



VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

81 Main Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Tuesday, April 9, 2019
7:00 PM

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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 about unified website—Greg Duggan and Rob Paluba
b. Approve schedule for future joint board meetings—Greg Duggan
c. Discussion and potential selection of preferred Governance options—George Tyler
d. Approve RFP for public engagement facilitator for November 2020 vote on governance change—Greg Duggan
e. Discussion and potential action on continuation of Governance Subcommittee—George Tyler
f. Approve date and prepare for joint board strategic work session—Greg Duggan
6. CONSENT ITEMS
a. Accept report entitled "Assessment of Critical Non-Compliant Sidewalks, Paths and Crossings"—Dennis Lutz
b. Adopt Safety Committee Policy—Greg Duggan
c. Approval of minutes: February 6, 2019 (Trustees only, unless changes proposed)
7. READING FILE
a. Board Member Comments
b. Memo from Dennis Lutz re: Chittenden Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for FYE2020
8. EXECUTIVE SESSION
a. An executive session is not anticipated
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 or President, 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 or President. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings, like all programs and activities of the Village of Essex Junction and the Town of Essex, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Unified Manager's office at 878-1341.

Certification: 04/05/2019 [Signature]

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**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, April 9, 2019**

SELECTBOARD: Elaine Haney, Chair; Max Levy; Andrew Watts; Patrick Murray; Annie Cooper

TRUSTEES: George Tyler, Village President; Dan Kerin; Andrew Brown, Lori Houghton

ADMINISTRATION: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/ Assistant Manager; Rob Paluba, IT Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Betzi Bilodeau; Raj Chawla; Diane Clemens; Betsy Dunn; Jerry Fox; Paul Hansen; Don Kent; Brian Shelden; Margaret Smith; Andy Suntup; Linda Suntup; Irene Wrenner

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

Ms. Haney called the special Joint Meeting of the Town of Essex Selectboard and the Village of Essex Junction Trustees to order at 7:00PM. She invited all in attendance to rise and join in the "Pledge of Allegiance".

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/ CHANGES

Ms. Haney reordered the agenda so 5d, approving an RFP, would take place after 5e. She also noted that consulting attorney, Dan Richardson, would join the meeting for item 5c.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

MAX LEVY made a motion, and PATRICK MURRAY seconded, that the Selectboard approve the agenda, with changes. The motion passed 5-0.

ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, that the Trustees approve the agenda, with changes. The motion passed 3-0 (Lori Houghton not yet in attendance.)

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

Margaret Smith requested that those at the table speak into the microphones, so the public in attendance could hear the discussions.

Betsy Dunn wondered when the boards will have a conversation about Australian Ballot voting vs. Town meetings. Ms. Haney said this conversation will come up as the boards move forward with governance discussions, but probably not at the current meeting.

Irene Wrenner pointed out that people struggled to hear at Town Meeting, due to a problem with the microphones.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Discussion about unified website

Mr. Duggan and Mr. Paluba introduced progress being made toward a unified website. Mr. Duggan noted the color scheme template provided by CivicPlus, for review and comment; the compilation of Selectboard member and Trustee comments about the website redesign; a draft survey to collect public comment about website needs; and a list of current websites related to the website redesign conversation.

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Trustee members discussed their concerns about the unified website, thinking that they may lose their Village website in this redesign process. Mr. Kerin asked for more information about what it means to share a platform. Mr. Paluba and Mr. Duggan explained the differences between “front end” and “back end” functionality and pointed out that a front-end exact replica of the current Village Website can be embedded in the platform. They described the back-end efficiencies that would result by hosting it on a shared platform. Mr. Paluba said the websites on the new platform would function collectively, include a shared search engine and provide consistency in how IT updates the website. Ms. Cooper suggested that the Village portion of the website not go live right away but be created as a replica of the current site with all of its features.

Ms. Houghton and Mr. Tyler wondered what would happen to the website if the municipality determines to not unify. Mr. Paluba described a \$150/ hour fee associated with extra web design work with CivicPlus. They discussed the probability that the municipalities would still sharing the IT department, even if there is a vote to not unify. In this case, Mr. Paluba said that they would still benefit from the efficiencies of hosting the websites on a shared platform.

The Trustees agreed to share a platform if the front-end of the Village website looks and functions the same.

b. Approve schedule for future joint board meetings

Mr. Duggan described joint meeting schedule options for 2019-2020 for the Trustees and Selectboard members to consider. Staff are suggesting that the boards increase the number of Joint meetings, due to the increasing number decisions the municipalities must make together and the amount of similar information they need to be presented with. He described three options, with the third as the staff recommendation:

- Option 1: Status quo meetings (2.5 meetings per month for boards, 4.5 for staff)
- Option 2: Keep existing schedule and have a joint meeting every month (3 meetings per month for boards, 5 for staff)
- Option 3: Same Selectboard and Trustee schedule, with two of the meetings including joint business for both boards (3 meetings per month for boards, 4 for staff)

Mr. Watts was concerned that holding a Joint Meeting at every second meeting would not leave enough time for municipality-specific items. He also wondered if going from one joint meeting every other month to two Joint meetings per month is too many, especially if the Governance Subcommittee also meets regularly. Mr. Teich and Mr. Duggan explained that if a scheduled joint meeting seems to not be needed, they could communicate this to the boards. Mr. Levy suggested that they schedule the meetings to get them on their calendars, but if some end up not being needed that is ok, too.

Mr. Kerin cautioned that they schedule based on what is needed at this point and not focus on each individual scheduling conflict. Incoming Trustee Raj Chawla wondered if the Joint meetings could be scheduled by 7pm. The majority of the Selectboard and Trustees stressed that the first joint meeting of the month should be consistent and the second joint meeting should take place only as needed. Trustees and Selectboard members acknowledged that the municipality-specific meetings may run over by a few minutes and an increased number of Consent agenda items may be needed.

102 **MAX LEVY made a motion, and PATRICK MURRAY seconded, that the Selectboard**
103 **approve Option 3 for the meeting schedule for 2019-2020. The motion passed 4-1, with**
104 **dissenting vote by Andy Watts.**
105

106 **ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, that the Trustees approve**
107 **Option 3 for the meeting schedule for 2019-2020.**
108

109 Mr. Tyler emphasized to staff that they take care to not overfill the meetings, with this change.
110

111 **The motion passed 3-0, Lori Houghton abstained.**
112

113 **c. Discussion and potential selection of preferred Governance options**

114 Mr. Tyler presented the Governance Subcommittee’s recommendation that the municipalities
115 move toward a Unified Charter model. He discussed the two major hurdles for achieving a
116 Unified Charter: establishing a new representation model; and reaching tax equity. Dan
117 Richardson, consulting attorney, stressed that there are ways to handle each issue. He said it
118 is important to be clear with residents that the benefits outweigh the tax changes. Mr. Tyler
119 explained that, under the Unified Charter model, they could either redistribute the electoral
120 based on population or keep representation from the Village and the Town outside the Village
121 to elect two individuals from each region and one person to represent both. Mr. Tyler said that
122 to reach tax equity, when combining the general funds, Town of Essex residents outside the
123 Village would assume a 28% increase in taxes. He pointed out that residents do not like to
124 see their taxes increase so there are a few options to consider that may ease the shock of
125 this. Verbiage could be included in the Charter about a timetable so the tax increase will take
126 place incrementally over five years. Mr. Tyler described a second option, which would include
127 a “special districts” model. This would allow the Village and the Town Outside the Village to
128 have their own Parks and Rec and Library districts. These special districts would elect and
129 appoint their own boards and their budgets would be separate from the Unified Charter’s
130 general fund. He pointed out that a decision by the boards on the Unified Charter
131 recommendation will help inform the outreach strategy.
132

133 **Selectboard members, Trustees and community members discussed and commented**
134 **on this agenda item... coming soon!**
135

136 **e. Discussion & potential action on continuation of Governance Subcommittee**

137 The Trustees and Selectboard discussed whether they would approve the continuation of the
138 Governance Subcommittee with two representatives from each body. The boards discussed
139 the goals of the subcommittee over the next few months, including crafting an agreement with
140 the outreach contractor, continuing their research and filtering ideas so facts are clear about
141 unified governance. Mr. Brown encouraged the Subcommittee to hold its first meeting by the
142 end of April.
143

144 Community member Betsy Dunn shared her hope that a resident could join the
145 Subcommittee. Ms. Haney said the Subcommittee’s role is best served by board members,
146 but community engagement will take place through outreach efforts.
147

148 **MAX LEVY made a motion, and PATRICK MURRAY seconded, that the Selectboard**
149 **continue Governance Subcommittee work. The motion passed 4-1, with dissenting vote by**
150 **Andy Watts.**
151

152 **DAN KERIN made a motion, and LORI HOUGHTON seconded, that the Trustees continue**
153 **to provide members to the Governance Subcommittee. The motion passed 4-0.**
154

155 **d. Approve RFP for public engagement facilitator for November 2020 vote on governance**
156 **change**

157 Mr. Duggan presented the proposal that the Selectboard members and Trustees authorize
158 staff to issue a request for proposals (RFP) for a public engagement facilitator, in preparation
159 for a November 2020 vote on governance. Prior to the vote, the contractor would solicit input
160 from thousands of residents to review and shape the governance change options.
161

162 Ms. Cooper said the effort should include media talent from the community and bring on board
163 residents as a civic engagement opportunity. Mr. Levy and Ms. Houghton posed questions
164 about how much money it would take to reach thousands of people, suggesting that the
165 amount in the RFP seems far less than enough. Mr. Duggan suggested that it could be
166 revised and posted as a Request for Qualifications that asks applicants to submit a budget,
167 without dictating an amount. The Trustees and Selectboard members suggested revisions to
168 the RFP to ensure the applicants know the number of residents they will be expected to
169 receive input from, understand their role with staff and the Governance Subcommittee, and are
170 clear about the scope of work expected of them.
171

172 **ANDY WATTS made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, that the Selectboard authorize**
173 **staff to issue a Request for Qualifications for a public engagement facilitator in**
174 **preparation for a November 2020 vote on governance. The motion passed 5-0.**
175

176 **ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and LORI HOUGHTON seconded, that the Trustees**
177 **authorize staff to issue a Request for Qualifications for a public engagement facilitator in**
178 **preparation for a November 2020 vote on governance. The motion passed 4-0.**
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180 **f. Approve date and prepare for joint board strategic work session—Greg Duggan**

181 Mr. Duggan presented a proposal that a strategic work session take place in June, for the
182 boards to focus on organizational management between the interconnected municipalities.
183 Mr. Teich described his hope that at least 10 department heads will be in attendance with a
184 majority of the Selectboard members and Trustees.
185

186 Mr. Watts and Mr. Tyler stressed that, if a facilitator is hired, they should be work-focused and
187 there should be a clear product at the end of the event. Mr. Teich explained that the facilitator
188 would also be charged with keeping the agenda on time, because the day will include so
189 many presentations from staff and work sessions.
190

191 Staff said that they will send out a doodle poll of options for days in June to see which will
192 work best for the largest number of people.
193

194 **ANDY WATTS made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, that the Selectboard authorize**
195 **the Unified Manager to hire a facilitator for the strategic work session event. The motion**
196 **passed 5-0.**
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198 **DAN KERIN made a motion, and ANDREW BROWN seconded, that the Trustees authorize**
199 **the Unified Manager to hire a facilitator for the strategic work session event. The motion**
200 **passed 4-0.**
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6. CONSENT ITEMS

- a. Accept report entitled "Assessment of Critical Non-Compliant Sidewalks, Paths and Crossings"

The Selectboard/Trustees accept the report by the CCRPC and Toole Design Group entitled "Assessment of Critical Non-Compliant Sidewalks, Paths and Crossings" and direct staff to utilize the report to develop a five-year municipal plan in the Village and in the Town to address the ADA issues as they impact on sidewalks, paths and crossings.

- b. Adopt Safety Committee Policy
The Selectboard/Trustees adopt the Joint Safety Committee Policy.

- c. Approval of minutes: February 6, 2019 (Trustees only)

MAX LEVY made a motion, and PATRICK MURRAY seconded, to approve the Consent agenda with comments. The motion passed 5-0.

ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, to approve the Consent agenda. The motion passed 4-0.

7. READING FILE

- a. **Board Member Comments**

The Selectboard and Trustees thanked Lori Houghton for her service as this was her final meeting as a Trustee.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

9. ADJOURN

MAX LEVY made a motion, and PATRICK MURRAY seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 5-0.

ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Ainsworth
Recording Secretary