



**Village of Essex Junction  
Town of Essex, Vermont**

## **Request for Proposals & Qualifications**

**Public engagement effort regarding potential governance changes in Essex Junction and Essex**

**Issued:** April 18, 2019

**Proposals due:** 4:30 p.m., May 6, 2019

### **OVERVIEW**

The Village of Essex Junction and the Town of Essex are seeking a professional, experienced facilitator(s) to engage residents on whether and how to make changes to the governing structures as it relates to a potential merger of the two municipalities.

The expectation is that the facilitator(s) will organize and oversee a public engagement process that solicits input from thousands of residents across all of Essex about the proposed governing structure(s) for the entire community. The process will focus on three potential governance change options being considered by the Essex Junction Board of Trustees and the Town of Essex Selectboard. Through the engagement process, the public will vet the three options and help craft and select one preferred option. The Town Selectboard and the Village Board of Trustees will then use this public input in their decision-making process. It is anticipated that residents will vote in November 2020 on whether or not to accept the proposed governance option.

The facilitator(s) will produce a report by November 1, 2019 that details the results of the engagement process.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Village of Essex Junction is an incorporated municipality within the Town of Essex. Since 2013, the Village and Town have shared one manager and have been consolidating some municipal departments. The Trustees and Selectboard have identified November 2020 as the time to have the entire community vote on whether or not to change the governing structure in the Village and Town (i.e., merge). The date was chosen in part because of the national presidential election, which is expected to result in high voter turnout.

A Governance Subcommittee of the two boards has met regularly since July 2018, and recently presented the full boards with three preferred options for governance change. The Village and

the Town have also hired an attorney with experience in these matters to provide legal guidance about governance topics.

Prior to holding a vote in November 2020, the Trustees and Selectboard want to conduct a comprehensive engagement process throughout the entire community in order for residents to learn about the issues, review options for governance, help craft and select the preferred option, and understand why their vote is important. Important issues to consider will include representation and taxation, among others.

The Governance Subcommittee has identified a variety of engagement options for consideration, including but not limited to a town-wide survey mailed to each home, a series of facilitated public meetings, creation of explanatory documents, a public web page, the use of other online resources (such as PlaceSpeak) for additional survey and feedback opportunities, and neighborhood conversations.

The facilitator(s) will work with the Governance Subcommittee and staff to create and execute the engagement plan.

The Trustees and Selectboard would like the entire engagement process, including a report of findings, to be completed by November 1, 2019. The facilitator(s) should be prepared to present the final report at a joint Trustee and Selectboard meeting shortly after the completion of the project.

For more information about the governance change proposals, please visit <https://www.essexjunction.org/boards/governance-subcommittee/> or <https://www.essex.org/governancesubcommittee>.

### **Scope of Work**

1. Work with Governance Subcommittee and staff to create a comprehensive public engagement plan.
2. Finalize the public engagement plan with the Trustees and Selectboard.
3. Conduct the engagement plan and solicit input to find the public's preferred governance change option.
4. Produce a report that presents findings. The report must be submitted in two forms: an electronic copy and an unbound, printed copy.
5. Present and discuss the report to the Trustees and Selectboard at a joint meeting of the boards.

### **Budget**

The proposal must include a detailed budget for the scope of work.

### **Proposal Requirements**

All proposals must include the following information.

1. Facilitator(s) name, address, telephone number, and email;
2. A brief description of the facilitator's background and experience;

3. A list of recent public engagement projects, with two to three references;
4. A demonstrated ability to solicit and receive input from thousands of people;
5. A detailed and comprehensive, town-wide engagement plan;
6. A proposed timeline for the entire process, including a final presentation to the Trustees and Selectboard;
7. A detailed budget for the scope of work;
8. A statement as to why the Trustees and Selectboard should select you.

### **Submittal process**

Proposals must be received by the Unified Manager's Office by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, May 6, 2019. Proposals can be emailed to [gduggan@essex.org](mailto:gduggan@essex.org) or mailed to the Town and Village Unified Manager's Office, ATTN: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager, 81 Main St., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

### **Selection/Negotiation Process**

The Trustees and Selectboard will select their top candidate on the basis of the evaluation criteria (attached). A contract will be entered into once terms have been agreed to by both sides.

### **Contact**

Questions about this Request for Proposals & Qualifications may be directed to Deputy Manager Greg Duggan at 802-878-1341 or [gduggan@essex.org](mailto:gduggan@essex.org).

## Criteria for Selection

The following criteria, as a minimum, will be used to evaluate the proposals:

Review Criteria	Weight	Maximum Points	Weighted Points
Understanding of the Project	3	5	15
Qualifications / Experience of facilitator(s)	4	5	20
Quality of the engagement plan	5	5	25
Timeline and budget	3	5	15
Past Performance on <u>Similar</u> Projects	3	5	15
Distinguishing qualifications	2	5	10
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>100</b>