

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Online
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Tuesday, July 28, 2020
6:30 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:

- **WATCH:** the meeting will be live-streamed on [Town Meeting TV](#).
- **JOIN ONLINE:** [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#). Depending on your browser, you may need to call in for audio (below).
- **JOIN CALLING:** Join via conference call (*audio only*): (802) 377-3784 | Conference ID: 160 080 725#
- **PROVIDE FULL NAME:** For minutes, please provide your full name whenever prompted.
- **CHAT DURING MEETING:** Please use "Chat" to request to speak, only. **Please do not use for comments.**
- **RAISE YOUR HAND:** Click on the hand in Teams to speak or use the "Chat" feature to request to speak.
- **MUTE YOUR MIC:** When not speaking, please mute your microphone on your computer/phone.

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. Approve the FY21 Village General tax rate
 - b. Consider request for financial implications of separation of Village of Essex Junction and Town of Essex
 - c. Discuss potential impacts of merger on planning and development
 - d. Approve resolution of appreciation for Police Chief Rick Garey
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approval of additional funding for design, posters, and tickets for Open and Outside event
 - b. Approve minutes: July 14, 2020
 - c. Check Warrant #17208—07/17/2020; #17209—07/24/2020
7. **READING FILE**
 - a. Board Member Comments
 - b. Emails from Eileen Girling and Stephen O. Lizewski re: Kudos! Re: Lamoille Street Construction Work for July 23, 2020
 - c. Upcoming meeting schedule
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - a. An executive session is not anticipated
9. **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: 07/24/2020 
Date Posted Initials

VILLAGE TRUSTEES

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
July 28, 2020**

TRUSTEES: George Tyler, Vice President; Raj Chawla; Dan Kerin; Amber Thibeault. (Andrew Brown not in attendance)

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Sarah Macy, Assistant Manager/Finance Director; Robin Pierce, Essex Junction Community Development Director; Darren Schibler, Town Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Rupesh Asher; Annie Cooper; Betsy Dunn; Adam Kavanaugh; Timothy Miller; Russel Mills; Bruce Post; Ken Signorello; Gabrielle Smith; Margaret Smith; Daryl Stultz; Carmille Terborgh; Irene Wrenner; Sharon Zukowski

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Tyler called the meeting of the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees to order at 6:30 PM, with Ms. Thibeault and Mr. Chawla in attendance

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

With no additions or changes to the agenda, approval was not required.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

Ms. Cooper made reference to a newspaper called the Essex Reporter to point out what she sees as unnecessary, harsh negativity aimed at the boards. She said she feels strongly such negativity is not needed when people voice opinions. She said she feels badly that the boards are shouldering this.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Approve the FY21 Village General tax rate

Staff presented the FY21 Village General Tax rate for board discussion. Ms. Macy said the final tax rate is slightly higher than planned due to lower than anticipated grand list growth. She explained how the tax rate was calculated and said it is a 7% change over the previous year. This would be a \$27 tax increase on an average \$280,000 home. She reminded the Trustees that this is the last year of the approved penny on the tax rate. Mr. Teich said this presentation is only about the Village tax rate, not inclusive of the school tax rate or the Town tax rate. Combined, these equate a \$222 increase from the previous year. The Trustees had no questions about the proposed General Tax rate for FY21.

RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, that the Trustees set the FY21 Village General tax rate at \$0.3302 per \$100 of assessed property value. The motion passed 3-0.

b. Consider request for financial implications of separation of Village of Essex Junction and Town of Essex

Mr. Kerin arrived during this agenda item at 6:53 PM.

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Mr. Tyler presented the issue of whether the Trustees would consider a request from residents for “complete and accurate calculations of what the costs would be if our two communities separated”. He mentioned that, in the past, a breakdown of every department in the Town and Village had been calculated, considering Town residential, Town commercial, Village residential and Village commercial tax revenues and expenses. He proposed they move forward with this request, utilizing a similar calculation of where the money comes from and where it is spent. He suggested that staff not speculate, therefore question # 5 of the requested breakdown should not be considered. The board members talked about the challenges with trying to identify when departments were established. They acknowledged that this undertaking is complex and Ms. Macy explained her current work load including audits and budgeting activities. Mr. Teich reiterated that the process of putting together answers to the request should not include speculative information. He said this exercise could clarify for residents exactly what is being funded by which money sources. Ms. Macy said she appreciated the clarity of the request’s questions. Mr. Chawla suggested that this information could illustrate an alternate scenario if merger fails. Mr. Kerin said it will also help people better understand how taxes are paid and how much they pay for.

GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, that the Trustees direct staff to provide a financial breakdown of Village and Town municipal expenditures and revenue sources according to Town and Village residential and commercial sources, with Global Foundries to be included as a Village commercial source. The motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Cooper commented that she trusts Ms. Macy’s ability to conduct this work.

c. Discuss potential impacts of merger on planning and development

Mr. Tyler provided a slide presentation about planning that he believes is necessary for a merger to be effective. He described the community demographics, highways, the political capital built around the Village of Essex Junction’s downtown development. He said the culture difference of the Village of Essex Junction is due to over half of the Trustee agenda items focused on small, urbanized downtown development, financial capital and planning that requires specific resources, an entrepreneurial approach to development and making progress in private investments into the downtown. He suggested that prior to a merger agreement, the Trustees should ensure the continuation of downtown development, keeping in mind that there is no formula to how to design a downtown, but a consolidated Essex Community Development and Planning office could help with this. He suggested that zoning and development projects should not be sacrificed during the merger. He stressed the importance of maintaining good relations with downtown investors post-merger.

Mr. Chawla commended Mr. Tyler’s presentation and slides and said this topic should be revisited to develop a plan. Mr. Teich clarified that the presentation suggests downtown should be upheld as a priority even after the merger. He noted that without intentionality of focus, many downtowns die. He suggested multiple ways people are drawn into the downtown, to continue with the sustainability and revitalization of Essex Junction.

d. Approve resolution of appreciation for Police Chief Rick Garey

Mr. Tyler read the resolution to Chief Garey into the record:

VILLAGE TRUSTEES

July 28, 2020

98 “WHEREAS, Rick P. Garey was hired as a police officer for the Town of Essex on June 5,
99 1989; and,
100 WHEREAS, Rick retired on July 17, 2020; and,
101 WHEREAS, Rick has concluded more than 31 years of dedicated service to the Essex
102 community; and,
103 WHEREAS, Rick has served the Essex Police Department and the Vermont law
104 enforcement community exceptionally well for decades as an officer, command staff and
105 Chief of Police; and,
106 WHEREAS, Rick supervised and mentored many subordinates, as a commander and Chief
107 of Police; and,
108 WHEREAS, Rick has served as a dispatcher, a patrol officer, a detective, and was
109 promoted to Corporal, Sergeant, the Town’s IT Director, Lieutenant, Captain and finally
110 Chief; and,
111 WHEREAS, Rick has been a part of several major criminal investigations during his tenure
112 at the Essex Police that greatly impacted the safety and welfare of the communities of
113 Essex and citizens of Vermont; now be it
114 RESOLVED, that the Selectboard, Board of Trustees and Unified Manager, on behalf of the
115 citizens of the Essex Community, hereby extend our gratitude to Rick for his many years of
116 service to the people of Essex.
117 Adopted this 20th day of July, 2020.”

118 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, that the Trustees accept**
119 **the resolution. The motion passed 4-0.**

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121 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

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123 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, that the Trustees approve**
124 **the Consent Agenda:**

- 125 a. Approval of additional funding for design, posters, and tickets for Open and Outside event
- 126 b. b. Approve minutes: July 14, 2020
- 127 c. c. Check Warrant #17208—07/17/2020; #17209—07/24/2020

128 **The motion passed 4-0.**

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130 **7. READING FILE**

- 131 a. Board Member Comments
 - 132 • Mr. Chawla said he thinks any items pulled from the proposed charter should be discussed
 - 133 with the trustees first.
 - 134 • Mr. Tyler said he wants to ensure an atmosphere of working together with the merger and
 - 135 not making unilateral decisions.
- 136 b. Emails from Eileen Girling and Stephen O. Lizewski re: Kudos! Re: Lamoille Street
- 137 Construction Work for July 23, 2020
- 138 c. Upcoming meeting schedule

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140 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- 141 a. ***An executive session is not anticipated**
- 142 **An executive session did not take place.**

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9. ADJOURN

Mr. Tyler acknowledged completion of the agenda for the regular meeting and entered the Trustees into the Joint meeting of the Trustees and Selectboard at 7:42 PM.

RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT, to adjourn. The motion passed 4-0 at 10:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Ainsworth
Recording Secretary