



VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Online
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Tuesday, January 26, 2021
6:30 PM

E-mail: manager@essexjunction.org

www.essexjunction.org

Phone: (802) 878-6951

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: 376 426 781#
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. Discussion and possible action to place on the annual meeting ballot the extension of the Economic Development tax
b. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Workshop and Schedule- Sarah Macy
c. Consider approval to hold Village meetings by Australian ballot
d. Discussion and possible action re: clock on village kiosk at Railroad and Main
6. CONSENT ITEMS
a. Approve minutes: January 12, 2021
b. Check Warrants: #17234 - 1/15/21; #17235-1/22/21
7. READING FILE
a. Board member comments
b. Unemployment update
c. Village Annual Meeting/Elections Preparation Schedule
d. Memo and attachment from Susan McNamara-Hill re: 2021 Candidate Information
e. Final version of Essex Plan of Merger and Charter as approved by Selectboard on 1/11/21
f. Memo and proposal from Dennis Lutz re: CCRPC/UPWP
g. 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: 1/22/2021 [Signature]
Date Posted Initials

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 26, 2021

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

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Tammy Getchell, Assistant to the Manager; Sarah Macy, Finance Director; Robin Pierce, Community Development Director; Travis Sabataso, Human Resources Director.

OTHERS PRESENT: Roseanne Prestipino, Sara Stultz, Mike Thorne, Irene Wrenner.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Andrew Brown called the meeting of the Village of Essex Junction Trustees to order at 6:30 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Unified Manager Teich noted additional agenda items: 5e. Discussion of a real estate matter; 6c. Approve temporary COVID-19 Emergency Leave Policy; and 8a. An executive session is anticipated to discuss 5e. He also noted additional handouts for agenda items: 5f. Memo from Evan Teich re: Executive Session for a real estate matter; and 6c. Memo and attachment from Travis Sabataso, HR Director.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

DAN KERIN made a motion, and GEORGE TYLER seconded, to amend the agenda as proposed. The motion passed 5-0.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments from public on items not on agenda

None at this time.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Discussion and possible action to place on the annual meeting ballot the extension of the Economic Development tax:

Finance Director Macy introduced this item, which is to gauge whether to place a question on the Annual Meeting ballot regarding an extension to the Economic Development Tax. Mr. Brown noted that the memo details the impacts of merger on the tax and how it would be handled. He said that there had been interest in continuing this tax at a prior Trustees meeting and suggested asking voters to extend the tax for three years, which would carry it through the transitional governing board period and into the first year of a merged entity.

George Tyler added that the Village would still need to find additional funding for upgrading amenities in the Village core, such as the Crescent Connector project. Raj Chawla added that other upgrades include improving pedestrian access and facilities for cyclists as the population and businesses in Essex continue to grow.

Amber Thibeault expressed support for the three-year proposal.

Mr. Tyler confirmed that the taxing mechanism would change if merger were to occur and that this tax would not be put on the Town's tax rate. He said that if the Village no longer has a separate general fund,

VILLAGE TRUSTEES

FINAL

January 26, 2021

48 this tax would cease and the money that is in the Economic Development Fund would be used for those
49 specific development activities.

50
51 Mr. Chawla asked if this would only be attached to the General Fund, not any remaining taxes for the
52 sidewalk and capital districts. Mr. Teich replied that those districts will be activated upon merging.

53
54 There was no public comment.

55
56 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, and GEORGE TYLER seconded, that the Trustees place a question on the**
57 **2021 Annual Meeting ballot asking voters to extend the Economic Development tax for a period of three**
58 **years. The motion passed 5-0.**

59
60 **b. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Workshop and Schedule—Sarah Macy**
61 Ms. Macy began the workshop by providing an overview of the budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. She noted
62 that the budget being presented is for General Fund only. She said that currently the budget total is \$5.6
63 million, which is approximately a 5% increase over the prior fiscal year. She noted that the estimated tax
64 rate is ¼ of a penny over FY2021 using average grand list growth, which would be a \$7 increase on the
65 average property year-over-year. She said that an increased stipend for Trustees, the Zoning Board of
66 Adjustment, and the Planning Commission have been discussed, and that the Village Attorney has said
67 that any increase in Trustee stipend must be its own article on the ballot. She also noted that an additional
68 \$62,774 has been allocated to the building fund on top of an existing increase, which means that two
69 priority projects (on the Brownell Library roof and Lincoln Hall electrical configuration) can both be worked
70 on in FY2022. She finally noted that the Village has the flexibility to warn two public hearings on the budget
71 instead of one, if they choose.

72
73 Mr. Brown confirmed that all board stipends be funded at a full level and will be more “opt out” rather
74 than “opt in”; and that the amount for Trustees is \$1,000. Ms. Macy made these adjustments to the
75 budget, which brought totals to a 5.1% increase, or a \$9.80 increase on the average property.

76
77 The Trustees discussed whether to hold two public hearings on the budget or one and discussed dates for
78 said hearings.

79
80 Irene Wrenner asked if the increase from \$7 to \$9.80 on the average property would impact the merger
81 estimate numbers given previously. Sarah replied in the affirmative, saying that they would start with
82 \$67,500 tax levy change year over year and that this increase would be about \$11,300 more than that.
83 She said that since the tax levy is being increased in phases, there would be a small but noticeable impact.

84
85 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, to warn a public hearing on the Fiscal Year**
86 **2022 general fund budget for Tuesday, February 9th, 2021 and a second public hearing on the Fiscal Year**
87 **2022 general fund budget for Tuesday, February 23rd, 2021. The motion passed 5-0.**

88
89 **c. Consider approval to hold Village meetings by Australian ballot**
90 Mr. Teich said that Act 162 as passed by the Vermont legislature allows municipalities to hold annual
91 meetings entirely by Australian ballot. He noted that the Trustees had previously approved holding the
92 budget vote by Australian ballot, but would need to make a similar decision about its Annual Meeting. He
93 said that staff are recommending action to approve holding an annual meeting by Australian ballot.

94

VILLAGE TRUSTEES

FINAL

January 26, 2021

95 Mr. Brown asked about holding special meetings by Australian ballot, noting that no special meetings are
96 currently warned, but that they could be called-for in future. Mr. Teich replied that there may be one
97 special meeting needed around cannabis legislation later in the year and that the Village can make a
98 decision around Australian ballot for special meetings as they arise.
99

100 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, to hold the 2021 Annual Meeting entirely**
101 **by Australian ballot. The motion passed 5-0.**
102

103 **d. Discussion and possible action re: clock on Village kiosk at Railroad and Main**

104 Mr. Teich noted that the bulletin board at Railroad and Main has been vandalized and that the clock is
105 missing. He asked if the clock should be replaced or if something should be put in its place. Mr. Teich
106 suggested replacing it with either the year of establishment for the Village, the logo for the Village, a
107 digital clock with thermometer display, or an artistic metal art piece. Staff will research what is feasible
108 and report back to the Trustees at a future meeting.
109

110 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

111 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, that the Trustees approve the**
112 **Consent Agenda:**

- 113 a. **Approve minutes: January 12, 2021**
- 114 b. **Check Warrants #17234—1/15/21; #17235—1/22/21**
- 115 c. **Approve Temporary COVID-19 Emergency Leave Policy**

116
117 **The motion passed 5-0.**
118

119 **7. READING FILE:**

- 120 a. **Board member comments:** Evan said that staff are looking into vaccinations for seniors and
121 are asking the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) whether the currently closed senior
122 center could be a vaccination site. He also said that staff are looking into whether AmeriCorps
123 members could be asked to help seniors make appointments for vaccinations, since they need
124 to be made online.
- 125 b. **Unemployment update:** Andrew said that Vermont’s unemployment numbers are
126 rebounding and are improving.
- 127 c. **Village Annual Meetings/Elections Preparation Schedule:** Mr. Teich noted that two Trustees
128 (Mr. Brown and Ms. Thibeault) have terms expiring soon.
- 129 d. **Memo and attachment from Susan McNamara-Hill re: 2021 Candidate Information**
- 130 e. **Final version of Essex Plan of Merger and Charter as approved by Selectboard on 1/11/21**
- 131 f. **Memo and proposal from Dennis Lutz re: CCRPC/UPWP**
- 132 g. **Upcoming meeting schedule**

133 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

- 134 a. **To discuss a real estate matter**

135
136 **ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and GEORGE TYLER seconded, that the Trustees enter into executive**
137 **session for the purpose of negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options, pursuant to**
138 **1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(2), to include the Unified Manager, Village Engineer, Village Attorney, and Community**
139 **Development Director. The motion passed 5-0 at 7:44 PM.**
140

141 **ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, to exit executive session. The motion**
142 **passed 5-0 at 7:54 PM.**

**VILLAGE TRUSTEES
FINAL**

January 26, 2021

143
144
145
146
147
148
149
150
151
152
153
154
155
156
157

9. ADJOURN:

ANDREW BROWN made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 7:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Coonradt
Recording Secretary

Approved this 9 day of February, 2021

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