

Essex Economic Development Commission (EDC)
Special Hybrid Meeting Minutes
December 30, 2025, 8:00AM
Hybrid Meeting Held at 81 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452
Minutes Submitted by Clerk Keith Dunbar, January 3, 2026

Attendees

Commission Members:

Present (Remote): Irene Wrenner, Chair; Ken Signorello, Vice Chair; Keith Dunbar, Clerk;
Anne Miller;

Absent: Igor Polenov

Staff (Remote): Jean O’Sullivan, Tammy Getchell

Public: N/A

Partners: N/A

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM by Chair Irene Wrenner, roll call attendance was held

2. Agenda Additions/Changes

- No changes were made to the agenda

3. Public to be Heard

- No public comments were offered in person or online.

4. Business Items

Discuss and potential action to modify memo to Selectboard re: Local Option Tax (LOT)

- Chair Wrenner opened discussion on revising the EDC memo to the Selectboard regarding the Local Option Tax, prompted by a concern that the prior memo (referenced as dated December 21) may have needed clearer framing of assumptions.

Key discussion points

- Commissioners reiterated that resident vs. non-resident LOT share is not directly knowable from state tax reporting; retailers report totals collected, not payer residency.
- The group discussed the need to make assumptions explicit, particularly where the memo infers what portion of LOT might be borne locally vs. by non-residents.
- A chart on employment inflow/outflow (in-migration/out-migration for work) was introduced and discussed. The group noted it was 2022 data and should be cited as such if included.
- Members discussed differences among communities (Essex, Williston, South Burlington, Colchester, Milton) and emphasized that commerce/retail concentration and travel

patterns matter, and that proximity to the interstate alone does not explain results (Milton was cited as an example).

- Jean O’Sullivan suggested using CATMA/transportation study employer-origin data and contacting CATMA staff (including “Emily”) as a possible way to support assumptions about commuting populations and spending behavior; also noted the State may have more current data by NAICS code and suggested a possible contact (Matt Barowitz mentioned).
- Discussion included a caution about “term paper” length vs. providing enough data to anticipate Selectboard questions.

Motions and Actions (all approved)

1. Add employment inflow/outflow chart to the memo
 - Motion: Add the employee inflow/outflow chart beneath the per-capita LOT chart, with proper citation (identified as coming from the Economic Development Strategic Plan, page 50).
 - Second: Provided (noted as for discussion).
 - Vote: Approved unanimously by voice vote (all “Aye”).
 - Result: Motion carried.
2. Revise language to clarify demographic differences and assumptions; adjust sentence structure
 - Motion: Add explicit acknowledgment that demographics differ across towns and clarify assumptions; revise sentence structure to lead with the baseline statement (“When Essex Junction is used as a baseline...”). Remove overly specific phrasing such as “at minimum” (as not supported by available data).
 - Second: Yes.
 - Vote: Approved unanimously (all “Aye”).
 - Result: Motion carried.
3. Revise description of table to include Milton and restore “neighboring” language
 - Motion: Update text describing the table/chart to reflect Milton being added and restore the word “neighboring.”
 - Second: Yes.
 - Vote: Approved unanimously (all “Aye”).
 - Result: Motion carried.
4. Revise recommendation paragraph tone (“grateful/confident” to “appreciate/have concerns”)
 - Motion: Change recommendation language to read in substance: members “appreciate” the opportunity to advise the Selectboard and “have concerns” that proposing a new tax—especially a regressive one—could be perceived as insensitive to household budgets during economic uncertainty.
 - Second: Yes.
 - Vote: Approved unanimously (all “Aye”).
 - Result: Motion carried.
5. Revise opening discussion sentence to reflect multiple meetings
 - Motion: Change “met on December 11th” to “met twice in December to address this task.”

- Second: Yes.
- Vote: Approved unanimously (all “Aye”).
- Result: Motion carried.

Additional discussion (no action taken)

- A suggestion was raised about referencing Burlington’s unique tax approach (including examples like short-term rental taxation) and potentially recommending a future investigation. Members generally felt it was too far afield for the current memo and task; no motion advanced.

Next steps agreed

- Chair Wrenner will finalize the revised draft memo and email it to members for review the same day, and staff will include it in the Selectboard packet (deadline noted as “tomorrow”).

Staff member Tammy Getchell provided brief comments supporting the approach of clearly stating assumptions and keeping additional references (like CATMA data) “in the back pocket.”

5. Next Meeting

- January 8th, 2026. To be held at the Essex Town Office, 8:00 am.

6. Adjournment

- Motion: **Signorello** motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:52 am, seconded by **Dunbar**.
Vote: Passed unanimously 4-0.

Meeting recording available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i99XoR5Sdq8>