COVID-19 UPDATE: Due to the Covid-19/coronavirus pandemic, this meeting will be held remotely. Available options to watch or join the meeting:

- The meeting will be live-streamed on Channel 17’s YouTube channel.
- Join Microsoft Teams Meeting. Depending on your browser, you may need to call in for audio (below).
- Join via conference call (audio only): (802) 377-3784 | Conference ID: 331 500 951#
- For the purpose of recording minutes, you will be asked to provide your first and last name.
- When listening to the meeting, please keep your phone or computer on “mute” as to prevent interruptions during the meeting. For agenda items when it is appropriate for the public to speak, please unmute your phone or computer and introduce yourself before requesting the floor from the Board Chair/President.

1. CALL TO ORDER [7:00 PM]
2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES
3. APPROVE AGENDA
4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD
   a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
5. BUSINESS ITEMS
   a. Approve existing and revised processes for human service funding awards
   b. Consider additional funding for purposes of emergency grants
   c. Consider additional funding for purposes of food security
   d. Approve Resolution regarding Essex COVID-19 Response
6. READING FILE
   a. Selectboard Comments
   b. Email from Elaine Haney re: Letter and request to Legislature for Assistance
   c. Upcoming meeting schedule
7. EXECUTIVE SESSION
   a. An executive session is not anticipated
8. ADJOURN

Members of the public are encouraged to speak during the Public to Be Heard agenda item, during a Public Hearing, or, when recognized by the Chair, during consideration of a specific agenda item. The public will not be permitted to participate when a motion is being discussed except when specifically requested by the Chair. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings of the Selectboard, like all programs and activities of the Town of Essex, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Town Manager’s office at 878-1341.

Certification: ___________________ 04/13/2020
Memorandum
To: Selectboard
From: Evan Teich, Unified Manager
Re: Existing and revised processes for human service funding awards
Date: April 13, 2020

Issue
The issue is whether the Selectboard will approve existing and revised processes for human service funding awards in fiscal 2020.

Discussion
The “committee” reviewing Human Services Funding requests has been handed all 30 applications for funding (17% more than last year) and given two weeks to review. The current status is that the applications consist of funding requests about $45,000 beyond our current budget. Therefore, I would like to:

1. At this time, not allow any new applications
2. Not allow the applicants to amend their application at this late date
3. If the Selectboard decides to add additional funding, from surplus, than the Board can direct me to (a) add to funding to an existing request that was reduced (we will have this recommendation ready) or (b) start the process for a second round of funding with committee review with the amount approved
4. The SB could also initiate a separate funding outside of the established process for activities and or agencies that either do not fit under the Human Services Grant’s guidelines or address the current needs of our community, i.e., not a 501 c 3 or who had not applied but we like their idea/program.

Cost
TBD

Recommendation
It is recommended that the Selectboard affirm the Human Services Funding Request application and review process.

The board may also wish to consider additional funding options described above.
Memorandum
To: Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager
Cc: Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager
From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager
Re: Consideration of additional funding for purposes of emergency grants
Date: April 13, 2020

Issue
The issue is for the Selectboard to consider additional funding for purposes of emergency grants.

Discussion
During the covid-19 pandemic, the Selectboard may receive and wish to respond to requests for emergency grants. One such request, from Heart & Soul of Essex, is attached.

Cost
TBD

Recommendation
The Selectboard may wish to consider additional funding for emergency grants.
April 9, 2020

To: The Essex and Westford Community
From: The Heart & Soul of Essex
Re: Emergency cash grants for community members impacted by Covid-19

Covid-19 is causing unprecedented hardship for many of our Essex and Westford friends and neighbors. Residents in our community need help NOW. We have created a low barrier grant opportunity to get emergency funds to Essex and Westford residents as soon as possible.

Availability of grants depends on the amount of funds the Heart & Soul of Essex (a 501c3 non-profit) is able to raise.

CRITERIA

1. To be eligible you must be a resident of Essex or Westford, or own a local business in Essex or Westford.
2. You or your family must have been impacted by Covid-19 in one of these ways
   a. A loss of income or employment due to Covid-19
   b. Caring for yourself or a family member due to Covid-19
3. You or your family must be in need of assistance to meet basic needs such as food, medication, housing, transportation.
4. Heart & Soul Board members and their families are not eligible for these grants.

DISTRIBUTION PLAN

1. Cash grants of $500 per family will be available on a first come first served basis. The number of grants we are able to provide depends on how much money we are able to raise.
2. Round One of grants will be available (depending on funding) between now and April 30th
3. If money is left over after we have served all residents that have requested help during Round One, we will hold a second round of grants during the month of May. These will again be available on a first come first served basis. They may not be available to people who received a grant during Round 1.
4. Cash grants will be delivered directly to the resident's address.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Simply call or text Liz at (802)310-0194 and she will respond immediately via text to let you know whether funds are available.
2. If funds are available, Liz will call you to collect a small amount of information to make sure you are eligible to receive the grant and to arrange for the funds to be distributed to you. Please be assured that we respect the privacy and dignity of our friends and neighbors who access these resources. The information we collect will be confidential.
Memorandum
To: Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager
Cc: Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager
From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager
Re: Consideration of additional funding for purposes of food insecurity
Date: April 13, 2020

Issue
The issue is for the Selectboard to consider additional funding for purposes of food insecurity.

Discussion
During the covid-19 pandemic, the Selectboard may receive and wish to respond to requests for funding for food insecurity.

Cost
TBD

Recommendation
The Selectboard may wish to consider additional funding for food insecurity.
Memorandum
To: Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager
Cc: Sarah Macy, Finance Director/Assistant Manager
From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager
Re: Resolution regarding Essex COVID-19 response
Date: April 13, 2020

Issue
The issue is whether the Selectboard will approve a resolution regarding Essex's COVID-19 response.

Discussion
Winooski recently approved a resolution regarding its response to COVID-19, and is sending the resolution to state and federal elected officials. Town staff has adjusted the resolution for Essex (attached).

Cost
N/a

Recommendation
Staff recommends the Selectboard approve a resolution regarding Essex’s COVID-19 response.
RESOLUTION
Essex COVID-19 Response

WHEREAS, on March 7, 2020, the first case of the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 was confirmed in the State of Vermont and the second on March 11; and

WHEREAS, in early March, the governor activated the State Emergency Operations Center; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, the World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 was considered a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, Governor Phil Scott declared a State of Emergency in Vermont because of the virus and issued an Executive Order under 20 V.S.A. Chapter 1, prohibiting, among other steps, social gatherings of more than 250 people; and

WHEREAS, since that time, the Governor has issued additional addenda and directives related to that Executive Order, including limiting gatherings to 10 people; issuing a Stay Home, Stay Safe Order; and most recently closing schools for in-person instruction through the rest of the school year; and

WHEREAS, the emergency measures in place have resulted in the closing of all non-essential business operations, mass layoffs of workers, workers staying home to care for children not attending school, and other impacts resulting in lost income for many residents; and

WHEREAS, it is not known how long emergency measures will remain in place; and
WHEREAS; the residents and small businesses that make our community vibrant are short on cashflow to keep paying bills and expenses; and

WHEREAS, we must support the long-term vibrancy of our community by protecting our residents, businesses, and essential Town services; and

WHEREAS, during a public health crisis, we must protect the public health by ensuring access to safe housing and basic needs such as food, water and heat; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Essex lacks the authority to change legislation that would provide meaningful relief to our community; and

WHEREAS, on March 27, 2020 the Federal Government signed into law a stimulus package allocating relief funds to the State of Vermont; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Selectboard urges the State of Vermont to take measures including additional Executive Order addenda, the passing of legislation, and other efforts to provide meaningful relief that

- Prohibits the eviction of residential and commercial tenants;
- Prohibits foreclosure on properties residential and commercial;
- Prohibits the non-renewal of leases as a way to circumvent an eviction moratorium;
- Prohibits the suspension of healthcare coverage;
- Prohibits the suspension of any utility including municipal and private services;
- Suspends interest accrual on late payment of property taxes;
- Holds harmless municipal budgets for late payment of property and education tax when delaying payments to provide relief to local taxpayers;
- Addresses lost revenue in the State Education Fund while holding municipal budgets harmless;
- Leverages federal relief funds to reimburse municipal budgets for costs incurred during COVID-19 response
- Extends any such actions not less than 60 days beyond the end of the period of emergency to allow residents and businesses time to recover their financial footing.
Adopted this 14th day of April 2020 by the Essex Selectboard.

**Town of Essex Selectboard**

Elaine Haney, Chair

Annie Cooper

Patrick Murray, Vice Chair

Andrew J. Watts

Vincent Franco, Clerk
Dear Chittenden County Senators,

Below is a communication from VLCT to House Ways & Means, Senate Finance, and both Government Operations committees regarding municipalities' concerns about property tax penalties. Both the Town of Essex and the Village of Essex Junction (via me and Village President Andrew Brown) agree with the attached letter from the Town of Colchester.

While there was an average amount of delinquency in Essex property taxes collected this past March 15th, we do not expect that to be the case when the September 15th payment comes due. As our legislative delegation, anything you can do to ensure that the Legislature understands the pressure on municipalities when faced with a significant property tax shortfall would be much appreciated.

Thank you so much for the hard work you are doing to make sure our residents are able to manage during this crisis.

Best,

Elaine

Elaine Haney (she / her)
Chair, Town of Essex Selectboard
April 11, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Karen Horn
Vermont League of Cities & Towns
89 Main St, Suite 4
Montpelier, VT 05602

Re: Fiscal Year 20-21 State Education Taxes Collected by Cities and Towns

1) 8% City/Town Penalty on Late Payments for State Education Taxes

2) Required Borrowing to Pay State Education Taxes

Dear Karen:

I’m writing to ask that VLCT assist with information sharing about two significant issues related to Property Taxes Collected to Pay State Education Taxes for FY 2020-2021 (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021). I would participate in the process personally but I am generally functioning as Emergency Management Director vs. my typical role as Town Manager.

The Town of Colchester and other cities and towns are required to pay to the State Education Taxes to School Districts REGARDLESS of whether we collect the taxes.

In addition to having to pay out the State Education Taxes regardless of whether we collect them, municipalities are:

a) Charged, by the State of Vermont, a daily penalty in the amount of an annual rate of 8%. This is required under 32 VSA § 5409 (1) and 16 V.S.A. § 426.

b) Subject to withholding of State funds due to the Town for any purpose, presumably even fees for service and State provided federal funds as per 32 VSA § 5409 (1).

Colchester collects $3 in State Education Taxes for every $1 in Town taxes for municipal services. In the current COVID-19 emergency with record numbers of people out of work and many businesses not producing goods and services, we are concerned about our ability to collect from taxpayers and in turn pay out the State Education Tax for FY 20-21.
The remedies the Town of Colchester is left with for non-payment of State Education Taxes are to:

a) Not pay out State Education Taxes we do not have and be charged 8% penalty, and have State and Federal Funds withheld from the Town at a difficult time

b) Tax sale our residents and businesses, potentially in large numbers, thus emptying the Town of the good people who make up the Town

c) Borrow from the bank, potentially for years, triple what we would have to borrow to cover our annual municipal service costs.

Option a) makes no sense fiscally. Option b) makes no sense as a community. Option c) seems patently unfair as the Town does not determine education costs, education funding, or education tax mechanisms.

The Town of Colchester is prepared to reduce spending and/or borrow to cover the unbudgeted cost of covering unpaid municipal taxes. However, we have no capacity to do this for the State Education Tax which is three times ($32M annually) the amount of the municipal tax ($12M annually) other than to pledge the sale of the homes and businesses in our community. This places the municipality alone in an impossible situation.

We are requesting that the State of Vermont:

1) Eliminate the 8% municipal penalty and withholding of State provided funds for non-payment of uncollected State Education Funds;

2) Take the responsibility of borrowing to pay unpaid State Education Taxes until the economic emergency created by COVID-19 is over and the vast majority of taxpayers are able to repay unpaid education taxes; interest charges to taxpayers should match the rate the State is able to arrange for a statewide borrowing for the Statewide Education Tax, which is much less than the compounded rate the towns are forced to charge.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Aaron Frank
Colchester Town Manager

Julie Greater
Colchester Clerk/Treasurer
# MEETING SCHEDULES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETINGS</th>
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<th>JOINT MEETINGS</th>
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<td><strong>April 14, 2020—6:30 PM</strong></td>
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