

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES  
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE - SPECIAL MEETING  
September 12, 2019

**SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS:** George Tyler, Chair; Andrew Watts; Raj Chawla; Max Levy.

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

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Ken Signorello; Dave Treston (KSV); Irene Wrenner; Colin Flanders; Dawn McGinnis; Betsy Dunn; Iris Banks; Heidi Clark;

**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 6:32pm.

**2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

Evan Teich provided the following additions or changes to the agenda: a brief discussion of Dan Richardson’s response to Ann Janda’s request for research on hybrid voting. This will be agenda item 5aa and will occur before agenda item 5a.

**3. AGENDA APPROVAL**

**GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, that the Subcommittee on Governance approve the agenda as amended. Motion passed 4-0.**

**4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

Ken Signorello stated that he has asked that separation be considered an option for discussion and surveys when talking about a potential governance change, and that all options should be presented to the public and examined carefully.

Irene Wrenner noted that she had submitted comments from the previous meeting, and requests that they be reviewed and addressed. Mr. Tyler replied that the subcommittee will review her comments as they review the revised survey draft later in this discussion.

Betsy Dunn asked why the focus groups held by KSV on the merger topic all 80 members who had expressed interest in participating. Mr. Tyler replied that larger focus groups are difficult to run and that KSV advised for smaller groups. He also stated that the previously-fielded qualitative survey had a significant number of respondents and was representative of both the Town outside the Village and the Village, and that the focus group was only one step in a multi-step, multi-yearlong process of gathering public input on this topic.

**5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

46 **aa: question to Dan Richardson—should we ask questions about annual meeting and**  
47 **voting and should we switch to Australian ballot? Should we ask question about hybrid**  
48 **voting?**

49 Ann updated the subcommittee on Dan Richardson’s feedback. At the previous subcommittee  
50 meeting a question had arisen regarding hybrid voting, which was put to Mr. Richardson after  
51 the meeting. His response was that no other municipalities in Vermont are using that form of  
52 voting, and expressed concern that adopting this form of voting would make the town vulnerable  
53 to legal challenges, would allow residents to vote more than once (voice vote and ballot vote),  
54 and that it would also present logistical challenges if ballots needed to be changed after a voice  
55 vote. Mr. Tyler noted that based on this response, a question around hybrid voting will not be  
56 included in this survey.

57  
58 **a. Discuss second draft of quantitative survey about governance change and consider**  
59 **approval**

60  
61 Dave Treston walked the subcommittee through revisions made since its September 5 meeting.  
62 He noted that many of the changes were made during the last meeting, but some have been made  
63 since then. He also noted that he combined certain questions where it made sense, and whittled  
64 down the survey to around 30 questions, which should take between 10-15 minutes for a  
65 respondent to complete.

66  
67 The subcommittee reviewed the latest draft of the survey and made the following edits:

- 68 • Minor wording changes in ‘Representation’ section of survey;
- 69 • Added sentence to ‘Voting’ section’s explanatory text to give further information on  
70 annual meetings;
- 71 • Additional questions and reordering of questions in ‘Voting’ section;
- 72 • Minor wording changes in ‘Taxation’ explanatory text for clarity;
- 73 • Minor wording change in ‘Notes’ subsection of ‘Taxation’ section for clarity;
- 74 • Statement added to ‘Taxation’ section clarifying how the Town and Village tax rates  
75 could change in a merger scenario;
- 76 • Rewording and additional potential responses to questions under ‘Services’ section;
- 77 • Removal of Q27
- 78 • Modifications to ‘Merger Options’ questions to remove the tax rate options from  
79 potential responses.

80  
81 Next steps:

- 82 • Mr. Treston will send the revised draft quantitative survey to the subcommittee and will  
83 begin programming the survey. The link should be available to distribute on September  
84 17<sup>th</sup>.
- 85 • Staff will print and place paper copies of the survey at senior center.

86  
87  
88 **RAJ CHAWLA made motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, to accept the draft quantitative**  
89 **survey as edited and authorize the distribution of survey. Motion passed 4-0.**

90

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE  
(DRAFT)**

**September 12, 2019**

91 **b. Consider cancelling meeting on September 19 if survey is approved, consider moving**  
92 **presentation of survey results to October 29 Joint Selectboard/Trustee meeting**  
93 The September 19 meeting will be cancelled and the presentation of survey results will occur at  
94 the October 29 Joint Selectboard/Trustees meeting.  
95

96 **c. Approval of minutes:**

97 *September 5, 2019:*

98 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, and ANDY WATTS seconded, to approve the**  
99 **Subcommittee on Governance meeting minutes from September 5, 2019 as written. Motion**  
100 **passed 4-0.**  
101

102 **6. ADJOURN:**

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104 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, to adjourn the meeting.**  
105 **Motion passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.**  
106

107 Respectfully Submitted,  
108 Amy Coonradt  
109 Recording Secretary  
110

111  
112 Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019  
113

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