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**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING
MAY 6, 2026**

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Amber Thibeault, President; Tim Miller, Vice-President; Bethany Clark, Clerk; Raj Chawla; Brian Shelden

ADMINISTRATION: Regina Mahony, City Manager; JoAnn Nichols, Animal Control Officer; Robert Welch, Police Officer

OTHERS PRESENT: Marcus Certa, Heidi Clark, Kerri McCarthy-Beam, Resa Mehren, Dennis Thibeault, Alison Wermer, Stephen Wille Padnos, NBC5, J

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

In lieu of a chair, Ms. Mahony called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2. **REORGANIZATION**

RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by TIM MILLER, to nominate AMBER THIBEAULT as President. Motion passed 5-0.

BETHANY CLARK made a motion, seconded by BRIAN SHELDEN, to nominate TIM MILLER as Vice-President. Motion passed 5-0.

TIM MILLER made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, to nominate BETHANY CLARK as Clerk. Motion passed 5-0.

3. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

None.

4. **APPROVE AGENDA**

No changes, thus no approval required.

5. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

None.

6. **PUBLIC HEARING**

a. Potentially Vicious Dog Bite Hearing

Ms. Thibeault read the following complaint into the record:

To the City Council of Essex Junction, a report of a” potentially vicious dog” event.

The encounter occurred at 4:55 PM on Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at Summit Street School playground. The victim of the attack was [redacted], age 5 years old, of [redacted] Essex Junction, VT, 05452.

I am [redacted] grandmother, [redacted] was leaving the playground on the sidewalk leading to the School Street parking lot. I was leaving the playground via the sidewalk leading to the Holy Family parking lot.

I saw a woman with two dogs enter the playground from the School Street parking lot. One dog was a black lab, about 60# and the other a white and tan pit-bull mix, about 80#. The woman either dropped the leashes or the dogs pulled free. When they saw [redacted] they rushed at him, the pit-bull mix jumped on him and knocked him to the ground. [redacted] weighs about 40#. He screamed in fright.

The woman began shouting at the dogs to come back, which they did not do. She had to run to them before she could grab the leashes and get them away from [redacted].

I started shouting and running across the playground telling her dogs are not allowed in the school yard and to leave. That they had knocked down my grandson. I repeatedly told her to leave.

By the time she had loaded the dogs back to her car my grandson had left the area via the School Street parking lot. He later said he was not injured.

I have a photo of the woman and her license plate. We did not exchange any personal information.

I refer you to ordinance 503:F, 507 and 510. I think all are relevant here.

Sincerely,
Alison Wermer
[redacted]
Essex Junction, VT 05452

Ms. Thibeault swore in all those present who would be providing testimony. She requested conflicts of interest or ex-parte communications, of which there were none. Ms. Wermer, complainant, read a series of ordinances which she believes the dogs in question were in violation of. She requested an apology from the dog owner for knocking down and scaring her grandson, and for swearing at her in front of her grandson. She said there is a dog park on West Street and that the dog owner made an illegal left hand leaving the Summit Street parking lot. Answering a question from Ms. Mahony, Ms. Wermer said she was unsure if the dog handler ever had her dogs leashed during the encounter.

Ms. Thibeault swore in Ms. McCarthy-Beam, owner of the dogs involved with the incident. She said her dog barked at the child but did not touch him. She claims he fell on his own. She frequently brings her dogs to Summit Street School playground and allows them to run off-leash. She said she is not aware that this is not allowed. The dogs are not registered. She has proof of their rabies vaccinations. Ms. McCarthy-Beam claims that Ms. Wermer was too far away to see the situation accurately.

Officer Welch discussed an incident which occurred on School Street in Essex Junction. Ms. McCarthy-Beam's dogs were dragging leashes, unaccompanied by a handler at visible distance, and the Labrador attacked a leashed Husky. The mixed-breed dog circled the dog and its owner. He recently received additional communication identifying Ms. McCarthy-Beam as the owner of the dogs involved. No citations were issued, as he did not have a method of identifying the owner of the dogs until recently. No definite injuries to the Husky were reported, however there were suspected injuries. Ms. Nichols, Animal Control Officer, said she has had minimal interactions regarding these dogs.

As Ms. McCarthy-Beam was not present earlier in the meeting, Ms. Wermer re-read her statement citing several ordinances and dog licensing requirements that she believes were violated in this incident. In response,

98 Ms. McCarthy-Beam asked why Ms. Wermer’s grandson was walking by himself in the playground. Mr.
99 Miller said there are no ordinances prohibiting such.

100
101 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by TIM MILLER, to close the proceedings, evidence and**
102 **enter into Deliberative Session. Motion passed 5-0.**

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104 A written decision will be issued following Deliberative Session.

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106 7. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

107 None.

108
109 8. **DELIBRATIVE SESSION**

110 **TIM MILLER made a motion, seconded by BETHANY CLARK to exit Deliberative Session. Motion**
111 **passed 5-0 at 7:25 PM.**

112
113 9. **ADJOURN**

114 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by TIM MILLER, to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0 at 7:25**
115 **PM.**

116
117 Respectfully Submitted,
118 Darby Mayville
119