

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION NEWS

"In the whole world, there is only one Essex Junction"

Issue No. 40

March 2017

Please Come to Annual Meeting **Wednesday, April 5, 2017 at 7 PM** **Essex High School Auditorium**

Essex Junction's general fund budget, which pays for municipal services such as road maintenance, fire department, and library, is decided by an "aye" or "nay" vote from the audience at the Village's Annual Meeting. Every vote counts.

The free pre-Annual Meeting community supper begins at 6:00 p.m. in the Essex High School cafeteria on Wednesday, April 5, 2017. Free childcare begins at 7:00 p.m. Free rides for Seniors, call 878-6940.

State of the Village 2017

By George Tyler, Village President
On behalf of the Essex Junction Board of Trustees

The Trustees extend our warmest regards to the Village community. We're honored to represent our neighbors' interests in Village government and would like to offer a few highlights of what has been a busy legislative year.

Budget and Shared Services

The positive impacts of the Village's ongoing shared services initiative with Essex Town are reflected in this year's budget. Following the trend of the last three years, administrative consolidations continue to lower the Village's tax rate. Some of these consolidations, such as the finance office, represent permanent changes in the Town and Village administrative operations; some, such as the shared municipal manager, are being conducted on a trial basis pending evaluation by the Trustees and the Essex Town Selectboard. Both boards have expressed their desire to continue moving forward with this initiative.

EJRP Governance Transferred to Village

Although administrative costs are down, this year's proposed FY18 general fund budget reflects a significant increase over last year's budget due to the transfer of the Essex Junction Recreation and Parks (EJRP) department from the Essex Junction school district to the Essex Junction municipal government.

The Essex Junction Prudential Committee (school board) has traditionally overseen EJRP's finances and operations. They have presented EJRP's budget for voter approval at their annual school meeting, and included EJRP's tax bill as a separate item in the Village school tax bill.

All that has changed with the reorganization of the Essex Junction, Essex Town, Westford, and Union 46 School Districts into a unified Essex-Westford School District. The Prudential Committee and Village School District will be assimilated into the new union school district, and EJRP's governance, including its financial oversight and annual budget development, will become the responsibility of the

Essex Junction Trustees and Village government. EJRP staff will become Village staff. Therefore, this year's Annual Report and FY2018 budget warning includes, for the first time, EJRP's proposed budget as part of the overall Village General Fund budget.

Because the cost of providing tax support for EJRP has simply been shifted from the school tax bill to the Village tax bill, it does not represent an overall increase in Village homeowners' tax burden. However, in the budget development process the Trustees learned that the cost of providing health insurance benefits for Village municipal staff is higher than for Village school district staff. Due to this cost increase the Trustees agreed to adjust EJRP's FY18 proposed budget to ensure no changes in EJRP programs and services in this transitional year.

Recreation District Vote

Transferring EJRP's governance to the Village was not the only option available to the Prudential Committee. At this time last year, the Trustees, Prudential Committee, and the Essex Town Selectboard agreed to create a study committee to explore possible options for merging EJRP with the Essex Town Recreation and Parks department as part of the ongoing shared services initiative. One of the Village-Town consolidation models the Study Committee was asked to consider was the formation of a union recreation district with its own elected board of governors. After considering various options the Study Committee concluded that the recreation district model would best serve the Essex community's needs. Such districts are common throughout the country and are similar to other single purpose government districts that already serve the Essex community today, such as the Union 46 School District, the Chittenden Solid Waste District, and the Champlain Water District. The Selectboard and Trustees accepted the Study Committee's findings and warned a community-wide vote in December. Voters rejected the proposal, with the positive-negative vote split along inside-the-Village and outside-the-Village lines, respectively.

Prior to the vote the Trustees proposed to the Prudential Committee to have the Village government take responsibility for EJRP in the event of a negative vote rather than having the question of EJRP's governance linger into 2017 at a time when the Prudential Committee must commit its full attention to the creation of the new union school district. The Prudential Committee accepted the Trustees' offer, and the two boards and associated staff have worked efficiently over the last few months to effect the transfer.

Park Street School Vote

Control and ownership of all EJRP buildings and facilities will be transferred to the Village government upon dissolution of the Village school district. However, the Park Street School, which is no longer used for regular school classes but which EJRP uses extensively for its child care programs, is a Village School District property. It's slated to be transferred to the new Essex-Westford Unified School District in April 2017 along with all other Village school district buildings.

Due to its historic importance (it was Vermont's first brick school building) and its importance to EJRP operations, the Trustees and Prudential Committee have agreed to have the Village government purchase Park Street from the Village school district for a nominal price. The Village community approved extensive renovations to the school a decade ago, and the Village government is best positioned to provide stewardship for the 19th century building. Ownership will also ensure the building remains available to EJRP.

Village voters must approve the sale of Park Street by the Village school district to the Village municipal government at the Village School District annual meeting on April 10, 2017. Although the Village government can purchase property for nominal cost without voter approval, the Village attorney has recommended that Village voters attending the Essex Junction Annual Meeting also express their approval by voice vote during the meeting.

WARNING
VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 5 & 11, 2017

The legal voters of the Village of Essex Junction are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Essex Community Educational Center on Educational Drive in the Village of Essex Junction on Wednesday, April 5, 2017 at 7:00 PM to act upon any of the following articles not involving voting by Australian ballot, said meeting to be adjourned to reconvene at the Essex Community Educational Center, on Tuesday, April 11, 2017 to vote for Village officers and transact any business involving voting by Australian ballot, said voting by Australian ballot to begin at 7:00 AM and close at 7:00 PM.

ARTICLE 1. Shall the voters act upon the report of the auditor?

ARTICLE 2. Shall the voters approve an annual General Fund Budget in the amount of \$4,816,309 for fiscal year July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018, \$3,285,170 of which is to be levied in taxes against the Village Grand List?

ARTICLE 3. Shall the voters approve the transfer of \$96,000 from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Reserve Fund for future capital projects?

ARTICLE 4. Shall the voters approve the purchase of the Park Street School property from the Essex Junction School District for \$1?

ARTICLE 5. Shall the voters approve holding the 2018 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 4, 2018 to act upon any articles not involving voting by Australian ballot and to reconvene on Tuesday, April 10, 2018 to vote for the Village officers and transact any business involving voting by Australian ballot?

ARTICLE 6. To transact any other business that may lawfully come before the meeting?

BALLOT QUESTIONS

ARTICLE 7. To elect Village officers required by law including: Moderator (one year term); two Village Trustees (three year term); three Library Trustees (1 five year term, 1 three year term and 1 one year term)?

Dated this 28th day of February, 2017

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By: George A. Tyler, President
Elaine H. Sopchak, Vice President
Daniel S. Kerin, Trustee
Lori A. Houghton, Trustee
Andrew P. Brown, Trustee

ATTEST:
Susan McNamara-Hill, Village Clerk

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION GENERAL FUND REVENUES

Account	FYE15 Actual	FYE16 Budget	FYE16 Actual	FYE17 Budget	FYE17 Estimated Revenues	FYE18 Proposed Budget
1 Unrestricted Fund Balance	0	35,000	0	35,000	35,000	60,000
2 Property Taxes	3,037,246	2,564,285	2,564,285	2,482,765	2,482,765	3,285,170
3 State for Pilot & Current Use	3,529	2,500	2,173	1,900	4,301	2,000
4 Essex Town Contribution to Library	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
5 Town Payment for Stormwater	0	59,500	59,500	59,352	59,352	61,460
6 Town Payment for Street Dept.	0	780,070	780,070	1,000,642	1,000,642	1,059,989
7 License & Zoning Fees	69,383	50,000	58,153	50,000	50,000	58,000
8 Whitcomb Farm Solar Pilot	6,600	5,524	5,405	5,400	5,400	5,000
9 Miscellaneous Fire Receipts	20	10	25	20	20	20
10 State District Court Fines	877	2,000	1,741	500	1,500	1,000
11 Interest Earnings	1,389	2,000	2,657	1,500	1,500	1,500
12 Parking Space Fees	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800
13 Lincoln Hall Rentals	0	1	30	1	1	0
14 Block Party Donations	1,700	1,500	1,150	1,500	1,500	1,500
15 Misc. Receipts	2,740	2,000	1,630	2,000	3,000	2,000
16 Miscellaneous Street Receipts	3,528	3,000	9,312	3,000	3,000	4,000
17 Miscellaneous Library Receipts	706	300	683	400	500	500
18 Parks & Rec Non-resident Fees	0	0	0	0	0	22,000
19 Service Fee - Water	106,840	108,760	108,760	113,888	113,888	92,948
20 Service Fee - WWTP	53,420	54,380	54,380	56,944	56,944	46,474
21 Service Fee - Sanitation	106,840	108,760	108,760	113,888	113,888	92,948
22 Miscellaneous Grants /Donations	19,958	0	17,725	0	10,702	0
23 Lost Book Revenue	5,069	0	2,381	0	2,000	0
24 Farmers Market Reimbursement	1,450	0	3,479	4,575	0	0
25 Penalties/Interest Delinq. Taxes	383	0	0	0	0	0
26 State Highway Aid	113,436	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	3,554,914	3,799,390	3,802,099	3,953,074	3,965,703	4,816,309

GENERAL FUND BUDGET SUMMARY

	FYE15 Actual	FYE16 Budget	FYE16 Actual	FYE17 Budget	FYE17 Estimated Expenditures	FYE18 Proposed Budget
GENERAL GOVERNMENT:						
27 Administration	546,247	588,773	562,235	603,131	600,699	503,502
28 Transfers & Misc Expenditures	649,623	690,448	765,448	583,585	616,585	673,858
29 Grant & Non-Budgetary Expenditures	17,974	0	20,763	0	11,702	0
30 Seniors Support	5,934	8,223	12,347	0	0	0
31 Fire Department	300,351	304,184	299,463	315,342	315,311	332,165
32 Library	692,950	762,774	696,980	776,396	764,867	798,291
33 Lincoln Hall	58,835	44,604	44,675	49,150	48,967	50,874
34 Community Development	224,051	249,937	233,331	251,212	228,642	253,271
35 Economic Development/Community Eve	86,573	87,450	70,408	92,021	85,470	92,905
36 Street Department	809,092	839,570	832,516	1,059,993	1,042,245	1,121,449
37 Recreation & Parks	0	0	0	0	0	674,728
Subtotal General Fund	3,391,630	3,575,963	3,538,166	3,730,830	3,714,488	4,501,043
38 Debt Service	68,612	223,426	223,426	222,244	222,244	315,266
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	3,460,242	3,799,389	3,761,592	3,953,074	3,936,732	4,816,309

Survey for Residents

Included in this Village newsletter is a survey for residents. The Village Trustees would like to hear from residents about their thoughts regarding a variety of issues and initiatives. This will help the Board make plans for the upcoming year, and allow residents to share their thoughts on what's important to the Village.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey. Use the enclosed envelope to return it to the Village office. Preliminary results will be shared with the community at Village Meeting on Wednesday, April 5th. Please take the time to let us know what you're thinking, and help us shape the Village's future direction.

**SMART
Water WAYS**



Add Up to Cleaner Water

***Water quality and storm water
information at
smartwaterways.org and
ccstreamteam.org***

Five Corners Farmers Market

There will be no summer market season this year! The market's purpose -- besides bringing fresh farm goods to the community -- has been one of downtown revitalization, and since its start seven years ago the Village now has four new restaurants with many Friday night dinner options. Further, after several years of collecting surveys, the Farmers Market seeks to take extra time to enhance the aspects of the market that are most valued.

Over the next six months, the farmers' market staff and volunteers will be creating a new vision for the market and a new market for the community! If you have input for or a desire to assist the Market Manager who is leading the redesign, please contact her at 5cornersfarmersmarket@gmail.com.

JOIN FRONT PORCH FORUM

If you haven't already, sign up for your neighborhood's e-newsletter today. Hear from your clearly identified nearby neighbors and post messages yourself. No fees, no spam, all local. It won't overflow your inbox. There are five neighborhoods in Essex Junction which have their own forums: Five Corners North, Five Corners South, Fairview Farms, Countryside and Essex West.

After just a few months on FPF, people often report feeling more connected to their neighbors, more tuned in to local goings on and more a part of their community. You'll see postings looking for a contractor, a lost pet, organizing a group yard sale, alerts to suspicious activity, etc. Check it out at www.frontporchforum.com.

Online conversations help neighbors connect and build community.

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
2 Lincoln Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452-3154

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ECRWSS

POSTAL PATRON

IMPORTANT DATES FOR VILLAGE RESIDENTS

<u>March 15, 2017</u>	Second installment of FY 2017 property taxes due
<u>April 5, 2017</u>	Community Supper, 6 PM, Essex High School Cafeteria Annual Meeting , 7 PM, Essex High School Auditorium
<u>April 11, 2017</u>	Village Annual Meeting ballot voting, 7 AM-7 PM, EHS
<u>April 30, 2017</u>	Water/Sewer bills mailed
<u>May 6, 2017</u>	Green Up Day
<u>May 27, 2017</u>	Memorial Day Parade, 10 AM
<u>July 4, 2017</u>	4 th of July Celebration with fireworks at Maple St. Park
<u>July 15, 2017</u>	16 th Annual Block Party/Street Dance, Railroad Avenue, 4-9 PM
<u>July 31, 2017</u>	Water/Sewer bills mailed
<u>Sept. 15, 2017</u>	First installment of FY 2018 property taxes due
<u>Oct. 31, 2017</u>	Water/Sewer bills mailed
<u>Nov. 15, 2017</u>	125 th Anniversary of the Village of Essex Junction
<u>Dec. 8, 2017</u>	8 th Annual Train Hop and Tree Lighting, 6-8 PM

Community Supper Before Annual Meeting, April 5 at 6:00 PM

Join your friends and neighbors for the Community Supper on Wednesday, April 5, 2017 at 6 PM in the Essex High School cafeteria. The supper is free and dessert will be provided. The supper is followed by the Village Annual Meeting in the auditorium at 7 PM. Free on-site child care is provided during the meeting.

2016 Annual Report

The 2016 Village Annual Report will be available at the Annual Meeting or may be picked up at the Village office or the Brownell Library by March 22. It will also be online at www.essexjunction.org. The FYE 16 Audit Report is also available on the Village website or at the Village office.

2017 Village of Essex Junction Resident Survey

Please indicate whether you **strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or have no opinion** about the following statements.

Quality of Life, Taxes, and Development

1. The Village should promote mixed use development (residential and business) in all commercial areas of the Village.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

2. I approve of the development that's been taking place in the Village center and believe it should continue.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

3. The Village has incorporated the Design Five Corners plan into the Land Development Code. The Village should maintain its historical, small community character by following this plan to balance the needs of local businesses and future economic development with the needs of local residents.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

4. Village government should work to bring more businesses to the downtown.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

5. The Trustees should pursue bonding to rehabilitate the train station.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

6. The Essex Police, fire departments, and local governments should make a renewed effort to publicize public safety and emergency response plans.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

Municipal Services

7. I am satisfied with the quality of maintenance of Village roads, sidewalks, bike paths, and parks.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

8. I am satisfied with the quality of Village water and sewer services.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

9. I am satisfied with the quality of the services being provided to the Village by the Town.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

10. I am satisfied with the quality of Village administration services (Village office, planning, and zoning).

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

11. I am satisfied with the quality of the Brownell Library.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

12. I am satisfied with the quality of programs offered by Essex Junction Recreation & Parks (EJRP).

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

Village-Town Consolidation Efforts

Essex Junction is an incorporated village within the Town of Essex. Village residents share the cost of Town municipal services with Town residents outside the Village. Village residents must also pay the full cost of services provided by the Village government. The ongoing effort to consolidate municipal services by the Village Trustees and Town Selectboard are intended to address this disproportionate tax burden. If carried to its logical conclusion, this effort could result in the eventual dissolution of the Village of Essex Junction as a distinct municipality. To help the Trustees understand how to proceed with consolidation efforts, please indicate whether you **strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or have no opinion** about the following statements.

13. The Village community should resist further efforts to consolidate services with the Town.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

14. Essex Junction's historic identity as a chartered Vermont village should be preserved even if it prevents full consolidation and tax equity with the Town of Essex.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

15. The Trustees and Selectboard should proceed with consolidation efforts until complete tax equity is achieved, even if it means the end of the Village as a separate municipality.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

16. The recent vote to consolidate recreation departments was approved by Village residents but defeated by Town-
outside-the-Village residents. I believe the Village should take no further steps to consolidate recreation
departments with the Town of Essex even if it prevents full Village-Town consolidation.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

17. I would prefer to see tax equity achieved in some way that preserves the Village's identity as a separate entity within the Town of Essex.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion

18. The Trustees should petition the Vermont Legislature to allow the Village to become a completely independent community from the Town of Essex. Residents in each community would then pay taxes only for those services provided by their local governments.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion