



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

Online & 2 Lincoln Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Wednesday, June 3, 2026
8:00 AM

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www.essexjunction.org

Phone: (802) 878-6944

This meeting will be in-person only.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** [8:00 AM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **APPROVE AGENDA**
4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
 - a. Comments from Public
5. **CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION**
 - a. Council effectiveness and working agreements
 - b. Community engagement and trust-building
 - c. Economic development and the City's role in shaping future growth and redevelopment
6. **JOINT SESSION WITH COUNCIL AND DEPARTMENT HEADS** [10:30 AM]
 - a. Team-building and strategic reflection
 - b. Celebration of accomplishments and progress
 - c. Discussion of strategic plan pillars and future opportunities
 - d. Small group discussions on strategic priorities
 - e. Priority-setting and identification of areas of alignment
 - f. Refinement of short-and-long-term priorities
 - g. Discussion of next steps
7. **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.

Upcoming City Council Meetings
(Meeting Dates are Subject to Change)
(* denotes special meeting or date change)

June 10, 2026	August 12, 2026	October 14, 2026
June 24, 2026	August 26, 2026	October 28, 2026
July 8, 2026	September 9, 2026	*November 10, 2026
July 22, 2026	September 23, 2026	*December 2, 2026
		*December 16, 2026

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
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING
June 3, 2026
Approved June 24, 2026**

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

ADMINISTRATION: Regina Mahony, City Manager; Mark Brislin, EJRP Director; Colleen Dwyer, Human Resources Director; Chris Gaboriault, Fire Chief; Wendy Hysko, Library Director; Rick Jones, Public Works Superintendent; Susan McNamara-Hill, City Clerk; Chelsea Mandigo, Water Quality Superintendent; Jess Morris, Finance Director; Ashley Snellenberger, Communications & Strategic Initiatives Director; Chris Yuen, Community Development Director.

OTHERS PRESENT: Sue McCormack, Facilitator; Marcus Certa, Resa Mehren.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

City Council President Thibeault called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

None.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

None needed.

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

a. Comments from Public

None.

5. **CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION:** *facilitated by Sue McCormack*

a. Council effectiveness and working agreements

City Manager Mahony began by noting that this annual retreat is a key part of the City's planning processes. Ms. McCormack then began by speaking about the goals of today's discussion, which are to continue to build shared understanding about roles, responsibilities, and norms, and focus on the Council's priorities around community engagement and economic development. Councilors began by sharing what they hope to take away from today's annual retreat. Ms. McCormack then led the Council in a facilitated discussion about establishing good shared norms and working agreements.

b. Community engagement and trust-building

Ms. McCormack then facilitated a discussion with the Council on the topic of community engagement and trust-building, with the goal of identifying a handful of priorities and action items to work on over the next year.

c. Economic development and the City's role in shaping future growth and redevelopment

Ms. McCormack then facilitated a discussion with the Council on economic development and the City's role in future growth and redevelopment, with the goal of identifying a handful of priorities and action items to work on over the next year.

6. **JOINT SESSION WITH COUNCIL AND DEPARTMENT HEADS:** *facilitated by Sue McCormack*

a. Team building and strategic reflection

Ms. McCormack facilitated icebreaker sessions with the Council and City Department Heads focusing on interactions with community businesses, engagement in community events, and the areas in Essex Junction that best represent the community's identity. She facilitated an exercise with Department Heads on their

57 hopes for the community if they were to leave the City now and return in five years. Staff brought up hopes
58 related to improved traffic, more affordable housing, and continued development of the City.

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60 b. Celebration of accomplishments and progress

61 Ms. McCormack facilitated a discussion with Department Heads and the Council on the departments'
62 accomplishments over the last year and progress on the City's goals and strategic vision.

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64 c. Discussion of strategic plan pillars and future opportunities

65 Ms. McCormack facilitated a discussion about the City's Strategic Plan pillars. City Manager Mahony
66 reviewed a brief overview of the pillars, which included housing, public services and facilities, economic and
67 business development, transportation and connectivity, environmental stewardship, and community
68 engagement and decision-making. The Council and Department Heads then engaged in personal reflection
69 and selected the action items associated with each of the six pillars that they would like to see prioritized
70 over the next one to two years.

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72 d. Small group discussions on strategic priorities

73 The Council and Department Heads then engaged in small group discussions around the strategic priorities
74 and action items they had identified.

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76 e. Priority-setting and identification of areas of alignment

77 Ms. McCormack facilitated a discussion around priority-setting and areas of alignment for the strategic
78 priorities, areas of focus, and potential action items. She reviewed the list of criteria to help prioritize items,
79 including whether the idea clearly supports the strategic pillars, is realistic for implementation in the next
80 several years with available or attainable resources, would have noticeable positive impacts on the
81 community, will reduce disparities and will promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, the City has or could build
82 the relationships or partnerships needed to make it successful, and is something that could be invested in or
83 sustained over time. They reviewed the list of items across pillars that they had developed in small group
84 discussions, including infrastructure to support housing, more services in neighborhoods, increased
85 community development, staff, staffing capacity housing needs, new impact fees, explore use of CHIP
86 financing/fee, explore Tier 1 designation, implement traffic calming improvements, housing trust fund, form-
87 based code, exploring a rental registry, holding a 5th birthday party for the City, public participation and
88 training, having a social media plan, emergency management plan updates, having a text alert system,
89 having an engagement committee, election information, investigate the use of firework drones, green energy
90 exploration, implement Comprehensive Plan climate and energy actions, stabilize and eventually expand
91 public transit services, Park Street bike lanes, implement one traffic calming improvement, hiring an
92 economic development consultant, expand downtown center designation, host business roundtables for
93 collaboration, having an economic development staff position, having more business services in
94 neighborhoods, developing a policy and staff training around AI use, Stevens Park options and alternatives,
95 recreation master plan, recreation community center, developing a homeless policy, developing an
96 enforcement policy, having an emergency shelter, Pearl Street Park parking, public parking, a 3-5 year plan
97 for parking garage, exploring alternative revenue streams, discuss having a full-time fire chief, ADA compliant
98 main entry to the library, build public works facility, social services grants, RFP for IT services, professional
99 development training for supervisors, Tree Farm capital plan, fund rolling stock, staffing for deputy manager,
100 library installation enhancement, ADA compliance for the City's website, and having a part-time assistant in
101 the clerk's office.

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103 f. Refinement of short-and-long-term priorities

104 Ms. McCormack then facilitated a discussion of the above identified items and refining them for developing
105 short- and long-term priorities for the City, through the lens of shared purpose and momentum. The top
106 priorities that emerged were wastewater infrastructure to support housing, funding rolling stock, and exploring
107 alternative revenue streams. Other top priorities included stabilizing and expanding the City's public transit
108 network, implementing the Comprehensive Plan's climate and energy actions, the Tree Farm Capital Plan,
109 increasing community development staffing capacity, building a public works facility, developing a Recreation
110 Master Plan, hosting business roundtables for collaboration, and the City's five-year birthday party. The
111 discussion included debate about whether some items were more public-facing versus internal infrastructure

112 work, and concerns about resource and staffing capacity constraints and how to balance maintenance of
113 existing systems with new initiatives.

114
115 g. Discussion of next steps

116 City Manager Mahony said that staff will summarize today’s discussions and present a summary of the retreat
117 at an upcoming regular City Council meeting, and staff will use these discussions to inform budget building
118 for the next fiscal year.

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120 **7. ADJOURN**

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122 **Councilor Chawla made a motion, seconded by Councilor Shelden, to adjourn the meeting. The**
123 **motion passed 5-0 at 2:00 P.M.**

124
125 Respectfully Submitted,
126 Amy Coonradt