TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2026

SELECTBOARD: Shannon Jackson, Chair; Ethan Lawrence, Vice-Chair; Meg Zimmerman, Clerk; Kendall Chamberlin

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Greg Duggan, Town Manager; Karen Adams, Deputy Town Manager; Tammy Getchell, Director of Community Engagement & Economic Development; Ron Hoague, Police Chief; Aaron Martin, Public Works Director; Lea Sanguinetti, Associate Engineer

PUBLIC: Trina Barnard, Natalee Braun, Ian Carroll, Alistair Deakin, Gina Halpin Barrett, Morgan Kirk, Stephanie Mack, Anne Miller, Michael Miller, Alan Nye, Reed Nye, Beth Parent, Sarah Reeves, Margaret Smith, Alex Solverson, Eric Stewart, Courtney White Thomas, Missie Thurston, Lois Whitmore, Cheryl Van Epps, Lorraine Zaloom, Sharon Zukowski, Alex S. (screenname), J Percy (screenname), m.music (screenname), rachael (screenname)

Meeting Recording:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdFTAjv28sI&list=PLljLFn4BZd2MX8tMSIwlYGFAQOith-Q_F

Times associated with each agenda item are approximate.

1. CALL TO ORDER (00:00:22)
Shannon Jackson called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES (00:00:28)
S. Jackson said the Public Hearing section was added to the Agenda in error and should be removed.

3. APPROVE AGENDA (00:01:27)
ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by MEG ZIMMERMAN, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion passed 4-0.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD (00:02:00)
Ian Carroll invited the Selectboard and community to the 4th annual Run, Walk, and Roll and Touch a Truck Event held on Sunday, June 14, 2026, at Essex Middle School. He said this is the only fundraising event that Big Beautiful Life utilizes to raise money for families that are in constant medical crisis. I. Carroll highlighted items that Big Beautiful Life has been able to provide families with funding from this event.

Courtney White Thomas expressed concerns about speeding and pedestrian safety on Tanglewood Drive. She asked that the Selectboard not adopt the Traffic Calming Manual. Greg Duggan confirmed the speed cushion has been delivered and the speed limit signs remain on schedule. He said installation is set to begin once all materials arrive.

Missie Thurston asked that the Selectboard take into consideration the safety of pedestrians and the road infrastructure when trying to decide what the speed limit should be on Tanglewood Drive.

~~**5. PUBLIC HEARING**~~

~~**a. Public hearing to close out Vermont Community Development Program – Recovery Housing Program**~~

5. CONSENT ITEMS (00:16:30)
ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by MEG ZIMMERMAN, to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion passed 4-0.
a. Approve minutes: May 18, 2026
b. Approve check warrants: #18340 - 05/15/26
c. Consider award of summer 2026 paving bid
d. Consider approval of five-year contract with Vermont Systems
e. Consider approval for location of a salvage yard at 264 Colchester Road - Paya's North, Inc.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS
b. Interview a volunteer to serve on the Economic Development Commission - Alex Solverson (00:17:29)
Alex Solverson said he is a resident of Essex and has experience working in media technology companies and as a small business owner. A. Solverson said he believes serving on the Economic Development Commission (EDC) is the best way for him to learn about local government. Answering a question from Kendall Chamberlin regarding his pursuit in entrepreneurship, he said his focus is on how to grow small businesses and give back to the community while empowering himself as a business owner. Answering a question from K. Chamberlin regarding how he would generate new revenue for Essex, A. Solverson said he would need time to observe the EDC's operations and economic trends before proposing new revenue-generating initiatives. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman about whether he would continue to bring diversified businesses to Essex, he said he could not confidently answer that question without researching what the needs of the community are. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding his decision to join the EDC at this time, A. Solverson expressed a strong commitment to community service. Answering a question from E. Lawrence regarding whether he had attended an EDC meeting, A. Solverson said he had not. Answering a question from E. Lawrence regarding whether he found the EDC website and if he had read their mission statement, A. Solverson answered affirmatively. S. Jackson asked A. Solverson to define community service. He defined it as anything that can be done to help the community, town and businesses that go above and beyond the day-to-day functions. A. Solverson asked the Selectboard what qualities they were looking for in a candidate for the EDC. Lawrence said the ideal candidate would be an active participant at meetings and be willing to learn and help the Town.

c. Interview a volunteer to serve on the Economic Development Commission - Alistair Deakin (00:28:20)
Alistair Deakin said he is a resident of Essex and the Executive Director of Vermont Legal Aid and has previously worked for the US Department of Commerce. He discussed his career experience in entrepreneurship, stating he has developed as well as helped start up numerous companies. Answering a question from K. Chamberlin regarding revenue generation for Essex, A. Deakin emphasized Essex's potential beyond a small coffee-shop town, proposing an evaluation of the local business ecosystem to identify what attracts entrepreneurs. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding his decision to join the EDC at this time, A. Deakin said he believes this is the best way to serve the community using the skills and knowledge he has to offer. Answering a question from E. Lawrence regarding whether he has attended an EDC meeting or read the mission statement, A. Deakin said he had not attended a meeting, but he had read the mission statement. Answering a question from E. Lawrence in regards if he had any experience in agritourism, A. Deakin described his work with black farmers at an Atlanta farmers' market.

Answering a question from S. Jackson regarding his definition of public service, A. Deakin said he was raised to believe that you give more than you take.

d. Interview a volunteer to serve on the Energy Committee - Natalee Braun (00:39:54)
Natalee Braun said she has served on Energy Committee for seven years. She said she believes it is important to build sustainable, low-energy, user-friendly systems for thermal networks and transportation sectors in Vermont. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding what the biggest challenge has been working on the Committee, she said the focus on sustainable energy sources without overwhelming people has been the biggest challenge. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding what the most rewarding part of working on the Committee has been, she said working with intelligent, caring members has been the most rewarding part. Answering a question from S. Jackson regarding whether she has done anything to help fill the vacancy on the Energy Committee, N. Braun said she has reached out to individuals, but the desire is to add a student member to the Committee. N. Braun asked the Selectboard what they value about the Energy Committee. E. Lawrence said he values the Committee's innovations. S. Jackson said he values the future energy projects the Committee has for the town.

e. Interview a volunteer to serve on the Conservation & Trails Committee - Morgan Kirk (00:55:54)
Morgan Kirk is reapplying to serve on the Conservation and Trails Committee (CTC). Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding what the biggest challenge has been since being on the CTC, she said that prioritizing her time because she is an emergency vet nurse. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding what the biggest reward has been since being on the CTC, she said she feels she has found her voice in helping to conserve land and improve trails. Answering a question from K. Chamberlin about the biggest challenge the CTC is currently facing, she said creating public awareness of the trails and community outreach. Answering a question from E. Lawrence about her favorite event that the CTC has held in the last year, she said that the Indian Brook Clean Up. Answering a question from S. Jackson regarding balancing conservation needs of the CTC along with her passion for the trails, she affirmed her commitment to sustainable trail development. She said she will utilize the CTC Forest Blocks and Corridors Plan and implement trail-routing software to ensure environmental protection.

f. Interview a volunteer to serve on the Planning Commission or the Conservation and Trails Committee — Eric Stewart (01:03:12)
Eric Stewart said he lives in Essex. He said he worked at NASA for 11 years as an aerospace engineer and currently works remotely for a different company. He said his interest in serving on the Planning Commission (PC) and the CTC developed after observing the Town's public meetings on CCTV. Answering a question from Meg Zimmerman regarding what he has observed from watching the meetings, E. Stewart said he believes that overall, the PC is doing a good job. Answering a question from K. Chamberlin regarding handling conflicts of opinion, he drew on his experience working at NASA by balancing a commitment to compromise with a willingness to respectfully advocate for his perspective. If his opinion is in the minority, he actively considers alternative perspectives while reserving his position to present at future meetings. Answering a question from E. Lawrence regarding whether he had read the Town Plan, he said he had read the vision and the goals. Answering a question from E. Lawrence regarding whether he is familiar with zoning regulation change processes, he answered affirmatively. Answering a question from E. Lawrence regarding whether he had read the zoning regulations, he said he had not. Answering a question from E. Lawrence about the Board's perspective on the PC's top priorities, S. Jackson identified steep slope and buffer regulations as the leading initiatives.

g. Consider approval of Human Services Funding recommendations for fiscal year 2026 and focus areas for fiscal year 2027 (01:13:34)

Tammy Getchell presented the proposed Human Services Funding recommendations for FY26. The Committee allocates funds based on a scoring system that evaluates the applicant's service delivery to Essex residents, funding requested, and overall budget availability. She said there were 26 applications totaling $236,000 in funding requests. The approved Essex Human Services Contribution is $72,806 less than the funding requested. T. Getchell presented the recommendations from the Committee, highlighting that 11 of the applicants will receive 100% funding, three applicants will receive 75% funding, six applicants will receive 50% funding, and six applicants will not be funded. T. Getchell said the Committee is recommending using the same focus areas for the FY27 funding cycle. M. Zimmerman asked if any of the agencies that were not funded this year had been funded in the past. T. Getchell said that all the agencies had been funded in the past. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding whether any new agencies received funding, T. Getchell said Wood for Good and Big Beautiful Life were new. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding how the Committee encourages new agencies to apply for funding, T. Getchell said through individual outreach to nonprofits and as well as through social media, newsletters and subscription services. K. Chamberlin asked for a comprehensive breakdown of the number of residents that the agencies provide service to be provided when making funding decisions. T. Getchell said the application information is available on the website. S. Jackson requested public comment, of which there was none.

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by MEG ZIMMERMAN, that the Selectboard approve contributions to the human services agencies as presented on the attached list. Motion passed 4-0.

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by MEG ZIMMERMAN, that the Selectboard approve the proposed focus areas for the FY27 funding cycle. Motion passe 4-0.

a. Consider approval of Chittenden Solid Waste District Fiscal Year 2027 budget (01:29:01)
Sarah Reeves, Executive Director of the Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD), provided an organizational overview and said no revenue is received from member municipalities for the services provided. Much of CSWD’s outreach is focused on diverting food waste. CSWD’s budget needed to be redone due to a phishing scam where $3 million was diverted to a fraudster. The investigation is open and the CSWD Board of Commissioners is also conducting an independent investigation. As a result, a short-term loan may be required to complete the Materials Recycling Facility project. S. Reeves discussed the projected revenue and expenses. She discussed potential fee increases, highlighting a $1 drop off facility use fee added for all users. Alan Nye, Essex’s representative to CSWD, said as the amount of trash needing disposal is reduced, the amount of revenue generated from the solid waste management fee is reduced. He said the Community Clean Up fund is available for various recycling projects. Answering a question from E. Lawrence regarding the leaf and yard debris fee increase, S. Reeves said this increase was to cover the cost of transporting the debris to the facility. Answering a question from K. Chamberlin regarding the $3 million fraud loss and subsequent budget reductions, she clarified that the fiscal adjustments target travel expenses rather than compromising financial security or core training initiatives. Answering a question from S. Jackson regarding what is being done about trash being spread along the Circ from haulers, she said that haulers are to be tarped and should be reported to the CSWD for compliance violations.

During public comment, Stephanie Mack asked for clarification regarding rates which was provided. Answering a question from S. Mack regarding how often CSWD is audited, S. Reeves said yearly. S. Reeves discussed the $3 million fraud, explaining that it occurred when an invoice requested a change in payment details, resulting in a duplicate disbursement.

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by MEG ZIMMERMAN, to approve the Chittenden Solid Waste District's fiscal year 2027 budget as presented by the district staff. Motion passed 4-0.

h. Consider adoption of Sand Hill Road Truck Traffic study (02:03:50)
Aaron Martin presented the Sand Hill Road Truck traffic study and report. The Saxon Hill Industrial Park (SHIP) causes heavy commercial truck traffic, which relies on local roadways adjacent to residential neighborhoods along lower Sand Hill Road. The Town of Essex, along with Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, conducted a transportation study within the SHIP and the residential neighborhoods along lower Sand Hill Road. The study assessed potential interventions and strategies to minimize the adverse effects of heavy-duty vehicles on the area. K. Chamberlin asked a question regarding stop sign intersections and signalized intersections and if there ever been a consideration in placing multiple stop signs versus stop lights. A. Martin said once a certain traffic volume is reached it warrants a signalized intersection. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding how recommendations are made on State-controlled routes, A. Martin said that any intersection within a state-controlled right-of-way is regulated by the State.

Answering a question from Lois Whitmore regarding the trip generation documentation in the report, A. Martin referred to information provided in previous meetings.

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by MEG ZIMMERMAN, that the Selectboard adopt the final Lower Sand Hill Road Truck Traffic Study report. Motion passed 4-0.

i. Consider approval of Traffic Calming Manual (02:20:28)
Lea Sanguinetti, Associate Engineer with the Public Works Department, presented the proposed Traffic Calming Manual. The manual would establish a formal process for residents to request traffic calming, enabling staff to investigate and implement measures on local and collector streets. Design work, pilot projects, and permanent installations would be financed through the Town's Capital Program, municipal grants, or Selectboard-approved supplementary funding. L. Sanguinetti said a 6- to 18-month evaluation of the pilot project/traffic calming project would be conducted to determine its effectiveness. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding whether to implement pilot projects, L. Sanguinetti noted that the strategy is case specific. L. Sanguinetti said that while some requests benefit from a phased trial, others are better suited for immediate, full-scale permanent construction. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding community standards for actionable concerns, L. Sanguinetti said the standards are what the warrants are set as based on the data collected.

Answering a question from K. Chamberlin regarding the 75% majority residential buy-in petition, L. Sanguinetti said it is part of traffic calming recommendations and is beneficial in project success. K. Chamberlin suggested notifying all residents that will be impacted by traffic calming measures. S. Jackson suggested a 30-day period for the Selectboard to decide after an appeal hearing.

Lorraine Zaloom expressed her disappointment with the Sand Hill Road truck traffic study. Missy Thurston asked if the Traffic Calming Manual is approved, and when it would be reviewed again. A. Martin said ideally it should be updated every few years because it is a living document. Answering a question from Margaret Smith regarding how to have traffic calming measures implemented on State routes, A. Martin advised contacting the police department. Cheryl Van Epps said it was important to consider near misses in addition to five-year crash data. E. Lawrence asked for reliable references of near-miss data to be provided to the Selectboard if available. C. Thomas asked that the Board not approve the Traffic Calming Manual.

KENDALL CHAMBERLIN made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, that the Selectboard adopt the Traffic Calming Manual.

M. Zimmerman said she wanted to better understand the process for making changes to the Traffic Calming Manual and asked if changes would go to the Selectboard for approval. G. Duggan confirmed that would be the case. S. Jackson said he would rather vote on the Traffic Calming Manual at a future meeting.

Motion withdrawn by KENDALL CHAMBERLIN.

The Selectboard asked that the Traffic Calming Manual be brought to a future meeting.

j. Consider approval of letter of support for grant application for completion of shared-use path along Upper Main St. / VT Route 15 (03:16:04)
Karen Adams presented the letter of support for the grant application for completion of a shared-use path along Upper Main St./VT Route 15. She said the Town was approached by the City of Essex Junction to apply for joint grant funding from the Vermont Agency of Transportation. The shared cost with the City is 44%, which accounts for $97,240 of the required 20% match. She said costs would be absorbed operationally in FY27 and larger expenditures would be added to the Capital Plan for future years. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding expenditures being absorbed into this year's budget and planning for it in future budgets, she said it would take time to know if the grant was approved so the expenditure could be spread across future budgets. S. Jackson asked for public comment, of which there was none.

ETHAN LAWARENCE made a motion, seconded by MEG ZIMMERMAN, that the Selectboard approve a letter of support for Main St Multi-Use Path - Phase 2 grant application, commit to providing the required matching funds, and acknowledge that a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and City would be needed. Motion passed 3-1, with KENDALL CHAMBERLIN dissenting.

k. Discussion about possible withdrawal from Green Mountain Transit (03:19:10)
G. Duggan discussed an email he received from Clayton Clark, Director of Green Mountain Transit (GMT), regarding a denial of a federal funding match to support the continuation of the #4 bus route. G. Duggan said GMT needs $112,000 to maintain persistent service with Essex. He said GMT's charter states municipalities must give notice one fiscal year before canceling membership. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding what happens to the leasing agreement, K. Adams said the leasing agreement is not affected by the membership being cancelled. K. Adams said there is a line item in the Capital Budget for a Senior van. E. Lawrence discussed the costs of buying a bus. K. Chamberlin said he had compassion for those that would be without access to buses.

During public comment, Ken Signerello encouraged the Board to use senior buses.

l. Consider approval of Regional Agreement with Chittenden County Community Justice Center (03:35:15)
G. Duggan said Act 180 completely changed how restorative justice is funded throughout the State, with the most significant change being that only one community justice center (CJC) in each county will receive State funding. As of July 1, 2026, all funding will be allocated to the Burlington CJC, which will become the Chittenden County CJC and serve the entire county. Chittenden County CJC will also provide additional programs including parallel justice/victim outreach, safe driving programs, and community referral

programs, which would need to be funded by participating municipalities. G. Duggan said the agreement is for one year and only municipalities that are contributing financially would receive the programs and services that are not funded by the State. Answering a question regarding where the $46,200 will be allocated, G. Duggan said the Chittenden County CJC will be hiring staff. E. Lawrence asked for further clarification of where the $46,200 will be allocated before he considers approval of the agreement. Answering a question from M. Zimmerman regarding the $46,200 being funded inclusive of Essex Junction, G. Duggan clarified that $46,200 is roughly a 50/50 split with Essex Junction. S. Jackson clarified that this is a one-year agreement. M. Zimmerman asked for a list of public participants in the programs provided by the CJC.

During public comment, L. Zaloom asked if Chief Hoague supports the community justice center transition. G. Duggan said he sees value in the safe driving program and the victim impact criminal justice program. L. Zaloom said services that were previously provided by Essex CJC will now be provided by other towns and that this agreement is very cost effective.

MEG ZIMMERMAN made a motion, seconded by KENDALL CHAMBERLIN, that the Selectboard approve a Regional Agreement with the City of Burlington through the Chittenden County Restorative Justice Center, and authorize the Town Manager to finalize and execute the Regional Agreement. Motion passed 3-1, with ETHAN LAWRENCE dissenting.

m. Consider approval of a delegate to attend the June 22, 2026, Vermont League of Cities and Towns Board of Director's Meeting (03:37:38)
G. Duggan said a delegate must be nominated to attend and vote in the June 22, 2026, Vermont League of Cities and Towns' Board of Directors Annual Meeting. He said more than one member from each municipality can attend but only one member can vote. Answering a question from K. Chamberlin regarding whether there is a recommendation on how board members should vote, G. Duggan said at this time there is none. K. Chamberlin volunteered himself to attend if he was provided with proper information on the voting topic. E. Lawrence said whomever the Selectboard chooses is entrusted to be the voice of the Town of Essex.

ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by SHANNON JACKSON, that the Selectboard identify KENDALL CHAMBERLIN to attend and vote on behalf of the Town of Essex's legislative body. Motion passed 4-0.

n. Work session for strategic planning and annual work plans, to review draft departmental work plans and discuss Selectboard priorities (04:01:27)
G. Duggan reviewed the departmental work plans and asked that all comments be kept to what is achievable. S. Jackson reviewed the FY27 Work Plan draft, highlighting the progress of budget items the Board has agreed upon. G. Duggan said he will take the agreed items from the meeting and to present them to the Selectboard at the next meeting, along with the items from the current FY26 work plan. E. Lawrence asked for the current work plan to be available before moving forward with the work session. Discussion was had on what goals and priorities there should be in the strategic plan. K. Adams said the Recreation Needs Assessment would be sent to the Selectboard, highlighting additional aquatic opportunities.

MEG ZIMMERMAN made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, to extend the Selectboard meeting until 11:10 PM. Motion Passed 4-0.

o. Discussion about pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution, to which the public body is or may be a party
This was discussed during Executive Session.

7. <u>READING FILE</u> (04:26:30)
a. a. Board member comments: K. Adams said a special meeting will be held on June 29, 2026, to discuss dog ordinances and animal rights.
b. Upcoming meeting schedule
c. Notification of potential herbicide spraying along Vermont Electric Cooperative distribution corridors
d. Coming Together - A Substance Use Addiction Summit - you are invited!
e. Update on conditions related to potentially vicious dog "Loyla" & dog ordinance
f. Approach to dog ordinance compliance—Indian Brook 2026

8. <u>EXECUTIVE SESSION</u>
a. An executive session may be requested to discuss the appointment or evaluation of a public officer or employee
Not required.

b. An executive session may be requested to discuss contracts
Not required.

c. An executive session was held to discuss pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution (04:29:20)
MEG ZIMMERMAN made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE, that the Selectboard make the specific finding that general public knowledge of pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution, to which the public body is or may be a party, would place the Town at a substantial disadvantage. Motion passed 4-0.

MEG ZIMMERMAN made a motion, seconded by ETHAN LAWRENCE to move that the Selectboard enter into executive session to discuss pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution, to which the public body is or may be a party, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(E), to include the Town Manager and Deputy Town Manager to the executive session. Motion passed 4-0.

KENDALL CHAMBERLIN made a motion, seconded by MEG ZIMMERMAN, for the Selectboard to exit executive session. Motion passed 4-0 at 11:08 PM.

9. ADJOURN
ETHAN LAWRENCE made a motion, seconded by MEG ZIMMERMAN, for the Selectboard to adjourn. Motion passed 4-0 at 11:09 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Darby Mayville & Jamie Harrison
Recording Secretaries