

SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE

September 5, 2019

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE - SPECIAL MEETING
September 5, 2019**

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS: George Tyler, Chair; Andrew Watts; Raj Chawla; Annie Cooper (substituting on behalf of Max Levy).

ADMINISTRATION: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Ann Janda, Project Manager.

OTHERS PRESENT: Ken Signorello; Dave Treston, KSV; Irene Wrenner; Kim Chase; Lori Houghton.

1. CALL TO ORDER

George Tyler called the meeting of the Village of Essex Junction Trustees and Town of Essex Selectboard Subcommittee on Governance (hereafter referred to as “Subcommittee on Governance”) to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

No vote was taken because the agenda was not modified.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

Mr. Signorello stated that at the last Joint Village Trustees and Town Selectboard meeting he’d emphasized that relying on surveys as a data source has its pitfalls, and he would like to emphasize that again, while at the same time encouraging close listening to all Essex residents and cautioning against misinterpretation.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Discuss and develop draft quantitative survey about governance change

Mr. Tyler noted that subcommittee members were able to submit questions and feedback and content for the survey ahead of time, and asked Mr. Treston to lead the subcommittee through the proposed quantitative survey. Mr. Treston noted that the survey was developed by taking input from the focus groups held in August as well as reactions from the qualitative survey and incorporating them into a questionnaire to quantitatively gauge how much of what was heard in the focus groups applies to the general public.

The subcommittee reviewed the survey and made the following edits:

- Introductory Text: add a sentence after “Election Day, November 3, 2020” that reads: “There will be other opportunities for public input before then.”
- Question 6: Strike “continue to” from the survey question
- Question 11: replace “size” with “population” in response to options 3 and 4
- Mixed System explanatory text: in the last sentence, replace “would be” with “may”

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- 47 • Q17: replace “a town” with “appointed” in the survey question
- 48 • Mayor explanatory text: after the second sentence, add “A mayor can be elected based on
- 49 having a vision for the community.”
- 50 • Strike Questions 20-21 and replace with “How important is being able to vote on
- 51 municipal budgets in person at an annual meetings?”, a five-point Likert scale for
- 52 responses, and a final response option stating “I think the municipal budgets should be
- 53 approved a different way.”
- 54 • Taxation explanatory text: add a phrase to the end of the last sentence stating, “...or if
- 55 your property owner decides to raise your rent.”
- 56 • Strike Question 28
- 57 • Question 29: strike “Town (or City) of” from the question and add “body” after “separate
- 58 governing” and before “or taxing authority.”
- 59 • Strike Question 31
- 60 • Question 33: strike second “of” in the question and strike second “important” in the
- 61 question
- 62 • Public Outreach and Education explanatory text: add “..., while also seeking input from
- 63 residents” to the end of the last sentence of the paragraph.
- 64 • Question 36: replace “prefer” with “like” in the question
- 65 • Question 38: staff and consultants to research alternative wording to “variance tax rate”
- 66 options in the question
- 67 • Add a question asking respondents whether they consider their homes to be in an urban,
- 68 suburban, or rural area
- 69 • Questions 41, 43, 47: add a response option stating “prefer not to say”
- 70 • Strike Question 44
- 71 • Strike Question 45
- 72 • Strike Question 46

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74 At the request of the subcommittee, Mr. Treston will set up survey logic for Question 42 so that
75 if respondents answer “no” when asked if they are registered to vote in Essex, they will be shown
76 a custom screen that gives the respondent information about how to register to vote. Mr. Treston
77 will also add a ‘thank you’ page at the end of the survey that includes a link to the
78 GreaterEssex2020.org website.

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80 Mr. Treston will revise contents of the survey based on the above subcommittee feedback and
81 present a revised draft to the governance subcommittee.

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83 Ms. Wrenner will email her suggested edits to the survey to Ann Janda, who will distribute to the
84 subcommittee members.

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86 **b. Approve additional meetings – September 12 and September 19 to finalize survey,**
87 **consider moving presentation of survey results to October 24**

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89 The Subcommittee on Governance will meet on September 12th and will tentatively meet on
90 September 19th (if needed). The presentation of quantitative survey results will occur at the Joint
91 Trustees/Selectboard meeting on October 29th.

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c. Approval of minutes:

August 22, 2019:

RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, and ANNIE COOPER seconded, to approve the Subcommittee on Governance meeting minutes from August 22, 2019 with the following Subcommittee corrections:

- Line 105: strike sentence beginning with “He stated that Bennington...” and replace with “He stated that Bennington had been a village in a town that merged in 1961. Bennington created a special district for downtown improvements.”

Motion passed 4-0.

6. ADJOURN:

RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, and ANNIE COOPER seconded, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Coonradt
Recording Secretary

Approved this 12th day of September, 2019

(see minutes of this day for corrections, if any)