TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2025

SELECTBOARD: Tracey Delphia, Chair; Kendall Chamberlin, Vice-Chair; Shannon Jackson, Clerk; Ethan Lawrence; Andy Watts
ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Greg Duggan, Town Manager; Karen Adams, Deputy Town Manager; Tammy Getchell, Public Information Officer/Assistant to the Town Manager; Ron Hoague, Police Chief; Kent Johnson, Town Planner
OTHERS PRESENT: Gina Halpin Barrett, Drew Pollak-Bruce, Bryan Davis, Gwendolyn Evans, Joshua Knox, Carolyn Lawrence, Ken Signorello, Adam Morse, Alan Nye, Diane Percy, Sarah Reeves, Margaret Smith, Reed Von Gal, Irene Wrenner, Sharon Zukowski

Meeting Recording:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=To3m7vpgFGQ&list=PLljLFn4BZd2MX8tMSIwlYGFAQOith-Q_F&index=2
Times associated with each agenda item are approximate.

1. CALL TO ORDER (0:21)
Tracey Delphia called the Town of Essex Selectboard meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES (1:12)
None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA (1:26)
No changes, thus not required.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD (1:33)
a. Comments from the Public on Consent Items and Items Not on Agenda
Ken Signorello said that the Conservation & Trails Committee (CTC) hopes to discuss a budgetary contribution to the Conservation Fund. He also said that he hopes that the Selectboard will discuss the purchase of the boat launch property along the Winooski River.

5. CONSENT ITEMS (5:45)
a. Approve minutes: November 17, 2025
b. Approve check warrants: #_ 18307- 11/14/25; #_18308 - 11/24/25
ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by ANDY WATTS, to accept the consent agenda, as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS (6:08)
a. Discussion with the Planning Commission
Joshua Knox, Chair of the Planning Commission (PC), presented. He discussed the transition from the PC both working on development review and planning to strictly working on planning. Answering a question from Ethan Lawrence, J. Knox said that the Town Plan is a legal document but needs properly worded regulations to be best applied to development. Answering a question from Shannon Jackson, J. Knox said that he feels it is helpful to have members who serve on both the PC and Development Review Board (DRB). Regarding discussions on steep slopes, J. Knox said that a side working group is determining what the definition of such should be. He believes that it is more effective for the PC and DRB to have two separate chairs. J. Knox said that the Tier 1b status has been discussed by the PC, and that they are interested in

bringing the issue back to the Selectboard with a much more limited scope in area. He discussed the future potential of moving the sewer core boundaries for a desired development along Route 289. Work on this project has not begun, however the PC believes that it could be helpful to the community due to the project's connectivity to the ETC Next area. Future discussions will be held on the issue. In public comment, Diane Percy thanked J. Knox and the other Planning Commissioners for their hard work on a recent rezoning request from the state.

b. Discussion with the Police Community Advisory Board (23:39)
Gwendolyn Evans, Chair of the Community Advisory Board, presented. She said that the results of a community survey are in and that the Board is working towards better informing the community of their work. Answering a question from E. Lawrence, G. Evans said that the Board currently has one vacancy. The Board has been attending additional events to help to engage the community and ideally help to fill the vacancy. G. Evans said that the survey results have shown that the town is pleased with the police department, but also that they feel disconnected from it. She believes that the Citizens Police Academy is something that would be helpful for all residents to attend. Answering a question from Kendall Chamberlin, R. Hoague said that the results of the survey have not been compared to previous years, however this would be a helpful thing to do in the future. Answering a question from S. Jackson, R. Hoague said that surveys will be done regularly. T. Delphia requested public input, of which there was none.

c. Discussion with Chittenden Solid Waste District Executive Director Sarah Reeves re: CSWD annual report (36:43)
Sarah Reeves, Executive Director of the CSWD, and Alan Nye, Essex Representative to the CSWD Board, presented. S. Reeves provided an overview of the organizational mission and stated that in FY27 there will be no community assessments. She said that a community fund is available for waste reductions in each community and that Essex is allotted $7,500 per year for this purpose. CSWD has brought in more revenue than predicted, most of which is due to property sales and grant revenue. Chittenden County's waste diversion rate is higher than the state average. CSWD has broken ground on a new materials recovery facility, and it should be operational by January of 2027. CSWD is working on increasing composting, especially with commercial entities. CSWD collected the most solar eclipse glasses of any organization in the country. Answering a question from S. Jackson, A. Nye said that Essex has previously used the community fund for Indian Brook clean-up and Christmas tree pickup however it has not been used in recent years. S. Reeves discussed business and community outreach and encouraged the Selectboard to help to communicate the assistance that CSWD can provide. Answering a question from A. Watts, S. Reeves said that the state is researching landfill expansion opportunities.

d. Consider approval of contract for Taser Conducted Electricity Weapons (CEW) (1:00:44)
R. Hoague said that the police department is looking to replace their end-of-life tasers. This purchase would not be made until the next fiscal year. The purchase price would be paid over the course of five years. No interest is required. The tasers would be purchased from the operating budget. Answering a question from S. Jackson, R. Hoague said that the price of tasers have increased substantially in recent years. One taser would be issued to every patrolling officer. Answering a question from E. Lawrence, R. Hoague said that a small trade-in value is available. T. Delphia requested public input, of which there was none.

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by ANDY WATTS, that the Selectboard give approval for the Manager and/or Chief of Police to carry out a contract as outlined above with Axon, Inc to begin in FY27.

Discussion: Answering a question from S. Jackson, R. Hoague said that this contract would not be signed until the budget for the next fiscal year is approved.

Voting: Motion passed 5-0.

e. Consider approval of contract for Body Cameras and In Car Cameras (1:12:53)
R. Hoague said that the department has twelve body cameras and in-car cameras, respectfully. The Police Department would like to end their current contract and enter into a new one to replace the five-year old cameras. Answering a question from E. Lawrence, Karen Adams said that half of the cost would be covered by the Town's fund balance and the other half would be from the City. Answering a question from A. Watts, K. Adams said that fund balance is intentionally used as other departmental priorities would need to be unspent if funding was moved around. A. Watts suggested adding the phrase, "pending fund balance approval," to the motion. He said that the manager has the authority to shift funds within departmental budgets. R. Hoague said that the Police Department will have an excess salary allocation which could be used for this purchase if necessary. T. Delphia requested public comment, of which there was none.

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by ANDY WATTS, that the Selectboard approve the Manager and/or Chief of Police enter into a contract for Body Worn Cameras and In-Car Cameras with Motorola Solutions, Inc cost as outlined above. Motion passed 5-0.

f. Consider adoption of the Keystone Trail Connectivity Project Plan (1:32:14)
Kent Johnson, Adam Morse (Fellowship of the Wheel), Drew Pollak-Bruce (CRO Designs) and Carolyn Lawrence (CRO Designs) presented. The Keystone Trail Connectivity Project is a grant-funded initiative that began in August of 2024. An advisory group with several stakeholders has been meeting bi-monthly and significant public outreach has occurred. The trail is located on the 289 corridor between Saxon Hill and the Town Center. Scenario planning occurred to determine scenarios that could be successful with a variety of variables. Survey results have shown that residents are excited for recreational opportunities but concerned about the wildlife impact. D. Pollak-Bruce spoke of efforts to combine funding opportunities for both bike/ped resources and wildlife protection. He said that this project aims to improve the informal trails network and open it up to a wider group of people. C. Lawrence discussed potential trail prototypes that could be used, noting that it would be helpful to allow for adaptive transport and winter plowing. A. Morse said that there are no budgeted trail spurs however these could be implemented in the future. A scoping study would be required to do work on state-owned land. E. Lawrence said that the state was doing some work regarding culverts in the site area.

C. Lawrence reviewed the technical wildlife/habitat recommendations from Arrowwood Designs. She reviewed potential funding opportunities and said that trail counters could be helpful for potential decommissioning. A. Morse spoke of the need to work on both small and larger projects to keep momentum going. Answering a question from A. Watts, C. Lawrence said that municipalities are allowed to determine what type of e-bikes are allowed on town trails. D. Pollak-Bruce discussed the possibility of implementing a speed limit and suggested deferring to state standards which are currently being developed. In public comment, K. Signorello suggested that this be presented to the Conservation & Trails Committee. He said that the CTC has written a memo to the state regarding culvert concerns in the area.

SHANNON JACKSON made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, that the Selectboard adopt the Keystone Trail Connectivity Project Plan. Motion passed 4-1, with KENDALL CHAMBERLIN dissenting.

g. Consider final adoption of Handbook for Boards, Committees and Commissions and their Staff Representatives (2:17:00)
Tammy Getchell said that significant changes have been made to this document over the past seven months. This document was already received preliminary approval in September. The handbook highlights laws and policies which are referenced in this document and will need to be frequently updated. E. Lawrence said that a significant amount of time has been spent discussing this and he believes that this issue should move to public comment and then vote. S. Jackson said that he believes that it should be established that one person cannot be the chair of more than one committee. T. Delphia said that it was previously voted down by the Selectboard. A. Watts said that the Selectboard does not have the authority to make this decision. S. Jackson expressed concern about including, "as time permits" regarding web updates. S. Jackson said that he disagrees with E. Lawrence's request to call the question.

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by KENDALL CHAMBERLIN, to cease board debate. Motion passed 3-2, with SHANNON JACKSON and KENDALL CHAMBERLIN in opposition.

In public comment, K. Signorello said that he believes that there should be more commitment from staff in this handbook, and said that he feels that they are often unable to fulfill their commitments.

E. Lawrence clarified that he is open to any changes to be made and subsequently voted upon regarding this document.

SHANNON JACKSON made a motion, seconded by KENDALL CHAMBERLIN, that on page 11 of this handout that we strike the language, "as time permits," from the second bullet point. Motion passed 3-2, with ETHAN LAWRENCE and ANDY WATTS dissenting.

SHANNON JACKSON made a motion, seconded by KENDALL CHAMBERLIN, that on page 10, in the onboarding section, the first bullet point of the second paragraph shall read, "the chair of the board should attend onboarding meetings with new members."

Discussion: A. Watts said that committee chairs should have the freedom to act as they choose.

Vote: Motion passed 3-2, with ANDY WATTS and ETHAN LAWRENCE dissenting.

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by KENDALL CHAMBERLIN, that the Selectboard adopt the Handbook for Boards, Committees and Commissions and their Staff Representatives as amended. Motion passed 5-0.

h. Discussion about the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee (2:38:50)
This was discussed during Executive Session.

7. <u>READING FILE</u> (2:38:57)
a. Board member comments: S. Jackson said that the Conservation Fund survey should be discussed further. K. Chamberlin lauded the donation policy. A. Watts encouraged accurate donation policies in regard to the library, noting their specific needs. He clarified that the budget meeting is at 8:30 AM on Friday, not 8 AM.
b. Upcoming meeting schedule

c. Draft Donations Policy
d. Results from Police Community Advisory Board survey
e. Recreation Needs Assessment Statistically Valid Survey Launch
f. Draft Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget Available
g. The Citizen: Hinesburg may reconsider enacting a local option tax
h. Conservation Reserve Fund Survey Results
i. November 2025 Reappraisal Update

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION (2:42:19)

a. An Executive Session was held to Discuss the Appointment or Employment or Evaluation of a Public Officer or Employee

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by SHANNON JACKSON, 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 Town Manager. Motion passed 5-0.

ANDY WATTS made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, to exit Executive Session at 9:48 PM. Motion passed 5-0.

9. ADJOURN

ANDY WATTS made a motion, seconded by SHANNON JACKSON, for the Selectboard to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0 at 9:49 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Darby Mayville
Recording Secretary