



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

Online & 145 Maple St.
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Wednesday, February 26, 2025
6:30 PM

E-mail: admin@essexjunction.org

www.essexjunction.org

Phone: (802) 878-6944

This meeting will be in-person in the Community Room at the Essex Police Department located at 145 Maple 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. **PUBLIC HEARING**
 - a. Public Hearing on the Proposed Land Development Code Amendments [20 Minutes]
6. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. *Interview and Consideration of Green Mountain Transit Alternate Member [5 Minutes]
 - b. Finance Department and Capital Review Committee Brief to Council [15 Minutes]
 - c. Discussion and Consideration of Stormwater Related Ordinances – Amendments to Ordinance 19 (Stormwater Permit Transfer) and New Ordinance 20 (Stormwater Management) [20 Minutes]
 - d. Discussion and Consideration of Land Development Code Amendments [20 Minutes]
 - e. Discussion and Consideration of the FY26 General Fund Operating and Capital Budgets [20 Minutes]
 - f. Discussion and Consideration of the Informational Hearing and Annual Meeting Warning [5 Minutes]
 - g. **Discussion and Consideration of an Executive Session to discuss Personnel
7. **CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approve Meeting Minutes: 2/3/2025 and 2/12/2025
 - b. Acting as the Liquor Control Commission: Approve Liquor Licenses
 - c. Approve Memorial Park Policy Amendment
 - d. Approve Essex Junction Little League Street Closure Application
8. **COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT**
9. **READING FILE**
 - a. Check Warrant # 24069 2/21/25
 - b. Police Community Advisory Board Minutes 1/21/25
 - c. Joint Planning Commission/City Council Minutes 2/6/25
 - d. Board of Civil Authority Minutes 2/11/25
 - e. Bike Walk Advisory Committee Minutes 2/13/25
10. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - a. *An Executive Session may be needed for the Appointment of a Public Official
 - b. **An Executive Session may be needed to discuss the City Manager Evaluation and Contract
11. **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.

**City Council Rules for Public Participation
City of Essex Junction**

Vermont's Open Meeting Law protects the public's right to attend and participate in meetings of local public bodies, but the purpose and function of these meetings is for the public body to do the work of the public; they are not meetings of the public (i.e., public forums). Consequently, these rules are necessary to manage the public's participation to ensure an environment in which the public feels safe to express their views on matters considered by the public body while minimizing disruptions so that the public body can get its work done. The full City Council Rules of Procedures for Meetings can be found here: www.essexjunction.org/codes/policies.

1. Please raise your hand to speak, whether in person or attending virtually.
2. You may only speak after you have been recognized by the president.
3. Before speaking, please state your name and address for the record.
4. All remarks must be addressed to the president.
5. Comments must be germane to the agenda item being addressed.
6. Comments under "Public to be Heard" must pertain to the business of the public body.
7. Repetitive and irrelevant comments are not allowed.
8. Please wait your turn; do not interrupt others.
9. Each person will be limited to two minutes of comment. This time may be extended only by permission of the president. The balance of time not used by each person will expire and cannot be reserved or yielded to another.
10. Each person may only speak once on the same agenda item, time permitting, with the consent of the president.
11. Those yet to be heard will be given priority over those who have already spoken.
12. You do not have the right to vote on agenda items.
13. Please obey orders and rulings of the president.
14. Keep your cool. Disruptive people will be asked to leave and removed if necessary.
15. Listen well, pay attention, and participate.

CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 26, 2025

COUNCILORS: Raj Chawla, President; Amber Thibeault, Vice-President; Marcus Certa; Elaine Haney; Tim Miller

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Regina Mahony, City Manager; Chelsea Mandigo, Water Quality Superintendent; Jess Morris, Finance Director; Chris Yuen, Community Development Director

OTHERS: Bethany Clark, Heidi Clark, George Dunbar, Stephen Wille Padnos, Grant Patterson, Andy Rowe, Resa

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Chawla called the meeting of the City Council to order at 6:30 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/ CHANGES

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

No changes, thus no approval required.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments for Public on Items not on Agenda

Mr. Dunbar asked when the audit report will be presented, Ms. Morris said that this should be posted to the website later this week and be presented to the Council on March 12. He said that Essex Junction has a significantly higher tax rate than other surrounding communities. He said that separation was expected to reduce taxes, and not doing so will erode the public’s trust in the City government. He questioned what happened to these promised savings and said that it appears that the tax rate is continuing to climb. Mr. Certa asked Mr. Dunbar to e-mail the Council his data points.

Mr. Patterson said that he is the owner of the WNFC Esports Dojo. He said that his four-car parking lot has been totally blocked off due to the City plows pushing snow onto it. During the last storm, it made his business completely inaccessible due to a 3.5-foot wall of ice. Answering a question from Mr. Chawla, Mr. Patterson said that he does not believe that this is happening to other businesses. Mr. Chawla said that this will be investigated and that someone will respond to Mr. Patterson.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Public Hearing on the Proposed Land Development Code Amendments

Mr. Chawla opened the public hearing.

Mr. Yuen said that the Land Development Code (LDC) is separate from the Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan. The LDC update is primarily technical adjustments and fixes. These include: a re-write of sign regulations, adjustment of residential density limits to meet statutory requirements and reduce barriers to small-scale housing construction, adjustment of site, dimensional and design standards for small-scale development, changes to stormwater regulations, regulation of food trucks, and the correction of technical inconsistencies. Sign regulations will be required to be content-neutral, and can only be regulated based on time, place, and manner. No changes are proposed to sandwich board signs. The 2023 Vermont HOME Act has required that areas served by municipal water and sewer allow up to fourplexes in the areas in which

50 single-family homes are allowable. The number of units per lot has been increased from four to six units in
51 the R-O and MF3 districts. The minimum front yard setback has been reduced in several districts, and up to
52 two principal structures are allowable per lot. Mr. Yuen discussed special design standards in the R1/R2 to
53 accommodate parking for triplexes and fourplexes. Triplexes and fourplexes will not be considered to be
54 “multi-family” and thus will not require the additional buffering standards. Food trucks will have generator
55 use very limited under the new regulations and generators cannot be run outside of daylight hours. Triplexes
56 and fourplexes will be able to be administratively approved.

57
58 Mr. Chawla requested public comment. Mr. Dunbar asked how the new state statutes affect neighborhood
59 covenants. Mr. Yuen said that they do not affect existing covenants. Mr. Dunbar said that additional units
60 also create a sound impact.

61
62 Mr. Chawla closed the public hearing.

63

64 **6. BUSINESS ITEMS**

65 **a. Interview and Consideration of Green Mountain Transit Alternate Member**

66 Ms. Clark said that she grew up in Essex Junction, is a non-driver, and the transit system is very important
67 to her. Mr. Chawla said that the Green Mountain Transit board typically meets during the weekday and
68 asked if Mr. Clark would be able to attend these meetings. Ms. Clark said that she could make morning
69 meetings as well as most mid-day meetings due to her flexible work schedule. Answering a question from
70 Mr. Certa, Ms. Clark said, if nominated to the board, she would look towards partnerships or raising fares to
71 avoid cutting access. Mr. Chawla said that the Council will decide and communicate it to Ms. Clark.

72

73 **b. Finance Department and Capital Review Committee Brief to Council**

74 Ms. Morris said that all separation details have been worked out, and that both municipalities have gone
75 through their first tax billing process. The finance department is fully staffed and is in the process of finding
76 efficiencies. Essex Junction had a successful audit for 2024. The Capital Committee has been working to
77 update the multi-year Capital Plan. Ms. Morris said that she is on the Board of the Vermont Government
78 Finance Officers Association (GOFA) and that the New England chapter will be holding their annual meeting
79 in Vermont this year. Mr. Certa asked about training opportunities for other finance staff, and Ms. Morris
80 explained the state-sponsored and NEMRC trainings available. She said that she is encouraging all finance
81 staff to take advantage of GOFA training opportunities as well as network with counterparts in other
82 communities.

83

84 **c. Discussion and Consideration of Stormwater Related Ordinances – Amendments to Ordinance 19**
85 **(Stormwater Permit Transfer) and New Ordinance 20 (Stormwater Management)**

86 Ms. Mandigo said that two public hearings were held in the fall regarding stormwater ordinance updates.
87 Comments from the public are summarized and available for review. Mr. Haney asked when it would be
88 determined if Global Foundries is exempt from the utility. Ms. Mahony said that she is hopeful that this can
89 be presented on March 12. Answering a question from Mr. Certa, Ms. Mahony said that the purpose of
90 establishing the stormwater utility is to make billing more equitable based on impervious surfaces amounts.

91

92 **TIM MILLER made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, that the City Council approve the**
93 **amendments to Essex Junction Municipal Ordinance Chapter 19: An Ordinance Establishing Permit**
94 **Transfer Authority for Expired and Unpermitted Discharges to Impaired Waterways; and Adopt**
95 **Essex Junction Municipal Ordinance Chapter 20: An Ordinance Relating to Stormwater Management**
96 **Regulations. Motion passed 5-0.**

97

98 **d. Discussion and Consideration of Land Development Code Amendments**

99 **TIM MILLER made a motion, seconded by MARCUS CERTA, that the City Council approve the**
100 **Land Development Code Amendments as presented. Motion passed 5-0.**

101
102 **e. Discussion and Consideration of the FY26 General Fund Operating and Capital Budgets**

103 Ms. Mahony said that there are very minimal changes in the budget due to county tax and a correction to the
104 Local Option Tax fund. The proposed General Fund Budget is \$12,419,241; \$11,405,931 of which is to be
105 levied in taxes against the City Grand List, which will need to be approved by voters. This represents a 2.6%
106 increase. Ms. Mahony said that stormwater funding has been moved into the stormwater utility. The
107 enterprise budget will not be approved this evening.

108
109 **TIM MILLER made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, that the City Council approve the FY26**
110 **General Fund Operating and Capital Program Budgets as presented. Motion passed 5-0.**

111
112 **f. Discussion and Consideration of the Informational Hearing and Annual Meeting Warning**

113 This includes the general fund budget, bond vote for the pump station, and three separate elections.

114
115 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by TIM MILLER, that the City Council approve the**
116 **warning as drafted. Motion passed 5-0.**

117
118 **g. Discussion and Consideration of an Executive Session to discuss Personnel**

119 This was discussed during Executive Session.

120
121 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

122 **ELAINE HANEY made a motion, seconded by TIM MILLER, to approve the consent agenda. Motion**
123 **passed 5-0.**

- 124
125 **a. Approve Meeting Minutes: 2/3/2025 and 2/12/2025**
126 **b. Acting as the Liquor Control Commission: Approve Liquor Licenses**
127 **c. Approve Memorial Park Policy Amendment**
128 **d. Approve Essex Junction Little League Street Closure Application**

129
130 **7. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT**

131 None.

132
133 **8. READING FILE**

- 134 **a. Check Warrant # 24069 2/21/25**
135 **b. Police Community Advisory Board Minutes 1/21/25**
136 **c. Joint Planning Commission/City Council Minutes 2/6/25**
137 **d. Board of Civil Authority Minutes 2/11/25**
138 **e. Bike Walk Advisory Committee Minutes 2/13/25**

139
140 **9. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

141 **b. An Executive Session may be needed to discuss the City Manager Evaluation and Contract**
142 **MARCUS CERTA made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, that the City Council enter into**
143 **executive session to discuss a personnel evaluation, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) to include the City**
144 **Council and the City Manager. Motion passed 5-0.**

145
146 **a. An Executive Session may be needed for the Appointment of a Public Official**

147 **RAJ CHAWLA** made a motion, seconded by **ELAINE HANEY**, that the City Council enter into
148 Executive Session to discuss the appointment of public officials, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) to
149 include the City Manager. Motion passed 5-0.

150

151 **AMBER THIBEAULT** made a motion, seconded by **TIM MILLER**, to exit Executive Session. Motion
152 passed 5-0 at 8:25 PM.

153

154 **RAJ CHAWLA** made a motion, seconded by **MARCUS CERTA**, to appoint Bethany Clark as an
155 Alternate to the Green Mountain Transit Board of Commissioners with a term expiring on June 30,
156 2027. Motion passed 5-0.

157

158 **10. ADJOURN**

159 Motion by **RAJ CHAWLA**, seconded by **ELAINE HANEY**, to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0 at 8:27
160 PM.

161

162 Respectfully Submitted,

163 Darby Mayville

164 Recording secretary

165