# Town of Essex

**Selectboard**
Phone: (802) 878-1341
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## Regular Meeting Agenda

**Monday, November 20, 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
- **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 the public on items not on Agenda

**5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. Discussion with Police Community Advisory Board
b. Discussion and potential action regarding a new town logo
c. Consider acknowledgment of receipt of Town Plan and warn for public hearings
d. Presentation and discussion on senior services for the Town of Essex
e. Work session on fiscal year 2025 budget
f. Discussion on the timeline regarding Selectboard strategic plan / annual workplan updates from staff
g. Presentation and discussion of selectboard strategic planning update November 2023
h. *Consider authorizing Town Manager to close on purchase of 80 & 90 Upper Main St.
i. **Discussion about the employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee
j. * ***Discussion and potential action about contracts and the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options
k. *** Discussion about contracts

**6. CONSENT ITEMS**

a. Approve check warrants: #18175 - 11/3/23; #18176 - 11/13/23
b. Wastewater Allocation Request for 44 Center Road
c. Wastewater Allocation Request for 46 Center Road
d. **Consider appointment of Deputy Health Officer
e. 2024 Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation Grant Application

**7. READING FILE**

a. Board member comments
b. Upcoming meeting schedule
c. Fiscal Year 24 budget actual for October

**8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

a. *An executive session is anticipated to discuss the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options
b. **An executive session may be requested to discuss the the employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee
c. ***An executive session is anticipated to discuss contracts

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11/17/2023

**TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD**
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**
**MONDAY NOVEMBER 20, 2023**

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

**ADMINISTRATION and STAFF**: Greg Duggan, Town Manager; Tammy Getchell, Public Information Officer/Assistant to the Manager; Marguerite Ladd, Deputy Manager; Dan Roy, Finance Director; Katherine Sonnick, Community Development Director; Ally Vile, Parks &Recreation Director

**OTHERS PRESENT**: Gina Halpin Barrett, Patty Davis, Sam Davis, Elizabeth Dunn, Dave Goodrich, Lisa Goodrich, Audi Guha, Christina Hagestad, Tom Jaros, John Larkin, Bob Leuang, Kay Leuang. Gabe Mannacino, Lynne Reynolds, Tom Reynolds, Rebecca Robinson, Ken Signorello, Georginna Tatro, Sam Tatro, Kate Vanni, Dean Vu, Tran Vu, Irene Wrenner, Lorraine Zaloom

**1. CALL TO ORDER**
Mr. Watts called the Town of Essex Selectboard meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
None.

**3. APPROVE AGENDA**
No changes, thus approval not required.

**4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
**a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda**
Ms. Davis discussed pollution and noise concerns from the Sand Hill Community Group regarding truck traffic on Sand Hill Road. She shared research regarding increased cancer rates for seniors and impacts on pregnant women for those living in polluted environments. Ms. Davis requested that the Selectboard stop issuing overweight truck permits for Sand Hill Road. She also expressed concern about the physical damage that the trucks were having on the roadway. Mr. Watts said that the Selectboard cannot act tonight because this is not a warned item.

Mr. Mannacino said that Sand Hill Road has gotten considerably busier and noisier over the last few years, and that his house is shaking and that he has started to see cracks in the walls from the increased traffic. He suggested rerouting traffic onto the Circ. Mr. Jaros discussed increases in both the noise and volume of truck traffic. Ms. Goodrich discussed truck noise as well as the debris built up on her home from increased traffic. Mr. Reynolds said that the requirement for overweight permits has not been effective, as there is no enforcement. He said that increased salt is required in this area to accommodate the trucks and noted that there are no sidewalks. Ms. Barrett said that the clearcutting of trees has resulted in a louder environment, and that environmental mitigation is important in industrial areas. Mr. Leuang. discussed the health impacts of diesel fuels and requested that the Town do a truck study to ensure they have accurate information on truck traffic. He suggested that extending Thomas Drive to River Road may solve the problem. Mr. Watts said that staff is looking into submitting a grant request to the regional planning commission to do a truck traffic study. He does not feel that a temporary solution is possible in the interim. If the data supports it, the Town could send a written request to the Secretary of Transportation and update their ordinances relating to trucking. Mr. Signorello said that he thinks that Mr. Leuang. was referring to Thompson, not Thomas

Drive, which was confirmed. Answering a question from Ms. Davis, Mr. Lawrence said that the Clerk's Office issues the overweight permits with approval from the Public Works Department.

## 5. BUSINESS ITEMS

### a. Discussion with Police Community Advisory Board

Ms. Hagestad said that she is the Vice-Chair of the Community Advisory Board. She said that the Board is in the early stages of development and has held three meetings. They are working on learning board processes, improving communications and scheduling. There is a lot of passion on the committee. The Committee would like a budget to purchase promotional items to bring to community events. Ms. Hill-Fleury asked when the Committee would be ready for public engagement. Ms. Hagestad said that she would bring it up at the next meeting, as the Committee would like to develop guidelines for such. Mr. Chamberlin asked if the Committee has found the stipends to be useful. Ms. Hagestad said that it is a bonus, but that the people who are on the Committee have true passion for the issue.

### b. Discussion and potential action regarding a new town logo

Ms. Getchell presented four potential logo designs to the Selectboard, noting that she had worked with Ms. Hill-Fleury and Mr. Lawrence to develop these. She discussed the fonts, coloring, and text of each. She suggested that the Selectboard either approve a logo or public survey on the logos this evening. Ms. Hill-Fleury said that it is important to approve a logo and then begin the process of branding Essex. Mr. Lawrence said that he would like to go with one of the approved logos from the Economic Development Commission (EDC) meeting and send them for review in a public survey. He said that he does not believe that the logos that were included in the packet are reflective of the conversations with the EDC. Ms. Robinson, EDC Chair, said that she believes that Ms. Getchell wanted to show the Selectboard as many options as possible prior to voting. The Selectboard discussed personal preferences related to each logo option. Ms. Delphia said that she would like to see a survey put out on the issue and that the color scheme is compatible with the website. Ms. Robinson said that the previous survey provides enough feedback, and that the logo can be tweaked going forward. Mr. Duggan noted that the existing logo did not receive much support during the initial survey. Mr. Watts said that he does not want to do another survey and suggested that the Selectboard table this issue as there is no consensus.

Mr. Watts requested public input. Mr. Signorello thanked Ms. Getchell for listening to the EDC and incorporating their suggestions into the logo. He suggested that recreation be added to the logo, as Essex is known for such. He said that the logo should be intended to sell Essex to those who don't already live here. Ms. Zaloom said that it is a mistake to have a staff member work on a logo as it puts everyone in a difficult position. She asked if the logo was holding up the website re-design process, Mr. Duggan said that it is not. Ms. Wrenner said that branding is important prior to logo development and said that she is sad to see the original historical aspects of the logo lost. She presented another version of the logo in a crest-shape focused on relaxation options in the Town. After additional discussion, the Selectboard agreed to table the issue.

### c. Consider acknowledgment of receipt of Town Plan and warn for public hearings

Ms. Sonnick said that she would like to have a work session at the next Selectboard meeting and hold two public hearings following. As required by state law, the Selectboard acknowledged that they have received the Town Plan.

**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA that the Selectboard acknowledge receipt of the 2024 Town Plan and resolve to hold two public hearings, the first on December 18, 2023, and the second on January 8, 2024. Motion passed 5-0.**

**d. Presentation and discussion on senior services for the Town of Essex**

Ms. Vile said that Essex Parks & Recreation will no longer oversee the Senior Center as of the end of the year. The department will continue Senior Van services for Town seniors. The fund balance for the Senior Center will remain with the City of Essex Junction and Parks & Recreation will continue to offer programming for seniors outside of the Senior Center. Ms. Hill-Fleury asked if there was going to be an effort to look for a new senior center. Ms. Vile said that there is no plan to do such. Mr. Chamberlin asked why the Town of Essex is not looking for a fund balance transfer. Ms. Vile said that a large transfer was made when the non-profit Essex Area Senior Center dissolved, these funds were put into a City finance account dedicated to Seniors. Answering a question from Ms. Delphia, Mr. Duggan said that Essex has had conversations with Essex Junction on continuing the Senior Center, however they are not interested in doing such. Non-residents are allowed to participate in Town Senior programming. Mr. Watts requested public input. Ms. Dunn said that she as surprised to see that Essex Junction residents can use Indian Brook at a resident rate. Mr. Watts said that this no longer the case.

**e. Work session on fiscal year 2025 budget**

Mr. Watts said that the Selectboard held Budget Day last week and have the staff responses to questions available tonight. Ms. Hill-Fleury asked for clarification about the use of fund balance, Mr. Roy explained how these funds have been applied to the respective department’s budget. Mr. Lawrence said that he has not had enough time to review the documents since Budget Day. Mr. Duggan said that there is a proposal to offer volunteer Fire Department members a stipend to be on call. An increased four-hour call-out rather than a two-hour call-out was also discussed. Mr. Duggan suggested implementing one or the other for the first year. The Selectboard decided to move forward with the stipends, rather than increasing the call-out hours.

Mr. Chamberlin discussed a desire to better calculate the amount of gas that each department uses so that it can be properly allocated. Mr. Duggan said that staff will review options for implementing this, and if any additional software will be required for such. Mr. Chamberlin expressed a desire to better determine Police Department expenses so that they can be split fairly between the City and Town. Answering a question from the public, Mr. Roy discussed efforts to keep sufficient liquid cash while ensuring optimal interest revenue. Ms. Delphia asked what the regular checking interest rate was, Mr. Roy said 1% on the checking account, 3% on the reserve fund and 5% in the other long-term accounts. The Selectboard discussed the possibility of using contract labor for parks projects, as this may be a larger savings over time. Mr. Lawrence also requested better allocation of parks and recreation gasoline and yearly parks maintenance spending. Mr. Watts said that he proposed using the fund balance to expand the position of trails coordinator to full-year, part-time. Ms. Delphia suggested that the Trails Coordinator work on a Forrest Management Plan. Mr. Chamberlin withdrew his previous suggestion to put a half penny of the tax rate towards the Conservation Fund, and instead discussed an annual contribution of $15,000. Mr. Chamberlin asked about the Health & Human Services grants, and a desire for all awardees to follow up with how the funds were spent.

Mr. Duggan said that the budget is intended to meet the goals that the Selectboard set in August, and asked if they felt that these were reflected. Mr. Chamberlin said that he would like to increase the annual pavement plan to $500,000/year. The Capital Plan will be discussed at the next two meetings, with a Public Hearing in January. Mr. Watts requested public input, and Ms. Zaloom clarified that she asked about the high interest-yielding accounts on Budget Day. She said that this is a more liquid option than opening a CD. Mr. Signorello asked how much Front Porch Forum would be budgeted for next year. Mr. Duggan said around $3,000. Mr. Signorello expressed concerns about the operations and accessibility of Front Porch Forum.

**f. Discussion on the timeline regarding Selectboard strategic plan / annual workplan updates from staff**

Ms. Ladd said that the Selectboard has always had a goal-setting session in the spring and suggested that this be a more continual discussion. She presented a timeline for keeping the Selectboard goals at the forefront. All Selectboard members indicated their support for this idea and requested that Ms. Ladd keep the Board updated.

**g. Presentation and discussion of selectboard strategic planning update November 2023**

Ms. Ladd presented an update on FY24 Strategic Planning projects, categorized by priority. Mr. Lawrence suggested that all involved departments be included under each item. Mr. Chamberlin suggested that this be included in the Town newsletter.

**h. Consider authorizing Town Manager to close on purchase of 80 & 90 Upper Main St.**

This was discussed during Executive Session.

**i. Discussion about the employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee**

This was discussed during Executive Session.

**j. Discussion and potential action about contracts and the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options**

This was discussed during Executive Session.

**k. Discussion about contracts**

This was discussed during Executive Session.

**6. <u>CONSENT AGENDA</u>**

**ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by KENDALL CHAMBERLIN, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion passed 5-0.**

**a. Approve check warrants: #18175 - 11/3/23; #18176 - 11/13/23**

**b. Wastewater Allocation Request for 44 Center Road**

**c. Wastewater Allocation Request for 46 Center Road**

**d. Consider appointment of Deputy Health Officer**

**e. 2024 Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation Grant Application**

**7. <u>READING FILE</u>**

**a. Board member comments**: Mr. Chamberlin thanked staff for the budget reports. He asked if Sand Hill Drive was upgraded for truck traffic, and Mr. Duggan said that he would investigate it. Ms. Delphia said that free Narcan is available through the Vermont Department of Health. Ms. Hill-Fleury thanked all Town employees for their hard work and wished them a happy Thanksgiving.

**b. Upcoming meeting schedule**

**c. Fiscal Year 24 budget actual for October**

**8. <u>EXECUTIVE SESSION</u>**

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

**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE 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 Town Manager. Motion passed 5-0.**

**TRACEY DELPHIA made a motion, seconded by DAWN HILL-FLEURY, to authorize the Town Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding for Redevelopment of 72, 74, and 76 Upper Main St. and Access to 80 & 90 Upper Main St. Motion passed 4-1, with ETHAN LAWRENCE voting against.**

**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA, to authorize the Town Manager to execute any and all documents necessary for the purchase of 80 & 90 Upper Main St. Motion passed 4-1, with ETHAN LAWRENCE voting against.**

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

**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, 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.**

**c. An executive session is anticipated to discuss contracts**

**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE that the Selectboard make the specific finding that general public knowledge of contracts would place the Town at a substantial disadvantage. Motion passed 5-0.**

**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, that the Selectboard enter into executive session to discuss contracts, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A), and 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 Town Manager. Motion passed 5-0.**

**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA to exit executive session. Motion passed 5-0 at 10:10 PM.**

**9. ADJOURN**

**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA, for the Selectboard to adjourn. The motion passed 5-0 at 10:14 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,
Darby Mayville
Recording Secretary

Approved this 4th day of December, 2023
**(see minutes of this day for corrections, if any)**

Kendall Chamberlin

Kendall Chamberlin, Selectboard Clerk