mr. Brown about his interest in continuing the district's successful,  
80 proactive approach toward asset management and maintenance. Mr. Levy asked Mr. Duncan  
81 why Comparative Retail Water Rates in Essex Junction are lower than the rates in the Town  
82 of Essex and asked for clarification of sharp water rate fluctuations in the past. Mr. Duncan  
83 explained that water rates are calculated from the wholesale rate, with consideration of  
84 operational maintenance and water investment debt within the different municipalities. He also  
85 discussed the impact GLOBALFOUNDRIES' water use has on rates, explaining that their high  
86 water use allows for more economical rates, but when their water use goes down, fixed rates  
87 increase to make up the difference. Similarly, when IBM closed, the significant change in  
88 water use caused sharp fluctuations in rates. Mr. Fay pointed out that over the past 10 years  
89 rates have increased for the average family by \$4.17. He also explained that CWD has been  
90 carefully managing a capital reserve fund to ensure effective asset maintenance. He said that  
91 2 months of the CWD operating budget is fund balance.  
92
- 93 d. **Planning for June 22 Strategic Advance work session—Jen Knauer**  
94 Ms. Knauer, moderator for the June 22 Strategic Advance work session, discussed the draft  
95 agenda with the Selectboard members and Trustees. She summarized key points from Liz  
96 Gamache's presentation at the previous joint meeting and requested feedback on the  
97 strategic advance agenda's menu of topics. These potential agenda topics include:  
98 A. Opportunity to hear from staff  
99 B. Articulate shared rationale/ vision for merger  
100 C. Define division of roles and responsibilities  
101 D. Develop tasks, key decision points and timeline leading up to November 2020  
102 E. Determine how decisions will be made  
103 F. Confirm communications plan  
104 G. Board/Trustee discussion and clarification of next steps  
105

106 To inform the day's activities, the Selectboard and Trustees agreed to provide Ms. Knauer  
 107 relevant, available information, such as established timeline points around legal dates for  
 108 ballots, and suggestions from the marketing firm. Mr. Tyler will provide the draft  
 109 communications plan, begun by the Joint Committee on Unification as well as relevant  
 110 research and any key questions that need to be resourced at the Strategic Advance. They  
 111 also agreed on three public comment periods of 5 to 10 minutes at morning, midday and at  
 112 the end of the day, with time carefully allotted to speakers based on an initial raise of hands of  
 113 all who wish to speak within the set timeframe.  
 114

115 Mr. Tyler hoped that operational and governmental matters remain clear so discussions of  
 116 conceptualization will not be hindered by discussions of day-to-day matters. He wondered if  
 117 having so many stakeholders present might be too ambitious. Ms. Knauer, Mr. Duggan, Mr.  
 118 Brown and Mr. Teich talked about the benefits of staff presence and roles they might play  
 119 during the day. Ms. Knauer clarified that staff input can be valuable when conceptualizing  
 120 different futures. She clarified that the staff knowledge of real-life implications should be seen  
 121 as a resource base available during the day to help streamline the process of  
 122 conceptualization. Mr. Teich and Mr. Brown pointed how valuable it is for staff to hear board  
 123 enthusiasm and learn about what decisions need to be made.  
 124

125 Mr. Murray hoped significant time would be spent on item B, so the discussion around vision  
 126 and rationale of merger options can go into depth. Mr. Brown discussed the importance of  
 127 items E, C and G to inform the development of an infrastructure of how decisions will be  
 128 made. Mr. Watts would like to discuss what should be in the communications plan.  
 129

130 Ms. Cooper confirmed with Ms. Knauer that the agenda would have clear timeframes around  
 131 the central topics to be used in the day's design and Ms. Thibeault hoped there may be  
 132 breakout sessions. Ms. Knauer explained that there will be multiple open discussions with  
 133 easel sheets utilized to visualize trends. A recap at the end of the day will be prioritized.  
 134

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

136 Ms. Haney requested this item be moved to after Item 5g on the agenda to allow guests at the  
 137 meeting to present first.  
 138

139 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion on behalf of the Village Trustees, and AMBER THIBEAULT**  
 140 **seconded, to rearrange the agenda as described by Selectboard Chair Elaine Haney. The**  
 141 **motion passed 3-0.**  
 142

143 **MAX LEVY made a motion, and ANNIE COOPER seconded, to move item 5e to after 5g.**  
 144 **The motion passed 5-0.**  
 145

146 f. **Accept Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction Housing Needs Assessment and**  
 147 **Action Plan— Darren Schibler & Robin Pierce**  
 148

149 **Mr. Brown recused himself from this discussion because the topic pertains to the work of**  
 150 **his employment, which may suggest a conflict of interest. He passed his Village Chair**  
 151 **responsibilities to Mr. Tyler for the purpose of this discussion.**  
 152

153 Mr. Schibler and Mr. Pierce provided a summary of the Town and Village Housing Needs  
 154 Assessment (HNA) and Action Plan. Mr. Schibler walked through a PowerPoint overview that  
 155 provided the context, driving questions, data sources and margin of error for the study, as well  
 156 as the goals and findings. The goals are that "everyone should have access to a home that is



157 affordable (<=30% of household income); is a desirable type and size; located to support  
 158 walking, biking and public transit; meets special needs (ADA, senior care, recovery support,  
 159 low-income, etc.); available without discrimination.” The findings included demographic trends  
 160 of Essex, including Essex Junction, that show increasing population, shrinking household  
 161 size, more seniors and young adults, increasing ethnic diversity, stagnant incomes and  
 162 increasing cost burden. Mr. Schibler discussed the finding that lower end jobs cannot or can  
 163 just barely afford rent or a home mortgage in Essex, so these employees mostly live outside  
 164 of Essex and commute to work. Mr. Schibler summarized the trends for rental housing as well  
 165 as homeownership, noting that affordability is an issue and renters often cannot access  
 166 homeownership. He also discussed trends for housing for the elderly, special needs housing  
 167 and homelessness. He described the recommended action plan, which would establish a  
 168 Joint Housing Commission; revise the land use regulations (consider inclusionary zoning);  
 169 reduce development fees for affordable housing projects; establish a housing trust fund; and  
 170 partner with housing developers and non-profits.  
 171

172 Maura Collins, an Essex resident and Executive Director of the Vermont Housing Finance  
 173 Agency (VHFA), thanked the Village of Essex Junction for supporting an application that  
 174 enabled VHFA to revamp their housing data website. She gave credit to Essex staff for  
 175 generating the Housing Needs Assessment and Action plan and said she has discussed the  
 176 proposal of establishing a joint housing commission with the Trustees and Selectboard. She  
 177 also spoke with the Economic Development Commission and with ecumenical faith-based  
 178 groups about this. Ms. Collins sees the formation of a housing commission as a great first  
 179 step in tackling housing needs in the area. VHFA staff participates in many local municipal  
 180 housing commissions and they are willing to provide support and to work in partnership with  
 181 Essex to move forward with a full community action plan.  
 182

183 **ANDY WATTS made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, that the Selectboard accept the**  
 184 **Town and Village Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan. The motion passed 5-0.**  
 185

186 **AMBER THIBEAULT made a motion, seconded by ANDREW BROWN, to accept the Town**  
 187 **and Village Housing Action Plan.**

188 After discussion with Mr. Teich and Mr. Tyler, and upon legal counsel from the Village  
 189 Attorney, Mr. Brown recused himself from this vote. Because there was no voting quorum, no  
 190 vote could take place. Trustees not present will review the video of this meeting and a vote on  
 191 this topic will be taken at the next Trustees meeting where there is a quorum.  
 192

193 **Amber Thibeault withdrew her motion.**  
 194

195 State Representative Lori Houghton pointed out that VHFA and other housing agencies in  
 196 Vermont have pushed for the State to address the issue of people who are financially eligible  
 197 but still not qualifying for Federal Housing Vouchers. As a result, language in the current state  
 198 budget will ensure that legislators dig into this topic to better understand the Federal Housing  
 199 Assistance available to the state and to strategize how to best use it.  
 200

201 g. **Accept Essex Community Enhanced Energy Plan— Melanie Needle & Darren Schibler**  
 202 Ms. Needle, the Senior Planner for the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission  
 203 (CCRPC), introduced the Essex Community Enhanced Energy Plan (ECEEP) and walked  
 204 through a PowerPoint presentation. The Energy Committee, Essex staff and both planning  
 205 commissions were instrumental in the development of the ECEEP. She said that Act 174  
 206 gives greater say to municipalities to permit renewable energy initiatives or enhanced energy  
 207 planning and the regional planning commissions can review and approve enhanced energy

208 plans. She pointed out that Vermont’s energy goals by 2050 are pushing municipalities to  
 209 make big changes in heating, energy, transportation and housing. Ms. Needle provided an  
 210 overview of Vermont’s total source energy use (20% renewable in 2017) in multiple areas.  
 211 She also gave an overview of suggested implementation actions. She noted strategies for  
 212 building renovations or new developments; thermal and energy efficiency education and  
 213 infrastructure; ease of use of alternative energy transportation; access to alternative modes of  
 214 transportation; and siting of land use for renewable energy generation. She discussed energy  
 215 targets and analysis developed by the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation for Essex with  
 216 metrics and targets that show trajectories for changes in areas like the number of people who  
 217 switch to electric vehicles or begin using alternate heating and power sources for electricity.  
 218

219 Ms. Haney suggested that at a future date, when there is time for discussion and more  
 220 individuals from the Energy Committee in attendance, Ms. Needle should return to the  
 221 Selectboard and Trustees to discuss the implementation strategies embedded in the ECEEP  
 222 in more detail. Ms. Needle pointed out that this plan will be an appendix to the draft Village  
 223 2019 Comprehensive Plan being voted on by the Essex Junction Planning Commission,  
 224 which will then be sent to the Trustees the week of June 10<sup>th</sup> for approval, followed by a public  
 225 hearing in July. The Comprehensive Plan is scheduled to go to the Trustees for adoption in  
 226 August. The Town will be able to use the ECEEP in its Comprehensive plan when the time  
 227 comes and, in the meantime, can use the report to support aligned initiatives.  
 228

229 **MAX LEVY made a motion, and PATRICK MURRAY seconded, that the Selectboard accept**  
 230 **the Essex Community Enhanced Energy Plan. The motion passed 5-0.**  
 231

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

233 Mr. Schibler and Mr. Pierce introduced the issue of considering alignment of development  
 234 fees between the Village of Essex Junction and the Town of Essex. In the proposal, Phase 1  
 235 would align administrative and deliberative fees. Then, later, Phase 2 would examine impact  
 236 fees.  
 237

238 Mr. Tyler hoped to learn more about the underlying logic for this proposal and for how  
 239 development fees are determined by the Town. He expressed concern that this step could  
 240 change the way impact fees are used toward development goals in the Village and that it is  
 241 contradictory to efforts toward tax stabilization. Mr. Pierce explained that impact fees are  
 242 rarely used in the Village, in order to encourage development.  
 243

244 Ms. Haney discussed with Mr. Levy and Mr. Duggan how Town impact fees are currently  
 245 determined, how the fees are used for capital funding, and the role of the Economic  
 246 Development committee with this. Zoning Administrator Sharon Kelly shared that there has  
 247 not been an increase in Town fees for a long time and there is room for the Town to have  
 248 discussion with the Village on this.  
 249

250 Mr. Schibler and Mr. Pierce discussed the day-to-day administrative benefits of aligning  
 251 administrative and deliberative fees. Mr. Brown suggested aligning these first, under Phase 1,  
 252 and holding off on Phase 2, because it warrants more discussion between the Selectboard  
 253 and Trustees. Ms. Haney pointed out that the topic of impact fees may come up during capital  
 254 budgeting conversations in the unification process. Mr. Duggan suggested that the topic could  
 255 be included in timeline planning that takes place at the Strategic Advance.  
 256

257 **ANDY WATTS made a motion, and Max Levy seconded, that the Selectboard authorize the**  
 258 **Community Development Departments to create a proposal for parity between the two fee**

259 schedules of administrative and deliberative fees, which would be considered by the two  
260 legislative bodies at a later date. The motion passed 5-0.  
261

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

265 Mr. Brown suggested utilizing the Selectboard’s motion, for unity, noting that Mr. Tyler’s  
266 request for elaborated goals be included in the work Community Development Departments’  
267 work. Ms. Haney observed that Mr. Tyler’s motion did come up with a proposal for new fees.  
268

269 **GEORGE TYLER withdrew his motion.**  
270

271 **ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, that the Trustees**  
272 **authorize the same motion as the Selectboard. The motion passed 3-0.**  
273

274 h. **Discussion of voting timeline for November 2020 vote on governance change—**  
275 **Evan Teich**

276 Mr. Teich discussed the timeline of the unification merger plan, including deadlines that must  
277 be met according to state statutes, at the state and local levels, in order to get a vote on the  
278 ballot for November 3, 2020. Elaine Haney requested information of if the holiday date  
279 deadline can be changed without missing other required deadlines. Mr. Levy pointed out that  
280 this phase of the unification process begins in August 2020, which means all of the details  
281 that go into this process will be ironed out before then. Mr. Watts noted that the decision of  
282 which merger plan to go with will determine who votes. He and Mr. Brown talked about the  
283 importance of consulting with legal counsel regarding this phase of the timeline. Mr. Brown  
284 suggested that the Trustees and Selectboard read state statutes related to these deadlines.  
285

286 i. **\*Hire market research firm for public engagement around governance change—**  
287 **Greg Duggan**

288 Mr. Duggan explained that staff interviewed six market research firms for the governance  
289 change outreach efforts. He suggested that the Selectboard members and Trustees enter into  
290 executive session to discuss and select a firm to contract with.  
291

292 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

293 a. **Approval of minutes: May 28, 2019**

294 Mr. Watts suggested the minutes be changed from “Monday, May 28” to “Tuesday May 28”.  
295

296 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, that the Trustees**  
297 **approve the Consent agenda with the change suggested by Mr. Watts. The motion passed**  
298 **3-0.**  
299

300 **7. READING FILE**

- 301 a. Certificate of Merit to Village of Essex Junction from Vermont Planners Association
- 302 b. Town of Essex/Village of Essex Junction Report for Calendar Year 2018: Progress on  
303 Implementation of All-Hazards Mitigation Plan

304 c. Job Description: Merger Project Manager (Long-term, temporary, part-time)

305 d. **Board Member Comments**

- 306 • Mr. Watts noted how much reading there was in this meeting’s reading file and suggested  
307 some of the documents could have been provided farther in advance.  
308

309 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

310 a. \*An Executive session to discuss entering into a contract with a firm to conduct public  
311 engagement efforts about governance change.  
312

313 **ANDY WATTS made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, that the Selectboard make the**  
314 **specific finding that premature general public knowledge of the Town's position**  
315 **concerning the proposed contract discussion would put the Town at a substantial**  
316 **disadvantage. The motion passed 5-0.**  
317

318 **ANDY WATTS made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, that the Selectboard enter into**  
319 **executive session to discuss contracts pursuant to 1. V.S.A. 313(a)(1)(A), to include the**  
320 **Trustees, Unified Manager, Deputy Manager, and Finance Director/Assistant Manager. The**  
321 **motion passed 5-0 at 10:00 p.m.**  
322

323 **GEORGE TYLER made a similar motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, on behalf of**  
324 **the Essex Junction Trustees. The motion passed 3-0 at 10:00 p.m.**  
325

326 **MAX LEVY made a motion, seconded by PATRICK MURRAY, for the Selectboard to exit**  
327 **executive session. The motion passed 5-0 at 10:33 p.m.**  
328

329 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, for the Trustees to exit**  
330 **executive session. The motion passed 3-0 at 10:33 p.m.**  
331

332 **ANDREW BROWN made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, for the Trustees to**  
333 **authorize the Unified Manager to execute a contract with KSV for public engagement**  
334 **around governance change, and to return to the boards for approval if the contract**  
335 **exceeds \$40,000. The motion passed 3-0.**  
336

337 **ELAINE HANEY made a motion, seconded by MAX LEVY, for the Selectboard to authorize**  
338 **the Unified Manager to execute a contract with KSV for public engagement around**  
339 **governance change, and to return to the boards for approval if the contract exceeds**  
340 **\$40,000. The motion passed 5-0.**  
341

342 **9. ADJOURN**  
343

344 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, for the Trustees to**  
345 **adjourn. The motion passed 3-0 at 10:35 p.m.**  
346

347 **ELAINE HANEY made a motion, seconded by MAX LEVY, for the Selectboard to adjourn.**  
348 **The motion passed 5-0 at 10:35 p.m.**  
349

350 Respectfully Submitted,  
351 Cathy Ainsworth  
352 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.

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**From:** George Tyler  
**Sent:** Friday, June 14, 2019 8:13 AM  
**To:** Evan Teich <[eteich@essex.org](mailto:eteich@essex.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: a Question from last night

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.

**From:** Liz Gamache <[Liz@lizgamache.com](mailto:Liz@lizgamache.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 3, 2019 8:51 AM  
**To:** Evan Teich <[eteich@essex.org](mailto:eteich@essex.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: a Question from last night

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

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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

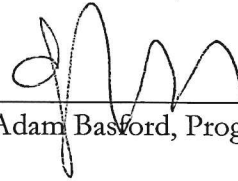
Re: Update Concerning Announcement of Planned Action

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 26<sup>th</sup> 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,



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Adam Basford, Program Manager