1. **CALL TO ORDER** [7:15 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. Preparation for Strategic Advance—Liz Gamache
   b. Update from Governance Subcommittee—George Tyler

6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
   a. Approval of minutes: May 6, 2019

7. **READING FILE**
   a. Board Member Comments
   b. Stormwater Award for Chelsea Mandigo from Green Mountain Water Environment Association
   c. Recreation Award for Adriane Martin
   d. Brownell Library Staff and Director’s Report March 2019
   e. “Garbage disposals vs. composting”, Burlington Free Press
   f. Memo from Rob Paluba and Greg Duggan re: website updates

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: 05/24/2019 [Signature]
VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
FINAL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 28, 2019

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

TRUSTEES: Andrew Brown, President; George Tyler; Raj Chawla; Amber Thibeault

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Liz Gamache; Jennifer Knauer; Emerson Lynn; Jim O’Rourke; Margaret
Smith; Irene Wrenner

1. CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG
   Andrew Brown called the Trustees back to order from their recess, and Elaine Haney called
   the Town of Essex Selectboard to order at 7:30 PM, for the Special Joint Meeting of the
   Village of Essex Junction Trustees with the Town of Essex Selectboard.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/ CHANGES
   There were no changes to the agenda.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL
   With no changes to the agenda, no motion to approve was required.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD
   a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
      There were no comments from the public

5. BUSINESS ITEMS
   a. Preparation for Strategic Advance—Liz Gamache
      Ms. Gamache, former Mayor and interim City Manager of St. Albans City, introduced Mr.
      Lynn, long-time, former owner and manager of the St. Albans Messenger newspaper, and Mr.
      O’Rourke, who is currently running the Messenger. In preparation for the Village of Essex
      Junction and Town of Essex’s work on unification, Ms. Gamache and Mr. Lynn shared their
      experiences from St. Albans City’s downtown revitalization efforts. They offered this
      information to identify parallels in their efforts that could help guide how Essex may want to
      manage their own large, municipal change effort. Ms. Gamache explained that St. Albans
      began from a place of potential downtown decay and stagnation, then developed a shared
      vision, effective planning strategies and achieved revitalization. She gave credit to strategies
      that built strong civic engagement, a transparent communication strategy, intentional
      community trust-building and formal as well as informal teaming for success. Mr. Lynn shared
      his insights into St. Albans’ revitalization efforts and outcomes. He mentioned that there has
      been a 65% increase in revenue and $52 million dollars added to the grand list since
      revitalization efforts began 6 years ago. Mr. Lynn described the connection between the vision
      of revitalization and core efforts dealing with existing landowners and landlords. Important
      community dynamics included the move of St. Albans’ largest employer, Mylan, downtown,
      and enforcing a requirement that Walmart would revitalize two downtown buildings. He said
      transparency of all efforts was essential, and public trust was built through consistent, weekly
      Public Relations (PR) about the value of work being done, updates on issues and activities,
and opportunities for engagement. He said the buy-in established resulted in a 3:1 margin of
votes for each step of their revitalization process.

Ms. Gamache and Mr. Lynn offered key suggestions for Essex as they move forward with
unification. Mr. Lynn encouraged Essex staff, Trustees and Selectboard members to utilize
the Essex Reporter for consistent public relations. Ms. Gamache encouraged elected officials
to maintain visibility with accomplishments along the way. She said it is important to
remember that their messaging will be received by people who are at many stages of the
change process (awareness, knowledge, action) so opportunities for multiple levels of
discussions should be planned and information sharing should be scaffolded to meet people
where they are. She said staff should provide accurate analysis and technical information
while creating a space for constructive conversations around tensions or conflict to help shape
the direction. She stressed the importance of a clear communications plan, with an
understanding of who will be communicating what, and that space should be intentionally
embedded for people to process what they are learning. She encouraged officials to
empathize with the fact that each individual will go through a process of change through this
unification.

Ms. Cooper asked for suggestions about how to get started with the work Ms. Gamache
described. Ms. Gamache illustrated the importance of beginning by identifying what shared
values exist in the community around the issue. She said that the staff and elected officials’
ideas and plans should be communicated and reviewed by community members,
stakeholders and public officials. They should be ready to articulate why they are pursuing this
change including the details, content and rationale. She said staff and the board members
should listen carefully and become clear on what people feel like they are losing as well as
what they hope for or might gain- this can help shape direction. Mr. Lynn described the
importance of establishing buy-in with core stakeholders who believe in the importance of
unification. He said they can build community trust by ensuring that all interpretations of the
issues are open for honest discussion.

Ms. Haney asked for suggestions on what the roles of staff and elected officials should be.
Ms. Gamache said that they should have designated spokespeople for specific efforts, to
ensure consistent messaging. She suggested that the board and staff be disciplined about
finding internal agreements to challenging questions. She encouraged everyone to
consistently share what questions are being asked from all areas and understand the answers
being provided. Mr. Lynn said that staff and elected officials need to find clarity about why
they want to merge municipalities, create an engaging vision and definition of “Greater
Essex”. He said that forward movement should be built on optimism and cautioned that when
the vision is not clear it might be filled in with negativity.

Mr. Murray asked for suggestions for how to address resistance to the idea of unification and
Mr. Brown wondered how to avoid misinformation. Ms. Gamache explained that it can help to
identify if the resistance is from a place of “I don’t get it; I don’t like it; or I don’t like you”, each
of which are progressively harder to address. She said that “I don’t get it” can often be
resolved with clarifying information; “I don’t like it” should be carefully discussed to determine
specifically what elements are not liked; and “I don’t like you” signifies lack of confidence in
leadership, which can be hard to overcome. Ms. Gamache suggested that they establish
official sources of information, such as the newspaper, website, and official social media sites
in order to combat misinformation.
Mr. Tyler expressed concern that some elements of unification may not be exciting enough for news stories because they involve things like board leadership structures and policy consolidation. Ms. Gamache reminded everyone that because this change will touch everyone, space should be created to discuss the “consolidation story”. She explained that things will surface that need to be heard and addressed in order to stay the course. She and Mr. Lynn both suggested that it would be helpful for staff and the board members to identify stages or specific decision points that need community approval prior to moving into the next things. Mr. Lynn also encouraged that they identify some exciting, visible, ancillary examples of how people will be better off by the two municipalities working together in a unified model.

Mr. Teich wondered if there was anything St. Albans would do over in their revitalization efforts. Ms. Gamache said it is important to answer emotional questions with empathy not necessarily more data. She said overall the effort far exceeded expectations.

Ms. Haney invited community in attendance to share comments.

Ms. Wrenner asked how history informed the process of St. Albans Revitalization. Mr. Lynn explained that the trajectory of not doing anything would have resulted in downtown decay, which people agreed was not an option. He said they looked at the history of the town and amplified it. For example, in the past there were hotels in St. Albans downtown and now there is one again. CCV is considering relocating back into downtown. He explained that it is important to engage people at multiple levels by including historical and visual contexts in order to generate buy in.

Ms. Wrenner commented that many people do not receive the Essex Reporter and asked that this be addressed with the post office so community members can remain informed. Mr. Teich invited extra copies of the Essex Reporter be delivered to the Village Offices at 2 Lincoln Street and the Town Offices at 81 Main Street and staff will deliver them to some of the local municipal buildings for people to pick up.

The board members and staff thanked Ms. Gamache, Mr. Lynn and Mr. O'Rourke for their time and said they plan to utilize the suggestions to inform their upcoming Strategic Advance and efforts toward unification.

b. **Update from Governance Subcommittee—George Tyler**

Mr. Tyler updated the Trustees and Selectboard about insight shared by Barb Higgins, who attended the most recent Governance Subcommittee meeting. Ms. Higgins pointed out that a long-term result of consolidation may be a negative impact on Economic Development, if business retention and development is hindered due to the tax increase in the Town Outside the Village. Mr. Tyler requested that staff generate accurate financial information related to this. He said the subcommittee would like to hear from businesses on the issue and be prepared with accurate information. He also requested that staff provide a list of businesses who currently receive tax abatements for the discussion. Mr. Chawla suggested feedback should be solicited from the Economic Development Committee because individuals in this group could become core leaders in the consolidation efforts.

Mr. Duggan explained that staff will be ready to recommend a community engagement contractor for the Trustees and Selectboard to hire to host a series of focus groups and surveys on consolidation issues. Ms. Haney and Ms. Cooper pointed out that a similar, previous strategy called Heart & Soul had difficulty reaching their target audience and they hope this new strategy will be more robust and more successful. Ms. Cooper suggested that
subcommittees should be mobilized to engage greater awareness of consolidation, and
stressed the importance of this community engagement effort. The boards also discussed the
possibility of providing incentives, such as in-kind access to Recreation programs, to people
so they will more readily participate in the focus groups and return surveys. Mr. Duggan
mentioned that if the contract ends up being $40,000 or more, a waiver may be needed to
enter into the agreement. This should be determined by Monday, June 3rd.

6. CONSENT ITEMS
a. Approval of minutes: May 6, 2019

GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, that the Trustees
approve the consent agenda. The motion passed 4-0.

MAX LEVY made a motion, seconded by PATRICK MURRAY, that the Selectboard approve
the consent agenda. The motion passed 4-0.

7. READING FILE
a. Board Member Comments
   • Ms. Haney and Mr. Teich expressed gratitude for Ms. Gamache's presentation. Ms.
     Haney shared her impression that the Selectboard, Trustees and Staff will need to
     increase effort and work hard on the unification effort.
   • Mr. Teich announced the passing of active Essex Junction Firefighter, Charles
     "Chuck" Barry, who served the Essex Junction Fire Department for the past 34 years.
     He shared fond memories of this dedicated man's service and contribution to Essex.
     Mr. Teich noted that he would forward the service arrangements to board members.

b. Stormwater Award for Chelsea Mandigo from Green Mountain Water Environment
   Association
   Ms. Cooper and Ms. Haney expressed congratulations to Ms. Mandigo for her award.

c. Recreation Award for Adriane Martin
   Ms. Cooper and Ms. Haney expressed congratulations to Ms. Martin for her award.

d. Brownell Library Staff and Director's Report March 2019

e. "Garbage disposals vs. composting", Burlington Free Press

f. Memo from Rob Paluba and Greg Duggan re: website updates

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION
   There was no executive session.

9. ADJOURN

RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, that the Trustees
adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0, at 8:58 PM.

MAX LEVY made a motion, seconded by PATRICK MURRAY, that the Selectboard adjourn
the meeting. The motion passed 4-0, at 8:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Ainsworth
Recording Secretary

Approved this 17th day of June, 2019
(See minutes of this day for corrections, if any)

Patrick Murray, Clerk, Selectboard