



**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Online & 75 Maple St.
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Thursday, June 12, 2025
6:30 PM

This meeting will be in-person at Essex Junction Recreation and Parks located at 75 Maple Street and available remotely. Options to join the meeting remotely:

JOIN ONLINE: [Join the meeting now](#)

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** [6:30 PM]

2. **ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA**

3. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

4. **REVIEW & APPROVE MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING**

5. **DISCUSS PLAN AND NEXT STEPS**

Consideration and discussion of process for examining other communities

6. **ADJOURN**

Attachments:

- Draft Meeting Minutes May 22, 2025
- Community Comparisons Chart
- Draft Interview Questions
- Draft Community Groupings

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 Chairperson, 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 Chairperson. Regarding remote 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 Governance Committee, 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 Essex Junction Recreation and Parks office at 802-878-1375 TTY: 7-1-1 or (800) 253-0191.

Governance Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 22, 2025

Members Present: Steve Eustis, Gabrielle Smith, Brian Sheldon, Elaine Haney, Deb McAdoo; Thomas Coen

Absent: Marlon Verasamy, Candace Morgan

Staff: Brad Luck

Members of the public: Bethany Clark

Steve Eustis called meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

There were no agenda additions or amendments.

Public to be heard: NA

Gabrielle Smith moved to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2025 meeting; Deb McAdoo seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Brad reviewed potential process for examining other communities. Three groups will each review three communities for a total of nine communities,

The committee will finalize questions to ask the communities and project details at the June 12th meeting. Groups will have between 6/12-7/10 to gather information.

Brad reviewed the list of nine communities. Inclusion on the list is based on those communities that are closest to Essex Junction in either population or square miles.

Observations and considerations that were discussed:

- How many members of each governing body should the group interview?
- Questions for board members could be similar to those in the survey sent to former Essex Junction officials.
- Probably should interview a mix of board members and municipal manager.
- Are the meetings on the phone, in person, or on Zoom?
- It would be helpful to have some kind of connection to the people to be interviewed to ensure the interviews are a priority for the interviewees.
- Some interviewees may not have the time and might prefer a survey to fill out.

- Consider interviewing multiple board members together and interviewing municipal manager separately.
- What would the value be of collecting general public feedback? With the wide variety of types of municipalities (rural and urban), would this bring in too much unrelated data? Perhaps a literature search in local papers or a discussion with the local editor. Including this information may expand the scope of the project unnecessarily.
- Interview questions for the board members and municipal managers can be the same.
- Definitely want to interview the board leader; can include an additional board member (to avoid quorum issues).
- Each committee member should come up with a few questions that the committee can choose from.
- We will want to fill out the table with the basic data about each community; these are not questions we'll need to ask.
- Could use the same questions from our internal survey, reframed for each community.
- Potential questions: Can you think of something good that happened in your community that was the result of the work of the board? Can you think of a time when the board got in the way of accomplishing?
- Brad will compile questions and send them around; each committee member can add their own questions.
- Next meeting, groups will form and begin to plan interviews and schedules.
- May meet just once in June, July, and August.

Next meeting is June 12th. Committee members should bring their draft questions.

Thomas Coen moved to adjourn; Deb McAdoo seconded. The meeting ended at 7:40 PM.

Average Population as a % & Square Miles % vs. City

#	Community	Form of Government	Election System	Number of Elected Officials	Leader of the Council Elected by	Term Length	Councilor Term Limits	Councilor Compensation	Neighborhood Assembly/ Other Advisory Group	Population	Square Miles	Population Per Councilor	FY26 Approved Budget	FY25 Tax Rate	Population as % of EJ	Square Miles as % of EJ	Average Population & Sq Miles %
1	Winooski	Weak Mayor	At-Large	5 (mayor+4)		Mayor (3yr), Councilors (2yr)				7,997	1.5	1,599			76%	32%	54%
2	St. Albans City	Weak Mayor	Wards (6)	7 (mayor+6)		Mayor (2yr), Councilors (3yr)				6,887	2.0	984			65%	43%	54%
3	Barre City	Weak Mayor	Wards	7 (mayor+6)		2yr				8,491	4.0	1,213			80%	84%	82%
4	City of Essex Junction	Council-Manager	At-Large	5	Council	3yr	None	\$2,500	None	10,590	4.7	2,118	\$12,419,241	0.9861	100%	100%	100%
5	Montpelier	Weak Mayor	Districts	7 (mayor+6)		2yr				8,074	10.3	1,153			76%	216%	146%
6	Rutland	Strong Mayor	At-Large	11		2yr				15,807	7.7	1,437			149%	162%	156%
7	Barre Town	Council-Manager	At-Large	5		3 (3yr), 2 (2yr)				7,923	30.7	1,585			75%	648%	361%
8	Williston	Council-Manager	At-Large	5		3 (3yr), 2 (2yr)				10,103	30.6	2,021			95%	645%	370%
9	Burlington	Strong Mayor	Districts & Wards	12		2yr				44,743	15.5	3,729			423%	327%	375%
10	Brattleboro	Council-Manager	At-Large	5		3 (3yr), 2 (1yr)				12,184	32.4	2,437			115%	684%	399%

Governance Interview Questions for VT Communities

- Introductions
- Thank you
- We are a committee in the City of Essex Junction studying Governance. We appreciate you taking the time to tell us more about governance in your community.

Opening Question:

Can you think of an example of a success in your community that was the direct result of the design of your community's government?

Form of Government:

Your community has a [council-manager/weak mayor/strong mayor] form of government. How does this model serve your community well? What are the gaps, challenges, or barriers you experience with this model?

- How would you adjust or change your current model of governance if you were given the opportunity and why?

Number of Elected Officials & Leader of the Elected Board:

Your community has [XX] members on the [selectboard/City Council/Board of Aldermen]. Does this number of elected officials serve your community well, why or why not?

- Would a different number of elected officials serve your community better, and if so, what number would you recommend and why?

In your community, the leader of the elected board is selected by the [Board/Council/electorate]. Has this system served the community well or not? Please explain.

- Is there a different method for selecting the leader of the elected board that could serve your community better, and if so, what would you recommend and why?

Elected Officials Term Lengths:

In your community, elected officials' term lengths are: [explain system as you understand it]. Does this number and/or system of term lengths serve your community well or not? Please explain.

- Is there a different number and/or system of term lengths that could serve your community better, and if so, what would you recommend and why?

Elected Official Term Limits:

Does your community have term limits for elected officials? If so, what are they? Has this system served your community well or not? Please explain?

- Would a different approach to term limits for elected officials serve your community better and if so, what would you recommend and why?

Election of Officials:

In your community, officials are elected [at-large/through districts or wards/through an overlay of wards within districts/through a hybrid model of some at-large and some through districts or wards]. Has this structure served your community well or not? Please explain.

- Is there a different approach to electing officials that could serve your community better and if so, what would you recommend and why?

Elected Officials Compensation:

Can you please tell us how much elected officials in your community are paid each year and if they all receive the same compensation. Also, can you explain the process for increasing elected officials' pay?

- Is the amount of compensation serving your community well or not? Please explain.
- Do you have feedback if a different amount of compensation for elected officials could serve your community better and if so, what would you recommend and why?
- Do you think your system for increasing pay for elected officials is serving your community well or not? Please explain. Would a different system serve your community better?

Neighborhood Assemblies or other neighborhood-oriented concepts:

Does your community have a charter-mandated Neighborhood Assembly or another neighborhood-oriented concept for community organization, input, or engagement?

- If so, can you please describe and tell us if you think this serves your community well or not and if you think there is a different system that could serve your community better?
- If not, do you have something formalized by your selectboard/Board of Alderman/City Council that is not mandated in your charter?

Community Engagement:

What are the three most effective ways that your local government engages with the residents?

Community Data Gathering:

Has your community done any recent community surveying or polling related to governance structure that you would be willing to share?

Is there anything that we didn't ask about or discuss that you would like to share?

Do you have any questions for us?

Suggested Community Groupings:

A

Burlington
Barre Town
St. Albans City

B

Rutland
Williston
Barre City

C

Winooski
Brattleboro
Montpelier

Committee Member	Community Grouping
Thomas Coen	
Steve Eustis	
Deb McAdoo	
Candace Morgan	
Brian Sheldon	
Gabrielle Smith	
Marlon Verasamy	
Elaine Haney	
Bethany Clark	