



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of December 5, 2016

Report covers from November 26, 2016 to December 2, 2016

Items requiring Board vote or discussion are noted with an asterisk (*)

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Request to Alter Sewer Easement (*)

In the past, several residents negotiated compensation in exchange for sewer easements through their properties. At Story Acres, one resident currently has a 30-foot-wide easement along a sewer trunk line that goes through his property. He was under the understanding that the 30-foot nature of the easement would be narrowed to a 10-foot extent after construction was complete (a construction easement that would break down to a narrower, permanent easement). However, the permanent, recorded easement has a 30-foot width, with no mention of an eventual narrowing and he would like to make some improvements on his property near that area. The Superintendent of Public Works has begun to discuss the matter with the resident.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Results of Network Penetration Testing

Our network security expert contractor has completed testing of the Town's computer network with respect to attack from the outside world via the Town's various Internet-facing exposure points. Testing did not find any vulnerabilities. The contractor also simulated various e-mail attacks (phishing and simulated malicious code) and only a few users succumb to those efforts. Our past awareness training was helpful in keeping most users safe and we will continue to underscore the importance of screening suspicious content with others. We intend to repeat this type of testing and training in future years.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Town Administrator's Performance Review and Goal Setting (*)

At this time each year, the Board arranges to review my performance and to set goals for the upcoming year. In the performance area, I will rely on the detailed reports filed with the Board at each Board meeting as a record of my activities, service, and accomplishments. As the Board may recall, my evaluation template was updated with six specific goals at the outset of this calendar year for use at this time.

Also, it is necessary to work with the Board to develop goals for the upcoming calendar year. In addition to the general roles and responsibilities in my position description, which I will continue to update the Board on in detail for each new Board meeting, I recommend the following specific scope and welcome discussion with the Board:

- Assist the Board, its consultants, and other Town boards and committees with continued planning and implementation of activities at Conomo Point, all in accordance with the Northern Conomo Point Wastewater Management District regulations and Board guidance. Activities will include: a) permitting and design completion, procurement, contracting, and project completion for northern Conomo Point public waterfront access improvements at 138 and 153 Conomo Point Road; b) demolition of structures at 4 and 8 Conomo Point Lane; c) coordination with private parties relative to the removal of structures at 9 Beach Circle; d) coordination with Board of Health with respect to implementing the requirements of the Northern Conomo Point Wastewater Management District; e) consideration with the Board and with the Conomo Point Planning Committee of the next possible northern Conomo Point improvement project area.
- Continue to serve as the Town's chief overseer of the Town Hall/Library renovation project. Work will involve: a) interfacing daily with our Project Manager and our Architect, and periodically with the Board, to keep the project on time and on budget; b) acting as a liaison to building staff during construction; c) closing out the project within the available remaining funding constraints; b) coordinating all logistics concerning the move back to 30 Martin Street from two, temporary spaces.
- Work with the Town Building Committee to firm up a recommendation regarding the best siting alternative for a new police/fire headquarters buildings (24-30 Martin Street site versus John Wise Avenue Site) and determine if the Board of Public Works will back any particular option so that Town Meeting's attention may turn to potential funding for design and construction of the new facility.
- Continue to advance the Town's readiness for Essex River dredging. Work will involve: a) working with the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a beneficial use study concerning the re-use of dredge spoils within the Essex River/Essex Bay system (if project is funded); b) continue working with interested parties concerning the future potential to cast future dredge spoils onto the marsh, or to use in other beneficial ways (study will be conducted to demonstrate whether these are viable and environmentally-compatible activities); and c) investigating and applying for funding that may become available for coastal resiliency mitigation projects.

- Continue to work with the Strategic Planning Committee to implement the Town's Strategic Plan by taking stock of progress to date and by working with the Town Planner to target the next several logical steps. These may include the formation of an Economic Development Committee, the signing of an Economic Development Community Compact, and implementation of some of the recent parking study recommendations.

Recommendation: **Preliminary Board discussion relative to this year's evaluation process using the current template and the goal setting process for the upcoming calendar year.**

(2) Informal Department Heads Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting on December 1, 2016, as I do from time to time. The meeting featured a discussion relative to fiscal year 2018 budget preparation, various recent grants, and the purchase of some recently-funded equipment.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Safety Committee Meeting

The Safety Committee will next meet on December 22, 2016. I have placed a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Potential Options for Future Management of Council on Aging Director (*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to look into how the Council on Aging could be restructured to serve in a purely advisory role, with the Director perhaps reporting to the Board. Presently, Section 2-22 of the town Bylaws recognizes the Council as operating under Section 8B of Chapter 40 of the General Laws. Section 8B makes the Council the appointing authority for all of its employees. I am working with Counsel presently to review future options and may have additional information by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Town Hall/Library Weekly Construction Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on November 30, 2016. The general contractor is now focusing on interior work after a run of poor weather. Some roofing elements remain and are expected to be completed during the week of December 5, 2016. Interior work presently includes window trim staining and finishing of the new set of interior egress stairs (rough-in was recently approved by the Building Inspector).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Potential Future Change Orders, Library Ramp and Door (*)

According to our architect, staining of the Library ramp was not included in the base bid, since our goal was to control costs as much as possible. However, it will be useful at this point to see what the cost will be so that the ramp will match the rest of the building if funds allow. Also, while the contractor is responsible for lowering the main exterior door to the Library, he has suggested that it would benefit the Town to outright replace the door frame and door (going from a metal to a wooden door). I am awaiting pricing on all of the above and will review those proposals with our architect and our Project Manager when available.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Packaging of Invitation for Bids, Northern Conomo Point Project (*)

I am continuing to work with our landscape architect to finalize the plans and specifications for the northern Conomo Point public waterfront access improvement project. I have reviewed draft plans and more refinement is in process. The project will be bid using a unit pricing format and we have the potential to bid both of the sub-areas together as well as separately. Having figures on separate sub-components may allow the Department of Public Works to assist with the parking area if the overall project price is over budget. Presently, the DPW is not in a position to commit to timely completion, since their availability depends on how wintry the month of March is. Having the sub-prices would also allow the contractor to get started on just the park area if additional funding is needed for the second area.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as to which bid options to seek.**

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Public Forum Concerning Master Plan for Centennial Grove (*)

Given recent public input concerning the Centennial Grove Cottage area and the Folsom Pavilion, the Board had discussed devoting an entire public forum to planning for the Grove. It is possible that this forum could be held on January 30, 2017, at the school.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) 2016 Memory Tree

As requested by the Board, I worked with the Essex Holiday Festival Committee to provide the Committee with a cut tree for this year's Memory Tree ceremony. The original Memory Tree was removed as part of the Town Hall/Library renovation project and this year's ceremony was held in front of the Fire Station. The cut tree was delivered by the nursery and placed in a stand and staked down by the DPW for this season. A new Memory Tree will be planted on the Town Hall grounds in the spring.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Draft Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Budget Update (*)

The Finance Committee has released its annual request for capital budget updates from all departments. Updates are due by January 10, 2017 and I have begun to develop the Board's document.

Recommendation: **Preliminary Board discussion relative to the FY18 capital budget update.**

(2) Draft Fiscal Year 2018 Operating Budget Request (*)

The Finance Committee will release its annual request for operating budget requests from all departments as of December 8, 2016. Request packages are due by January 10, 2017. I will have more developed information by the Board's next meeting but I wish to cover at this time several items that will factor into the budget.

Recommendation: **Preliminary Board discussion relative to the Operating Budget request.**

(3) Regional School District Operating Budget Discussion Group (*)

Selectman Coviello met with officials from Manchester and the Regional School District on December 2, 2016. The meeting featured a discussion relative to the release of the Tentative Budget, which will be sent to the towns by the District on December 7, 2016, with a public hearing to follow on December 14, 2016.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Preliminary List of Potential Topics for Annual Town Meeting (*)

I have assembled a preliminary list of topics for possible articles at the 2017 Annual Town Meeting, which will be held on May 1, 2017. It is useful to review these items now, since many have budget implications and the budget process is now in full swing.

Recommendation: **Preliminary discussion relative to this list.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Successful Appeal of 2014 FEMA Coastal Flood Panels

As the Board is aware, the Woods Hole Group had been hired by the Town to challenge the FEMA coastal flood panels that were issued in 2014, given that FEMA had used very general modeling techniques not completely applicable to our area. During the week of November 28, 2016 FEMA issued a set of revised maps that have some appreciable changes that will benefit both Essex and Ipswich residents. While the actual boundaries of certain flood zones may not have changed, the elevation above which flooding is not expected to occur has decreased. So, for many people, if a property is surveyed with respect to its local elevation profile, it is possible that certain elements may now be out of the flood zone. The new maps are presently going through a public advertisement and comment period and, absent any input that results in changes, should be effective by mid-March. Copies of the proposed changes are on file in the Selectmen's Office.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

M. Grants

(1) Green Communities Grant Program Application (*)

Now that our initial \$130,000 Green Communities Grant allotment is behind us in the form of a contribution to the Town Hall/Library renovation project, our Town Planner has reviewed various possible project ideas for our first round of competitive funding. Projects considered include: a) upgrading all streetlights to

LED lamps; b) replacement of the Water Plant boiler; or c) energy efficiency improvements at the Essex Elementary School.

The LED project may not be recommended at this time since the Town would have to take ownership of the lights first (a lengthy process) and since a separate grant program may be available soon for this type of project. A recent analysis of the Water Plant boiler by our insurer does indicate that we have a dated system in place and the grant would allow us to replace the system without as high a level of Town expense. The Planner also recommends tackling some elements of the recent Essex Elementary School energy audit. I expect to have a full report from the Planner, with recommendations, by meeting time.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization of a Green Communities grant application based upon elements recommended by the Planner. The application can be signed by the Chairman, outside of a meeting, once prepared.**

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on December 2, 2016.

This report is available at www.essexma.org on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.