



## Town of Essex

### Selectboard

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## Regular Meeting Agenda

**Monday, October 16, 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 the public on items not on Agenda
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
  - a. Presentation from Tree Farm Management Group about 2023 Operational and Financial Summary
  - b. Presentation from Town Meeting Television on Fiscal Year 24 update and Fiscal Year 2025 budget request
  - c. Discussion about next steps in proposed changes to Town of Essex Charter
  - d. \*Discussion about the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
  - a. Approve minutes: October 2, 2023
  - b. Approve check warrants: # 18171 - 10/06/23
  - c. Consider approval of request to Vermont Agency of Transportation to conduct speed and safety study on VT Route 15 near Whitcomb Meadows Lane
  - d. Consider approval of letter of support for application for Town Center Waterline Project to be placed on Regional Project Prioritization List
  - e. Consider support of a Municipal Planning Grant for New Town Center Designation
7. **READING FILE**
  - a. Board member comments
  - b. Upcoming meeting schedule
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
  - a. \*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: \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ 10/13/2023

**TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
October 16, 2023**

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

**ADMINISTRATION:** Greg Duggan, Town Manager; Marguerite Ladd, Deputy Town Manager; Annie Costandi, Essex Public Works;

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Joe Chastenay, Darryl, Betsy Dunn, Erin Dickinson, Sven Eklof, Jim Goudie, Gina Halpin Barrett, Charlie Lancaster, Jordan Mitchell, Meghan O'Rourke, Bruce Post, Mary Post, Ken Signorello, Margaret Smith, Irene Wrenner, Tom Yandow, Lorraine Zaloom.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Watts called the meeting of the Town of Essex Selectboard to order at 6:30 P.M.

**2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

None.

**3. AGENDA APPROVAL**

Not needed.

**4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

Joe Chastenay spoke about an incident of theft at the Essex Country Club in which a golf cart was stolen and asked for follow-up from the Police Department.

Ken Signorello noted that the Indian Brook cleanup event is occurring this weekend.

Betsy Dunn thanked the Parks & Recreation Department for the Explore Essex event. She additionally spoke about the opioid epidemic in the community and suggested having a public forum as a mechanism to communicate information to the public about steps being taken to combat the epidemic.

Lorraine Zaloom suggested making manuals available to volunteers and committees that include instructions on procedures and processes, such as uploading materials to the Town's website. She also requested that each committee receive an email address that is not governmental, to improve communication processes.

Mary Post expressed concern about overdose deaths in the community and said she would like the community to have more information on how to obtain Narcan and would like the Town to look into taking actions to prevent overdose deaths.

Town Manager Duggan said that the Town is in the process of obtaining Narcan to make it available in certain public locations in the community. Deputy Town Manager Ladd added that the Town will provide more information about where its opioid settlement funds are being allocated, and also noted that the Police Department conducts community outreach around this topic.

47  
48 **5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

49 a. Presentation from Tree Farm Management Group about 2023 Operational and Financial Summary  
50 Sven Eklof, President, and Jim Goudie, Vice President of the Tree Farm Management Group, gave a brief  
51 presentation about their 2023 operational and financial performance. Mr. Eklof began by noting that the  
52 Tree Farm's board increased to 9, in order to increase representation. He noted that the Tree Farm hosts a  
53 number of soccer clubs and leagues and that the high school's soccer programs and cross-country club  
54 also use the facilities. He spoke about the large events that occurred at the Tree Farm this summer. He  
55 noted that this year saw positive revenue performance but noted that maintenance has been costly due to  
56 the amount of rain that occurred this summer. He said that one of leadership's goals is to improve the  
57 relationship between municipalities and the Tree Farm Management Group, and that another is to improve  
58 the parking situation at the property. He noted that part of the agreement between the Tree Farm and the  
59 Town of Essex requires the Tree Farm to submit a management plan to the Town as well as obtain  
60 501(3)(c) non-profit status, both by the end of the year. He said that they are working on both items and  
61 anticipate completing them by the deadline. He said that they are also hiring a firm to conduct a site plan  
62 in order to improve the parking situation.

63  
64 Ms. Hill-Fleury asked about the parking issues related to the lacrosse events, and Mr. Eklof replied that  
65 they had not anticipated the number of participants that had come to that event, and that they have realized  
66 that they need to better control the parking for large events.

67  
68 Mr. Chamberlin asked if there are plans for winter events at the Tree Farm. Mr. Eklof replied that the gate  
69 is generally closed after Halloween but that the public is still able to access the property in the colder  
70 months to use the walking trails.

71  
72 Ms. Delphia thanked the Tree Farm leadership for their efforts toward collaboration and improving the  
73 relationship with Essex.

74  
75 Mr. Lawrence asked whether the Tree Farm anticipates being able to make the deadline for becoming a  
76 nonprofit, and Mr. Eklof replied that they have hired a firm to help with the process and are optimistic  
77 that they will be able to obtain nonprofit status by the end of the year.

78  
79 b. Presentation from Town Meeting Television on Fiscal Year 2024 update and Fiscal Year 2025 budget  
80 request

81 Meghan O'Rourke, Director of CCTV, and Jordan Mitchell, Operations Director at Town Meeting TV,  
82 provided a brief presentation on their Fiscal Year 2024 update and Fiscal Year 2025 budget request. Ms.  
83 Mitchell noted that in the last fiscal year, they produced 40 Selectboard and Planning Commission  
84 meetings, and that they covered 111% of the budgeted number of programs. She noted that costs are  
85 covered by cable subscribers from Comcast and Burlington Telecom and that municipal contributions help  
86 cover operating costs. She said that this year, they are requesting an FY25 contribution from Essex of  
87 \$13,891 to cover general operating funds, which is 5% higher than last year's contribution. She  
88 additionally noted that due to declining cable revenue and financial support for community media from  
89 cable, they are seeking a permanent funding source from the legislature this legislative session. She asked  
90 that Essex sign onto a letter of support, which will be submitted to the legislature with the funding request.

91  
92 The following public comments were made:

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- Bruce Post spoke about how important Town Meeting TV has been, both as a public record of meetings and during the pandemic as a way to safely engage in the civic process.

### c. Discussion about next steps in proposed changes to Town of Essex Charter

Chair Watts said that the Selectboard has discussed all sections of the Charter and their proposed changes, and that this discussion pertains to next steps in the process of making those changes. He noted that there were several sections for which they deferred discussion, such as the ordinance section, the Town Manager section, the Annual Meeting section, and whether the Selectboard wanted to move forward with requesting a cannabis tax. He asked other Selectboard members how much time they want to devote to further discussion of these charter changes, given that they are moving into budget development for the next fiscal year and given that the previous set of proposed charter changes has not yet been approved by the legislature. Ms. Hill-Fleury said that she would like to wait and see if the first five proposed changes are approved by the legislature prior to submitting further changes. She also suggested providing the Charter Change Committee with the Selectboard's notes and discussions around the further proposed changes. Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Chamberlin agreed with that suggestion. The Selectboard discussed whether they could move forward with more minor changes, but did not make a decision at this time.

The following public comments were made:

- Bruce Post recommended showing strong support for the charter changes that are already pending in front of the legislature, given that the Town voters approved these changes already. He said that they could ask for support from the Town's legislative delegation to move these changes quickly.
- Margaret Smith expressed support for the already-approved changes that are pending at the legislature and that the Selectboard should turn its focus on budget development for the next fiscal year.
- Lorraine Zaloom agreed with previous public comments.

Town Manager Duggan said that they can refer this discussion back to the Charter Committee for their consideration in preparation for Town Meeting Day 2025 and that the Town will work to provide staff support for this.

Chair Watts said that they will also reach out to their legislative delegation on the currently pending charter changes.

d. \*Discussion about the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options  
See item #8a below.

## 6. CONSENT ITEMS

- Approve minutes – October 2, 2023
- Approve check warrants: #18171 – 10/6/2023
- Consider approval of request to Vermont Agency of Transportation to conduct speed and safety study on VT Route 15 near Whitcomb Meadows Lane
- Consider approval of letter of support for application for Town Center Waterline Project to be placed on Regional Project Prioritization List
- Consider support of Municipal Planning Grant for New Town Center Designation

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**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by TRACEY DELPHIA to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed 5-0.**

**The minutes from October 2, 2023 were amended as follows:**

- **Reflect a 4-1 vote to approve the agenda (Chair Watts dissenting).**

Mr. Chamberlin asked about how the zones were set up in the speed study to transition the speed limit, saying that it makes the most sense to change the speed limit at the bottom of the hill. Town Manager Duggan noted that they can pass these comments on to VTrans.

### **7. READING FILE**

- a. Board member comments: Ms. Hill-Fleury thanked Tammy Getchell and staff for the Explore Essex event. Town Manager Duggan also thanked Public Works, the Police Department, the Parks & Recreation Department, and the Community Development Director, as well as the Selectboard, for their work on the Explore Essex event. Ms. Hill-Fleury also asked that the Town follow up on the public comments received about distributing Narcan and combatting the opioid epidemic. Town Manager Duggan noted that the opioid settlement funds they are receiving must be put toward prevention, and that much of the funding goes toward the Community Outreach Team at the Howard Center, which does work in Essex. Deputy Town Manager Ladd spoke about prevention and public safety activities occurring in Essex, mainly with the first responders and Police Department, and also noted that state programs are coming online to help assist towns with opioid-related issues. Ms. Delphia suggested that the Department of Health may have informational resources that the Town could use. Switching topics, Ms. Delphia then noted that the Noise Exposure Map update group had an initial, level-setting meeting last week and will meet again in November. Chair Watts reminded the Selectboard that they have an all-day budget working session on November 14.
- b. Upcoming meeting schedule

### **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, that the Selectboard enter into 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. The motion passed 5-0 at 7:42 P.M.**

**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, to exit executive session. The motion passed 5-0 at 9:01 P.M.**

### **9. ADJOURN**

**DAWN HILL-FLEURY made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 9:01 P.M.**

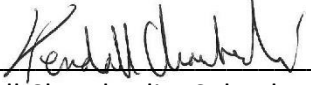
Respectfully Submitted,

## SELECTBOARD

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184 Amy Coonradt,  
185 Recording Secretary

186  
187 Approved this 30th day of October, 2023  
188 **(see minutes of this day for corrections, if any)**

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192 Kendall Chamberlin, Selectboard Clerk