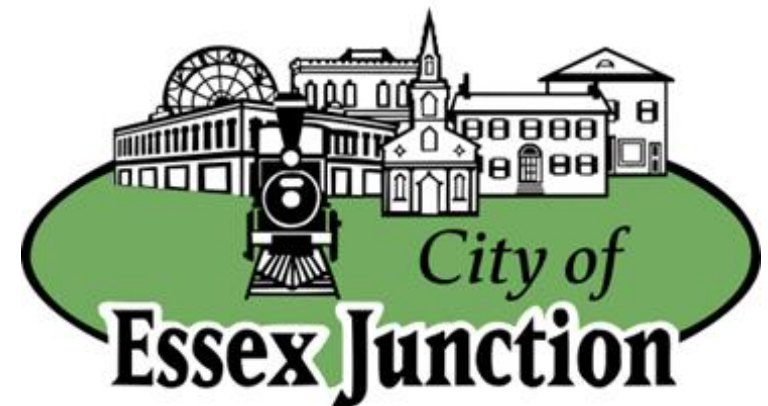


2026 City Council Orientation

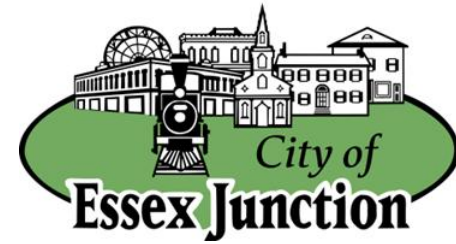
Amber Thibeault, Council President

Regina Mahony, City Manager

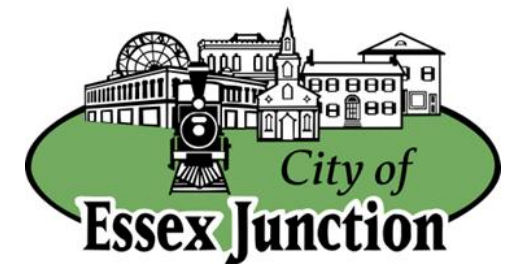
May 13, 2026



Agenda

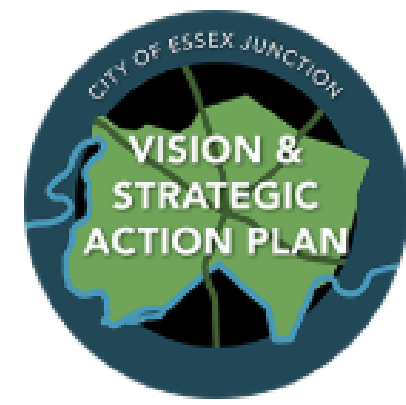


- Demographics
- Comprehensive Plan & Vision & Strategic Action Plan - Priorities
- Council-Manager Form of Government
 - Council Authority
 - Manager Authority
- Council Rules of Procedure
- Open Meeting Law, Transparency & Code of Ethics
- Organization
 - Committees
 - Departments
 - Facilities
- Budget and Fiduciary Responsibility
- Priority Projects, Hiring & Events
- Resources, questions, and discussion!



Essex Junction Demographics

Total Population	10,590
Median Age	40
Over 65	14.9%
Total Occupied Homes	4,761
Median Gross Rent	\$1,544
Median Household Income	\$89,257
BA or Higher	52.4%
Born Outside the US	10.5%
Language spoken at home	15.8% other than English



Vision & Strategic Action Plan

The City of Essex Junction becomes known for its inclusive and welcoming ethos. As a result, the population is both economically and ethnically diverse. **The economic approach is community-led while having a strong focus on adapting and growing as a community.** Community connectivity is significant in relation to amenities, activities, and engagement, as well as practicality via cycle lanes, trails, and public transportation. Walkability and cycling are encouraged, and there are passive and active greenspaces within the city. Inclusivity and equity are demonstrated via affordable housing, vertical development and incentives and new businesses. **There is investment in the public good and shared amenities and resources that create desirable living conditions. There is a focus on community vitality across the city with vibrant amenities and activities.** The enviable location is attractive to people wishing to move to the city due to its amenities, character, sense of community and proximity to the airport, Burlington, and the landscape of Vermont.

Strategic Plan Pillars & Action Items



KEY ACTIONS

- Action 1: Enhance the 'Neighborhood Village Feel'
- Action 2: Include Contemporary Design Principles into the City of Essex Junction
- Action 3: Improve the City's Landscaping and Design Standards



KEY ACTIONS

- Action 4: Promote and Enhance Safety
- Action 5: Address and Focus on Community Wellness
- Action 6: Provide Responsible, Open and Transparent Government



KEY ACTIONS

- Action 7: Enhance Downtown and Corridors
- Action 8: Provide and Promote Partnership Driven Institutional Support and Advocacy
- Action 9: Bring Businesses Together to Work Collaboratively



KEY ACTIONS

- Action 10: Improve Community Education
- Action 11: Enhance Transportation Safety
- Action 12: Develop a Citywide Multimodal Transportation Plan



KEY ACTIONS

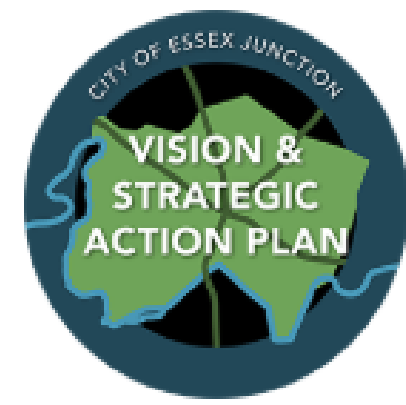
- Action 13: Support Green Spaces and Tree Planting
- Action 14: Encourage Clean Energy and Efficiency Options
- Action 15: Create a City-wide Comprehensive Sustainability Plan



KEY ACTIONS

- Action 16: Promote Community Vitality
- Action 17: Enhance Community Connectivity
- Action 18: Create a Comprehensive Community Engagement Plan



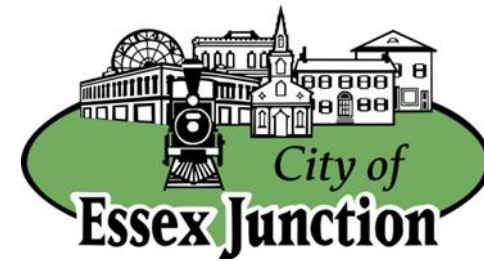


Comprehensive Plan 2027 Update

How is the Comprehensive Plan different from the 2024 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan?

- The 2024 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan (CVSAP) captured what the community wants: its values and aspirations across six pillars, like Housing, Economic Development, and Environmental Stewardship. The Comprehensive Plan is the formal legal document that translates those values into how we get there, with specific goals, land use maps, and actions the City commits to. The CVSAP feeds directly into the Comp Plan update.

2027 Comprehensive Plan Update

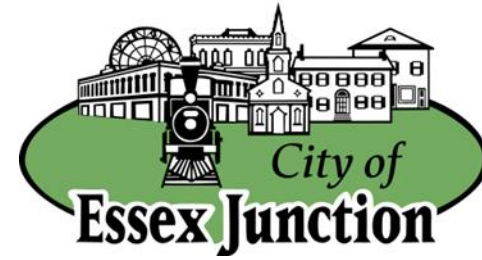


The Comprehensive Plan is the City's primary long-range policy document, guiding growth, development, and public investment. The current plan was adopted in 2019 and will expire in 2027.

Since 2019, Essex Junction has become an independent city, state housing and land-use laws have changed, and several major local and regional planning initiatives have been completed. This update will ensure the City's plan reflects current conditions, community priorities, and state requirements. It will:

- Align with new state and regional planning requirements
- Build on the City's 2024 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan
- Integrate recent planning efforts, including the Connect the Junction Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan
- Address housing, transportation, land use, infrastructure, sustainability, and economic development

Council-Manager Form of Government



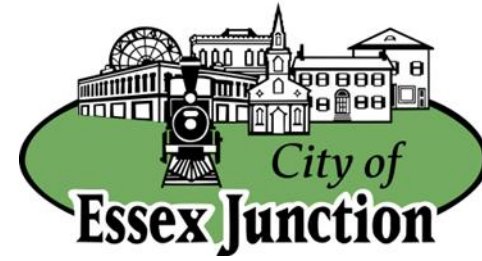
Councilors make up the City Council – the policy-setting board

- 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

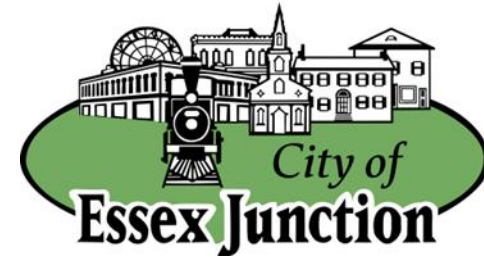
Council Authority



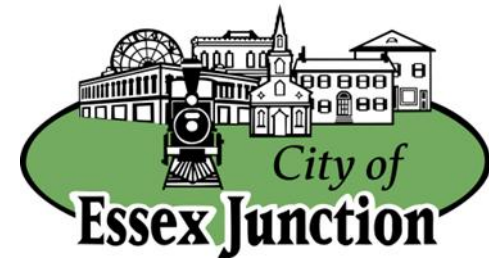
- Hire the City Manager
- Appoint City Attorney*, City Clerk*, Zoning Administrator
- Appoint residents to the DRB, Planning Commission and all other policy boards
- Serve as the Liquor Control Board, Local Cannabis Control Commission, Board of Health, and other Statutory requirements
- Make, amend, 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))

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**



Staff Authority Directed by State Statute

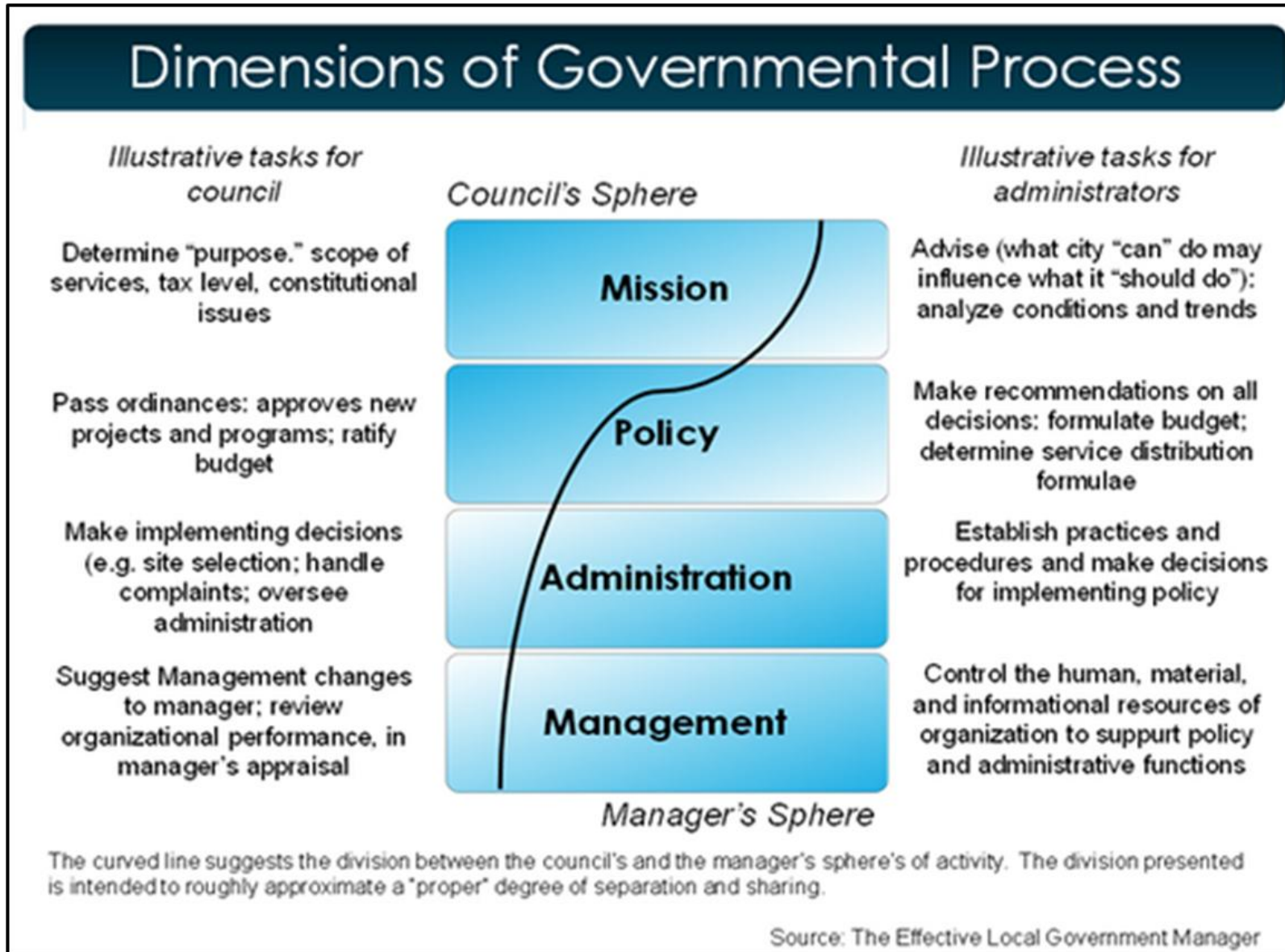
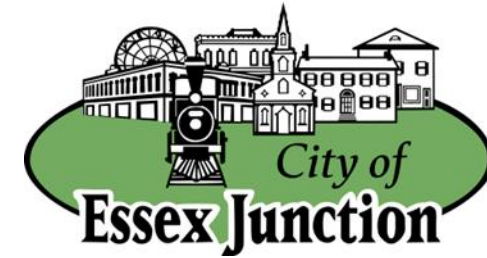
Zoning Administrator: Must adhere to 24 V.S.A. Chapter 17 and enforce the Land Development Regulations.

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

Fire Department: 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.

Roles and Authority



Council Roles

Roles	Associated Activities
Strategic Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Planning• Determining what is important in the short term• Identifying community wants and needs• Seeing interconnections
Representative–Constituent Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answering calls and emails from residents• Connecting residents with the local government to help resolve issues
Trustee–Steward	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looking at the long-term implications of decisions• Fiduciary role
Decision-maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading briefing materials• Participating in study sessions• Listening to residents• Voting
Community Builder	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being present and listening to individuals and community groups• Convening important community conversations• Celebrating accomplishments• Participating in events
Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducting the manager’s performance evaluation• Reviewing the audit

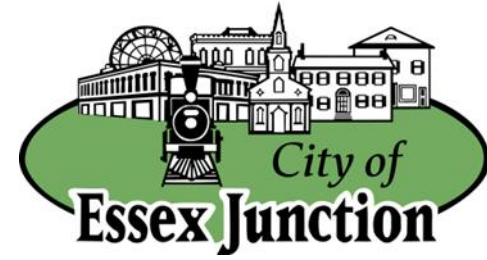
Source: Defining the Roles of Elected Officials and City/County Manager: Understanding the various roles of elected officials and how the CAO and staff can best support them. By Julia Novak, ICMA-CM, Tanisha Briley, ICMA-CM, Dr. John Nalbandian, and Jan Perkins, ICMA-CM | Dec 01, 2024 | PM Magazine - Article

Manager Role to Help Council Achieve Best for Community

1. Intentionally plan for opportunities for the governing body to fulfill each role, and create a time at council meetings where councilors can share their recent activities in the community. This publicly encourages councilors to reach out.
2. Create systems for efficiently addressing constituent concerns so elected officials can turn these issues over to the staff and not feel like they must be the ombudsman for the public, while at the same time, receiving credit for staff responses.
3. Refer to strategic plans and long-range goals when executing programs and projects to create connections between the daily work of the organization and the priorities of the elected officials. This could mean connecting agenda items directly to governing body priorities.
4. Discuss both short- and long-term consequences of action (or inaction).
5. Support the governing body in establishing ground rules for civility and mutual accountability.
6. Demonstrate accountability to the governing body by updating them on the status of agreed-upon priorities and ensuring a meaningful process exists for performance evaluations.

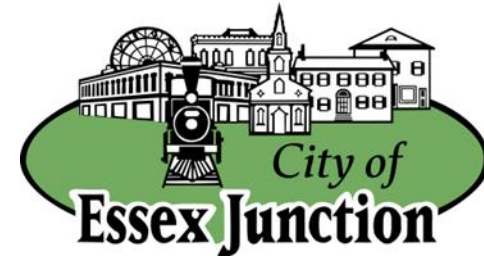
Source: Defining the Roles of Elected Officials and City/County Manager: Understanding the various roles of elected officials and how the CAO and staff can best support them. By Julia Novak, ICMA-CM, Tanisha Briley, ICMA-CM, Dr. John Nalbandian, and Jan Perkins, ICMA-CM | Dec 01, 2024 | PM Magazine - Article

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'd on all correspondence between Councilors and staff
- 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)

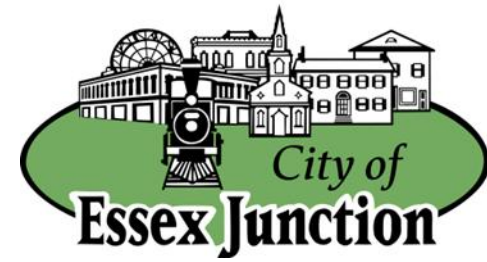
Council Rules of Procedure



- Annually Council elects a president, vice president, and clerk
- The president runs the meetings
- A quorum of the Council is 3
- All action/direction of the Council is done by affirmative vote
- Follow the 2023 Communication Policy: “Formal positions of the City Council, or calls or questions seeking the official opinion of the City Council, should be referred to the City Council President unless another Councilor has been designated by the body or to the City Manager. If a resident communicates with the entire City Council, the Council President should respond on behalf of the Council.”
- President and Manager set the agenda. Councilors can request items by the Wednesday prior. Note the Council Rules of Procedure for meetings states “a requested agenda item will be considered in relation to the Council’s priorities and work programs.” That is how we keep things tied to the Strategic Plan.
- Agenda Outline
 - Public to Be Heard
 - Business Items
 - Consent Agenda
 - Councilor Comments & Concerns/City Manager’s Report
 - Reading File
 - Executive Session (if needed)

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

Transparency, Open Meeting Law & Ethics



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.

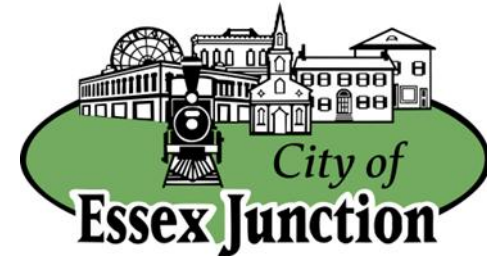
- All (but executive session) communication by a Council member discussing City business is considered public
- Use your @essexjunction.org email to conduct City business
- Meetings must be warned with minutes produced
- Avoid instances where 3 or more Council members are present **and** discussing current 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

Open Meeting Law



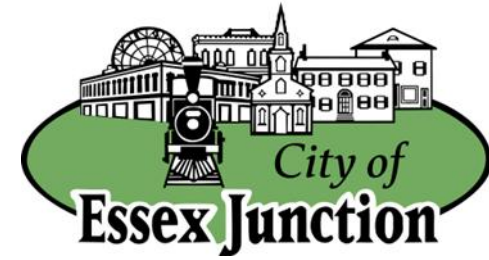
- A public body (aka “decision making bodies” = City Council, DRB, Library Trustees, BCA) must provide a dedicated, staffed, physical meeting location (unless in emergencies) and may conduct hybrid meetings. We do conduct hybrid meetings for increased involvement. The law authorizes remote-only meetings for advisory public bodies.
- Requires each municipality to post on its website the procedures for filing an Open Meeting Law complaint and the text of the relevant statute. This information is located on the City’s website here:
<https://www.essexjunction.org/boards/open-meeting-law>.
- Secretary of State Open Meeting Law Training – required annually for the Council President and City Manager, but it’s a helpful training for all of us. The training is located [here](#).

Municipal Code of Ethics



- The City Council adopted the statewide Municipal Code of Ethics and it is incorporated in the City's General Rules and Personnel Regulations.
- We've asked all staff and committee members to read and sign the new Code and take the required training.
- The code and the process for investigating potential violations is located on the City's website here: <https://www.essexjunction.org/codes/municipal-code-of-ethics>
- The State's Ethics Commission produced this helpful guide to help explain when a perceived or real conflict of interest may exist as well as the recusal process:
[https://www.essexjunction.org/fileadmin/files/Administration/Conflict of Interest Quick Chart FAQ.pdf](https://www.essexjunction.org/fileadmin/files/Administration/Conflict_of_Interest_Quick_Chart_FAQ.pdf)
- City Manager is also subject to the ICMA Code of Ethics

Declaration of Inclusion



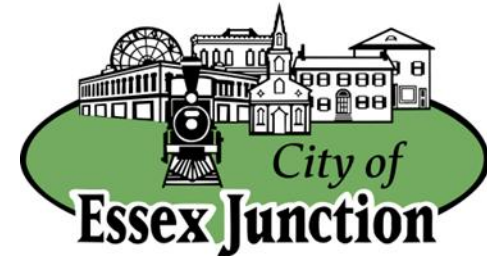
The Village of Essex Junction and/or City of Essex Junction condemns racism and welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or disability, and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community.

As a Village and/or City, we formally condemn all discrimination in all of its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all of our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment.

The Village of Essex Junction and/or City of Essex Junction has and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinions.

Adopted by the Village Trustees on May 11, 2022

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
- Tree Farm Management Group

Policy Committees of Council

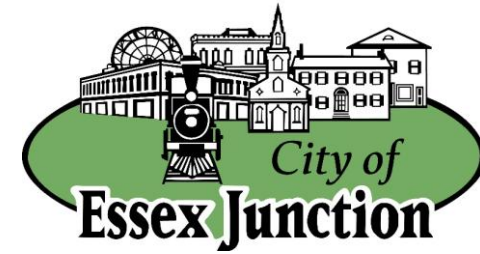
- Bike/Walk Advisory Committee
- Tree Advisory Committee
- Capital Program Review Committee
- Police Community Advisory Board
- Tri-Town Sewer Committee
- Recreation Advisory Committee

Possible Future Policy Committees of the Council – *prioritize through annual Strategic Plan process*

- Housing Commission
- Energy Committee
- Downtown Committee
- Economic Development Committee
- Project-Based Committees (similar to 1 Main St. Park Design)
- Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee
- Community Engagement Committee

City of Essex Junction

Organization chart



City Council

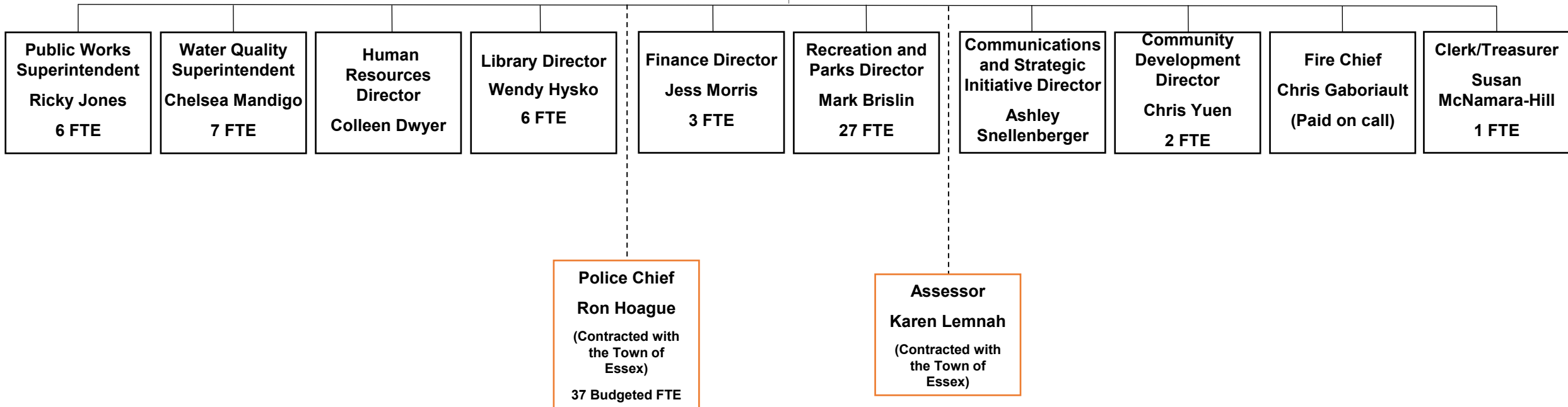
City Manager
Regina Mahony

Contracts:

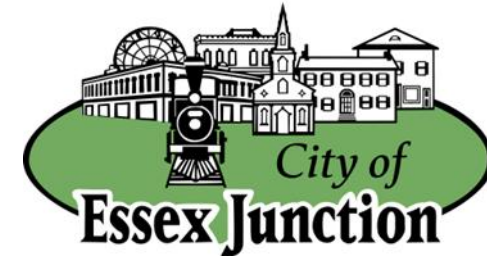
City Engineer – Hamlin Engineering

City Attorney - Monaghan Safar PLLC

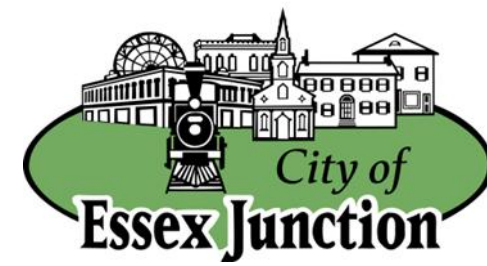
Information Technology Managed Service Provider – OpenApproach



Facilities

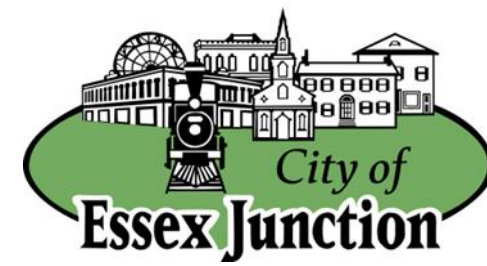


- 2 Lincoln
- Brownell Library
- Fire Department
- Maple Street Park and Facilities
- Park Street School
- Department of Public Works Garage
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Fire Station
- Parks
 - Maple Street Park
 - Maple Street Pool
 - Cascade Park
 - Stevens Park
 - Essex Dog Park & State Property*
 - 1 Main St. Park
- Tree Farm – co-owned with the Town of Essex



FY27 Budget: Summary General Fund

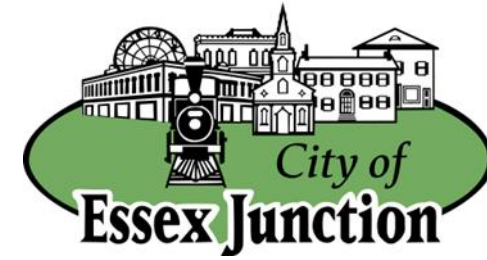
	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget	2027 Budget	\$ Change	Change
Revenues								
Property Taxes	10,420,986	10,433,476	11,110,346	11,145,692	11,405,931	11,891,682	485,751	4%
General	3,456,044	3,507,965	632,664	948,334	721,705	785,864	64,159	9%
Clerk	105,008	76,404	71,464	86,023	78,035	63,800	(14,235)	-18%
Information Technology	14,000	14,000	-	-	-	-	-	n/a
Community Development	79,158	76,720	47,000	43,330	75,000	45,000	(30,000)	-40%
Economic Development	4,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	n/a
Fire	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	n/a
Streets	153,500	168,729	132,500	134,810	127,500	127,220	(280)	0%
Brownell Library	500	21,948	650	17,526	900	900	-	0%
Recreation	12,479	9,267	11,000	7,975	10,170	7,003	(3,167)	-31%
Total Revenues	14,245,685	14,308,518	12,005,624	12,383,689	12,419,241	12,921,469	502,228	4%



FY27 Budget: Summary General Fund

	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget	2027 Budget	\$ Change	Change
Expenditures								
Administration	611,570	627,915	688,830	586,001	735,309	761,756	26,446	4%
Legislative	83,333	48,646	102,244	61,424	99,150	88,251	(10,900)	-11%
Clerk	306,750	262,588	256,470	264,184	268,921	261,444	(7,477)	-3%
Finance	504,300	482,589	589,118	526,823	621,777	677,648	55,871	9%
Information Technology	153,650	259,205	228,611	194,066	211,551	238,513	26,962	13%
Assessing	77,810	79,310	89,568	91,967	96,075	147,890	51,815	54%
Community Development	482,813	320,506	396,078	365,009	425,610	438,750	13,140	3%
Economic Development	40,000	6,005	-	28	-	30,000	30,000	n/a
Fire	545,484	537,675	530,292	513,638	543,037	553,642	10,605	2%
Public Safety and Services	2,977,293	2,973,733	3,057,361	2,897,815	3,235,493	3,516,597	281,104	9%
County/Regional Functions	346,883	316,733	354,376	360,754	445,901	442,929	(2,972)	-1%
Streets	1,566,556	1,572,099	1,552,923	1,445,544	1,583,502	1,653,741	70,239	4%
Stormwater	167,484	163,921	230,850	194,831	-	-	-	n/a
Brownell Library	964,134	915,181	1,016,569	1,003,167	1,047,704	1,082,917	35,213	3%
Recreation	1,100,479	1,065,014	1,131,553	1,167,090	1,135,776	1,095,086	(40,691)	-4%
Buildings	3,215,263	375,786	350,655	351,407	362,720	409,974	47,254	13%
Debt	402,528	394,916	392,053	367,446	375,943	361,365	(14,578)	-4%
Transfers and Misc.	699,356	3,456,126	1,036,574	3,898,816	1,230,770	1,160,967	(69,803)	-6%
Total Expenditures	14,245,685	13,857,948	12,004,124	14,290,010	12,419,241	12,921,469	502,228	4%

Purchasing

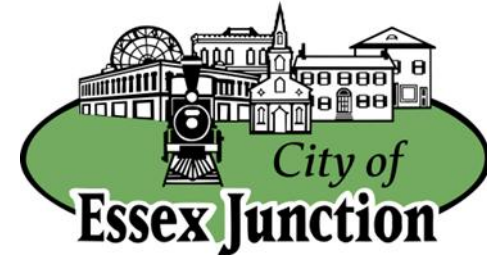


Purchases	Type	Purchasing Agent
Up to \$15,000	Incidental	Dept Head or designee
\$15,000 - \$75,000	Minor	City Manager or delegation to Dept Head
>\$75,000	Major	City Council

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

Resource: Purchasing Policy – Effective Date 4/15/2026

Priority Projects (a selection)

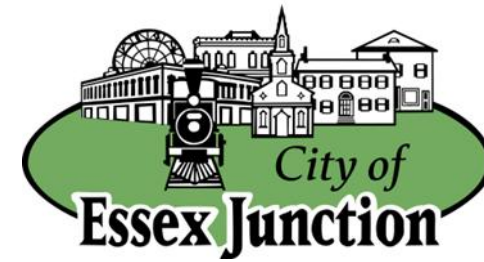


- Strategic Planning Process – next up the Council Retreat!
- Reappraisal
- Construction Projects
 - Public Works Facility
 - Library Roof Replacement
 - Railroad Ave Waterline
 - Annual Repaving
 - Pump Station Retrofits
 - Pearl Street Multi-modal
 - Main St Park
 - Cascade Park
- Amtrak Multi-modal Station
- Salary Study and negotiation of Association Contract
- Comprehensive Plan Update
- Equity Work with CCRPC and Partner Communities
- Future facility needs: Fire and Recreation

The Capital Plan also includes a list of prioritized municipal capital needs (roads, bridges, culverts, sidewalks, and waterlines). The list of projects is included in the budget, and a summary of the projects is included on the Capital Program Review Committee and can be found [HERE](#).

Also for a more thorough review of City projects view the full Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan report and the Department Work Plans [HERE](#).

Hiring:



Full Time Positions

- Licensed Childcare Director
- Licensed Childcare Site Coordinator
- Preschool Assistant Teacher
 - To apply visit: <https://cityofessexjunction.applytojob.com/apply>

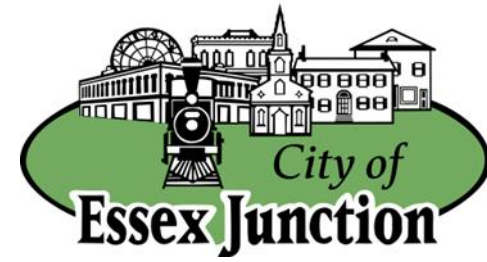
EJRP is hiring for seasonal summer staff

- Day Camp Counselors
- Day Camp Activity Coordinators
- Lifeguards
- Swim Instructors
- Park Patrol

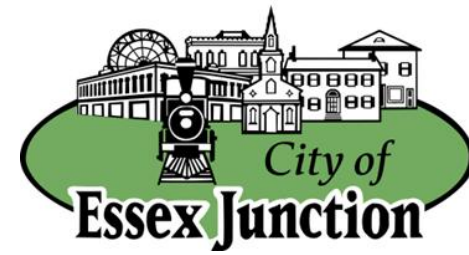
To apply for Summer positions above please visit:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScltqvYFKdWydKZusSqSTKRVfy9R46mcDqaWPnmXtMdMdVAPQ/viewform>

Upcoming Events



- Memorial Day Parade – Saturday, May 23
- Essex Pride Festival – Saturday, May 30
- Brownell 100th Events:
 - Sam Brownell's 184th Birthday Party – May 30th at noon
 - Retro Circ Desk – July 10th at 1pm
 - 100th Anniversary – July 18th at 4pm



Resources

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

New! VLCT Selectboard Handbook – online, member access only:

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