



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

81 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Thursday, June 6, 2019
7:00 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** [7:00 PM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **APPROVE AGENDA**
4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. Planning for Public Engagement around Governance Change
 - b. Discuss communications outreach strategy
 - c. Approval of minutes: May 23, 2019
6. **READING FILE**
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 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: _____ 06/04/2019 _____ *J Mitchell*

Memorandum

To: Governance Subcommittee; Evan Teich, Unified Manager

From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager *GD*

Re: Planning for public engagement around governance change

Date: June 4, 2019

Issue

The issue is for the Governance Subcommittee to meet with representatives from KSV and begin developing a public engagement plan to prepare for a governance change vote in November 2020.

Discussion

Erin Fagnant, Director of Client Relationships for KSV, will meet with the Governance Subcommittee meeting on Thursday night to begin planning for public engagement. KSV plans to offer surveys and focus groups, with the Governance Subcommittee acting as a steering committee.

Discussion topics will include the desired extent of surveys and focus groups, as well as timelines and process. The Governance Subcommittee should be prepared to go over several items:

- Who needs to be involved at each stage of the engagement process
- Key milestones
- Meeting schedule with KSV
- Scope of the project

Other discussion topics may include which groups of the public to reach and questions to ask or themes to touch on in surveys and focus groups.

Cost

The cost will depend on the scope of the project, and is estimated to be between \$37,850 and \$49,950.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Governance Subcommittee meet with KSV to begin developing a public engagement plan for a governance change vote in November 2020.



Essex Town & Essex Junction Consolidation Research Proposal

May 29, 2019



KSV is a full-service data-driven marketing and advertising agency. With offices in Manhattan and Vermont, KSV has partnered with financial, healthcare, education, tourism, recreation, retail and sustainable products, government entities, and energy services clients for over 40 years, building effective marketing programs that deliver on business KPIs.

KSV is a member of MAGNET, a global network of advertising and marketing agencies with partners throughout the world. MAGNET is the world's most successful network of innovative and entrepreneurial independent agencies.

KSV is a WBENC-certified women-owned B Corp.

WOMEN
OWNED



Our Expertise

a.k.a. Our Jam





AGENCY CAPABILITIES

Market Research

Brand Research & Analysis
Customer Journey Mapping
Customer Prioritization Modeling
B2B & B2C Customer Panels
First Party Data Evaluation & Insights
Hard-to-Reach Audience Surveys & In-Depth Interviews
Focus Groups

Strategic Marketing Consultation

Customer Cross Product Lifecycle Mapping
Product Specific Customer Journey Maps
Program Experience Visualization & User Flows
Energy Benchmarking and Third Party Reporting
Website Navigation Audit and Tree-Test
First Party Data Evaluation and Insights

Media and Connections

Omnichannel Planning
Media Planning & Channel Strategy
Cross Program/Product Paid Search Strategy and Consulting
Media Reporting and Insights
ROI Analysis

Social Media and Public Relations

Social Marketing Strategy & Content Creation
Thought Leadership Strategy & Content Creation
Social Monitoring & Community Management
Paid Social Advertising
Measurement & Reporting
Public Relations
Community Relations

Advertising and Design

Creative
Brand Identity
Brand Voice
Content Creation
Voice Ready Content

Video Production

Live Footage
Animation
Post-production & Editing
Social Media Videos

Digital Transformation

Voice Ready Content
Website Performance Trend Analysis and Meta-Data Audit
Website Navigation Audit and Tree-Test
UX Testing
GA & Salesforce Protocol Guidance

Data Science

Engagement Modeling Tool
Investment Modeling Tool
Customer Prioritization Modeling
Regression Modeling
Data Engineering
Data Visualization

Analytics and Insights

Existing Marketing Infrastructure and System Audit
GA & Salesforce Protocol Guidance
Energy Benchmarks
Custom Built Dashboards & Customized Data Hubs
Google Tag Manager Setup, Audit, & Optimization
Google Analytics: Custom Configuration, Dashboards & Conversion Tracking



**Enough about us.
Let's talk about you.**



What we heard:

The Town of Essex has separate governing bodies for Essex Town vs. the Village of Essex Junction. And while some services have been combined over the years, many community services remain separate.

The community leaders are looking to move to a fully consolidated municipal system and have developed three operating options for community review and feedback.

A research project will be conducted to help narrow down to and refine the best option for the town leading up to a town-wide vote in November 2020 with the goal of obtaining 80%+ voter approval.

Project Approach





RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Project Kickoff & Alignment Meeting

Objectives

1. Align on project components and research objectives.
 - *Potential topics of discussion to include:*
 - *History of town merger and current status*
 - *Review of three proposed operating options*
 - *Anticipated resident feedback, challenges, and opportunities*
 - *Potential research questions*
 - *Focus group location and logistics*
 - *Project timeline*

Format

- *2-hour in-person meeting*



RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Initial Residential Survey

Objectives

1. Determine the level of awareness of town merger discussions and favorability among residents.
2. Understand potential challenges and perceived benefits of merging functions and services.
3. Uncover potential issues to probe during focus groups and future survey.

Format

- *Online survey*
 - *While the survey would include some multiple choice questions, the focus would be on open-ended questions to allow residents to share with us their top-of-mind challenges or perceived benefits to help inform the development of focus group discussion guide questions*
 - *Residents will not be exposed to the three proposed operating options in this survey*
- *Survey programmed and hosted by KSV*
- *Survey link deployed by Town of Essex*
- *KSV to share a debrief of survey findings*



RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Focus Groups

(Tier 2 & 3 plans only)

Objectives

1. Gather resident feedback on three proposed operating options, including potential issues, perceived benefits, and recommended improvements to each option.
2. Determine whether revisions should be made to any of the options before gathering additional feedback.
3. Use feedback to inform the development of a survey that will be deployed to residents.



RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Focus Groups

(Tier 2 & 3 plans only)

Format

- *90-minute focus group sessions*
 - *Tier 2 – 4 total groups*
 - *1 group of 8-10 Town of Essex residents only*
 - *1 group of 8-10 Village of Essex Junction residents only*
 - *2 groups of 8-10 residents from the Village and Town combined*
 - *Tier 3 – 8 total groups*
 - *2 groups of 8-10 Town of Essex residents only*
 - *2 groups of Village of Essex Junction residents only*
 - *2 groups of 8-10 residents from the Village and Town combined*
 - *2 groups of business decision makers from both Town and Village*
- *Each group will have a mix of genders, incomes, ages, and number of years lived in the Town or Village*
- *KSV to develop focus group recruitment screener, schedule focus group participants, and moderate focus groups*
- *Town of Essex to deploy recruitment screener link and provide facilities for focus group sessions*
- *KSV to present report of focus group findings and recommendations for the follow-up quantitative survey*
- *KSV will video record and transcribe all focus groups*



RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Proposed Merger 3-Option Survey

Objectives

1. Gather quantitative feedback from residents on the three proposed operating options, including challenges and benefits of each approach.
2. Determine which option is the favorite among residents that will be placed on the ballot for the November 2020 election.
3. Determine whether revisions should be made to the “winning” option prior to putting it on the ballot.

Format

- *Online survey(s)*
 - *Resident survey*
 - *Business survey (Tier 3 only)*
- *Survey(s) programmed and hosted by KSV*
- *Survey link(s) deployed by Town of Essex*
- *KSV to present research findings in person*

Your Team





YOUR TEAM



Erin Fagnant

Director of Client Relationships

Erin is our client's business partner, day and night. She works to ensure our clients receive the best experience working with KSV and doesn't sleep until you meet your objectives—but the sleep deprivation doesn't show because she's always so damn chipper.

Contact Information
efagnant@ksvc.com



Tucker Wright

Director of Strategy

Tucker leads the research and strategy team at KSV. He works with the agency's clients to help them identify the most effective strategies to reach their KPIs. He and his team are stewards of the holistic customer experience.

Contact Information
twright@ksvc.com



Dave Treston

Sr. Strategist & Research Analyst

Dave is a senior-level brand strategist and research analyst specializing in quantitative and qualitative research including; surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus group planning and execution, research analysis, and consumer insights.

Contact Information
dtreston@ksvc.com

Pricing





PRICING OPTIONS

Tier 1 - \$21,200

What's included:

- (1) Project Kickoff and Alignment Meeting
- (1) Initial Resident Survey
- (1) Survey on Proposed Merger Options – residential audiences only

Tier 2 - \$37,850

What's included:

- (1) Project Kickoff and Alignment Meeting
- (1) Initial Resident Survey
- (4) Focus Groups – residential audiences only
- (1) Survey on Proposed Merger Options – residential audiences only

Tier 3 - \$49,950

What's included:

- (1) Project Kickoff and Alignment Meeting
- (1) Initial Resident Survey
- (8) Focus Groups:
 - (4) Residential
 - (4) Business
- (2) Surveys on Proposed Merger Options:
 - (1) Residential
 - (1) Business

What's next

Let us answer your questions

Select the project tier that works best for you

Schedule project kickoff





Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing our proposal.
We hope that this is just the beginning of a conversation, and a partnership.

We can't wait to get started.

Memorandum

To: Governance Subcommittee; Evan Teich, Unified Manager

From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager

Re: Discussion of communications outreach strategy

Date: June 4, 2019

Issue

The issue is for the Governance Subcommittee to discuss a communications outreach strategy.

Discussion

In addition to using a market research firm to engage residents on questions about governance change for a November 2020 vote, the Trustees and Selectboard will also be working to educate and inform the public about the vote.

The Governance Subcommittee can begin discussing outreach strategies. Possible ideas include the following:

- Website, with information about status quo and potential changes
- Identify a primary spokesperson/spokespeople
- Weekly communications from the boards
 - Essex Reporter
 - Front Porch Forum
 - Social media
 - Etc.
- Public forums
- Meetings with local groups and organizations
 - Rotary
 - Lions Club
 - Churches
 - Municipal boards and committees
 - School Board
- Branding

The Town and Village recently hired a Merger Project Manager who can help with outreach.

St. Albans officials spoke the Trustees and Selectboard about the importance of communications, and could serve as a resource for additional ideas.

Cost

To be determined based on the extent of the outreach.

Recommendation

This memo is for discussion purposes.

1 **VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION/TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD**
2 **SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE**
3 **SPECIAL MEETING**
4 **MAY 23, 2019**

5
6 **Governance Subcommittee Members:** George Tyler, Chair; Max Levy; Raj Chawla, Andy
7 Watts.

8 **ADMINISTRATION:** Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager.

9 **OTHERS PRESENT:** Barbara Higgins, Margaret Smith, Irene Wrenner.

10
11 **1. CALL TO ORDER**

12
13 Mr. Tyler called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

14
15 **2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

16
17 There were no changes to the Agenda. Members agreed that discussion should occur when they
18 reach the items in the Reading File.

19
20 **4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

21
22 Ms. Barbara Higgins, who is a member of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) but
23 was speaking as a resident, encouraged the Governance Subcommittee (GS) to discuss the
24 impact of consolidation decisions and their positive and negative impacts on economic
25 development from a business and housing perspective. Mr. Tyler appreciated this comment and
26 asked for more specifics. One example Ms. Higgins gave was that, from a property tax
27 perspective, any increases would have an impact on businesses, and she was concerned how that
28 might have an effect on attracting new businesses to Essex. Mr. Tyler agreed with Ms. Higgins
29 that this topic needed to be discussed. Mr. Levy suggested that Ms. Higgins ask the EDC to
30 gather information about how taxes affect businesses today and how it would look for businesses
31 in a consolidated community, and Ms. Higgins agreed.

32
33 **5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

34 **a. Review of potential focus group providers (staff)**

35
36 Mr. Duggan introduced the issue of informing the GS about projected costs and availability of
37 market research professionals to organize focus groups around governance proposals. In
38 speaking to market research professionals, staff believes there should be six to 10 focus groups
39 with six to 10 people per group. Mr. Duggan's memorandum, dated May 23, 2019, includes a list
40 of firms that are interested in conducting focus groups, surveys or both. With regard to the
41 process, one option could be a larger, kick-off focus group to gather input and shape the
42 questions for the smaller focus groups. The focus groups could include target demographics as
43 well as any other residents who wish to participate and are available at different times. Staff and
44 elected officials would find participants, provide meeting space, provide incentives and
45 background material about the governance change project. Market research professionals also

46 suggested that a community-wide survey, conducted prior to the focus groups, could provide
47 feedback that focus groups could explore in more depth.

48

49 Mr. Duggan explained that if members hire a market research professional, preliminary costs
50 would range from \$1,500 to \$3,000 per focus group, plus an additional cost for a report. With an
51 incentive cost of \$50 per person, the total cost is estimated at a low of \$10,800 for six groups of
52 six people to \$35,000 for 10 groups of 10 people. Combined with one or two surveys, the entire
53 public engagement effort is likely to cost \$25,000 to \$50,000, depending on the extent of the
54 work. Mr. Duggan added that an alternate route could be to use staff or volunteers to conduct
55 focus groups and to create a survey in-house or to hire an intern at a low cost. This would lower
56 the cost, but would take the process out of the hands of a third-party and potentially lose the
57 perception of impartiality.

58

59 Members discussed the direction they would like to take on this issue. Mr. Tyler thought their
60 past discussions leaned towards having focus groups first because they might identify issues that
61 need to be included in the survey. Mr. Levy felt it was important to hone in on important issues
62 raised by the community first, and Mr. Chawla agreed. Mr. Levy was in favor of hiring a
63 research professional and wondered if they would be the ones to recommend a process to follow.
64 Mr. Tyler agreed that a third party keeps the project objective. Mr. Chawla added that he felt the
65 project was too much work for the staff to take on at this time. Members discussed how to get the
66 “pulse” of the community through a survey or two. Mr. Watts felt the results of the meeting on
67 March 24, 2018 and the 2017 survey conducted by the Trustees should be considered during this
68 process. He noted that there were overwhelmingly positive responses on the survey, but negative
69 written comments. Mr. Chawla thought that a professional could correlate the results so the
70 information could be more accurate and useful. The members agreed to hire a marketing research
71 professional to conduct both the survey and focus groups.

72

73 Members discussed a budget of no more than \$40,000 for this project, and after some
74 deliberation, decided to present this update and recommendation to the Trustees and Selectboard
75 (SB) on the joint meeting Tuesday, May 28th for their authorization. The Unified Manager has
76 the authority to spend up to \$40,000 without requiring a lengthy bid process. It was also decided
77 to make a decision of which professional to hire, based on the staff’s recommendation, at the
78 next GS meeting on June 3.

79

80 Ms. Higgins urged the GS to educate the public about any joint proposals before sending out the
81 survey in order for the survey to be of any value. Mr. Tyler stated that topics for questions have
82 been identified, such as the Council/Manager form of government, whether to have voting
83 districts or not, whether to have a phase-in for any tax increases and feelings about identity. Mr.
84 Chawla noted that there is still a lot of confusion going on about understanding the current status
85 quo. Mr. Teich stated that if the public answers that it does not understand the question, then
86 there is more work to do. Mr. Chawla suggested an ongoing website tied into the survey for
87 answering questions. He suggested using Facebook, Front Porch Forum and letters to the editor
88 to get out the information. Ms. Higgins agreed that was important, however she pointed out that,
89 in the end, people will make a decision based on their pocketbook. Mr. Tyler thought those
90 questions could be presented to the focus groups, such as, Do you support merger? Do you
91 support merger if your taxes will be increased by a certain number and what increase would be

92 palatable? Mr. Chawla wanted to know the value on that money for residents and what it means
93 to them. Mr. Teich added the question, What is important to you as one community and what are
94 you willing to pay for that? Mr. Teich also recommended asking these questions to the many
95 volunteers in the community, and members agreed.

96
97 Mr. Levy was in favor of in-kind incentives for focus group participants, such as Indian Brook
98 passes or a recreation program, and members agreed. Members also agreed to hold the focus
99 groups at comfortable locations with coffee and pastries.

100

101 b. Identify people, groups, and priority questions for focus groups

102

103 The GS talked about people and groups to include in focus groups about governance change, and
104 to identify priority questions for those focus groups. In the memorandum dated May 23, 2019
105 from Greg Duggan to the GS and the Unified Manager, Mr. Duggan provide a potential list of
106 people and groups. Members discussed the list and added the following:

107

108 Business owners, realtors, developers, leaders in the community, such as coaches, Rotary
109 members, PTO officers and neighborhood watch leaders. Mr. Duggan confirmed that once
110 identified, a direct invite will get sent with the hope of getting people involved. Members agreed
111 to include business owners who do not reside in Essex as a group to invite. Mr. Chawla would
112 like to see as many different voices as possible included.

113

114 c. Discussion of process and questions for community survey

115

116 The GS discussed a community survey around governance change. Mr. Watts wondered about
117 including questions on representation, program/asset access and higher taxes to limit access. Mr.
118 Teich recommended letting the research professional decide on those questions. He thought the
119 focus groups could answer questions, such as, Do you understand why merger and What
120 questions would you like answered before you would say yes to a merger? Mr. Levy stated that
121 the reason for a merged community needs to be really clear and people need to know how things
122 will be better and how it will impact their lives other than efficiencies and even if there is no tax
123 impact. Mr. Chawla wanted to identify the value people see, before addressing taxes. He wants
124 to know how people define their community and whether they see it as an investment for a better
125 future. Mr. Tyler wanted to get the pulse of the community and what the first thing is that comes
126 to their mind with regard to this issue. Members discussed how the vote on this issue would be
127 different than in 2006 because it would take place at the same time as the presidential election, so
128 there would be a good turnout. Any questions members want to include for focus groups and the
129 survey should be emailed to staff. Staff will begin work on the “why” for the governance project
130 for further discussion with the members in the future.

131

132 d. Approval of Minutes: May 13, 2019

133

134 **MAX LEVY MOVED AND ANDREW WATTS SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE**
135 **THE MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2019 AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION PASSED 4-0.**

136

137 **6. READING FILE**

138 a. Responses from Dan Richardson re: governance questions

139

140 Members deliberated briefly on the responses from Mr. Dan Richardson, Attorney. Mr. Tyler
141 was surprised that with a charter change, it could take a year or more to get passed through the
142 Legislature. Mr. Watts noted that if the public is interested in representative districts, it is good
143 for people to know that boundaries of districts can change every five years. Mr. Teich was
144 interested in knowing what the public wants for the libraries. The attorney explained that the
145 libraries cannot create themselves or dissolve themselves.

146

147 b. Differences in water/sewer rates for Village of Essex Junction and Town of Essex

148

149 Members deliberated briefly on this issue. Mr. Duggan stated that the issue is very complicated.
150 The Town, outside the Village (TOV), has more pumping stations and charges for depreciation,
151 whereas the Village charges for capital. The TOV also has bonds that do not apply to the Town
152 inside the Village (TIV). There can be separate water districts or utilities based on the services
153 that are being provided. Consolidation of public works could change the structure. If merger
154 happens, a single legislative body can act as Water Commission for both districts.

155

156 **7. ADJOURN**

157

158 Mr. Watts and Mr. Teich are not able to attend the June 6th GS meeting.

159

160 **MAX LEVY MOVED AND RAJ CHAWLA SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT**
161 **8:32 P.M. THE MOTION PASSED 4-0.**