



VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Online & 2 Lincoln St.
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Tuesday, January 25, 2022
6:30 PM

E-mail: manager@essexjunction.org

www.essexjunction.org

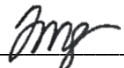
Phone: (802) 878-6951

This meeting will be held both remotely and in person. Available options to watch or join the meeting:

- **WATCH:** the meeting will be live streamed on [Town Meeting TV](#)
- **JOIN ONLINE:** [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
- **JOIN CALLING:** (toll free audio only): (888) 788-0099 | Meeting ID: 944 6429 7825; Passcode: 635787

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. Discuss public outreach and board questions for local options tax
 - b. Possible action about regulating short term rentals (Airbnb-type)
 - c. Discuss adding cannabis to annual meeting ballot
 - d. Discuss adding fund balance threshold change to annual meeting ballot
 - e. Consider approval to hold Village Annual Meeting by Australian ballot
 - f. Discuss topics for annual newsletter
 - g. Consideration of purchasing of masks with American Rescue Plan Act funds
 - h. Discussion and possible action about contracts with the Town of Essex
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approve minutes: January 11, 2022
 - b. Village Annual Meeting/Elections Preparation Schedule
 - c. Approve Check Warrants: #17286—01/24/2022
7. **READING FILE**
 - a. Board member comments
 - b. Approval of CCRPC Unified Planning Work Program projects for 2023
 - c. Email from Elaine Haney re: Input regarding discussion of shared EDC
 - d. Face Covering Rule extended by Selectboard 1/18/2022
 - e. Public Notice of Modification to GlobalFoundries Hazardous Waste Facility Permit
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - a. An executive session is not anticipated
9. **ADJOURN**

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Certification: 01/21/2022 

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
January 25, 2022

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Andrew Brown; George Tyler; Raj Chawla; Amber Thibeault; Dan Kerin

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Brad Luck, Essex Junction Recreation and Parks (EJRP) Director; Robin Pierce, Community Development Director; Harlan Smith, Director of Parks and Facilities

OTHERS PRESENT: Bob Burrows; Kevin Collins; Patty Davis; Yves Dubief; Wendy Hysco; Chris Kline; Deb McAdoo; Nathan O’Conner; Dennis Thibeault; Irene Wrenner; Jess

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/ CHANGES**

There were no changes or additions to the agenda. Mr. Tyler pointed out Ms. Haney’s letter in the reading file and Mr. Brown said it was relevant to item 5a, so could be discussed at that time.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

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

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

a. **Comments from public on items not on the agenda.**

There were no comments from the public at this time.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. **Discuss public outreach and board questions for local options tax**

Mr. Teich introduced the issue, as presented in the Local Options Tax (LOT) memo detailing options for outreach, online Q & A, informational meetings, and presentation opportunities to educate the public about the LOT. The Trustees discussed and agreed with the proposed outreach plans. Mr. Brown offered to conduct a presentation of the LOT at the Town Meeting Info Session. He said he would include information about how the LOT could offset the property tax burden that could result from a predicted \$800,000 deficit in FY26, if the City charter is approved. Mr. Chawla requested that Mr. Brown’s presentation and outreach help clarify that municipal funds, such as those for the Crescent Connector, may be allocated as project-specific funding which they are not able to be used to offset the deficit. Mr. Luck suggested they also educate people about why some capital improvement plans have not already been scheduled, by explaining the Capital Plan scoring process. The Trustees authorized for the outreach and awareness plan to move forward.

b. **Possible action about regulating short term rentals (Airbnb-type)**

Mr. Brown introduced the question of whether the Trustees want staff to research regulatory tools that the Village, and future City, may be able to apply to short-term rentals. He said the overarching goal is to keep housing stock available for residents by disincentivizing converting full residences into a short-term Airbnb-type rentals. He said they should also preserve the capability of those with extra room(s) in their primary residence to be able to earn income through short-term rentals. The Trustees talked about the low numbers of available housing in the Village. Mr. Brown suggested that charging fees to homeowners who rent entire homes as Airbnb-type lodging. The Trustees requested that staff engage with the Housing Commission to research the issue. Mr. Pierce agreed that investment properties should be controlled but that short-term rentals in already-inhabited homes should not be negatively impacted. Ms. Thibeault wondered how this type of regulation would be enforced. The Trustees agreed that they should wait until a city is formed before

56 determining regulation strategies. Ms. Smith, from the Housing Commission, said the research
57 proposal is in line with the commission's interests and they will look into this.
58

59 Ms. Davis shared anecdotes related to her decisions to move, in the past. She said she supported
60 the idea of regulations to deter encampments and make it easier for people to find housing.
61

62 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, that the Board of Trustees revisit**
63 **the topic on July 26th with staff's initial findings. The motion passed 5-0.**
64

65 c. **Discuss adding cannabis to annual meeting ballot**

66 Mr. Pierce introduced the issue of whether the Trustees will place an opt-in question on the 2022
67 ballot, to determine if the voters will allow retail cannabis in the Village. He said that if a Village
68 vote passes, they could make specific zoning decisions to stipulate where retail cannabis sale
69 could take place (away from schools, for example). The Trustees discussed the warning and
70 timeline for educating residents. They agreed that putting the question on the ballot could be a
71 good decision, because businesses may be ready to open by October, if the Town's opt-in
72 question passes. The Trustees requested staff provide them information about strategies to
73 address zoning for retail cannabis by their next meeting. They requested that any informational
74 messaging be shared with them in advance and Mr. Chawla suggested that staff look into whether
75 they may use Lamoille County's FAQ document about the issue. He also suggested that CCRPC
76 and the Planning Commission have a conversation with stakeholders on the topic. The Trustees
77 agreed to work on unbiased language that does not suggest they are for or against opting-in. They
78 agreed that the locations of retail cannabis should be carefully considered.
79

80 d. **Discuss adding fund balance threshold change to annual meeting ballot**

81 The Trustees discussed the issue of whether or not place an item on the 2022 Annual Meeting
82 ballot to increase the unassigned fund balance percentage from the current 10% to, instead, the
83 GFOA suggested 15%-20%. Mr. Luck said this procedure controls how much of a rainy-day fund
84 could be kept. The Trustees discussed whether they should postpone the ballot question, until after
85 the separation issue. They decided to add 15% to the ballot because they could still assign funds,
86 within the unassigned fund balance threshold if they determined it would be in their best interest,
87 even if the increase passes.
88

89 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, that the Board of Trustees add an**
90 **article to the 2022 Annual Meeting asking the voters if they want to change the unassigned**
91 **fund balance maximum policy to 15%. The motion passed 5-0.**
92

93 e. **Consider approval to hold Village Annual Meeting by Australian ballot**

94 Mr. Teich said recent legislation passed to would allow municipalities to choose whether to hold the
95 2022 Annual Village Meeting by Australian Ballot again for this year. Trustees discussed the
96 previous year's increased voter turnout when it was held this way. They talked about the cost of
97 the election and the mailing, as detailed in the related memo, Mr. Teich said the cost of \$5000, for
98 mailing ballots to all active voters, is the amount required after cost-splitting with the school.
99

100 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, that the Board of Trustees hold**
101 **the 2022 Annual Meeting entirely by Australian ballot and to mail ballots to all active voters.**
102 **The motion passed 5-0.**
103

104 f. **Discuss topics for annual newsletter**

105 Mr. Brown suggested the annual newsletter include the topics already discussed by the Trustees:
106 Local Options Tax, Essex Independence and Cannabis legislation. The Trustees talked about the
107 preferred newsletter size, requesting it be brief and to the point with links to more information found
108 online. Ms. Thibeault said that the focus of the newsletter should be the ballot. The Trustees

109 agreed that an update on Independence could be in a timeline format. They requested staff move
110 forward with drafting the newsletter and authorized them to send it out when they see it as ready.
111

112 **g. Consideration of purchasing of masks with American Rescue Plan Act funds**

113 Mr. Chawla introduced the issue of whether or not to purchase masks for the community using less
114 than 1% of ARPA Funds (up to \$40,000), which would secure 45,000-60,000 masks. He talked
115 about identified sources for the purchase and how other institutions are sourcing and distributing
116 masks. He said the strategy of purchasing and distributing masks would make securing masks
117 easier for Essex residents and could help vulnerable populations. He suggested, based on
118 discussions with medical professionals, they secure multiple types of masks to accommodate
119 various face shapes and sizes. He asked whether or not the Trustees would move forward with
120 purchasing and determining a strategy to distribute masks. The Trustees discussed the benefits of
121 the proposal. Mr. Kerin said he agreed with the idea of providing masks but wondered what it
122 would take to distribute them. Mr. Kerin and Mr. Chawla discussed how providing 3-5 masks per
123 person could negatively impact pollution but positively impact health and safety. Mr. Tyler thought
124 the Senior Center could be a point of distribution and wondered if restaurant workers could be
125 targeted for masks as well. Mr. Luck suggested that the Recreation Department devise a
126 distribution strategy. Mr. Chawla talked about challenges with securing masks for the community's
127 youngest children. The Trustees discussed the benefits of a slow, deliberate roll out of the effort.
128 Ms. Thibeault suggested starting with providing masks to staff. Mr. Kerin said that the program
129 should be carried out as a preventative gesture but not an ongoing program that expands too far.
130

131 Mr. Dubief, a professor from UVM focusing on COVID research, discussed how using masks can
132 reduce the aerosol spread of COVID and gave examples of how mask use can lower the rate of
133 transmission. He suggested N95 masks be provided because they are more comfortable and
134 breathable. He stressed the importance mask accessibility while targeting education about masks-
135 how often they can be used, etc. He suggested prioritizing senior living spaces.
136

137 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, that the Board of Trustees**
138 **address the emergency situation of COVID-19, which threatens the lives and health of our**
139 **residents and staff, by making emergency purchases of up to \$40,000 to supply high-quality**
140 **masks to Village residents and staff using ARPA funds.**

141 Mr. Tyler and Mr. Chawla clarified that this effort will start small, by using only a few thousand
142 dollars at first to determine how it goes, then report back to the Trustees on how to proceed.

143 **The motion passed 5-0.**
144

145 **h. Discussion and possible action about contracts with the Town of Essex**

146 Mr. Luck introduced this follow-up discussion from the Essex Selectboard and Village Trustees
147 Joint Meeting on January 24th. Mr. Tyler brought up Ms. Haney's letter from the reading file, to
148 illustrate the need for the Village to focus on their own economic development vision. He said the
149 Town's Economic Development Committee is broader than just the downtown and takes a different
150 approach than what is needed there. He suggested forming a Downtown Committee, or their own
151 Economic Development Commission, to take better advantage of their downtown designation. He
152 suggested that this strategy could support planned, significant projects and prepare for new
153 initiatives in a more coordinated, focused way. He also suggested they also have a stronger
154 presence in the Global Foundries industrial park plans. Mr. Brown wondered how a Town
155 Economic Director would play out with a shared Economic Development Committee. Mr. Chawla
156 talked about the importance of continued collaboration with the Town until but also consider a
157 separate structure, later, for economic development downtown.
158

159 The Trustees discussed their support of the other collaborative committees/ joint boards with the
160 Town and supported how the agreements are currently written. Mr. Chawla wondered how the

committee stipends would be addressed. He suggested they identify an agreement with the Selectboard for how this will work. Mr. Brown suggested this also could include a discussion about logistics related to appointments of committee members.

6. **CONSENT ITEMS**

DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, to approve the consent agenda as amended:

- a. Approve minutes: January 11, 2022
- b. Village Annual Meeting/Elections Preparation Schedule
- Approve Check Warrants: #17286—01/24/2022

The motion passed 5-0.

7. **READING FILE**

a. **Board member comments**

- Mr. Brown said he will forward information from Global Foundries about their strategy to remove hydrogen from used water to power their operations, to reduce energy use.
- Mr. Brown said during the day he was invited by Representatives Houghton and Dolan to discuss the bill for Essex Independence with the House Government Operations (Ops) committee at their first hearing. He said he and Mr. Murray from the Selectboard attended to answer questions. Mr. Brown's impression was that the Committee understands their amicable separation process. He explained the next steps for the bill: another opportunity for testimony, if House Government Ops thinks it is necessary, otherwise they will be voting on the bill. He said if it passes in this committee it may have to go to House Ways and Means committee, then it would go to the House for a vote, prior going to the same two committees in the Senate. If the Senate aligns with the House, then the bill goes to the Governor for his signature. If there were differences between the Senate and the House versions, then it would go to a conference committee and back to the House and Senate for approval prior to going to the Governor.
- Mr. Tyler said he understood that the budget reviewed in a previous meeting does not have money for renovations to Lincoln Hall in it, but ARPA funds may be used. He requested that the plan presented regarding this renovation go through a more focused discussion, including public comments and input, prior to anything being done to it. Mr. Luck clarified that the plan was only intended to illustrate how the City could have a City Hall in the event of a charter change, but a more thorough discussion and public input would be planned. Mr. Kerin suggested that ARPA funds be used for this project instead of economic development funds and Mr. Tyler explained the background and intention for economic development fund use.

- b. **Approval of CCRPC Unified Planning Work Program projects for 2023**
- c. **Email from Elaine Haney re: Input regarding discussion of shared EDC**
- d. **Face Covering Rule extended by Selectboard 1/18/2022**
- e. **Public Notice of Modification to GlobalFoundries Hazardous Waste Facility Permit**

8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a. ***An executive is not anticipated**
No executive session took place

9. **ADJOURN**

DAN KERIN made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, that the Trustees adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 8:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Ainsworth