



VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
Subcommittee on Governance
Special Meeting Agenda

2 Lincoln Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Thurs., Sept. 12, 2019
6:30 PM

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The Governance Subcommittee consists of two members of the Essex Junction Board of Trustees and two members of the Essex Selectboard. The members will not discuss or take action on any issue outside of the scope of the subcommittee and shall not act as the Town Selectboard or Village Board of Trustees at the meeting.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** [6:30 PM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **APPROVE AGENDA**
4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. Discuss second draft quantitative survey about governance change and consider approval
 - b. Consider cancelling meeting on September 19 if survey is approved, consider moving presentation of survey results to October 29 Joint Selectboard/Trustee meeting
 - c. Approve minutes: September 5, 2019
6. **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 Chair or 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 Chair or President. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings, like all programs and activities of the Village of Essex Junction and the Town of Essex, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Unified Manager's office at 878-1341.

Certification: _____

Memorandum

To: Governance Subcommittee; Evan Teich, Unified Manager

CC: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager

From: Ann Janda, Project Manager

Re: Draft Quantitative Survey About Governance Change

Date: September 9, 2019

Issue

The issue is working with KSV on a quantitative survey about governance change.

Discussion

KSV has created a second draft of a quantitative survey about governance change based on edits made at the September 5 Governance Subcommittee meeting. The Governance Subcommittee should provide any additional feedback and suggestions for edits and then should consider approving.

Cost

NA

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Governance Subcommittee review and consider approving the second draft quantitative survey.

ESSEX

Resident Survey **Number 2** – September 2019

DRAFT – ~~August 29~~ **September 9, 2019**

Screening Questions

S1. What will your age be on November 3, 2020? [single selection]

- Under 18 [terminate]
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+

S2. Are you a resident of the Town of Essex? If so, please reference this list of street names to confirm whether you live within the Village of Essex Junction or within Essex Town outside the Village.

[this question links out to this PDF:

https://www.greateressex2020.org/uploads/1/2/6/3/126381556/streetshandout_2.pdf

] [single selection]

- I live in Essex Town outside the Village
- I live in the Village of Essex Junction
- I live someplace else besides the Town of Essex [terminate]

Introductory Text

[Description text]

This *second* survey is designed to gather input from residents of the ~~Town of Essex~~ *community* on the topic of a potential merger between the municipal governments of the Town of Essex and the Village of Essex Junction.

The objective of this *follow-up* survey is to determine what a proposal for a merged community should look like in terms of governance structure, representation, taxation, and identity. The objective of the prior survey in July was to uncover potential topics to probe in the focus groups and in this follow-up survey.

The Town of Essex Selectboard and Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees will evaluate feedback and determine a governance model proposal that may be placed on the ballot for Election Day November 3, 2020. There will be other opportunities for public input prior to November 3, 2020.

This is an anonymous survey. Though we will ask for basic demographic information (age, gender, etc.), you will not be asked for your name or contact information.

Q1. Are you familiar with the current governance structure of the two municipalities? [single selection]

- Yes [skip to Q2]
- No, I would appreciate a short description [display description text]

[Description text]

The Village of Essex Junction (“the Village”) is a municipality within the larger municipality of the Town of Essex (“the Town”):

- *Residents of the Village are also residents of the Town. Village residents pay municipal taxes to both the Village and Town.*
- *Residents of the Town living outside of the Village (“the Town outside the Village”) are only residents of the Town. Town outside the Village pay municipal taxes only to the Town.*

Residents of the Village pay municipal taxes to both the Village and Town for municipal services. Residents of the Town outside the Village only pay municipal taxes to the Town for municipal services.

General Opinions on Merger

Q2. At present, would you say that you are generally in favor, opposed, or undecided when it comes to the idea of merging the municipal governments of the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction? [single selection]

- Generally in favor of merger [go to Q3a, then skip to the description text that follows]
- Undecided [go to Q3b4, then skip to the description text that follows]
- Generally opposed to merger [go to Q5Q3c, then skip to the description text that follows]

Q3a. Why would you say that you are generally in favor of merger? Check all that apply. [multiple selection, shuffle all answer choices except the last]

- I believe it’s time to make it happen once and for all
- I believe it could result in a governing body that more fairly or equally represents all residents in the community
- I believe it could ultimately result in tax equalization across the entire Town of Essex, where everyone pays the same amount of municipal tax for equal access to services

- I believe we would be a stronger, more unified community if it were a single municipality
- I believe municipal services would be improved if they are paid for and managed with the whole community in mind
- I feel it's confusing that we're the same Town but have two municipalities
- I believe it could make voting and elections more streamlined
- Other (please specify)

Q3b4. Why would you say you are undecided? Check all that apply. [multiple selection, shuffle all answer choices except the last]

- I need to see what the proposed plan for a merger would look like
- I don't understand why we are considering a merger at this point in time
- I see both pros and cons to merging the municipalities
- I'm new to the community
- I feel overwhelmed just thinking about this
- I don't really think about this stuff
- Other (please specify)

Q3c5. Why would you say you are generally opposed to a merger? Check all that apply. [multiple selection, shuffle all answer choices except the last]

- Things are fine as is
- I'm concerned it could mean my taxes going up
- I'm concerned it could result in a governing body that doesn't fairly or equally represent all residents in the community
- I'm concerned I could pay for services I wouldn't need or use
- I'm concerned it could make it harder to access services or service quality would diminish
- I'm worried it could mean the closure of facilities, like a library or fire station
- I'm worried about negative impacts related to development in the community
- I believe there are more negative consequences than benefits
- I'm worried it could lead to changing the name of the community to something I wouldn't like
- I don't like the way some services have already been consolidated
- The citizens voted "no" the last time the question was on the ballot in 2007
- Other (please specify)

[Description text]

Regardless of whether you are generally in favor, generally opposed, or currently undecided about merging the two municipalities, we would like to get your opinion on the options being considered for a potential merger. If there is to be a merger proposal put up for a vote, the goal would be for the proposal to satisfy most, if not all, of the

community. This is an opportunity to gather resident feedback to help shape a solution that works for all of Essex.

Representation

[Description text]

The following questions deal with **representation** and how a governing body in a merged municipality could be comprised.

The five-member Town of Essex Selectboard and the five-member Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees are presently elected “at-large” from their respective communities. Members of the Town Selectboard, regardless of where they live in the Town, which includes the Village, are elected by the entire community and are expected to represent the entire community; members of the Trustees, regardless of where they live in the Village, are expected to represent the entire Village.

[Description text]

Here is one way a governing body can be comprised to serve a unified municipality. Please read this description, sourced and modified from the National League of Cities website, and answer the questions that follow.

At-Large

All at-large members are elected to serve the same constituency, which is the population of the community as a whole. At-large election proponents favor having council members elected by the entire community because:

- Council members in an at-large system can be more impartial, rise above the limited perspective of a single district and concern themselves with the problems of the whole community.
- Vote trading between councilmembers is minimized.
- Well-qualified individuals are elected to the council because the candidate pool is larger.

However, at-large elections can weaken the representation of particular groups, especially if the group does not have a community-wide base of operations or is an ethnic or racial group concentrated in a specific ward.

Q46. If the Town and Village governments merge into a single municipality, I believe all members of the new, single governing board, regardless of where they live in Essex, should ~~continue to~~ be elected at-large from the entire community.

- Agree [go to Q5a7, then skip to next section]
- Disagree [skip to Q5b8, then go to next section]

Q5a7. For what reasons do you agree with having a governing body where all members are elected at-large? Check all that apply. [multiple selection, shuffle all except the last two]

- I believe we would get high quality candidates
- I believe the elected members would do a better job serving the entire community and not just their district
- I believe we're all one community, one Essex and this would remove perceived Town/Village separation
- I believe all of Essex would be more fairly represented
- Because that is how the Selectboard and Trustees are currently elected and that's fine
- I'm not sure why
- Other (please specify)

Q5b8. For what reasons do you disagree with having a governing body where all members are elected at-large? Check all that apply. [multiple selection, shuffle all except the last two]

- I would be concerned representation would not be fair or equal
- I believe such a structure would favor more populous areas of the community
- I would be concerned that issues specific to my part of Essex would be minimized or ignored
- I'm more in favor of district/ward style representation rather than at-large
- I don't think it would actually result in well-qualified candidates running
- I'm not sure why
- Other (please specify)

[Description text]

Here is another way a governing body can be comprised to serve a unified municipality. Please read this description, sourced and modified from the National League of Cities, and answer the questions that follow.

Districts/Wards

These elections select a single council member from a corresponding geographical section of the community, called a district or ward. District election proponents favor having council members elected to represent individual wards because:

- *District elections give all legitimate groups, especially those with a geographic base, a better chance of being represented on the town council, especially minority groups.*
- *District councilmembers are more sensitive to the small but important problems of their constituents.*
- *District elections may improve citizen participation because councilpersons that represent a specific district may be more responsive to their constituency.*

However, councils elected by district elections may experience more infighting and be less likely to prioritize the good of the community over the good of their district.

Note: In a district/ward representative model, all districts and wards would need to be near equal in population to maintain balance. With that in mind, a ward may need to comprise a larger area than just your neighborhood or the area immediately surrounding your home.

Q69. If the Town and Village governments merge into a single municipality, I believe there should be representative districts and members of the governing board should be elected from the districts where they live. [single selection]

- Agree [go to Q7a10, then skip-go to next sectionQ8]
- Disagree [go to Q7b11, then skip-go to next sectionQ8]

Q7a10. For what reasons do you agree with having a governing body where representatives come from districts/wards? Check all that apply. [multiple selection, shuffle all except the last two]

- I believe the issues pertaining to my specific part of Essex would be better addressed
- I believe it would actually encourage more residents to consider running to serve on the governing body
- I believe all parts of Essex would be more fairly represented
- I believe it would bring diverse perspectives to serve all of Essex
- I'm not sure
- Other (please specify)

Q7b11. For what reasons do you disagree with having a governing body where representatives come from districts/wards? Check all that apply. [multiple selection, shuffle all except the last two]

- I would be concerned that there wouldn't be enough people in each district interested in serving on the governing body
- I believe such a structure would result in representatives only serving the interests of the residents in their district rather than all of Essex
- I'm concerned that the requirement for districts to be near equal in size population that it wouldn't feel like my local concerns would be addressed
- I'm concerned that the requirement for districts to be near equal in size population would result in the more populous areas would have more districts and thus more seats on the governing body
- I'm concerned it would divide the community
- I'm more in favor of an at-large representation structure
- I'm not sure
- Other (please specify)

Q812. If the Essex governing body were to have representative districts/wards, how likely is it you would run to represent your district/ward? [single selection]

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Moderately likely
- Slightly likely
- Not at all likely

[Description text]

Mixed System

Some municipalities combine these two methods by electing some council members at large and some from districts. An individual councilmember will either occupy a district or an at-large seat on the council.

Note: A governing body comprised of both at-large seats and district/ward seats would set different term lengths depending on the type of seat. For example, an at-large seat may be a four-year term whereas a district/ward seat ~~would~~ may be a two-year term.

Q913. If the Town and Village governments merge into a single municipality, I believe there should be a combination of both at-large seats and district/ward representatives. [single selection]

- Agree [go to Q14Q10a, then skip-go to next section Q11]
- Disagree [go to Q15Q10b, then skip-go to next section Q11]

Q14Q10a. For what reasons do you agree with having a governing body where there is a combination of at-large and district/ward representatives? Check all that apply. [multiple selection, shuffle all except the last two]

- I believe it would be a balanced approach where local concerns are heard and addressed while the perspective of the entire community is kept in mind
- I believe it would be a nice compromise between those that feel strongly about having either at-large representation or district/ward representation
- I'm not sure
- Other (please specify)

Q15Q10b. For what reasons do you disagree with having a governing body where there is a combination of at-large and district/ward representatives? Check all that apply. [multiple selection, shuffle all except the last two]

- It sounds complicated

- I would be concerned there wouldn't be enough residents interested in running to fill these seats
- I believe it would favor more populous areas of the community
- I would rather have an at-large structure
- I would rather have a district/ward structure
- I'm not sure
- Other (please specify)

Q116. Please rank your preference for which representation structure you would prefer in a merged municipality. [rank order, shuffle answer choices]

- At-large
- Districts/wards
- Combination of at-large and districts/wards

Mayor

[Description text]

In council-manager governments (as presently exists in Essex) most mayors are considered "weak" mayors meaning their authority does not supersede the council's or manager's authority in running the government. However, mayors can be elected "at-large" from the entire community and can act as spokespersons for the government, and have other duties assigned by the council and the town charter.¹ A mayor could be elected for having a vision for the Essex community. An Essex mayor could have a seat on the Vermont Mayors Coalition which lobbies Vermont government on economic, legislative, and social issues, particularly those affecting the state's largest communities.

(¹ Sourced from National League of Cities)

Q127. In addition to a unified representative council and an ~~town~~ appointed manager, Essex should have a mayor. [single selection]

- Agree [go to Q13a8, then move to next section]
- Disagree [go to Q13b9, then move to next section]

Q13a. Why do you agree that Essex should have a mayor? [multiple selection, shuffle all except the last two]

- I believe she or he could develop an aspirational vision for the entire community
- I believe she or he would be able to be an effective voice advocating for Essex at the state level
- I believe it would be good to have someone overseeing the government that would be held accountable
- I'm not sure

- Other (please specify)

Q19Q13b. Why do you disagree that Essex should have a mayor? [multiple selection, shuffle all except the last two]

- I'm concerned there wouldn't be enough residents interested to run for mayor that would result in a competitive election
- I'd rather have those interested in serving the local government run for the new Town council rather than as a mayor
- I'd be concerned she or he wouldn't have much power to do anything
- I'm not sure
- Other (please specify)

Voting

The next few questions focus on the topic of voting.

The Town of Essex government and Village of Essex Junction government both have "annual meeting" nights where voters assemble at Essex High School auditorium and approve the municipal budgets by voice vote.

Many Vermont communities use the same process, but some have their budgets approved by the more familiar "Australian ballot" with voters marking a paper ballot and depositing it in a ballot box during all day voting.

Q14. How important is being able to vote on the municipal budget in person by voice vote at annual meeting? [single selection]

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important
- I think the budget voting process should be something different

Q20. I think annual meetings should only be informational meetings and we should approve budgets by Australian (paper) ballots at the ballot box during all day voting. [single selection]

- Agree [go to Q21, then skip to next section]
- Disagree [go to Q22, then to next section]

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Q21. Why do you agree that annual meetings should be informational and the budget be approved during all-day voting at the ballot vote? [multiple selection, shuffle all answer choices except the last two]

- I believe it would be more convenient for me to be able to vote on the budget during all-day voting
- I don't believe those that are able to attend annual meetings represent the entire community
- I'd rather more people be able to have a say in the budget and I believe all-day voting will accomplish that
- I'm not sure
- Other (please specify)

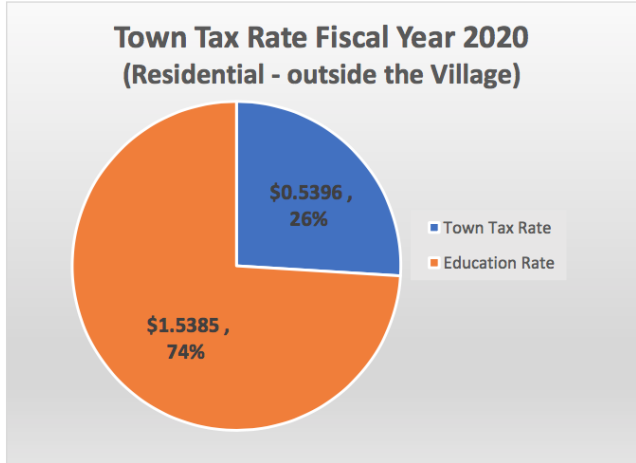
Q22. Why do you disagree that annual meetings should be informational and the budget be approved during all-day voting at the ballot vote? [multiple selection, shuffle all answer choices except the last two]

- It's Essex tradition to approve budgets in that way
- It is something unique to our community
- I believe it maintains a small community feel
- Other (please specify)

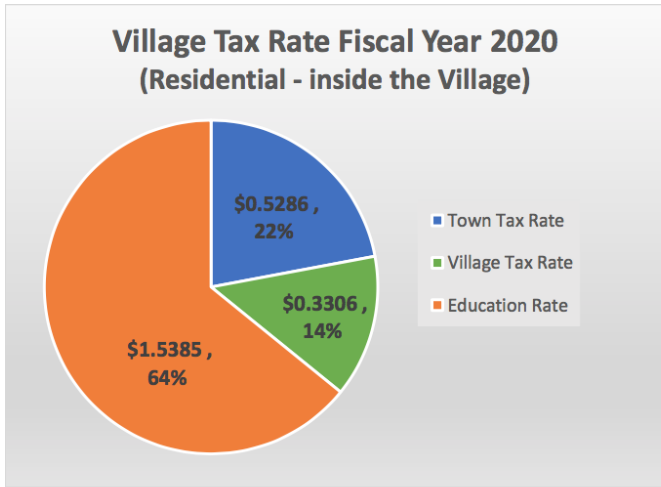
Taxation

The next few questions focus on the topic of municipal taxes. Only property owners in Essex pay municipal taxes, ~~however~~ if you are renting, we would still like your input since you would be impacted should you decide to buy a home in Essex. or if your property owner decides to change your rent based on the amount of taxes paid.

Residents of the Town outside the Village pay municipal taxes only to the Town.



Residents of the Village of Essex Junction pay municipal taxes to both the Village and Town.



**Does not include Town Highway Tax Rate, which is paid only by Town outside the Village residents.*

The amount Essex homeowners owe in municipal tax is based on the assessed home value:

- *A resident of the **Town outside the Village** with a home value of \$280,000 would pay a **total of \$1,510.88 in municipal taxes***
- *A resident of the **Village of Essex Junction** with a home value of \$280,000 would pay a **total of \$2,405.76 in municipal taxes***

Notes:

- **All resident of Essex, whether in the Village or the Town outside the Village, pay the same rate in education taxes. Education tax rates will not be impacted by any potential merger, potentially only municipal tax rates.**
- **Only users of municipal water and sewer pay for these services. Residents in parts of Essex that don't have municipal water or sewer service won't need to pay for those services.**
- **Any remaining debt owed by the Village municipality will stay with the properties in the Village. A temporary "Village Debt Assessment District" will be established and sunset once the debt is paid in full by Village residents.**

[Q23Q15](#). In a merged government, all residents should pay municipal taxes based on a single tax rate, regardless of where in Essex someone lives. **[single selection]**

- Agree **[go to [Q24Q16a](#), then to [Q26Q17](#)]**
- Disagree **[go to [Q25Q16b](#), then to [Q26Q17](#)]**

[Q24Q16a](#). Why would you agree with having a single tax rate for all Essex residents? Check all that apply. **[multiple selection, shuffle all except last two]**

- I feel like that's fair since we are all Essex residents
- I believe a single tax rate will help ensure quality of municipal services and access to services is maintained throughout all of Essex
- It would help make us feel like a more unified community
- I'm not sure
- Other (please specify)

[Q25Q16b](#). Why would you disagree with having a single tax rate for all Essex residents? Check all that apply. **[multiple selection, shuffle all except last two]**

- I believe it would mean my taxes would go up and I don't want that
- I'm ok with my taxes increasing if that means maintaining or improving municipal service access/quality, but I'm worried about taxes going up too quickly **to achieve a single tax rate.**
- I believe we don't all benefit equally from municipal services so we shouldn't have to pay based on the same rate
- I'm not sure
- Other (please specify)

Timeline

Q26Q19. If a merger that results in a single municipal tax rate may causes property taxes to rise/increase for some residents, which may or may not include myself, I would be more inclined to vote for it if the tax increase was gradual over a few years rather than all at once. [single selection]

- Agree
- Disagree

Commented [DT1]: Combine Q26 and Q27?

Q27. If a single tax rate were to be achieved after a period of time of gradually evening out tax rates, what would be the ideal time frame? [Note: shorter time frames = higher annual increases for residents who receive increases.] [single selection]

- Immediate equal tax rate
- Equal tax rate achieved in no more than 3 years
- Equal tax rate achieved in no more than 5 years
- Equal tax rate achieved in no more than 7 years
- Equal tax rate achieved in no more than 10 years
- Equal tax rate achieved in no more than 12 years

Identity

Q28. In a merged community, how important would it be for the community name to be "Town (or City) of Essex"? [single selection]

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not at all important

Q29Q. If a new charter is created for a unified community named "Town (or City) of Essex," I would like the former Village to be known as the unincorporated Village of Essex Junction, to help maintain its historic identity, but with no separate governing body or separate taxing authority. [single selection]

- Agree
- Disagree

Q30Q21. If the two municipalities merge, we should try to retain some aspects of our Town and Village identities, as long as it doesn't impact costs or the delivery of municipal services. [single selection]

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q31. Which of the following names would you prefer? [single selection]

- ~~Town of Essex~~
- ~~City of Essex~~
- ~~Neither of these~~
- ~~It doesn't matter to me~~

Development

~~Q32~~Q22. How do you feel about development in the Essex community as a whole, as in the planning and construction of new residential and commercial buildings in the community? [single selection]

- I like the way the community is developing
- I dislike the way the community is developing
- There are both aspects I like and dislike as it pertains to development in the community
- I don't have an opinion

~~Q33~~Q23. How important is retention of the character ~~or of~~ rural Essex ~~important~~ to you? [single selection]

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not at all important

Q24. How do you believe merger will impact development in the community? [single selection]

- Merger will improve development
- Merger will negatively impact development
- I don't believe merger will impact development
- I don't know enough to say

Services

Q25. I'm concerned that merger will decrease services that contribute to my quality of life in Essex, for example, how often the streets are plowed ~~and or~~ the availability of recreational programs. [single selection]

- Agree
- Disagree

Public Outreach and Education

[Description text]

Should there be a public vote on a potential merger of the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction municipal governments, it will come in the form of an Australian (paper) ballot vote and occur on Election Day November 3, 2020. Prior to that, a presentation on a merger proposal would take place during the March/April 2020 annual meetings for both the Town and Village. Throughout 2020, the municipalities will provide information and education to residents on the topic of merger, while also seeking additional input and feedback from residents.

Q236. How would you prefer like to receive information pertaining to a proposed merger? Check all that apply [multiple selection]

- Email (sign up for an email list)
- Mail sent to home
- At the Town/Village annual meeting
- In a public meeting outside of the annual meetings
- Town/Village municipal websites
- A website solely dedicated to the merger question
- Town/Village social media accounts
- Front Porch Forum
- Other (please specify)

Q237. What would be the preferred method in which you receive information related to a potential merger? Select one. [single selection]

- Email (sign up for an email list)
- Mail sent to home
- At the Town/Village annual meeting
- In a public meeting outside of the annual meetings
- Town/Village municipal websites
- A website solely dedicated to the merger question
- Town/Village social media accounts
- Front Porch Forum
- Other (please specify)

Merger Options

Q238. If the following proposed merger options were put up for a vote, which ones would you vote in favor of? Check all you would vote "yes" for. [multiple selection]

- Tax rate: Single tax rate
Representation: At-large
- Tax rate: Single tax rate
Representation: Districts/wards
- Tax rate: Single tax rate
Representation: Combination at-large and districts/wards

- Tax rate: ~~Variable-Different~~ tax rates
Representation: At-large
- Tax rate: ~~Variable-Different~~ tax rates
Representation: Districts/wards
- Tax rate: ~~Variable-Different~~ tax rates
Representation: Combination at-large and districts/wards
- None of the above – I want some other option for merger (please specify)
- None of the above – I would not support any merger proposal

Commented [DT2]: Final wording TBD

Commented [DT3]: Different tax rates based on services received

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Q239. Which would be your top choices for merger or non-merger? Select one.
[single selection]

- Tax rate: Single tax rate
Representation: At-large
- Tax rate: Single tax rate
Representation: Districts/wards
- Tax rate: Single tax rate
Representation: Combination at-large and districts/wards
- Tax rate: ~~Variable-Different~~ tax rates
Representation: At-large
- Tax rate: ~~Variable-Different~~ tax rates
Representation: Districts/wards
- Tax rate: ~~Variable-Different~~ tax rates
Representation: Combination at-large and districts/wards
- None of the above – I want some other option for merger (please specify)
- None of the above – I would not support any merger proposal

Commented [DT4]: Final wording TBD

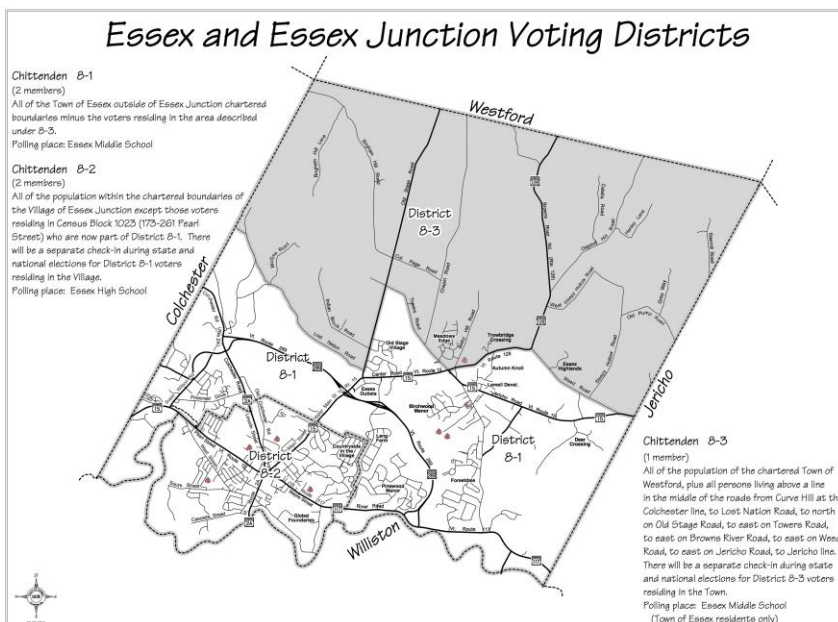
Demographic Questions

Q340. How long have you lived in the Essex community? [single selection]

- Less than five years
- 5-9 years
- 10-14 years
- 15-19 years
- 20-24 years
- 25 years or more

Q341. Do you own or rent your primary residence? [single selection]

- Own
- Rent
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say



Q342. Are you currently registered to vote in Essex? [single selection]

- Yes, District 8-1
- Yes, District 8-2
- Yes, District 8-3
- Yes, but I'm not sure of my district
- No

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Q33. How would you characterize the area in which your home is located?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

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Q3443. Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your household? [single selection]

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q44. What is your gender? [single selection]

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Q45. How would you identify your race or ethnicity? (Select all that apply) [multiple selection]

- Asian
- Black/African American
- Caucasian/White
- Hispanic/Latin
- Native American
- Pacific Islander
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify)

Q46. Do you have a long-lasting or chronic condition (physical, visual, auditory, cognitive or mental, emotional, or other) that substantially limits one or more of your major life activities (your ability to see, hear, or speak; to learn, remember, or concentrate)? [single selection]

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

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Q47Q35. What was the combined income for all members of your household last year? [single selection]

- Less than \$25,000
- \$25,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$149,999
- \$150,000-\$199,999
- \$200,000+
- Prefer not to say

Thank you page

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We appreciate your thoughts in this topic.

For more information about the entire process related to a potential merger vote, please visit GreaterEssex2020.org.

If you are currently not registered to vote in Essex, please visit the Town Clerks Office at 81 Main Street or register online

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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

73
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.

79
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 _____ day of _____, 2019

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