



Town of Essex
Charter Review Committee
Phone: (802) 878-1341
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AGENDA

Wednesday, May 22, 2024 – 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: 848 1805 6720](#) | [Passcode: 642284](#)
- **JOIN CALLING:** (*toll free audio only*): (888) 788-0099 | Meeting ID: 848 1805 6720; Passcode: 642284

This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request.

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. Approve minutes: April 24, 2024
 - b. Discussion and update on the Town Boards, Committees, & Commissions Breakfast on May 20
 - c. Discussion about Essex Free Library Board of Trustees Bylaws and potential conflicts with Town Charter
 - d. Discussion about charter review services provided by Vermont League of Cities and Towns
 - e. Discussion about Selectboard comments on proposed Charter amendments
 - f. Confirm next meeting date: June 26, 2024
6. **ADJOURN**

Essex Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes

Town of Essex Charter Review Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday May 22, 2024

Charter Review Committee:

At Meeting: Charles Tabone, Bruce Post, Lorraine Zaloom, Margaret Smith (on Zoom), Dawn Hill-Fleury (Ex-Officio)

Administration and Staff: Tammy Getchell – Assistant to the Manager

Others Present: At Meeting – Janet Watts, Trustee, Chairperson, Essex Free Library Board of Trustees. On Zoom – Gina Halpin.

1. Call to Order

- a. Mr. Post called the Essex Charter Review Committee to order at 6:31 PM.

2. Agenda Additions/Changes

- a. No changes to the Agenda.
- b. Mr. Tabone made a motion seconded by Ms. Zaloom to approve the Agenda for May 22, 2024. Motion passed 4-0.**

3. Approve Minutes

- a. Mr. Post requested a change to the minutes of April 24, 2024, Section 5.c.ii to change the word, “it’s” to “its”.
- b. Mr. Tabone made a motion seconded by Ms. Zaloom to approve the minutes as amended for April 24, 2024. Motion passed 4-0.**

4. Public To Be Heard

- a. No public comments.

5. Business Items

- a. Town Boards, Committees, and Commissions Breakfast held on May 20th, 2024.**
 - i. Mr. Post and Mr. Tabone from the Charter Review Committee were present at the breakfast held at the The Tavern in Essex.
 - ii. Discussions centered around improving communication among the various Town Boards, Committees, and Commissions within Essex and the Selectboard and Staff.
- b. Essex Free Library Board of Trustees Bylaws and potential conflicts with the Town Charter.**
 - i. Ms. Watts informed the committee that last week the library updated their bylaws to make it clearer as to how the role of the Library Director is managed.
 - ii. Mr. Tabone gave an analysis of his views on how the current Charter interacted with the previous version of the Library Bylaws as he was unaware of the updated version.
 - iii. Ms. Zaloom agreed with several items that Mr. Tabone outlined and expressed her opinions on the subject.

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- iv. Ms. Watts said it was her understanding that the Town would prefer to keep the Library Director under their purview.
- v. There was discussion on who is or should oversee the Library Director. The Town or the Library Trustees.
- vi. Ms. Watts expressed that pending seeing finalization of bills not yet written into law and seeking further counsel on the matter that deferring to 22 V.S.A. § 143 might be a possible solution.
- vii. Ms. Getchell made mention that:
 - 1. The Library Director can employ and remove library staff. However, those staff members are town employees.
 - 2. The relationship between the Town and the Library is relatively problem free at this time, all things considered.
- viii. Ms. Zaloom started a discussion as to whether we continue this conversation or table it to collect more information.
- ix. Ms. Hill-Fleury noted that if we were to defer to state statute and put it in the charter that it would go in Section 401 B.
- x. **Mr. Tabone made a motion seconded by Ms. Smith to add 22 V.S.A. § 143 to the Charter in Section 401 B. Motion passed 3-1. Mr. Post voted no.**
 - 1. Ms. Zaloom expressed that the word “may” in the last sentence of section (a) should be replaced with “shall”.
 - 2. Mr. Post expressed that S.220 Bill is not passed yet so we are not sure what the final version of 22 V.S.A. § 143 will read as.
- c. Charter review services offered by Vermont League of Cities and Towns.
 - i. Ms. Getchell informed the committee of the following:
 - ii. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns (V.L.C.T.) has redone their website.
 - iii. The V.L.C.T. now will review charters and that as part of our membership we can avail ourselves to this service as per their guidelines.
 - iv. We can also submit questions regarding word definitions or topics related to creating/amending charters.
- d. Review Selectboard comments on proposed Charter amendments.
 - i. § 117-701 – no changes.
 - ii. § 117-702 – removed.
 - iii. § 117-703 – keep existing.
 - iv. § 117-704 – no changes.
 - v. § 117-705 – change to. “Notwithstanding any other provisions of this charter and the requirements of the general law of the State of Vermont, the Selectboard or Town Assessor is authorized to negotiate assessment and taxation agreements. With the exception of tax stabilization agreements, the Selectboard is authorized to execute such agreements between the Town and a taxpayer or taxpayers within the Town consistent with applicable requirements of the Vermont Constitution.
 - vi. § 117-801 – no changes.
 - vii. § 117-901 – add “Town Assessor” to § 117-402.
 - viii. § 117-902 – Town Assessor requested the change.

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- ix. § 117-903 – accept changes.
- x. § 117-904 – no changes.
- xi. § 117-905 – change “law” to “laws” and remove “proceed in the discharge of”.
- xii. § 117 Subchapter 10 remove “and initiatives” from title.
- xiii. § 117-1001 – accept changes.
- xiv. § 117 Subchapter 11 – remove.
- xv. § 117 Subchapter 12 remove “of Provisions” from the title.
- xvi. § 117-1201 – keep existing.

6. Next Meeting

- a. The next meeting of the Essex Charter Review Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, July 10, 2024, 6:30 PM at location to be determined.

7. Adjourn

- a. **Ms. Zaloom made a motion seconded by Mr. Tabone to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 4-0.**
- b. Meeting Adjourned 8:41 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charles Tabone
Secretary