1. CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG [8:30 AM]

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

3. APPROVE AGENDA

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

5. BUSINESS ITEMS [8:35 AM]
   a. Elect chair and recording secretary
   b. Establish ground rules
   c. Discuss questions from board members about governance
   d. Brainstorm available resources
   e. Discuss budget availability and constraints
   f. Sketch out anticipated timeline
   g. Next steps

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION
   a. No executive session is anticipated

7. ADJOURN

Members of the public are encouraged to speak during the Public to Be Heard agenda item, during a Public Hearing, or, when recognized by the Chair, during consideration of a specific agenda item. The public will not be permitted to participate when a motion is being discussed except when specifically requested by the Chair.

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Certification:

Date Posted: 7/10/14

Initials: [Signature]
Selectboard and Trustee Subcommittee on Governance
July 12, 2018 Special Meeting Minutes
81 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT

Committee Members Present:  Max Levy
Elaine Sopchak
George Tyler
Irene Wrenner

Staff Present:  Evan Teich (joined the meeting at 8:50 a.m.)

Members of the Public Present:  Jerry Fox
Dawn Hill-Fleury
Margaret Smith

1. CALL TO ORDER
Irene Wrenner called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES
3. APPROVE AGENDA
There were no agenda additions.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD
There were no comments from the public.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Elect chair and recording secretary
Max Levy moved and Elaine Sopchak seconded to nominate George Tyler to be chair of the committee. The motion was approved 3-0-1 (Mr. Tyler recused himself from the vote).

George Tyler moved and Irene Wrenner seconded to nominate Elaine Sopchak to be recording secretary for the committee. The motion was approved 4-0.

b. Establish ground rules
The committee established some ground rules:
- They will review a variety of perspectives.
- They will assume members’ good intentions.
They will seek to understand.

All options are on the table.

These meetings are more conversational than formal and so speakers do not need to be formally recognized.

No member will advocate for either the Village or the Town; this does not preclude members from pointing out the pros and cons of a particular option as it relates to either community.

Members agreed that they will not prioritize any of the options but will instead provide guidance to the two full boards on how they may impact the community. If in the course of research a particular option is determined not to be legal, that option will be removed from the table.

c. Discuss questions from board members about governance

Questions were submitted by Elaine Sopchak, George Tyler, and Irene Wrenner. No other board members submitted questions. Copies of these questions are attached and made a part of these minutes.

Mr. Levy suggested the conversation begin with a high-level discussion of various options, and that specific details be avoided at the outset. The committee then discussed a variety of possible governance scenarios. These are outlined below.

Potential Governance Options

Scenario A:

- Retain the Village Board of Trustees as long as there are Village-specific needs (5 members).
- Create an equivalent Town-outside-the-Village (TOV) entity for TOV-specific needs (5 members).
- Also maintain and expand existing Town Selectboard (SB) to include the membership of both the above boards, so that the SB has 10 members.
- This model would entail 3 separate charters, one for each board.

Scenario B:

- Dissolve both Village and Town charters, and write a new, single charter for one community.
- Form a new board of 5 to 7 members, all elected at-large.
- Create a Rural Essex advisory board and a Village advisory board, the members of which would be appointed by the elected board.

Scenario C:
- Create a single, consolidated board but maintain 2 charters.
- Each charter adopts the same amendment to allow this to happen.

Scenario D:
- Consider overlay districts, and whether they apply outside of the realm of planning.

Scenario E:
- Create a single board of 7 to 9 members.
- Create two voting districts: Village and TOV.
- Elect 3 members from the Village, 3 members from TOV, and 3 at-large.

Scenario F:
- Dissolve the Village charter, keep Town charter.
- Adjust Town Selectboard membership based on geography.

Scenario G:
- Dissolve the Village charter, keep Town charter.
- Maintain 5 member, at-large Selectboard.

Scenario H:
- Form a city with a mayor and city council.

Mr. Tyler recommended the questions, What’s missing? Are there other government structures we haven’t thought of? It was noted that the Essex Governance Group (EGG) Report recommended neighborhood assemblies. The committee determined that these could be considered regardless of what governance option is chosen. Committee members also wondered whether it was required to have a governing board with an odd number of members.

The committee then compiled a list of what the boards want to achieve in forming a new governance structure, as follows, and in no particular order. These goals may help narrow down the governance options based on their ability to enable them.
- Tax equity
- Eventual single tax rate
- Eliminate duplication
d. Brainstorm available resources

The committee then considered the necessary resources to begin researching the options. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT), the Secretary of State’s Office, and Legislative Council were identified as organizations with the most relevant expertise to assist the committee. Mr. Teich recommended that the committee also research legal challenges to the mergers of other communities to help identify potential issues.

Mr. Tyler gave the committee members a preliminary list of financial data he would like to compile, a copy of which is attached and made a part of these minutes. He also expressed significant concern about the status of the Town’s and Village’s representation on regional boards like the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), should they form a single community. Investigating the representational and financial impacts of a merger on the communities’ membership in this and similar organizations is essential. Mr. Teich stated this concern also applies to other entities that provide the Village and Town funding, such as FEMA. Mr. Tyler requested that the committee and staff do an initial, internal analysis of potential impacts before approaching CCRPC.

The committee asked Mr. Teich to instruct staff to provide the data Mr. Tyler requested, and to identify any gaps in information the committee may not have considered yet. Mr. Teich also suggested reaching out to other Vermont municipalities to learn about their experiences with merger. The VLCT can also help gather this information.

e. Discuss budget availability and constraints

The committee considered whether funds need to be allocated to this work. At the moment, they will rely on the free services of VLCT and Secretary of State. Mr. Levy suggested setting aside funds in the FY20 budgeting process.

f. Sketch out anticipated timeline
The committee determined that at best, research can be completed in time to provide the community with an update and overview at the 2019 annual meetings. For the purposes of this committee's work, members decided to provide both boards with a report of their findings at the October 11, 2018 joint meeting. Members will complete research by September 15th and will draft a report by September 30th. Members will finalize the report and submit it to Town staff for inclusion in the meeting packet for October 11th.

g. Next steps
- Ms. Sopchak will provide both boards with a verbal update at the next joint meeting on July 18th.
- Ms. Sopchak will provide minutes of this meeting to Town staff for posting.
- Ms. Sopchak will combine the governance options with the questions submitted by board members, and recirculate them to committee members for further comment.
- Ms. Sopchak will reach out to VLCT to request their assistance, provide them with the documentation of this meeting, and help schedule a time when VLCT can come to a committee meeting, hopefully in the first two weeks of August.

At this time audience member Jerry Fox asked questions regarding the Town and Village tax rates. The committee provided clarifications and answers to his questions.

6. ADJOURN
Ms. Wrenner moved to adjourn and Mr. Levy seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.