

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD of CIVIL AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING
SEPTEMBER 14, 2026**

BCA MEMBERS PRESENT: Dylan Giambatista (Chair), Jordan Verasamy (Vice-Chair) (remote), Kelly Adams (remote), Bethany Clark (remote), Diane Clemens, Cheri Davis (remote), Susan McNamara-Hill (Clerk), Gibson Smith, Amber Thibeault (remote), Carmon Verasamy, Elisa Ziglar
STAFF PRESENT: Regina Mahony (City Manager), Kristin Shamis (City Attorney)
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: None

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Giambatista called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/ CHANGES

Mr. Giambatista suggested that Item 6a, Appoint Election Worker(s) be discussed after Items 6b, BCA Rules of Procedure (for tax assessment appeals) and 6c, Review Tax Assessment Appeals Procedure, Process and Updates. All agreed.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

ELISA ZIGLAR made a motion, seconded by CARMON VERASAMY, to approve the agenda, as amended. Motion passed 10-1 with GIBSON SMITH not yet in attendance.

4. APPROVE MINUTES of PREVIOUS MEETING

a. July 6, 2026

DIANE CLEMENS made a motion, seconded by ELISA ZIGLAR, to approve the minutes of July 6, 2026, as amended.

Amendments:

-The adjournment time will be changed to 7:19 PM.

5. PUBLIC to be HEARD

a. Comments from Public

None.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. BCA Rules of Procedure (for tax assessment appeals)

Mr. Giambatista said nine total appeals have been submitted to date. He wishes to establish a timeline for the BCA hearing appeals. Ms. Mahony noted that a recent Supreme Court decision has allowed for additional time for the BCA to make decisions. Less appeals have been submitted than expected, which may have been due to lower-than-expected tax bills despite higher assessments. The BCA must visit all property in person if the owner is requesting an appeal.

Mr. Giambatista presented the draft Rules of Procedure, using the Vermont League of Cities and Towns as a model. He highlighted the rules of quorum, role of the assessor and recess procedures. Ms. Shamis discussed evidence which is accepted by the BCA, noting that irrelevant or unreliable evidence may be excluded. The BCA is responsible for giving evidence the weight it deserves. Public comment is not required during hearings. Ms. Clemens clarified that no new testimony can be provided on the site visit. Decisions will be made during deliberative session. Ms. Shamis said the Assessor's assessment is assumed to be correct, and the burden of persuasion is on the property owner. Once a meeting is closed,

it is expected that no additional evidence will be submitted. A decision must be issued 15 days after the hearing is closed. Should the property owner not allow the BCA to enter their property the appeal will automatically be withdrawn. Ms. Shamis said the BCA can and should request that property owners have their dogs contained for the visit. The BCA may request access to any rooms at the property.

At the hearing, appellants can bring forth experts to present on their behalf. Ms. Thibault suggested that all appellants receive the same amount of time to present, all agreed. This time was set as being not more than 30 minutes. All appellants will receive specific time slots to present. Should an appellant not attend the hearing, evidence can be submitted in advance. Ms. Shamis will check to determine if the site visit notes are subject to public record or not. Photographs should not be taken on site visits. Site visits and deliberation are not subject to public meeting law. Ms. Shamis detailed potential appeal opportunities for property owners who disagree with the decision of the BCA.

The Rules of Procedure was distributed to all members of the BCA. Mr. Giambatista discussed changes which would be incorporated into the document, based on feedback from this evening. Ms. Shamis suggested limiting participation in deliberative sessions to those who attended the hearing and site visit, and asked that if this is not possible participating BCA members should watch the meeting recording.

KELLY ADAMS made a motion, seconded by BETHANY CLARK, to approve the rules of procedure for property tax assessment appeal hearings with the deletion of the footer reference and the four instances of lister changed to assessor or assessors as needed. Motion passed 11-0.

Mr. Giambatista suggested two hearing dates of September 28th at 6 PM and September 30th at 6 PM. A regular BCA meeting is also scheduled for October 5th. Everyone in attendance at the hearing does not need to attend the site visit, however they should plan to attend the deliberative session. Information on the hearings will be e-mailed and mailed to appellants.

ELISA ZIGLAR made an amendment to adopt the schedule as presented and instruct the Clerk's office to facilitate scheduling. No second, amendment failed.

DYLAN GIAMBATISTA made an amendment to adopt the schedule as presented and to instruct the Clerk to include appellants 1-5 as Group 1, and appellants 6-9 as Group 2. No second, amendment failed.

Ms. Ziglar suggested the commercial property be included with Group 2, as it is smaller.

DYLAN GIAMBATISTA made a motion, seconded by KELLY ADAMS, to amend the motion to request approval of the proposed timeline for tax assessment appeals and the meeting schedule, with discretion given to the clerk for scheduling the appellants. Motion passed 11-0.

DYLAN GIAMBATISTA made a motion, seconded by BETHANY CLARK, to approve the amended motion. Motion passed 11-0.

b. Review Tax Assessment Appeals Procedure, Process and Updates

Discussed with previous business item.

c. Appoint Election worker(s)

Mr. Giambatista read the list of potential election officials, noting that James Redfield and Dennis & Margaret Thibault are interested in serving but not listed on the memo. There is no formal application

process beyond e-mailing Ms. McNamara-Hill with interest. Mr. Giambatista said he would like to see some kind of staff or board-level vetting for potential election workers. He suggested requesting that the Clerk speak further with those who are not in the memo to provide more information about themselves prior to being appointed.

KELY ADAMS made a motion, seconded by ELISA ZIGLAR, to add the following names to the list of assistant election officials as set out in the memo. Motion passed 11-0.

Ms. McNamara-Hill will speak with other clerks in the area to determine if they have a process in place for vetting election workers.

Mr. Giambatista requested feedback on the primary election. Ms. McNamara-Hill said she would like to see each book manned by pairs to ensure checks and balances in the future. Confusion over multiple binders and the co-location of districts was discussed. Mr. Giambatista suggested that elections process improvements be discussed further at the next meeting. He suggested anyone who would like to offer feedback or ideas to send them forward.

Ms. McNamara noted that any tax payments put in the drop-box or made online after 4:30 PM on the 15th will be considered late. This change was voted upon last year.

7. ADJOURNMENT

KELLY ADAMS made a motion, seconded by ELISA ZIGLAR, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 11-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Darby Mayville
Recording Secretary