Town of Essex
Village of Essex Junction

TRUSTEE & SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 7:00 PM
2 Lincoln 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 [7:00 PM]

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

3. APPROVE AGENDA

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

5. BUSINESS ITEMS
   a. Discussion of shared website for Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction—Rob Paluba
   b. Approval of draft timeline for merger vote—Max Levy & George Tyler
   c. Review of Governance Subcommittee final report and discussion of next steps—George Tyler
   d. Support for collaborative planning between Town and Village Planning Commissions
   e. *Evaluation of Unified Manager on 2018 goals—Max Levy & George Tyler
   f. Determine 2019 goals for Unified Manager—Evan Teich
   g. Approval of Minutes: December 5, 2019 (Trustees only, unless changes proposed)

6. READING FILE
   a. Board Member Comments
   b. Q&A info sheet re: Update on Governance of Essex and Essex Junction

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION
   a. *An executive session is expected for evaluation of a public employee

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.

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Certification: 2/1/2019
Date Posted
Initials
TRUSTEE & SELECTBOARD

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, February 6, 2019

SELECTBOARD: Max Levy; Michael Plageman; Elaine Haney; Andrew Watts; Irene Wrenner.

TRUSTEES: George Tyler; Lori Houghton (by call-in); Dan Kerin; Elaine Haney.
Andrew Brown was not in attendance.

ADMINISTRATION: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Town Manager; Sarah Macy Finance Director; Rob Paluba, IT Director; Susan McNamara-Hill, Town Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT: John Alden, Village Planning Commission; Dustin Brusso, Town Planning Commission Margaret Smith; Brande Peters; Andy Suntup; Paul Hansen;

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 7:00PM. They invited all in attendance to rise and join in the “Pledge of Allegiance”.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/ CHANGES
Mr. Teich provided two additions to the agenda: minutes, for the Trustees to approve, from the joint meeting of December 18th, as an addition to item 5g, and a Q&A on Governance to be added to item 6b.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL
Dan Kerin moved, and Elaine Haney seconded, that the Trustees approve the agenda, with additions. The motion passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent).

Michael Plageman moved, and Irene Wrenner seconded, that the Selectboard approve the agenda, with additions. The motion passed 5-0.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD
   a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
Brande Peters requested that the Essex municipalities consider being her fiscal sponsor for a $10,000 grant, due the following day, to the Vermont Community Foundation or the Vermont Women’s Fund. She described various ways she thought the grant opportunity’s guidelines might connect to municipality interests, including promoting viable careers, non-pregnancy issues, economic services for low income women, economic vitality, Route 15 land use, fresh air, clean outhouses or community care packages. Ms. Haney, Mr. Tyler and Mr. Kerin suggested that she leave a copy of her application with staff, along with her contact information, and that she connect with Mr. Teich the next day.
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. **Discussion of shared website for Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction—Rob Paluba**

Mr. Paluba explained the IT department’s process for selecting a vendor to host a shared website for the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction. He said a committee of staff determined selection criteria and identified four top vendor candidates, with CivicPlus as the committee’s top choice. Mr. Paluba said CivicPlus stood out because of its extensive experience working with municipalities and because of the company’s configurable module options so Essex can to personalize the site to meet their specific website needs. He also discussed the system’s security, social media compatibility and outreach functions for emergency broadcasting.

Mr. Paluba explained that development and deployment of the new website will cost $33,100 and, through this phase, IT will work with a CivicPlus project team. Annualized expenses, thereafter, will be $1,174 more than Essex’s current spending on website services. Mr. Paluba is planning to conduct demos of the new website in June and that the site will launch toward the end of September. He said the website will have a Landing/Home page, a Town page, and a Village page, and one more main page which could be used for for recreation or as a joint Town and Village page. Mr. Paluba pointed out that, when the new website goes live, thirteen of the fourteen websites currently managed by the municipalities will be discontinued, but their domains will still be owned by the municipalities. The only exclusion to this is the Brownell Library page, who will continue using their own new website.

Mr. Tyler, Mr. Levy, Ms. Haney and Ms. Houghton explained specific website functionality important to them, including: a front-end that encourages two-way communication and connects directly with Essex events, news and opportunities for public input; a mobile app option; water bill and tax payment options; Channel 17 compatibility; the same or better analytics; public records requests monitoring; clarity of communications and buttons; and document storage/document history capability. The Village Trustees described collaboration between staff and the Trustees, when their current website was designed. They encouraged IT to work with them in a similar fashion while designing the new website. Mr. Paluba said the workgroup will provide regular updates in the Selectboard and Trustees’ reading files, and Mr. Teich said he would include Village Trustees in website development conversations.

b. **Approval of draft timeline for merger vote—Max Levy & George Tyler**

Mr. Tyler suggested that the Trustees and Selectboard members establish a November 2020 deadline for a governance change question to be on the ballot for voters. Ms. McNamara-Hill clarified that the question would need to be finalized by the middle of August 2020, in order to ensure it is on the ballot, through the state of Vermont. She discussed legal statutes and procedures involved with merging the municipalities. Ms. McNamara-Hill and Mr. Watts pointed out variations in statutes, based on what governance structure is chosen and protocol differences for Villages and Towns. Ms. Haney wondered if there could be sub-questions on the ballot. Ms. McNamara-Hill said that all decisions need to be arranged with legal counsel, to ensure adherence with requirements for public hearings, warnings, which sections of the
population needs to vote, how the votes should take place, how the question is worded on
ballot, etc. Mr. Tyler and Mr. Levy pointed out that, if merger details are not worked out in
time for the November deadline, the Selectboard members and Trustees can aim for a later
date for a vote on governance.

The Selectboard and Trustees discussed the pros and cons of a November 2020 deadline. Ms.
Haney proposed that the Selectboard and Trustees review progress in May 2020, to see if the
goal is still achievable. Ms. Wrenner pointed out that, even though there will be a large
turnout for the November 2020 election, getting information out to voters about the
governance question may be challenging. Ms. Haney pointed out that including the question
on the November ballot will ensure people do not miss their opportunity to vote.

Mr. Tyler opened the discussion to public comment. Ms. Smith agreed that getting
governance change information out to voters during the 2020 election will be a challenge.
Mr. Suntup requested verification that an early voter option will be available. Ms.
McNamara-Hill confirmed that early voting would be an option because the question would
be on the ballot.

Mr. Tyler moved, and Ms. Haney seconded, that the Trustees work with the Selectboard to
develop a governance change proposal for voter approval in November 2020. The motion
passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent).

Michael Plageman moved, and Andy Watts seconded, that the Selectboard work with the
Trustees to develop a governance change proposal for voter approval in November 2020.
The motion passed 5-0.

c. Review of Governance Subcommittee final report and discussion of next steps—George
Tyler

Mr. Tyler opened a discussion with Selectboard members and Trustees to determine whether
there is continued support for the Governance Committee to focus on and guide work
involved with governance change. He shared his opinion that the joint meetings of the
Trustees and Selectboard are not ideal venues for moving the governance issue forward, due
to their consistently full agendas. Mr. Plageman and Ms. Wrenner agreed with his opinion.
Mr. Levy and Ms. Haney suggested that the subcommittee develop a timeline, now that there
is a vote date in place, and condense the report they developed so it can be to be discussed at
the next Joint Meeting. They also discussed the pros and cons of possibly reconstituting the
subcommittee after April elections. Mr. Kerin voiced his support of the subcommittee model
as a way to mobilize public outreach on the topic of governance change. Mr. Kerin, Mr.
Plageman and Ms. Haney commended the subcommittee’s work to date, which resulted in a
menu of options for the Selectboard and the Trustees to consider, all vetted by legal counsel.

Mr. Watts said that the subcommittee did not conduct their work as he had expected it would
be done, and proposed the governance change efforts take place at the joint meetings, not in a
subcommittee. He also suggested that governance planning meetings be warned as
Selectboard meetings, to promote greater inclusion. Mr. Tyler noted that consult with legal
counsels indicated the subcommittee meetings do not need to be warned, but any of the
Trustees and Selectboard members can attend them and participate in the discussions. Ms. Wrenner, Ms. Macy and Ms. Houghton discussed how the Selectboard, Trustee and joint meetings may need to be take place differently in the future, based on the changing dynamics of the municipalities.

The Trustees and Selectboard, agreed that the subcommittee should meet in March to produce a governance change timeline for the upcoming year and to condense the report so it is ready to be discussed at the next Joint Meeting on April 10th.

d. **Support for collaborative planning between Town and Village Planning Commissions**

Mr. Tyler presented the question of Board support for formal, collaborative planning efforts between the Town and Village Planning commissions. He invited Mr. Brusso and Mr. Alden to discuss their collaborative process. Mr. Brusso said that their goal is to work toward the creation of a single Planning Commission, but first explore ways to collaborate and align. Mr. Duggan explained the legal limitations/nuances of how the Planning Commissions collaborate, according to municipality statutes. Mr. Brusso said that the two commissions began dedicating every other month of their meeting schedules as “joint planning workshops”. He expressed that this format has been beneficial and commissions have identified a series of workshop topics to address. He also pointed out that, in this arrangement, ex-officio are not required and those who attend are “visiting members”. Mr. Tyler and Mr. Kerin said the commissions should consider going on a retreat to begin putting together their ideas. Ms. Haney suggested that the Planning Commissions, the Selectboard and the Trustees all meet together on some of the topic areas they are discussing. All members of the Selectboard and the Trustees agreed that they support the efforts of the Planning Commissions to define and normalize alignment and collaboration practices.

e. **Evaluation of Unified Manager on 2018 goals—Max Levy & George Tyler**

Mr. Levy proposed that the Selectboard and Trustees evaluate the Unified Manager on the Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Constrained (SMART) goals included in his contract for 2018. Input from Mr. Teich about his efforts toward these goals, along with feedback from others on his performance, were collected and summarized for review. Mr. Levy proposed that the Trustees and Selectboard members go into executive session, as item 7a, to review the summary, determine Mr. Teich’s accomplishment of the 2018 SMART goals and decide whether he is eligible for a bonus of up to $3,000, as per his contract.

f. **Determine 2019 goals for Unified Manager—Evon Teich**

Mr. Levy introduced the issue of setting SMART goals for the Unified Manager for 2019. He explained that the Village President and Selectboard Chair compiled and synthesized a list of suggested goals, provided by Selectboard members and Trustees. Their proposed SMART goals included:

- Ensure periodic, one-on-one, communication and interaction with department heads, particularly before any policy changes that might affect their jobs. Don’t allow the management organizational structure to impede good working relations with staff.

- When speaking in public make sure you and staff use consistent, inclusive, mutually agreed upon Language. For example, don’t use the term ‘town’ without specifying whether this refers to ‘town-wide’ or ‘town within the village.’
• Consult with interested board members and staff to develop a communication strategy across multiple platforms, including Facebook and other relevant social media, and incorporating the potential to effectively disseminate accurate information about merger and other town-wide issues.

• Initiate a process for all Town and Village Departments to develop a five-year strategic plan. This effort should be driven by department heads working in collaboration with administrative staff.

• Develop an aligned and consistent process for hiring staff and onboarding new staff and new appointees of standing committees.

The Selectboard members and the Trustees determined that a new, better method of establishing the Unified Manager’s SMART goals should be planned for future evaluations. Mr. Kerin suggested that they consider, in the future, measuring the Unified Manager’s progress semiannually. Ms. Houghton suggested that the 2019 SMART goals be determined as one goal specific to the Village of Essex Junction, one specific to Essex Town and one joint goal. Mr. Kerin, Ms. Haney and Ms. Wrenner discussed the challenges and nuances of measuring the goals proposed by the Village President and Selectboard Chair. In consideration of this, it was decided to eliminate the goal written as bullet number two.

George Tyler moved, and Elaine Haney seconded, that the Trustees assign goals 1, 3, 4, and 5, recommended by the two board chairs, with the correction on goal number 3 to replace “Facebook and other relevant social media” with just “social media”. The motion passed 3-1. Roll call: George Tyler, yes; Elaine Haney, yes; Dan Kerin, yes; Ms. Houghton, no; Andrew Brown absent.

Ms. Houghton reiterated that she wanted to see the group choose one Village goal, one Town goal and a joint goal.

Michael Plageman moved, and Andy Watts seconded, that the Selectboard assign goals 1, 3, 4, and 5, recommended by the two board chairs, with the correction on goal number 3 to replace “Facebook and other relevant social media” with just “social media”.

Ms. Wrenner said that the goal written as bullet number two was important to include in the SMART goals, and she sees it as measurable.

The motion passed 4-1, with dissenting vote from Irene Wrenner.

g. Approval of Minutes: December 5, 2019 (Trustees only)

George Tyler moved, and Dan Kerin seconded, that the Trustees approve the Trustee and Selectboard special meeting of December 18, 2018 minutes, without correction.

The motion passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent).
George Tyler moved, and Dan Kerin seconded, that the Trustees approve the Joint meeting of the Essex Selectboard and Essex Junction Trustees’ minutes from the meeting of December 5, 2018, without correction. The motion passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent).

6. READING FILE

a. Board Member Comments

- Ms. Wrenner said she is unable to go to the Saturday 2/9/19 hockey game to conduct outreach, and Mr. Plageman said he would attend in her stead.
- Ms. Wrenner attended a Voices for Education meeting and has a packet of information for the boards that she will add to the next meeting’s reading file.

b. Q&A info sheet re: Update on Governance of Essex and Essex Junction upcoming Meeting Schedule and Events

Mr. Levy introduced the Governance info sheet, to be used for public outreach, and requested that the Selectboard and Trustees approve its content, before it is distributed. Ms. Wrenner provided a spelling correction and all other revisions will be provided to Mr. Duggan.

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

a. *An executive session is expected for evaluation of a public employee

Andy Watts moved, and Irene Wrenner seconded, that the Selectboard enter into executive session to discuss the evaluation of an employee in accordance with 1. V.S.A. Section 313 (a)(3), to include the Village of Essex Junction Trustees and the Unified Manager. The motion passed 5-0.

George Tyler moved, and Elaine Haney seconded, that the Trustees enter into executive session to discuss the evaluation of an employee in accordance with 1. V.S.A. Section 313 (a)(3), to include the Unified Manager and the Essex Town Selectboard. The motion passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent).

Michael Plageman moved, and Irene Wrenner seconded, that the Selectboard exit executive session. The motion passed 5-0 at 8:45 p.m.

George Tyler moved, and Elaine Haney seconded, that the Village Trustees exit executive session. The motion passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent) at 8:45 p.m.

Irene Wrenner moved, and Michael Plageman seconded, that the Selectboard approve awarding Evan the full $3,000 bonus for successfully achieving 2018 goals. The motion passed 5-0.

George Tyler moved, and Dan Kerin seconded, that the Trustees award Evan Teich the maximum $3,000 performance bonus for satisfactorily achieving the mutually agreed upon goals as warranted under the manager’s contract. The motion passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent).

8. ADJOURN
Irene Wrenner moved, and Michael Plageman seconded, that the Selectboard adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 8:45 p.m.

Dan Kerin moved, and George Tyler seconded, that the Trustees adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent) at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Ainsworth
Recording Secretary

Approved this 1 day of April, 2019
(See minutes of this day for corrections, if any)

Patrick Murray, Clerk, Selectboard