



VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Remote Meeting Only
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Tuesday, March 8, 2022
6:30 PM

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www.essexjunction.org

Phone: (802) 878-6944

This meeting will be remote participation only. 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. Welcome Colleen Dwyer, HR Director
 - b. Presentation of audit report – Kittell, Branagan & Sargent
 - c. Consider sound waiver of public nuisance ordinance for removal of commercial trash for Champlain Valley Exposition August 27 – September 5, 2022
 - d. Consider approval of Village Annual Meeting warning
 - e. Discuss website redevelopment
 - f. *Discuss contracts with the Town of Essex
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approve minutes: February 22, 2022
 - b. Approve Check Warrants: #17290—02/22/2022; #17291—02/28/2022
 - c. Approve street closure request for Essex Junction Little League Opening Day parade on May 7
7. **READING FILE**
 - a. Board member comments
 - b. Upcoming meeting schedule
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - a. *An executive session may be necessary to discuss potential contracts
9. **ADJOURN**

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Certification: 03/04/2022

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**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 8, 2022**

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

ADMINISTRATION: Colleen Dwyer, Director of Human Resources; Wendy Hysko, Library Director/Interim Co-Manager; Brad Luck, Essex Junction Recreation & Parks Director/Interim Co-Manager; Jess Morris, Finance Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Annie Cooper, Patty Davis, Paul Hansen, Jeffrey Kershner, Bill Keyser, Chris Kline, Roseanne Prestipino, Tim Shea, Bob, Harlan Smith, Michael Thorne

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Andrew Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

Mr. Luck noted an updated document for consent agenda item number 6c.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

DAN KERIN made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed 5-0.

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

a. Comments from public on items not on the agenda
None at this time.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. Welcome Colleen Dwyer, HR Director

The Trustees welcomed Collen Dwyer as the new Director of Human Resources for Essex Junction.

b. Presentation of audit report – Kittell, Branagan & Sargent

Mr. Keyser presented the audit report, noting that it was conducted on-site in October of 2021 and completed and submitted in January 2022. He said that there were no material adjustments that were proposed by the auditor and that there were minor adjustments recommended (but nothing of concern). He said that consistent with the prior years, there was a single audit required because the Village spent in excess of \$750,000 of federal funding (including Dept. of Transportation funding for the Crescent Connector and FEMA funding for the Densmore Road project). He said that because the Crescent Connector projected was tested in previous years, the Village qualified as a low-risk single audit, and the auditors found no risks or material weaknesses and no findings. He said that there may be another single audit required for 2022 due to the receipt of federal Covid relief funding.

Mr. Keyser noted a general fund balance of \$865,000, and that \$136,000 has been assigned for future expenditures. He noted that water/sanitation funds are meant to be self-sustaining. He said that revenues were up in 2020 due to rate increases as well as usage increases. He noted that the recreation fund had income of \$75,000, decreasing its overall deficit to under \$100,000.

Mr. Keyser spoke about the audit process, which entails a review and test of all balance sheet figures and an analytical review of the income and expenses for the Village, and then entails meeting with the

Village's financial department. Mr. Keyser noted that there are very strong controls in place to ensure that expenses are being paid and revenue is being received and coded appropriately.

Mr. Kerin acknowledged the hard work of the financial department and the auditors through this audit.

Mr. Tyler asked about the Whitcomb Terrace loan fund. Mr. Keyser said that it is comprised of grant funds received and passed through as a loan to Whitcomb Terrace, but is a net-zero on financial statements (in effect, it won't be collected in future).

c. Consider sound waiver of public nuisance ordinance for removal of commercial trash for Champlain Valley Exposition August 27 – September 5, 2022

Mr. Luck began by noting that an ordinance was recently passed preventing trash haulers from collecting trash prior to 7:00 AM, and noted that Mr. Shea, the owner of Champlain Valley Exposition, has requested a waiver for the duration of the Champlain Valley Fair, so that trash may be collected beginning at 6:00 AM.

Mr. Shea said that they try to be conscious of neighbors 355 days of the year, but because of the volume of trash during the fair, they are hoping that they could have trash hauled beginning at 6:00 am, prior to staff, volunteers, and fair-goers arriving.

Mr. Brown noted that there is a flurry of activity during the days of the Expo and the community typically expects and anticipates it. Mr. Tyler agreed, saying that removing garbage from the previous day is an important part of daily preparation for the fair.

GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, that the Trustees grant a sound waiver to Champlain Valley Exposition and allow trash haulers to begin no earlier than 6:00a.m. from August 27-September 5, 2022. The motion passed 5-0.

d. Consider approval of Village Annual Meeting warning

Mr. Luck noted 3 regular and 4 new ballot initiatives for the April meeting. He said that the new ballot initiatives pertain to increasing the unrestricted fund balance, a local option tax, allowing cannabis retailers in Essex Junction, and a bond to replace the Main Street water line.

Mr. Chawla said that the informational meeting on the ballot is being held nearly 2 weeks after ballots are being mailed. He said that if Essex Junction continues to mail ballots to voters in future, it would be good to have informational meetings take place earlier in the process. Mr. Brown agreed, saying that the Junction should hold additional informational meetings prior to the Village annual meeting in order to educate voters on ballot items. Mr. Tyler also agreed, saying that the process for getting information out to voters is not in sync with getting ballots out to voters. He said that information should go out to voters in a more timely way in future.

Mr. Brown noted that the Junction's newsletter will be mailed soon and should arrive in homes by March 23rd, and that it contains more information about the articles on the ballot.

Harlan Smith asked if Junction ballots should be dropped off at 81 Main Street or 2 Lincoln Street. Mr. Brown said that the clerk is still located at 81 Main Street, which is where ballots should go.

DAN KERIN made a motion, and GEORGE TYLER seconded, that the Trustees recommend that the Village of Essex Junction assess a one percent sales tax, a one percent meals and alcoholic beverages tax, and a one percent rooms tax pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138(b) and place

102 this question for consideration by the voters on the April 12, 2022, Annual Meeting Australian
103 ballot. The motion passed 5-0.

104
105 **DAN BROWN** made a motion, and **RAJ CHAWLA** seconded, that the Trustees approve of the
106 warning for the Village of Essex Junction Informational Hearing on April 6, 2022 and the Annual
107 Meeting on April 12, 2022. The motion passed 5-0.

108
109 e. Discuss website redevelopment

110 Mr. Luck began the discussion by noting that the Village website has not been updated in the last 8-10
111 years. He said that the Trustees had previously agreed that when the Town moves to a new web
112 vendor, the Village wouldn't. He noted that updates need to be done in order to remain ADA-
113 compliant. He asked whether the Trustees would like to redevelop the website now. He noted that
114 there is funding in the current budget to pay for upgrades or redevelopment, and asked whether the
115 Junction should stay with its current vendor—Ecopixel—who is also a local vendor, or whether they
116 would consider posting a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new vendor.

117
118 Mr. Tyler said that he is comfortable with an update and renovation to the website, as opposed to
119 purchasing a new one. He said that he likes the flexible nature of the current website design. He asked
120 that the new City status of the Junction be included in any updates to the website. Mr. Brown agreed
121 that this should be thought of more as an update to the existing website and upgrades to its back end.
122 He said that he has no concerns with retaining the current vendor, especially given their local nature.
123 He said that in terms of timing, he asked whether it would make more sense to update some aspects
124 once the Village becomes a City. Ms. Hysko replied that it would be an upgrade and it would be
125 relatively easy to update graphics and logos. Mr. Chawla said that he would be comfortable with an
126 upgrade.

127
128 Annie Cooper expressed support for upgrading the website.

129
130 f. *Discuss contracts with the Town of Essex

131 Mr. Luck noted that there are four outstanding agreements between the Town and the Village, and that
132 the two entities will be exchanging edits back and forth until the next joint meeting in order to reach
133 agreement. He noted that the outstanding agreements are in finance, clerk, recreation/Indian
134 Brook/senior center/senior bus, and shared boards/commissions/committees areas.

135
136 Mr. Luck began by walking through the shared committees agreement. He noted that the Town is
137 willing to discuss staffing and resources for Essex BEST. He noted that Essex BEST is not a
138 Selectboard or Trustee-appointed entity. Mr. Brown and Mr. Chawla agreed that it would be best to try
139 and work through the details around shared committees and boards during the transition year, rather
140 than trying to come to a decision by the end of the month. Mr. Tyler concurred. Mr. Brown said that the
141 Board could continue to work on Essex BEST staffing, resources, and funding and engage with Essex
142 BEST in these efforts, as well as agree to engage in conversation on a shared Housing Commission,
143 He said that he would recommend removing from overarching MOU.

144
145 Mr. Tyler asked whether the Selectboard intends to try and separate the Tri-Town Committee; he said
146 that it is not possible to do that, since those three communities are on the permits for water and sewer.
147 Mr. Brown said that they will confirm and reinforce that the Tri-Town Committee cannot be dissolved.

148
149 Mr. Chawla suggested acknowledging that the Junction is willing to pay an equitable share of
150 operation for shared committees in FY24.

151

152 Mr. Luck confirmed that first choice is to remove the boards from the MOU, but second choice is to
153 commit to working on it and consider it moving forward.

154
155 In terms of shared financial services, Mr. Luck recommended including more flexible language around
156 working in shared spaces, to allow for the potential to operate out of separate spaces but still share in
157 the agreement. Trustees agreed with that recommendation.

158
159 Mr. Luck noted that for the clerk/treasurer agreement, they have agreed to changing the end date to
160 June 30, 2023 throughout the document.

161
162 For the recreation, Indian Brook, and Senior Center/Bus agreement, Mr. Brown noted that the
163 language in the current document was reverted back to the Trustees' prior version. Mr. Luck said that
164 he would not like to commit the Junction to the "existing" space for Senior Center at 2 Lincoln St, in
165 case renovations mean that existing space is unusable for a time.

166
167 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

168 a. Approve minutes: February 22, 2022

169 b. Approve Check Warrants: #17290—02/22/2022; #17291—02/28/2022

170 c. Approve street closure request for Essex Junction Little League Opening Day parade on May 7

171
172 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER to approve the consent agenda**
173 **as presented. The motion passed 5-0.**

174
175 **8. READING FILE**

176 a. Board member comments: Mr. Brown congratulated and thanked Mr. Luck and Ms. Hysko for taking
177 on the role of interim co-managers. Mr. Luck said that there are interviews being conducted for both
178 wastewater and public works. Mr. Kerin said that the elections last week went as smoothly as they
179 could have. Mr. Tyler noted that the new City charter does away with having a Zoning Board of
180 Appeals and replaces it with a Development Review Board (DRB) and a Planning Commission. He
181 said that the Trustees will need to have a discussion about applications for DRB and Planning
182 Commission seats. He asked Mr. Luck and Ms. Hysko to touch base with staff to discuss this. Mr.
183 Luck commended the hard work of Tammy Getchell on behalf of both the Town and the Junction.

184 b. Upcoming meeting schedule

185
186 **9. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

187 a. *An executive session may be necessary to discuss potential contracts

188 An executive session was not necessary.

189
190 **10. ADJOURN**

191
192 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER to adjourn the meeting. The motion**
193 **passed 5-0 at 7:56 PM.**

194
195 Respectfully Submitted,
196 Amy Coonradt