CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING
September 9, 2026

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Amber Thibeault, President; Tim Miller, Vice President; Bethany Clark, Clerk; Raj Chawla, Brian Shelden.
ADMINISTRATION: Regina Mahony, City Manager; Ashley Snellenberger, Communications & Strategic Initiatives Director; Chris Yuen, Community Development Director.

OTHERS PRESENT: Gail Boundy; Marcus Certa; Joe Cornacchia; Michael Miller; Reed Nye; Dennis Thibeault; Resa.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
City Council President Thibeault called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
None.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**
None needed.

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
a. Comments from Public
Gail Boundy asked for clarification and guidance regarding a fence that was put up on her property. She said it was installed in alignment with fencing regulations but that she received a notice that there were other regulations she did not follow when she installed it, one of which is that there are visibility concerns. She noted that the City suggested installing landscaping instead of a fence, but that she does not have financing to do that. She requested some sort of reasonable compromise. City Manager Mahony advised G. Boundy to work within the Development Review Board process and with City staff to resolve this issue.

Joe Cornacchia spoke about a neighbor around the proposed Pine Court stop sign that has an unkempt property, and asked if there is municipal code that could help remedy this. City Manager Mahony advised J. Cornacchia to connect with the Community Development Department staff on this topic.

Marcus Certa thanked staff for providing information about the Economic Development Fund and the reference to the capital improvement tax. M. Certa noted that the reasoning and justification for using that and the local option tax fund seem to have overlap, and suggested a more in-depth discussion about fund uses in the future.

5. **PUBLIC HEARING**
a. Discussion and Consideration of Proposed Amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 8: An Ordinance Relating to Motor Vehicle Regulations Enforcement for Park Street Striping and Pine Court Stop Sign
City Council President Thibeault opened the public hearing.

City Manager Mahony began by noting that this ordinance change is being done to implement the restriping of Park Street for the bicycle lanes as approved by the City Council on April 29, 2026. She noted proposed amendments in Chapter 8 of the Municipal Code that would accomplish this. She also noted the addition of a stop sign on Pine Court and West Street, which is not related to the bicycle lanes project. She said that this stop sign is similar to the approach taken to have stop signs on the rest of the entryways to West Street.

The following public comments were received:
- Joe Cornacchia noted that there are very few homes in the area of the proposed stop sign, and very few vehicles that would be crossing that intersection, given the nearby dead end. He said that having

a stop sign here might cause problems, and that the issue is that a motorist wasn't obeying the traffic laws and rights-of-way requirements that are already in place.

City Council President Thibeault closed the public hearing.

6. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. Discussion and Consideration of Proposed Amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 8: An Ordinance Relating to Motor Vehicle Regulations Enforcement for Park Street Striping and Pine Court Stop Sign

Councilor Miller said that the proposed stop sign location is in an area that doesn't seem to have limited sign distance, and noted that the sight lines on the other end of Pine Court and Clems Drive were more inhibiting than the sight lines at Pine Court and West Street. Community Development Director Yuen said he received a complaint from a neighbor that encountered someone coming from Pine Court in an unsafe way, which was captured on security footage and reviewed by the City Engineer, who determined that a stop sign was the recommendation. He noted that having a stop sign there entering West Street is a regulatory standard. Councilor Chawla said that the cost is not prohibitive and that the City Engineer is recommending it, which he could support. Councilor Miller said he could also support it, given that it came from a resident and the placement of the stop sign seems prudent. Councilor Shelden agreed, noting the City Engineer's comment that having a standardized and predictable approach for intersections leading to West Street is a regulatory best practice. City Council President Thibeault said it makes sense to follow the City Engineer's advice and place the stop sign.

Councilor Clark made a motion, seconded by Councilor Chawla, that the City Council adopt the amendments to Chapter 8 of the Municipal Code as presented. The motion passed 5-0.

b. Discussion and Consideration of Rebranding Update of New City Signs

Communications & Strategic Initiatives Director Snellenberger began by noting that the City solicited estimates for updated signs in 2022, which were around $14,375. She noted that prices have increased since then. She noted that the rebranding project still has an unspent balance of $2,350, which could be repurposed to cover these costs. She noted that they received updated quotes from two companies in Williston, for $6,805 and $7,400. She noted that based on this, staff are requesting an additional $10,000 from the Economic Development Fund, to cover costs.

Councilor Miller asked how many banners were included in the quote. He also asked if this quote includes replacement of the 5 entry signs into the City and whether it also includes replacing the sign in front of the municipal office. Director Snellenberger said the quotes include 50 banners and the 5 entry signs, not the municipality signage. Councilor Chawla asked if they could use additional funding for professional imagery, and suggested that they could find additional funds in the FY28 budget to do so. Councilor Clark asked why the original estimate was so far off, and Director Snellenberger replied that they were initial estimates in the middle of a range, and that they have been further refined and reflected in these finalized numbers.

Councilor Chawla made a motion, seconded by Councilor Clark, that the City Council authorize the use of the Economic Development Fund in an amount not to exceed $10,000 for the rebranding sign project. The motion passed 5-0.

c. *Discussion and Consideration of an Executive Session to discuss the appointment of Public Officials

See item #9a below.

d. **Discussion and Consideration of an Executive Session to Discuss Personnel

See item #9b below.

e. ***Discussion and Consideration of an Executive Session to Discuss a Possible Contract

See item #9c below.

7. **CONSENT ITEMS**
a. Approve Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2026
b. Acting as the Local Cannabis Control Commission: Approve Retail Cannabis License Renewal for Sweetspot Vermont LLC

Councilor Miller made a motion, seconded by Councilor Clark, to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed 5-0.

8. **COUNCILOR COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT:** City Manager Mahony noted that the first installment of property taxes are due on September 15, 2026. She also noted that fees are due to the City on 4:30 P.M. on the day they are due. City Council President Thibeault noted that the Council is holding a snack and school supply drive on September 15 at 2 Lincoln Street. Councilor Clark noted that the first Meet Me On Main event is on September 19, and on each subsequent Saturday. Councilor Shelden commended Public Works for their swift action with some plumbing issues he experienced. Councilor Miller noted that there was a major fire this afternoon that was swiftly dealt with by the Fire Department, and commended their efforts.

9. **READING FILE**
a. Check Warrant #27004 – August 21, 2026; #27005 – September 3, 2026
b. August Financial Reports
c. Regional Boards and Committees Memo
d. Brownell Library Trustees Minutes – August 18, 2026

10. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
a. *An Executive Session may be needed to discuss the appointment of public officials

Councilor Clark made a motion, seconded by Councilor Miller, that the City Council enter into executive session to discuss the appointment of public officials, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) to include the City Manager and Kolby LaMarche. The motion passed 5-0.

Councilor Shelden made a motion, seconded by Councilor Chawla, to exit executive session. The motion passed 5-0 at 7:56 P.M.

Councilor Clark made a motion, seconded by Councilor Shelden, to appoint Kolby LaMarche to the Police Community Advisory Board for a 3-year term ending June 30, 2029. The motion passed 4-0 (Councilor Miller absent for vote).

b. **An Executive Session may be needed to discuss personnel
Councilor Clark made a motion, seconded by Councilor Miller, that the City Council enter into executive session to discuss a personnel evaluation (check-in) pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) to include the City Council and City Manager. The motion passed 5-0.

c. ***An Executive Session may be needed to discuss a possible contract
Councilor Miller noted that he will be recusing himself from this executive session, due to a conflict of interest with the Fire Department.

Councilor Clark made a motion, seconded by Councilor Shelden, that the City Council make the specific finding that premature disclosure of the contractual matters would place the City at a substantial disadvantage, and further that the City Council enter into executive session to discuss a contract, pursuant to 1.V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A) to include the City Council (except for Tim Miller due to the conflict of interest with the Fire Department) and City Manager. The motion passed 4-0 (Councilor Miller abstaining).

11. **ADJOURN**

Councilor Shelden made a motion, seconded by Councilor Chawla, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0 at 7:56 P.M (Councilor Miller absent for vote).

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Coonradt