



**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Online & 2 Lincoln St.
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Wednesday, April 10, 2024
6:30 PM

E-mail: admin@essexjunction.org

www.essexjunction.org

Phone: (802) 878-6944

This meeting will be in-person at 2 Lincoln Street and available remotely. Options to watch or join the meeting remotely:

- **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
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. Discussion & Consideration of FY25 Chittenden Solid Waste District Budget
 - b. Discussion & Consideration of FY25 Enterprise Fund Operating and Capital Budgets for Water, Wastewater, Sanitation, and EJP Program Fund; and Warn Public Hearing for Utility Rates
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approve Meeting Minutes: March 27, 2024
 - b. Acting as Liquor Control Commission: Liquor License Approvals
 - c. Approve Letter of Intent to Participate in Grants in Aid Program
 - d. Approve Clarification of Tree Farm Management Group Board Composition
 - e. Approve Tree Farm Management Group Management Agreement Amendments
 - f. Approve July 4th Fireworks Display Permit – EJP
7. **COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT**
8. **READING FILE**
 - a. Check Warrant #24041, 04/05/24
 - b. March Financial Reports
 - c. Senior Programming Update
 - d. Five-year Stormwater Management Plan
 - e. Anaerobic Digester – WWTF Budget Supplement
 - f. Feedback for VTrans on Susie Wilson Road Scoping Study and Rt 15 Paving Request
 - g. DRB Meeting Minutes 3/21/24
 - h. PCAB Meeting Minutes 3/19/24
 - i. TAC Meeting Minutes 3/19/24
9. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
10. **ADJOURN**

Members of the public are encouraged to speak during the Public to Be Heard agenda item, during a Public Hearing, or, when recognized by the President, during consideration of a specific agenda item. The public will not be permitted to participate when a motion is being discussed except when specifically requested by the President. Regarding zoom participants, if individuals interrupt, they will be muted; and if they interrupt a second time they will be removed. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings of the City Council, like all programs and activities of the City of Essex Junction, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the City Manager's office at 802-878-6944 TTY: 7-1-1 or (800) 253-0191.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING
April 10, 2024**

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Amber Thibeault; Vice President; Marcus Certa, Clerk; Andrew Brown, Elaine Haney.

ADMINISTRATION: Regina Mahony, City Manager; Ricky Jones, Public Works Director; Brad Luck, EJRP Director; Chelsea Mandigo, Water Quality Superintendent; Jess Morris, Finance Director.

OTHERS PRESENT: Alise Certa, Resa, Sarah Reeves, Dennis Thibeault

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Councilor Thibeault called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. She began by noting that the City Council has had several meetings that were disrupted by anti-Semitic and racist hate speech, and that this type of speech is not tolerated and is condemned by the Council. She said that while it may not always be possible to prevent hate speech from occurring during public comments, the City Council will take measures to make it more difficult to express such views.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

None.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

None needed.

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

a. Comments from public on items not on the agenda

None.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. Discussion & Consideration of FY25 Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) Budget

Councilor Certa noted that his wife is an employee of CSWD and as such, feels that it presents a conflict of interest for him, and he said that he will recuse himself from tonight's discussion.

CSWD Executive Director Reeves provided an overview of the FY25 budget for the Council's review and consideration. She began by noting the three main sources of CSWD's revenue, which are user fees, material and product sales, and solid waste management fees, adding that they do not receive revenue from local sales or property taxes. She spoke about CSWD's projected FY25 income of \$15.9 million, anticipated to come from solid waste management fees, tipping fees, the sale of materials, and, to a lesser degree, from product stewardship and reimburseables, grant revenue, and interest and dividends. She spoke about CSWD's projected FY25 expenses of \$16.08 million, the bulk of which are related to payroll expenses (38%) and materials management (43%), with other contributing costs associated with property management, promotion and education, community support, travel and training, administrative costs, and professional fees. She said that based on this, they are projecting a budget shortfall of approximately \$287,000. She spoke about FY25 compared to FY24's budget, noting that while revenue is projected to increase by 3.6%, expenses are anticipated to increase by 11.7%. She said that much of the expense increase is related to equipment and fleet increased costs, related to CSWD's aging infrastructure. She said that this shortfall would be covered by drawing approximately \$287,000 from CSWD's reserve fund. She noted that CSWD's board approved a solid waste management fee increase (the first in 12 years) from \$27 per ton to \$30 per ton, which will impact

54 households by an approximately \$0.28 per month increase. She noted that this charge is only on waste,
55 not compost, recycling, or scrap. She said that they also approved an increase in the tip fee in the
56 recycling facility to \$90 per ton, which helps cover equipment expenses for the aging facility, and also
57 budgeted \$250,000 in operating expenses to cover equipment repair and replacement. She noted that
58 there was no increase in tip fees for the organics recycling facility, nor increases in fees at drop off
59 centers. She spoke briefly about upcoming capital projects and fund equity.

60
61 Councilor Brown asked about the contamination policy for compost and organics, and Executive Director
62 Reeves said that the goal of this policy is to be able to work with haulers and identify areas where
63 contamination is a problem and conduct education with clients so that contamination is mitigated. She
64 said that the fine associated with contamination is designed to incentivize them to work with clients to
65 decrease contamination.

66
67 Executive Director Reeves noted revenue around the community cleanup fund and that each community
68 has access to this funding to conduct cleanup activities in their communities.

69
70 **Councilor Brown made a motion, seconded by Councilor Haney, to approve the Chittenden Solid**
71 **Waste District FY25 budget as presented. The motion passed 3-0.**

72
73 b. Discussion & Consideration of FY25 Enterprise Fund Operating and Capital Budgets for Water,
74 Wastewater, Sanitation, and EJRP Program Fund; and Warn Public Hearing for Utility Rates
75 Finance Director Morris noted that this is the second presentation of enterprise budgets for FY25 for the
76 City. She noted that the original estimated combined utility rate increase was approximately 6.5% and
77 that this estimate has been revised to a 2.67% increase (or \$17.52 per year on an average bill). She
78 noted that this change was driven by smaller increases in the water and wastewater budgets than
79 originally projected. She noted that the sanitation fund's capital transfer increased by \$55,000 from the
80 original budget presentation, resulting in an increase of 3.89% (rather than the original 1.94% increase).
81 She noted that this transfer was the result of an underfunded reserve and some upcoming work needed
82 on capital projects that would put the capital reserve fund into negative territory.

83
84 Councilor Thibeault asked whether there is any way of transferring funding to the sanitation fund's capital
85 reserves to ensure a positive balance. Finance Director Morris replied that if the City were to increase
86 the capital funds transfer in FY25 by another \$22,000 (for a total transfer of \$172,000) and increase by
87 \$50,000 more in transfers over the next five years, it would then put the fund into the positive. She said
88 that this would in turn increase rates by 6.53% or \$10.36 per year.

89
90 Councilor Certa asked about estimated revenues in wastewater, noting that they were developed with
91 FY23 data and asked if there is more recent data. Finance Director Morris noted that the preliminary
92 budgets were developed using the most recent FY24 data to date, which was through January at the
93 time. She noted that there have been issues with flow meters for Williston and the Town of Essex,
94 resulting in inaccurate flow data for the last three months of FY24, as well as several significant storm
95 events that have also impacted recent flow data. She said that due to this, they decided to produce an
96 estimate for FY25 based on past average utilization. Councilor Certa expressed concerns that other
97 municipalities are not metering everything that should be metered, and that the City should work to more
98 accurately meter its own flows to ensure it has the most accurate data. Councilor Brown asked who is
99 responsible for the cost of metering other towns' pump stations, and Water Quality Superintendent
100 Mandigo replied that other municipalities would bear the costs for installing flow meters. She noted that
101 once the Town installs a flow meter at the Susie Wilson jug-handle in the next year, it will allow the City
102 to know how much is the Town's flow and how much is the City's flow.

103
104 Councilor Thibeault expressed support for increasing the capital transfer to the sanitation budget. Other
105 Councilors concurred.

106
107 **Councilor Certa made a motion, seconded by Councilor Brown, to approve the FY25 Enterprise**
108 **Fund operating and capital budgets for Water, Wastewater, Sanitation, and EJRP Program Fund**
109 **as presented, including the modification to the sanitation fund presented by Finance Director**
110 **Morris. The motion passed 4-0.**

111
112 **Councilor Certa made a motion, seconded by Councilor Brown, to warn a public hearing on May**
113 **22, 2024 for FY25 rate setting for the Water, Wastewater and Sanitation funds. The motion passed**
114 **4-0.**

115
116 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

- 117 a. Approve Meeting Minutes: March 27, 2024
118 b. Acting as Liquor Control Commission: Liquor License Approvals
119 c. Approve Letter of Intent to Participate in Grants in Aid Program
120 d. Approve Clarification of Tree Farm Management Group Board Composition
121 e. Approve Tree Farm Management Group Management Agreement Amendments
122 f. Approve July 4th Fireworks Display Permit – EJRP
123

124 **Councilor Brown made a motion, seconded by Councilor Certa, to approve the consent agenda**
125 **as presented. The motion passed 4-0.**

126
127 **7. COUNCILOR COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT**

128 City Manager Mahony noted that there is an Amtrak platform project occurring currently, which would
129 create a raised platform 8 inches above the track level. She noted that it started on April 3 and is
130 anticipated to take approximately one year. She noted that there may be changes to the passenger
131 waiting area and parking occasionally throughout the life of the construction project. She also noted that
132 contractors have resumed work on the Crescent Connector project. She said that there will be signage
133 indicating road/parking access and closures. She further noted that the City's Tree City USA application
134 was approved for this year. She noted that Public Works has begun work to fix lawns damaged as a
135 result of snow removal.
136

137 Councilor Haney asked whether the report on the Senior Center has been shared with the seniors, and
138 City Manager Mahony replied that it has. Councilor Haney asked for an update on the Community
139 Advisory Board position activities with the Police Department. City Manager Mahony replied that there
140 is still a vacant position on that board, and that they are conducting broad recruitment activities for
141 vacancies on volunteer boards later this spring. Councilor Haney congratulated Councilor Thibeault on
142 her re-election, Councilor-elect Miller on his election, and thanked Councilor Brown for his years of
143 service on the City Council and Village Trustees.
144

145 **8. READING FILE**

- 146 a. Check Warrant #24041, 04/05/2024
147 b. March Financial Reports
148 c. Senior Programming Update
149 d. Five-year Stormwater Management Plan
150 e. Anaerobic Digester – WWTF Budget Supplement
151 f. Feedback for VTrans on Susie Wilson Road Scoping Study and Rt 15 Paving Request
152 g. DRB Meeting Minutes – 3/21/2024
153 h. PCAB Meeting Minutes - 3/19/2024
154 i. TAC Meeting Minutes – 9/19/2024
155

156 **9. ADJOURN**
157

158 **Councilor Brown made a motion, seconded by Councilor Certa, to adjourn the meeting. The**
159 **motion passed 4-0 at 7:23 P.M.**

160
161 Respectfully Submitted,
162 Amy Coonradt