

WHAT IS A CHARTER AND WHY IS ESSEX JUNCTION VOTING ON A NEW ONE ?

In Vermont, a charter is the legal foundation for a local government. It gives cities, towns, and incorporated villages the authority to create laws and collect taxes to provide local services.

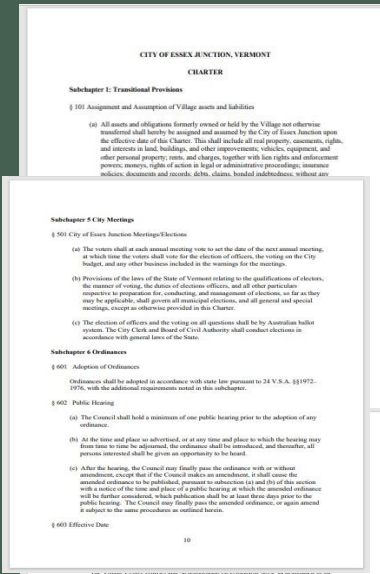
Doesn't Essex Junction already have a charter? Yes. Essex Junction's charter gives it the same general legal powers as any city or town, including Essex Town.

Then what's the problem with our current charter? Essex Junction's current charter establishes it as an incorporated village within the boundaries of Essex Town. Town governments can tax incorporated villages within their geographic boundaries. This means the Essex Town government can tax properties inside Essex Junction, but the Essex Junction government cannot tax properties outside its boundaries in Essex Town. In practical terms, Essex Junction property owners are financially supporting two local governments.

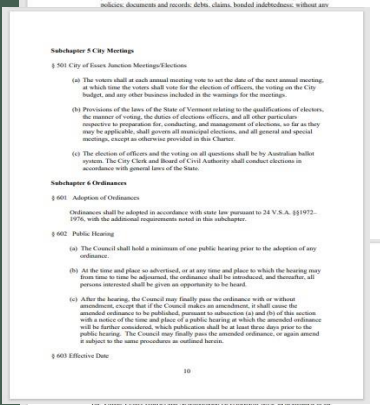
How will a city charter change this? Towns cannot tax properties inside cities. By changing its legal status from a village to a city, Essex Junction's village borders will become city borders. Essex Town will no longer be allowed to tax properties inside Essex Junction. Essex Junction property owners will only pay taxes to one municipal government.

What other major changes will result from becoming a city? Essex Junction residents can vote in city elections but not town elections, as they presently do. Also, the state gives town clerks more legal powers and responsibilities over elections, land records, and licenses than village clerks. By becoming a city, the Essex Junction city clerk will have the same powers and responsibilities as a town clerk.

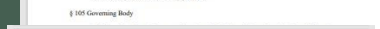
SECTION-BY-SECTION BREAKDOWN OF THE ESSEX JUNCTION CITY CHARTER



→ **I:** Transfers Village of Essex Junction's properties, debts, and operations to City of Essex Junction



→ **II:** Gives Essex Junction all the powers of municipal government allowed by VT Constitution



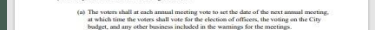
→ **III:** Essex Junction shall continue its elected board/manager government (no mayor)



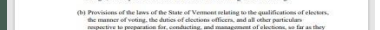
→ **IV:** Brownell library shall continue to have an elected board



→ **V:** Explains how annual meetings and elections shall be run



→ **VI:** Explains how city council shall create and approve new ordinances



→ **VII:** Describes the manager's duties and administrative powers



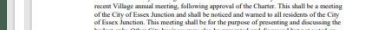
→ **VIII:** Establishes a development review board and planning commission



→ **IX:** City shall establish rules and processes for personnel management and property appraisal



→ **X:** How the elected board and manager shall prepare the budget for public approval



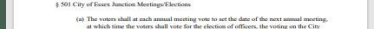
→ **XI:** Explains the process for levying taxes and assessing property values



→ **XII:** Explains process for funding capital (large) projects



→ **XIII:** Explains process for amending this charter



→ **XIV:** No other government can lay claim to territory within the city boundaries

