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**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
August 24, 2021**

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:** Andrew Brown, President; Raj Chawla, Vice President; Dan Kerin; Amber Thibeault.

**ADMINISTRATION:** Evan Teich, Unified Manager; Ron Hoague, Chief of Police, Robert Kissinger, Lieutenant; Maguerite Ladd, Assistant Manager; Brad Luck, Director of Essex Junction Parks & Recreation; Sarah Macy, Finance Director; Robin Pierce, Community Development Director.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Alyse Certa, Andy Champagne, Annie Cooper, Bridget Downey-Myer, Elaine Haney, Tim Shea, Gabrielle Smith, Joe [REDACTED].

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Andrew Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

Ms. Thibeault requested to move Consent Agenda Item 6a to 5h and add material to support Business Item 5g.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

**DAN KERIN made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed 5-0.**

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

a. **Comments from public on items not on the agenda**

Mr. Champagne asked if Village residents have voting rights for both Village and Town board members. Mr. Brown replied yes. Mr. Champagne asked if Village residents can serve on both Selectboard and Trustees at the same time. Mr. Brown replied yes. Mr. Champagne asked whether the Village controls the Town if 3 members of the Selectboard are from the Village. Mr. Brown replied no. Mr. Champagne asked about amounts in the Village and Town budgets. Mr. Brown confirmed the numbers. Mr. Champagne asked if the Town Manager reports to both the Selectboard and Trustees. Mr. Brown replied yes. Mr. Champagne asked if Village residents would be able to vote for Selectboard members if the Village separates from the Town, and Mr. Brown replied they would not. Mr. Champagne asked about enforcement and accountability for any agreements between the Town and Village, and Mr. Brown replied that those agreements would be backed by contractual law.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. **\*Work Session on Essex Junction Independence Initiative**

Mr. Luck began by outlining the topics that will be discussed during the work session, which include: the current status of the charter, discussion about the proposals with the Town of Essex, an update from Our Village, Our Voices, and reviewing the meeting schedule.

Mr. Luck began by reviewing the charter. Mr. Brown asked about consolidated services during the Transition Period (Section 102) and whether services not planned for consolidation during the transition period should be listed in the section. Mr. Luck clarified that the transition period is the one year following approval from the legislature, in which the City would continue with existing consolidated services. Mr. Luck noted that language in the finance section has been updated to reflect Village tax delinquencies that ought to stay with the Town for the transition period. He briefly ran

53 through other minor changes. He noted that the Trustees will vote to approve the charter at their  
54 September 14 meeting.

55  
56 Mr. Luck then led a discussion of the August 23 joint meeting between the Trustees and the Town  
57 Selectboard. Ms. Thibeault asked whether the Trustees and Selectboard need to be in conceptual  
58 agreement about shared services by November or whether they must have a signed and executed  
59 contract for those services by November. Mr. Brown said he had similar concerns, as a comment was  
60 made that the shared services must be agreed-upon by the end of September. He said that focus  
61 should be on items that are outstanding in terms of budgetary impacts (for Police, Finance, Assessor,  
62 or other services that are being shared). Mr. Tyler clarified that the only item on the ballot would be the  
63 proposed charter, not shared services. He said it is important to have shared service arrangements in  
64 place for separation but not necessarily in time for the vote. Mr. Brown said that having shared service  
65 arrangements in place would inform a proposed budget, which is important in terms of whether voters  
66 will approve the charter. Mr. Tyler said that having a conservative estimate or a range could still be  
67 informative if exact budget figures aren't available at the time of the vote. Mr. Chawla asked what will  
68 be in a Tentative Agreement (TA) and whether it could include figures. He also asked who decides  
69 what a complete deal is.

70  
71 Mr. Brown reviewed the list of proposed shared services and asked Trustees to weigh in on whether  
72 there are items that could be taken off that list to expedite the process with the Selectboard. The  
73 Trustees discussed each of the items and determined that there is enough consensus between the  
74 Trustees and Selectboard to draft TAs for Police services, reappraisals, and assets (first right of  
75 refusal for 81 Main Street). They determined that more discussion is needed in the areas around  
76 finances, Indian Brook access, the transition period, tax delinquencies, and senior services.

77  
78 Elaine Haney provided an update from Our Village, Our Voices (OVOV) on efforts to inform and  
79 educate voters about the upcoming vote in November. She said that there are currently 23 active  
80 volunteers assisting OVOV and that another 15-20 plan to join the canvassing effort. She noted that  
81 they have had several events including: spinning and coffee chats with Trustees as opportunities for  
82 conversation and questions. She showed an example of the information cards and informational flyers  
83 that OVOV produces and brings to events. She noted that the most frequently asked questions are  
84 around how taxes will be impacted, what will happen with police services, and what will happen after  
85 the vote. She noted that OVOV will conduct additional outreach through the fall.

86  
87 Joe \_\_\_\_\_ asked about the legislature, saying that the Village should be proactive about any potential  
88 reasons why the legislature would vote against this charter change. Mr. Brown said that it is often  
89 difficult to predict how the legislature will vote on any given measure, saying that the Village is making  
90 efforts to ensure the support of its legislative delegation.

91  
92 Mr. Luck then briefly summarized the upcoming meeting schedule.

93  
94 **b. Consider approval of warning of first and second public hearings re: Charter for City of**  
95 **Essex Junction**

96 Mr. Luck noted that the public hearings would take place on September 28 and October 12.

97  
98 **DAN KERIN made a motion, and GEORGE TYLER seconded, that the Trustees approve the**  
99 **warnings for two public hearings regarding the City of Essex Junction charter on September 28**  
100 **and October 12, pending review from the clerk. The motion passed 5-0.**

101

102 **c. Consider approval of content from Our Village, Our Voices on the Village of Essex Junction**  
103 **website**

104 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, that the Trustees review and**  
105 **approve the FAQ documents and other materials provided by the citizen group, Our Village,**  
106 **Our Voices prior to posting those materials to the Village website and prior to distributing**  
107 **those materials. The motion passed 5-0.**

108 **d. Consider authorizing the Village Clerk to mail out ballots to all active registered voters for**  
109 **the November 2<sup>nd</sup> election**

110 Mr. Brown spoke in favor of this, noting the overwhelming success and increased participation of  
111 voters through the mail-in ballot process.

112 **RAJ CHAWLA made a motion, and AMBER THIBEAULT seconded, that the Trustees authorize**  
113 **the November 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot to be mailed to all active registered Essex Junction residents. The**  
114 **motion passed 5-0.**

115 **e. Discussion about planning for Fiscal Year 2023 budget**

116 Ms. Macy noted that a critical part of budget process is receiving input from the Trustees on high level  
117 goals and priorities for the budget year and invited them to give their input.

118  
119 Mr. Brown said that a priority is ensuring that the Village has the financial resources available for  
120 separation activities and related costs. He said another goal is having ordinance enforcement be more  
121 proactive in nature, since enforcement is currently lacking, and asked about the resources that it would  
122 take to do that. Mr. Tyler recalled that when this had been discussed in the past, increased  
123 enforcement also likely entailed legal action and costs, which should be taken into consideration. Mr.  
124 Kerin noted that in the past, they had discussed having a board to address ordinance violations at the  
125 local level. Mr. Chawla spoke about an idea from the Racial Equity Task Force to invest 1% of the  
126 budget for an equity position to be shared with the Town. He also noted that the Village doesn't have  
127 Community Development in the citizen sense, in terms of outreach and communication.

128  
129 Mr. Tyler asked about discussing pursuit of a Local Option Tax. Mr. Brown replied that he'd like to  
130 prepare for a vote on a Local Options Tax. He said from a budgetary standpoint, staff proposals on  
131 how to budget and plan for a Local Option Tax will be necessary.

132  
133 Mr. Tyler noted a request to upgrade ventilation in the Brownell Library, citing concerns over current  
134 ventilation and the rise of Covid-19 variants. Mr. Kerin said that Efficiency Vermont may be able to  
135 assess the Library's HVAC system. Mr. Brown noted that they may be able to leverage ARPA funding  
136 for some of these activities.

137  
138 **f. Consider adoption of Public Nuisance Ordinance**

139 Chief Hoague said that he and Lieutenant Kissinger have incorporated feedback from the Trustees'  
140 previous discussion of the ordinance into the most current version. He asked the Trustees for  
141 additional feedback.

142  
143 Mr. Brown asked about edits to the sound ordinance section and whether the timing of various  
144 activities was made internally consistent. Mr. Chawla noted that some start times were 6:00 AM and  
145 others were 7:00 AM. The Trustees agreed to adjust all start times for trash hauling and other activities  
146 to 7:00 AM in the sections and definitions. Ms. Thibeault asked to strike "utilizing mechanized  
147 conveyances" from the trash collection section, citing concerns that noise could still emanate from

148 trash trucks whether they use a device to collect trash or collect it manually. Mr. Kerin, Mr. Tyler, and  
149 Mr. Brown disagreed, saying that the intent was to target larger trash haulers.

150  
151 Ms. Thibeault asked about language around frightening horses and missiles. Chief Hoague noted that  
152 the definition of missiles in the language is any object that can be thrown. He also noted that the  
153 language is pertinent to gatherings such as parades, where spooked horses could pose a public safety  
154 concern.

155  
156 Ms. Thibeault asked about language around the use of firearms, asking whether discharging firearms  
157 is even permitted in the Village. Lieutenant Kissinger replied that he will remove the language, as it  
158 applied more to the Town than to the Village.

159  
160 Other minor changes were discussed. Edits will be incorporated and brought back before for the  
161 Trustees for final approval at a subsequent meeting.

162  
163 **g. Consider potential action on Rail Council**

164 Mr. Pierce said that this item came out of a review of the Vermont Rail Plan, which would reinstate Rail  
165 Service between Montreal and Boston via Springfield, Massachusetts and would stop in Essex  
166 Junction. Given this activity and that the Essex Junction station is the busiest in Vermont, staff  
167 recommend that the Village pursue representation on the Vermont Rail Advisory Council. Mr. Brown  
168 agreed that it would be good to have a Village Trustee on the Council. Others agreed and will think  
169 about who may be best to suggest for appointment.

170  
171 **h. Consider approval of Champlain Valley Expo events requiring waiver list \*\*was Consent**  
172 **Agenda item 6a\*\***

173 Ms. Thibeault asked for an explanation of the current waivers. Mr. Shea walked through the current  
174 waiver requests.

175  
176 **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

- 177 a. Consider approval of Champlain Valley Expo events requiring waivers list \*\*now Business Item  
178 5h\*\*
- 179 b. Consider approval of EJRP Bus Bid recommendation
- 180 c. Approve minutes: August 10, 2021
- 181 d. Approve Check Warrant #17264—8/13/21

182  
183 **GEORGE TYLER made a motion, and DAN KERIN seconded, to approve the consent agenda as**  
184 **presented. The motion passed 5-0.**

185  
186 **7. READING FILE**

- 187 a. Board member comments: Mr. Chawla thanked Mr. Luck and Chief Hoague for their clarification  
188 about Maple Street Park.
- 189 b. Memo from Chief Ron Hoague re: Recap of National Night Out
- 190 c. Email from Nicole Mone-St. Martha re: Reopening options for Senior Center
- 191 d. List of Boards/Committees/Commission openings
- 192 e. Memo from Brad Luck re: Maple Street Safety
- 193 f. Upcoming meeting Schedule

194  
195 **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

196 \* An executive session may be needed to discuss negotiation of contracts and agreements with the  
197 Town of Essex

198 An executive discussion was not needed.

199

200 **9. ADJOURN**

201 **DAN KERIN made a motion, and RAJ CHAWLA seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion**  
202 **passed 5-0.**

203 The meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM.

204

205 Respectfully Submitted,

206 Amy Coonrad