



VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Online
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Wednesday, June 17, 2020
6:00 PM

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

- The meeting will be live-streamed on Town Meeting TV.
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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.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER [6:00 PM]
2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES
3. APPROVE AGENDA
4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD
a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
5. PUBLIC HEARING
a. Presentation of Fiscal Year 2021 Proposed Utility Rates—Sarah Macy
b. Public Hearing on Fiscal Year 2021 Proposed Utility Rates
6. BUSINESS ITEMS
a. Consider budget adjustments to Fiscal Year 2021 Water, Wastewater, Sanitation budget; Warn second Public Hearing— Sarah Macy
b. Continued discussion and possible action on support for local businesses due to COVID-19—Robin Pierce
c. Review draft merger charter to make changes and fix areas of concern—Evan Teich
7. CONSENT ITEMS
a. Approve minutes: June 1, 2020
8. READING FILE
a. Board Member Comments
9. EXECUTIVE SESSION
a. \*An executive session is not anticipated
10. ADJOURN

This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings of the Trustees, like all programs and activities of the Village of Essex Junction, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Unified Manager's office at 878-6951.

Certification: 06/12/2020
Date Posted

Initials (handwritten signature)

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
June 17, 2020

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

**ADMINISTRATION and STAFF:** Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager; Robin Pierce, Community Development Director.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Ken Signorello, Irene Wrenner.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Andrew Brown called the meeting of the Village of Essex Junction Trustees to order at 6:00 PM.

**2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

Deputy Manager Duggan requested the inclusion of additional materials for Business Item 6c (Review Draft Charter and fix areas of concern), including comments from the Trustees, George Tyler’s proposed edits to the charter, and a study from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns regarding municipal regulation of alcohol and tobacco. He noted a request from Champlain Valley Expo to consider waiving \$15,000 annual fee to the Village, and proposed it be added as Business Item 6d.

**3. AGENDA APPROVAL**

**DAN KERIN made a motion, and GEORGE TYLER seconded, that the Board of Trustees approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed 5-0.**

**4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

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

None at this time.

**5. PUBLIC HEARING**

**a. Presentation of Fiscal Year 2021 Proposed Utility Rates**

Finance Director Sarah Macy presented information for this item, noting that the presentation is based on the approved enterprise fund budget. She summarized this year’s rates and the increase over last year, and next year’s rates and the increase over this year. She noted that the Fiscal Year 2021 proposed combined utility rate increase over Fiscal Year 2020 is 6.9%; it is higher than the average annual increase but is lower than last year’s increase. She noted that the water fund rate will increase in 2021 by 5.9%, the wastewater treatment rate will increase by 9.9%, and the sanitation rate will increase by 4.9%. She also recommended that the Trustees approve a new type of rate called an interim utility bill fee, which is common in surrounding communities, and said the cost of this fee is currently borne by all users through the standard user rate. She also reviewed the large water user rate, which is only currently paid by GLOBALFOUNDRIES, and that it will increase in FY21 by 13.3%.

Mr. Brown asked how the interim utility bill fee of \$35 was calculated and whether it aligns with the Town’s rate for this fee. Ms. Macy replied that it is comprised of a \$25 fee that is charged when a line is connected or disconnected and an estimated labor cost of \$10 for the time and effort to produce the bill. She added that St. Albans uses this methodology and amount.

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**b. Public Hearing on Fiscal Year 2021 Proposed Utility Rates**

Public hearing closed at 6:20 PM.

**6. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**a. Consider budget adjustments to Fiscal Year 2021 Water, Wastewater, Sanitation budget; Warn second Public Hearing**

**GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, to warn the second of two public hearings on the proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Utility Rates for Tuesday June 23, 2020. The motion passed 5-0.**

**b. Continued discussion and possible action on support for local businesses due to COVID-19**

Community Development Director Pierce began the discussion of this item, outlining a proposal to support local businesses through a voucher program and event. He proposed that residents would receive one \$10 voucher per household to be redeemed at local businesses in the Village Center during a designated time period, that residents would need to show proof of residency, and vendors would in turn need to demonstrate proof of purchase to redeem the vouchers with the Village. He tentatively proposed Friday, July 10 and Saturday, July 11 from 3:00-9:00 PM for the dates of this voucher event.

Mr. Brown expressed concern that a one-weekend event during a small time window could encourage crowding in retail and dining spaces and suggested spreading the event out during an entire week or for a longer time each day. Ms. Thibeault asked whether staff had the capacity to both distribute vouchers to residents and reimburse vendors for spent vouchers after the event. The Trustees discussed which businesses would qualify for the voucher program. Mr. Teich suggested postponing the dates for several weeks in order to get the word out about the event to increase potential participation among vendors and residents.

**GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, that the Trustees give Staff approval to initiate the Open and Outside initiative to give away 1,000 vouchers to be spent on Village business with a redeemable value of \$10 for up to \$10,000 from the Village economic development fund, defer to staff to select the specific dates and timing of the program, waive the normal Permit fee of \$50 during this event, and work with the Selectboard to confirm that they are willing to waive the recording fee for this event. The motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. Tyler additionally noted that many businesses in the Village were receptive to the idea of having additional outdoor seating areas while patrons wait to enter their establishments (due to COVID-19 related capacity limits), and suggested that staff pursue purchasing plastic-coated steel mesh tables and umbrellas for this. He noted that it would help boost business in the Village. Mr. Teich noted that per the Governor’s orders, tables would need to be cleaned after every use. Mr. Chawla said he would want to ensure that the tables would not be used as smoking areas by patrons. Mr. Kerin suggested that the Village could rent tables from Champlain Valley Expo.

**GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, to allocate an amount not to exceed \$12,000 for staff to provide outdoor seating and place-making supplies for the Village Center District, drawing on the Village’s penny on dollar for economic development. The motion passed 5-0.**

**c. Review draft merger charter to make changes and fix areas of concern**

The Trustees reviewed the draft merger charter by section and outlined their respective edits, comments, and concerns. Areas of focus included the transition districts and timing of the transition period, the timing and formation of an interim governing body and how that relates to elections and budgetary timelines for the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction, discussion of community development and the role of a planning commission, and reapportionment. The Trustees agreed that Attorney Dan Richardson should be consulted before proceeding with language in several sections of the draft merger charter.

Irene Wrenner commented on the unnecessary formation of an interim governing body and how instead the Town and Village could emulate the school district when they merged a number of school boards.

**d. Consider request from Champlain Valley Expo (CVE) to waive the \$15,000 annual fee**

Mr. Teich said that staff had received a request from CVE asking that the Village consider waiving the \$15,000 fee that is due annually to the Village, adding that a main reason for this request is a lack of revenue due to not being able to hold events in the spring and summer months. He noted that CVE had hosted a COVID-19 testing site and did not charge the hospital for it, as well as a COVID-19 surge site, for which they would only be reimbursed for expenses.

Mr. Brown asked if the Trustees would be in favor of revisiting this request at the end of the calendar year and consider waiving the fee if finances have not turned around by then. Ms. Thibeault suggested a forbearance instead of a waiver of the fee, citing concerns that a waiver could set a precedent for tax relief. Mr. Tyler noted that the fee is not a tax. Mr. Chawla said that the scale of benefit that CVE has provided the community during the COVID-19 crisis warrants the granting of this waiver.

**GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, to waive the annual fee of \$15,000 from Champlain Valley Expo to the Village for the 2020 calendar year. VOTING (by roll call) – Andrew Brown – aye, Raj Chawla -aye, Amber Thibeault – nay, Dan Kerin – aye, George Tyler – aye. The motion passed 4-1.**

**7. CONSENT ITEMS:**

**a. Approve minutes: June 1, 2020**

- Blank for last name of DEUTSCH.

**GEORGE TYLER made motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, that the Trustees approve the Consent Agenda with the following comments:**

- Add “Deutsch” as Erna’s last name on Line 13 of June 1, 2020 minutes.

**The motion passed 5-0.**

**8. READING FILE:**

**a. Board Member Comments**

- Mr. Chawla asked about the status of the face covering resolution. Ms. Thibeault replied that it had been posted to the Village website.
- Mr. Kerin requested that the Trustees review the final resolution documents prior to posting to ensure consistent messaging with any related resolutions for the Town outside the Village.

**VILLAGE TRUSTEES**

**June 17, 2020**

145 **9. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**  
146 **a. \*An executive session is not anticipated**

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148 **10. ADJOURN:**  
149 **AMBER THIBEAULT made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, that the Trustees adjourn the**  
150 **meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 9:13 PM.**

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153 Respectfully Submitted,  
154 Amy Coonradt  
155 Recording Secretary  
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