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**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING
October 9, 2024**

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Raj Chawla, President; Amber Thibeault; Vice President; Tim Miller, Clerk;
Marcus Certa, Elaine Haney.

ADMINISTRATION: Regina Mahony, City Manager; Ron Hoague, Chief of Police.

OTHERS PRESENT: Annie Cooper, Drew Darrow, Brett Gaskill, Christina Hagestad, Resa.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

City Council President Chawla called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

None.

3. **APPROVE AGENDA**

None needed.

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

a. Comments from public on items not on the agenda

Resa Mehren asked if a decision has been made about the most recent CVE noise ordinance requests, and City Council President Chawla replied that no decision has been made yet.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. Discussion of Police Community Advisory Board Applicant

City Manager Mahony noted that the applicant isn't able to attend a City Council meeting for an interview, and that a potential alternative could be that several Councilors interview the applicant at another time and report back to the Council with a recommendation. Councilor Certa and Councilor Miller volunteered to participate in the interview with the applicant.

b. Presentation of the Police Community Advisory Board Brief to Council

Christina Hagestad presented to the City Council a briefing on the Police Community Advisory Board's activities and upcoming plans. She said that one area of focus is establishing a presence and outreach at City events independent of the Police Department, to gain trust and be seen as a separate body. She said that the PCAB is also working on producing more blog posts for the Board, as well as reviewing new and existing Police Department policies and providing feedback. She said the PCAB is also updating a survey that was fielded several years ago and field that survey again, around how the community feels about the Police Department. She noted that in terms of current needs, what the PCAB needs is more members, so she is excited that there is an applicant for a seat on the Board.

Chief Hoague spoke about the difficulty of making progress on the above items given the turnover experienced on the Board and the liaison to the Board at the Police Department departing. He said he is excited to field the survey that was last fielded in 2020, saying it will provide valuable feedback about what is and isn't working in terms of public safety in the community.

City Council President Chawla noted some social media activity around concerns in various neighborhoods in Essex Junction and wondered how a connection could be made between residents and the PCAB, in terms of voicing those concerns. Ms. Hagestad agreed, saying that she would like the PCAB to explore ways to potentially make those connections while remaining an independent and neutral body in the community. City Council President Chawla said that the Council can also try and help make those connections.

Councilor Certa asked if having more members on the PCAB will help solve engagement problems or whether there are other ways of addressing those issues. Ms. Hagestad replied that having more members will be a good first step. She said that seeing results of the survey could also help inform other potential solutions.

Chief Hoague spoke about how having the input of the PCAB on educational sessions hosted by the Essex Police Department has been extremely positive and valuable. He spoke about soliciting feedback from the PCAB for the Howard Center Street Outreach Team and several education sessions on use of force. He also spoke about the value of having PCAB members on the Police Department’s hiring and promotional boards.

The following public comments were received:

- Annie Cooper spoke about residents using social media to share their frustrations, which is part of the utility of social media. She said that voicing these frustrations doesn’t necessarily mean that residents should volunteer on committees. She also thanked Chief Hoague for his service.

c. *Discussion and Consideration of an Executive Session to discuss Personnel
See item #9a below.

d. **Discussion and Consideration of an Executive Session to discuss a Contract
See item #9b below.

6. **CONSENT ITEMS**

- Approve Meeting Minutes: September 25, 2024
- Approve FY25 General Capital Fund Plan Amendment for the Stormwater slip line project
- Approve Bid Award for Pipeline Rehabilitation

Councilor Haney made a motion, seconded by Councilor Thibeault, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed 5-0.

7. **COUNCILOR COMMENTS & CITY MANAGER REPORT:**

City Manager Mahony said the Bike Walk Advisory Committee is partnering with Local Motion to determine where the City has and needs bicycle parking. She also noted that they are trying to obtain more bike racks for the City. She thanked attendees at the Connect the Junction event this past week. She noted there will be a report and more action items coming out of that work soon. She expressed appreciation for the attendance at the Crescent Connector ribbon cutting ceremony. She noted a new parking lot and EV chargers and bicycle lockers at the Connector as well.

8. **READING FILE**

- Check Warrant #24057, 10/03-04/2024
- Regional Boards and Committee Minutes Memo
- Meeting Schedule for January through June of 2025
- FY2024 Key Control Document
- September Financial Reports
- New Crescent Connector Bicycle Locker Information
- Development Review Board Minutes 9/19/2024
- Bike Walk Advisory Committee Minutes 9/24/2024

9. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- *An Executive Session may be needed to discuss Personnel

Councilor Certa made a motion, seconded by Councilor Thibeault, that the City Council enter into executive session to discuss a personnel evaluation, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) to include the City Council and the City Manager. The motion passed 5-0 at 7:30 P.M.

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110 b. **An Executive Session may be needed to discuss a Contract
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112 **Councilor Certa made a motion, seconded by Councilor Miller, that the City Council make the specific**
113 **finding that premature disclosure of the contractual matters would place the City at a substantial**
114 **disadvantage, and moved that the City Council enter into executive session to discuss a contract,**
115 **pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(A) to include the City Council and the City Manager. The motion**
116 **passed 4-0 (Councilor Haney abstained and recused herself from this executive session due to**
117 **conflict of interest) at 7:30 P.M.**
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119 **City Council President Chawla made a motion, seconded by Councilor Thibeault, to exit executive**
120 **session. The motion passed 5-0 at 7:45 P.M.**
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122 City Council President Chawla provided an update on the request from Champlain Valley Exposition for
123 additional sound waivers. He said that relating to the recent request for an additional 15 sound waivers, the
124 City conducted a public survey and found that residents felt that CVE's request should be accompanied by
125 a substantial increase in the contribution that CVE provides to the City. He said that as a result of this, the
126 City entered into negotiations with CVE and proposed a financial contribution of \$500,000, at which point
127 CVE decided that it can work within its existing 20 waivers as part of its current agreement, and no additional
128 decision is needed at this time. He said the City plans to review the sound agreement in the fall of 2026 in
129 preparation for the next sound agreement, as previously planned.
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131 10. **ADJOURN**
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133 **Councilor Thibeault made a motion, seconded by City Council President Chawla, to adjourn the**
134 **meeting. The motion passed 5-0 at 7:46 P.M.**
135

136 Respectfully Submitted,
137 Amy Coonradt