



Town of Essex Village of Essex Junction



TRUSTEE & SELECTBOARD SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

**Tuesday, December 18, 2018 at 6:30 PM
81 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452**

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

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG

[6:30 PM]

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

3. APPROVE AGENDA

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

- a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

- a. Budget Format changes and Consolidation of Accounts—Sarah Macy, Dennis Lutz
- b. Building Department Budgets—Dennis Lutz, Sarah Macy, Lauren Morrisseau
- c. Buildings Manager Position—Dennis Lutz
- d. Highway Tax Elimination/Village Rolling Stock Transfer moved into Highway Budget—Lauren Morrisseau, Evan Teich
- e. Recreation Departments Co-location—Brad Luck, Ally Vile
- f. Senior Center Request—Ally Vile
- g. *Discussion of real estate matter

6. READING FILE

- a. Board Member Comments
- b. List of Shared Positions in the Budgets with Percentages

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. *An executive session is anticipated to discuss a real estate matter

8. 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.

This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings, like all programs and activities of the Town of Essex and the Village of Essex Junction, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Town Manager's office at 878-1341.

Certification: 12/14/2018

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8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a. *An executive session may be requested for the appointment of a public officer
- b. **An executive session is anticipated for evaluation of a public employee

9. **ADJOURN**

Members of the public are encouraged to speak during the Public to Be Heard agenda item, during a Public Hearing, or, when recognized by the Chair, 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. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings of the Selectboard, like all programs and activities of the Town of Essex, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Town Manager's office at 878-1341.

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**TRUSTEE & SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, December 18, 2018**

SELECTBOARD: Max Levy, Chair; Michael Plageman; Elaine Sopchak; Irene Wrenner.
(Andrew Watts not present).

TRUSTEES: George Tyler, Village President; Andrew Brown; Lori Houghton; Elaine Sopchak.
(Dan Kerin not present)

ADMINISTRATION: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Town Manager;
Sarah Macy Assistant Finance Director; Darby Mayville Economic Development/Community
Relations Assistant; Lauren Morrisseau, Assistant Manager and Village/Town Finance Director;
Brad Luck, Essex Junction Recreation and Parks Director; Ally Vile, Town of Essex Parks &
Recreation Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Laurel Ashley; Anne-Marie Dennis; Arlin Flanders; Bernie Haslan;
Hannah Tracy; John Wermer.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Mr. Levy and Mr. Tyler called the special Joint Meeting of the Town of Essex Selectboard and
the Village of Essex Junction Trustees to order at 6:30 PM. They invited all in attendance to rise
and join in the "Pledge of Allegiance".

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/ CHANGES

No changes to the agenda but hard copies of items for part 5a and 5b were distributed.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

With no changes, approval was not required.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

Margaret Smith offered a reminder for Selectboard, Trustees, staff and any other speakers in the
meeting to use the microphones so all present could hear what is being said.

The Trustees, staff and Selectboard bid farewell to Lauren Morrisseau, retiring Assistant
Manager and Village/Town Finance Director. They spoke about Ms. Morrisseau as "the rock"
who always knows the answers; a wonderful person, whose depth of knowledge and experience
as Finance Director allowed her to effortlessly step into the Village Co-Manager and Assistant
Manager roles during staff transitions; her honesty and expertise have been an asset to all. The
Trustees and Selectboard presented Ms. Morrisseau with a flower arrangement and cake. She
thanked everyone, saying that she is confident she will be leaving everything in wonderful hands
and that it's "been a great ride!" Ms. Morrisseau received a standing ovation from all in
attendance.

49
50 **5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

51 Mr. Levy invited staff to provide an overview of items a. and b. in their totality and before
52 opening discussion.
53

54 **a. Budget Format Changes and Consolidation of Accounts**

55 Public Works Director Dennis Lutz reviewed the overview of budget changes to the Highway
56 Account and the creation of a Buildings Account. Mr. Lutz said these changes were needed to fix
57 issues that have taken place over time and they provide consistent formatting, accurate line cost
58 assignments and consolidation/standardization of accounts. He pointed out that the changes:

- 59 • combine small line items into related larger accounts;
- 60 • fix inconsistencies of line item names and locations;
- 61 • streamline the books and numbering systems between the municipalities;
- 62 • ensure consistency with how employee benefits are detailed;
- 63 • arrange building costs within one new spreadsheet so information about buildings can be
64 easily identified and sorted, separately from Public Works, Town Highway, Library, Parks &
65 Recreation and Police budgets.
66

67 Assistant Finance Director Sarah Macy navigated the new spreadsheets on a projected view of
68 her laptop, providing an overview of how the accounts are organized and demonstrating
69 spreadsheet functionality. She said that the two municipalities' spreadsheet formats will now
70 look the same and pointed out that any changes to an expense account's name or number have
71 been noted within the rows where the change occurred. While showing specific examples within
72 the sheets, she spoke about how satisfying it is to create a new budget system that: is in
73 alignment between the Town and Village; details an overall reduction in line items; has
74 eliminated smaller accounts with little impact; provides a clear depiction of building costs and
75 demonstrates continued progress toward alignment. She explained that new numbering in the
76 spreadsheets now mirrors the audited books in Nemrick.
77

78 **b. Building Department Budgets—Dennis Lutz, Sarah Macy, Lauren Morrisseau**

79 Ms. Macy spoke about how the Buildings Budget was created by removing lines from other
80 budgets and importing them into the new spreadsheet. She showed that the where each line
81 originates is noted at the bottom of the new spreadsheet, so information can be "cross-walked"
82 back into historical or backup records. The new spreadsheet's functionality allows data on all of
83 the buildings in the municipality to be reviewed in one place and will provide for easier expense
84 tracking. It can also be filtered to show only information within specific categories: buildings,
85 municipalities, items, etc.
86

87 Mr. Levy wondered if the spreadsheets can be sent to the Selectboard Members and Trustees to
88 be reviewed. Ms. Macy said they can be, but the document will be locked so no changes can be
89 made. Ms. Morrisseau said that changes of note, for the Village Trustees, are that the Lincoln
90 Hall building and expenses moved and salary information about benefits are now broken out into
91 separate lines. Mr. Levy and staff discussed ways these spreadsheets could be used for the
92 Annual Report. Mr. Tyler said he was confused by the new format but the new spreadsheets
93 seem good, overall. Mr. Brown, Mr. Tyler and Ms. Sopchak concurred that the spreadsheets
94 make sense, are transparent and are a good step. Ms. Morrisseau reminded the group that staff
95 plans to address other areas of the budget in this way over the next year.

96
97 **GEORGE TYLER MOVED, AND LORI HOUGHTON SECONDED, THAT THE ESSEX TRUSTEES**
98 **ACCEPT THE REVISED BUDGET FORMAT AS PART OF THE FYE2020 BUDGET PROCESS. THE**
99 **MOTION PASSED 4-0. (DAN KERIN NOT PRESENT)**

100
101 **MICHAEL PLAGEMAN MOVED, AND IRENE WRENNER SECONDED, THAT THE ESSEX TRUSTEES**
102 **ACCEPT THE REVISED BUDGET FORMAT AS PART OF THE FYE2020 BUDGET PROCESS. THE**
103 **MOTION PASSED 4-0. (ANDREW WATTS NOT PRESENT)**
104

105 **c. Buildings Manager Position—Dennis Lutz**

106 Mr. Lutz detailed the need for a Buildings Manager, who would be shared by both communities,
107 and he described the essential functions of this position. He presented a slideshow of buildings
108 that the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction are responsible for, and pointed out their
109 wide range of building maintenance needs. Mr. Lutz spoke about how building maintenance has,
110 up to now, been reactionary as people on staff try to address issues when they arise. He said a
111 Buildings Manager would strategize, organize and prioritize maintenance proactively. Currently,
112 staff who work in the buildings contact Public Works as maintenance needs arise, although none
113 of the department's staff are building experts. He said there is no consistency with contracting
114 work and nobody on staff is qualified to assess the quality of the work that has been done. Mr.
115 Lutz admitted that the cost and benefits associated with this additional staff person are high but
116 said that the position should be a priority and, with adjustments to other Public Works areas, he
117 does not see the need for a significant increase in the budget.
118

119 Mr. Levy questioned if there is a Buildings Manager at the schools and the possibility to work
120 more closely with them. Mr. Teich spoke about the schools' maintenance department and the
121 scope of their work. He said their department may advise the new Buildings Manager.
122 Discussions with the department could determine if school maintenance staff could be contracted
123 to do specific jobs for the municipality. Ms. Sopchak clarified that the Buildings Manager
124 position would be exempt and questioned whether the salary is equitable as compared to other
125 municipalities. Mr. Lutz said that this is in the salary range of others who are performing
126 building maintenance and supervising contracts. Ms. Houghton said that she would need to know
127 what is being cut in order to inform whether to approve this position and the Trustees and
128 Selectboard spoke about needing to determine the factors that are already increasing the budgets
129 this year. Ms. Wrenner requested clarity about how the two municipalities would share the cost
130 of the position and Mr. Teich said that the Town of Essex would pay for 70% and the Village of
131 Essex Junction would pay 30%.
132

133 **d. Highway Tax Elimination/Village Rolling Stock Transfer moved into Highway**
134 **Budget—Lauren Morrisseau, Evan Teich**

135 Mr. Teich reminded the Trustees and Selectboard that they had been working on trying to
136 determine a strategy to eliminate the Highway Tax for a few years, noting incremental decreases
137 to the tax since 2016. He said staff recommends that now would be a good time to eliminate the
138 tax completely while, concurrently, moving the Village yearly transfer of funds to the Rolling
139 Stock Fund for Street vehicles out of the Misc. Transfers department and into the Street
140 Department. This would be in line with the Public Works Consolidation Committee's suggestion
141 that there be only be one rolling stock. Ms. Morrisseau shared and reviewed a chart that showed

the effect of three scenarios: 1.) if tax payments if the highway tax is eliminated, 2.) if the Village Highway Rolling Stock Fund is added to the Town budget, and 3.) what would happen if both changes take place simultaneously. She referenced previous discussions about how to create tax equity between the two municipalities, pointing out that by eliminating the Highway Tax and moving the Rolling Stock Fund at the same time, the municipalities will avoid creating tax disparity.

Mr. Teich acknowledged this process would require an amendment to the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the municipalities. He reminded the group that the money transferred from the Rolling Stock Fund would be invested into a shared account that would be used by the Village to purchase equipment for road maintenance. He noted that entering into this agreement would signify a spirit of cooperation and trust between the municipalities.

Ms. Sopchak noted that the change associated with this recommendation would each year be an increase of \$.84 for the average Town Outside the Village (TOV) taxpayer and a decrease of \$1.68 of the average Village taxpayer.

The Trustees and Selectboard discussed the importance of clear language in the MOU about how the Rolling Stock Fund would be used. Mr. Tyler pointed out that the Trustees would need to be sole decision-makers on what equipment the Transferred Rolling Stock Fund is spent on but Mr. Levy expressed interest in having the transferred Rolling Stock funds be used only for shared equipment. Ms. Sopchak agreed that devising strategies to move toward joint ownership of equipment between the municipalities is a goal, but is not currently part of the discussion about this recommendation. She noted that transferring only unassigned funds from this Rolling Stock Fund for this year would not be enough needed to eliminate the Highway Tax with little tax disparity. She equated the process of transferring Rolling Stock in this way as similar to how the Public Works line item was successfully transferred to offset funding and has been managed for the past two years. Mr. Lutz brought attention to the predictability of the Rolling Stock Fund (6%) and the predictable 20 year plan for equipment purchasing. Ms. Wrenner suggested that the Trustees and Selectboard Members consider using the Highway Tax towards offering funds for the Buildings Manager position, and not consider the Rolling Stock Fund issue until a future date. Ms. Morrisseau pointed out that this suggestion would change the tax rates significantly. Mr. Brown stated that any concerns about ownership of equipment could be solved in effective MOU language. Ms. Sopchak clarified that this decision is a first step: any discussions about transferring or sharing assets should be a separate issue for future consolidation conversations. Mr. Plageman stated that this recommendation is a good step forward toward tax equity and further collaboration between the municipalities. The Trustees unanimously expressed support for the recommendation, with careful wording in the MOU.

Mr. Levy admitted that the Selectboard members had not held a public discussion of this recommendation in their recent meeting. Ms. Sopchak asserted the importance of this taking place prior to moving the recommendation. Mr. Watts was not present for the discussion in this joint meeting but Mr. Teich read a note from him, suggesting that the decision not take place at the Joint meeting. Staff and Trustees expressed frustration with not being able to decide whether or not the Selectboard and Trustees will approve the recommendation at this joint meeting, considering a budget meeting is scheduled for the Trustees on the next day. Ms. Houghton shared that although she is supportive of consolidation, the process could be smoother. She

189 pointed out that with all the decisions that need to be made there will be pros and cons on both
190 sides. Mr. Teich noted that this Joint meeting was scheduled to get input prior to budget making
191 and in future years it will be scheduled earlier.

192
193 Ms. Houghton pointed out that the trustees will need to move forward in their budget meeting by
194 creating two different budgets, considering if a motion on the recommendation were to pass or to
195 fail. The Selectboard agreed to have a discussion on the recommendation on January 3rd.

196
197 e. **Recreation Departments Co-location (informational)—Brad Luck, Ally Vile**

198 Ms. Vile, Director of Essex Parks and Recreation (EPR), informed the boards of shared program
199 space at Aspire Studio, for fitness and wellness programs, and the potential elimination of Sunset
200 Studio, leased to EPR, expiring June 30, 2019. She explained that the EPR and the Essex
201 Junction Recreation and Parks' (EJRP) fitness schedules take place at opposite times during the
202 day and they have found success sharing studio space at Aspire Studio. This means that the one
203 facility space is filled at much greater capacity than was previously true. She said that the
204 proposal for putting all staff together into one space has been positively received. She explained
205 that operating in two locations, while paying one lease is not sustainable without increasing fees.
206 Instead, the two departments will be co-locating the programs at 75 Maple Street and EPR will
207 be transferring revenue from the program fund to the Village in the amount of \$12,000 to assist in
208 building and facility needs. The Trustees and Selectboard members expressed approval with this
209 decision. Ms. Houghton spoke about the fact that space use in Essex seems to be at full capacity
210 with so many popular programs in such high demand.

211
212 f. **Senior Center Request—Ally Vile**

213 Ms. Vile reminded the Selectboard and Trustees, that EPR and EJRP were planning to co-
214 supervise some positions. With the retirement notification of the Senior Activities Coordinator,
215 this co-supervision opportunity can move forward. She explained that the Senior Activities
216 Coordinator has proven to need more flexibility in the current 40 hour position, per the AFSCME
217 regulations, to complete all aspects of her job, related to programs, trips, membership, monthly
218 newsletters, budget management facility needs and volunteer supervision. The FYE20 EPR
219 budget includes a change in title for the position, which will align all staff between EPR and
220 EJRP, who organize and manage programs. This position title will be Program Director - Senior
221 Activities at an exempt status. An additional 12 hour per week Program Coordinator - Senior
222 Activities position will also be included in the budget to assist the EPR and EJRP Program
223 Directors with the Senior Center needs to ensure a clean, safe and supervised space for games,
224 trips, programs, meetings and more. Mr. Teich pointed out the benefits of having the Program
225 Director position be exempt. Mr. Tyler clarified that all positions are in the Town Budget but the
226 activities are shared and co-supervised. The Selectboard and Trustees expressed consensus
227 approval of this concept and strategy.

228
229 Anne-Marie Dennis, a member of the senior center and volunteer, stated that she was in
230 attendance to keep abreast what is happening with the Senior Center. She expressed concern that,
231 even though there will be an additional position to help coordinate Senior Center activities, the
232 hourly requirement of the Senior Center Director position did not decrease. She said that by
233 including new responsibilities within the position there will continue to be overtime and other
234 problems.

g. *Discussion of Real Estate Matter

*Addressed in item 7a

h. Approval of Minutes: November 19, 2018

Not conducted

6. READING FILE

No comments

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

a. *An executive session is anticipated to discuss a real estate matter

GEORGE TYLER MOVED, AND ANDREW BROWN SECONDED, THAT THE TRUSTEES ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE NEGOTIATING OR SECURING OF REAL ESTATE PURCHASE OR LEASE OPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH 1 V.S.A. SECTION 313(2) AND TO INCLUDE THE SELECTBOARD, UNIFIED MANAGER, DEPUTY TOWN MANAGER, FINANCE DIRECTOR/ASSISTANT VILLAGE MANAGER, AND ASSISTANT FINANCE DIRECTOR." THE MOTION PASSED 4-0 AT 8:40 P.M.

MICHAEL PLAGEMAN MOVED, AND IRENE WRENNER SECONDED, THAT THE SELECTBOARD ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE NEGOTIATING OR SECURING OF REAL ESTATE PURCHASE OR LEASE OPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH 1 V.S.A. SECTION 313(2) AND TO INCLUDE THE TRUSTEES, UNIFIED MANAGER, DEPUTY TOWN MANAGER, FINANCE DIRECTOR/ASSISTANT VILLAGE MANAGER, AND ASSISTANT FINANCE DIRECTOR." THE MOTION PASSED 4-0 AT 8:40 P.M.

ELAINE SOPCHAK MOVED, AND LORI HOUGHTON SECONDED, THAT THE TRUSTEES EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION. THE MOTION PASSED 4-0 AT 9:13 P.M.

IRENE WRENNER MOVED. AND MICHAEL PLAGEMAN SECONDED, THAT THE SELECTBOARD EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION. THE MOTION PASSED 4-0 AT 9:13 P.M.

8. ADJOURN

ANDREW BROWN MOVED, AND LORI HOUGHTON SECONDED, THAT THE TRUSTEES ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED 4-0 AT 9:13 P.M.

IRENE WRENNER MOVED, AND MICHAEL PLAGEMAN SECONDED, THAT THE SELECTBOARD ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED 4-0 AT 9:13 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Ainsworth

TRUSTEE & SELECTBOARD

December 18, 2018

281 Approved this 7 day of Jan, 2019

282

283 (See minutes of this day for corrections, if any)

284


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286

287

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Elaine Haney, Clerk, Selectboard

290

291