

SELECTBOARD & TRUSTEES

**TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
JOINT MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2022**

SELECTBOARD: Patrick Murray, Vice-Chair; Sue Cook; Tracey Delphia; Dawn Hill-Fleury

TRUSTEES: Andrew Brown, President; Dan Kerin; Amber Thibeault; George Tyler

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Marguerite Ladd, Assistant Manager; Brad Luck, Co-Interim Village Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: Kevin Collins, Annie Cooper, Bella D., Erin Dickinson, Betsy Dunn, Maureen Gillard, Ethan Lawrence, Resa M., Deb McAdoo, Timothy Miller, Greg Morgan, Jess Morris, Mary Post, Harlan Smith, Margaret Smith, Mike Sullivan, Dennis Thibeault, Michael Thorne, Irene Wrenner, Lorraine Zaloom, Sharon Zukowski, Bob, Bridget

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Murray called the Town of Essex Selectboard to order for the Joint meeting with the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees at 6:30 PM.

Mr. Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees to order for the Joint meeting with the Essex Selectboard at 6:30 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Ms. Cook suggested moving Business Item 5d, Consider adoption of Annual Town Meeting warning (Selectboard only) to be discussed immediately following the Reading File.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

SUE COOK made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA to amend the agenda to move Agenda Item 5d below Agenda Item 7. The motion passed 4-0. Committee

GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed 4-0.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

Ms. Dunn thanked the Selectboard for voting to expand the Conservation & Trails Committee, and for accepting all the candidates.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Discussion and potential action on tentative agreements about shared services between Town of Essex and Village/City of Essex Junction

Mr. Murray said the Selectboard has not had the chance to review these agreements independently prior to this meeting and suggested they enter executive session for this purpose. The Board decided to have preliminary discussions with the Trustees, and then enter executive session. Ms. Delphia asked questions regarding financial arrangements, timing, and potential extensions in the shared Financial Services Agreement.

49 Mr. Murray opened the discussion to the public. Ms. Dunn questioned why so many agreements are being
50 made between the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction when the Village intends to separate. Mr.
51 Brown said the intent behind the Clerk/Treasurer and Financial Services Agreement is to memorialize
52 what is currently occurring.

53
54 Mr. Murray suggested that the Selectboard enter into a 30-minute executive session and rejoin the meeting
55 at 7:30 PM.

56
57 **SUE COOK made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA, that the Selectboard make the**
58 **specific finding that general public knowledge of contracts would place the Town at a substantial**
59 **disadvantage. Motion passed 4-0.**

60
61 **SUE COOK made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA, that the Selectboard enter into**
62 **executive session and include the Town Manager, Deputy Town Manager, Assistant Manager, and**
63 **Town Attorney to discuss contracts pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(A). Motion passed 4-0.**

64
65 **SUE COOK made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA to exit executive session. Motion**
66 **passed 4-0 at 7:31 PM.**

67
68 Mr. Murray called the Town of Essex Selectboard back into session at 7:31 PM.

69
70 Mr. Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees back into session at 7:31 PM.

71
72 Mr. Murray said the Selectboard discussed the Clerk/Treasurer’s agreement and suggested that the
73 agreement last for 18 months rather than five years. This is because the Clerk’s office is currently down an
74 employee, and they would like some time to figure out staffing needs. Language specifying the number of
75 employees in the Clerk/Treasurer’s Office was removed from the proposed agreement. Ms. Thibeault
76 suggested adding language about revisiting the contract. The Trustees expressed support for the changes
77 that were suggested.

78
79 **b. Consider approval of upcoming joint meeting schedule**

80 Mr. Murray said there is a meeting scheduled right after Christmas and Thanksgiving in 2022, and
81 suggested changing these dates. Ms. Cook concurred. Mr. Murray said that Mr. Watts had stated in an e-
82 mail that the Selectboard does not set their meeting dates until April, and Mr. Murray said that the dates
83 after April be tentatively scheduled. Mr. Teich suggested listing the two dates after Thanksgiving and
84 Christmas as “TBD,” and encouraged the Selectboard to set meeting dates at least through April.

85
86 **DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded SUE COOK, by to approve the proposed**
87 **Selectboard/Trustee meeting schedule for 2022 up to April 25. Motion passed 4-0.**

88
89 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, to approve the proposed**
90 **Selectboard/Trustee meeting schedule for 2022 up to April 25. Motion passed 4-0.**

91
92 **c. Discussion and potential action on request from Trustees to Selectboard for payment for Finance**
93 **Director costs**

94 Mr. Brown said the funds for shared management has already been collected, and that the Trustees are
95 requesting a return of these funds for the services that they will not be receiving. Mr. Brown presented
96 financial data showing how much of these funds have been spent, and how much time the shared Finance

97 Director spent on each municipality. Mr. Brown said the Village Finance Director will be starting on
98 February 7th. As of this point, the Town Finance Department will no longer oversee the Village Finance
99 Department. Ms. Cook asked for clarification that this amount was to replace a previous financial request
100 of \$60,000, Mr. Brown confirmed that this was correct. Ms. Delphia asked about a statement in the memo
101 that said that the Finance Director salary had no Village general fund contribution. Mr. Brown said that
102 the Villagers have paid for the Town Finance Director via their Town taxes. Therefore, only half of the
103 amount that the Village residents paid is requested to be refunded. Mr. Tyler said he does not believe
104 there is a legal obligation for the Town to pay these funds back, but that it is the right thing to do since the
105 Village paid for a service that is not going to be provided. Ms. Delphia asked if time spent by the Town
106 Finance Department assisting the new Village Finance Director may still be providing these services. Mr.
107 Luck said the new Village Finance Director will need minimal training. Ms. Hill-Fleury noted that the
108 new Village Finance Director will be using the 81 Main Street space and supplies and asked if the Village
109 plans on asking for funds for any other employees. Mr. Brown said that there were no plans to ask for
110 more funds for this purpose.

111
112 In public comment, Ms. Dunn said the budget was voted on by all, and that the services would still be
113 provided should the Village have decided to take them. Ms. Post said that her taxes would not be refunded
114 if she decided to move. Mr. Teich said that this request really comes down to how the Boards want their
115 relationship to be in coming years. Mr. Murray tabled the issue and requested that the Selectboard provide
116 questions and clarifications prior to the next meeting.

117
118 **6. CONSENT AGENDA**

119 None.

120
121 **7. READING FILE**

122 **a. Board member comments:** Ms. Delphia said that dog licenses were due on April 1. Ms. Cook asked
123 for clarification in the Independence summary and timeline regarding the date that the City would be
124 responsible for collecting taxes.

125 **b. Memo from Brad Luck re: Independence summary and timeline**

126 **c. Update on stipend program for boards and committees**

127
128 **9. ADJOURN**

129 **AMBER THIBEAULT made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, for the Trustees to adjourn.**
130 **Motion passed 5-0 at 8:30 PM.**

131
132 **5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

133 **d. Consider adoption of Annual Town Meeting warning (Selectboard only)**

134 Mr. Duggan presented the draft warning and asked if the Selectboard wanted the community to vote on
135 cannabis retailers and retail portions of integrated licensee establishments in one question, or to separate
136 the two types of retail into two questions. The Selectboard indicated support for the single question. Mr.
137 Murray requested public input, none was given. Mr. Duggan reminded the Board that there will be no in-
138 person voting due to COVID. The logistics of informational meetings and timing of mailing ballots were
139 discussed.

140
141 **DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA, that the Selectboard**
142 **approve the warning for the 2022 Town Meeting as presented. Motion passed 4-0.**

143
144 **9. ADJOURN**

145 **TRACEY DELPHIA made a motion, seconded by SUE COOK, for the Selectboard to adjourn.**
146 **Motion passed 4-0 at 8:42 PM.**

147

148 Respectfully Submitted,

149 Darby Mayville

150 Recording Secretary

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152