



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

2 Lincoln Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Tuesday, August 27, 2019
7:15 PM (or immediately following
Village Trustees Meeting)

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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** [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. Approval of control panel replacement for West Street and Susie Wilson Road pump stations—Jim Jutras
 - b. Update from Governance Subcommittee
 - c. Approve elevator speech about potential merger
 - d. Approve revised joint meeting schedule—Sarah Macy
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approve use of infographic about merger
7. **READING FILE**
 - a. Board Member Comments
 - b. Water quality impacts at Indian Brook Reservoir
 - c. Memo from Greg Duggan and Tammy Getchell re: Update on changes at 2 Lincoln Street office
 - d. Email and attachments from Delia Makhetha re: Colchester Exit 16 DDI Project
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: 08/23/2019 *J. Mitchell*

TRUSTEES & SELECTBOARD

August 27, 2019

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEE
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
August 27, 2019**

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

TRUSTEES: Andrew Brown, Chair; George Tyler, Vice Chair; Raj Chawla; Amber Thibeault; Dan Kerin;

ADMINISTRATION: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager; James Jutras, Water Quality Superintendent.

OTHERS PRESENT: Diane Clemens, Claudine Safar, Kristen Shamis, Margaret Smith, Ken Signorello.

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

Andrew Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Trustees back to order from their recess, and Elaine Haney called the Town of Essex Selectboard to order. They entered into the Special Joint Meeting of the Village of Essex Trustees and the Town of Essex Selectboard at 7:17pm.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

There were no agenda additions or changes at this time.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

As no changes were proposed for the agenda, approval was not needed.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments from public on items not on agenda

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Approval of control panel replacement for West Street and Susie Wilson Road pump stations—Jim Jutras

Jim Jutras, Water Quality Superintendent, stated that he is requesting permission of both boards simultaneously to waive the purchasing policy bid requirements and proceed with a sole source contract to replace the control panels for the Susie Wilson Road and West Street pump stations. He noted that the current pumps are from the 1960s and have been retrofitted a number of times, and as such they require an electrician that is familiar with these pumps to perform the installation of the new control panels. He added that both Boards need to approve this waiver because the funds will come from both the Town and Village.

Mr. Levy asked how the new control panels will be designed to mitigate corrosion from salt spray, since that was one of the drivers of deterioration of current equipment. Mr. Jutras replied that the units will be set further back and on pedestals to increase air flow, and that they will be made of stainless steel and will decrease moisture and condensation around the unit.

Mr. Levy asked what would happen if the current control panels fail. Mr. Jutras replied that the Susie Wilson station could store excess flow for around 3-4 hours, and that the West Street

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51 relies on a generator and has very little storage capacity. He also stated that the control system
52 can be automatically shut down to prevent overflows.

53
54 Ms. Haney asked if the current proposed electrician (Pratt and Smith) would be used in future
55 for more upgrades or if another electrician could be used. Mr. Jutras replied that improvements
56 in design and documentation of pump stations going forward would mitigate the need for this
57 type of request in future.

58
59 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, that the Trustees waive the**
60 **bid process and allow staff to proceed with purchase and installation of the Susie Wilson**
61 **Road and West Street pump station custom control panels with Pratt and Smith Electric.**
62 **The motion passed 5-0.**

63
64 **ANDY WATTS made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, that the Selectboard waive the**
65 **bid process and allow staff to proceed with the purchase and installation of the Susie**
66 **Wilson Road and West Street pump station custom control panels with Pratt and Smith**
67 **Electric. The motion passed 5-0.**

68
69 **b. Update from Governance Subcommittee**
70 George Tyler provided an update from the Governance Subcommittee on the results from the
71 focus groups and listening sessions conducted by KSV marketing consultants. He noted that the
72 tone from the six sessions was generally positive about the merger and concept, but that there
73 were some doubts, concerns, and questions, but not much negativity. He highlighted the
74 following key findings:

- 75 • Participants asked about timing and why the merger conversation is occurring now,
76 since a previous merger attempt was rejected in 2007.
- 77 • Participants emphasized that the Town and Village governments should be unbiased
78 and fact-based when discussing the merger, not promotional.
- 79 • Participants generally felt positive about phasing in tax increases, but uncertain about
80 how that would be done.
- 81 • Participants felt strongly that maintaining quality of services is crucial and that this
82 should be emphasized when communicating about the merger.
- 83 • Participants showed interest in exploring the possibility of a mayoral form of government.

84
85 Mr. Levy added that participants were unclear about the status quo and what it is currently, and
86 that this should be clarified at a high level in communications.

87
88 Mr. Chawla noted that representation was a large theme in the sessions, and that there is a
89 consistent desire for some form of board representation for both the Town and Village residents.
90 Residents are willing to accept tax increases as long as they are accompanied by
91 representation.

92
93 Ms. Haney noted that it seemed that a tax increase would need to be phased in gradually, but
94 was surprised that the suggested time period was 3-5 years and not 7-10. She also noted that
95 she was struck by the statement that though Town Outside the Village residents had a lower tax
96 rate, they still have high costs (including septic systems and water lines, for example), which is
97 important for Town and Village residents to keep in mind.

98
99 Mr. Tyler noted that the final phase of this initiative will be a quantitative survey, the structure of
100 which will build from the information gathered in the qualitative survey and focus groups. The

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101 Subcommittee members will each send individual questions for this survey, and KSV will put
102 together a draft survey to review and revise on September 5th. Meetings have also been
103 tentatively scheduled for September 12th and 19th, in case they are needed. The Subcommittee
104 anticipates that results from the survey will be available in late October.

105

106 Ms. Haney asked if the survey would have the same statistical significance requirements as the
107 first survey? Mr. Tyler replied that he thinks so, yes. He noted that the response rate to the first
108 survey was very high and that he is hoping this survey has similar response rates.

109

110 Ms. Haney also asked both boards about the utility of the survey and focus group activities
111 conducted by KSV. Mr. Kerin noted that having an outside entity produce and field an unbiased,
112 factual survey is extremely valuable, and is helping to educate the public as well as supply
113 information to the Town and Village. Ms. Cooper noted that she had hoped for a higher volume
114 of participants, but felt that broad representation in the survey and groups has been achieved.

115

116 Mr. Signorello cautioned the Boards about developing policy through surveys, because surveys
117 can be misinterpreted. He also noted that there is no public notice for a survey (unlike for a
118 vote), and that there are not restrictions on who can take the survey. He advised the Boards to
119 consider all information within the survey and groups when making decisions around the merger
120 topic.

121

122 c. Approve elevator speech about potential merger

123 Mr. Levy walked through the proposed elevator speech about a potential merger, noting that the
124 Subcommittee on Governance drafted the language in an attempt to be succinct and unbiased.
125 The following changes were proposed by the Trustees and Selectboard members:

126

- 127 • In the last sentence of the first paragraph, strike “the” from “overcome the
128 challenges”
- 129 • Strike the second sentence of the second paragraph and replace with the following:
130 “We’re relying on residents’ feedback to help us develop the best models for
131 representation and for taxing everyone equitably for our municipal services.”

132

133 **DAN KERIN made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, that the Board of Trustees**
134 **approve the elevator speech about a potential merger about the Town of Essex and**
135 **Village of Essex Junction with the proposed edits.**

136

137 Public comment: Mr. Signorello noted that an elevator pitch has three parts (problem and
138 benefits of solution, differentiator, and an ask for action). He asks that the Boards consider the
139 basics of an elevator pitch before approving this language.

140

141 Mr. Kerin responded that the above proposed language has been termed an elevator speech as
142 a matter of semantics, but is simply a method to solicit feedback from the public, and does not
143 retract his motion.

144

145 **The motion passed 5-0.**

146

147 **PATRICK MURRAY made a motion, and ANNIE COOPER seconded, that the Selectboard**
148 **approve the elevator speech about a potential merger about the Town of Essex and**
149 **Village of Essex Junction with the proposed edits. The motion passed 5-0.**

150

151

152 **d. Approve revised joint meeting schedule—Sarah Macy**
153 Sarah Macy walked through the discussion of revising the joint meeting schedule. She stated
154 that the schedule of meetings had been changed in April from two meetings each per month for
155 the Trustees and Selectboard and one joint meeting every other month, to appending a joint
156 meeting to one of each individual Board’s meetings (the first Selectboard meeting and second
157 Trustees meeting of each month). Staff have proposed a revised schedule, recognizing that the
158 current schedule has increased timely decision-making but has increased the number of
159 meetings per month. Staff now propose that joint meetings are held twice monthly with
160 individual Selectboard or Trustee business to be conducted before or after those meetings.

161
162 Both Selectboard and Trustee members agreed that fewer meetings would be better and that
163 more joint meetings would make all aware of both Town and Village issues, but expressed
164 concern with having longer meetings, not having enough time devoted to discussing
165 Selectboard-specific or Trustee-specific issues, and blurring jurisdictional lines if both boards
166 are present when a Town-or-Village-specific issue is being considered and voted on.

167
168 Both Boards agreed that this discussion item be tabled, and that staff will revise their proposed
169 schedule and bring it to a future Joint Trustees/Selectboard meeting.

170

171 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

172 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, that the Trustees approve**
173 **the consent agenda. The motion passed 5-0.**

174
175 **MAX LEVY made a motion, and ANNIE COOPER seconded, that the Selectboard approve**
176 **the consent agenda with comments.**

177

178

179 **a. Approve use of infographic about merger**

180 Mr. Watts noted that the agenda item asks for approval of the use of the infographic, not the
181 content in the infographic. He stated that his concerns regarding key benefits have not yet been
182 satisfied.

183
184 **The motion passed 4-1, with dissenting vote from Mr. Watts.**

185

186 **7. READING FILE:**

187 **a. Board Member Comments**

188 Mr. Teich noted that a staff member is on maternity leave and that they are short-staffed for
189 between 12-13 weeks.

190

191 Mr. Chawla noted that Public Works has put up more reflecting beacons and mid-street
192 crosswalks at key pedestrian traffic points, and expressed his appreciation of this.

193

194 Mr. Watts asked for clarification regarding the merger infographic. He stated he had been told
195 that the infographic would be used at KSV focus sessions, and that he had told members of the
196 public that it would be used at some and not at other sessions. Mr. Teich clarified that the
197 infographic was not use for any of the sessions, adding that it had not been available to use at
198 the first session and KSV had omitted it from other sessions to be consistent.

199

200 Mr. Murray noted that the 2019-2020 school season will begin on August 28, and that there will
201 be increased bus traffic and activity in the Village, and that residents be aware of this increase
202 across neighborhoods.

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- 203 **b. Water quality impacts at Indian Brook Reservoir -**
- 204 **c. Memo from Greg Duggan and Tammy Getchell re: Update on changes at 2**
- 205 **Lincoln Street office**
- 206 **d. Email and attachments from Delia Makhetha re: Colchester Exit 16 DDI Project**

207

208 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

209 No Executive Session was required or held.

210

211 **9. ADJOURN:**

212 **MAX LEVY made a motion, and PATRICK MURRAY seconded, to adjourn the Selectboard**

213 **meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 8:52pm.**

214

215 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, to adjourn the Trustee**

216 **meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 8:52pm.**

217

218

219 Respectfully Submitted,

220 Amy Coonradt

221 Recording Secretary

222

223 Approved this 9th day of September, 2019

224

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

226

227