



# 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.*

*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: 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 18<sup>th</sup>, 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.

47 5. BUSINESS ITEMS

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49

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

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

60

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

71

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

82

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

84 Mr. Tyler suggested that the Trustees and Selectboard members establish a November 2020  
85 deadline for a governance change question to be on the ballot for voters. Ms. McNamara-Hill  
86 clarified that the question would need to be finalized by the middle of August 2020, in order  
87 to ensure it is on the ballot, through the state of Vermont. She discussed legal statutes and  
88 procedures involved with merging the municipalities. Ms. McNamara-Hill and Mr. Watts  
89 pointed out variations in statutes, based on what governance structure is chosen and protocol  
90 differences for Villages and Towns. Ms. Haney wondered if there could be sub-questions on  
91 the ballot. Ms. McNamara-Hill said that all decisions need to be arranged with legal counsel,  
92 to ensure adherence with requirements for public hearings, warnings, which sections of the

93 population needs to vote, how the votes should take place, how the question is worded on  
94 ballot, etc. Mr. Tyler and Mr. Levy pointed out that, if merger details are not worked out in  
95 time for the November deadline, the Selectboard members and Trustees can aim for a later  
96 date for a vote on governance.

97  
98 The Selectboard and Trustees discussed the pros and cons of a November 2020 deadline. Ms.  
99 Haney proposed that the Selectboard and Trustees review progress in May 2020, to see if the  
100 goal is still achievable. Ms. Wrenner pointed out that, even though there will be a large  
101 turnout for the November 2020 election, getting information out to voters about the  
102 governance question may be challenging. Ms. Haney pointed out that including the question  
103 on the November ballot will ensure people do not miss their opportunity to vote.

104  
105 Mr. Tyler opened the discussion to public comment. Ms. Smith agreed that getting  
106 governance change information out to voters during the 2020 election will be a challenge.  
107 Mr. Suntup requested verification that an early voter option will be available. Ms.  
108 McNamara-Hill confirmed that early voting would be an option because the question would  
109 be on the ballot.

110  
111 **Mr. Tyler moved, and Ms. Haney seconded, that the Trustees work with the Selectboard to**  
112 **develop a governance change proposal for voter approval in November 2020. The motion**  
113 **passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent).**

114  
115 **Michael Plageman moved, and Andy Watts seconded, that the Selectboard work with the**  
116 **Trustees to develop a governance change proposal for voter approval in November 2020.**  
117 **The motion passed 5-0.**

118  
119 c. **Review of Governance Subcommittee final report and discussion of next steps—George**  
120 **Tyler**

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

133  
134 Mr. Watts said that the subcommittee did not conduct their work as he had expected it would  
135 be done, and proposed the governance change efforts take place at the joint meetings, not in a  
136 subcommittee. He also suggested that governance planning meetings be warned as  
137 Selectboard meetings, to promote greater inclusion. Mr. Tyler noted that consult with legal  
138 counsels indicated the subcommittee meetings do not need to be warned, but any of the

139 Trustees and Selectboard members can attend them and participate in the discussions. Ms.  
 140 Wrenner, Ms. Macy and Ms. Houghton discussed how the Selectboard, Trustee and joint  
 141 meetings may need to be take place differently in the future, based on the changing dynamics  
 142 of the municipalities.

143  
 144 The Trustees and Selectboard, agreed that the subcommittee should meet in March to  
 145 produce a governance change timeline for the upcoming year and to condense the report so it  
 146 is ready to be discussed at the next Joint Meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup>.

147  
 148 d. **Support for collaborative planning between Town and Village Planning Commissions**

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

164  
 165 e. **\*Evaluation of Unified Manager on 2018 goals—Max Levy & George Tyler**

166 Mr. Levy proposed that the Selectboard and Trustees evaluate the Unified Manager on the  
 167 Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Constrained (SMART) goals included  
 168 in his contract for 2018. Input from Mr. Teich about his efforts toward these goals, along with  
 169 feedback from others on his performance, were collected and summarized for review. Mr.  
 170 Levy proposed that the Trustees and Selectboard members go into executive session, as item  
 171 7a, to review the summary, determine Mr. Teich’s accomplishment of the 2018 SMART  
 172 goals and decide whether he is eligible for a bonus of up to \$3,000, as per his contract.

173  
 174 f. **Determine 2019 goals for Unified Manager—Evan Teich**

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

- 179 • Ensure periodic, one-on-one, communication and interaction with department  
 180 heads, particularly before any policy changes that might affect their jobs. Don’t allow the  
 181 management organizational structure to impede good working relations with staff.
- 182 • When speaking in public make sure you and staff use consistent, inclusive, mutually  
 183 agreed upon Language. For example, don’t use the term ‘town’ without specifying  
 184 whether this refers to ‘town-wide’ or ‘town within the village.’

- 185 • Consult with interested board members and staff to develop a communication strategy  
 186 across multiple platforms, including Facebook and other relevant social media, and  
 187 incorporating the potential to effectively disseminate accurate information about merger  
 188 and other town-wide issues.
- 189 • Initiate a process for all Town and Village Departments to develop a five-year strategic  
 190 plan. This effort should be driven by department heads working in collaboration with  
 191 administrative staff.
- 192 • Develop an aligned and consistent process for hiring staff and onboarding new staff and  
 193 new appointees of standing committees.  
 194

195 The Selectboard members and the Trustees determined that a new, better method of  
 196 establishing the Unified Manager's SMART goals should be planned for future evaluations.  
 197 Mr. Kerin suggested that they consider, in the future, measuring the Unified Manager's  
 198 progress semiannually. Ms. Houghton suggested that the 2019 SMART goals be determined  
 199 as one goal specific to the Village of Essex Junction, one specific to Essex Town and one  
 200 joint goal. Mr. Kerin, Ms. Haney and Ms. Wrenner discussed the challenges and nuances of  
 201 measuring the goals proposed by the Village President and Selectboard Chair. In  
 202 consideration of this, it was decided to eliminate the goal written as bullet number two.  
 203

204 **George Tyler moved, and Elaine Haney seconded, that the Trustees assign goals 1, 3, 4, and**  
 205 **5, recommended by the two board chairs, with the correction on goal number 3 to replace**  
 206 **“Facebook and other relevant social media” with just “social media”. The motion passed 3-**  
 207 **1. Roll call: George Tyler, yes; Elaine Haney, yes; Dan Kerin, yes; Ms. Houghton, No;**  
 208 **Andrew Brown absent.**  
 209

210 Ms. Houghton reiterated that she wanted to see the group choose one Village goal, one Town  
 211 goal and a joint goal.  
 212

213 **Michael Plageman moved, and Andy Watts seconded, that the Selectboard assign goals 1,**  
 214 **3, 4, and 5, recommended by the two board chairs, with the correction on goal number 3 to**  
 215 **replace “Facebook and other relevant social media” with just “social media”.**  
 216

217 Ms. Wrenner said that the goal written as bullet number two was important to include in the  
 218 SMART goals, and she sees it as measurable.  
 219

220 **The motion passed 4-1, with dissenting vote from Irene Wrenner.**  
 221

222 **g. Approval of Minutes: December 5, 2019 (Trustees only)**  
 223

224 **George Tyler moved, and Dan Kerin seconded, that the Trustees approve the Trustee and**  
 225 **Selectboard special meeting of December 18, 2018 minutes, without correction.**  
 226 **The motion passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent).**  
 227

228 George Tyler moved, and Dan Kerin seconded, that the Trustees approve the Joint meeting  
229 of the Essex Selectboard and Essex Junction Trustees' minutes from the meeting of  
230 December 5, 2018, without correction. The motion passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent).  
231

232 6. READING FILE

233 a. Board Member Comments

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

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

240 Mr. Levy introduced the Governance info sheet, to be used for public outreach, and requested  
241 that the Selectboard and Trustees approve its content, before it is distributed. Ms. Wrenner  
242 provided a spelling correction and all other revisions will be provided to Mr. Duggan.  
243

244 7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

245

246 a. \*An executive session is expected for evaluation of a public employee  
247

248 Andy Watts moved, and Irene Wrenner seconded, that the Selectboard enter into executive  
249 session to discuss the evaluation of an employee in accordance with 1. V.S.A. Section 313  
250 (a)(3), to include the Village of Essex Junction Trustees and the Unified Manager. The  
251 motion passed 5-0.  
252

253 George Tyler moved, and Elaine Haney seconded, that the Trustees enter into executive  
254 session to discuss the evaluation of an employee in accordance with 1. V.S.A. Section 313  
255 (a)(3), to include the Unified Manager and the Essex Town Selectboard. The motion passed  
256 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent).  
257

258 Michael Plageman moved, and Irene Wrenner seconded, that the Selectboard exit  
259 executive session. The motion passed 5-0 at 8:45 p.m.  
260

261 George Tyler moved, and Elaine Haney seconded, that the Village Trustees exit executive  
262 session. The motion passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown absent) at 8:45 p.m.  
263

264 Irene Wrenner moved, and Michael Plageman seconded, that the Selectboard approve  
265 awarding Evan the full \$3,000 bonus for successfully achieving 2018 goals. The motion  
266 passed 5-0.  
267

268 George Tyler moved, and Dan Kerin seconded, that the Trustees award Evan Teich the  
269 maximum \$3,000 performance bonus for satisfactorily achieving the mutually agreed upon  
270 goals as warranted under the manager's contract. The motion passed 4-0 (Andrew Brown  
271 absent).  
272

273 8. ADJOURN

274

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

277

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

280

281

282

283 Respectfully Submitted,

284 Cathy Ainsworth

285 Recording Secretary

286

287

288 Approved this 1 day of April, 2019

289

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


291

292

293

294

295



Patrick Murray, Clerk, Selectboard