

SELECTBOARD

**TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2022**

SELECTBOARD: Andy Watts, Chair; Sue Cook; Tracey Delphia; Dawn Hill-Fleury; Patrick Murray

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Greg Duggan, Town Manager; Marguerite Ladd, Deputy Manager; Dennis Lutz, Public Works Director; Aaron Martin, Director of Public Works Operations/Town Engineer; Dan Roberge, Highway Superintendent

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Bird, Matt & Casey Carmolli, Diane Clemens, Kevin Collins, Patty Davis, Erin Dickinson, Michael Dimitroff, Gina Halpin Barrett, Heather Katz, Michael Kiey, Ethan Lawrence, Resa Mehren, Timothy Miller, Hugh Mungus, Linda Myers, Mary Post, Betty Poulin, Roseanne Prestipino, David Skopin, Gillian Smith, Margaret Smith, Sr Doug Lawrence, Irene Wrenner, TJ Yandow, Lorraine Zaloom, Bob, Essex Res, HSmith

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Watts called the Town of Essex Selectboard to order at 6:30 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Mr. Watts clarified that, despite it being included in the agenda, there would be no executive session at this meeting.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

No changes, approval not required.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

Mr. Skopin encouraged the Selectboard to add a staff position to assist residents in reducing their energy usage.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Consider approval of new name and signage at Public Works facility

Mr. Duggan said that Public Works Director Dennis Lutz will be retiring this summer after a 30-plus year career running the department. As a result, Public Works staff suggested honoring Mr. Lutz by renaming the highway garage and other buildings on the site to the Dennis E. Lutz Public Works Facility. Board members expressed support for Mr. Lutz's hard work and dedication to the community. Mr. Lutz said he is honored by the gesture and said he feels that the entire Public Works staff shares in his dedication to the community.

In public comment, Ms. Wrenner and Ms. Smith echoed the Board's thanks to Mr. Lutz.

DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by PATRICK MURRAY, that the Selectboard approve the new Public Works sign, placement, and dedication of the Town of Essex Public Works Facility to Dennis E. Lutz. Motion passed 5-0.

b. Consider one-time waiver to Purchasing Policy for replacement of Public Works vehicle

49 Mr. Martin said the Public Works Department has run into complications in replacing a new truck
50 and associated plowing equipment. This is primarily as a result of supply chain issues in the auto
51 industry. As a result, the department would like to obtain three quotes from qualified vendors,
52 rather than utilizing the formal bidding process. Mr. Lutz thanked Highway Superintendent Dan
53 Roberge for his hard work researching options for this purchase. Ms. Cook asked if there would
54 be an advantage for selecting an increased max capacity vehicle. Mr. Roberge responded that a
55 lower capacity truck will allow non-CDL drivers to operate it.

56
57 **PATRICK MURRAY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA, that the Selectboard**
58 **grant Public Works a one-time waiver to the purchasing policy to purchase the truck and**
59 **body as noted in this memorandum due to the availability of trucks in the market and the**
60 **timeline of possessing the truck before the next winter season. Motion passed 5-0.**

61
62 **c. Discussion and possible action on Town of Essex Rule Requiring Wearing Face**
63 **Coverings Indoors in Public Spaces**

64 Mr. Watts said the current covid-19 case numbers were declining, and the new CDC guidance
65 ranks Essex as having “moderate” community transmission. The Essex Westford School District
66 has also made masks optional, and the state of Vermont plans to change its recommendation
67 around indoor masking on March 14th. Mr. Murray expressed support for dropping the mandate
68 but said that he could also support a few days lead out. Ms. Delphia agreed and said she feels
69 the original decision to impose the mask mandate immediately was not the best, as more time
70 should have occurred for outreach. Ms. Cook said she agreed with the previous points and said
71 that each individual business owner has the right to make their own decision regarding masking.
72 She also said the data has not been tracked for the past five days and suggested that this be
73 done prior to rescinding the mandate. Mr. Duggan said that the current design of the CDC data
74 does not allow daily tracking.

75
76 In public comment, Mr. Dimitroff, Mr. Skopin, Mr. Mungus, and a caller on the phone encouraged
77 the Board to drop the mask rule. Ms. Wrenner said the public should be allowed attend town
78 meetings in person. Mr. Watts said that in-person meetings will be discussed soon. Ms. Delphia
79 said she does not want any business owners to be put in the place to have to communicate the
80 change and encouraged the Board to push the change to March 14.

81
82 **SUE COOK made a motion, seconded by DAWN HILL-FLEURY, that the Selectboard lift**
83 **the Town of Essex Rule Requiring Wearing Face Coverings Indoors in Public Spaces**
84 **effective March 14, 2022. Motion passed 5-0.**

85
86 **6. CONSENT AGENDA**

87 **ANDY WATTS made a motion, seconded by SUE COOK, to approve the Consent Agenda.**
88 **The motion passed 5-0.**

89 **a. Approve minutes: February 23, 2022; February 28, 2022 (Informational Hearing)**

90 **b. Approve check warrants: #17954 - 02/22/2022**

91
92 **7. READING FILE**

93 **a. Board member comments:** Ms. Delphia thanked staff for their work on the post Town
94 Meeting Day survey. Ms. Hill-Fleury thanked the Police Department and Community Justice
95 Center for their “Know Your Rights” presentation this weekend. Mr. Murray thanked voters for
96 passing the budget and Town staff for the work in preparing the budget and Town Meeting. Mr.

97 Watts said the Board had discussed meeting in person via e-mail, and that Board members were
98 in support of this. Mr. Duggan said a remote option for attendance will still be available.

99 **b. Essex Town Meeting exit survey results**

100 **d. Upcoming meeting schedule**

101

102 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

103 n/a

104

105 **9. ADJOURN**

106 **DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by SUE COOK, for the Selectboard to**
107 **adjourn. Motion passed 5-0 at 7:18 PM.**

108

109 Respectfully Submitted,

110 Darby Mayville

111 Recording Secretary

112

113 Approved this 21st day of March, 2022

114 (See minutes of this day for corrections, if any)

115

116 *Tracey Delphia*

117 Tracey Delphia, Clerk, Selectboard

118