

# City of Essex Junction

## City Council Regular Meeting Agenda



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2026 • 6:30 PM  
Online & 2 Lincoln Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452

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This Agenda has been Amended on 6/22/26

This meeting will be in-person 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. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
  - a. \*Interview and Consideration of Appointments to the Brownell Library Trustees, Development Review Board, Police Community Advisory Board and the Recreation Advisory Committee [15 Minutes]
  - b. Conversation with CHIPS Executive Director, Amy Boudreaux [10 Minutes]
  - c. Communications Department Head Brief to Council [10 Minutes]
  - d. Discussion and Consideration of Retreat Debrief [10 Minutes]
  - e. Discussion and Consideration of the Engagement Plan [10 Minutes]
  - f. Discussion and Consideration of the Economic Development Services RFP [10 Minutes]
  - g. Discussion and Consideration of the Pearl Street Multimodal Project and Westbound Lane Configuration [15 Minutes]
  - h. \*\*Discussion and Consideration of an Executive Session to Discuss Contracts – **Added 6/22/26**
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
  - a. Approve Meeting Minutes: 6/3/26 and 6/10/26
  - b. Annual Memo with Manager Appointments and Appointments of the City Clerk and Tree Warden
  - c. Approve the 2026 Town Road and Bridge Standards
  - d. Approve Street Closure Application for Meet Me on Main
  - e. Approve Fraud Policy Amendments
7. **COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT**
8. **READING FILE**
  - a. Check Warrant #24120 6/12/26
  - b. Champlain Water District Water Quality Report
  - c. Recreation Advisory Committee Minutes 6/3/26
  - d. Development Review Board Minutes 6/3/26
  - e. Planning Commission Minutes 6/4/26
  - f. Tree Farm Management Group Minutes 6/8/26

**9. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a. \*An Executive Session may be needed to discuss the appointment of public officials
- b. \*\*An Executive Session may be need to discuss contracts

**10. ADJOURN**

*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)

July 8, 2026	August 12, 2026	September 9, 2026	October 14, 2026
July 22, 2026	August 26, 2026	September 23, 2026	October 28, 2026

**City Council Rules for Public Participation**

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](http://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 24, 2026  
Approved July 8, 2026**

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

11 **ADMINISTRATION:** Regina Mahony, City Manager; Wendy Hysko, Library Director, Ashley  
12 Snellenberger, Director of Communications & Strategic Initiatives; Chis Yuen,  
13 Community Development Director.

14  
15 **OTHERS PRESENT:** Amy Boudreaux, Marcus Certa, Karen Hergesheimer, Susie McGovern, Reed  
16 Nye, Kory Riemensperger, Jeb Spaulding, Dennis Thibeault, Stephen Wille  
17 Padnos, Resa.

18  
19 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

20 City Council President Thibeault called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

21  
22 2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

23 None.

24  
25 3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

26 None.

27  
28 4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

29 a. **Comments from Public**

30 Stephen Wille Padnos spoke about a bill that recently passed in the State legislature (H.941), a provision of  
31 which states that municipalities are no longer allowed to regulate plants, except cannabis and hemp. He said  
32 that this has implications for visibility triangles, rights of way, plantings around fire hydrants, etc. He  
33 suggested that municipalities and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns should conduct a policy and legal  
34 analysis of this bill.

35  
36 Resa expressed appreciation for the notes on the agenda showing that it has been edited since it was first  
37 posted, which is useful for the public to follow along with City Council meetings and activities.

38  
39 5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

40 a. \*Interview and Consideration of Appointments to the Brownell Library Trustees, Development Review  
41 Board, Police Community Advisory Board, and the Recreation Advisory Committee  
42 The Council interviewed Kory Riemensperger and Jeb Spaulding for open positions on the Brownell Library  
43 Trustees. The applicants spoke about their relevant experience, involvement in the community, qualifications,  
44 and interest in participating on the Brownell Library Trustees Board. Councilors asked the applicant questions  
45 related to their familiarity with the Trustees and their recently developed strategic plan, how they see the  
46 library's role in the community, and whether they would be interested in serving on other committees if not  
47 appointed to this one.

48  
49 The Council interviewed Susie McGovern for an open position on the Recreation Advisory Committee. The  
50 applicant spoke about her relevant experience, involvement in the community, qualifications, and interest in  
51 participating on the Recreation Advisory Committee. Councilors asked the applicant questions related to how  
52 they've interacted with Essex Junction recreation programming and infrastructure and whether they would  
53 be interested in serving on other committees if not appointed to this one.

54  
55 See item #9a below for appointments.  
56

57 b. Conversation with CHIPS Executive Director, Amy Boudreaux  
58 Amy Boudreaux, Executive Director of Essex CHIPS, spoke on this agenda item. She provided an update  
59 on the program and its recent activities. She noted that CHIPS reopened in January and that its focus has  
60 been on rebuilding programs, strengthening relationships, and creating opportunities for youth and families  
61 in the community. She said that since reopening, they have engaged 85 youth from the area, through teen  
62 center programs, additional extra programs on Friday nights, and outreach events. She said that they have  
63 held more than 80 program days and engagement opportunities for students, and have led special events,  
64 leadership opportunities, volunteer activities, and outreach efforts. She noted that between 12-26 youth  
65 attend regular programming events, but have had higher volumes at drop-in events. She said that they  
66 strongly encourage youth to have a voice and ownership of programming and the space, and noted that  
67 there are youth members of the CHIPS Board of Directors. She noted that CHIPS launched a youth advisory  
68 board to solicit further feedback on programming. She spoke about the results of a recently-fielded CHIPS  
69 survey. She spoke about establishing a referral system and partnerships with schools. She spoke about  
70 some of the events that CHIPS has held for community connections.  
71

72 Councilor Chawla asked about any challenges or gaps that have arisen since CHIPS reopened. Ms.  
73 Boudreaux replied that mental health is a persistent challenge, but that CHIPS provides valuable  
74 opportunities for youth to connect face-to-face and interact with each other in person and that staff are trained  
75 to help with youth. She also spoke about challenges engaging with high school-aged youth, but that they are  
76 working to develop programming for that age demographic as well as a mentorship program. Councilor Clark  
77 asked about greatest opportunities for Essex CHIPS moving forward, and Ms. Boudreaux replied that she  
78 would like to see more opportunities to connect with youth in middle and high school, and in turn have them  
79 connect more with the community, as well as focus on workforce development and different career  
80 opportunities. She said they are also focusing on prevention-related education and providing caregiver  
81 workshops to support parents in areas they might need more help in. Councilor Clark asked about outreach  
82 and engagement mechanisms that CHIPS uses, and Ms. Boudreaux replied that they are working on  
83 broadening their outreach and engagement efforts, but that they work with schools, local care organizations,  
84 and have a strong social media presence. Councilor Miller asked how the community can support the local  
85 donation program for CHIPS, and Ms. Boudreaux said that they will have set hours for drop-offs that they will  
86 publicize to collect donations.  
87

88 c. Communications Department Head Brief to Council

89 Communications and Strategic Initiatives Director Snellenberger spoke on this agenda item. She began by  
90 summarizing the department's activities over the last six months, including the City's rebranding efforts and  
91 development of a new City logo, developing the City's Community Engagement Plan, hosting a committee  
92 orientation and training for committee and board members, and working on the second year of departmental  
93 work plans and the Council Retreat. She then summarized the activities that the department anticipates  
94 engaging on in the next six months, including rolling out the Community Engagement Plan to staff, updating  
95 the new logo on the website and signs in the City, as well as moving to a .gov domain for City staff, planning  
96 for ADA compliance throughout the City by 2028, working on departmental work plan and budget  
97 development for FY28, and working on transition plans, as she will be transitioning to another job opportunity  
98 in the next several months. She thanked the Council and City staff for the opportunity to work with them and  
99 for the City over the last four years.  
100

101 d. Discussion and Consideration of Retreat Debrief

102 Director Snellenberger provided a written summary of the City Council's retreat on June 3, 2026, at which it  
103 discussed community engagement, economic development, and established priorities for Fiscal Year 2028.  
104 She spoke about the Council's first discussion item, which was to develop six working agreements/norms for  
105 effectively working together. She then noted the Council's discussions of community engagement and  
106 economic development, and its development of priorities around strengthening trust, participation, and  
107 community connection over the next year, as well as the City's role in shaping its economic future and  
108 priorities around creating an economic development strategy, strengthening relationships with local  
109 businesses, increasing staff capacity around community development and economic development, and  
110 establishing an Economic Development Committee or Main Street Downtown Committee. She then spoke

111 about the second half of the Retreat, which included the Council and department heads, and focused on  
112 celebrating progress on the current strategic plan and action items for the upcoming fiscal year.  
113

114 Councilor Chawla talked about the Retreat itself and having entire department head staff and Council making  
115 joint decisions. He emphasized the importance of feedback and collaborative discussion, but cautioned that  
116 the Council's role as a legislative and decision-making body not be minimized. He spoke about the list of  
117 outstanding items that may not rise to the top of being Council and City priorities but are still issues  
118 nonetheless, and asked how those will be addressed along with bigger items. City Manager Mahony said  
119 that they are still learning through the process, given that this was the second annual City Council Retreat,  
120 and said that they can have a more in-depth discussion prior to the third annual Retreat about placing greater  
121 emphasis on the Council's role in setting priorities. City Council President Thibeault agreed, acknowledging  
122 that the list of priorities is lengthy and that each of them represents some form of the City's constituency or  
123 geography, and that the priorities as articulated in the debrief document align with what was discussed at the  
124 Retreat. Director Snellenberger noted that one part of the work plan process will be for department heads to  
125 determine if there are items on the larger list of priorities that can feasibly be added to their work plans, even  
126 if they are smaller items. Councilor Miller agreed with Councilor Chawla about looking at structural changes  
127 to the retreat process prior to next year's Retreat. Councilor Clark agreed that the list of priorities coming out  
128 of the Retreat aligns with what was discussed. City Manager Mahony also spoke about how capacity is a  
129 limiting factor for any of the items on the priority list (or larger list), and Councilor Clark said that the Council  
130 will eventually need to think about how to expand that capacity.  
131

132 e. Discussion and Consideration of the Engagement Plan

133 Director Snellenberger noted that the Council discussed an initial draft of the Community Engagement Plan  
134 at its May 27, 2016 meeting, and that they had requested feedback from the Chittenden County Regional  
135 Planning Commission (CCRPC) Outreach and Engagement Manager. She noted that the version before the  
136 Council tonight includes updates based on feedback from CCRPC. She also noted a request from the  
137 previous discussion for prompts from staff for the Council to further facilitate discussion and refinement of  
138 the plan, and she included those prompts for discussion. They include whether the goal from the Retreat  
139 captures goals for the engagement plan or whether further detail is needed, whether there are additional  
140 goals that staff should include in the plan, whether the Council agrees with the Community Engagement  
141 Framework as presented in the plan, and whether the Council thinks there is anything missing from the plan  
142 or if they feel comfortable approving the plan as drafted in its current state.  
143

144 Councilor Clark said that the Council has expressed an interest in strengthening the City's social media  
145 presence, which is included in the Community Engagement Plan, and that she is comfortable with the plan  
146 as drafted. Councilor Chawla agreed with the additional goal of engaging with underrepresented  
147 communities. He also noted that the responsibility for much of the engagement is on City staff, and said he  
148 would like to set an expectation for Council members to carry some of this responsibility as well. Director  
149 Snellenberger replied that they could incorporate and build Council engagement into the engagement plan  
150 in certain areas, and that there are implicit expectations that Councilors will support engagement efforts with  
151 the community. Councilor Clark agreed that the Council should and does play a significant role in community  
152 engagement, but acknowledged that staff will include the Council in their engagement plans as they are  
153 developed.  
154

155 **Councilor Miller made a motion, seconded by Councilor Clark, to approve the Comprehensive**  
156 **Community Engagement Plan. The motion passed 5-0.**  
157

158 f. Discussion and Consideration of the Economic Development Services RFP

159 City Manager Mahony began by noting that there was a \$30,000 line item included in the Fiscal Year 2027  
160 budget for economic development consulting services, given that the City does not have an economic  
161 development committee or department, that there have been thoughts about potentially changing the City's  
162 designation from Village to a Downtown designation (but that there is a lot of activity at the state level with  
163 Act 250 changes and future land use map changes), that there has been interest in revenue generation for  
164 the City that decreases the burden on the residential side of the City's grand list, and how the City can move  
165 forward at this point in time. She noted that the purpose of the RFP for consulting services is not to develop

166 a traditional economic development strategy, strategic plan, or comprehensive economic development plan,  
167 but to seek practical recommendations regarding how the City’s economic development functions should be  
168 organized, governed, funded, staffed, and implemented to support the City’s long-term economic goals.  
169

170 City Council President Thibeault said she would like to see the timeline pushed up, given that deliverables  
171 and actionable information will be crucial to budget discussions for the FY28 budget. Councilor Clark asked  
172 if the selection committee for the RFP has been formed yet (City Manager Mahony: no), and also noted that  
173 the RFP was written in a way that they could receive bids from vendors who have experience in municipal  
174 operations but not in economic development. City Manager Mahony said she would review the required  
175 bidder experience to ensure that economic development experience is required. Councilor Chawla said that  
176 at least one City Councilor should be on the selection committee. Councilors discussed whether \$30,000  
177 was an appropriate amount for the scope of this contract (some Councilors thought the number too small  
178 and others thought too large), but agreed to wait and see the types of bids that are submitted in response to  
179 the RFP.  
180

181 g. Discussion and Consideration of the Pearl Street Multimodal Project and Westbound Lane Configuration  
182 Community Development Director Yuen spoke on this agenda item. He began by noting that the Pearl Street  
183 Multimodal Project improvements have mostly been approved, with the exception of the westbound lane  
184 configuration. He said that as the consultant had drawn up in the scoping study, the number of westbound  
185 lanes is reduced to one from the City until the Susie Wilson Road intersection. He noted that there were  
186 some concerns about that proposal and traffic capacity. He noted that three live tests were conducted at  
187 three different locations on three different dates where the westbound side of the road was reduced to one  
188 lane. He shared data of analysis from those live tests, which showed that the test days were slower but not  
189 much slower, and that part of that was due to slower travel speeds.  
190

191 Councilor Chawla said that the reduction to one lane westbound shows a slowing in traffic but not necessarily  
192 the congestion that was a potential concern when this proposal was initially presented. Councilor Miller asked  
193 about the funding for this project, given some of the high needs in the rolling stock and capital projects for  
194 stormwater and other utilities, and City Manager Mahony replied that this is a General Fund capital project,  
195 and that the funds used for it would not come from the same funding source as the funds for utility capital  
196 projects, but noted that the rolling stock is also funded from the General Fund. Councilor Chawla noted that  
197 the improvements through this project have been discussed in the City for more than a decade, and that  
198 increased multimodal connectivity is something the community has expressed as a top priority consistently.  
199 Councilor Miller acknowledged this, but also said there is also a pressing need to reallocate funds to shore  
200 up the drastically underfunded rolling stock. Councilor Sheldon noted that this proposed project does not  
201 negatively impact traffic and that multimodal infrastructure is an important priority for the City and residents.  
202 City Manager Mahony said that supporting Green Mountain Transit (GMT) is one of the City’s priorities, too,  
203 and that one method of supporting the bus system is making it more easily accessible for more people to  
204 use, and that this project would be a big help for accessing GMT services in that area of the City. City Council  
205 President Thibeault asked if City staff recommends moving forward with this project, and Director Yuen  
206 replied that yes, he would recommend moving forward with this configuration for the westbound lane and  
207 moving forward with the project as a whole, given that the Community Development Department receives  
208 numerous complaints about this stretch of road specifically, that this part of the City serves as a regional  
209 connection, and that this project aligns with the long-range vision for the Connect the Junction Plan. City  
210 Manager Mahony agreed that reducing the westbound side to one lane is a good idea and that it can be  
211 easily changed back to two lanes if traffic is negatively impacted, but she appreciates the challenge with  
212 spending almost \$1 million on this project. She noted that this project is at the top of the Capital Committee’s  
213 project list and was funded to move forward, and that an extensive amount of work has gone into developing  
214 this alternative and figuring out how to achieve the goals of the project with the funding allocated for it. She  
215 said she would be hard-pressed to determine that repurposing this funding for the rolling stock would be the  
216 best use of funding, either, without going through the full budgeting process and determining the City’s  
217 priorities.  
218

219 The following public comments were received:

- Marcus Certa said he would recommend pausing on this project to allow the Council the opportunity to discuss the rolling stock and other items that are in need of funding, and he said that this project should be re-examined in order to implement a shared use path that is built correctly to meet needs.

Councilor Chawla noted that there are apartments being built on this stretch of road, and that there will be plenty of people commuting through the area and using it, and that it will also increase GMT ridership. He said that this is a community priority, and expressed concern about postponing the project for another two to three years.

**Councilor Chawla made a motion, seconded by Councilor Sheldon, that the City Council direct staff to proceed with final design and implementation of the Pearl Street Multimodal Improvements using a single westbound travel lane as proposed in the 2025 scoping study. The motion passed 3-2 (Councilors Clark and Miller dissenting).**

h. **\*\*Discussion and Consideration of an Executive Session to Discuss Contracts**

6. **CONSENT ITEMS**

- a. Approve Meeting Minutes: June 3, 2026, and June 10, 2026
- b. Annual Memo with Manager Appointments and Appointments of the City Clerk and Tree Warden
- c. Approve the 2026 Town Road and Bridge Standards
- d. Approve Street Closure Application for Meet Me on Main
- e. Approve Fraud Policy Amendments

**Councilor Miller made a motion, seconded by Councilor Chawla, to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed 5-0.**

7. **COUNCILOR COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT:** Councilor Miller noted the 4<sup>th</sup> of July events at the Champlain Valley Expo from 6:00 P.M. to 9:30 P.M.

8. **READING FILE**

- a. Check Warrant #24120 – June 12, 2026
- b. Champlain Water District Water Quality Report
- c. Recreation Advisory Committee Minutes – June 3, 2026
- d. Development Review Board Minutes – June 3, 2026
- e. Planning Commission Minutes – June 4, 2026
- f. Tree Farm Management Group Minutes – June 8, 2026

9. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a. **\*An Executive Session may be needed to discuss the appointment of public officials**

**Councilor Miller made a motion, seconded by Councilor Chawla, that the City Council enter into executive session to discuss the appointment of public officials, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) to include the City Manager. The motion passed 5-0.**

**Councilor Chawla made a motion, seconded by Councilor Miller, to exit executive session. The motion passed 5-0 at 8:51 P.M.**

**Councilor Clark made a motion, seconded by Councilor Chawla, to appoint Kory Riemensperger to fill the vacant position as Brownell Library Trustee until the 2027 Annual Meeting. Further, to appoint Amanda Svensson as a member Susan Swogger and John Alden as an alternate to the Development Review Board for a 3-year term ending June 30, 2029. Further, to appoint Susie McGovern to the Recreation Advisory Committee for a 2-year term ending June 30, 2028. Further, to appoint Amber Thibeault as the Council representative on the Capital Review Committee for a 3-year term ending June 30, 2029. The motion passed 5-0.**

- b. **\*An Executive Session may be needed to discuss contracts**

275 Councilor Miller made a motion, seconded by Councilor Chawla, that the City Council make the  
276 specific finding that premature disclosure of contractual matters would place the City at a substantial  
277 disadvantage, and that the City Council enter into executive session to discuss a contract, pursuant  
278 to 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A) to include the City Council and City Manager. The motion passed 5-0.  
279

280 Councilor Chawla made a motion, seconded by Councilor Miller, to exit executive session. The  
281 motion passed 5-0 at 8:51 P.M.  
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283 10. ADJOURN  
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285 Councilor Miller made a motion, seconded by Councilor Chawla, to adjourn the meeting. The motion  
286 passed 5-0 at 8:54 P.M.  
287

288 Respectfully Submitted,  
289 Amy Coonradt