

2023 City Council Orientation

Andrew Brown, Council President

Regina Mahony, City Manager

May 10, 2023



Agenda

- Demographics & Comprehensive Plan
- Council-Manager Form of Government
- Council Authority
- Conflict of Interest and Ethical Conduct
- Manager Authority
- City Organization and Staffing
- Budget and Fiduciary Responsibility
- Priority Projects, Hiring & Events
- Resources, questions, and discussion!



Essex Junction Demographics

Total Population	10,590
Median Age	39
Over 65	16.1%
Housing Units	4,644
Median Gross Rent	\$1,412
Median Household Income	\$79,677
BA or Higher	46.9%
Born Outside the US	12.7%
Language spoken at home	14.6% other than English



Thoughtful Growth



Reclaim space for people to create a high-quality pedestrian experience.



2019 Comprehensive Plan

- 8-yr plan
- Done prior to separation
- Most content still relevant

Next steps:

1. Strategic Planning to help guide next steps now that we are a City
2. Annual Workplan/Strategic Planning Process



Create a governance structure and shared vision for the Village and the Town that enhances the unique characteristics of each.



Continue to leverage the Village Center and Neighborhood Development designations to add diverse housing types and attract local businesses in these areas.

Safety



Calm traffic in the Village Center.



Proceed with Crescent Connector construction.



Improve access to and safety of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.



The **Connector Road** opens up six acres of underutilized land to development, while creating a way for traffic to avoid Five Corners. This road would improve traffic efficiency at Five Corners by 12%.

2019 Comprehensive Plan



The **Essex Junction Comprehensive Plan** defines a comprehensive long-range vision for the community. It contains general goals and policies that guide decisions about the physical development or redevelopment of the community, and community issues more broadly.

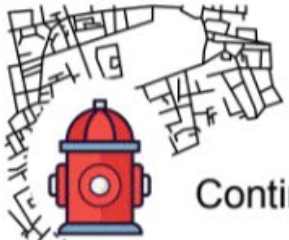
The following are highlights from the Plan, organized by **Heart and Soul** values to explain the breadth of issues this Plan addresses.



Local Economy



Engage in policies to make progress on the transit-specific strategies in the Economic Development and Vision Plan including:



Continue to invest in public infrastructure and manage public assets in collaboration with the Town.



Regional multimodal improvements



Freight and commuter rail service expansion



Transit-oriented development



Work with the Town to implement the **Enhanced Energy Plan** to reduce energy consumption, generate more renewable energy, and reduce fossil fuel use in the heating, transportation and electricity sectors.

2019 Comprehensive Plan



Education



Students are educated by a rigorous, well-balanced, proficiency-based curriculum to achieve reading and math fluency by the end of grade 3 and to graduate with the skills to be successful.

3+1=4

Strengthen early childhood education so children are ready to thrive in school and businesses have a robust workforce to support the local economy.



Health & Recreation



Integrate substance use prevention into our culture by working with Essex CHIPS and the school district to ensure youth are receiving healthy messages where they live, learn, and play.

Offer programs and facilities to ensure residents of all ages and abilities have access to physical activity and healthy food choices.

2019 Comprehensive Plan



Community Connections



Maintain and enhance a culture that values diversity and offers a welcoming spirit.



Participate in local government and volunteer to stay connected and ensure all voices are heard.

Council-Manager Form of Government



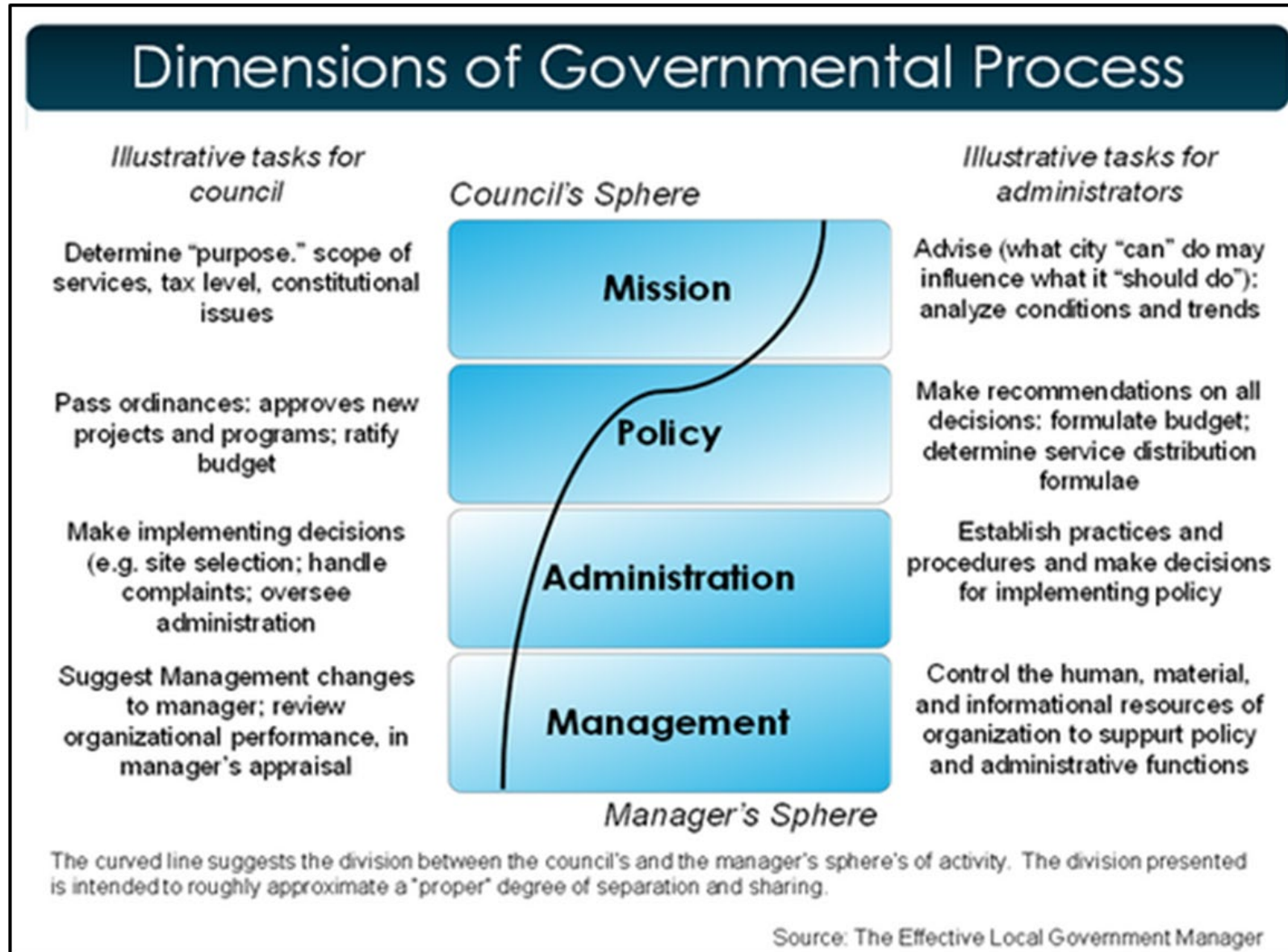
Councilors make up the City Council – the policy-setting board

- As a group, set high-level priorities to provide direction to staff
- Make and change policy
- Oversee the big picture – budget, plans, property, and City Manager

The **City Manager** is the Chief Administrative Officer - runs the City Operations

- Run day-to-day operations of the City
- Supervise and direct all staff
- Support Council in developing policy
- Implement and administer policy, budget, plans, and property

Roles and Authority



Council Authority



- Hire the City Manager
- Appoint City Attorney*, City Clerk*, Zoning Administrator
- Appoint residents to the DRB, Planning Commission and all other policy boards
- Serve as the Liquor Control Board, Local Cannabis Control Commission, Board of Health, and other Statutory requirements
- Make, amend, repeal ordinances
- Acquire, sell, lease property
- Provide for fiduciary oversight and approve budget to bring to the voters
- Provide an independent audit
- Convene public forums

* Manager recommends, Council approves (City Charter 602 (d) and (o))

Council Rules of Procedure



- Annually Council elects a president, vice president, and clerk
- President runs the meetings
- A quorum of the Council is 3
- All action/direction of the Council is done by affirmative vote
- Follow the 2014 Communication Policy for Village Trustees and Staff: “If asked or called upon to express an opinion or judgment representing the collective position of the Board of Trustees or Village government, they should defer the question to the Village President or Village Manager accordingly.”
- President and Manager set the agenda. Councilors can request items by the Wednesday prior.
- Agenda Outline
 - Public to Be Heard
 - Business Items
 - Consent Agenda
 - Reading File
 - Executive Session (if needed)

Meetings are held on
the 2nd and 4th
Wednesdays at 6:30

*Consider reviewing the 2014 Communication Policy,
2009 Trustees’ Policy Regarding Trustees’ Meeting
and establishing a Rules of Procedure.*

Boards and Committees



Specified in Charter:

- Planning Commission
- Development Review Board
- Board of Abatement
- Board of Civil Authority
- Library Board of Trustees

Regional Organizations with City Representation:

- Chittenden County Communications Union District
- Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
- Chittenden Solid Waste District
- Green Mountain Transit
- Town Meeting TV
- Winooski Valley Parks District
- Champlain Water District (Town Rep)

Policy Committees of Council

- Housing Commission (currently joint with Town)
- Bike/Walk Advisory Committee
- Tree Advisory Committee
- Capital Program Review Committee
- Tri-Town Sewer Committee
- Police Community Advisory Board (new & joint with the Town)
- BEST Committee

Possible Future Policy Committees of Council

- Energy
- Downtown Committee
- Rec Advisory Committee
- Governance Committee – required in Charter
- Project Based Committees (similar to 1 Main St. Park Design)

Transparency



Goals are that the public trust in its officers is preserved and ensure that all decisions made by public officers are based on the best interests of the municipality.

- All (but executive session) communication by a Council member discussing City business is considered public
- Use your @essexjunction.org email to conduct City business
- Meetings must be warned with minutes produced
- Avoid instances where 3 or more Council members are present **and** discussing current or future items before the Council
- Information can be shared via email, but debate must take place in public setting. Careful of “reply all.”
- Executive session content and items marked confidential must be kept private.
 - Do not forward confidential emails
 - Do not talk about Executive session outside of Executive Session

Ethics and Conflict of Interest



- The City of Essex Junction Conflict of Interest and Ethics Policy was approved on May 11, 2022; effective on July 1, 2022. This is attached will be reviewed annually by way of this presentation.
- This Policy is adopted pursuant to requirements of Vermont Statutes (24 V.S.A. §2291(20) and 24 V.S.A. §1984).
- Policy Statement: To maintain the public trust that is critical to the continued operation of the municipality. There are five principles to which public officers and employees shall adhere to:
 - represent and work towards the public interest rather than private/personal interests.
 - accept and maintain the public trust.
 - exercise leadership, particularly in the form of consistently demonstrating behavior that reflects the public trust.
 - recognize the proper role of all government bodies and the relationships between the various government bodies.
 - always demonstrate respect for others and for other positions.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest



- What is a conflict of Interest?
 - A real or seeming incompatibility between a public officer's or employee's private interests and their public or fiduciary interests to the municipality they serve. A conflict of interest arises when there is a direct or indirect personal or financial interest of a public officer/employee or a person or group closely tied with the public officer/employee
 - A situation where a public officer has publicly displayed a prejudgment of the merits of a particular quasi-judicial proceeding.
 - A situation where a public officer has not disclosed ex parte communication(s) related to a quasi-judicial proceeding that is before the public body to which that public officer belongs.
- What is not a conflict of Interest?
 - It is not a conflict of interest if your interest is no greater than that of other persons generally affected by the decision



Ethics and Conflict of Interest

- What to do if you have a conflict of interest?
 - Disclose:
 - The public official shall disclose, in an open public meeting, the nature of the actual or perceived conflict of interest, prior to any consideration of the matter.
 - Once there has been a disclosure of an actual or perceived conflict of interest, other public officers shall be afforded an opportunity to ask questions or make comments about the situation.
 - Recusal:
 - A public officer shall declare whether they will recuse him or herself and explain the basis for that decision. If the public officer has a conflict of interest but believes that they are able to act fairly, objectively, and in the public interest they shall state why they believe that. Otherwise, the public officer shall recuse him or herself from the matter under consideration.
 - The failure of an appointed public officer to recuse themselves in spite of a conflict of interest, whether real or perceived, may be grounds for discipline or removal from office.
- If you are recused:
 - You cannot sit with, deliberate with, or participate in discussions with the public body as a public officer
 - However, such member may still participate as a member of the public or private party, if applicable

Manager Authority



- Serves as the Chief Administrative Officer
- Prepare the annual budgets and administer them
- Oversee all ordinance enforcement, collection of funds, and expenditure of funds
- Serve as the Personnel Director and hire, manage, and fire (if needed) staff; including appointment of Treasurer (Charter 602(b))
- Regularly report to the Council on finances and operations
- Attend and participate in all Council meetings
- Serves as the Councilors' primary support

See International City Management Association's (ICMA) *Code of Ethics*

Communicating with Staff



- Questions and requests should be directed to the Manager
- To the extent that general questions or history is requested, it will be shared with the full Council
- Councilors are encouraged to:
 - Attend facility tours with Department Heads and the Manager
 - Reach out to staff before meetings with questions and to understand more about an issue or item on the agenda.
- The Manager must be cc'ed on all correspondence between staff and Councilors
- Direct constituents to the City Manager when asked about an operational issue
- Emergency Situations
 - The City Manager or Acting City Manager will attempt to keep the council informed
 - During emerging events, the focus must be on the event and public safety. In these instances, it's best to speak with one voice (Manager, Chief, Council President)



Staff Authority Directed by State Statute

Zoning Administrator: Must adhere to 24 V.S.A. Chapter 17 and enforce the Land Development Regulations.

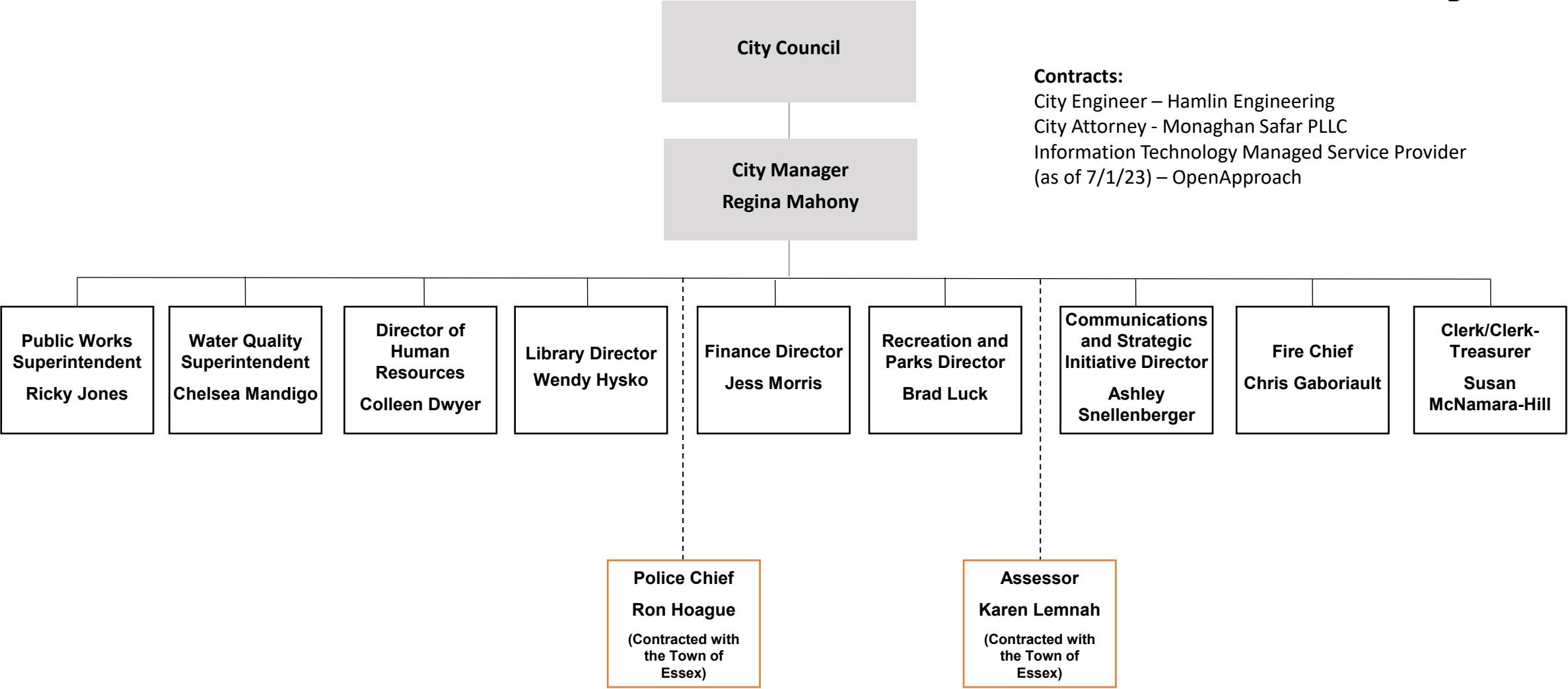
Police Chief: Must adhere to 24 V.S.A Chapter 55 and enforce all local and state laws.

Fire Staff: Must adhere to V.S.A. relevant to a variety of building trades and fire safety protocols.

City Clerk: Must adhere to 24 V.S.A. Chapter 35 and administer all elections and recording as prescribed.

City of Essex Junction

Organization chart



Facilities



- 2 Lincoln
- Brownell Library
- Fire Department
- Maple Street Park and Facilities
- Park Street School
- Department of Public Works Garage
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Fire Station

- Parks
 - Maple Street Park
 - Maple Street Pool
 - Cascade Park
 - Stevens Park
 - Essex Dog Park*
 - 1 Main St. Park



FY 24 Budget: Summary General Fund

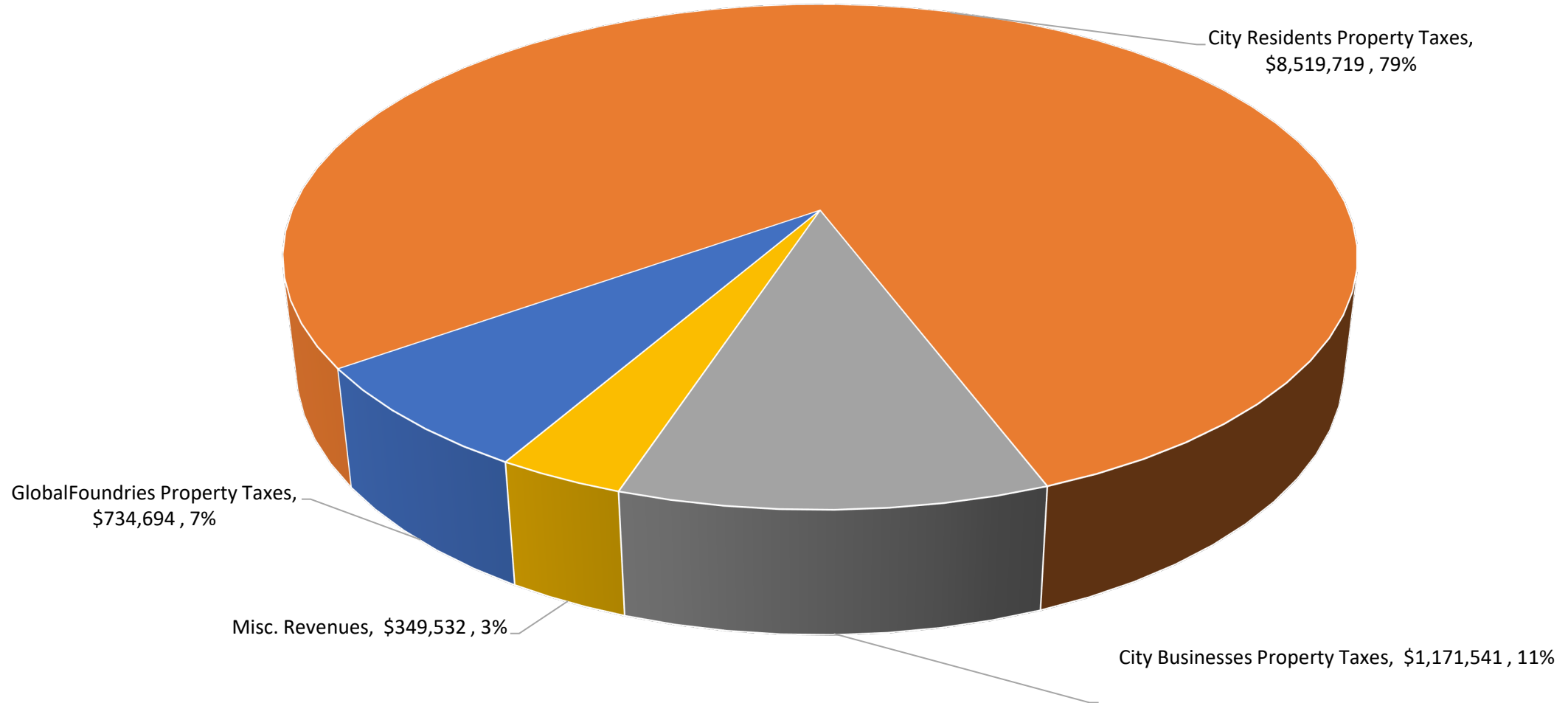
FY23 Village Budget (does not include portion of Town Budget)	FY22 Mock City Budget w/ Inflation	FY24 Proposed CITY ONLY Budget	\$ Change from FY22 mock	% Change from FY22 mock
\$6,310,015	\$10,691,093	\$11,421,171	\$730,078	6%

Estimated Tax impact

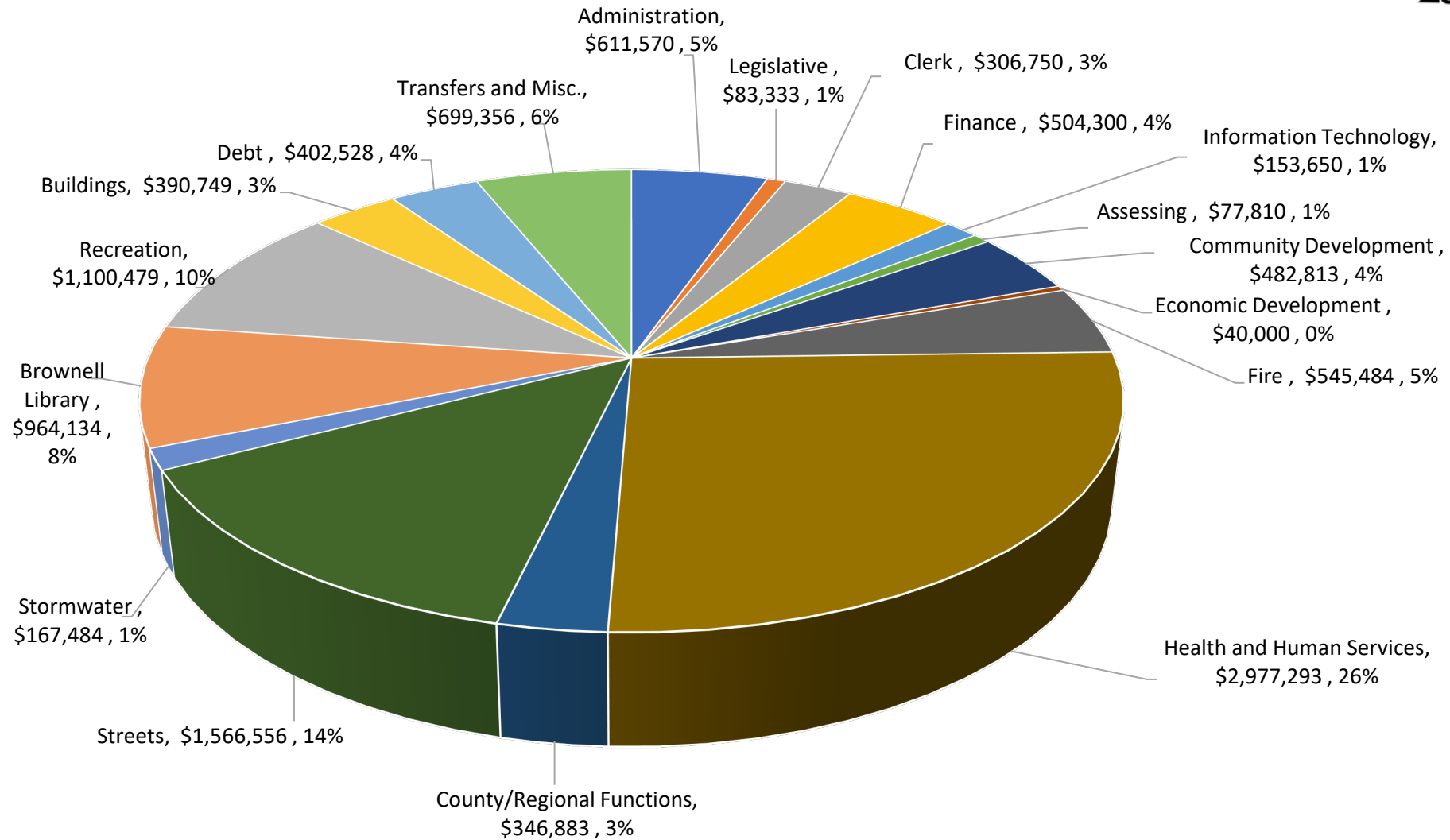
FY23 Combined Rate	FY24 Proposed Rate	\$ Change	% Change
\$0.9298	\$0.9337	\$0.0039	0.4%

Estimated tax increase to a \$280,000 City property is \$10.86

FY24 Budget: Revenues



FY24 Budget: Expenditures



Purchasing



Purchases	Type	Purchasing Agent
<\$500	incidental	all staff
\$501 - \$2,000	Routine	Designated purchasing agents by Dept Head
\$2,001 - \$5,000	Minor	Designated purchasing agents by Dept Head - 3 Quotes required
\$5,001-\$10,000	Moderate	Designated purchasing agents by Dept Head - 3 Quotes required
\$10,001-\$40,000	Large	Designated purchasing agents by Dept Head - 3 Quotes required
>\$40,000	Major	City Council

Competitive Bidding	
	Standardized competitive bid format required; or use of prequalified vendor or exceptions: competitive proposals, sole source purchase, recurring purchases, maintenance, repair, or emergency purchase
>\$40,000	
>\$250,000	Optional prequalification for single project
Sole Source	
<\$40,000	Awarded by Unified Manager
>\$40,000	Awarded by City Council
>\$150,000	Funded in accordance with Grant Terms

Grants need Council approval if there is a financial obligation; approved by City Manager if no financial obligation.

Resource: Purchasing Policy – Effective Date 10/11/2018

Priority Projects (a selection)



- SEPARATION
- 2 Lincoln Renovation
- Strategic Planning Initiative
- 2023 Construction Projects
 - Crescent Connector
 - Brickyard Culvert
 - Main Street Waterline
- Support community, regional and state housing needs: Land Development Code amendments, Rental Registry analysis, Housing Commission – Inclusionary Zoning & Housing Trust Fund
- Ordinance Enforcement
- Amtrak Multi-modal Station
- 1 Main Street Park
- Stormwater Utility
- WWTF – 10-year assessment
- Governance Committee – 3 years from City Charter approval
- Salary Study and negotiation of Association Contract
- Future facility needs: Public Works, Fire and Recreation
- How can we be a more equitable and inclusive community?

Hiring

Current Openings

Equipment Operator/Maintenance Technician

📍 Essex Junction, VT

Library Substitute

📍 Essex Junction, VT

Licensed Afterschool Assistant Site Coordinator

📍 Essex Junction, VT

Licensed Afterschool Site Coordinator

📍 Essex Junction, VT

Preschool Assistant Teacher (part-time)

📍 Essex Junction, VT

Shelver

📍 Essex Junction, VT

Stormwater Technician Intern

📍 Essex Junction, VT

Wastewater Operator

📍 Essex Junction, VT



We will also advertise two new positions shortly: Admin Asst. and Asst. Clerk.

<https://cityofessexjunction.applytojob.com/apply>

Upcoming Events



- Memorial Day Parade:

SAT, MAY 27

9:30AM - PRE-PARADE PROGRAM AT 5 CORNERS

10:00AM - PARADE BEGINS

PARADE ROUTE: FROM ST. JAMES CHURCH, ROUTE 2A TO 5 CORNERS, UP PEARL STREET TO MAIN ENTRANCE AT CHAMPLAIN VALLEY EXPOSITION

- Community Fair at the Library - Saturday, June 17th from 1 pm to 4 pm
- Juneteenth, organized by Voices for Inclusion in Essex & Westford - Sunday, June 18th from 1 pm to 3 pm at the Essex Experience
- 4th of July

Resources:

- [City Charter](#)
- Ethics and Conflict of Interest
- [Purchasing Policy](#)
- [Budget](#)
- [Ordinances](#)
- [City and Town Agreements](#)



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