



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

Online & 145 Maple St.
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Wednesday, June 11, 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. Large Water User Rate Public Hearing
6. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. Discussion and Consideration of Setting All Utility Rates [10 Minutes]
 - b. Interviews and Consider Appointments to Bike Walk Advisory Committee, Capital Program Review Committee, Development Review Board, Moderator, Planning Commission and Tree Advisory Committee [40 Minutes]
 - c. Update from Tree Advisory Committee [10 Minutes]
 - d. Discussion and Consideration of Regional Future Land Use Map and Tier 1B (Act 250 Exemption) Status [15 Minutes]
 - e. Department Head Brief to Council – Communications and Strategic Initiatives Director
7. **CONSENT ITEMS**
 - a. Approve Meeting Minutes: 5/28/25
 - b. Approve Iroquois Ave Waterline and Roadway Replacement Project Bid Award
 - c. Approve 2025 Resurfacing Project Bid Award
8. **COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT**
9. **READING FILE**
 - a. Check Warrant # 24073 04/18/25
 - b. Regional Boards and Committees Memo
 - c. May Financial Reports
 - d. Police Community Advisory Board Minutes 5/20/25
 - e. Governance Committee Minutes 05/22/25
10. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
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.

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**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING
June 11, 2025**

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Amber Thibeault, President; Marcus Certa, Vice President; Tim Miller, Clerk; Brian Shelden.

ADMINISTRATION: Regina Mahony, City Manager; Jess Morris, Finance Director; Ashley Snellenberger, Communications & Strategic Initiatives Director; Chris Yuen, Community Development Director.

OTHERS PRESENT: Diane Clemens, Nathan Doudera, Steve Eustis, Leslie Goldring, Finn Hamilton, Kevin Hamilton, Kim Hamilton, Jeffrey Kershner, Daniel Ligouri, Nick Meyer, Taylor Newton, Warren Spinner, 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

None.

5. **PUBLIC HEARING**

a. Large Water User Rate Public Hearing

Finance Director Morris presented on this item, which relates to setting the Large Water User Rate for Fiscal Year 2026. She reviewed the Large Volume Water User Rate Setting Policy, noting that it currently only applies to Global Foundries. She provided an overview of the City's Water Fund Budget for FY26, noting an 8.5% increase from FY25 that is largely driven by an increase in the Chittenden Water District's wholesale rate, an increase in state fees, an increase in salaries/benefits for positions, and an increase in planned transfers to the water capital reserve fund. She outlined the Large Volume Water User Rate for FY26 of \$0.671 per 1,000 gallons, noting that it represents an 8.74% increase over the rate for FY25. Steve Eustis, a member of the public, asked several clarifying questions, which were answered by Finance Director Morris.

Councilor Certa made a motion, seconded by Councilor Shelden, to close the public hearing. The motion passed 4-0.

6. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. Discussion and Consideration of Setting All Utility Rates

Councilor Shelden asked for more information on the staffing cost increases noted as a driver in the budget increase. Finance Director Morris said that staff worked this year to allocate public works staff more precisely, and that the increased cost was due to a more accurate reallocation of the cost center for public works employees. Councilor Certa asked how accurate the estimated state fee increase is, and Director Morris replied that the estimate could be slightly high but should be fairly accurate.

Councilor Miller made a motion, seconded by Councilor Certa, to approve the FY26 utility raters as presented. The motion passed 4-0.

b. Interviews and Consider Appointments to Bike Walk Advisory Committee, Capital Program Review Committee, Development Review Board, Moderator, Planning Commission, and Tree Advisory Committee

The City Council interviewed Daniel Ligouri for a seat on the Bike Walk Advisory Committee. He spoke briefly about his background and interest in serving on the Committee. Councilors asked questions of the candidate, and he was given the opportunity to ask questions of the Council.

The City Council interviewed Nathan Doudera for a seat on the Capital Program Review Committee. He spoke briefly about his background and interest in serving on the Committee. Councilors asked questions of the candidate, and he was given the opportunity to ask questions of the Council.

The City Council interviewed Steve Eustis for the position of Moderator. He spoke briefly about his background and interest in continuing to serve as the Moderator. Councilors asked questions of the candidate, and he was given the opportunity to ask questions of the Council.

The City Council interviewed Diane Clemens for a seat on the Planning Commission. She spoke briefly about her background and interest in continuing to serve on the Commission. Councilors asked questions of the candidate, and she was given the opportunity to ask questions of the Council.

The City Council interviewed Finn Hamilton for a seat on the Planning Commission. Councilors and City Manager Mahony outlined the role of the Planning Commission in the City. He spoke briefly about his background and interest in serving on the Commission. Councilors asked questions of the candidate, and he was given the opportunity to ask questions of the Council.

The City Council interviewed Leslie Goldring for a seat on the Tree Advisory Committee. She spoke briefly about her background and interest in continuing to serve on the Committee. Councilors asked questions of the candidate, and she was given the opportunity to ask questions of the Council.

c. Update from Tree Advisory Committee

Nick Meyer and Warren Spinner of the Tree Advisory Committee (TAC) provided an update from the Committee. Mr. Meyer spoke about the Committee’s work with Branch Out Burlington to grow its own trees for the Junction (rather than sourcing them from elsewhere), resulting in savings. He spoke about TAC’s involvement in Arbor Day events, as well as the City’s continued Tree City USA designation. He spoke about plantings in Maple Street and Calahan Parks. He expressed concern that the increased development in the City has not focused enough on green spaces, and asked that the Development Review Board place more of an emphasis on landscape planning and caring for green spaces. Mr. Spinner emphasized the importance of ensuring that developers’ landscape plans are robust and that green spaces are cared for after development projects are completed. He suggested modifying the Land Development Code to focus more on sustaining green spaces, and Mr. Meyer noted that developers could allocate more of their landscaping resources to improving the soil volume underneath the sidewalks beneath the trees to help ensure their continued health and survival. Mr. Spinner spoke about emerald ash borer beetle (EAB) infected trees on the West Street extension and asked how the City is handling the removal of those trees, and City Manager Mahony noted that this is included in one of the projects in the FY26 Capital Plan and they are currently scoping what is feasible within the City’s budget. Councilor Miller thanked the TAC for its work over the years in planting over 325 trees in Essex Junction, and acknowledged the vast breadth of knowledge that the TAC has.

The following public comments were received:

- Kim Hamilton commended the TAC’s close work with the Junction’s schools and getting children interested in trees and involved in the community.
- Steve Eustis suggested using the TAC to guide the Planning Commission and LDC more on what species make sense for landscaping and for the community’s wants and needs, as well as holding developers accountable for replanting if their plantings fail.

d. Discussion and Consideration of Regional Future Land Use Map and Tier 1B (Act 250 Exemption) Status

Community Development Director Yuen and Taylor Newton of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) spoke on this topic. Mr. Newton noted that items for discussion tonight include the CCRPC’s new Regional Future Land Use Map, Tier 1B status, and regional and municipal housing targets. He noted that Essex Junction expressed support for the housing targets in May. He then spoke about the Future Land Use Maps, noting that Essex Junction contains two land use categories from this map (Downtown Center and Planned Growth Area). He noted that both of these categories are eligible for Tier 1B exemption status, which allows for development of projects of 50 units or less to be exempt from Act 250 permitting. Councilor Certa spoke about the Pearl Street corridor and asked why it wasn’t categorized as part of the downtown area, given the City’s focus on developing the corridor. Mr. Newton replied that while the City is planning to include high density mixed uses in that corridor in the future, its City Plan hasn’t quite caught up and CCRPC is taking a conservative approach to these designations. He also noted that there is currently very little distinction between these two designations in terms of benefits at this juncture. Director Yuen agreed, noting that there is enough flexibility between the Planned Growth Area and the Downtown Center to eventually extend the Downtown designation in the future.

The following public comments were received:

- Diane Clemens noted that the City’s Comprehensive Plan is being updated for 2027, and that they plan to dovetail its updates with the Regional Plan in 2028.

Councilor Certa made a motion, seconded by Councilor Miller, that the City Council adopt the municipal resolution as presented and request that the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission seek the Land Use Review Board’s approval to have the Downtown Center and Planned Growth Area qualify and be mapped for Act 250 Tier 1B area status. The motion passed 4-0.

e. Department Heads Brief to Council – Communications & Strategic Initiatives Director
 Communications & Strategic Initiatives Director Snellenberger spoke about activities and accomplishments over the last year. She noted the commencement of the community newsletter last September, which is published in the Essex Reporter monthly. She spoke about the City’s strategic planning activities, which were also started last year. She spoke about new budget engagement activities and the second year of the Community Dinner event. She said that the City has started the City’s rebranding process, noting that they have received 31 bids in response to the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the rebranding scope of work and that they have narrowed the number of candidates for the work down to 4 of the bids. She said that staff are working on developing a Council Engagement Plan, which was one of the items that came out of the Council Retreat held last week. She said that staff are also working on development of new committees and engaging youth to participate on committees. Councilor Certa asked for more detail on the rebranding timeline, and Director Snellenberger replied that they hope to have a successful bidder chosen by the end of the month, and that the rebranding work is anticipated to last for between 4 and 8 months. Councilor Certa asked if there are other communication strategies that the City could be using to improve outreach and engagement, and Director Snellenberger outlined a number of potential strategies. She also spoke about ways to improve accessibility on the City’s website. Councilor Miller asked for more information on accessing the Community Newsletter, and Director Snellenberger replied that individuals can subscribe through the website. She spoke about some of the most recent topics featured in the newsletter, noting it as one of the strategies to solicit and obtain feedback from the community.

8. **CONSENT ITEMS**

- a. Approve Meeting Minutes: May 28, 2025
- b. Approve Iroquois Ave Waterline and Roadway Replacement Project Bid Award
- c. Approve 2025 Resurfacing Project Bid Award

Councilor Certa made a motion, seconded by City Council President Thibeault, to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed 4-0.

9. **COUNCILOR COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT**: City Manager Mahony noted that the City is continuing to adjust the timing of the traffic lights at Five Corners. She provided an update on the 2 Lincoln

Street renovation project. Councilor Certa asked that residents be more mindful on the roads, given the increased bicycle traffic in the summer.

10. **READING FILE**

- a. Check Warrant #24073 – April 18, 2025
- b. Regional Boards and Committees Memo
- c. May Financial Reports
- d. Police Community Advisory Board Minutes – May 20, 2025
- e. Governance Committee Minutes – May 22, 2025

11. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a. *An Executive Session May be Needed to Discuss the Appointment of a Public Official

Councilor Certa made a motion, seconded by City Council President Thibeault, that the City Council enter into executive session to discuss appointment of public officials, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) to include the City Manager. The motion passed 4-0.

Councilor Certa made a motion, seconded by Councilor Miller, to exit executive session. The motion passed 4-0 at 8:57 P.M.

12. **ADJOURN**

Councilor Certa made a motion, seconded by Councilor Miller, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0 at 8:57 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Coonradt