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**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
CITY COUNCIL
INFORMATIONAL HEARING
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 25, 2025**

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

ADMINISTRATION: Regina Mahony, City Manager; Colleen Dwyer, Human Resources Director; Steve Eustis, Moderator; Chris Gaboriault, Fire Chief; Ricky Jones, Public Works Superintendent; Brad Luck, Essex Junction Parks & Recreation Director; Susan McNamara-Hill, City Clerk; Jess Morris, Finance Director; Ashley Snellenberger, Communications & Strategic Initiatives Director; Chris Yuen, Community Development Director.

OTHERS PRESENT: Diane Clemens, Beth Custer, George Dunbar, Karen Hergesheimer, Venessa Luck, Sheila Porter, Andy Suntup, Linda Suntup, Jeanne.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Moderator Steve Eustis called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

2. **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND PROCEDURES OVERVIEW**

Moderator Eustis began the meeting by conducting a round of introductions. He then spoke about procedures, noting that this is an informational meeting and that there are no motions or amendments to be made, and that it pertains to the warned items that will be voted on by ballot.

3. **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ABOUT ARTICLE 1:** Shall the voters approve an annual General Fund Budget in the amount of \$12,419,241 for Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, \$11,405,931 of which is to be levied in taxes against the City Grant List?

City Manager Mahony provided an overview of the proposed FY26 General Fund summary. She noted that the proposed FY26 general Fund budget represents an increase of \$415,117 or 3% over the FY25 budget. She spoke about the estimated FY26 tax impact of the proposed FY26 General Fund budget, noting that the estimated tax increase on a \$280,000 property in FY26 is an increase of \$73 (or 2.6%) per year over FY25. She also shared preliminary impact on residents and taxpayers for FY26 for total annual utility rate increases and stormwater utility fees. She noted that the utility rate (across utilities) is projected to increase by \$99.86 or 14.7%, and that the stormwater utility would increase by \$84.75. She noted that taken with the tax rate increase, the overall increase would be \$257.61 or 7.5% per resident/taxpayer for FY26.

City Manager Mahony then spoke in further detail about the budgeted expenses and revenues for the FY26 General Fund.

The following public comments were received:

- George Dunbar spoke about the EJRP budgets, both within the enterprise funds and the General Fund. He asked whether there is an opportunity to move more administrative costs from the general Fund to the enterprise fund for EJRP, adding that it could save between 5 and 6 cents on the tax rate. City Manager Mahony noted that over the last several budget cycles, the City has been shifting more funding from the General Fund to the enterprise fund where possible, but only where appropriate to do so (for example, if administrative costs can be tied to a specific program or fee within the enterprise fund). Director Luck provided more information about how administrative costs are categorized within the program fund, noting that individual programs' budgets have their own administrative costs associated with them. He said that administrative costs on the General Fund

side for EJRP relate to basic overhead, and they have been working over the last several years to ensure that these costs are right-sized for the department.

4. **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ABOUT ARTICLE 2:** Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the City of Essex Junction in an amount not to exceed three million eight hundred thousand Dollars (\$3,800,000), subject to available grants-in-aid, if any, be issued to finance the cost of retrofitting the three pump stations located on West Street, Maple Street, and River Street?

City Manager Mahony noted that this bonding authority would be for retrofitting three pump stations that are nearing or past the end of their useful life. She noted that these would be upgraded to meet future demands and ensure community safety. She noted that the West Street pump station is also shared with the Town of Essex, which would participate in cost-sharing for the debt related to retrofitting that station.

5. **ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT ARTICLE 3:** To elect City officers required by law including: one City Council member (three year term), one Library Trustee (five-year term), and one Champlain Water District Commissioner (three year term)?

Moderator Eustis noted that ballots are available ahead of time at the City Office, or voting can occur in-person on April 8, 2025 at the Champlain Valley Expo.

6. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

None.

7. **READING FILE**

- a. Annual Report Newsletter
- b. Annual Report

8. **ADJOURN**

Councilor Thibeault made a motion, seconded by Councilor Certa, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0 at 6:49 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Coonradt