



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

Online
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Monday, April 6, 2020
7:45 PM (or immediately following
Town Selectboard Meeting)

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Phone: (802) 878-1341

The Selectboard and Trustees meet together to discuss and act on joint business. Each board votes separately on action items.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Due to the Covid-19/coronavirus pandemic, this meeting will be held remotely. Available options to watch or join the meeting:

- The meeting will be live-streamed on Channel 17's YouTube channel.
Join via Microsoft Teams https://tinyurl.com/Selectboard-Trustees040620 . Depending on your browser, you may need to call in for audio (below).
Join via conference call (audio only): (802) 377-3784 | Conference ID: 996 290 979#
For the purpose of recording minutes, you will be asked to provide your first and last name.
When listening to the meeting, please keep your phone or computer on "mute" as to prevent interruptions during the meeting. For agenda items when it is appropriate for the public to speak, please unmute your phone or computer and introduce yourself before requesting the floor from the Chair/President.

- CALL TO ORDER [7:45 PM]
AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES
APPROVE AGENDA
PUBLIC TO BE HEARD
a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
BUSINESS ITEMS
a. Update on COVID-19 impacts
b. Discuss how to assist residents and businesses during COVID-19 pandemic
c. Discuss and approve upcoming meeting schedule
CONSENT ITEMS
a. Approve minutes: March 24, 2020 – (Trustees and Selectboard)
READING FILE
a. Board Member Comments
EXECUTIVE SESSION
a. An executive session is not anticipated
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: 04/03/2020 [Signature]

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES  
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
April 6, 2020

**SELECTBOARD:** Elaine Haney, Chair; Patrick Murray; Andrew Watts; Annie Cooper; Vince Franco.

**TRUSTEES:** Andrew Brown, President; Amber Thibeault; Raj Chawla; Dan Kerin.

**ADMINISTRATION and STAFF:** Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager; Rick Garey, Chief of Police.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Lisa LaBerge; Max Levy; Ken Signorello; Irene Wrenner.

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

Andrew Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Trustees to order and Elaine Haney called the Town of Essex Selectboard back from recess, to enter into the Joint Meeting of the Village of Essex Trustees and the Town of Essex Selectboard at 8:03 PM.

**2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

There were no agenda additions or changes at this time.

**3. AGENDA APPROVAL**

There were no changes to the agenda so approval is not needed at this time.

**4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

**a. Comments from public on items not on agenda**

There were no comments from the public at this time.

**5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**a. Update on COVID-19 impacts:**

Mr. Teich began the update by noting the key actions that the Town and Village have taken to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, including enacting the Essex Emergency Operations Plan with Police Chief Garey as the designated emergency operations coordinator, asking the boards to declare a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 crisis, unifying Town and Village actions and operations during the crisis where possible, and ensuring consistent messaging from the joint communities through the appointment of a public information officer (Mr. Duggan) and assistant public information officer (Tammy Getchell) . He added that departmental continuity plans were developed, non-essential board and committee meetings have been cancelled, all essential board meetings are held remotely, public meeting spaces have been closed, and essential roles and functions in Town and Village administration are either working remotely or in staggered shifts. He further noted that the Champlain Valley Expo is now a COVID-19 test site, the Fire Department is now treating all calls as hazardous, the Police Department is

45 working split shifts, park amenities are closed, and parks and paths are not closed but social  
46 distancing is being very strongly encouraged. He finally noted that two new expense accounts  
47 have been created for Town and Village COVID-19-related expenses, in anticipation of FEMA-  
48 reimbursement in future.

49

50 Ms. Haney thanked municipal staff for their hard work, and noted that different communities  
51 are experiencing different levels of intensity in terms of police enforcement of Stay Home, Stay  
52 Safe orders. Mr. Teich noted that the Essex Police Department has been approaching the order  
53 with a light touch to start.

54

55 Mr. Chawla noted that signage for social distancing was put into place in the Pearl Street Park,  
56 but that many are ignoring them and he has heard concern from elderly constituents. He  
57 emphasized the importance of ramping up stronger messaging. Ms. Cooper stressed that Essex  
58 should try and get ahead of the curve to enact preventive measures, not reactive measures.

59

60 Mr. Kerin asked whether school grounds were included in the social distancing/trespass order  
61 and suggested reaching out to the school boards to post signage on school playgrounds.

62

63 Mr. Brown asked if the next step would be for the parks and recreation departments to remove  
64 basketball hoops, tennis nets, and other equipment from parks to discourage gatherings and  
65 encourage social distancing. Mr. Teich replied in the affirmative, if signs are not adhered-to. He  
66 added that park crews are on a split shift and are also tasked with disinfecting buildings, so they  
67 may not have the bandwidth to do comprehensive enforcement.

68

69 **b. Discuss how to assist residents and businesses during COVID-19 pandemic:**

70 Mr. Teich said the Town has 1% of the current fiscal year's budget set aside for Health & Human  
71 Services funding, which amounts to \$148,000, and that the Town received more first-time grant  
72 applications than the prior year, for a total amount of \$186,000. He proposed to expedite the  
73 approval process for grants, bringing them before the Selectboard in early May instead of June  
74 to get funding distributed as quickly as possible. He also noted that the Town and Village are  
75 actively reaching out to senior citizens, sending them letters with a list of resources and  
76 contacts.

77

78 Selectboard and Trustee members discussed various ways to get food to families in need,  
79 update citizens on available resources, and distribute donations. Mr. Teich mentioned that the  
80 human services funds utilize partnerships with local entities, who have the knowledge and  
81 infrastructure to better distribute funding than the administration could. He also suggested that  
82 more money could be taken out of surplus funding to cover the gap between existing human  
83 services grant funding and the amount of funding requested during this round.

84

85 The Selectboard and Trustees discussed bringing ideas and potential solutions for connecting  
86 citizens to resources to the grant review committee.

87

88 Ken Signorello suggested that personal protective equipment (PPE) could be purchased and  
89 made available to those that need it like frontline staff, grocery, delivery, healthcare.

90  
91 Irene Wrenner suggested that United Way is coordinating the receipt and distribution of  
92 resources, and can be reached by dialing 2-1-1.

93  
94 The Selectboard and Trustees then discussed the anticipated financial impacts of the COVID-19  
95 crisis. Mr. Teich noted that the state education fund is projected to lose \$40 million between  
96 now and the beginning of the next state fiscal year. He noted that the Town and Village are able  
97 to use their assigned and unassigned fund balances to ensure that essential services are  
98 maintained through during the COVID-19 crisis. Sarah Macy noted that the Town had \$2.2  
99 million in unassigned fund balance and \$1.7 million in assigned fund balance at the end of the  
100 last fiscal year.

101  
102 Ms. Haney stated that the Selectboard and Trustees want to assure residents that there will not  
103 be massive tax increases after the crisis is over with, and asked what steps could be taken to  
104 ensure that this doesn't occur. Mr. Teich said the administration is looking at current cash flow  
105 and cash availability and will review ways to limit expenses moving forward.

106  
107 Ms. Haney asked if there are actions that can be taken at the property-tax collection level,  
108 should that be needed in future. Mr. Teich replied that less than 20% of the property tax bill is  
109 municipal, and that the school district and state receive a large portion of the collected taxes.  
110 He added that Essex has a Board of Civil Authority which hears requests for tax abatement and  
111 penalty reduction from citizens, and that one of the qualifying reasons for abatement or  
112 penalty reduction is provable financial hardship. Ms. Macy added that when the next round of  
113 delinquent tax notices is sent out, the Town would include information on property owners'  
114 right to apply for abatement.

115  
116 Mr. Watts asked whether the state's decision to postpone the tax filing deadline until July 15<sup>th</sup>  
117 has had an effect on Essex. Ms. Macy noted that this would delay when citizens would receive a  
118 revised tax bill with property tax adjustments applied. Ms. Haney suggested reaching out to the  
119 Essex delegation of legislators to see if action can be taken at that level.

120  
121 **c. Discuss and approve upcoming meeting schedule:**

122 Mr. Duggan noted that meetings will be remote for the foreseeable future and that the  
123 schedule has been adjusted to have the Selectboard and Trustees meet twice per month.

124  
125 **PATRICK MURRAY made a motion, VINCE FRANCO seconded, that the Selectboard approve**  
126 **the revised meeting schedule through June 30, 2021, with adjusted start times to 7:00 PM.**  
127 **when Selectboard meets first. Motion passed 5-0.**

128  
129 **PATRICK MURRAY made a motion, VINCE FRANCO seconded, that the Selectboard approve**  
130 **Option A meeting schedule through April 2021. Motion passed 5-0.**

131

132 **RAJ CHAWLA** made a motion, and **DAN KERIN** seconded, that the Trustees approve the  
133 **Option A** meeting schedule through April 2021, with the Trustees start time at 6:30 PM.  
134 **Motion passed 4-0.**

135  
136 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

137  
138 **a. Approve minutes: March 24, 2020 (Trustees and Selectboard)**

139  
140 **ANDY WATTS** made a motion, and **ANNIE COOPER** seconded, that the Selectboard approve  
141 the consent agenda for April 6, 2020. **Motion passed 5-0.**

142  
143 **AMBER THIBEAULT** made a motion, and **DAN KERIN** seconded, that the Trustees approve the  
144 consent agenda for April 6, 2020. **Motion passed 4-0.**

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146  
147 **7. READING FILE:**

148 **a. Board Member Comments**

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150 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

151 **a. An executive session is not anticipated**

152  
153 **9. ADJOURN:**

154 **DAN KERIN** made a motion, and **AMBER THIBEAULT** seconded, to adjourn the Trustees  
155 meeting. **Motion passed 4-0 at 10:10 PM.**

156  
157 **The Selectboard continued with a Selectboard-only portion of the meeting.**

158  
159 Respectfully Submitted,  
160 Amy Coonradt  
161 Recording Secretary

162  
163  
164 Approved this 28th day of April, 2020

165  
166 **(see minutes of this day for corrections, if any)**

167  
168