



Town of Essex
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**BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY
MEETING as BOARD of ABATEMENT
DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING
APRIL 28, 2026**

Members Present In-Person: Dawn Hill-Fleury, Chair; Betsy Dunn, Vice-Chair; Tatsiana Bussiere (non-voting); Shannon Jackson; Ethan Lawrence; Georgia Lavigne; Ken Signorello; Erik Post; Margaret Smith; Andy Watts; Irene Wrenner; Meg Zimmerman; Cynthia Seivwright

Members Present via Zoom: Liz Subin, Kendall Chamberlin

Others Present In-Person: Jack Kendrick, Ruth Kendrick

Others Present via Zoom: Ryan Lawrence

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 PM by Dawn Hill-Fleury, Chair.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

DAWN HILL-FLEURY asked to remove the minutes of December 3, 2025 from the agenda and Consent items.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

SHANNON JACKSON made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, to accept the agenda as amended. Motion passed 14-0.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

None.

5. CONSENT ITEMS

~~a. Approve Minutes: December 3, 2025~~

Not discussed.

6. REQUESTS FOR ABATEMENT

a. Ruth Kendrick - Request to abate sewer/water charges under 24 V.S.A. §1535(a)(10)

Mr. Kendrick, son of property owner Ms. Kendrick, said exterior water lines were inadvertently left on and subsequently froze. The subsequent bill was approximately \$1,800. He would like to see if there was any way to abate the sewer charges that were charged, as the water was not processed through the sewer system. Sewer charges are based off water usage, as it is assumed that all water used goes through the sewer system. If a property owner notifies the town ahead of time, such as for filling up a swimming pool, it is possible to adjust the bill. Mr. Kendrick is requesting an abatement of \$1,172.78, which is the full cost of sewer. He also indicated that he believes that paying the minimum sewer charge would also be fair.

TOWN MANAGER	PARKS AND RECREATION	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	PUBLIC WORKS	ASSESSOR	FINANCE	TOWN CLERK	LIBRARY	FIRE	POLICE
878-1341	878-1342	878-1343	878-1344	878-1345	878-1359	879-0413	879-0313	878-5308	878-8331

b. Ryan and Chantal Lawrence - Request to abate sewer/water charges under 24 V.S.A. §1535(a)(10)

Mr. Ryan Lawrence said he was surprised by his higher water bill and asked town staff for a daily water usage report. There was a very large spike from December 18, 2025-December 23, 2025 and then usage returned to normal. He is unsure what could have caused this large spike and no issues have been found. The water meter has been checked and found to be operating properly. No guests were at his home during this time. Mr. Ryan Lawrence said he would like to see the usage for the week of the large spike in December to be changed to the average of what is spent for the normal billing period. Mr. Chamberlin asked Mr. Ryan Lawrence about the age of the toilet fixtures and if he has a cat who might be able to flush a toilet. The home is heated via baseboard hot water. Mr. Ryan Lawrence said he believes that he has a good idea of his home's usage and believes that any trends would continue outside of the one-week period in December. Ms. Hill-Fleury requested additional information (the data log from December 17, 2025 – December 23, 2025, the week in question) on water usage data, which was not provided with the original application to the Town, and asked that Mr. Ryan Lawrence come back to the Board of Abatement at a later date.

ERIK POST made a motion, seconded by KEN SIGNORELLO, to continue the hearing. Motion passed 13-1, with ANDY WATTS in opposition.

7. DELIBERATION

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by GEORGIA LAVIGNE, to enter into deliberative session. Motion passed 14-0.

ANDY WATTS made a motion, seconded by BETSY DUNN, to exit deliberative session. Motion passed 14-0.

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by SHANNON JACKSON, to abate sewer bill from February 2026 in the amount of \$1,052.72. Motion passed 12-2, with IRENE WRENNER and KENDALL CHAMBERLIN in opposition.

The board acknowledged the need to establish clearer guidelines for future abatement requests and agreed to schedule another meeting to create a formal policy.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Darby Mayville,
Recording Secretary