Town of Essex
Selectboard
Phone: (802) 878-1341
Email: manager@essex.org

Regular Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, February 21, 2023 – 6:30 PM
81 Main St., Essex Junction, VT 05452

This meeting will be in person and online. Available options to watch or join the meeting:
• **JOIN ONLINE:** Zoom Meeting ID: 987 8569 1140; Passcode: 032060 or https://zoom.us/j/98785691140?pwd=WENqeFhITGVDS0Q5blROdkhuS3RkZz09
• **JOIN CALLING:** (*toll free audio only*): (888) 788-0099 | Meeting ID: 987 8569 1140; Passcode: 032060

1. **CALL TO ORDER** 6:30 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. Presentation from Green Mountain Transit fiscal year 2024 budget and beyond
   b. Discussion and possible approval of the Essex B.E.S.T. proposal for the formation of Community Advisory Board with Essex Police Department
   c. Consider approval of assignment of opioid settlement funds for opioid abatement services in fiscal year 2023
   d. *Discussion about the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee
   e. **Discussion about the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
   a. Approve minutes: January 30, 2023 - Special Meeting; February 6, 2023
   b. Approve check warrants: # 18093 - 2/3/23 # 18095- 02/06/23; Warrant # 18097 - 02/10/23
   c. Consider approval of Form PVR-4155 Certificate of No Appeal or Suit Pending to Grand List
   d. Acknowledge name for new street, 87 Pinecrest Drive
   e. Acknowledge name for new street, 60 Colonel Page Road
   f. Consider acceptance Essex Police Vermont State Grant Award
7. **READING FILE**
   a. Board member comments
   b. Upcoming meeting schedule
   c. Question & Answer sheets about Town Meeting
   d. Status of Winter Operations January 01, 2023, through February 01, 2023
   e. Salt Shed Evaluation Status
   f. Transition of Essex Junction Finance Department out of 81 Main St.
   g. Letter from Patty Davis re: resignation from Planning Commission
   h. Resolution from the Vermont Legislature Recognizing those working to solve broadband issues in Vermont
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
   a. *An executive session is anticipated to discuss the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee
   b. **An executive session is anticipated to discuss the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options

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: ______ ______ 2/17/2023

TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2023

SELECTBOARD: Andy Watts, Chair; Kendall Chamberlin; Tracey Delphia; Dawn Hill-Fleury; Ethan Lawrence, Clerk

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Greg Duggan, Town Manager; Ron Hoague, Police Chief; Anthony Jackson-Miller, Community Affairs Liaison; Marguerite Ladd, Deputy Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: Paul Bohne, Green Mountain Transit (GMT); Clayton Clark, GMT; Patty Davis; Gina Halpin Barrett; Jody Kamon, Essex B.E.S.T; Ta-Tanisha Redditta, Essex B.E.S.T; Ken Signorello; Margaret Smith; Lorraine Zaloom

1. <u>CALL TO ORDER</u>
Mr. Watts called the Town of Essex Selectboard to order at 6:30 PM.

2. <u>AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES</u>
None.

3. <u>APPROVE AGENDA</u>
No changes, thus no approval required.

4. <u>PUBLIC TO BE HEARD</u>
a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
None.

5. <u>BUSINESS ITEMS</u>
a. Presentation from Green Mountain Transit fiscal year 2024 budget and beyond
Mr. Clark, GMT General Manager, and Mr. Bohne, GMT Essex Representative, were the presenters. Mr. Clark said that GMT's assessment for Essex has gone down 6.3%. He said that ridership for the two routes that serve Essex and Essex Junction have been increasing in the past two years. While GMT values the concept of fare-free operations, financial challenges and the absence of COVID relief funds have necessitated a return to bus fares in the future. It is estimated that fares will return anywhere between September 2023 and January 2024, depending on the ability to get the payment processing equipment needed. GMT is having staffing concerns and needing to spend a considerable amount on overtime. Mr. Bohne said that GMT is working on developing methods to even out paratransit costs. Ms. Hill-Fleury asked if the driver shortage will impact existing routes, Mr. Clayton said that this could possibly occur in the future but not at this time. Mr. Lawrence asked what the fare rates would be, Mr. Clayton said that they would return to the pre-pandemic rates of $1.50 or $.75. Mr. Bohne said that he technically lives in the City of Essex Junction, however he is willing to continue to represent Essex on the GMT Board. Mr. Watts requested public input, none was given.

b. Discussion and possible approval of the Essex B.E.S.T. proposal for the formation of Community Advisory Board with Essex Police Department
Ms. Redditta and Ms. Kamon Co-Chairs of Essex B.E.S.T (Building Equality, Solidarity, and Trust) presented on this issue. Ms. Redditta said that community members and the Essex Police Department have worked together to develop the proposal for a Community Advisory Board (CAB). Ms. Kamon said that the mission of the CAB would be to increase trust between the community and law enforcement and

serve as a way for marginalized communities to feel that their voice is heard by the police department. The CAB will increase communications between the police department and the broader community, as well as help the community to have representation on the Board. The Board will be made up of three residents of the City and three of the Town. For the first year, at least one member of Essex B.E.S.T. will serve on the committee for continuity. Three-year terms would also be staggered for continuity. No voting will occur, which is why the Board is even numbered.

Mr. Watts asked if specific benchmarks will be set, Ms. Kamon said that this will be set up once the committee is established. Mr. Lawrence asked about the committee attendance requirements, Ms. Kamon said that both virtual and in-person attendance would be welcomed. If members struggle to attend, the CAB would reach out to see how they could facilitate participation. Meeting frequency would also be worked out as the group gets started. Ms. Delphia asked if funds for this committee will be provided by the police department or Selectboard/City Council. Ms. Kamon said that it would be an independent board under the Selectboard and City Council, with stipends paid by the respective communities. Mr. Watts asked if the group would be hampered by open meeting laws. Police Chief Hoague said that he welcomed open meeting laws as this would help to build transparency. He said that he supports the idea of a CAB and plans to be fully engaged and attend every meeting. Ms. Delphia expressed concern for crime victims to speak privately and safely. Ms. Kamon said that this could be facilitated anonymously. Mr. Watts requested public input. Mr. Signorello asked for clarification on committee member residency, which was given. Ms. Zaloom thanked Essex B.E.S.T., the police department, and Selectboard for their hard work on this project.

DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA that the Selectboard create a Community Advisory Board to partner with the Essex Police Department and instruct staff to create qualifications, advertise for members and facilitate the effort. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Duggan said that he hopes that advertise the position quickly, and have interviews conducted in late March or early April. Meetings may not be able to occur until the City conducts interviews and appoints candidates.

c. Consider approval of assignment of opioid settlement funds for opioid abatement services in fiscal year 2023

Ms. Ladd said that these funds have come down to the Town from the federal government as the result of two opioid abatement settlements. All the payments came to the Town in November. Staff have proposed that the funds are used to pay for the already budgeted Community Outreach contract via the Howard Center. The Community Outreach team works with the police department to assist with mental health and substance abuse calls, as well as substance abuse mitigation. Mr. Chamberlin asked if the funds would go to the fund balance if not spent, Ms. Ladd said that this would not be the case as these funds needed to be used for opioid abatement. Mr. Watts requested public input, none was given.

TRACEY DELPHIA made a motion, seconded by DAWN HILL-FLEURY that the Selectboard assign $37,954.02 received from the opioid settlement funds be assigned to FY23 to be put towards the already budgeted Community Outreach contract. Motion passed 5-0.

d. Discussion about the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee

This was discussed in Executive Session.

e. Discussion about the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease option

This was discussed in Executive Session.

6. <u>CONSENT AGENDA</u>

DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

a. Approve minutes: January 30, 2023 - Special Meeting; February 6, 2023

Mr. Watts requested that the minutes of February 6th be edited to reflect that all motions were approved 4-0, not 5-0.

b. Approve check warrants: # 18093 - 2/3/23 # 18095- 02/06/23; Warrant # 18097 - 02/10/23

c. Consider approval of Form PVR-4155 Certificate of No Appeal or Suit Pending to Grand List

d. Acknowledge name for new street, 87 Pinecrest Drive

e. Acknowledge name for new street, 60 Colonel Page Road

f. Consider acceptance Essex Police Vermont State Grant Award

Mr. Lawrence congratulated Mr. Hoague on the grant award.

7. <u>READING FILE</u>

a. Board member comments: Ms. Hill-Fleury thanked Ms. Davis for her service to the Planning Commission. Mr. Chamberlin asked if the salt shed would be able to be replaced within the five-year time period, Mr. Duggan said that he would investigate the financials and report back. The Board discussed possible grant funding for this purpose. Mr. Watts pointed out information about the City Finance Department moving out of 81 Main Street but said that it is not a full severance between the two as of yet. Mr. Watts suggested that additional communications about Town Meeting be sent out, as some residents are unaware of the details. He clarified that the only way to participate is by attending in-person, however the meeting will be live-streamed. Mr. Lawrence said that he had received a lot of positive feedback when he handed out flyers on Town Meeting. Mr. Chamberlin asked if the charter amendment will affect filling the Planning Commission opening. Mr. Duggan said it would not, and that all open positions are advertised. If the charter change is passed it will take some time to implement the changes.

b. Upcoming meeting schedule

c. Question & Answer sheets about Town Meeting

d. Status of Winter Operations January 01, 2023, through February 01, 2023

e. Salt Shed Evaluation Status

f. Transition of Essex Junction Finance Department out of 81 Main St.

g. Letter from Patty Davis re: resignation from Planning Commission

h. Resolution from the Vermont Legislature Recognizing those working to solve broadband issues in Vermont

8. <u>EXECUTIVE SESSION</u>

a. An executive session was held to discuss the appointment or evaluation of a public officer or employee

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA, to move that the Selectboard enter into executive session to discuss the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee in accordance with 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(3), to include the Town Manager and Deputy Manager. Motion passed 5-0.

b. An executive session was held to discuss the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA to move that the Selectboard enter executive session to discuss the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or

lease options in accordance with 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(2) and to include the Town Manager and Deputy Manager. Motion passed 5-0.

DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA to exit executive session. Motion passed 5-0 at 8:33 PM.

9. <u>ADJOURN</u>

DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, for the Selectboard to adjourn. The motion passed 5-0 at 8:33 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Darby Mayville
Recording Secretary

Approved this 20th day of March, 2023
(see minutes of this day for corrections, if any)

____
Ethan Lawrence, Selectboard Clerk