



VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
MEETING AGENDA

Online
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Monday, June 29, 2020
6:30 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 [6:30 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. Review, discuss, and edit draft merger charter
6. CONSENT ITEMS
a. Adopt revisions to Village of Essex Junction General Rules and Personnel Regulations (Trustees only)
7. READING FILE
a. Board Member Comments
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 TTY: 7-1-1 or (800) 253-0191.

Certification: 06/26/2020

[Signature]

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES  
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD  
JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
June 29, 2020

**SELECTBOARD:** Elaine Haney, Chair; Dawn Hill-Fleury; Patrick Murray; Andrew Watts.

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

**ADMINISTRATION and STAFF:** Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager, Dan Richardson, Attorney.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Al Bombardier, Helen Diplock, Deb McAdoo, Russ Mills, Patrick Neal, Marybeth Redmond, Abby Russin, Pat Seaver, Brian Shelden, Ken Signorello, Gabrielle Smith, Margaret Smith, Mike Thorne, Jim Waite, Irene Wrenner, Lorraine Zaloom, Patty \_\_\_\_.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Andrew Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Trustees and Elaine Haney called the Town of Essex Selectboard to order and to enter into the Joint Meeting of the Village of Essex Trustees and the Town of Essex Selectboard at 6:31 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**

Dawn Hill-Fleury asked when future meetings will be held with the police, and Ms. Haney replied that there will be an item on the July 6 meeting agenda to address next concerns and hear from the public.

Ken Signorello suggested that the Selectboard stipend be commensurate with the effort that Board members put into their work, recognizing that it is a substantial time commitment. Ms. Haney replied that multiple Board members over the years have asked for increased stipends and that the stipend should increase commensurate with the cost of living.

Irene Wrenner asked about the status of the merger charter, noting that the version being considered tonight is significantly different than the draft being worked on by the Subcommittee on Governance earlier in the spring, and that only one Board member has taken the time to compare the draft to the Town charter. She urged the Joint Boards to wait until the end of the COVID-19 pandemic to take up the merger issue, and suggested that constituents are more interested in issues around policing at this time.

Patty\_\_ noted that the policing issue is a recurring request in the Town and Village to let the public be heard and acknowledged and to let the public know that staff and the Boards are working on this issue.

48 She added that the Boards deserve compensation, but they need to take on the issues that their  
49 constituents want them to take on.

50  
51 Lorraine Zaloom asked the Joint Boards to reconsider working on merger, given that the impacts of the  
52 pandemic may shift what should be included in a merger plan. She suggested that Town representation  
53 and policing should be issues that take precedence at this time.

54  
55 Raj Chawla noted the significant time commitment needed to participate on a Board, and that if the  
56 Boards want diverse and motivated representation then they need to think about compensation and  
57 whether finances are a barrier to participation.

58  
59 George Tyler noted that the Subcommittee on Governance’s meetings had to cease abruptly due to  
60 COVID-19, and that the group has been heavily focused on representation and tax models. He added  
61 that Project Manager Ann Janda had put together boilerplate language for the body of the draft merger  
62 charter based on the contents of the Town and Village charters, and that this was done in a transparent  
63 manner.

64  
65 **5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

66 **a. Review, discuss, and edit draft merger charter**

67  
68 Ms. Haney led the first portion of this item, proposing that the Joint Boards review and edit the less  
69 substantive items in the charter first, and then focus in more depth on the following sections: transition  
70 period, sidewalk, capital improvement, formation of interim board/permanent board, and  
71 proportionality in districts.

72  
73 Less substantive items discussed included when an organizational municipal meeting should occur (keep  
74 as Town Meeting Day in the first year), whether the new municipality should have a Zoning Board of  
75 Adjustment or a Development Review Board (the latter was preferred), the unification and adoption of  
76 Town and Village ordinances, personnel, and compensation.

77  
78 Upon review of these items, the Joint Boards put forth a number of questions to Attorney Dan  
79 Richardson.

- 80
- 81 • They asked about how to reconcile ordinances in the Village and Town that may conflict or may  
82 only apply to their respective communities, and Mr. Richardson suggested that either the  
83 existing ordinances apply to their pre-merger jurisdiction or that the Town and Village could  
84 identify the ordinances that have some conflict or differences in advance and resolve those as  
85 one of the first orders of business of the new merged entity. He added that whatever strategy is  
86 employed, the ordinances need to have plain language guidance on how they apply and to  
87 whom, so that a lay person can interpret them with relative ease.
  - 88 • The Joint Boards asked Mr. Richardson about how to transition to a Development Review Board  
89 from a Zoning Board of Adjustment, and he replied that the terms should be staggered and that  
90 authorizing language is needed in the charter.
  - 91 • Mr. Tyler asked about having an odd-numbered versus even-numbered board, saying that the  
92 House Committee on Government Operations had said that an even-numbered board does not  
93 have a precedent. Mr. Richardson replied that he has not seen an even-numbered governing  
94 board, and that the number of board members needs to force consensus. Mr. Watts expressed  
95 concern that because a board of three Village representatives and three Town representatives  
was placed on the ballot and passed in March, it may conflict with the number of Board

96 members proposed in the merger charter. He asked whether multiple questions could be placed  
97 on the ballot so that if folks disagree with a 3 and 3 representation they could still vote for a  
98 merger with a different number of Board members. Mr. Richardson replied that no, a charter  
99 needs to be put forward and the Town needs to approve it.

100  
101 Irene Wrenner noted that the House Committee on Government Operations did not discuss the issue of  
102 number of board members, and that they did not vote down the Essex charter change. She also pointed  
103 out that the Essex/Westford School Board is even-numbered and has only ever had one tie vote.

104  
105 Mr. Richardson elaborated on the House Committee on Government Operations' process, that they  
106 review charter changes, hear testimony, and deliberate as a committee, and that legislative counsel  
107 reviews all changes for constitutional and statutory consistency. He also noted that their process and  
108 timeline is at their discretion.

109  
110 Al Bombardier noted his agreement with Mr. Richardson in that the ballot needs to contain one  
111 question to voters. He also noted that there are cost shifts and implications built into the new charter,  
112 and that people in the Town outside the Village need to understand these implications prior to a vote.

113  
114 Ken Signorello said that, hypothetically, if there were a complete merger plan on the ballot and a  
115 question to change the existing charter to Australian ballot, and the merger failed and Australian ballot  
116 vote succeeded, the Australian ballot action would go forward. He further noted that the  
117 correspondence from the House Committee on Government Operations back to the Town read like it  
118 was a response to the multitude of correspondence the committee chair was receiving from the Town  
119 constituents.

120  
121 Ms. Hill-Fleury asked how to reconcile and honor the Town's wishes to have a 3 + 3 representation  
122 model. Mr. Richardson said that the Town and Village need to figure out how to merge but ensure that  
123 consensus is the decision-making driver of governance and that one group does not overpower the  
124 interests of the other.

125  
126 Ms. Haney suggested that the intention of the voters could be honored by having a 3 + 3 + 1  
127 representation model with a representative that does not vote unless they need to break a tie. She also  
128 noted that ties have been extremely rare and have never been on Town/Village lines.

129  
130 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

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132 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, that the Trustees approve the**  
133 **consent agenda for June 29, 2020. The motion passed 5-0.**

134  
135 **a. Adopt revisions to Village of Essex Junction General Rules and Personnel Regulations (Trustees**  
136 **only)**

137  
138 **7. READING FILE:**

139 **a. Board Member Comments**

140  
141 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

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

143

**TRUSTEES & SELECTBOARD**

**June 29, 2020**

144 **9. ADJOURN:**

145

146 **DAN KERIN made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, to adjourn the Trustees meeting. VOTING:**  
147 **unanimous; motion passed at 10:15 PM.**

148

149 **PATRICK MURRAY made a motion, and DAWN HILL-FLEURY seconded, to adjourn the Selectboard**  
150 **meeting. VOTING: unanimous; motion passed at 10:16 PM.**

151

152

153 Respectfully Submitted,

154 Amy Coonradt

155 Recording Secretary

156

157

158 Approved this \_\_28th\_\_ day of \_July\_, 2020

159

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

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