

**SELECTBOARD & TRUSTEES
(DRAFT)**

**TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEES
DRAFT JOINT MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, June 15, 2021**

SELECTBOARD: Andy Watts, Chair; Tracey Delphia; Vince Franco; Dawn Hill-Fleury; Patrick Murray

TRUSTEES: Andrew Brown, President; Raj Chawla; Dan Kerin; Amber Thibeault; George Tyler

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Charlie Cole, Town of Essex Fire Chief; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Ron Hoague, Police Chief; Marguerite Ladd, Assistant Manager; Brad Luck, Essex Junction Recreation & Parks Director; Sarah Macy, Finance Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Bob Burrows, Betsy Dunn, Kevin Collins, Patty Davis, Erin Dickinson, Maureen Gillard, Susan Hale, Toni Morgan, Ken Signorello, Mike Sullivan, Mike Thorne, Irene Wrenner, Lorraine Zaloom, Jeanne _____, Margaret _____, RM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Watts called the Town of Essex Selectboard to order for the Joint meeting with the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees at 6:30 PM.

Mr. Brown called the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees to order for the Joint meeting with the Essex Selectboard at 6:30 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Ms. Hill-Fleury requested that the minutes from June 5, 2021 be removed from the consent agenda and placed under Business.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

TRACEY DELPHIA made a motion, seconded by DAWN HILL-FLEURY, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed 4-0.

Vince Franco was not yet in attendance.

AMBER THIBEAULT made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed 4-0.

Raj Chawla was not yet in attendance.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

Mr. Watts explained that members of the public can only speak once during this time, and that the Boards may or may not respond to them. Speakers are expected to direct comments to the Board chairs, and to remain civil and not attack other members of the public.

Ms. Zaloom suggested that the Boards send a joint letter to the Essex Westford School District (EWSD) Board in support of the recent equity plan. Mr. Watts said that this would be discussed later in the meeting.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Update on equity work in Essex

49 Mr. Teich reminded the Boards that Essex would be holding a Juneteenth celebration on June 19th from 11
50 AM-1 PM. He thanked all who worked to make this event possible. Mr. Teich said that the Task Force
51 on Racial Equity, Policing and Public Safety was established a few months ago and meets every couple of
52 weeks. One of the first actions of the committee was to survey residents to learn their concerns regarding
53 equity and policing. The group split into three subgroups to address the results of the survey. Mr. Teich
54 said that both Boards have included money in their next fiscal year budgets to provide stipends to
55 members of boards and commissions in order to make these groups more representative of the citizenry.
56

57 Mr. Murray serves on the policing sub-committee and said that the community members who identified as
58 BIPOC reported having more negative interactions with police than those who identified as white. He said
59 that, over the years, the Police Department has been forced to take on more and more responsibilities due
60 to a lack of other services. Public safety should involve more than just police. He said it is his hope that
61 this group will help to allow Essex to move their police force into the modern age and be able to focus on
62 their original purpose.
63

64 Chief Hoague said that he has provided a lot of education on training and budgeting for the Police
65 Department. He agreed with Mr. Murray's statements that the Police Department has been given more
66 and more to address over the years.
67

68 Mr. Teich said that the Town of Essex contracts with Howard Center Mental Health Services to aid those
69 in crisis. He also said that no specific line items for diversity, equity, or inclusion can be found in the
70 budget for either community.
71

72 The Boards discussed the request to send a memo of support to EWSD regarding their equity plan,
73 however no action was taken. Staff will draft a memo and present it to the Boards later.
74

b. Discussion about June 5, 2021 Strategic planning meeting

75
76 Mr. Teich said that this agenda item gives a chance for the Boards to highlight and debrief their June 5th
77 meeting. Mr. Tyler asked if the municipalities have received further information about the American
78 Rescue Plan Act funds to be allocated to the communities. Mr. Teich said that the Village of Essex
79 Junction has been awarded \$1.136 million, and the Town of Essex had been awarded \$1.155 million.
80 These funds can be used for water, sewer, broadband, and climate change improvements. It is possible
81 that these could be used to mitigate the impact of COVID, however further information is needed
82 regarding this use. In addition, an additional \$121 million is intended to be allocated to county
83 governments in Vermont, however due to the limited jurisdiction of Vermont counties it has yet to be
84 determined how this will be spent.
85

86 Ms. Wrenner asked why the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction were allocated different sums
87 due to their similar populations. Mr. Teich said that there were a variety of factors for how the money was
88 allocated.
89

**c. Update from Village Trustees on Essex Junction Independence initiative and request to
Selectboard for how to move forward with the potential for shared services**

90
91 Mr. Brown said that the Village Trustees recently held a 3.5-hour meeting regarding the future of the
92 Village. Should separation occur, the Village would like to discuss the continued sharing of Police and
93 Recreation services. The Trustees may be interested in sharing the Clerk, Finance, and IT Departments on
94 a temporary basis after separation occurs. All other services would be separate. Mr. Brown asked the
95 Selectboard how they would like to enter discussions on sharing services, offering a full board discussion,
96

97 subcommittee, or mediated conversation as examples of how this could go forward. Mr. Watts said that
98 the Selectboard has not had any discussions on sharing services, and that he felt that the Board should
99 have its own discussion before discussing anything with the Trustees. Mr. Brown requested that this be
100 done at the next Selectboard meeting so that there is no delay in the separation process.

101
102 Mr. Murray asked why the Trustees were interested in sharing Recreation services. Mr. Tyler said that
103 there was lengthy discussion regarding sharing these services, however the Board ultimately decided that
104 a larger Recreation Department would serve citizens better. Mr. Brown said that the Village desires to
105 share the Police Department due to the amount of resources that taxpayers have already put into it. Mr.
106 Brown said that the Village is looking to separate as much as possible, and that the vision is for Essex
107 Junction is to be an independent city with services to support itself. It is not known if a transition period
108 will even be necessary and has not been defined in length. Mr. Brown said that fiscal year 2024 will be
109 the earliest that the Village will be able to be an independent community due to budget cycles and state
110 approvals.

111
112 In public comment, Ms. Dunn said that it is important to remember that separation has not yet passed in
113 the Village, and that no changes should be negotiated until only TOV (Town outside the Village) members
114 are serving on the Board. She asked if the Town of Essex would need a new charter. Mr. Watts said that
115 this would not be needed. Mr. Brown said that the Village is not specifically voting on separation, but a
116 new charter for the community which would result in separation. Mr. Watts said that if there is a Village
117 resident on the Selectboard during the transition time they would be expected to resign.

118
119 **d. Possible action resulting from evaluation of Unified Manager**

120 Mr. Brown explained that this was codifying the Boards decision that had been made during Executive
121 Session on May 4th.

122
123 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by AMBER THIBEAULT. that Trustees authorize a**
124 **raise for Unified Manager Evan Teich in the amount of 2% of his salary with an effective date of**
125 **February 26, 2021. Any raise authorized as of this date would be paid retroactively back to the**
126 **effective date. The motion passed 5-0.**

127
128 **DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by VINCE FRANCO, that the Selectboard**
129 **authorize a raise for Unified Manager Evan Teich in the amount of 2% of his salary with an**
130 **effective date of February 26, 2021. Any raise authorized as of this date would be paid retroactively**
131 **back to the effective date. The motion passed 5-0.**

132
133 Mr. Brown thanked Mr. Teich for his hard work for the community and apologized that his raise was
134 nearly four months late.

135
136 **e. Discussion and possible action on future joint meeting schedule**

137 Mr. Watts said that the Boards have had pre-scheduled joint meetings in the past, however it is now time
138 to decide if these should continue to be prescheduled or only be held as needed. Ms. Hill-Fleury asked
139 why the two Boards need to continue to meet jointly. Mr. Watts said that meetings would be needed to
140 review progress towards established goals, and for staff not to have to present the same thing at multiple
141 meetings. After some discussion, it was decided that staff would send out a Doodle poll to schedule
142 meetings for the next several months. Mr. Teich informed the Boards that, after tonight, meetings will be
143 held in a hybrid format, with the option to attend in person or remotely.

144

145 **f. Approve minutes: June 5, 2021 - Joint**

146 Ms. Hill-Fleury requested that the following be changed from, “Ms. Wrenner mentioned a 2018 joint
147 board meeting, expressing a need for representation for both towns” to “Ms. Wrenner mentioned a 2018
148 joint board meeting, expressing a need for representation for the TOV.”

149
150 **TRACEY DELPHIA made a motion, seconded by DAWN HILL FLEURY, to approve the minutes
151 as amended. Motion passed 5-0.**

152
153 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by GEORGE TYLER, to approve the minutes as
154 amended. Motion passed 5-0.**

155
156
157 **g. *Discussion on real estate lease options**
158 This was discussed during Executive Session.

159
160 **6. READING FILE**

161 **a. Board member comments**

162 Mr. Watts said that the next Selectboard meeting will be in-person with the option of participating
163 remotely. Mr. Teich said that the Board will sit six feet apart so that masks will not need to be worn. All
164 municipal buildings still require masks, however, this may change in the near future.

165
166 Ms. Hill-Fleury thanked Col. Shevchik for his letter.

167 **b. Letter from David W. Shevchik re: update on 158th Fighter Wing**
168 **c. Upcoming meeting schedule**

169
170 **7. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

171 **a. * *An executive session is anticipated to discuss the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase
172 or lease options**

173 **VINCE FRANCO made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA, that the Selectboard enter
174 into executive session to discuss the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease option in
175 accordance with 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(2), to include the Trustees, Unified Manager, Assistant
176 Manager, Essex Parks & Recreation Director, Essex Junction Recreation and Parks Director, and
177 Deputy Manager. Motion passed 5-0.**

178
179 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN , that the Trustees enter into
180 executive session to discuss the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease option in
181 accordance with 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(2), to include the Selectboard, Unified Manager, Assistant
182 Manager, Essex Parks & Recreation Director, Essex Junction Recreation and Parks Director, and
183 Deputy Manager. Motion passed 5-0.**

184
185 **DAN KERIN made a motion, seconded by RAJ CHAWLA, that the Trustees exit executive session.
186 The motion passed 5-0 at 8:27 PM.**

187
188 **DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA, that the Selectboard
189 exit executive session. The motion passed 5-0 at 8:27 PM.**

190
191 **8. ADJOURN**

**SELECTBOARD & TRUSTEES
(DRAFT)**

June 15, 2021

192 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, seconded by DAN KERIN, that the Trustees adjourn the meeting.**
193 **The motion passed 5-0 at 8:28 PM.**

194
195 **DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by VINCE FRANCO, that the Selectboard**
196 **adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 8:28 PM.**

197
198 Respectfully Submitted,
199 Darby Mayville
200 Recording Secretary

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