

**SELECTBOARD & TRUSTEES  
(DRAFT)**

**TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD  
VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES  
DRAFT JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
Saturday, June 5, 2021**

**SELECTBOARD:** Andy Watts, Chair; Patrick Murray, Vice Chair; Tracey Delphia; Vince Franco; Dawn Hill-Fleury

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

**ADMINISTRATION and STAFF:** Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Marguerite Ladd, Assistant Manager; Brad Luck, Essex Junction Recreation and Parks (EJRP) Director; Sarah Macy, Finance Director; Linda Mahns, Administrative Assistant

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Patty Davis; Essex ReTorter; Maureen Gillard; Jennifer Knauer; Joe Percy; David Skopin; Irene Wrenner.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees to order for the Joint meeting with the Essex Selectboard at 8:11 AM.

Mr. Watts called the Town of Essex Selectboard to order for the Joint meeting with the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees at 8:11 AM.

**2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

**3. APPROVE AGENDA**

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

**4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

Mr. Skopin spoke about the need to work together towards climate issues.

Ms. Davis asked for attorneys to be present at all joint board meetings.

Ms. Wrenner mentioned a 2018 joint board meeting, expressing a need for representation for both towns.

**5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**a. Joint Board Strategic Planning Meeting**

Ms. Knauer was introduced as the moderator of this meeting and gave the scope of work for the day's meeting. The boards and staff went around the room to give short introductions.

**b. Prioritize Joint Board Projects**

The following categories were discussed during the initial part of this meeting:

**Legal – Externally Driven**

- **Tax Equity** – timeline needed, if want on the current draft budget
- **Tree Farm** – deadline present for June 2022
- **Existing MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding)** – Mr. Tyler asked what (if any) joint MOUs are existing that need our attention in this next year. Mr. Duggan mentioned some

54 Public Works MOUs. Mr. Teich spoke about unforeseen MOUs that may have implications  
55 if separation occurs. **ACTION ITEM**: Staff will create a review of what is existing to report  
56 back to boards on what is pending, what is needed for joint board attention, and in what  
57 timeframe. The intention is to categorize and create a policy for this with standardization  
58 for timelines.

- 59 • **Evaluation and Supervision of Unified Manager** – ongoing need
- 60 • **Cannabis** – there is a set deadline from the State for this topic

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62 **Delegate to Staff – Staff develops recommendations, Board(s) informs/consults**

- 63 • **Jobs/Economic Development and Stability**
- 64 • **Local Options Tax**
- 65 • **Planning for ARPA Dollars**
- 66 • **Racial Equity (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Work)**
- 67 • **Capitol Planning/Fund sharing**

68  
69 **Boards have more agency – flexibility. Internal drivers**

- 70 • **Agreement between boards about how to pursue separation**
- 71 • **Budgeting/Planning for Separation**
- 72 • **Police (Policy and Oversight)**

73  
74 **Uncategorized**

- 75 • **Indoor Recreation Facilities**
- 76 • **Expand/Rework Committee (RACI matrixes)**
- 77 • **Village separation vote for November 2021 and all things necessary to get a final**  
78 **separation charter and plan**
- 79 • **Intersection of health & municipal services**
- 80 • **Increasing communication between boards, committees and work groups**
- 81 • **Climate Change - Energy conservation / solar projects** (Getting municipality carbon  
82 neutral)
- 83 • **Joint Housing Commission**

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86 **c. Determine Accountable / Responsible Parties for Prioritized Items**

87 At 9:51 AM, after a morning break, an interactive poll was generated for the board members to  
88 help set priorities. The objective was to confirm 3-5 most urgent / pressing priorities for Joint  
89 Board Projects. A long discussion occurred to try to prioritize a list of approximately 19 items.

90  
91 At 11:35 AM, after a second break, another exercise was attempted to determine a priority list –  
92 the use of color coding these options to possibly determine the top 5-6 items to take on first.  
93 What came out of a discussion were the following items ranked the top items, but this list is not in  
94 any particular order.

- 95
- 96 • **Planning for ARPA Dollars**
- 97 • **Local options tax**
- 98 • **Capitol Planning/Fund Sharing**
- 99 • **Jobs/Economic Development & Stability**
- 100 • **Racial Equity**
- 101 • **Agreement between boards about how to pursue separation**
- 102 • **Existing MOUs**

- 103 • Police – Policy and Oversight
- 104 • Increase communication and trust between boards
- 105

106 d. **Develop shared expectations for how staff / management will support two boards’ work.**  
107 **The objective: Staff invited to outline proposed availability – how staff is planning to**  
108 **manage the demand of two Boards for the short term.**

109 Mr. Duggan summarized the needs of the staff:

- 110 – to reduce duplication and create standardization and efficiencies for applications as well
- 111 as tasks.
- 112 – to keep key procedures streamlined which means to keep things as staff has aligned them
- 113 and then have a discussion later once status of separation is more known/determined.
- 114 – to have one working budget per board – to not create what-if budget scenarios.
- 115 – to work more in partnership with and full acceptance from the boards to set expectations
- 116 and priorities on tasks.
- 117
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119 **ACTION ITEM:** Staff will delineate the tasks for procedures to have a future discussion with the  
120 boards.

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122 With regards to determining how things are working, Ms. Knauer asked everyone if there’s a  
123 process for the staff to report back to the board. Mr. Murray spoke about self-evaluations as a  
124 board tool for evaluations how they are doing and how operating back to staff and residents and  
125 stated this is not being utilized currently.

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128 e. **Develop shared expectations for working with each other on Joint Board Projects**  
129 **/Operating Agreements as needed. The objective: Identify a mechanism / shared**  
130 **understanding: if a conflict comes up re a shared project, how would we resolve it?**

131 A slide was shared on Board Priorities, outlining 3 main topics:

- 132 – Each Board controls its own priorities;
- 133 – Joint priorities require majority support of each Board independently;
- 134 – Unexpected emergency supersedes all other priorities.
- 135
- 136

137 Mr. Chawla asked the question if one board wishes to direct the staff in one way and the other  
138 board disagrees, how might this get resolved between boards? Mr. Teich offered the opportunity  
139 to discuss issues and priorities with him so he can delegate staff.

140  
141 Mr. Watts spoke about negotiating between the boards as the way to resolve potential issues  
142 going forward. Mr. Teich spoke about the boards strategizing issues to determine what can come  
143 to a yes – in other words, to ask the question: what is keeping a dissenting vote from saying yes  
144 to a plan or initiative or decision.

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147 f. **Bring the “operating agreements” conversation to a natural close (15-20 min) Wrap-up &**  
148 **Next Steps**

149 Ms. Knauer asked if everyone got what they needed for today’s session and asked for closing  
150 comments around the room. Mr. Teich closed with a thank you, saying staff works for both  
151 boards and community and working together helps us all.

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154 **6. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

155                   a. **An executive session is not anticipated.**  
156           **An executive session did not take place.**

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159 **7. ADJOURN**  
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161 **AMBER THIBEAULT made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, that the Trustees adjourn**  
162 **the meeting. The motion passed 4-0 at 1:00 PM.** DAN KERIN left early and was not present for  
163 the vote.  
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165 **PATRICK MURRAY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA, that the Selectboard**  
166 **adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 1:00 PM.**  
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168 Respectfully Submitted,  
169 Linda Mahns  
170 Recording Secretary  
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