

SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE

January 23, 2020

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE - SPECIAL MEETING
January 23, 2020**

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS: George Tyler, Chair; Max Levy; Andy Watts; Dan Kerin.

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Bruce Post, Ken Signorello, Irene Wrenner.

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 7:00pm.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

George Tyler provided the following additions or changes to the agenda: an email from Susan McNamara-Hill, to be discussed during Business Item 5a, and a summary document of previously-approved transition model recommendations, to be discussed during Business Item 5b.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

MAX LEVY made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, that the Subcommittee on Governance approve the agenda as amended. Motion passed 4-0.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

None at this time.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Review attorney comments on draft transition plan language

Mr. Tyler led the discussion of this item. He stated that the draft transition plan was sent to Attorney Richardson by Ann Janda and this version includes Mr. Richardson’s responses. He proposed that the Subcommittee review Mr. Richardson’s comments and formulate any follow-up questions as necessary. He finally recommended that he and Ms. Janda meet with Mr. Richardson to review follow-up questions after tonight’s meeting.

The Subcommittee reviewed questions and comments within the draft charter document. These focused on multiple sections within the document itself, including the transition period, organizational municipal meeting, details around the interim governing body itself, budget and municipal administration, boards and department transitional provisions, personnel (including a specific question around implications for unions/associations should the Town and Village dissolve and merge), water and sewer districts, finances, terms extended, and the municipal government seat.

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46 Mr. Tyler will draft more specific questions based on this discussion and will review them with
47 Ms. Janda and Mr. Richardson prior to the next Subcommittee on Governance meeting.

48
49 Bruce Post asked whether a period of 12 years for a transitional tax district could be guaranteed
50 if it were included in an adopted charter. Mr. Tyler replied that it would be binding, to the extent
51 that it was in an approved municipal charter. Mr. Teich stressed that any charter changes need to
52 be reviewed and approved by the legislature in Montpelier prior to adoption. In reply to Mr.
53 Post's concern, Mr. Tyler suggested potentially including language in the transitional charter that
54 made the charter binding for the period of the transition.

55
56 **b. Discuss plan for meeting with attorney and legislators in Montpelier**

57 Mr. Tyler suggested that it would be appropriate for him as chair of the Subcommittee on
58 Governance to meet with legislators and legislative counsel in Montpelier, but asked if others
59 would also like to participate.

60
61 Mr. Teich cautioned against inadvertently having a quorum of the Subcommittee meet with the
62 legislature, as open meeting laws still need to be followed.

63
64 Mr. Tyler noted that he had drafted an executive summary of the recommendations for a
65 transitional representation model and asks other subcommittee members whether it should be
66 presented to legislators when discussion occurs. Other subcommittee members agreed on this
67 approach.

68
69 The subcommittee decided that Mr. Tyler and Mr. Levy, as chair and vice-chair of the
70 Subcommittee on Governance, were appropriate representatives for meeting with legislators.

71
72 **DAN KERIN made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, that the Subcommittee on**
73 **Governance approve the executive summary of recommendations for a transitional**
74 **representation model for use at a meeting with State legislators in Montpelier. Motion**
75 **passed 4-0.**

76
77 **c. Consider designating a subcommittee member or members to the Boards in the meeting**
78 **with legislators**

79 This was discussed in Business Item 5b.

80
81 **d. Review draft FAQ and consider approving for use at upcoming public meetings**

82 Mr. Tyler reviewed the survey and changes that have been made recently, specifically that this
83 draft includes more content on how the Town and Village can merge and not separate, and noted
84 that the document has been drafted to be as apolitical as possible.

85
86 Because the Subcommittee had substantive edits to make to the current draft FAQ, a decision
87 around using the FAQ as written was postponed and will be determined at a future meeting.

88
89 Ken Signorello suggested some edits to the draft FAQ clarifying the statement about 43% tax
90 base loss. He suggested adding language around population loss as well. Mr. Tyler stated that the
91 language in question is in the process of being revised.

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92
93 Irene Wrenner suggested excluding the paragraph from the draft FAQ around separation, since
94 separation models and options were not discussed. She also suggested that the separation and
95 share model be discussed and vetted by local government.

96
97 Mr. Watts noted that the Town cannot separate itself from the Village and that it does not have a
98 mechanism to do so. He stated that because this decision can only come from the Village, it is
99 inappropriate to ask the Town to separate from the Village. He proposed adding language around
100 this discussion.

101
102 **e. Set date for next Subcommittee on Governance meeting**
103 A tentative date for the next Subcommittee on Governance meeting was set for February 13,
104 2020 at 7:00pm.

105
106 **f. Approval of minutes**
107 *January 16, 2020:*
108 **MAX LEVY made a motion, and ANDY WATTS seconded, to approve the Subcommittee**
109 **on Governance meeting minutes from January 16, 2020 with the following modifications:**
110 - **Line 4: Replace “December 19, 2019” with “January 16, 2020”**
111 - **Line 28: Replace “brought up” with “presented”**

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113 **Motion passed 4-0.**

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115 **6. ADJOURN:**
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117 **DAN KERIN made a motion, and MAX LEVY seconded, to adjourn the meeting. Motion**
118 **passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:13pm.**

119
120 Respectfully Submitted,
121 Amy Coonradt
122 Recording Secretary

123
124
125 Approved this 13th day of February, 2020

126
127 **(see minutes of this day for corrections, if any)**