

## 5/25 Trustee Work Session on Essex Junction Independence

On May 25, the Trustees held a work session on Essex Junction Independence. The following is what was discussed.

The Trustees reviewed a draft of the charter for the city of Essex Junction. The Trustees agreed to keep the charter very similar to the current Village charter. They agreed to a council-manager form of government with five City Councilors elected at-large, serving three-year terms. The City Council will elect a president and vice president from its membership and appoint a City Manager. The Trustees will be creating a plan for the new city to consider the various aspects of the government within the first several years of taking form, to examine if there are future changes citizens would like to see in terms of things like have voting districts or more councilors.

The Trustees generated a list of questions for legal counsel and asked that they review the current draft of the charter.

The Trustees discussed outreach and engagement strategies for the overall initiative. Work session summaries will continue to be shared with the community and staff, along with updating materials at <https://www.essexjunction.org/independence>. The Trustees approved a postcard to be mailed to all residents that discusses the independence effort and how people can follow along and/or provide input.

The Trustees heard from resident Elaine Haney, who is leading a citizen group effort called “Our Village, Our Voices.” She reported that in the coming weeks they would be seeking community volunteers and begin their outreach effort to hear from Village residents about what they love about our community, what they hope the future will look like, and what concerns they have about independence. The group will also be working to help educate residents about the new charter, what it means, answer questions, and encourage people to vote in November.

If you have feedback on the work session, you are encouraged to share your thoughts here: <https://forms.gle/QCjgFqQcsXxia5Kb9>.

If you missed the work session, but would like to watch it, you can find it here (starting at minute 7:08 and ending at 1:57:00): <https://youtu.be/YfsdAHknU3o?t=428>.

The next work session will take place as the first item on the agenda at the June 8 Trustees meeting, which is starting early at 4:00p.m. The meeting agenda and link will be posted a few days before the meeting here: <https://www.essexjunction.org/boards/board-of-trustees>.

**Memo**

To: Village Trustees

From: Brad Luck, Director, EJRP

Date: May 19, 2021

Re: Work Session: Essex Junction Independence

**Essex Junction Independence**

Goal

To create an independent Essex Junction, ensuring that it: has a foundation that provides for economic and political stability, reflects the Village character, has opportunity for growth, and looks towards the future.

How we will get there

This will be a Village led process that is future-oriented. We will steer clear of distractions and act with civility, transparency, and deliberateness. The Trustees will work to develop consensus and speak with a consistent voice. We will engage with, bring together, seek input from, and work to inform our community. We will work with the Selectboard and maintain a healthy relationship with our neighbors in the Town.

Tonight, we will be discussing:

- A. Draft Charter and next steps
- B. Review timeline & consider scheduling additional work sessions
- C. Outreach strategies
- D. Updates of Community Conversations group with chair Elaine Haney

A. Draft Charter and next steps

George kindly took the lead in drafting the charter and collecting edits. We can review the charter and:

- Highlight notable sections (changes from current Village practice and/or the failed merger charter)
- Note areas that need further discussion
- Generate a list of questions for legal counsel

Here are some questions that have already come up for legal counsel that can be modified or added to:

- Do the Transitional Provisions need to be in the Charter or can they be in a separate document?
- Do we need this level of specificity on real estate appraisal?
- If the new Charter is approved, what happens to the current Trustees?
- As a new city, are we a new entity (I.e. a new FEIN)?
- As a new city, what happens with all current employee contracts/association, etc.?

At our last work session, we identified five items of the charter that should get some board discussion and community input:

1. Form of Government: Council-Manager or Mayor-Council (weak mayor or strong mayor)
2. Election of officials: at-large, wards/districts (one official per or multiple), combination
3. Governing Body Composition: number of officials
4. Term of Office: length of term (all same or different)
5. Meetings/Elections: Town Meeting Day or alignment with EWSD

While the first four items are intriguing to think about and re-imagine a future Village government, it is recommended that the Trustees consider the following:

- Change is hard. While the idea of separation is overwhelmingly popular, actually doing it may feel daunting to some. Becoming a city is a significant singular change, that inherently will have many ripple effects. It may not be the right time to introduce governance nuances that can be confusing and different than what people are used to. Simpler is sometimes better.
- The Village has had a charter and system of government for nearly 130 years that has worked and the community is familiar with: a council-manager form of government with five trustees, elected at-large, for three-year terms, who then elect their own president, and hire a municipal manager.
- Moving to a mayor-council system (weak mayor) can be confusing and is a significant change. While the KSV studies were about merger and involved people from the Village and Town outside the Village, the KSV quantitative survey data indicated 62% of residents did not believe that (a merged) Essex should have an elected mayor in addition to having a unified representative council and an appointed town manager. Of those opposed, 2/3 said they would rather have people running to serve on the council and 1/3 were concerned a mayor wouldn't have much power to do anything. Note: of the 38% who were in favor of a mayor, 8 in 10 believed it would be an effective voice advocating for Essex at the state level. The point of this is not to debate the merits of a weak mayor system or the KSV data and its relevance to the current conversation, it is that introducing a mayor in this charter could change the vote from one about independence to one about the form of government for some people.
- Moving to more neighborhood centered districts/wards may be a good direction for the Village and this concept sounds Village oriented, yet in the KSV data, more voters from the Village agreed that at-large representation (58%) would be an ok representation model vs. districts/wards only (56%) or a combination of at-large/wards (39%). The survey was looking at merger, so take it for what it is. Again, introducing this new element could generate discourse and voting about how officials are elected instead of about independence. Additionally, with new census data not coming out until September, it would be difficult to effectively create balanced districts until then, which would be too late for the charter.
- For those desiring these conversations and considerations of new governance models for the independent city of Essex Junction, the Trustees could consider writing into their transitional provisions (or stating in another fashion) their commitment to having a citizen committee be formed within X amount of time of the new charter taking effect, to study governance models and make recommendations for any changes. This would show a clear intent for this to be a priority and serious consideration in the near future, and would keep the separation vote about a governance model that has been used, accepted, and is understood by Village residents.

- Some of the most challenging work ahead will be the transitional provisions, creating a timeline of the creation/return of Village departments, undoing of MOU's, and future financial relationship with the Town. It may be better to have more time to focus on these things.

It is recommended that the Trustees discuss how to address the five items of the charter that were identified for more robust consideration.

B. Review timeline & consider scheduling additional work sessions

We need to identify approximately eight hours of work sessions in the coming weeks to discuss personnel, organizational structure, budgets, and more. Doodle results indicated the following could work for all five Trustees:

- Sat, 6/5 - 1:30-5:00p.m. - after the morning retreat with the SB
- Mon, 6/7 - 4:00-8:00p.m.
- Note: regular Trustees meeting on 6/8
- Thu, 6/10 - 4:00-8:00p.m.
- Mon, 6/14 - 4:00-8:00p.m.

In addition to selecting the dates and times, the Trustees should discuss if these will be online, in-person, or both.

Here is the timeline that has been outlined:

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Focal Points</b>
Trustees Meeting	27-Apr	Meet with attorney. Trustee goals and operating norms. Community Conversations. Budget/source of funds. Timeline and scope of work. Outreach strategies.
Trustees Meeting	11-May	Timeline. Charter legislative process with Representatives. Charter items. Charter writing plan. Outreach strategies.
Trustees Meeting	25-May	Charter walk through. Charter items discussion. Charter engagement.
Trustees Meeting	8-Jun	Charter review. Charter engagement.
<b>ADDED Full Day Work Session</b>	BETWEEN 6/9-6/21	Full day work session on personnel, organizational structure, and budget. Options with attorney. MOU's. Assets/buildings. Approach/plan for working with Selectboard. Transitional Provisions.
Trustees Meeting	22-Jun	Charter review. Committees. Intergovernmental/Health & Human Services. FY22 independent org chart and budget based on planned service delivery/organization.
Trustees Meeting	13-Jul	Charter review. Organization and budget. Transitional Provisions.
<b>ADDED Work Session</b>	27-Jul	Transitional Provisions.
Trustees Meeting	10-Aug	Community booklet content. Village Summit plan and promotion.
Trustees Meeting	24-Aug	Community Conversations presentation.
<b>ADDED Work Session</b>	31-Aug	Charter, organization, budget review for alignment with community.
<b>ADDED 11-Sep</b>		VILLAGE SUMMIT: Community conversations, charter, organization, and budget. Resident feedback opportunity.
Trustees Meeting	14-Sep	Charter, organization, budget review for alignment with Summit feedback. Charter approval.
	15-Sep	Charter filed with clerk at least 10 days before first public hearing
<b>ADDED Public Hearing</b>	28-Sep	First public hearing (between 9/25-10/3 – at least 30 days before vote); approval of warning of charter vote for November 2
	29-Sep	Vote warned (9/23-10/3 - not less than 30 or more than 40 days)
Trustees Meeting	12-Oct	Second public hearing on charter. Last chance for charter revisions (actually 10/13, 20 days before vote).
	13-Oct	Last day for any charter revisions (20-days before vote)
Trustees Meeting	26-Oct	No work session on Essex Junction Independence.
Trustees Meeting	2-Nov	Vote. TRUSTEES BUDGET WORKSHOP DAY.

Here are some comments from legal counsel on the timeline:

1) You have the 2nd public hearing for October 12th. The last day (as properly noted) for charter changes is 20 days before the vote. If, as a result of that vote, you have some further edits, then you have only 1 day to do it. This places a LOT of pressure on the people doing the editing and also any persons meeting to discuss these changes. Hopefully you will have it all ironed out by then, but its something to keep in mind. I might suggest bumping back both by a couple of weeks?

2) Do you have any work sessions between the first and 2nd public hearing so that you can address any edits you might want after the first public hearing?

Ed has commented that August is often a tough month since a lot of people are away on vacations. I have copied him if he has any other comments.

Claudine

#### C. Outreach strategies

**Work Session Summaries** - We will continue to distribute work session summaries on Front Porch Forum, the Village website, and social media. It also is being e-mailed to all Village and Town staff.

**Village Website** - We will continue to update and add materials to the website.

**Placespeak** – we are hoping to launch Placespeak this week.

**Direct Mail** – Mailing to all residences seems to be one of the most effective strategies to get the word out. In the KSV survey, residents identified “mail sent to home” as the top way (58%) they would like to receive information pertaining to a proposed merger. Note: the others at the top were Front Porch Forum (52%), email (52%), and Town/Village websites (50%).

Here is a possible schedule of mailers:

- May – postcard to inform about the initiative, goals, operating norms, work session schedule, website, contact information, and Placespeak
- Late August/Early September – postcard Summit invite and details
- Late September – Essex Junction Independence booklet: charter, organization, budget, timeline, FAQ’s, vote information, etc.

Linda has graciously and creatively drafted a postcard that could be mailed at this time. The Trustees should review the content, determine if they find value in sending a postcard at this time, and if so, discuss a process for edits and timeline for mailing.

Note: if the Trustees agree to proceed with a postcard, the first item on the agenda after the work session is this consideration. The recommended motion would be: “I move that we proceed with mailing a postcard regarding the independence effort to all residents of the Village as discussed in the work session.”

**Strategies To Consider Further Down the Road:**

**Trustee Chats** – The Trustees could consider holding chats with residents as informal opportunities for them to ask questions and make suggestions. If this is of interest, the Trustees should consider if these will be in-person or online (or both), the format/plan, frequency, days, dates, times, etc.

**Forums** – The Trustees could consider holding a/some public forums that could provide education, discussion, and information gathering from participants.

D. Updates of Community Conversations group with chair Elaine Haney  
Elaine Haney will be with us to share the current status of a citizen volunteer group.

**Attachments:**

- Memo from George Tyler re: Draft Charter
- Draft Charter as of 5/19/21
- Draft Postcard
- VLCT Quick Guide to Charter Procedure
- Trustee charter survey results
- Trustee charter survey summary
- Community feedback from 5/11 work session
- KSV Key Findings Report

## **Memo**

**From:** George Tyler

**To:** Essex Junction Board of Trustees

**Date:** 5/20/21

Attached is the working draft of the City of Essex Junction Charter with all your edits/comments as track changes.

After reviewing your edits/comments/questions, I researched the charters of four Vermont cities similar to Essex Junction in population and density (people/square mile) – Barre, Montpelier, St. Albans, and Winooski – to help clarify a few issues that came up. I also tried to simplify and summarize some of the key tasks we'll need to focus on.

Lastly, I created a "reference" section of relevant portions of those other city charters that might facilitate our charter creation and revision efforts.

## **Some Key Tasks for Completion of City Charter**

### **Transitional Sections**

- I. Does the city charter need to explicitly state an intention to adopt/continue Essex Junction ordinances, policies, contracts, debts, operations, etc.?
- II. How will the Village government transition to a City government? For example, do Trustees automatically become councilors? What if the charter establishes wards and new elected positions? Does the Village budget automatically become the City budget?
- III. Financial and contractual obligations (bonded debt, etc.) incurred as a former incorporated village in Essex Town.
- IV. Intermunicipal agreements with Essex Town – what needs to be spelled out in the charter?

### **Form of Government**

Barre, Montpelier, St. Albans, and Winooski all have council-manager governments and mayors. All their charters give similar powers to the manager but varying powers to the mayor. (Montpelier has a city council president & a mayor!) [\(Reference #1\)](#)

### **Voting Wards/Districts**

Barre and St. Albans have voting wards; Montpelier has voting districts. *(Note: if we want wards but feel we cannot establish them prior to the charter vote then we could put a clause in the transitional portion*



*of the charter stating that the City will have wards which will be established 60 days prior to the first annual meeting after approval of the charter.)* [\(reference #2\)](#)

## **Annual Meeting**

Although Vermont has state-wide “Town Meeting” day, none of the city charters make any reference to “town meeting.” Each specifically declares that the first Tuesday in March shall be a “City Meeting” day on which a budget is presented, and elections are held. We will need to decide if we are going to coordinate our Australian balloting with the E-W school district. [\(Reference #3\)](#)

## **Ordinances**

Each charter describes a multi-step process for establishing ordinances similar in detail to the present process described in the draft charter we are working on. [\(Reference #4\)](#)

## **Tax Assessment**

Each charter deals with the process of tax assessment differently.

## **Reference #1 Form of Government**

### **Barre**

#### **Subchapter 003 : City Council, (Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 1, § 301), § 1-301. Governing body**

The City shall be governed by an elected Council and by an appointed City Manager and by such other officers and employees as may be duly appointed pursuant to this charter, City ordinances, or general laws of the State of Vermont.

(1) The City Council shall consist of the Mayor and two councilors for each ward who shall serve for a term of two years.

(2) Within the limitations of the foregoing, the Council shall have the power to:

(A) Appoint and remove the City Manager and supervise, create, and abolish offices, commissions, or departments other than the offices, commissions, or departments established by this charter.

(B) Assign additional duties to offices, commissions, or departments established by this charter, but may not discontinue or assign to any other office, commission, or department duties assigned to a particular office, commission, or department established by this charter.

## **Montpelier**

### **Subchapter 001 : Incorporation And Grant Of Powers**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 5, § 103)**

#### **§ 5-103. Form of government**

(a) The municipal government provided by this chapter shall be known as council-manager form of government. Pursuant to its provisions and subject only to the limitations imposed by the State Constitution and by this chapter, all powers of the City shall be vested in an elective City Council which shall enact ordinances, codes, and regulations; adopt budgets; determine policies; and appoint the City Manager, who shall enforce the laws and ordinances and administer the government of the City. All powers of the City shall be exercised in the manner prescribed by this chapter or prescribed by ordinance.

(b) The Mayor and Council members shall be sworn to the faithful performance of their respective duties. The Mayor and Council members in their joint capacity shall constitute the City Council. The City Council shall have all the powers of selectboards, as well as additional powers granted by this chapter. (Amended 2013, No. M-19 (Adj. Sess.), § 2, eff. May 20, 2014.)

## **St. Albans**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 11, § 4)**

#### **§ 11-4. Form of government**

The municipal government provided by this charter shall be known as a council-manager form of government. Pursuant to its provisions and subject only to the limitations imposed by the State Constitution and by this charter, all powers of the City shall be vested in an elective council, hereinafter referred to as the City Council, which shall enact ordinances, codes, and regulations, adopt budgets, determine policies, and appoint the City Manager, who shall execute the laws and administer the government of the City. All powers of the City shall be exercised in the manner prescribed by this charter or prescribed by ordinance. (Amended 2009, No. M-23 (Adj. Sess.), § 5

## **Winooski**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 19, § 101)**

#### **§ 19-101. Corporate existence retained; form of government**

(a) The City of Winooski as constituted by No. 314 of the Acts of 1921, as amended, is hereby continued to be incorporated as a body corporate and politic. The boundaries of the City are depicted on a plan recorded as Slide 10 Map 77-3 (formerly Book 2 Page 14), attached hereto as Exhibit A.

(b) The municipal government provided by this charter shall be known as a council-manager form of government. Pursuant to its provisions and subject only to the limitations imposed by the State Constitution and by this charter, all powers of the City shall be vested in an elective council, hereinafter referred to as "the Council," which shall enact ordinances, codes, and regulations, adopt budgets, determine policies, appoint the City Manager, and exercise the powers of a municipal legislative body. All powers of the City shall be exercised in the manner prescribed by this charter or prescribed by ordinance or by resolution.

## **Reference #2 Voting Wards/Districts**

### **Barre**

#### **Subchapter 001 : Incorporation And General Provisions**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 1, § 103)**

##### **§ 1-103. Wards established**

There shall be three wards for the City of Barre and the boundaries of the wards shall be fixed from time to time by the Board of Civil Authority subject to the approval of the City Council. The boundaries shall be fixed so as to provide equal or near equal distribution of population among the three wards in accordance with the most recent federal census. (Amended 2019, No. M-3, § 2, eff. April 19

### **Montpelier**

#### **Chapter 005 : City Of Montpelier**

##### **Subchapter 002 : City Voting Districts**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 5, § 201)**

##### **§ 5-201. City voting districts**

There shall be three voting districts for the City, which shall be defined and filed with the City Clerk. The City Council may make changes from time to time to the boundaries of the districts in order to provide an equal division of population among them in accordance with U.S. Census data. Voting district changes shall not be made more frequently than once in five years. Such changes shall be approved by the voters at an annual or special meeting of the City and shall become effective immediately upon approval unless a later date is established therein. (Amended 2013, No. M-19 (Adj. Sess.), § 2, eff. May 20, 2014.)

### **St. Albans**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 11, § 5)**

##### **§ 11-5. Wards**

The City Council is empowered to make such changes from time to time, by resolution or ordinance, in the number and boundaries of the several wards of the City as it may deem proper, having regard so far as practicable and convenient, to an equal division of population among them; provided that after the first change so made, such changes shall not be made more than once in five years. (Amended 2009, No. M-23 (Adj. Sess.), § 6, eff. May 20, 2010.)

## **Reference #3 Annual Meeting**

### **Barre**

#### **Subchapter 002 : Elections And City Meetings**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 1, § 202)**

§ 1-202. Time of elections and meetings

(a) The annual City meeting of the City for the election of officers, the voting of budgets, and any other business included in the warnings for the meeting, shall be held on the first Tuesday in March, unless otherwise legally warned by the Council.

### **Montpelier**

#### **Subchapter 005 : City Meetings; Nomination And Election Of Officers**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 5, § 501)**

§ 5-501. City meetings

(a)(1) On the first Tuesday of March in each year, a meeting of the voters of the City shall be held as designated on the warning for such meeting, at a place or places to be appointed by the City Council, and a warning shall be posted in accordance with State statute.

(2) Any business or election required by this chapter or general law to be transacted at the annual meeting may also be transacted at a special meeting.

(b) The warning for annual and special City meetings shall, by separate articles, specifically indicate the business to be transacted, including the offices and the questions to be voted upon. The warning also shall contain any legally binding article or articles requested by 10 percent of the registered voters of the City. The warning shall also include any nonlegally binding articles, including matters of State, national, or international importance requested by five percent of the voters. Petitions requesting that an article be placed on the warning shall be filed with the City Clerk not fewer than 40 days before the day of the meeting.

(c) All budgets, elections, and public questions shall be considered by Australian ballot at annual and special meetings.

(d) A vote taken at an annual or special meeting shall remain in effect unless rescinded or amended. (Amended 2011, No. M-15 (Adj. Sess.), § 2, eff. May 7, 2012; 2013, No. M-19 (Adj. Sess.), § 2, eff. May 20, 2014.)

## **St. Albans**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 11, § 6)**

### **§ 11-6. City meetings**

- (a) Annually on the first Tuesday of March a meeting of the legal voters of the City, and of the several wards therein, shall be held for the election of officials, the voting of budgets, and any other business included in the warnings for the meeting, which shall be by Australian ballot, and a plurality of votes shall be sufficient to elect. The ballot boxes shall be open for a minimum of nine consecutive hours at times and a location to be determined and warned by the City Council.

## **Winooski**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 19, § 201)**

### **§ 19-201. City meetings**

The annual City meeting shall occur on the first Tuesday in March, and shall be warned in the manner provided by general law. Special City meetings shall be called and warned as provided by general law. All elections, voter registration and qualifications, absentee voting, and the conduct of such City meetings shall be controlled by general law. All matters shall be considered by Australian ballot. (Added 2013, No. M-9, § 3, eff. June 4, 2013.)

## **Reference #4 Ordinances**

### **Barre**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 1, § 107)**

#### **§ 1-107. Ordinances; adoption process**

(a) Every ordinance shall be introduced in writing. The enacting clause of all ordinances shall be "The Council of the City of Barre hereby ordains...". If the Council passes the proposed ordinance upon first reading, it shall cause it to be published in the form passed in a newspaper of general circulation in the City or such other manner of publication as acceptable in State law, at least once, together with a notice of the time and place when and where there will be a public hearing to consider the same for final passage. The first such publication shall be at least three days prior to the date of the public hearing.

- (b) After the public hearing, the Council may finally pass the ordinance with or without amendment. If the Council amends the proposed ordinance, then it shall cause the amended ordinance to be published at least once together with a notice of the time and place of the public hearing, at which such amended ordinance will be further considered and which publication shall be at least three days prior to the public hearing. Once the ordinance is adopted by the Council, the City Clerk shall cause the ordinance as adopted to be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the City or such other manner of publication as acceptable in State law, and said ordinance shall take effect 14 days after the date of the publication. (Amended 2019, No. M-3, § 2, eff. April 19, 2019.)

## **Montpelier**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 5, § 702)**

### **§ 5-702. Ordinance adoption, notice, and effective date**

- (a) A proposed bylaw, regulation, or ordinance shall be adopted upon completion of the process that includes public notification and public hearing prior to passage by the City Council.
- (b) The adoption or amendment of an ordinance shall be warned in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 1972, as may be amended from time to time, in addition to posting on the City website and public notice six days prior to the effective date.
- (c) An ordinance takes effect 15 days after passage unless the City Council or the City Clerk receives a petition signed by five percent of the voters calling for a public vote to disapprove the ordinance. (Amended 2013, No. M-19 (Adj. Sess.), § 2, eff. May 20, 2014.)

## **St. Albans**

### **Chapter 011 : City Of St. Albans**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 11, § 17)**

### **§ 11-17. Ordinances; introduction; first and second readings; public hearings**

(a) Every ordinance shall be introduced in writing. The enacting clause of all ordinances shall be "The Council of the City of St. Albans hereby ordains... ". If the Council passes the proposed ordinance upon first reading, it shall cause a short and concise one-paragraph description of the effects of the proposed ordinance to be published in a locally distributed newspaper, at least once, together with a notice of the time and place where and when there shall be a public hearing to consider the same for final passage. Such publication shall include reference to a place within the City where copies of the entire text of the proposed ordinance may be examined. The first publication shall be at least one week prior to the date of the public hearing. In the event the City Council shall comprehensively revise any chapter or chapters of its Code of Ordinances it shall be sufficient if a concise summary of the principal provisions of such revision is published as aforesaid rather than the entire text thereof.

(b) At the time and place so advertised, or at any time and place to which the hearing may from time to time be adjourned, the ordinance shall be read in full, except that by vote of a majority of the Council, the ordinance may be read by title, and after the reading, all persons interested shall be given an opportunity to be heard.

(d) After the hearing, the Council may finally pass the ordinance with or without amendment, except that if the Council makes an amendment it shall follow the provisions for final passage, publication, and public hearing as provided by subsections (a) and (b) of this section. After the hearing, the Council may finally pass the amended ordinance or again amend it subject to the same procedures as outlined herein. (Amended 2009, No. M-23 (Adj. Sess.), § 18, eff. May 20, 2010.)

## **Winooski**

### **Chapter 019 : City Of Winooski**

**(Cite as: 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 19, § 402)**

#### **§ 19-402. Ordinances in general**

(a) Form. Every proposed ordinance shall be introduced in writing and in the form required for final adoption. No ordinance shall contain more than one subject which shall be clearly expressed in its title. The enacting clause shall be "The City of Winooski hereby ordains...". Any ordinance which repeals or amends an existing ordinance or part of the City Code shall set out in full the ordinance, sections, or subsections to be repealed or amended, and shall indicate the matter to be omitted by enclosing it in brackets or by strikeout type and shall indicate new matter by underscoring or by italics.

(b) Procedure. An ordinance may be introduced by any member at any regular or special meeting of the Council. Upon introduction of any ordinance, the City Clerk shall distribute a copy to each Council member and to the Manager, shall file a reasonable number of copies in the office of the City Clerk, and shall post and publish the ordinance, or synopsis thereof, as provided by general law, together with a notice setting out the time and place for a public hearing thereon and for its consideration by the Council. The public hearing may be held separately or in connection with a regular or special council meeting and may be adjourned from time to time; all persons interested shall have an opportunity to be heard. After the hearing, the Council may adopt the ordinance with or without amendment or reject it but, if it is amended as to any matter of substance, the Council may not adopt it until the ordinance or its amended sections have been subjected to all the procedures herein required in the case of a newly introduced ordinance.

(c) Effective date. Except as otherwise provided in this charter, every adopted ordinance shall become effective at the expiration of 30 days after adoption or at any later date specified therein. (Added 2013, No. M-9, § 3, eff. June 4, 2013.)

## CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION

### PREAMBLE

The inhabitants of Essex Junction are a corporate and political body under the name of "City of Essex Junction." As such, inhabitants enjoy all rights, immunities, powers, and privileges and are subject to all the duties and liabilities now appertaining to or incumbent upon them as a municipal corporation.

**[George Tyler's NOTE: The following is from the 1999 separation charter: "*The inhabitants of the Village of Essex Junction, within the corporate limits as now established as the Village of Essex Junction, shall continue to be a municipal corporation by the name of the City of Essex Junction.*" ]**

### Subchapter 1: Transitional Provisions

#### § 101 Adoption of Village assets and liabilities

- (a) All assets and obligations formerly owned or held by the Village of Essex Junction shall become the assets and obligations of the new City of Essex Junction upon the effective date of the charter. This shall include all real property, easements, rights, and interests in land, buildings, and other improvements; vehicles, equipment, and other personal property; assessed but uncollected taxes, rents, and charges, together with lien rights and enforcement powers; moneys, rights of action in legal or administrative proceedings; insurance policies; documents and records; debts, claims, bonded indebtedness; without any further act, deed, or instrument being necessary.
- (b) All contracts, agreements, trusts, and other binding written documents affecting the Village shall remain in effect on the effective date of the charter, and the new City of Essex Junction shall assume all the responsibilities formerly belonging to the Village unless otherwise specified. ~~Pursuant to § 104, the unincorporated Village shall become a debt assessment district until the Village's residual bond debt is retired.~~

#### § 102 Transition Period

**[George Tyler's NOTE: I believe we will need to consult with an attorney about this section. At first glance it may not seem necessary, but the budget that was approved prior to Legislative approval of the City charter will have been for the "Village" and not the "City" and it may not be directly transferable. There could be other reasons for having a transition period as well.]** *The transition period shall begin not later than July 1, following the approval of the charter by the Legislature, and end on June 30 the year after approval of the charter. At the end of the transition period, the charter will become effective and the new City of Essex Junction shall be fully established and organized. Nothing in this section shall affect or limit other provisions in this subchapter or in other*



*subchapters, which serve a transitional purpose and which by their own provisions continue beyond the transitional period. In such cases, transitional provisions intended to extend beyond the transitional period shall be governed by specific sunset terms.*

§ 103 Organizational Municipal Meeting

The first annual City Meeting shall occur on ~~City Meeting Day~~ the first Tuesday in March following approval of the charter. ~~This shall be a unified meeting of the new municipality and shall be noticed and warned to all residents of the City of Essex Junction. and unincorporated Village of Essex Junction.~~ This meeting shall be for the purpose of presenting and discussing the budget only. Other (new City) business may also be presented and discussed but not voted on. After presentation and discussion of the budget and any other business the meeting shall adjourn. Voting on the budget shall be by Australian ballot and shall occur on ~~City Meeting Day~~. Voting for new Essex City elected officers shall also occur at this time.

~~Time and holding of the meeting shall be pursuant to Subchapter 5 of the City charter. The first annual City meeting shall be jointly warned by the Interim Governing Body pursuant to §105. The election of a moderator shall be the first order of business.~~

**Commented [gt1]:** We will need to discuss this. Do we want it to coordinate with the school district?

**Commented [gt2]:** Andrew notes: this probably isn't necessary.

§ 104 Transitional Districts

*Transitional district rates shall be set by the new City Council.*

- (a) *For a transitional period commencing from the July 1 effective date of the charter, the unincorporated Village of Essex Junction (formerly the incorporated Village of Essex Junction) shall be designated as a Debt Assessment District for the purpose of retiring the Village's residual bonded debt in existence before the transitional period. This residual debt is scheduled to retire in FY 2035.*
- (b) *For a transitional period of 12 years commencing from the July 1 effective date of the charter, the unincorporated Village of Essex Junction (formerly the incorporated Village of Essex Junction) shall be designated as a Tax Reconciliation District for the purpose of transferring the cost of the Village's municipal operations into the City's operational budget.*
- (c) *For a transitional period of 12 years commencing from the July 1 effective date of the charter, the unincorporated Village of Essex Junction (formerly the incorporated Village of Essex Junction) shall be designated as a Sidewalk District for the purpose of levying a special tax on properties within the Village for the purpose of maintaining the Village's sidewalks, including snow removal and routine maintenance, but not capital repairs, in accordance with its previous sidewalk maintenance procedures prior to the merger.*

- (d) *For a transitional period of 12 years commencing from the July 1 effective date of the charter, the unincorporated Village of Essex Junction (formerly the incorporated Village of Essex Junction) shall be designated as a Capital Improvement District for the purpose of levying a special tax on properties within the Village for the purpose of paying for Village capital infrastructure projects on the Village's Capital Reserve Plan prior to the merger. The Capital Improvement District is not required to complete all projects in the plan prior to the end of the transitional period and the Council shall designate in their proposed budgets which projects are to be completed in each new fiscal year of the transitional period.*
- (e) *For a transitional period of 12 years commencing from the July 1 effective date of the charter, the Village Center Zone, as designated in the Essex Junction zoning plan, shall be designated as a Downtown Improvement District for the purpose of continuing the Village's downtown revitalization efforts as outlined in the Village's municipal plan, and shall retain any and all state designations for the purposes of redevelopment in force at the time of adoption of the charter or until such designations are withdrawn or amended as per routine statutory process.*

*§ 105 Interim Governing Body*

- (a) *For the transition period described in paragraph § 102 following the approval of the charter by the Legislature, all members of the former City Council and Village Board of Trustees shall comprise an Interim Governing Body. In no event shall the Interim Governing Body consist of fewer than three former trustees and three former selectpersons. In the event of a resignation, the remaining members of the board on which the resignation occurred shall appoint a replacement chosen from the registered voters in the communities over which they have jurisdiction. The Interim Governing Body shall schedule, warn, and hold meetings as appropriate. The former selectpersons shall address details and issues relating to expenditures in the Essex City budget approved by voters for the fiscal year of the transitional period. The former trustees shall address details and issues relating to expenditures in the Essex Junction budget approved by voters for the fiscal year of the transitional period. The selectpersons and trustees shall address all details and issues relating to the transition from a City and village to the new City of Essex Junction jointly. The Interim Governing Body with the assistance of the Unified Manager shall develop recommendations for whatever proposals or policies are needed to ensure a smooth transition. The new City of Essex Junction Council may implement such proposals at the end of the transitional period.*
- (b) *During the transition period the Interim Governing Body will also, with the assistance of the Manager and staff, integrate the ordinances of the former City of Essex Junction with the ordinances of the former Village of Essex Junction, pursuant to § 110 below, by identifying conflicting ordinances and determining in each case whether the more or less restrictive ordinance will apply or a combination thereof.*

- (c) *In the event of a vacancy that results in fewer than three members of the former City Council or fewer than three members of the former Village Trustees, all remaining members shall vote to appoint a member from the district with a vacancy in a manner pursuant to § 304.*
- (d) *The Interim Governing Body will also, with the assistance of the Unified Manager and staff, propose and warn in the manner pursuant to this charter, the first annual budget of the new City of Essex Junction for consideration by the voters at the first annual meeting held pursuant to § 103. This meeting shall be informational only. Voting for the budget shall occur on City Meeting Day pursuant to § 103.*

§ 106 City Council

- (a) *There shall be a City Council consisting of seven members.*
- (b) *Three members shall reside within the boundaries of the former incorporated Village of Essex Junction to be elected by the qualified voters within the boundaries of the former incorporated Village of Essex Junction. This area will become known as Ward 2. Boundary adjustments will be made over time as necessary pursuant to § 301. Three members shall reside within the boundaries of the City of Essex Junction exclusive of the former Village of Essex Junction to be elected by the qualified voters of the City of Essex Junction exclusive of the former Village of Essex Junction. This area will become known as Ward 1. Boundary adjustments will be made over time as necessary pursuant to § 301. One member shall reside in either Ward 1 or Ward 2 to be elected by the combined votes of the qualified voters in Ward 1 and Ward 2.*
- (c) *The term of office of a City Selectperson shall be three years and terms shall be staggered. For the first election cycle seven people will be elected. One seat for each ward will be for three years; one seat for each ward will be for two years; one seat for each ward will be for one year. After that, every seat shall be a three-year term. The remaining seat will be at large from either ward and the term shall be three years.*
- (d) *Within three years after the first election of the seven-member Council, the Council shall appoint a special commission to study the composition of voting wards within the City of Essex Junction, including the former incorporated Village of Essex Junction, and, having regard to an equal division of population and other considerations deemed proper, recommend within one year, changes, if any, to the number and boundaries of wards by which members of the Council are elected.*

§ 107 Budget and Municipality Administration

*Following the approval of the charter by the Legislature pursuant to § 103 and § 105, the Manager will propose a unified budget for the community for the next fiscal year that addresses proper service levels, contractual obligations, capital projects, and debt, and that reflects any changes related to the merger.*

*§ 108 Village and City Department Transitional Provisions*

- (a) For a transitional period of five years commencing from the July 1 effective date of the charter, the Manager, with the advice and consent of the new City of Essex Junction Council, shall integrate the fire departments, community development and planning departments, parks and recreation departments, and any other former City and village municipal services and operations, with special provisions and considerations outlined below.*
- (b) The City of Essex Junction shall operate the former Essex Junction Fire Department and former Essex City Fire Department, and each department shall have a chief appointed by the Manager. At the Manager's discretion, one person may be appointed chief for both departments. During the transitional period, pursuant to § 105, the Interim Governing Body may review options for integrating the operations of the two departments for the purpose of improving efficiency and service levels, with a preference for retaining the historic identities of the two departments and for the predominant level of service to remain "paid on call."*
- (c) During the five-year transitional period the Manager shall integrate and reorganize the former City and village recreation and parks departments and the Manager shall appoint a department head.*
- (d) During the five-year transitional period the Manager shall integrate and reorganize the former City and village community development and planning departments, and the Manager shall appoint a department head.*

*§ 109 Planning and Development*

- (a) On the effective date of this charter, the former City plan and Village plan, and the former City zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations, and the former Village's zoning bylaws and Land Development Code shall remain in effect in their respective former geographic areas until amended or revised by the new City Council upon recommendation by the merged Planning Commission and in conjunction with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and pursuant to 24 VSA 4350(a).*
- (b) Prior to the effective date of the charter, the City Council shall appoint three members and the Village Trustees shall appoint three members to serve on the new City planning commission. The duration of the first terms shall be staggered to*

*establish ongoing, staggered appointment schedules. Once it has organized, the new City Council shall choose a seventh member for a term.*

- (c) *Prior to the effective date of the charter, the City Council shall appoint three members and the Village Trustees shall appoint three members to serve on the new City Development Review Board. The duration of the first terms shall be staggered to establish ongoing, staggered three-year appointment schedules. Once it has organized, the new City Council shall choose a seventh member for a three-year term.*

#### *§ 110 Unification and Adoption of Ordinances, Bylaws, and Rules*

*On the effective date of this charter, all ordinances, and bylaws of the City of Essex Junction and the Village of Essex Junction shall become ordinances and bylaws of the new City of Essex Junction. The Interim Governing Body shall integrate the ordinances of the former City of Essex Junction with the ordinances of the former Village of Essex Junction pursuant to § 105(b) of this charter. The new City of Essex Junction Council shall be fully authorized to amend or repeal any ordinance according to the provisions of subchapter 6 of the charter. Whenever a power is granted by any such ordinance or bylaw to an officer or officers of the City of Essex Junction or the Village of Essex Junction, such power is conferred upon the appropriate officer or officers of the new City of Essex Junction.*

#### *§ 111 Personnel*

- (a) *Pursuant to § 105, the Interim Governing Body shall develop a pay and classification plan and make recommendations to meet the City's needs. The new City of Essex Junction Council may implement such proposals at the end of the transitional period.*
- (b) *The City of Essex Junction personnel regulations in effect at the time of approval of the charter shall carry over and control until amended by the new City of Essex Junction Council.*
- (c) *Employees of the City of Essex Junction and the Village of Essex Junction shall become employees of the new City of Essex Junction. The dates of hire with the City of Essex Junction and the Village of Essex Junction will be used as the dates of hire for purposes related to benefits with the new City of Essex Junction and all accrued benefits shall carry over.*

#### *§ 112 Water and Sewer Districts*

*Upon the effective date of the charter, there shall be a transitional phase to incorporate the municipal water systems and municipal sewer systems into one service area district. The one district shall be made up of multiple systems which follow the boundaries of the*

*legacy systems including those operated separately by the Village of Essex Junction and the City of Essex Junction. Each system will have its own user base consistent with the legacy systems. Costs specific to each system will be charged solely to the user base within the boundaries of that system including capital and debt service costs. Any new costs incurred after the effective date of the charter of the merged municipality attributable to the entire district will be borne by all users. Costs attributable to specific users through a special assessment, surcharge, or other contractual arrangement shall continue to be assessed to the specific users until they are paid in full.*

**§ 113 Finances**

- (a) *The existing real property tax system of the City shall become the system of the new City of Essex Junction. Upon the effective date of the charter, all grand lists will remain in effect and any remaining taxes due to the Village and City will be payable to the new City of Essex Junction keeping all existing due dates. The new City of Essex Junction will manage the existing budget of the Village and City with oversight by the Interim Governing Body.*
- (b) *All tax and indebtedness incurred by the Village tax payers at the time of merger are to remain with these properties until final payment of said obligations are made in full.*
- (c) *All existing legal obligations, including but not limited to tax stabilization agreements and any agreements to purchase real property, are to be considered obligations of the new governmental entity.*

**§ 114 Terms Extended**

*The Council and Trustee terms set to expire in the year of approval of the charter shall be extended without further action necessary, until June 30, 2022. All other elected officials holding office at the time of Legislative approval of the charter shall remain in their seats until new elections occur or until they step down from office.*

**§ 115 Transitional Tax Districts and Transitional Tax Provisions**

*Transitional tax districts shall be established pursuant to § 104.*

**§ 116 Repeals**

*24 App. V.S.A. chapters 117 (City of Essex Junction Charter) and 221 (Village of Essex Junction Charter) are repealed.*

**Commented [gt3]:** Andrew Notes: all of the following up to subchapter 2 is merger related and not appropriate for this charter. However, this section does call attention to some important considerations for the city charter. For example, we will probably need to state that the Village municipal plan and Land Development Code will be adopted by the City; that all debts, etc. of the Village will be adopted by city; all Village departments will continue, etc.

## Subchapter 2: Incorporation and Powers of The City

### § 201 Corporate Existence

[George Tyler's NOTE: This is virtually the same as in the preamble. I'm not sure if both are necessary.]The inhabitants of the Village of Essex Junction, within the corporate limits as now established, shall be a municipal corporation by the name of the City of Essex Junction. ~~This municipal corporation is a merger of and a successor to the City of Essex Junction (24 App. V.S.A. chapter 117 repealed) and the Village of Essex Junction (24 App. V.S.A. chapter 221 repealed).~~

### §202 General Powers, Law

Except as modified by the provisions of this charter, or by any lawful regulation or ordinance of the City of Essex Junction, all provisions of the statutes of this state applicable to municipal corporations shall apply to the City of Essex Junction.

### § 203 Specific Powers

- (a) The City of Essex Junction shall have all the powers granted to Cities and municipal corporations by the Constitution and laws of this State together with all the implied powers necessary to carry into execution all the powers granted; and it may enact ordinances not inconsistent with the Constitution and laws of the State of Vermont or with this charter.
- (b) The City of Essex Junction may acquire real and personal property within or without its corporate limits for any municipal purpose, including storm water collection and disposal, waste water collection and disposal, solid waste collection and disposal, provision of public water supply, provision of public parks and recreation facilities, provision of municipal facilities for office, fire protection, and police protection, provision of public libraries, provision of public parking areas, provision of sidewalks, bicycle paths, and green strips, provision of public roadways, provision of public view zones and open spaces, and such other purposes as are addressed under the general laws of the State of Vermont. The City of Essex Junction may acquire such property in fee simple or any lesser interest or estate, by purchase, gift, devise, lease, or condemnation and may sell, lease, mortgage, hold, manage, and control such property as its interest may require.
- (c) The City of Essex Junction may exercise any of its powers or perform any of its functions and may participate in the financing thereof, jointly or in cooperation, by contract or otherwise, with other Vermont municipalities, the State of Vermont, any one or more subdivisions or agencies of the State, or the United States, or any agency thereof.

**Commented [gt4]:** From Raj: Should we come to an agreement with the Town on shared police services, I'd like it to be included in our charter for the purposes of guaranteeing equal oversight. I don't want to operate our police department as an MOU.

- (d) The City may acquire property within or without its corporate limits for any City purpose, in fee simple or any lesser interest or estate, by purchase, gift, devise or lease, and may sell, lease, mortgage, hold, manage, and control such property as its interests may acquire. The City may further acquire property within its corporate limits by condemnation where granted to Cities by the statutes of the State of Vermont.
- (e) The City of Essex Junction may establish and maintain an electric power system and regulate power line installations; provided, however, that the City shall have no authority under this charter which conflicts with that authority granted to the Public Utilities Commission or any other state regulatory agency.
- (f) In this charter, mention of a particular power shall not be construed to be exclusive or to restrict the scope of the powers which the City of Essex Junction would have if the particular power were not mentioned.

**Commented [gt5]:** From Raj: Thinking of the future, would it make sense to include something / do we need to - regarding the power to operate some sort of internet / broadband network for our community?

#### § 204 Reservation of Powers

Nothing in this charter shall be so construed as in any way to limit the powers and functions conferred upon the City of Essex Junction and the City Council by general or special enactments in force or effect or hereafter enacted; and the powers and functions conferred by this charter shall be cumulative and in addition to the provisions of such general or special enactments.

#### §205 Form of Government

- (a) *The municipal government provided by this chapter shall be known as council-manager form of government. Pursuant to its provisions and subject only to the limitations imposed by the State Constitution and by this chapter, all powers of the City of Essex Junction shall be vested in an elective City Council, which shall enact ordinances, codes, and regulations, adopt budgets, determine policies, and appoint the City Manager, who shall enforce the laws and ordinances and administer the government of the City. All powers of the City shall be exercised in the manner prescribed by this chapter or prescribed by ordinance.*
- (b) *Voting districts shall be established pursuant to § 301.*

#### **Subchapter 3: Voting District and Governance Structure**

#### § 301 Voting Wards

- (a) *The former incorporated Village of Essex Junction shall be known as Ward 2. Boundary adjustments will be made over time as necessary pursuant to § 301(b). The City of Essex*



*Junction exclusive of the former Village of Essex Junction shall be known as Ward 1. Boundary adjustments will be made over time as necessary pursuant to § 301(b).*

- (b) *The Council is empowered to make such changes from time to time, by resolution or ordinance, in the number and boundaries of the wards of the City as it may deem proper, having regard so far as practicable and convenient, to an equal division of population among them; provided that after the first change so made, such changes shall not be made more than once in ten years.*

*§ 302 Powers and Duties of Governing Body*

- (a) *The members of the City of Essex Junction Council shall constitute the legislative body of the City of Essex Junction for all purposes required by statute, and except as otherwise herein specifically provided shall have all the powers and authority given to, and perform all duties required of City legislative bodies or Councils under the laws of the State of Vermont.*
- (b) *Within the limitations of the foregoing, the City of Essex Junction Council shall have the power to:*
  - (1) *Appoint and remove a City Manager and supervise, create, change, and abolish offices, commissions, or departments other than the offices, commissions, or departments established by this charter.*
  - (2) *Appoint the members of all boards, commissions, committees, or similar bodies unless specifically provided otherwise by this charter.*
  - (3) *Provide for an independent audit by a certified public accountant.*
  - (4) *Inquire into the conduct of any officer, commission, or department and investigate any and all municipal affairs.*
  - (5) *Exercise every other power which is not specifically set forth herein, but which is granted to Councils or legislative bodies by the statutes of the state of Vermont.*

*§ 303 Governing Body Composition and Term of Office*

- (a) *There shall be a City Council consisting of seven members.*
- (b) *The term of office of a City councilor shall be three years and terms shall be staggered.*
- (c) ~~Select persons~~ *Councilors shall represent the City.*

*§ 304 Vacancy in office*

*In case of a vacancy of a Council seat, such vacancy shall be filled by the City Council until the next annual election pursuant to § 305(c) of this charter.*

*§305 Election of Governing Body Officers*

- (a) The terms of the officers shall commence on the first day of the month following the month of election. At the first meeting of the month following the annual City meeting, the Council shall organize and elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, and clerk by a majority vote of the entire Council, and shall file a certificate of the election for record in the office of the City clerk.*
- (b) The chairperson of the Council or in the chairperson's absence, the vice chairperson, shall preside at all meetings of the Council and shall be recognized as the head of the City government for all ceremonial purposes.*
- (c) In the event of death, resignation, or incapacity of any Council member, the remaining members of the Council may appoint a person to fill that position until the next annual election. Incapacity shall include the failure by any member of the board to attend at least 50 per cent of the meetings of the board in any calendar year. At the next annual election, the vacancy shall be filled and the person so elected shall serve for the remainder of the term of office. In the event the Council is unable to agree upon an interim replacement until the next annual City election, a special election shall be held forthwith to fill the position.*
- (d) Elected ~~Selectpersons~~ Councilors who move from their ward prior to the expiration of their terms shall surrender their seats.*

*§ 306 Compensation*

- (a) Compensation paid to the Council members shall be set by the voters at the annual meeting, with a minimum of \$1500.00 a year each. Council members' compensation must be set forth as a separate item in the annual budget presented to the meeting.*
- (b) The Council shall fix the compensation of all officers and employees, except as otherwise provided in this charter.*

*§ 307 Prohibitions and Conflicts of Interest*

- (a) Holding Other Office. No Council member shall hold any City employment during the term for which they were elected to the Council. A Council member may be appointed to represent the City on other boards except as pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2647. No former Council member shall hold any compensated appointive municipal*

office or employment, except for poll worker, until one year after the expiration of the term for which they were elected to the legislative body.

- (b) **Appointments and Removals.** Neither the legislative body nor any of its members shall in any manner dictate the appointment or removal of any municipal administrative officers or employees whom the manager or any of the manager's subordinates are empowered to appoint. The legislative body may discuss with the Manager the appointment, performance, and removal of such officers and employees in executive session.
- (c) **Interference with Administration.** Except for the purpose of inquiries and investigations under § 302 (b)(4), the legislative body or its members shall deal with the municipal officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the Manager solely through the Manager, and neither the legislative body nor its members shall give orders to any such officer or employee, either publicly or privately.

§ 308 *Governing Body Meetings*

*As soon as possible after the election of the chairperson and vice chairperson, the Council shall fix the time and place of its regular meetings, and such meetings shall be held at least once a month.*

§ 309 **Special City Meetings**

Special City meetings shall be called in the manner provided by the laws of the State, and the voting on all questions shall be by the Australian ballot system.

§ 310 **Procedure**

- (a) The Council shall determine its own rules and order of business.
- (b) *The presence of four members shall constitute a quorum. Four affirmative votes shall be necessary to take binding Council action.*
- (c) The Council shall in accordance with Vermont law keep minutes of its proceedings. This journal shall be a public record.
- (d) All meetings of the Council shall be open to the public unless, by an affirmative vote of the majority of the members present, the Council shall vote that any particular session shall be an executive session or deliberative session in accordance with Vermont law.

§ 311 **Appointments**

The Council shall have the power to appoint the members of all boards, commissions, committees, or similar bodies unless specifically provided otherwise by this charter. The terms of all appointments shall commence on the day after the day of appointment unless the appointment is to fill a vacancy in an office, in which case the term shall commence at the time of appointment.

§ 312 Additional Governing Body Provisions

- (a) No claim for personal services shall be allowed to the officers elected at the annual meeting, except when compensation for such services is provided for under the provisions of this chapter or by the general law. The compensation of all officers and employees of the City shall be fixed by the Council, except as herein otherwise provided.
- (b) The Council may authorize the sale or lease of any real or personal estate belonging to the City.

**Commented [gt6]:** From Raj: Do we want to set a salary for city council / does it need to be in charter?

**Subchapter 4 Other Elected Offices**

§ 401 Brownell Library trustees

There shall be a five-member Board of Library Trustees who shall be elected to five-year terms using the Australian ballot system pursuant to § 501. Only qualified voters of the City of Essex Junction shall be eligible to hold the office of elected library trustee. The five permanent, self-perpetuating library trustees shall function in accordance with the terms of the Brownell Trust agreement dated May 25, 1925.

§ 402 Moderator

*The voters at the City Annual Meeting shall elect a Moderator who shall preside at the next City Annual Meeting. The term of Moderator shall be one year. Only qualified voters of the City of Essex Junction shall be eligible to hold the office of Moderator.*

**Subchapter 5 City Meetings**

§ 501 City of Essex Junction Meetings/Elections

- (a) Annual meetings for the election of officers, the voting on the budgets, and any other business included in the warnings for the meetings, shall be held on City-Town Meeting Day, as defined in 1 VSA §371.
- (b) Provisions of the laws of the State of Vermont relating to the qualifications of electors, the manner of voting, the duties of elections officers, and all other particulars respective to preparation for, conducting, and management of elections, so far as they

may be applicable, shall govern all municipal elections, and all general and special meetings, except as otherwise provided in this charter.

- (c) The election of officers and the voting on all questions shall be by Australian ballot system. The City Clerk and Board of Civil Authority shall conduct elections in accordance with general laws of the State.

### Subchapter 6 Ordinances

#### § 601 Adoption of Ordinances

Ordinances shall be adopted in accordance with state law pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1972.

**Commented [gt7]:** From Raj: We should talk about requiring two public hearings prior to formal adoption.

**Commented [gt8]:** Andrew: Prefer we use what was in the Town's proposal for the adoption of ordinances

#### § 602 Filing and recording of ordinances

The City clerk shall prepare and keep in the City clerk's office a book of ordinances which shall contain each ordinance finally passed by the Council, together with a complete index of the ordinances according to subject matter.

#### § 603 Rescission of ordinances

[George Tyler's NOTE: The following paragraph about rescission of ordinances was copied from the Essex Town Charter. The current Village Charter has no such paragraph because it is implied from "§ 601 Adoption of Ordinances" above that rescission of ordinances is done according to state statutes. We never figured out why the Town included this "rescission" paragraph in its charter and it probably isn't necessary for us to include it in the City charter. The Trustees should discuss this and possibly consult with an attorney] All ordinances shall be subject to rescission by a special or annual City meeting, as follows: If, within 44 days after final passage by the Council of any such ordinance, a petition signed by voters of the City not less in number than five percent of the qualified voters of the municipality is filed with the City Clerk requesting its reference to a special or annual City meeting, the Council shall fix the time and place of the meeting, which shall be within 60 days after the filing of the petition, and notice thereof shall be given in the manner provided by law in the calling of a special or annual City meeting. Voting shall be by Australian ballot. An ordinance so referred shall remain in effect upon the conclusion of the meeting unless a majority of those present and voting against the ordinance at the special or annual City meeting exceeds five percent in number of the qualified voters of the municipality.

#### § 604 Petition for enactment of ordinance; special meeting

[George Tyler's Note: As with the rescission process above, the state has a defined process and by simply stating that adoption of ordinances is per state statutes we may not need to include this paragraph or the remaining paragraphs dealing with ordinances. I believe we should consult with an attorney on this]

- (a) ~~Subject to the provisions of § 304 of this charter, voters~~ Voters of the City may at any time petition ~~in the same manner as in § 304~~ for the enactment of any proposed lawful ordinance by filing the petition, including the text of the ordinance, with the City Clerk. The Council shall call a special City meeting (or include the ordinance as annual meeting business) to be held within 60 days of the date of the filing, unless prior to the meeting the ordinance shall be enacted by the Council. The warning for the meeting shall state the proposed ordinance in full or in concise summary and shall provide for an Australian ballot vote as to its enactment. The ordinance shall take effect on the 10th day after the conclusion of the meeting provided that voters ~~as qualified in § 304~~, constituting a majority of those voting thereon, shall have voted in the affirmative.
- (b) The proposed ordinance shall be examined by the City Attorney before being submitted to the special City meeting. The City Attorney is authorized subject to the approval of the Council, to correct the ordinance so as to avoid repetitions, illegalities, and unconstitutional provisions and to ensure accuracy in its text and references and clearness and preciseness in its phraseology, but the City Attorney shall not materially change its meaning and effect.
- (c) The provisions of this section shall not apply to any appointments of officers, members of commissions, or boards made by the Council or to the appointment or designation of Council, or to rules governing the procedure of the Council.

**Commented [AT9]:** The reference to Section 304 is incorrect as Section 304 in current Charter is vacancy in City Council seats.

### ***Subchapter 7: City Manager***

#### *§701 Appointment/Hiring of Manager*

*The Council shall appoint a City Manager under and in accordance with Vermont Statutes Annotated, as amended from time to time hereafter. The Manager shall be appointed solely on the basis of the Manager's executive and administrative qualifications in accordance with the Vermont statutes.*

#### *§ 702 Powers of Manager*

*The Manager shall be the chief administrative officer of the City of Essex Junction. The Manager shall be responsible to the Council for the administration of all City of Essex Junction affairs placed in the Manager's charge by or under this charter. The Manager shall have the following powers and duties in addition to those powers and duties delegated to municipal managers under the Vermont statutes.*

- (a) *The Manager shall appoint and, when the Manager deems it necessary for the good of the service, suspend or remove all City of Essex Junction employees, including the Treasurer, and other employees provided for by or under this charter for cause, except*

*as otherwise provided by law, this charter, or personnel rules adopted pursuant to this charter. The Manager may authorize any employee who is subject to the Manager's direction and supervision to exercise these powers with respect to subordinates in that employee's department, office, or agency. There shall be no discrimination in employment, in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, including but not limited to 21 V.S.A. §495. Appointments, lay-offs, suspensions, promotions, demotions, and removals shall be made primarily on the basis of training, experience, fitness, and performance of duties, in such manner as to ensure that the responsible administrative officer may secure efficient service.*

- (b) The Manager shall direct and supervise the administration of all departments, offices, and agencies of the City of Essex Junction, except as otherwise provided by this charter or by law.*
- (c) The Manager shall recommend hiring of City Attorney with Council approval, and shall hire special attorneys as needed.*
- (d) The Manager or a staff member designated by the Manager shall attend all Council meetings and shall have the right to take part in discussion and make recommendations but may not vote. The Council may meet in executive session without the Manager for discussion of the Manager's performance or if the Manager is the subject of an investigation pursuant to § 302(b)(4) of this charter.*
- (e) The Manager shall see that all laws, provisions of this charter, and acts of the Council, subject to enforcement by the Manager or by officers subject to the Manager's direction and supervision, are faithfully executed.*
- (f) The Manager shall prepare and submit the annual budget and capital program to the Council.*
- (g) The Manager shall submit to the Council and make available to the public a complete report on the finances and administrative activities of the City of Essex Junction as of the end of each fiscal year.*
- (h) The Manager shall make such other reports as the Council may require concerning the operations of City of Essex Junction departments, offices, and agencies subject to the Manager's direction and supervision.*
- (i) The Manager shall keep the Council fully advised as to the financial condition and future needs of the City of Essex Junction and make such recommendations to the Council concerning the affairs of the City of Essex Junction as the Manager deems desirable.*

- (j) *The Manager shall be responsible for the enforcement of all City of Essex Junction ordinances and laws.*
- (k) *The Manager may when advisable or proper delegate to subordinate officers and employees of the City of Essex Junction any duties conferred upon the Manager by this charter, the Vermont statutes, or the Council members.*
- (l) *The Manager shall perform such other duties as are specified in this charter or in State law, or as may be required by the Council.*

§ 703 Hearing/Removal Process

- (a) *The Council may remove the Manager from office for cause in accordance with the following procedures:*
  - 1. *The Council shall adopt by affirmative vote of a majority of all its members a preliminary resolution which must state the reasons for removal and may suspend the Manager from duty for a period not to exceed 45 days. A copy of the resolution shall be delivered within three days to the Manager.*
  - 2. *Within five days after a copy of the resolution is delivered to the Manager, the Manager may file with the Council a written request for a hearing; said hearing to be in a public or executive session by choice of the Manager. This hearing shall be held at a special Council meeting not earlier than 15 days nor later than 30 days after the request is filed. The Manager may file with the Council a written reply not later than five days before the hearing.*
  - 3. *The Council may adopt a final resolution of removal, which may be made effective immediately, by affirmative vote of a majority of all its members at any time after five days from the date when a copy of the preliminary resolution was delivered to the Manager, if the Manager has not requested a public hearing, or at any time after the public hearing if the Manager has requested one.*
- (b) *The Manager shall continue to receive the Manager's salary until the effective date of a final resolution of removal.*

§ 704 Vacancy in Office of Manager

*The Manager, by letter filed with the City Clerk, may appoint a staff member to perform the Manager's duties in the event of the Manager's absence due to disability, incapacitation, or vacation unless the Manager has previously appointed a staff member as assistant manager or deputy manager, who would automatically assume the Manager's responsibilities in the Manager's absence. If the Manager fails to make such designations,*

**Commented [gt10]:** From Raj: Do we want the city council to be able to approve / disapprove of the choice or replacement?

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*the Council, may by resolution appoint an officer or employee of the City to perform the duties of the Manager until the Manager is able to return to duty.*

**Commented [AT11]:** Think this section should be green – based on Brad’s survey results.  
**Formatted:** Font: Italic, Font color: Accent 6

**Subchapter 8: Boards and Commissions**

§ 801 Board of Civil Authority

The Board of Civil Authority shall be defined by 17 VSA § 2103(5).

§ 802 Board of Abatement of Taxes

The board of civil authority shall constitute a board of abatement as provided by law. The board of abatement shall meet and discharge its duties as required by the applicable statutory provisions.

§ 803 Planning Commission

**[George Tyler’s NOTE: This section and the Development Review Board section below assume that we will convert the Village’s present PC/DRB system to a DRB/PC system. I believe this should be a topic for Trustee discussion.]** There shall be a Planning Commission and its powers, obligations, and operation shall be under and in accordance with Vermont Statutes Annotated, as they may be amended from time to time hereafter, and members will be appointed by the City Council from among the qualified voters of the City. Members of the Commission shall hold no other City office.

**Commented [gt12]:** Raj: We should identify which statutes and discuss if we want to alter

§ 804 Development Review Board

A Development Review Board shall be established and its powers, obligations, and operation shall be under and in accordance with Vermont Statutes Annotated, as they may be amended from time to time hereafter, and members will be appointed by the City Council for terms of three years from among the qualified voters of the City.

**Commented [gt13]:** Raj: DRB makeup?

**Commented [AT14]:** 803 and 804 for discussion.

§ 805 Brownell Library Trustees

There shall be a five-member Board of Library Trustees who shall be elected to five-year terms using the Australian ballot system pursuant to § 501. Only qualified voters of the City of Essex Junction shall be eligible to hold the office of elected library trustee. The Trustees holding office at the time of enactment of the charter shall serve until their terms are completed. The Library Trustees shall establish policy for the operation of the Library and shall otherwise act in conformance with the Vermont statutes. The five permanent, self-perpetuating Library Trustees shall function in accordance with the terms of the Brownell Trust agreement dated May 25, 1925. The Library shall be required to follow all financial and personnel policies adopted by the City Council.

**Commented [gt15]:** Raj: Do we want to discuss approaching the library and rec department differently? Probably not enough time and the brownell trust may prevent it, but this independence effort may provide an opportunity to reimagine those services into something different and all-encompassing.

**Commented [gt16]:** Raj: I can’t recall if these trustees are paid. If so, who sets that?  
**[George note: The elected board are NOT compensated]**

## Subchapter 9: Administrative Departments

### Part I

#### § 901 Personnel Administration and Benefits

- (a) The Manager or the Manager's appointee shall be the personnel director. The Manager shall maintain personnel rules and regulations protecting the interests of the City and of the employees. These rules and regulations must be approved by the Council and shall include the procedure for amending them and for placing them into practice. Each employee shall receive a copy of the rules and regulations when the employee is hired.
- (b) The rules and regulations may deal with the following subjects or with other similar matters of personnel administration: job classification, jobs to be filled, tenure, retirement, pensions, leaves of absence, vacations, holidays, hours and days of work, group insurance, salary plans, rules governing hiring, temporary appointments, lay-off, reinstatement, promotion, transfer, demotion, settlement of disputes, dismissal, probationary periods, permanent or continuing status, in-service training, injury, employee records, and further regulations concerning the hearing of appeals.
- (c) No person in the service of the City shall either directly or indirectly give, render, pay, or receive any service or other valuable thing for or on account of or in connection with any appointment, proposed appointment, promotion, or proposed promotion.

**Commented [gt17]:** Raj: Wondering if we want to be more direct and specify hiring an HR professional

### Part II

#### § 902 Department of Real Estate Appraisal

**[George Tyler's NOTE: These Real Estate Appraisal sections may need to be amended if there is some possibility of contractually sharing this service with Essex Town.]** There shall be established a department of real estate appraisal headed by a professionally qualified real estate assessor, who shall be appointed by the Manager.

**Commented [gt18]:** From Andrew: Do we even need to say we will have a department for this? What if we wanted to contract this out – would we then need to change the charter? In reviewing other City charters, Montpelier as an example, does not have such a department listed within their charter yet they do have such a department within their City.  
George: We'll need to investigate and perhaps consult with an attorney. The present Village charter contains some of this but it doesn't establish a department.

#### § 903 Appraisal of Property

The department of real estate appraisal shall appraise all real and business personal property for the purpose of establishing the grand list. Appraisals shall be reviewed periodically and kept up to date. Technically qualified individuals or firms may be employed as needed.

**Commented [gt19]:** Raj: Agree.

#### § 904 Appraisal of Business Personal Property for Tax Purposes

Appraisal of business personal property shall be in accordance with the provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 3618, as the same may from time to time be amended, provided that all business

personal property acquired by a taxpayer after September 30, 1995 shall be exempt from tax.

§ 905 Duties of Department

The duties and powers of the department of real estate appraisal shall be the same as those established for listers under the general statutes.

§ 906 Purpose

The purpose of the department of real estate appraisal is to provide for appointment of a qualified real estate assessor rather than the election of listers. The City shall be governed by, and each taxpayer shall have rights granted by, the applicable statutes concerning real and personal property taxation, appeal therefrom, and other statutes concerning taxation.

**Subchapter 10 Budget Process**

§ 1001 Fiscal year

The fiscal year of the City shall begin on the first day of July and end on the last day of June of each calendar year. The fiscal year shall constitute the budget and accounting year as used in this charter.

§ 1002 Annual Municipal Budget

With support from the finance department, the Manager shall submit to the Council a budget for review before annual City/Town Meeting or at such previous time as may be directed by the Council. The budget shall contain:

- (a) An estimate of the financial condition of the City as of the end of the fiscal year.
- (b) An itemized statement of appropriations recommended for current expenses, and for capital improvements, during the next fiscal year, with comparative statements of appropriations and estimated expenditures for the current fiscal year and actual appropriations and expenditures for the immediate preceding fiscal year.
- (c) An itemized statement of estimated revenues from all sources, other than taxation, for the next fiscal year and comparative figures of tax and other sources of revenue for the current and immediate preceding fiscal years.
- (d) A capital budget for the next five fiscal years, showing anticipated capital expenditures, financing, and tax requirements.

**Commented [gt20]:** Raj: Sarah has talked about preparing "Popular Budgets" - my understanding is that these are much more approachable by the average citizen. I'd like to hear some feedback from her on how to make this process more approachable by residents in an effort to gain more participation. May be 30 minute convo and we may want to spell this out in the charter.

**Commented [gt21]:** Raj: Again, this is an opportunity to reimagine how we engage with our community on budgeting. It may be worthwhile to set aside some (brief) discussion time with Sarah to hear her thoughts on this and think about it as a board.

**Commented [gt22]:** I suggest we just refer to is as "Annual Meeting"

**Commented [AT23]:** Is this referring to "Town Meeting" or the now informational meeting?

**Commented [gt24]:** Raj: This is an opportunity to revisit this timeline / process. Do we need / want a longer term outlook?

(e) Such other information as may be required by the Council.

§ 1003 Governing Body's Action on the Budget

The Council shall review and approve the recommended budget with or without change. The budget shall be published not later than two weeks after its preliminary adoption by the Council. The Council shall fix the time and place for holding a public hearing for the budget and shall give a public notice of such hearing.

§ 1004 Meeting Warning and Budget

- (a) The Council shall hold at least one public hearing at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting to present and explain its proposed budget and shall give a public notice of such hearing.
- (b) The Manager shall not less than 15 days prior to the annual meeting make available the Council's recommended budget and the final warning of the pending annual meeting.
- (c) The annual City report shall be made available to the legal voters of the City not later than 10 days prior to the annual meeting.

§ 1005 Appropriation and Transfers

- (a) An annual budget shall be adopted at **City-Town** Meeting by the vote of a majority of eligible voters by Australian ballot in accordance with section § 501. If, after the total budget has been appropriated, **the** Council finds additional appropriations necessary, the appropriations shall be made and reported at the next City Meeting as a specific item. The appropriations shall only be made in special circumstances or situations of an emergency nature. No specific explanation need be given for any normal annual operating expense in any office, department, or agency which may be increased over the budget amount by an amount not more than 10 percent of the office's, department's, or agency's budget.
- (b) From the effective date of the budget, the amounts stated therein, as approved by the voters, become appropriated to the several agencies and purposes therein named.
- (c) The Manager may at any time transfer an unencumbered appropriation balance or portion thereof between general classifications of expenditures within an office, department, or agency. At the request of the Manager, the Council may, by resolution, transfer any unencumbered appropriation balance or portion thereof within the Council budget from one department, office, or agency to another. Notwithstanding the above, no unexpended balance in any appropriation not included in the Council budget shall be transferred or used for any other purpose.

Commented [gt25]: "Annual Meeting" instead of "Town Meeting"??

Commented [AT26]: See Section 501 reference.

§ 1006 Amount to be Raised by Taxation

Upon passage of the budget by the voters, the amounts stated therein as the amount to be raised by taxes shall constitute a determination of the amount of the levy for the purposes of the City in the corresponding tax year, and the Council shall levy such taxes on the grand list as prepared by the assessor for the corresponding tax year.

**Subchapter 11: Taxation**

§ 1101 Taxes on Real Property

Taxes on real property shall be paid in equal installments on March 15 and September 15. The Council shall send notice to taxpayers no less than 30 days prior to when taxes are due.

§ 1102 Penalty

(a) An additional charge of eight percent shall be added to any tax not paid on or before the dates specified in section § 1101 of this charter, and interest as authorized by Vermont statutes.

§ 1103 Assessment and Taxation Agreement

Notwithstanding section § ~~904~~ § 903 of this charter and the requirements of the general laws of the State of Vermont, the Council is hereby authorized and empowered to negotiate and execute assessment and taxation agreements between the City and a taxpayer or taxpayers within the City of Essex Junction consistent with applicable requirements of the Vermont Constitution.

**Commented [AT27]:** Should this be 903?

**Commented [gt28]:** I agree with Amber, 903 is correct, not 904

**Subchapter 12: Capital Improvements**

§ 1201 Capital Programs

(a) The Manager shall prepare and submit to the Council a five-year capital program at least three months prior to the final date for submission of the budget.

**Commented [gt29]:** Raj: How / where would reconciliation of our portion of capital funds held by the town be listed in the charter? In the transition section?

**Commented [gt30]:** Raj: See my note above. Do we want to discuss changing this process / time frame?

(b) Contents. The capital program shall include:

1. A clear general summary of its contents;

2. A list of all capital improvements which are proposed to be undertaken during the five fiscal years next ensuing, with appropriate supporting information as to the necessity for such improvements;
3. Cost estimates, method of financing, and recommended time schedules for each such improvement; and
4. The estimated annual cost of operating and maintaining the facilities to be constructed or acquired.

The above information may be revised and extended each year with regard to capital improvements still pending or in process of construction or acquisition.

### **Subchapter 13: Amendment of Charter and Initiatives**

#### **§ 1301 Laws Governing**

This charter may be amended in accordance with the procedure provided for by state statutes for amendment of municipal charters.

### **Subchapter 14: General**

#### **§ 1401 Savings Clause**

Repeal or modification of this charter shall not affect the validity of previously enacted ordinance, resolution, or bylaw.

#### **§ 1402 Separability of Provisions**

The provisions of this charter are declared to be severable. If any provisions of this charter are for any reason invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which can be given effect without the invalid provision.

HAVE A VOICE IN OUR FUTURE

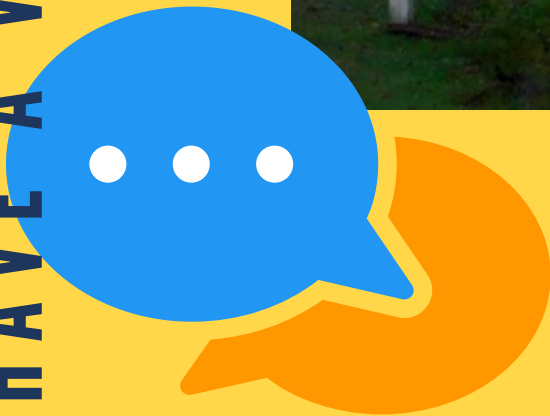
# ESSEX JUNCTION INDEPENDENCE



IN THE WHOLE WORLD, THERE IS ONLY ONE  
**ESSEX JUNCTION**

Join in the discussions for a proposed City of Essex Junction.  
See back for details and links to get involved

<https://www.essexjunction.org/independence>



# ESSEX JUNCTION INDEPENDENCE

The Village of Essex Junction Trustees have embarked on an initiative called "Essex Junction Independence." The goal is to create an independent Essex Junction, ensuring that it: has a foundation that provides for economic and political stability, reflects the Village character, has opportunity for growth, and looks towards the future.

This will be a Village led process that is future-oriented. We will steer clear of distractions and act with civility, transparency, and deliberateness. The Trustees will work to develop consensus and speak with a consistent voice. We will engage with, bring together, seek input from, and work to inform our community. We will work with the Selectboard and maintain a healthy relationship with our neighbors in the Town.

The identified scope of work includes writing the charter, outlining the organization and budget, working iwth the Town Selectboard, listening to Village residents, and educating and informing voters. The intent is to have a vote on a new city charter on November 2, 2021. Only Village of Essex Junction residents will vote on the proposed charter.

## WORK SESSIONS

The Trustees will be using approximately the first hour of each of their regularly scheduled meetings to have a work session to discuss Essex Junction Independence. The public will be given the opportunity to speak at the start of each work session. Meetings start at 6:30p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

## CONTACT INFORMATION



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



878-6951



[trustees@essexjunction.org](mailto:trustees@essexjunction.org)



[@essexjunctionvt](https://www.facebook.com/essexjunctionvt)



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## Opportunities to Ask, Engage, and Have a Voice

Visit the online forum, Placespeak to engage in a variety of opportunities for feedback, including discussions, polls, surveys, and general comments. The Trustees want to hear from you and will continue to create opportunities to engage and learn. More information about registering for Placespeak can be found at [www.essexjunction.org/independence](http://www.essexjunction.org/independence). You can also sign up for email updates on upcoming chats, forums, and events, including a community-wide summit.



## BACKGROUND

On March 3, there was a Town-wide vote on a Plan of Merger, which would have merged the Village and Town governments and services. It failed by 19 votes. On April 13, there was a re-vote and it failed by 26 votes. Also on April 13, Village of Essex Junction voters passed a non-binding advisory article that if the plan for merger failed, the Trustees should draft a charter to create the independent city of Essex Junction and put it before voters by November 2021. This passed with 79% approval.



## CHARTER PREPARATION

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**Charter submission.** A proposal to adopt/amend/repeal a governance charter may be submitted to the legal voters of a municipality at an annual or special town meeting by the selectboard or a petition of 5% of the voters.

**Revisions to voter-backed proposal.** A charter proposal by petition cannot be changed by the selectboard, except for technical corrections, and must be submitted to the voters at the next annual meeting or primary or general election.

**Copies available.** Official copy of the charter proposal must be filed as a public record with the town clerk at least 10 days before the first of two required public hearings. The clerk must certify the date he or she received the official copy. Copies must be made available to the public upon request.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

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**Hearings and notice.** Selectboard must hold at least two public hearings prior to the vote on the charter proposal.

**First public hearing.** The first public hearing is held at least 30 days before the special or annual town meeting. Notice for the first public hearing must:

- Be in accordance with 17 V.S.A. § 2641:
  - Post in at least two public places in the municipality, and in or near the town clerk's office, not less than 30 nor more than 40 days before the hearing; and
  - Published in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality at least five days before the hearing
- Show each charter section(s) to be adopted, repealed, or amended in amended form by showing deleted matter struck through and new matter underlined. However, if the selectboard decides the charter proposal is too long or unwieldy to be shown in amended form, notice shall include:
  - Concise summary of the charter proposal;
  - A statement that an official copy of the proposal is on file for public inspection at the town clerk's office and that copies will be made available upon request.

**Second public hearing.** The second public hearing is held no later than 10 days after the first public hearing if the charter proposal was made by petition. Notice for second public hearing is the same process as the first public hearing.

**Revisions following public hearings.** The selectboard may make revisions only if the charter proposal is from the selectboard and revisions are made no less than 20 days before the date of the special or annual town meeting to vote on the charter proposal. If revisions are made, the selectboard must:

- Post notice of revisions:
  - In the same places as the warning for the special or annual town meeting; and
  - Not less than 20 days before the date of the special or annual town meeting.
- Attach revisions to the official copy kept on file for public inspection in the town clerk's office.

## **SPECIAL OR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

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**Notice for town meeting.** Notice for special or annual town meeting is the same process and timing as for annual town meeting under 17 V.S.A. § 2641. The notice must also show each charter section(s) to be adopted, repealed, or amended in amended form by showing deleted matter struck through and new matter underlined. However, if the selectboard decides the charter proposal is too long or unwieldy to be shown in amended form, notice shall include a:

- Concise summary of the charter proposal; and
- Statement that an official copy of the proposal is on file for public inspection at the town clerk's office and that copies will be made available upon request.

**Method of voting and ballot requirements.** The vote on the charter proposal must be conducted by Australian ballot. The ballot must:

- Show each section to be amended in the amended form by showing deleted matter in struck through and new matter underlined;
- Allow the voter to vote on each separate proposal contained within the charter proposal.
- If the selectboard decides the charter proposal is too long or unwieldy to be shown in the proposed form on the ballot, voters must be permitted to vote on each separate proposal in its entirety in the form of a "yes" or "no" proposition.

**Copies available.** An official copy of the charter proposal must be posted conspicuously in each ballot booth for inspection by the voters during balloting.

## **POST-VOTE**

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**Results.** The town clerk must announce and post voting results immediately after the vote is counted.

**Certification.** Within 10 days following the day of the election, the town clerk must certify to the Secretary of State and provide:

- Each separate charter proposal and the facts as to its origin and the procedure followed;

- If the charter proposal as made by the selectboard, the minutes recorded by the selectboard that detail the origins and intent of each separate proposal;
- If by voter petition, the body of the petition and evidence of the required number of petition signatures;
- A copy of the official certified copy of the charter proposal filed with the town clerk;
- Copies of the warnings and published notices for each of the public hearings;
- Minutes recorded by the selectboard that detail each of the public hearings;
- Copies of warnings and published notices for the meeting to vote on the charter proposal; and
- A copy of the ballot and the results of the vote or votes on the charter proposal.

**Confirmation.** The Secretary of State must confirm the town clerk's certification, file the certificate, and deliver copies to: The Attorney General, the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Secretary of the Senate, Chair people of the committees concerned with town charters to both houses of the General Assembly.

**Effective date.** The charter/amendment/repeal becomes effective upon enactment into law either as:

- Originally proposed; or
- Amended by the General Assembly.

# Trustee Charter Survey

The following information is being collected to help with the conversation at the 5/11 work session discussion on the charter. It would be great to have your input by the end of the day on 5/10. We are asking for your name and e-mail. The e-mail is simply so you can get a response receipt for your reference. The results will be included in a future packet and placed on resources pages related to independence.

Thanks.

-Brad

Email \*

rchawla@essexjunction.org

Your Name

Raj Chawla

We will start by using the merger charter that the Trustees passed and was voted on in November 2020. This is simply some baseline data gathering. Please reference this document as it relates to the following questions. For now, we will skip Subchapter 1: Transitional Provisions. This will need to be included and addressed, but after we have a grasp on the charter and organizational plan. Here is a link that you could cut and paste into your browser to access the charter:

[https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex\\_merger\\_charter\\_-\\_trustee\\_final\\_20200924.pdf](https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex_merger_charter_-_trustee_final_20200924.pdf)

Looking at Subchapter 2: Incorporation and Powers of the Town, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
202	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
203	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
204	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
205	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 2?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 3: Voting District Governance Structure, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
301	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
302	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
303	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
304	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
305	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
306	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
307	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
308	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
309	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
310	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
311	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
312	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 3?

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Looking at Subchapter 4: Other Elected Offices, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
401	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
402	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 4?

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Looking at Subchapter 5: Town Meetings, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
501	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 5?

---

Looking at Subchapter 6: Ordinances, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
601	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
602	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
603	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
604	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 6?

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Looking at Subchapter 7: Town Manager, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
701	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
702	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
703	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
704	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 7?

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Looking at Subchapter 8: Boards and Commissions, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
801	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
802	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
803	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
804	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
805	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 8?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 9: Administrative Departments, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
901	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
902	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
903	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
904	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
905	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
906	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 9?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 10: Budget Process, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1001	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1002	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1003	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1004	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1005	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1006	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 10?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 11: Taxation, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1101	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1102	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1103	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 11?

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Looking at Subchapter 12: Capital Improvements, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1201	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 12?

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Looking at Subchapter 13: Amendment of Charter and Initiatives, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1301	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 13?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 14: General, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1402	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 14?

.....

Are there other elements that you would like added to the charter conversation that do not appear in this version?

I'd like assurances that city would have equal oversight role for any shared departments. in terms of Police, the village may very well insist on a different approach to policing than the town and should have complete discretion to describe how it wants policing carried out within the city. That discussion on how to manage a shared police force with what will likely be differing views will be tough. Discussion of how to handle any provisions related to sharing services with other municipalities. Can these relationships be codified in the charter or must they remain contracts / MOUs? Tri-town agreement. Recreation - establishing a formal relationship in terms of facilities and budgets.

Are there any legal questions at this point that we will want answers to and/or to discuss?

Property tax / real estate details / terms with ToE as it relates to their presence in property within the City of EJ. Local option tax?

This form was created inside of Essex Junction Recreation & Parks.



# Trustee Charter Survey

The following information is being collected to help with the conversation at the 5/11 work session discussion on the charter. It would be great to have your input by the end of the day on 5/10. We are asking for your name and e-mail. The e-mail is simply so you can get a response receipt for your reference. The results will be included in a future packet and placed on resources pages related to independence.

Thanks.

-Brad

Email \*

abrown@essexjunction.org

Your Name

Andrew

We will start by using the merger charter that the Trustees passed and was voted on in November 2020. This is simply some baseline data gathering. Please reference this document as it relates to the following questions. For now, we will skip Subchapter 1: Transitional Provisions. This will need to be included and addressed, but after we have a grasp on the charter and organizational plan. Here is a link that you could cut and paste into your browser to access the charter:

[https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex\\_merger\\_charter\\_-\\_trustee\\_final\\_20200924.pdf](https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex_merger_charter_-_trustee_final_20200924.pdf)



Looking at Subchapter 2: Incorporation and Powers of the Town, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
202	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
203	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
204	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
205	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 2?

I believe we want to discuss both the form of governance (council-manager, weak vs strong mayor, etc.) as well as districts and whether that's necessary

Looking at Subchapter 3: Voting District Governance Structure, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
301	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
302	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
303	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
304	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
305	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
306	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
307	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
308	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
309	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
310	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
311	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
312	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 3?

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Looking at Subchapter 4: Other Elected Offices, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
402	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 4?

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Looking at Subchapter 5: Town Meetings, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
501	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 5?

Do we want to meet on the traditional Town Meeting day or continue with the School Board in April? Do we need to specify the actual date within the charter or can we say that the board/council will determine the date, or something else which gives us more flexibility?

Looking at Subchapter 6: Ordinances, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
601	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
602	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
603	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
604	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 6?

While we have done it this way for years, I think we should go with the adoption process within the Town's version of the merger charter.

Looking at Subchapter 7: Town Manager, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
701	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
702	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
703	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
704	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 7?

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Looking at Subchapter 8: Boards and Commissions, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
801	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
802	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
803	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
804	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
805	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 8?

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Looking at Subchapter 9: Administrative Departments, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
901	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
902	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
903	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
904	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
905	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
906	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 9?

Our existing Village charter is much cleaner in my mind with 901 - see <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/24appendix/221/00005.01>. Also, do we need to specify so much on real estate appraisals?

Looking at Subchapter 10: Budget Process, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1001	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1002	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1003	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1004	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1005	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1006	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 10?

.....



Looking at Subchapter 11: Taxation, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1101	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1102	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1103	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 11?

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Looking at Subchapter 12: Capital Improvements, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 12?

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Looking at Subchapter 13: Amendment of Charter and Initiatives, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1301	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 13?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 14: General, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1402	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 14?

.....

Are there other elements that you would like added to the charter conversation that do not appear in this version?

Do we want a local options tax? Do we want to prepare a section for cannabis in case the community decides to allow for this (assuming we need this in the charter)?

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Are there any legal questions at this point that we will want answers to and/or to discuss?

Why do we need this level of specificity on real estate appraisal?

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This form was created inside of Essex Junction Recreation & Parks.

Google Forms

# Trustee Charter Survey

The following information is being collected to help with the conversation at the 5/11 work session discussion on the charter. It would be great to have your input by the end of the day on 5/10. We are asking for your name and e-mail. The e-mail is simply so you can get a response receipt for your reference. The results will be included in a future packet and placed on resources pages related to independence.

Thanks.

-Brad

Email \*

gtyler@essexjunction.org

Your Name

George

We will start by using the merger charter that the Trustees passed and was voted on in November 2020. This is simply some baseline data gathering. Please reference this document as it relates to the following questions. For now, we will skip Subchapter 1: Transitional Provisions. This will need to be included and addressed, but after we have a grasp on the charter and organizational plan. Here is a link that you could cut and paste into your browser to access the charter:

[https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex\\_merger\\_charter\\_-\\_trustee\\_final\\_20200924.pdf](https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex_merger_charter_-_trustee_final_20200924.pdf)

Looking at Subchapter 2: Incorporation and Powers of the Town, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
202	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
203	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
204	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
205	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 2?

For above and all questions hereafter, where I've indicated that little discussion will be necessary, I mean we'll only need to make small changes such as substituting "City of Essex Junction" for "Town of Essex" and so forth, and that the essence of each of these paragraphs is something we would want the new community to have. Obviously section 205 Form of Government, will require much discussion and decision-making.

Looking at Subchapter 3: Voting District Governance Structure, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
301	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
302	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
303	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
304	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
305	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
306	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
307	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
308	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
309	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
310	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
311	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
312	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 3?

I suspect 301 & 303 will spark much discussion but I personally hope that doesn't happen, particularly 301. I think this is such an interesting but complex subject that it could distract us from the main task. The new city government could revisit this question in the future and invest the time and resources it requires. In the meantime, our at-large status quo system is working okay, so with only a few months to get this to the voters let's not spend time fixing things that aren't broken.

Looking at Subchapter 4: Other Elected Offices, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
402	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 4?

The Gov. Subcommittee spent hours on this so don't waste more time. The Brownell trust is what it is and cannot be changed. Just make the necessary adjustments to names and numbers and move on.

Looking at Subchapter 5: Town Meetings, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
501	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 5?

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Looking at Subchapter 6: Ordinances, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
601	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
602	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
603	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
604	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 6?

603 is Essex Town's cumbersome process, which the selectboard insisted on including. The Village currently uses the process recommended by state statutes which is much more streamlined and reasonable. Ditto for 604.

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Looking at Subchapter 7: Town Manager, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
701	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
702	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
703	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
704	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 7?

All of this is contingent on the form on government we select.

Looking at Subchapter 8: Boards and Commissions, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
801	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
802	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
803	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
804	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
805	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 8?

803 & 804 represent a change from our current PC/ZB arrangement, but we've spent a lot of time discussing this already and I urge us to just go with the change. For 805, again, do NOT spend time on this. We sorted it out and this is the way it needs to be.

Looking at Subchapter 9: Administrative Departments, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
901	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
902	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
903	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
904	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
905	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
906	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 9?

901 - this will be contingent upon the form of government we choose. The rest is boilerplate.

Looking at Subchapter 10: Budget Process, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1001	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1002	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1003	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1004	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1005	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1006	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 10?

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Looking at Subchapter 11: Taxation, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1101	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1102	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1103	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 11?

Looking at Subchapter 12: Capital Improvements, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 12?

This is the Village's present way of doing things and it works great and I urge us not to waste time 'fixing' it.

Looking at Subchapter 13: Amendment of Charter and Initiatives, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1301	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 13?

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Looking at Subchapter 14: General, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1402	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 14?

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Are there other elements that you would like added to the charter conversation that do not appear in this version?

Simpler is best for right now. The new city can always add stuff.

Are there any legal questions at this point that we will want answers to and/or to discuss?

1. In a designated "council-manager" government the powers of the manager seem fairly well defined and consistent in municipal charters. But what about a mayoral/manager system? Are their statutory guidelines for designating the powers of the manager in the charter?

2. If the new charter is approved, what happens to village trustees with time remaining in their terms? Must they step down?

This form was created inside of Essex Junction Recreation & Parks.

Google Forms

# Trustee Charter Survey

The following information is being collected to help with the conversation at the 5/11 work session discussion on the charter. It would be great to have your input by the end of the day on 5/10. We are asking for your name and e-mail. The e-mail is simply so you can get a response receipt for your reference. The results will be included in a future packet and placed on resources pages related to independence.

Thanks.

-Brad

Email \*

athibeault@essexjunction.org

Your Name

Amber Thibeault

We will start by using the merger charter that the Trustees passed and was voted on in November 2020. This is simply some baseline data gathering. Please reference this document as it relates to the following questions. For now, we will skip Subchapter 1: Transitional Provisions. This will need to be included and addressed, but after we have a grasp on the charter and organizational plan. Here is a link that you could cut and paste into your browser to access the charter:

[https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex\\_merger\\_charter\\_-\\_trustee\\_final\\_20200924.pdf](https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex_merger_charter_-_trustee_final_20200924.pdf)



Looking at Subchapter 2: Incorporation and Powers of the Town, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
202	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
203	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
204	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
205	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 2?

Note responses from KSV study on mayor.

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Looking at Subchapter 3: Voting District Governance Structure, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
301	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
302	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
303	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
304	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
305	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
306	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
307	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
308	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
309	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
310	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
311	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
312	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 3?

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Looking at Subchapter 4: Other Elected Offices, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
402	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 4?

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Looking at Subchapter 5: Town Meetings, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
501	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 5?

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Looking at Subchapter 6: Ordinances, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
601	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
602	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
603	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
604	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 6?

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Looking at Subchapter 7: Town Manager, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
701	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
702	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
703	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
704	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 7?

Though very little discussion will be needed if the current structure remains - only will need robust discussion if the type of structure changes.

Looking at Subchapter 8: Boards and Commissions, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
801	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
802	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
803	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
804	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
805	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 8?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 9: Administrative Departments, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
901	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
902	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
903	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
904	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
905	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
906	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 9?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 10: Budget Process, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1001	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1002	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1003	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1004	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1005	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1006	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 10?

.....



Looking at Subchapter 11: Taxation, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1101	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1102	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1103	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 11?

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Looking at Subchapter 12: Capital Improvements, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 12?

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Looking at Subchapter 13: Amendment of Charter and Initiatives, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1301	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 13?

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Looking at Subchapter 14: General, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1402	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 14?

---

Are there other elements that you would like added to the charter conversation that do not appear in this version?

Not that I can think of.  
.....

Are there any legal questions at this point that we will want answers to and/or to discuss?

Not that I can think of.  
.....

This form was created inside of Essex Junction Recreation & Parks.



# Trustee Charter Survey

The following information is being collected to help with the conversation at the 5/11 work session discussion on the charter. It would be great to have your input by the end of the day on 5/10. We are asking for your name and e-mail. The e-mail is simply so you can get a response receipt for your reference. The results will be included in a future packet and placed on resources pages related to independence.

Thanks.

-Brad

Email \*

rchawla@essexjunction.org

Your Name

Raj Chawla

We will start by using the merger charter that the Trustees passed and was voted on in November 2020. This is simply some baseline data gathering. Please reference this document as it relates to the following questions. For now, we will skip Subchapter 1: Transitional Provisions. This will need to be included and addressed, but after we have a grasp on the charter and organizational plan. Here is a link that you could cut and paste into your browser to access the charter:

[https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex\\_merger\\_charter\\_-\\_trustee\\_final\\_20200924.pdf](https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex_merger_charter_-_trustee_final_20200924.pdf)

Looking at Subchapter 2: Incorporation and Powers of the Town, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
202	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
203	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
204	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
205	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 2?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 3: Voting District Governance Structure, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
301	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
302	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
303	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
304	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
305	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
306	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
307	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
308	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
309	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
310	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
311	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
312	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 3?

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Looking at Subchapter 4: Other Elected Offices, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
401	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
402	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 4?

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Looking at Subchapter 5: Town Meetings, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
501	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 5?

---

Looking at Subchapter 6: Ordinances, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
601	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
602	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
603	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
604	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 6?

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Looking at Subchapter 7: Town Manager, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
701	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
702	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
703	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
704	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 7?

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Looking at Subchapter 8: Boards and Commissions, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
801	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
802	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
803	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
804	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
805	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 8?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 9: Administrative Departments, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
901	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
902	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
903	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
904	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
905	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
906	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 9?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 10: Budget Process, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1001	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1002	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1003	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1004	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1005	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1006	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 10?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 11: Taxation, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1101	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1102	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1103	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 11?

---

Looking at Subchapter 12: Capital Improvements, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1201	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 12?

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Looking at Subchapter 13: Amendment of Charter and Initiatives, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1301	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 13?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 14: General, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1402	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 14?

.....

Are there other elements that you would like added to the charter conversation that do not appear in this version?

I'd like assurances that city would have equal oversight role for any shared departments. in terms of Police, the village may very well insist on a different approach to policing than the town and should have complete discretion to describe how it wants policing carried out within the city. That discussion on how to manage a shared police force with what will likely be differing views will be tough. Discussion of how to handle any provisions related to sharing services with other municipalities. Can these relationships be codified in the charter or must they remain contracts / MOUs? Tri-town agreement. Recreation - establishing a formal relationship in terms of facilities and budgets.

Are there any legal questions at this point that we will want answers to and/or to discuss?

Property tax / real estate details / terms with ToE as it relates to their presence in property within the City of EJ. Local option tax?

This form was created inside of Essex Junction Recreation & Parks.



# Trustee Charter Survey

The following information is being collected to help with the conversation at the 5/11 work session discussion on the charter. It would be great to have your input by the end of the day on 5/10. We are asking for your name and e-mail. The e-mail is simply so you can get a response receipt for your reference. The results will be included in a future packet and placed on resources pages related to independence.

Thanks.

-Brad

Email \*

abrown@essexjunction.org

Your Name

Andrew

We will start by using the merger charter that the Trustees passed and was voted on in November 2020. This is simply some baseline data gathering. Please reference this document as it relates to the following questions. For now, we will skip Subchapter 1: Transitional Provisions. This will need to be included and addressed, but after we have a grasp on the charter and organizational plan. Here is a link that you could cut and paste into your browser to access the charter:

[https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex\\_merger\\_charter\\_-\\_trustee\\_final\\_20200924.pdf](https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex_merger_charter_-_trustee_final_20200924.pdf)



Looking at Subchapter 2: Incorporation and Powers of the Town, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
202	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
203	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
204	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
205	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 2?

I believe we want to discuss both the form of governance (council-manager, weak vs strong mayor, etc.) as well as districts and whether that's necessary

Looking at Subchapter 3: Voting District Governance Structure, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
301	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
302	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
303	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
304	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
305	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
306	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
307	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
308	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
309	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
310	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
311	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
312	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 3?

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Looking at Subchapter 4: Other Elected Offices, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
402	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 4?

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Looking at Subchapter 5: Town Meetings, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
501	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 5?

Do we want to meet on the traditional Town Meeting day or continue with the School Board in April? Do we need to specify the actual date within the charter or can we say that the board/council will determine the date, or something else which gives us more flexibility?

Looking at Subchapter 6: Ordinances, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
601	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
602	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
603	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
604	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 6?

While we have done it this way for years, I think we should go with the adoption process within the Town's version of the merger charter.

Looking at Subchapter 7: Town Manager, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
701	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
702	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
703	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
704	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 7?

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Looking at Subchapter 8: Boards and Commissions, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
801	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
802	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
803	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
804	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
805	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 8?

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Looking at Subchapter 9: Administrative Departments, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
901	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
902	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
903	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
904	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
905	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
906	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 9?

Our existing Village charter is much cleaner in my mind with 901 - see <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/24appendix/221/00005.01>. Also, do we need to specify so much on real estate appraisals?

Looking at Subchapter 10: Budget Process, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1001	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1002	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1003	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1004	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1005	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1006	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 10?

.....



Looking at Subchapter 11: Taxation, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1101	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1102	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1103	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 11?

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Looking at Subchapter 12: Capital Improvements, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 12?

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Looking at Subchapter 13: Amendment of Charter and Initiatives, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1301	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 13?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 14: General, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1402	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 14?

.....

Are there other elements that you would like added to the charter conversation that do not appear in this version?

Do we want a local options tax? Do we want to prepare a section for cannabis in case the community decides to allow for this (assuming we need this in the charter)?

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Are there any legal questions at this point that we will want answers to and/or to discuss?

Why do we need this level of specificity on real estate appraisal?

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This form was created inside of Essex Junction Recreation & Parks.

Google Forms

# Trustee Charter Survey

The following information is being collected to help with the conversation at the 5/11 work session discussion on the charter. It would be great to have your input by the end of the day on 5/10. We are asking for your name and e-mail. The e-mail is simply so you can get a response receipt for your reference. The results will be included in a future packet and placed on resources pages related to independence.

Thanks.

-Brad

Email \*

gtyler@essexjunction.org

Your Name

George

We will start by using the merger charter that the Trustees passed and was voted on in November 2020. This is simply some baseline data gathering. Please reference this document as it relates to the following questions. For now, we will skip Subchapter 1: Transitional Provisions. This will need to be included and addressed, but after we have a grasp on the charter and organizational plan. Here is a link that you could cut and paste into your browser to access the charter:

[https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex\\_merger\\_charter\\_-\\_trustee\\_final\\_20200924.pdf](https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex_merger_charter_-_trustee_final_20200924.pdf)

Looking at Subchapter 2: Incorporation and Powers of the Town, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
202	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
203	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
204	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
205	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 2?

For above and all questions hereafter, where I've indicated that little discussion will be necessary, I mean we'll only need to make small changes such as substituting "City of Essex Junction" for "Town of Essex" and so forth, and that the essence of each of these paragraphs is something we would want the new community to have. Obviously section 205 Form of Government, will require much discussion and decision-making.

Looking at Subchapter 3: Voting District Governance Structure, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
301	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
302	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
303	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
304	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
305	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
306	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
307	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
308	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
309	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
310	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
311	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
312	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 3?

I suspect 301 & 303 will spark much discussion but I personally hope that doesn't happen, particularly 301. I think this is such an interesting but complex subject that it could distract us from the main task. The new city government could revisit this question in the future and invest the time and resources it requires. In the meantime, our at-large status quo system is working okay, so with only a few months to get this to the voters let's not spend time fixing things that aren't broken.

Looking at Subchapter 4: Other Elected Offices, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
402	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 4?

The Gov. Subcommittee spent hours on this so don't waste more time. The Brownell trust is what it is and cannot be changed. Just make the necessary adjustments to names and numbers and move on.

Looking at Subchapter 5: Town Meetings, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
501	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 5?

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Looking at Subchapter 6: Ordinances, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
601	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
602	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
603	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
604	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 6?

603 is Essex Town's cumbersome process, which the selectboard insisted on including. The Village currently uses the process recommended by state statutes which is much more streamlined and reasonable. Ditto for 604.

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Looking at Subchapter 7: Town Manager, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
701	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
702	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
703	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
704	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 7?

All of this is contingent on the form on government we select.

Looking at Subchapter 8: Boards and Commissions, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
801	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
802	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
803	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
804	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
805	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 8?

803 & 804 represent a change from our current PC/ZB arrangement, but we've spent a lot of time discussing this already and I urge us to just go with the change. For 805, again, do NOT spend time on this. We sorted it out and this is the way it needs to be.

Looking at Subchapter 9: Administrative Departments, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
901	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
902	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
903	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
904	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
905	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
906	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 9?

901 - this will be contingent upon the form of government we choose. The rest is boilerplate.

Looking at Subchapter 10: Budget Process, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1001	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1002	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1003	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1004	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1005	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1006	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 10?

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Looking at Subchapter 11: Taxation, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1101	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1102	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1103	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 11?

Looking at Subchapter 12: Capital Improvements, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 12?

This is the Village's present way of doing things and it works great and I urge us not to waste time 'fixing' it.

Looking at Subchapter 13: Amendment of Charter and Initiatives, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1301	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 13?

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Looking at Subchapter 14: General, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1402	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 14?

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Are there other elements that you would like added to the charter conversation that do not appear in this version?

Simpler is best for right now. The new city can always add stuff.

Are there any legal questions at this point that we will want answers to and/or to discuss?

1. In a designated "council-manager" government the powers of the manager seem fairly well defined and consistent in municipal charters. But what about a mayoral/manager system? Are their statutory guidelines for designating the powers of the manager in the charter?

2. If the new charter is approved, what happens to village trustees with time remaining in their terms? Must they step down?

This form was created inside of Essex Junction Recreation & Parks.

Google Forms

# Trustee Charter Survey

The following information is being collected to help with the conversation at the 5/11 work session discussion on the charter. It would be great to have your input by the end of the day on 5/10. We are asking for your name and e-mail. The e-mail is simply so you can get a response receipt for your reference. The results will be included in a future packet and placed on resources pages related to independence.

Thanks.

-Brad

Email \*

athibeault@essexjunction.org

Your Name

Amber Thibeault

We will start by using the merger charter that the Trustees passed and was voted on in November 2020. This is simply some baseline data gathering. Please reference this document as it relates to the following questions. For now, we will skip Subchapter 1: Transitional Provisions. This will need to be included and addressed, but after we have a grasp on the charter and organizational plan. Here is a link that you could cut and paste into your browser to access the charter:

[https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex\\_merger\\_charter\\_-\\_trustee\\_final\\_20200924.pdf](https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/essex_merger_charter_-_trustee_final_20200924.pdf)



Looking at Subchapter 2: Incorporation and Powers of the Town, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
202	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
203	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
204	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
205	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 2?

Note responses from KSV study on mayor.

Looking at Subchapter 3: Voting District Governance Structure, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
301	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
302	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
303	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
304	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
305	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
306	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
307	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
308	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
309	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
310	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
311	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
312	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 3?

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Looking at Subchapter 4: Other Elected Offices, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
402	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 4?

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Looking at Subchapter 5: Town Meetings, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
501	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 5?

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Looking at Subchapter 6: Ordinances, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
601	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
602	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
603	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
604	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 6?

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Looking at Subchapter 7: Town Manager, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
701	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
702	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
703	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
704	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 7?

Though very little discussion will be needed if the current structure remains - only will need robust discussion if the type of structure changes.

Looking at Subchapter 8: Boards and Commissions, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
801	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
802	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
803	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
804	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
805	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 8?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 9: Administrative Departments, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
901	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
902	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
903	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
904	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
905	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
906	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 9?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 10: Budget Process, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1001	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1002	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1003	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1004	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1005	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1006	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 10?

.....



Looking at Subchapter 11: Taxation, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1101	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1102	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1103	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 11?

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Looking at Subchapter 12: Capital Improvements, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1201	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 12?

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Looking at Subchapter 13: Amendment of Charter and Initiatives, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1301	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 13?

.....

Looking at Subchapter 14: General, please rate each section on the level of discussion you anticipate and/or would want:

	This section will not be necessary	Very boilerplate; little discussion needed	Needs some board discussion, but shouldn't take too long	Needs robust board discussion and/or community input
1401	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1402	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments or questions about Subchapter 14?

.....

Are there other elements that you would like added to the charter conversation that do not appear in this version?

Not that I can think of.  
.....

Are there any legal questions at this point that we will want answers to and/or to discuss?

Not that I can think of.  
.....

This form was created inside of Essex Junction Recreation & Parks.



# May 11 Work Session Feedback on Essex Junction Independence

This survey will be available from 5/12 through 5/24.

This survey is for Village of Essex Junction residents and must include your e-mail, name, and address. Incomplete responses will not be given consideration.

Please note: this information will be used to inform the work and discussions of the Trustees. We will not be directly responding to any comments or questions posted below. If you have specific matters you would like a response to, you should e-mail the Trustees directly (<https://www.essexjunction.org/boards/board-of-trustees>).

Please be aware that the information provided below could be made public.

Email \*

bob11.burrows@gmail.com

Your Name \*

Robert Burrows

Your Address \*

8 Clems Dr

On a scale of 0-10 (0=Very bad, 10=Excellent), how well do you think the process for creating an independent Essex Junction is going?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very Bad            Excellent

What did you hear that you are excited about?

A reasonable plan that looks doable, lots of positive energy, and hope for an end to the status quo.

Did you hear anything that you are concerned about?

Do you have any comments, feedback, or suggestions?

Looking forward to hearing about opportunities for citizen involvement.

Do you have any questions?

This form was created inside of Essex Junction Recreation & Parks.





## ESSEX RESIDENT SURVEY ON POTENTIAL MERGER (SEPT/OCT 2019)

### Key Findings Report

October 29, 2019

#### Background & Research Objectives

KSV was engaged by the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction municipal governments to facilitate a series of research activities to gather resident feedback on the question of whether to merge the two municipal governments into a single, unified municipality.

This has been an iterative process in which we started with a resident survey that was in the field in July 2019. That mostly qualitative, open-ended survey helped inform the development of the discussion guides for a series of listening sessions which took place in August 2019 with residents from across the community. In those listening sessions, participants provided feedback on several proposed, high-level representation models and taxation structures for a potential merger, while also discussing the pros and cons of keeping status quo.

Findings from those two qualitative phases of research led to the development of this latest survey in which we aimed to validate and quantify the key findings and themes uncovered related to perceived challenges or perceived benefits of potential merger options. An additional goal of the survey was to determine if there was a favorite proposal for merger among residents – or a desire to keep the status quo.

Output from these research activities is intended to provide information that will aid the Town of Essex Selectboard and Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees while considering and making decisions on this issue.

The final survey upon which this report is based was in the field from September 16 through October 20, 2019. The link to the survey was distributed online by Town and Village officials through municipal websites, social media accounts, Front Porch Forum, email lists, the Essex Reporter and as a paper survey at municipal locations.

*This report summarizes the highlights, key findings, and KSV's takeaways from the survey. A more detailed look at the survey data can be found in our cross-tabulation of the data.*



**Which part of Essex:**

- 52.49% – Town outside the Village
- 47.51% – Village of Essex Junction

**Voting District:**

- 34.24% – District 8-1
- 40.88% – District 8-2
- 18.36% – District 8-3
- 5.09% – Not sure of district
- 1.42% – Not registered to vote

N = 844

**Respondent Characteristics**

We received 844 total responses from the Essex community, and this represented a mix across geographies, voting districts, and demographics. The split between the Town outside the Village and the Village of Essex Junction is close to the 50-50 population split.

Additionally, three-quarters of respondents (75.83%) indicate they’ve lived in Essex for 10 or more years, making it likely they were around the last time this issue was debated and put up for a vote. This echoes our experience with the

listening sessions on this topic, where most of the participants that took part were very familiar with the history of the merger debate and passionate about where they stand on this issue.

**General Attitudes Toward Potential Merger**

At present, slightly less than half of all Essex residents surveyed (48.46%) say they are generally in favor of merging the municipal governments of the Town of Essex and the Village of Essex Junction. Residents in the Village are more likely to support merger, with nearly two-thirds saying they’re in favor.

Residents of the Town outside the Village are divided on their support for merger — District 8-1 is twice as likely to be in favor compared to District 8-3 — but overall less than half of all TOV residents say they’re generally in favor. A majority of 8-3 residents (54.84%) oppose merger.

	TOTAL	Voting District			Time Lived in Essex	
		8-1	8-2	8-3	Less than 10 yrs.	10 or more yrs.
	N = 844	N = 289	N = 345	N = 155	N = 204	N = 640
Generally in favor	48.46%	44.29%	64.93%	20.65%	54.41%	46.56%
Undecided	18.13%	19.03%	13.62%	24.52%	21.57%	17.03%
Generally opposed	33.41%	36.68%	21.45%	54.84%	24.02%	36.41%

The survey also finds that Essex residents that have lived in the community 10 or more years are less likely to be in favor of merger and more likely to be opposed to merger. As we learned in the listening sessions, the history of this issue is still present, and some believe this issue has



already been decided — 4 in 10 of those opposed to merger (N = 282) say they don't favor it because the citizens voted "no" in 2007.

In addition to those that lean one way or the other, about 1 in 5 residents are still undecided and represent a tipping point between merger approval or merger disapproval by the community.

**Why would you say you are generally in favor of merger? (Top 4)**

- 77.26% – I believe we would be a stronger, more unified community if it were a single municipality
- 73.11% – I believe municipal services would be improved if they are paid for and managed with the whole community in mind
- 69.68% – I believe it could ultimately result in tax equalization across the entire Town of Essex
- 58.92% – I believe it's time to make it happen once and for all

N = 409

**Why Some Residents Favor Merger – Unity, Service Improvements, Equal Tax Rate**

Of the respondents that are in favor of merger (N = 409), nearly 8 in 10 say they're in favor because it would unify the community, making it stronger.

*"Strength [in] numbers. We would be one community, finally. It is what we teach our kid to do, get along with each other." – Village resident*

Those in favor also believe it could lead to an improvement in municipal services.

Seven in 10 of those in favor of merger support the idea because it could lead to tax equalization. Village residents in support of merger were more likely to cite this (78.6% of them did) compared to TOV residents (54.61%).

*"[I] think it will lead to better governance and hopefully bring some cost savings. I also think it will be less confusing and less divisive." – TOV*

*(District 8-1) resident*

Ten percent of respondents cited some benefits other than the answer choices given. One of the most common responses was a perception that merger would result in municipal efficiencies and eliminate cost redundancies. This was also a top benefit mentioned in the first, open-ended survey that was fielded in July, however, discussion in the listening sessions revealed skepticism as to whether additional cost savings through consolidation are actually achievable. Essex residents should be provided with information that sets proper expectations on potential future savings as a result of merger.





### Why Some Residents Oppose Merger – Tax Increases, Concern Over Unfair or Unequal Representation, Distrust in Officials

Nearly two-thirds of those opposed to merger are against it because of concerns over tax increases. It has been stated in public meetings and on the survey itself that a merger would likely result in an increase in tax rate for TOV residents. As a result, 84.26% of TOV residents that are against merger (N = 197) are concerned about seeing a tax increase, compared to 23.53% of Village residents that say the same.

Over half of Village residents that are against merger (N = 85) say they're against it because they don't like the way some services have already been consolidated, making it the second biggest concern (after "more negative consequences than benefits"). We heard concerns over "back room merger" in listening sessions that included both Village and TOV residents, but this survey showed that Village residents were more concerned — only 26.9% of TOV residents opposed to merger said this was a concern. Regardless, it is imperative that all plans related to merger and consolidation of services take place out in the open with public input heard.

*"I don't trust current officials - elected or hired employees. If they want something, they set the ball in motion behind closed doors, and then taxpayers are the last to find out the details. If someone ask questions or expresses concern, they're being 'negative' and the [Facebook] warriors shame them. The controlled narrative set forth is alarming." – TOV (District 8-1) resident*

Nearly 17% of those opposed to merger cited some reason other than the answer choices given. A few perceive that all or most of the benefits of merger would go to the Village and not the Town.

*"The village has nothing to lose, no place for expansion but up, or replace existing buildings. The town has everything to lose. Why destroy something that works very well." – TOV (District 8-1) resident*

### Why would you say you are generally opposed to merger? (Top 4)

- 65.96% – I'm concerned it could mean my taxes going up
- 56.38% – I believe there are more negative consequences than benefits
- 54.61% – I'm concerned it could result in a governing body that doesn't fairly or equally represent all residents in the community
- 42.20% – The citizens voted "no" the last time the question was on the ballot in 2007

N = 282



There is also a sentiment of distrust in the current governing boards, exacerbated by the perception that the current make-up of the two governing boards leads to more favorability toward Village concerns.

*“This merger is being strong-armed by the 8 [of] 10 Town/Village leaders whose constituents are really their Village neighbors who want lower taxes because they like to spend and lost IBM.” – TOV (District 8-3) resident*

This also leads to the perception that information and commentary provided by the municipal governments have been one-sided in favor of merger. This survey itself was not immune to feedback where some perceived it as a “push poll” to support merger, despite our efforts to remain objective and allow all residents to share thoughts on options being considered, regardless of whether they currently support merger, oppose merger, or remain undecided.

*“Information distributed and presented so far has only shown the plus side of the story and feels more like a pro-merger ad campaign.” – TOV (District 8-3) resident*

*“I do not appreciate the recent communications from community leaders supporting the merger that seem dismissive of citizens of both Town and Village as being ignorant. This has eroded my trust in any of these leaders and their messaging.” – Village resident*

Every piece of communication on the topic of merger will be under a microscope. Evaluate communication for potential bias and eliminate it. Acknowledge the legitimate concerns residents have with merger, which include tax increases and representation models, and work with them to find common ground.

### **Why Some Residents are Undecided – Need More Details, See Both Sides**

Nearly 1 in 5 Essex residents (18.13%) are currently undecided when it comes to merger. District 8-3 residents are the most likely to be undecided on merger — 24.52% are undecided compared to 19.03% of District 8-1 residents and 13.62% of District 8-2 residents.

Seven in 10 of those that are undecided (N = 159) say they would need to see what the proposed plan for a merger would look like before making a decision. This was a common theme we heard in the listening sessions, and even when shown information that included potential governing board representation structures and the current difference in tax rates that



would need to be addressed if a single tax rate were to be achieved, respondents asked for specifics in order to provide a more informed opinion.

*“I need to understand the details of expected costs and benefits.” – TOV (District 8-3) resident*  
*“It seems unclear what the pros and cons are for both Village and Town residents.” – TOV (District 8-3) resident*

Some like the idea in theory, but without detail around potential benefits, they remain on the fence.

*“It's hard to know who to believe. Recent school mergings don't seem to have saved money and are certainly not elevating student performance. ‘Merging’ seems like a great idea, but what are the measurable benefits? How will we know whether it lived up to its promise? Can we return if the merger isn't what we anticipated?” – Village resident*

Others indicate that their support or non-support would hinge on what is decided for a governance model and taxation structure.

*“I need to see what the new governance model might look like and have a clear understanding of how a merger would affect my tax rate.” – TOV (District 8-1) resident*

The undecided in this case are not completely uninformed, rather, they simply require more information to evaluate before they can make a decision. Should the process move forward toward a potential vote on merger, we imagine that, once decisions are made regarding governance structure, taxation impacts, and identity, more and more undecided voters will make their decision. Later on in this report, we get a sense of which options would lead to support for merger and which would lead to not supporting merger.



## Representation

Representation is a key issue at the heart of the question of whether to merge and, as such, has been a key focus of these research efforts.

As we did in the listening sessions, this survey presented three governance model options for respondents to consider — a governing body with all members elected at-large, a governing body in which all representatives are elected from a district or ward, and a governing body that would feature a combination of at-large and district/ward-based representatives. Descriptions of each model were also presented with pros and cons of each approach, sourced from the National League of Cities, to enable respondents to provide a more informed opinion.

For each option, we asked whether respondents would agree or disagree with having that representation model — essentially what would residents be OK with in terms of governance structure. The intention was to force a choice in order to better determine which representation structures would be most favorable to Essex residents.

	Present Attitude Toward Merger				Voting District		
	TOTAL	In favor	Undecided	Opposed	8-1	8-2	8-3
	N = 844	N = 409	N = 153	N = 282	N = 289	N = 345	N = 155
<b>At Large Only</b>							
Agree	50.95%	71.39%	49.02%	22.34%	49.48%	58.26%	32.90%
Disagree	49.05%	28.61%	50.98%	77.66%	50.52%	41.74%	67.10%
<b>Districts/Wards Only</b>							
Agree	62.44%	45.97%	66.67%	84.04%	62.98%	55.65%	76.77%
Disagree	37.56%	54.03%	33.33%	15.96%	37.02%	44.35%	23.23%
<b>Combination of At-Large/Wards</b>							
Agree	35.31%	42.79%	39.22%	22.34%	32.53%	39.13%	29.68%
Disagree	64.69%	57.21%	60.78%	77.66%	67.47%	60.87%	70.32%

Overall, Essex residents are more favorable toward a district-/ward-based representation, with residents across the community — but in particular TOV residents — indicating an acceptance of that model.



Those that are generally in favor of merger (N = 409), however, are more likely to support an at-large structure. Given that those in favor of merger are seeking a more unified community, an at-large structure is seen as a way of eliminating divisions, whether those divisions are real or perceived.

### Resident Thoughts on At-Large Representation

<b>For what reasons do you <u>agree</u> with having a governing body where all members are elected at-large? (Top 3)</b>	<b>For what reasons do you <u>disagree</u> with having a governing body where all members are elected at-large? (Top 3)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 74.60% – I believe we’re all one community, one Essex, and this would remove perceived Town/Village separation</li><li>• 58.50% – I believe the elected members would do a better job serving the entire community and not just their district</li><li>• 47.62% – I believe all of Essex would be more fairly represented</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 66.83% – I would be concerned representation would not be fair or equal</li><li>• 66.35% – I’m more in favor of district/ward style representation rather than at-large</li><li>• 61.06% – I would be concerned that issues specific to my part of Essex would be minimized or ignored</li></ul>
N = 441	N = 416

Those in favor of an at-large representation structure (N = 441) like it mostly for the perception that it could unite the community under one banner of one Essex and eliminate any lines of separation.

*“Geographic-based elections lead to partisan politics, which is exactly what the Essex community as a whole does not need today or tomorrow.” – Village resident*

Nearly half of those in favor of at-large representation say it would lead to all of Essex being more fairly represented.



However, what’s fair or equal for one resident may be viewed as unfair or unequal for another. Two-thirds of those that are not in favor of at-large representation (N = 416) would be concerned that representation would *not* be fair or equal under an at-large structure.

*“History shows that the board has been dominated by one district or another over time.” – TOV (District 8-1) resident*

*“Under At-Large, it is possible for one small area of the community to have most of the elected officials, thereby not reflecting other areas of the sprawling Essex area.” – TOV (District 8-1) resident*

### Resident Thoughts on District/Ward Representation

<b>For what reasons do you <u>agree</u> with having a governing body where representatives come from districts/wards? (Top 3)</b>	<b>For what reasons do you <u>disagree</u> with having a governing body where representatives come from districts/wards? (Top 3)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 81.44% – I believe all parts of Essex would be more fairly represented</li> <li>• 65.53% – I believe the issues pertaining to my specific part of Essex would be better addressed</li> <li>• 57.39% – I believe it would bring diverse perspectives to serve all of Essex</li> </ul> <p>N = 528</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 68.24% – I’m concerned such a structure would result in representatives only serving the interests of the residents in their district rather than all of Essex</li> <li>• 67.30% – I’m concerned it would divide the community</li> <li>• 61.32% – I’m more in favor of an at-large representation structure</li> </ul> <p>N = 318</p>

A district- or ward-based system is seen by proponents as a solution to address the concerns in the community around fair or equal representation, and to ensure that the unique needs across the community are better addressed.

However, even those in favor of such a model caution that it could perpetuate TOV and Village divides unless wards are created by rethinking existing Village and TOV lines.



*“Still very concerned that this will create an us against them atmosphere similar to what we have now. The districts would have to wipe out old Village/Town boundaries to be effective.” – Village resident*

Those opposed to this structure believe it may result in representatives being too focused on their ward’s concerns rather than the community as a whole.

Others don’t like this structure because of the relatively small size of Essex.

*“I’m not sure our combined population is large enough to warrant this kind of structure, concerned it may amplify the perception of the kind of Town/Village division that already exists.” – Village resident*

### Resident Thoughts on a Combination of At-Large and District/Ward Representation

<b>For what reasons do you <u>agree</u> with having a governing body where there is a combination of at-large and district/ward representatives? (Top 3)</b>	<b>For what reasons do you <u>disagree</u> with having a governing body where there is a combination of at-large and district/ward representatives? (Top 4)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 78.19% – I believe it would be a balanced approach where local concerns are heard and addressed while the perspective of the entire community is kept in mind</li> <li>• 61.74% – I believe it would be a nice compromise between those that feel strongly about having either at-large representation or district/ward representation</li> <li>• 8.05% – Other</li> </ul> <p>N = 298</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41.76% – I would rather have a district/ward structure</li> <li>• 40.48% – It sounds complicated</li> <li>• 32.60% – I would rather have an at-large structure</li> <li>• 29.12% – I believe it would favor more populous areas of the community</li> </ul> <p>N = 546</p>

Those who would support a mixed approach like it for the perceived balance it could provide.



*“I like to think that this would provide a voice for the districts, though with potential for increased in-fighting, but with the at-large body, there could still be traction for forward movement. You don't want to ignore the districts with the big picture POV all the time. District inputs will provide a check and balance to the big picture and may also prompt perspectives that weren't otherwise thought of.” – TOV (District 8-3) resident*

Some, perhaps somewhat cynically, see it as a way to appease as many people as possible in the merger debate.

*“Just to ‘sell’ the idea of a merger for once and for all.” – Village resident*

Four in 10 of those who are opposed to a combination of at-large and ward-based seats would see such a governing body as being too complicated and one in which there may not be enough candidates to support competitive elections. Another concern voiced is whether the at-large portion of the governing body would be seen as having more authority or status over the district portion.

*“Because within boards that have such structure there is a tendency to treat district members as second tier members (my election is worth more than yours) making the boards ineffective.” – TOV (District 8-3) resident*

### Ranking the Representation Options

The table below shows a weighted average representing how respondents ranked the three representation options against each other. The higher the weighted average, the higher the rank.

**Q. Please rank your preference for which representation structure you would prefer in a merged municipality.**

	Attitude Toward Merger				Voting District		
	TOTAL	In favor	Undecided	Opposed	8-1	8-2	8-3
	N = 844	N = 409	N = 153	N = 282	N = 289	N = 345	N = 155
At-large only	1.80	2.10	1.75	1.40	1.78	1.93	1.51
District/wards only	2.11	1.78	2.12	2.58	2.13	1.97	2.41
Combination	2.09	2.12	2.12	2.02	2.09	2.10	2.08

This table shows that preferences lean toward a district-/ward-based representation model or a combination of at-large and district-/ward-representation, and it is very close.





**What would residents vote for?**

	TOTAL	Present Attitude Toward Merger			Voting District		
		In favor	Undecided	Oppose	8-1	8-2	8-3
	N = 844	N = 409	N = 153	N = 282	N = 289	N = 345	N = 155
<b>Would Vote “Yes” (Multiple Selection)</b>							
Single municipality w/at-large only	34.60%	59.41%	26.80%	2.84%	30.80%	46.09%	16.13%
Single municipality w/wards only	29.98%	40.34%	35.95%	11.70%	29.07%	35.94%	22.58%
Single municipality w/combination	38.63%	61.86%	38.56%	4.96%	34.95%	48.99%	20.65%
Would not support any merger	30.09%	0.00%	16.34%	81.21%	33.91%	17.10%	51.61%
Some other option for merger	9.83%	1.22%	18.30%	17.73%	9.69%	8.70%	14.19%
<b>Top Choice (Select One)</b>							
Single municipality w/at-large only	26.42%	44.99%	21.57%	2.13%	25.61%	31.59%	15.48%
Single municipality w/wards only	18.25%	22.49%	27.45%	7.09%	19.72%	18.55%	16.77%
Single municipality w/combination	21.56%	31.78%	27.45%	3.55%	18.69%	27.83%	11.61%
Would not support any merger	26.18%	0.00%	11.76%	71.99%	29.41%	14.78%	44.52%
Some other option for merger	7.58%	0.73%	11.76%	15.25%	6.57%	7.25%	11.61%



Toward the end of the survey, respondents were asked which of the high-level proposals (single municipality paired with a governing body option) they would vote in favor of or whether they would not support any merger proposal or would rather have some other option for merger. They were first asked to select all of the options they would vote for, following up with a question that asked what their top choice would be — including options to not vote for any merge proposal or to suggest an alternative.

First, we need to acknowledge the difference between responding to a survey question with high-level, hypothetical information compared to an actual vote based on a fully fleshed out proposal for a potential merger option. As we have recognized previously, residents are hungry for more detailed information to form a more definitive opinion.

Given present information, 3 in 10 of all residents would not support *any* merger proposal that was suggested. A third of those surveyed in District 8-1 and half from District 8-3 say they would not support any merger proposal.

Nearly 10% indicated they would prefer some other option for merger, which we asked them to specify, though a number of respondents filled in this box by stating they need more information before evaluating any merger option.

There were 34 responses mentioning some form of separation of the two municipalities, with some advocating for a continued sharing of services such as the police force — “a friendly separation.” This accounted for approximately 4% of all survey responses.

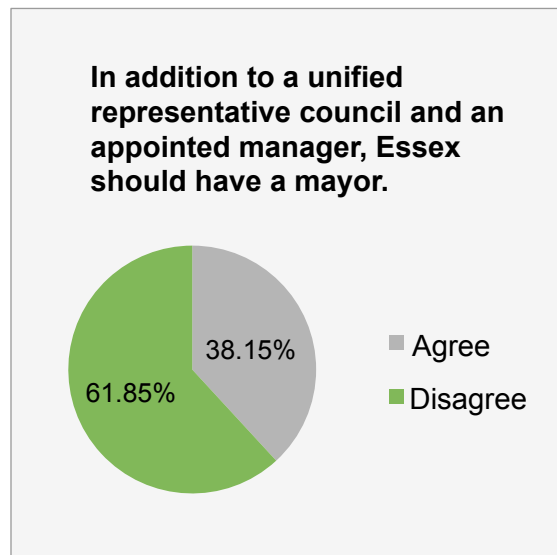
That means 6 in 10 residents saying they would support at least one of the merger options considered in this survey.

Interestingly, we see the option getting the most support is the one with the combination of at-large and district-/ward-based representatives. Our hypothesis is that those generally in favor of merger and those on the fence are seeing this as a best-of-both-worlds or a balanced approach that would satisfy more people than if the governing body were one or the other. However, it is not anyone’s top choice when given the option to choose.

We also recognize that some of those generally in favor of merger wouldn’t support just any proposal put in front of them. That group is more likely to support an option that contains at-large representatives — either solely at-large or in combination with district-/ward-based seats — more so than they would support a solely district-/ward-based model. Again, earlier findings indicate those in favor of merger strive for more unity and they may feel that at-large representation is the best way to become a united community.



We also see those that generally oppose merger would be willing to consider a merger if it came with a governing body featuring only district-/ward-based seats. Just over 10% of those generally opposed to merger would consider voting in favor of that proposal. This helps us quantify a sentiment we heard in the listening sessions in which those that are concerned about merger would be willing to trade an increase in tax rate if that meant a model that guarantees representation from their neighborhood, district, or ward.



### Mayor

One of the areas in which residents across the community are somewhat aligned is on the prospect of having an elected mayor — a majority (61.85%) do not believe Essex should have an elected mayor in addition to having a unified representative council and an appointed town manager.

Two-thirds of residents opposed to a mayor indicate that they would rather have people that are interested in running for public office in Essex serve on the Town council rather than pursue mayorship. Almost a third (31.03%) of those opposed to an Essex mayor say that they would be

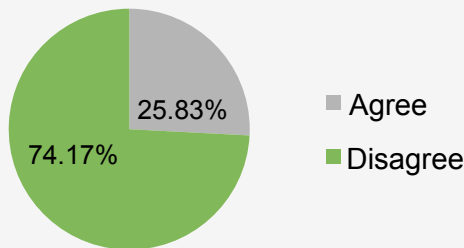
concerned a potential mayor wouldn't have much power to do anything anyway.

Many others mentioned that the idea of a mayor would add another potentially costly and unnecessary layer of government.

Of those in favor of a mayor (N = 323), 8 in 10 believe a mayor would be an effective voice advocating for Essex at the state level.



**Municipal budgets should continue to be voted on by a voice vote during Annual Meetings rather than through Australian (paper) ballot voting.**



### Municipal Budget Voting

Another area in which residents across the community are mostly aligned is on the topic of how municipal budgets should be voted on — nearly three-quarters (74.17%) of residents disagree with continuing to vote on municipal budgets during Annual Meetings.

Of those that disagree, 86.28% indicate they would rather have more people be able to have a say in the budget and believe Australian ballot would accommodate that. Also, 85.65% say that they don't believe those that are able to attend annual meetings represent the entire community.

*“Without absentee ballots we disenfranchise many voters: lower income who have difficulty scheduling a meeting, people on night shifts like nurses, the retired who may vote from Florida via absentee and our military men and women on assignment overseas.” – TOV (District 8-1) resident*

There were a number of other reasons given to move away from budget voting during Annual Meetings. A few residents allude to the potential for hasty decisions being made on the budget during the meetings.

*“This is a difficult one because while appreciate that the current process allows for direct citizen input into the budget process, I think it is too easy for last minute alterations with potentially large consequences to be implemented with little or no vetting.” – Village resident*

While the majority would like to move away from voting on the budget during Annual Meetings, a few noted that those meetings still have their purpose for information sharing and debate, even if the ultimate vote takes place at a later date during all-day voting.

*“Vote should be by Australian ballot. Annual meetings should be used for clarification (along with other info/clarification events on an as-needed basis).” – TOV (District 8-1) resident*



**Taxation**

Another cornerstone issue related to the merger question is taxation. Respondents to the survey were given information about municipal tax rates, in which Village residents currently pay more in municipal taxes compared to the residents of the Town outside the Village. It was explained that a move toward a single municipality would result in tax rates meeting somewhere in the middle. Respondents were then asked whether they would support having a single tax rate.

**Q. In a merged government, all residents should pay municipal taxes based on a single tax rate, regardless of where in Essex someone lives.**

	TOTAL	Voting District		
		8-1	8-2	8-3
	N = 844	N = 289	N = 345	N = 155
Agree	66.11%	57.44%	87.83%	34.84%
Disagree	33.89%	42.56%	12.17%	65.16%

Two-thirds of the community would support a single tax rate. However, there are clear, predictable divisions within the community.

Village residents in 8-2 are overwhelmingly in favor, with 41% of them indicating it would result in their taxes going down. That wasn't the top reason they support a single tax rate, however.

Across all districts, residents that support a single tax rate (N = 561) say they feel it is fair because everyone is an Essex resident — 80.39% of those in favor of a single tax rate said this, making it the top-cited reason. The other top reason is the belief that a single tax rate would help ensure the quality of municipal services, and that access to those services would be maintained throughout all of Essex — 73.26% of those in favor of a single tax rate selected this answer choice. Half of those in favor said a single tax rate would make it feel like a more unified community.

A third of the community, however, does not support a single tax rate (N = 287), with the strongest opposition coming from 8-3. The top reason for not wanting a single tax rate, cited by 76.31% of those not in favor, is the belief that not everyone benefits equally from municipal services and shouldn't have to pay based on the same rate. One comment noted that some services are more convenient for Village residents. Additionally, half of those that don't support a single tax rate say so because they believe it would mean taxes increasing.

Nearly a quarter of those that are not in favor of a single tax rate voiced other concerns. A few respondents mentioned they shouldn't have their taxes increased based on budgets set previously by Village voters.



*“I didn't vote to grow Brownell Library and EJRP to their current size. Why should I be forced to pay for them?” – TOV (District 8-3) resident*

A few Town outside the Village residents also stated that they chose to live in the Town, and not the Village, because of lower tax rates.

*“Major, major concern! Definitely not in favor. One reason I chose to live in the Town was the tax rate. People in the Village chose to live there. I am not willing to share the tax burden because the Village residents want relief.” – TOV (District 8-1) resident*

**Q. Merger that results in a single municipal tax rate may cause property taxes to increase for some residents. If a single tax rate for all residents in the community were to be achieved after a period of time of gradually evening-out tax rates, what would be the ideal time frame?**

	TOTAL N = 844	Essex should have a single tax rate	
		Agree N = 558	Disagree N = 286
Immediately	16.23%	17.74%	13.29%
No more than 3 yrs.	18.60%	26.88%	2.45%
No more than 5 yrs.	25.12%	34.05%	7.69%
No more than 7 yrs.	5.21%	5.73%	4.20%
No more than 10 yrs.	12.09%	11.11%	13.99%
No more than 12 yrs.	22.75%	4.48%	58.99%

In the listening sessions, we touched on the topic of phasing in a tax increase, should a merger be put up for a vote. We asked the above question in the interest of gauging public sentiment on the ideal time frame, should a single tax rate come into effect.

While the survey was in the field, we received feedback that this question forced respondents who are not in favor of a single tax rate to make a choice without giving them an option to indicate they wouldn't support it, and we agree with that feedback. That could in part explain why the majority of those that would disagree with having a single tax rate would want to push it out as far as possible.



On the flip side, of those that would support a single tax rate, a majority indicated they would like to see a single tax rate achieved in either no more than 3 years or no more than 5 years, which is similar to what we heard in the listening sessions.

### Impact on Municipal Services

Just 3 in 10 respondents (28.08%) indicate they would be concerned that merger would decrease services that contribute to their quality of life in Essex, such as the availability of recreational programs or the frequency in which streets are plowed in the winter. This finding holds throughout the different areas of the community.

However, those that believe merger would impact municipal services (N = 237), would be concerned about public works (60.76%), recreation (59.49%), libraries (56.12%), and planning/community development (52.32%). TOV residents were more likely to express concern over planning/community development, whereas Village residents were more likely to express concern over libraries, recreation, and the senior center.

### Development and Planning

When it comes to development and planning, half of all respondents (53.91%) said there are aspects they both like and dislike as it pertains to development in Essex. District 8-3 residents were more likely to dislike the way the community is developing (32.09%), compared to 21.80% of District 8-1 residents and 19.71% of District 8-2 residents. Nearly 20% of District 8-1 residents and 18.55% of District 8-2 residents say they like the way the community is developing, compared to 10.32% of District 8-3 residents.

Merger and its impact on development, in particular negative impacts on development, were a key theme in the TOV resident-specific listening sessions. The survey finds that District 8-3 residents are more concerned about potential negative impacts related to development as a result of merger.

### Q. How do you believe merger will impact development in the community?

	TOTAL	Voting District		
		8-1	8-2	8-3
	N = 844	N = 289	N = 345	N = 155
Positive impact	18.48%	15.57%	24.64%	11.61%
Negative impact	22.27%	24.57%	11.59%	40.00%
No impact	25.36%	25.95%	29.86%	16.77%
Don't know enough to say	33.89%	33.91%	33.91%	31.61%



On a similar note, the survey also asked respondents how important it is to retain the character of the rural parts of Essex. Nine in 10 residents say it is at least somewhat important, with over half (53.67%) saying it is very important, including 4 in 10 of Village residents and 76.13% of District 8-3 residents.

### Identity

The topic of merger often stirs up debate over identity and whether to retain aspects of existing municipal identities or combining aspects of identities or starting new. Our initial survey and listening sessions certainly found residents sharing their thoughts on what to name a potential single municipality — or what name(s) would be a non-starter.

Though we did not specifically ask about names for a single municipality in this survey, we did ask about the importance of identity. What we found is Village residents are slightly more likely to want to hold on to some aspects of the existing Town and Village identities.

### Q. If the two municipalities merge, we should try to retain some aspects of our Town and Village identities, as long as it doesn't impact costs of the delivery of municipal services.

	TOTAL	Area of Essex	
		TOV	Village
	N = 844	N = 443	N = 401
Strongly agree	22.87%	16.70%	29.68%
Somewhat agree	19.31%	16.48%	22.44%
Neither agree nor disagree	24.88%	26.41%	23.19%
Somewhat disagree	13.39%	14.67%	11.97%
Strongly disagree	19.55%	25.73%	12.72%

On a related note, a question did ask respondents whether the Village of Essex Junction should be known as the unincorporated Village of Essex Junction, with no separate governing body or taxing authority, in an effort to retain the Village's historic identity in a merged community. Sixty percent of Village residents supported this idea, while 40% of TOV residents supported this.





### Public Outreach and Communication

Throughout all phases of research, we’ve heard residents tell us they want more details and more information related to a potential merger question provided to them by the two governing bodies.

Residents throughout the community would prefer information to be sent directly to them, whether that’s through mail or email, which includes Front Porch Forum updates. Direct communication is recommended so that the onus is not placed on residents themselves to seek out information, however, ever-present resources like the Town and Village websites and the GreaterEssex2020.org website would still be valuable places for residents to receive information.

#### How would you like to receive information pertaining to a proposed merger? Check all that apply.

- 58.53% – Mail sent to home
- 52.37% – Front Porch Forum
- 52.25% – Email
- 49.53% – Town/Village websites
- 39.69% – Merger-specific website
- 33.29% – Town/Village social media
- 32.94% – Annual Meetings
- 31.40% – Other public meetings

N = 844

We did not ask a question about frequency of communication, but the comment below echoes a sentiment we heard in some of the listening sessions and the first survey. Communicate early, often, and objectively.

*“Saturate us. Don't give any chance for the people on the losing side to say they didn't have the opportunity to participate or understand what they were agreeing to. And start immediately. You barely have a year before you'd have to warn the vote and that's a lot of work to do, information to give and feedback to solicit and process.” – TOV (District 8-3) resident*

### Timing

Though we did not specifically gauge public sentiment on the timing of these efforts, we did hear feedback on the timing, as we did in the listening sessions. We’ve heard in previous research and in this survey that this feels like it is being rushed and pushed through without enough public input.

*“I feel like we are rushing towards this and you want me to want this but you haven't given me concrete information about how you are going to do this. And to be honest, I don't really trust those in power. How do I know if I vote 'yes' because you will do XYZ that you won't turn around and say, sorry, we can't do that?” – Village resident*



Also, throughout our research, we've received comments questioning whether it is appropriate to gauge public sentiment around merger with the perception that there hasn't been much information conveyed to the public to this point about details.

*"I don't even see how this survey can be pushed out at this point which is asking merger questions without explaining the benefits and costs of the mergers. Would like to see a projection of future costs likely to be incurred in the next 10 or so years by both the present town and Village. For example, I understand a recent Village meeting was impacted because sewage was backed up. Is the Village about to incur expensive costs related to infrastructure in the next 10 years? Is the town liable for similar expenses? There needs to be open transparency on projected costs and any cost shifting that would be dealt to residents because of this should a merger occur." – TOV (District 8-3) resident*

This comment references the timeline for a potential merger vote that would be planned to coincide with the 2020 presidential election. With an anticipated contentious national election on the horizon, it's fair to say that Essex residents may be saddled with a potentially contentious local issue to contend with as well. Should a merger question be considered during that election, communication leading up to a potential vote should convey why that election was chosen for a public vote.

*"I believe it is not an auspicious time for this effort. The national politics are moving on the same timeline and are so toxic and polarizing I don't believe there will be enough room for people to participate in both with open hearts and open minds. Both conversations are so exhausting that I believe having them run in parallel is unrealistic. We all have demanding lives beyond politics" – TOV (District 8-1) resident*

The "Timeline and Process" section of the infographic on the GreaterEssex2020.org website is a great resource for sharing the steps in the process, should this move forward, but perhaps more clarity and detail is required regarding any planned public outreach and communication, which is noted as occurring throughout the timeline.



## Final Takeaways, Recommendations, and Action Items

### **Residents remain divided over whether to merge or not**

Slightly less than half of all residents are currently in favor of merger while a third are opposed. That leaves a little less than 20% who are undecided and could swing support in either direction. The undecided segment is hungry for more communication, detail, and clarity around tax impacts, representation structure, and perceived benefits of merging.

**Recommendation:** As more decisions are made and a proposal is potentially developed, continue to check the pulse with residents with formal or informal feedback sessions or surveys to gauge whether the conversation is moving in a direction that will gain the support of the majority of the community.

### **There is no slam-dunk option for a potential merger, but there is receptiveness overall to options that include district/ward representation**

In both the listening sessions and this latest survey, we are seeing residents from across the community gravitate toward the idea of having district/ward-based representation – 6 in 10 residents agree that if the municipalities merged that there should be representative districts. Perceived benefits include a feeling of fair or equal representation and a belief that local concerns would be better addressed, which are two key concerns of TOV residents as well as residents that are undecided or currently opposed to merger. Village residents may not be as receptive to a model that has district/ward-based seats only, but they would be open to a combination approach.

However, residents did express concern that a district/ward-based model may exacerbate division in the community between TOV residents and Village residents.

**Recommendation:** Should a district/ward-based model or a combo model that includes district/ward-based seats be pursued, consider whether it would be possible to draw districts that don't conform to existing Village and TOV borders. A few respondents suggested this in the listening sessions and on the survey as well. Also, should this be pursued, consider positioning district/ward representation as a way to ensure fairness and a diverse set of voices serving the greater good of the entire Essex community.

### **A gradual step up to a single tax rate would be required, should a merger go through.**

Two-thirds of Essex residents would support a single tax rate if there were to be a single municipality and most residents would not be content with immediate tax rate equalization. The majority of Village residents would want tax rate equalization within three years while the majority of TOV residents would want tax equalization in 10-12 years.



Recommendation: Meeting somewhere in the middle would see tax equalization in 5-7 years. If a merger proposal is developed, solicit additional feedback to gauge whether Village residents would be OK with a longer timeline and if TOV residents would be OK with a shorter timeline if it meant the inclusion of a representation model they are more likely to be in favor of.

**There are a few areas of consensus in the community, including opposition to having a mayor and support for moving away from conducting municipal budget votes at Annual Meetings**

A majority of residents across the community would not support having a mayor, feeling like it would be an unnecessary layer of government where interested candidates for public office would be better served running for the governing board.

Regarding budget votes, residents would prefer an Australian ballot vote to ensure more residents can participate in the budget approval process. Some residents like the idea of keeping the tradition of Annual Meetings alive as a way to receive information related to the budget and discuss it with elected officials and community members before putting it up for vote.

Recommendation: Should a merger proposal be drafted, keep a mayor out of it and explore the opportunity to add charter language that establishes budget approval through Australian ballot voting.

**Additional Recommended Action Items**

- **Keep the resident feedback loop open and continue to encourage resident input to shape any potential merger proposal.** Don't give the impression that because this survey is completed that residents won't have opportunities to participate in this process.
  - Consider open workshops to test ideas in real time with community members between now and a potential proposal presentation at the Annual Meetings
  - Consider conducting more frequent, focused surveys (3-5 questions) to get quick feedback on burning questions while in the process of developing a potential proposal. There are many cost-effective tools you can use to poll residents, as well as some mobile app-based solutions.
- **Provide a more detailed timeline and process.** We kept hearing from some residents "I need to see more information before providing input." Let them know what details and education will be provided when, if possible. For example, let them know when they may see projected cost savings, potential tax impacts, or district maps should that model be pursued.
- **Develop a communications plan that features plenty of direct outreach to residents.** Residents told us that mail, Front Porch Forum newsletters, and email are their preferred channels for receiving information pertaining to the merger question. Keep



residents informed about major milestones, planned events, or links to additional surveys or feedback gathering activities. Link back to the merger website or municipal sites, but don't assume residents will seek out information on their own. And always remember – **communicate early, often, objectively, and out in the open.**