

WARNING
VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 6 & 12, 2016

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 6, 2016 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 12, 2016 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 \$3,953,074 for fiscal year July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, \$2,482,765 of which is to be levied in taxes against the Village Grand List?

ARTICLE 3. Shall the voters approve adding 1 cent to the tax rate to establish a fund for village capital improvement projects designated by the Village Trustees?

ARTICLE 4. Shall the voters approve holding the 2017 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 5, 2017 to act upon any articles not involving voting by Australian ballot and to reconvene on Tuesday, April 11, 2017 to vote for the Village officers and transact any business involving voting by Australian ballot?

ARTICLE 5. To transact any other business that may lawfully come before the meeting?

BALLOT QUESTIONS

ARTICLE 6. To elect Village officers required by law including: Moderator (one year term); one Village Trustees (three year term); two Library Trustee (1 five year term and 1 one year term)?

Dated this 23rd day of February, 2016

VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By:


George Tyler, President


Dan Kerin, Vice President


Lori Houghton, Trustee


Andrew Brown, Trustee


Elaine Sopchak, Trustee

ATTEST:


Susan McNamara-Hill, Village Clerk

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
April 6, 2016**

Moderator Steve Eustis welcomed the assemblage to the 122nd Annual Meeting of the Village of Essex Junction. The meeting was broadcast live on Channel 17. The assemblage was led in the Pledge of Allegiance and Gary Moreau sang the Star Spangled Banner. The recent passing of former village trustee, George Boucher, was noted. Attendees included:

- Village Board of Trustees - Village President, George Tyler, Village Vice President, Dan Kerin, Trustees, Andrew Brown, Elaine Sopchak, Lori Houghton.
- Village Administration - Municipal Manager, Pat Scheidel; Village Assistant Manager & Finance Director, Lauren Morrisseau, Village Clerk/Treasurer, Susan McNamara-Hill; Village Community Development Director, Robin Pierce; Administrative Assistant to the Village Manager, Patty Benoit; Assistant Zoning Administrator, Terry Hass; Public Works Supervisor, Rick Jones; Water Quality Supervisor, Jim Jutras; Village Engineer, Rick Hamlin; Village Attorney, Dave Barra; Essex Junction Fire Chief, Chris Gaboriault; Brownell Library Director, Wendy Hysko, Brownell Library Board Chairwoman, Christine Packard.
- State Representatives - Tim Jerman and Paul Dame.
- Essex Selectboard – Max Levy, Irene Wrenner, Andy Watts, Mike Plageman, Sue Cook.
- Recording Secretary, Marianne Riordan.

Moderator Eustis called the meeting to order at 7 PM and explained the procedure to be followed.

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

MOTION by Chuck Barry, SECOND by Tim Jerman, to approve Article 1 as read.

DISCUSSION: George Dunbar, III, congratulated Pat Scheidel for 40 years of public service. Mr. Dunbar asked about the statement in the village audit that expenditures in governmental funds exceeded revenues and whether there is an audit report on the land acquisition fund. Finance Director, Lauren Morrisseau, explained the expenditures were capital investments and the audit report on the land acquisition fund shows a balance of \$80,000. There were no further comments.

VOTING ON ARTICLE 1: unanimous; motion carried. Article 1 is adopted.

ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters approve the annual General Fund budget in the amount of \$3,953,074 for fiscal year July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 of which \$2,482,765 is to be levied in taxes against the Village Grand List?

MOTION by Chuck Barry, SECOND by Mary Jo Engel, to approve Article 2 as read.

DISCUSSION: Village President George Tyler highlighted the following:

- **The amount to be raised by taxes is less than the proposed General Fund budget because the paving budget for the village is incorporated into the town's highway budget and there are other anticipated revenues the village will receive. The tax rate decreased as a result of shared services initiatives with the town.**
- **Capital reserve projects total \$145,467 for water line work, sidewalk, and a new server in the Village Office. Expenditures for rolling stock total \$95,204.**

- **Distribution of property taxes shows school at 67%, Town at 20%, Village at 10%, and Parks & Rec at 3%. With shared services money is moved from the village budget into the town budget for equalization. Shared services saved \$267,000 last year (i.e. money that did not have to be raised by taxes).**
- **Water Quality Superintendent, Jim Jutras, is on the cover of the national trade magazine, *Treatment Plant Operator*. Mr. Jutras was key in the management of the upgrade of the waste water treatment plant and use of clean biosolids from the plant on the Whitcomb farm fields. Mr. Jutras exemplifies the community service demonstrated by all the village staff.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- **Alison Werner, Lincoln Street, questioned the proposed library budget that reflects a \$100,000 increase from FY13 to FY17. Pat Scheidel explained the proposed budget is estimated as close as possible to actual costs. George Tyler and Dottie Bergendahl added the increase is due to health and benefits costs budgeted for the staff anticipated at the library.**
- **Linda McKenna, School Street, spoke in support of the library budget and the services provided.**
- **George Dunbar, III, asked about the following:**
 - **Discrepancy in the town budget figure and the town payment to the village for storm water - Pat Scheidel explained the town storm water budget also includes personnel costs and transfer to capital for storm water. Lauren Morrissette added the amount shown in the village budget includes salary and benefits for storm water personnel and storm water monitoring and permitting.**
 - **Municipal tax rate of the village and the disparity between the town and village tax rate continuing to increase (in 2011 the village tax rate was \$.6607 and the town tax rate was \$.4318 and in 2015 the village tax rate was \$.7704 [up two cents from 2014] and the town tax rate was \$.4880) – Pat Scheidel explained many decisions are made throughout the budget process. Also, there was a bond issue passed by the village which impacts the tax rate regardless of consolidated services. The intention is to identify and eliminate duplication of services by the village and town and increase efficiencies. The governing bodies are informed of the dollar value of savings and move toward a more equitable tax structure. George Tyler pointed out the town outside the village pays a highway tax which has been decreased and the savings moved into the general fund to the benefit of all the citizens of the town and village.**

CALL THE QUESTION by Diane Fuchs, SECOND by Chuck Barry. VOTING on call the question: majority of ayes; motion carried. Discussion ceased.

VOTING ON ARTICLE 2: majority of ayes; motion carried. Article 2 is adopted.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the voters approve adding one (1) cent to the tax rate to establish a fund for village capital improvement projects designated by the Village Trustees?

MOTION by Tim Jerman, SECOND by Mary Jo Engel, to approve Article 3 as read.

DISCUSSION: Village President George Tyler explained one cent on the tax rate will raise \$109,000 each year. The money will be used to make public improvements in the village center such as pocket parks or benches when the opportunity arises. Any expenditure would be discussed at a Trustees meeting and public comment would be gathered.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- George Dunbar, III, expressed concern about the proposed fund, noting the Land Development Code already empowers the village to require developers to do improvements and if the fund is used to purchase real estate the discussion of such purchase could be in Executive Session so there would be no public input.

AMENDMENT by George Dunbar, III, SECOND by Alison Wermer, to add the following wording to Article 3 to read: “Shall the voters approve adding one (1) cent to the tax rate to establish a fund for village capital improvement projects designated by the Village Trustees with a cap of \$250,000 and expenditures from which are at the request of voters at the annual meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose.”

DISCUSSION OF AMENDMENT: The following comments were made:

- Tim Jerman, Sycamore Lane, spoke against the amendment because the Trustees have the best interest of the village downtown in mind and need to have the ability to act when opportunity comes up.
- Carl Wermer, Lincoln Street, mentioned the cost and burden to call a special meeting. Trustee Sopchak said the cost is thousands of dollars to warn and organize a special meeting.
- Trustee Sopchak stated one of the many purposes of the fund is to have the nimbleness and ability to help local businesses in the village with a revolving loan or a small grant for façade improvements or other beautification activities, for example. A public hearing would be held on how to use the funds. A cap on the fund would limit opportunity for the village to be part of a large grant that required a local match.
- Greg Morgan, Grove Street, compared the concept of the proposed one cent fund to the rolling stock fund that avoids having to bond for purchases and gives the village some flexibility. Mr. Morgan noted the Economic Development Committee in the town often cannot act because the town does not have the resources. Mr. Morgan supported the concept of the fund provided there is public process.
- Darryl Stultz, Seneca Ave., spoke in support of having a cap on the fund and asked how long the taxpayers would pay into the fund if there is not a cap. George Tyler said without a cap the fund would continue to accrue or could be spent each year. The Trustees would review the fund each year.
- A gentleman in the audience asked about discussion in Executive Session per state statute. Elaine Sopchak explained state law is strict on what can be discussed in Executive Session.

CALL THE QUESTION by Chuck Barry, **SECOND** by Dorothy Bergendahl. **VOTING** on call the question: unanimous; motion carried. Debate ceased.

VOTING ON AMENDMENT (cap of \$250,000): majority of nays; motion does not carry. The amendment fails.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION (on original wording of Article 3): The following comments were made:

- Molly Dillon, Jackson Street, asked how other places, such as St. Albans, supported the fund. Elaine Sopchak said St. Albans established a special tax district (TIF) and worked with the state and developers.
- Alison Wermer, Lincoln Street, suggested putting a sunset on the fund of five years and discussing continuation at that time.

AMENDMENT by Alison Wermer, **SECOND** by Darryl Stultz, to add wording to Article 3 to read: “Shall the voters approve adding one (1) cent to the tax rate to establish a fund for village capital improvement projects designated by the Village Trustees and such tax rate to be reconsidered by the voters at the annual meeting in 2021?”

DISCUSSION OF AMENDMENT: The following comments were made:

- Brad Luck, Main Street, asked if the article will be before the voters each year. Moderator Eustis said as currently worded the article will not be before the voters again.
- George Dunbar, III, spoke of following the same process for the fund that is followed with the Rolling Stock Fund and the Capital Improvement Fund in that the Trustees discuss the project and transfer money into the fund. Village President Tyler pointed out the Trustees borrowed the one cent fund concept from the town which has two cents on the tax rate for capital projects. The Trustees felt one cent was reasonable and not overly burden the taxpayers. George Dunbar stressed the need to set priorities for use of the money. There are already various funds established.
- Jeffrey Thompson, Rosewood Lane, asked the impact of one cent on the tax rate. George Tyler said the impact is \$28 per household. One cent raises \$109,000.
- Aaron Smith, Main Street, asked who will own and maintain items such as pocket parks. George Tyler said that will be determined by the circumstance. Pocket parks may be the responsibility of the village. The village can require developers to do a lot, but there is a limit. The fund can provide an incentive.

CALL THE QUESTION by Tim Jerman, **SECOND** by Chuck Barry. **VOTING** on call the question: unanimous; motion carried. Debate ceased.

VOTING ON AMENDMENT (five year sunset/review): majority of ayes; motion carried. The amendment is adopted.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION on Article 3 as amended: There were no further comments.

VOTING ON ARTICLE 3 as amended (five year sunset/review): unanimous; motion carried. Article 3 as amended is adopted.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the voters approve holding the 2017 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 5, 2017 to act upon any articles not involving voting by Australian ballot and to reconvene on Tuesday, April 11, 2017 to vote for the village officers and transact any business involving voting by Australian ballot?

MOTION by Chuck Barry, SECOND by Tim Jerman, to approve Article 4 as read.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTING ON ARTICLE 4: unanimous; motion carried. Article 4 is adopted.

ARTICLE 5: To transact any other business that may lawfully come before the meeting.

Brownell Library Foundation

Dorothy Bergendahl announced donation to the Brownell Library Foundation from Hannaford's for every purchase of a blue reuse grocery bag. All were urged to purchase a blue reuse bag.

State Representative Tim Jerman

Tim Jerman announced he is not seeking re-election to the state legislature after serving for the past 12 years.

Rec Governance Committee

Michael Smith mentioned the Recreation Governance Study Committee meetings that will be discussing the future of the village and town recreation departments. All are urged to attend the meetings.

Elections

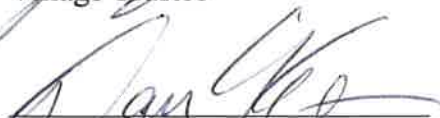
- Moderator (one year term)
- One Village Trustee (three year term)
- Two Library Trustees (five year term and one year term)


Adjournment

MOTION by Bob O'Neill, SECOND by Tim Jerman, to adjourn the 122nd Annual Meeting of the Village of Essex Junction. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 PM. Voting by Australian ballot will take place on April 12, 2016 from 7 AM to 7 PM at Essex Community Educational Center.


Village Trustee


Village Trustee


Village Clerk

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS
ANNUAL ELECTION
APRIL 12, 2016**

Number of Voters on Checklist	7185
Number of Voted Ballots	374
Number of Blank/Spoiled ballots	4
Annual Meeting 4/6	73

Under Article 6 of the Warning:

To elect Village officers required by law including: Moderator (one year term); one Village Trustee (three year term); two Library Trustees ((one 1-year term, one 5-year term)?

Office	Name	Number of Votes
Moderator	Steven Eustis	355
Trustee (1, 3-year term)	Lori Houghton	354
Library Trustee (5 yr term)	Nina Curtiss	347
Library Trustee (1 yr term)	Elizabeth Glaspie	335

Attest: *Susan McNamara-Hill*

Susan McNamara-Hill, Village Clerk

4/12/16