

Keeping Up With the Council

Tim Miller, City Council

July 29, 2024

The month of July has closed with the council meeting twice. However, neither of those meetings happened on the typical second and fourth Wednesdays.

Our first meeting was July 8th which was the second Monday. This meeting was held at the fire station during the department's regularly scheduled business meeting so that we could be present for the issuing of life saving awards. The full press release is here;

<https://www.essexjunction.org/news/item/first-responders-honored-with-life-saving-awards>

Our second meeting was July 17th. This meeting started off with a briefing by Public Works Superintendent, Rick Jones. He spoke about the Main Street Waterline project and hopes to have that project finished next year. He also talked about the Crescent Connector with the ongoing work that has been happening with its expected completion in September. Along with various other smaller scale paving projects that are happening around the city.

Superintendent Jones also noted the delivery of a new pickup truck that took an about a year for delivery and the recent order of a new dump truck with a 2 year expected delivery time.

The second agenda item brought us back to committee appointments. With the last of our outstanding interviews taking place. We made final appointments to the Development Review Board, Planning Commission and Tree Advisory Committee. While this fills all of the open vacancies on these boards, we do still have 2 open positions on the Police Community Advisory Board. <https://www.essexjunction.org/boards/police-community-advisory-board>

The final version of the Community Vision & Strategic Action Plan was presented by Communications Director Ashley Snellenberger. With some minor adjustment to the wording around funding police and fire at their currently levels, to make sure these departments are fully funded now and in the future, the adjusted version was adopted by the council.

This plan and vision will shape how we move forward in Essex Junction over the next years. If you are unfamiliar with the plan or presentation to this point, more information can be found here, <https://lab2.future-iq.com/essex-junction-visionstrategic-action-plan/>

The final tax rate for FY '25 was set and properly tax bills are soon to be delivered with the first installment due September 15th. In April of this year, voters in Essex Junction approved a Veterans Exemption over and above what the state allows. This along with a slight growth in the grand list means the final tax rate is set at \$0.9742 which resulted in a final set municipal tax increase of 5.9% from FY '24 to FY '25

The last item we covered was how the new legislation from Montpelier passed this year will change the way we function. There was no shortage of new bills that made their way from the golden dome. Changes to Open Meeting Law, Uniform Code of Ethics, Housing Permit Reform

and Funding along with our first charter change. If you want to read up more on what happened, there are slides within the meeting packet with hyperlinks. Those slides start on page 55.

https://www.essexjunction.org/fileadmin/files/City_Council/Meetings/2024/07/CC_Packet_2024_0717.pdf

With the heat of July behind us, here's to hoping for some crisp, cool mornings! As always, we encourage you to reach out to us. You can do so by clicking this link,

<https://www.essexjunction.org/boards/city-council> or there is time provided during the start of each meeting under, Public to Be Heard