
Town Meeting Warning

TOWN OF ESSEX Annual Town Meeting March 6 & 7, 2023

THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF ESSEX IN THE COUNTY OF CHITTENDEN ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED AND WARNED TO MEET AT THE ESSEX CINEMAS, 21 ESSEX WAY #300, ESSEX, VERMONT ON MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2023 AT 7:30 PM TO TRANSACT THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS AND ACT ON THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES.

- Article I. Shall the reports of the Officers be accepted?
- Article II. Shall the Town of Essex vote on all public questions by Australian ballot?
- Article III. Discussion of ballot items:
- Article V, Adopting the fiscal year 2024 budget;
 - Article VI, Increasing the capital tax rate;
 - Article VII, Charter amendment to reorganize the charter;
 - Article VIII, Charter amendment for ability to set license fees;
 - Article IX, Charter amendment to allow for just cause eviction ordinance;
 - Article X, Charter amendment to allow for recall of Selectboard members;
 - Article XI, Charter amendment to transition from Zoning Board of Adjustment to Development Review Board
 - Article XII, Announcement of offices up for election in Article XII
- Article IV. Public to be heard.

WHEREUPON, AFTER DISPOSITION OF SAID BUSINESS, SAID MEETING SHALL BE ADJOURNED TO THE FOLLOWING DAY, MARCH 7, 2023, FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES TO BE VOTED ON BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT. THE POLLS FOR SAID BALLOT SHALL BE AT ESSEX MIDDLE SCHOOL, 60 FOUNDERS ROAD, ESSEX, VERMONT AND SHALL BE OPEN FROM 7:00 AM UNTIL 7:00 PM AT WHICH TIME THEY SHALL BE CLOSED.

- Article V. Shall the Town adopt a budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 as recommended by the Selectboard in the amount of \$15,401,152?
- Article VI. Shall the Town of Essex increase the Capital Reserve Fund by adding 1 cent to the tax rate, in addition to the two cents previously authorized, for the purpose of financing capital projects?
- Article VII. Shall the Town of Essex reorganize its charter as recommended by the Charter Review Committee?
- Article VIII. Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to have the authority to adopt and enforce ordinances for the purposes of regulating, licensing, and fixing reasonable and necessary license fees?
- Article IX. Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to give the Selectboard the power to enact an ordinance to protect residential tenants from eviction without just cause?

Town Meeting Warning

- Article X. Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to allow for the recall of Selectboard members?
- Article XI. Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to create a Development Review Board to replace the Zoning Board of Adjustment by January 1, 2025, following passage by the Vermont Legislature?
- Article XII. Election of the following:
Moderator, 1 vacancy (1-year term)
Selectboard, 2 vacancies (3-year terms)

Dated at Essex, Vermont, the 30th day of January 2023 by the Essex Town Selectboard.

Selectboard signatures:

Andrew J Watts

Andrew J Watts (Feb 2, 2023 09:55 EST)

Andrew J. Watts, Chair

Ethan Lawrence

Ethan Lawrence (Feb 5, 2023 19:26 EST)

Ethan Lawrence, Clerk

Dawn Hill-Fleury

Dawn Hill-Fleury (Feb 2, 2023 09:34 EST)

Dawn Hill-Fleury

Tracey A Delphia

Tracey A Delphia (Feb 1, 2023 19:41 EST)

Tracey Delphia, Vice Chair

Kendall Chamberlin

Kendall Chamberlin (Feb 2, 2023 09:24 EST)

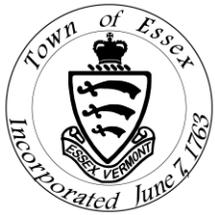
Kendall Chamberlin

Received for record this 2nd day of February, 2023 in the records of the Town of Essex.

Susan McNamara-Hill

Susan McNamara-Hill (Feb 2, 2023 13:54 EST)

Susan McNamara-Hill, Town Clerk



TOWN MEETING 2023
QUESTIONS and ANSWERS
Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

Town of Essex
February 10, 2023

1. How much is the proposed budget for fiscal year (FY) 2024 and how does it compare to the current fiscal year's budget?

The proposed FY24 general fund budget is \$15,401,152, a decrease of \$1,274,089 or 7.6 percent from FY23.

More details about the budget are available on the Town of Essex website, <https://www.essexvt.org/1087/Budget>. The proposed budget will be published in the Town Annual Report, which is expected to arrive in mailboxes by February 25.

2. If this budget is approved by voters at Town Meeting, what impact will it have on the municipal tax rate and the amount an average property owner pays?

The proposed FY24 budget would increase the municipal tax rate by an estimated 22 percent, or \$340 on the average home in Essex, which is assessed at \$280,000. The resulting municipal tax rate would be \$0.6728 (per \$100 of assessed value). On a home assessed at \$280,000 that equates to a municipal tax bill of \$1,884.

	FY2023	FY2024 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
Total Budget	\$ 16,675,241	\$ 15,401,152	\$ (1,274,089)	-7.6%
Tax Levy	\$ 14,996,345	\$ 10,837,562	\$ (4,158,783)	-27.7%
Grand List	\$ 27,199,873	\$ 16,107,141	\$ (11,092,732)	-40.8%
Tax Rate	0.5513	0.6728	0.1215	22.0%
\$280k Home	\$ 1,543.64	\$ 1,883.84	\$ 340.20	22.0%

Assessed value can be found by looking at your current tax bill. Assessed value is not the same as market value.

These projections are based on a 1 percent growth in the grand list. Should grand list growth exceed this projection, the tax rate set in the summer would be adjusted downward accordingly.

3. Why is the budget decreasing, but the tax rate increasing?

This is due to the separation of the Village of Essex Junction from the Town of Essex. When the Village separated, the Town lost approximately 41 percent of its tax base. The proposed

FY24 budget contains the funding necessary to maintain municipal service levels following the separation of Essex Junction. So although the total budget is decreasing, a smaller tax base means taxes will need to increase to raise enough revenue to fund the budget and maintain services.

4. What are the main cost drivers in the FY24 budget?

In addition to the loss of 41 percent of the Town's tax base, two other factors have a significant impact on budget costs: health insurance premiums increased approximately 20 percent; and high inflation touched everything from general supplies to gasoline to contractual raises for staff.

5. What is happening in the FY24 budget to limit expenses?

The separation of Essex Junction has been mitigated to some extent through shared service agreements put in place by the Selectboard and the Essex Junction Board of Trustees/City Council. The Town's Police Department, including dispatch and the Community Justice Center, will continue to serve the City of Essex Junction. The costs are being allocated on a per capita basis. Assessing services will also be shared with Essex Junction, with costs allocated on a per parcel basis. Senior Services will be shared with Essex Junction on a per capita basis for half of FY24, through December 31, 2023.

Police Department spending has often come in below budget, primarily due to staffing shortages. For the past few years, the Police Department has been funded at less than 100 percent to account for the under-spending. In FY24, the Police budget is proposed to be funded at 90 percent, a better approximation of historical spending.

Overtime, particularly in Public Works Highway and the Clerk's Office, has been reduced to better reflect historical spending.

The Fire Department remains a volunteer, paid on-call department. Pay rates are proposed to increase for the first time in 5 years, from \$15.50/hour to \$17/hour; firefighters would again be paid for training to incentivize attendance (pay for training was eliminated several years ago in an effort to align with the Essex Junction Fire Department); and admin hours would increase for officers to better reflect work expectations for the volunteer department. Despite the proposed pay increases, salary lines were adjusted based on actual and expected attendance to calls and training, resulting in a net decrease in the budgeted salaries line for Fire.

Capital transfers out of the operating budget were level-funded from FY23.

Regional expenses such as Green Mountain Transit, the county tax, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, and Vermont League of Cities and Towns dues are decreasing in accordance with a smaller population and/or grand list.

The Conservation Reserve Fund contribution was reduced to account for the smaller tax base and budget constraints.

Human services funding, which makes up 1 percent of the budget, will decrease with a smaller budget.

6. What staffing changes are proposed in the FY24 budget?

- The Clerk’s Office, which is shared with Essex Junction in FY23 and has three full-time employees, will shrink to two full-time employees in FY24 and will solely serve the Town of Essex.
- Essex Free Library is proposed to have an additional 5 hours of staffing. Two existing staff (one part-time, one at 30 hours/week) were budgeted with five additional hours each, with those hours being reassigned from substitute librarians. Giving additional hours to existing staff is expected to help with coverage and reduce reliance on substitute librarians, which can be hard to schedule on short notice. Some substitute hours remain to help when regular staff are on vacation or out sick.
- Public Works has a highway position funded at 0.7 of a full-time equivalent (FTE) staff person in the FY23 budget. For FY24, that position is proposed to increase to 1.0 FTE. Doing so will allow for a deeper team in Public Works, which is important year-round and particularly so in the winter for plowing services – all the more so at a time when covid is still prevalent, the job market has created turnover amongst municipal highway departments, and upcoming retirements will result in the loss of institutional knowledge.
- Parks Maintenance and Senior Services hours are proposed to shift. Currently, the Parks Maintenance Department is budgeted for 2.5 FTEs. One of the FTEs provides support to the senior van by driving as needed. Proposed in the budget is to make one Parks Maintenance FTE 50/50 with Senior Services, reducing the number of budgeted hours for part-time van drivers; and increasing the 0.5 FTE Parks position to 1 FTE. The net result is that Parks will continue to have 2.5 FTEs and the Senior Van will have more reliable drivers with fewer budgeted hours.
- Allocations of salaries to relevant enterprise accounts such as water and sewer were updated.

7. Will any sharing of services with Essex Junction come to an end in FY24?

Yes, as of July 1, 2023, Information Technology and the Clerk’s Office will no longer be shared between the Town of Essex and the City of Essex Junction.

8. What Capital Budget items are being proposed in FY24?

The proposed FY24 capital plan calls for capital tax additions of \$322,000, spending of \$1,368,170, and an ending balance of \$2,590,755. Capital projects proposed for FY24 include the following: buildings improvements; various road improvements; highway

vehicles, fire vehicles, and other heavy equipment; replacement of park assets; ADA compliance upgrades on sidewalks; stormwater projects; replacement of Information Technology systems; and maintenance and replacement of street trees.

The operating budget includes transfers to the Capital budget in the amount of \$470,000. More details about specific projects and the transfers are available online at <https://www.essexvt.org/761/Budget>.

9. How much is fund balance and is there any available for reducing taxes?

The Town’s policy is to maintain an unassigned fund balance of 15 percent of the operating budget, which equates to approximately eight weeks of operating expenses. The Government Finance Officers Association recommends keeping at least two months of operating expenses in unassigned fund balance so that municipalities can operate during a natural disaster, an emergency, or some other type of unexpected event.

The Town has an unassigned fund balance of \$2,501,286, or 15 percent of the current operating budget. The Selectboard has approved the use of \$615,700 in fund balance in the FY24 budget.

10. When and where do residents vote on the budget?

Voting on the budget will occur by Australian ballot at the polls, which will be open on Tuesday, March 7 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Essex Middle School, 58 Founders Dr., Essex.

Voters can also request an early ballot (see below for more info; the Town is not sending ballots to all voters this year).

Voters are encouraged to attend the annual Town Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 6 at the Essex Cinemas (Double E Performance Center entrance), 21 Essex Way #300, Essex. Town Meeting will include an informational presentation about the proposed FY24 budget.

11. Are there any special articles that voters are being asked to consider at Town Meeting besides the budget?

Yes. In addition to the budget, Town Meeting will have questions about the following:

- By voice vote at Town Meeting on March 6:
 - Approving the reports of officers
 - Voting on all future public questions by Australian ballot

- By Australian ballot at the polls on March 7:
 - Increasing the Capital Reserve Fund by adding 1 cent to the tax rate
 - Amendments to the Town of Essex Charter

More details about these items are available in other Question and Answer info sheets, which can be found online at www.essexvt.org/818/Town-Meeting.

There is also an article to elect a moderator for next Town Meeting, and a vote on two Selectboard seats.

12. Will I receive my ballot early and how do I return it?

Voters will only receive a ballot early if one is requested. The Town is not mailing ballots to all voters. Early voting will start February 16.

Voters may visit the Town Offices at 81 Main St., Essex Junction to vote in the office, pick up a ballot to take home, or to request that a ballot be mailed.

Ballots can also be requested to be mailed by emailing clerk@essex.org; calling 802-879-0413, option 6; or requesting online at www.mvp.vermont.gov.

In order to be counted, ballots must be returned before the polls close on Town Meeting Day on March 7 (7 p.m.). Voters returning ballots on Town Meeting Day must deliver the ballot directly to the polling place (Essex Middle School).

A secure ballot box will be available at the Town Offices for returning ballots after hours or on weekends up until the morning of March 7.



TOWN MEETING 2023
QUESTIONS and ANSWERS
Voting on all public questions
by Australian ballot

Town of Essex
February 10, 2023

1. Why is there a Town Meeting question asking, “Shall the Town of Essex vote on all public questions by Australian ballot?”

In November 2020, Town voters approved a question to “adopt [the Town’s] annual budget by Australian ballot.” The annual budget had long been the big question at Town Meeting that was decided by voice vote.

With the budget now being voted on by Australian ballot, the Selectboard has included a question on the Town Meeting warning about conducting all other Town business by Australian ballot: “Shall the Town of Essex vote on all public questions by Australian ballot?” **This question will be decided by voice vote the evening of Monday, March 6.**

Other voice vote questions include whether or not to adopt the reports of officers, and occasional items that might arise in any given year. The most recent example is the creation and funding of a Conservation Reserve Fund in 2018.

2. If this question is approved, what will happen to future annual Town Meetings?

All Town Meeting votes would happen by Australian ballot on Town Meeting Day, the first Tuesday of March. Voters would be able to cast early ballots in accordance with state law. The Town would continue to have an in-person component of annual meeting in the form of an Informational Meeting within the 10 days preceding Town Meeting.

3. When and where do residents vote at Town Meeting?

Town Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 6 at the Essex Cinemas (Double E Performance Center entrance), 21 Essex Way #300, Essex.

Voting will continue at the polls on March 7, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Essex Middle School, 58 Founders Dr., Essex. Ballot questions include the following:

- Adoption of the Town budget for fiscal year 2024
- Increasing the Capital Reserve Fund by adding 1 cent to the tax rate
- Five charter amendments
- Election of a moderator and two Selectboard members

More details about these items are available in other Question and Answer info sheets, which can be found online at www.essexvt.org/818/Town-Meeting.



TOWN MEETING 2023
QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

Increasing the Capital Reserve Fund

Town of Essex
February 10, 2023

1. Why does the Town Meeting ballot include a question, “Shall the Town of Essex increase the Capital Reserve Fund by adding 1 cent to the tax rate, in addition to the two cents previously authorized, for the purpose of financing capital projects?”

When the Village of Essex Junction separated from the Town of Essex, the Town lost approximately 41 percent of its tax base. As a result, the Town also lost 41 percent of the revenue that was generated each year by the 2-cent capital tax rate.

The capital budget is used to fund ongoing maintenance, repairs, and replacements on buildings, facilities, and heavy equipment. The budget is broken into several areas: Buildings, Highways, Equipment, Park Facilities, Paths/Walks/Trails, Stormwater, Information Management, Natural Resources Management, and Undesignated.

To make up the entirety of the lost revenue, the Town would need to raise the capital tax to 3.39 cents. (The tax rate is on \$100 of assessed value of a property; for the average home in Essex, which has an assessed value of \$280,000, the 2-cent capital tax costs \$56 per year.)

The Selectboard chose to ask voters to increase the capital tax rate to 3 cents, and not 3.39 cents, for two main reasons:

- a. The loss of the Essex Junction tax base is already driving a proposed 22 percent property tax rate increase on the general fund budget;
- b. A town-wide reappraisal, to be completed by June 2025, is expected to result in higher residential property values, which will in turn generate more revenue on the fixed capital tax rate.

2. How much money will the Town raise with the existing 2-cent capital tax rate, and how does that compare to what was raised before the separation of Essex Junction?

The 2-cent capital tax rate is estimated to generate \$322,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2024. When Essex Junction was part of the Town, the 2 cents generated about \$530,000 each year.

3. How much revenue will the additional 1 cent raise for the Capital Reserve Fund, and at what cost to owner of the average home?

An additional 1 cent would generate approximately \$161,000. For the owner of the average \$280,000 home, 1 cent would cost \$28 per year.

4. How would the additional money be used?

Capital revenue would more fully fund projects such as stormwater infrastructure, road improvements, building repairs and maintenance, parks assets, and heavy equipment such as Public Works and Fire vehicles. The capital budget is also instrumental in providing local matches to state and federal grants.

For perspective, capital requests in FY24 totaled \$531,000. Capital requests for just highways (\$160,000) and stormwater infrastructure (\$150,000) totaled \$310,000. Existing capital reserves can be used for some projects in FY24, and other projects can be delayed.

Capital reserves, however, will not last forever without additional funding. As one example, stormwater costs will only increase as stricter standards are required by federal and state governments, and existing infrastructure will need replacements or upgrades before it fails; the unexpected stormwater repairs for failures on Heatherbush Road and Cypress Lane in the past year resulted in a cost of \$240,756.

More details about specific capital projects are available online at www.essexvt.org/761/Budget.

5. Why isn't the capital need decreasing following the separation of Essex Junction?

Although the pre-separation, Town-wide capital tax rate supported all portions of the community – for instance, stormwater infrastructure, improvements to the Town Offices, road improvements near the Susie Wilson Road and Pearl Street intersection – the bulk of the capital tax supported assets outside the Village of Essex Junction boundaries.

Road mileage maintained by the Town of Essex Public Works Department remains the same following separation. The same holds true for the number of parks maintained by the Town Parks and Recreation Department, and the number of buildings owned and maintained by the Town.

6. When and where do residents vote on whether or not to increase the Capital Reserve Fund by adding 1 cent to the tax rate?

Voting on the capital tax rate will occur by Australian ballot at the polls, which will be open on Tuesday, March 7 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Essex Middle School, 58 Founders Dr., Essex.

Voters can also request an early ballot (see below for more info; the Town is not sending ballots to all voters this year).

Voters are encouraged to attend the annual Town Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 6 at the Essex Cinemas (Double E Performance Center entrance), 21 Essex Way #300, Essex.

Town Meeting will include an informational presentation about the capital tax rate, as well as the proposed FY2024 budget and proposed charter amendments.

7. Will I receive my ballot early and how do I return it?

Voters will only receive a ballot early if one is requested. The Town is not mailing ballots to all voters. Early voting will start February 16.

Voters may visit the Town Offices at 81 Main St., Essex Junction to vote in the office, pick up a ballot to take home, or to request that a ballot be mailed.

Ballots can also be requested to be mailed by emailing clerk@essex.org; calling 802-879-0413, option 6; or requesting online at www.mvp.vermont.gov.

In order to be counted, ballots must be returned before the polls close on Town Meeting Day on March 7 (7 p.m.). Voters returning ballots on Town Meeting Day must deliver the ballot directly to the polling place (Essex Middle School).

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TOWN MEETING 2023
QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

Amendments to the Town Charter

Town of Essex
February 10, 2023

1. What are the charter amendments being proposed on the Town Meeting ballot?

The ballot contains questions about five charter amendments:

- i. Shall the Town of Essex reorganize its charter as recommended by the Charter Review Committee?
- ii. Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to have the authority to adopt and enforce ordinances for the purposes of regulating, licensing, and fixing reasonable and necessary license fees?
- iii. Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to give the Selectboard the power to enact an ordinance to protect residential tenants from eviction without just cause?
- iv. Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to allow for the recall of Selectboard members?
- v. Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to create a Development Review Board to replace the Zoning Board of Adjustment by January 1, 2025, following passage by the Vermont Legislature?

2. Why are these amendments being proposed?

In the summer of 2022, the Selectboard created a Charter Review Committee to examine the existing Town Charter and propose any revisions. The Committee met weekly from September through November, and suggested a number of charter amendments. The Selectboard reviewed the proposed amendments in December 2022 and decided to focus on the five items that appear on the ballot.

3. What is the importance of a charter?

The Vermont League of Cities and Towns describes the purpose of a charter as follows:

“Governance charters are, in effect, a constitution for the municipality that provides a framework for self-rule. Once a municipality has been granted a governance charter by the state, that charter becomes the primary source of power and structure for the local government. Where the charter provides for procedures other than those established by statute, the provisions of the charter will generally prevail unless the statute or charter specifically provides otherwise. ... Municipalities choose to adopt charters for various reasons. Primarily, it gives the local government the flexibility to design a system of self-governance suited to its particular needs and concerns. A charter may also diverge from state

law by allowing such things as voter initiatives and recall of elected officials, allowing local governments to fill in what they may perceive as gaps in state law.”

The existing Essex charter is online at

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/chapter/24appendix/117>

4. What is the purpose of each of the proposed amendments?

Let’s review each amendment.

i. Shall the Town of Essex reorganize its charter as recommended by the Charter Review Committee?

The Charter Review Committee proposed a reorganization of the charter with the intention of making it flow better and be easier to read for the average person. The reorganization includes the deletion of a reference to the Essex Town School District and the Village of Essex Junction Graded School District, neither of which exists following their consolidation into the Essex Westford School District.

ii. Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to have the authority to adopt and enforce ordinances for the purposes of regulating, licensing, and fixing reasonable and necessary license fees?

Within the past few years, the Town Clerk’s Office proposed increasing dog licensing fees to better account for the administrative time spent on licensing. The Town Clerk found that state law sets dog licensing fees, and municipalities cannot deviate from those fees unless the municipal charter allows it.

The Charter Review Committee looked at other charters that allow municipalities to set their own fees, and recommended language used in the South Burlington charter. In addition to dog licensing fees, the proposed language would allow the Town to adopt and enforce ordinances for fees such as places of public resort and accommodation; fireworks displays; itinerant vendors; and more.

iii. Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to give the Selectboard the power to enact an ordinance to protect residential tenants from eviction without just cause?

The Charter Review Committee made the suggestion to include language protecting residential tenants from eviction without cause. In other words, a landlord could only evict tenants when they have a solid reason to do so, such as nonpayment of rent.

Although the Committee had proposed detailed language about what should go into a just cause eviction ordinance, the Selectboard ultimately decided to present voters with simpler language. If the charter amendment passes, the Selectboard would review more detailed language as part of the ordinance adoption process.

- iv. *Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to allow for the recall of Selectboard members?*

The idea for a recall provision in the Town charter was proposed by a resident in 2021. The Charter Review Committee reviewed other municipal charters that include a recall provision before proposing language to the Selectboard. The Selectboard then adjusted the language that is being considered by voters.

A recall vote would require a petition signed by at least 15 percent of the registered voters, and would have to happen within 60 days of receiving a valid petition. A successful recall vote would require at least as many registered voters to vote as in the election wherein an officer was elected, or at least one-third of the registered voters of the Town to vote, whichever is greater. A recall vote could only be brought against an individual once in 12 months.

- v. *Shall the Town of Essex amend its charter to create a Development Review Board to replace the Zoning Board of Adjustment by January 1, 2025, following passage by the Vermont Legislature?*

This item would adjust how planning and zoning is conducted in Essex.

Under the existing Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment model, the Planning Commission fills both legislative roles (conducts outreach to the community, amends Land Use Regulations, does long-range planning such as updating the Town Plan, reviews capital plan) and quasi-judicial roles (reviews applications for subdivisions and development site plans). The Zoning Board hears appeals from the Zoning Administrator and reviews conditional use applications.

Under a Planning Commission and Development Review Board model, the Planning Commission holds the legislative role of conducting outreach to the community, amending Land Use Regulations, doing long-range planning, and reviewing the capital plan. The Development Review Board has the quasi-judicial role of conducting all development review and hearing all appeals from the Zoning Administrator.

5. Where can I see the proposed language for each amendment?

Electronic copies of each amendment are online at www.essexvt.org/1110/Charter-Review-Committee.

Hard copies are available at the Town Clerks Office, 81 Main St., Essex Junction.

6. Will each amendment be voted on separately, or are they being considered as a combined package?

Each of the proposed amendments will be a separate question on the Town Meeting ballot.

7. When will the changes take effect, if approved by Essex voters?

Once approved by voters, charter amendments need to be approved by the Vermont Legislature. Because of that requirement, it is difficult to know exactly when the charter amendments will become law.

8. When and where do voters vote on each of the proposed amendments?

Voting on the charter amendments will occur by Australian ballot at the polls, which will be open on Tuesday, March 7 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Essex Middle School, 58 Founders Dr., Essex.

Voters can also request an early ballot (see below for more info; the Town is not sending ballots to all voters this year).

Voters are encouraged to attend the annual Town Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 6 at the Essex Cinemas (Double E Performance Center entrance), 21 Essex Way #300, Essex. Town Meeting will include an informational presentation about the proposed charter amendments, as well as the proposed FY2024 budget and a proposed increase to the capital tax rate.

9. Will I receive my ballot early and how do I return it?

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