



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Dec. 20, 2016

Report covers from December 3, 2016 to December 16, 2016

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Strategic Planning Committee Meeting/Economic Development Compact (\*)

I attended the subject meeting along with Chairman O'Donnell and Town Planner Matt Coogan on December 12, 2016. With the last two scheduled SPC meetings not achieving a quorum, the Committee had much to catch up on. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the prospect of entering into an Economic Development Community Compact with the Baker Administration, much like the Compact the Town already has in the area of coastal resiliency planning.

The SPC voted to recommend this course of action and to put in place an Economic Development Committee (EDC) that would serve as the primary driver of the Compact. I will be able to work with the Town Planner to prepare the Town's application for the Compact and the Board should discuss both a potential mission statement for the EDC and the makeup of the EDC (including desired member qualifications). I have made initial contact with the State about our expanded Compact and we will need to address a recent change in policy that may delay the process. Further, the Committee reviewed its list of present priorities and the Town Planner and I will be working to update that document and post on the Town's website, with a link back to the overall Strategic Plan.

**Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the mission and makeup of the proposed EDC and authorization for me to sign the Community Compact application on behalf of the Chairman, once the application is finalized.**

#### (2) Bicentennial Committee Budget Estimate (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to determine from the Chair of the Bicentennial Committee what the Committee envisions for a budget for the celebration to occur during 2019. I contacted the Chair and asked what the overall spending will be, along with a breakdown of funding sources: Town funds, private donations, and funds collected through fundraising (i.e. sale of calendars, hats, memorabilia, etc.). Presently, the Chair is working on developing some figures by meeting time, based upon the Committee's discussion to date.

**Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.**

## **B. Computer Systems**

### (1) Replacement of Uninterruptible Power Supply Units, Sewer Stations

Recently, one of the Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) units failed in one of the sewer lift stations. These units keep the central computer running between a power failure and when the generator kicks in. The Superintendent of Public Works and I reviewed the situation and we will be replacing all units with a different model which provides better advanced warning regarding imminent device failure and the ability to hot-swap dead batteries.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

### (2) Permanent Shelving of Old Servers

As the Board is aware, I had replaced both the Assessors' server and the Primary Windows Domain Controller in our new server room in the recent past. Now that both new systems seem to be running well, with no long-term issues observed, I have permanently powered down, disconnected, and shelved the two old servers. The two old units will be kept for about two years, in the event that some data or function was overlooked. At that time, the units will be discarded after hard drives have been destroyed.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 2 hours.

## **C. Personnel**

### (1) Continued Discussion of Town Administrator's CY17 Goals (\*)

At the last meeting, I provided the Board with my suggested goals for calendar year 2017. The Board indicated that discussion regarding those items should be held at the present meeting and asked that I add a goal associated with coordinating a renewed effort toward a regional Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Great Marsh (five communities).

I have researched the process for the development and approval of this type of regional RMP, which will include multiple steps. In 2011, the Town of Ipswich had hired the Horsley Witten Group to bring the five communities together on a course toward a joint RMP. I have received a copy of the report from that effort from Ellie Baker of the Horsley Witten Group, along with the most recent State guide to RMP formulation (2004). I have also reached out to the current State ACEC Coordinator, Ms. Nancy Putnam, who works for the Division of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Ms. Putnam's primary role is to support ecology projects on DCR lands, so her role as State ACEC Coordinator very limited. Further, I have learned that the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management may have a graduate fellow working to coordinate some ACEC issues in the near future.

Given that the first half of the calendar year will be devoted to completing the Town Hall/Library project, moving back in, and getting acclimated to the building, along with accomplishing the northern Conomo Point improvement project, I think a wise goal relative to the ACEC RMP would best be planned for the fall. My preliminary thought is to coordinate a summit that would be held in the new Town Hall meeting hall in September. I could work to build support and connect various players during the earlier part of the year, so that the summit is productive. My initial work would involve establishing a primary official from each community who will commit to study and foster the effort.

*Recommendation:* **Further Board discussion regarding my goals.**

(2) Connecting Volunteers to Town Government Service Opportunities

Using the excellent response to the survey regarding residents' willingness to serve on Town boards and committees, we had connected several respondents with the Finance Committee, which was in great need of volunteers to fill some vacant seats. We also connected two respondents with a need to fill a vacant Housing Authority seat. Thereafter, I provided information about the various interested parties to a variety of departments, boards, and commissions since our goal is to connect each willing volunteer with a service opportunity. Parties will be contacted via e-mail and Town officials will check with me before contacting any particular person, in the event that a person has already been tapped for or connected with a position. I will continue to manage the connection process until all interested parties have been moved into a role.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary at this time.

#### **D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

(1) Town Hall/Library Renovation Project Weekly Construction Meetings

I attended construction meetings on December 7 and December 14, 2016. The contractor has completed all roofing work and associated insulation. Interior window frame staining continues, and the remaining interior blue boarding/plastering work is nearly complete. Interior trim boards and stairway lumber has been delivered to the site and the framing and plumbing/electrical rough-in for the third-floor meeting hall are underway.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Change Order Pricing, Staining of Library Ramp and Door Replacement (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the potential need to add the above two elements to the Town Hall/Library renovation project scope via change orders. I learned that a new, wooden door and wooden frame will cost \$3,553 and, after that pricing was reviewed and approved by our architect and our Project Manager, the Chairman authorized that work to proceed (per the Board's previous vote).

The labor to install the frame and lower the door to the new floor height are already included in the base bid (since the existing frame and door were to be removed and reset).

Regarding the staining of the Library ramp, we are told that this work can be done in the spring, and the cost will be \$2,900. Since that figure is relatively small, the Board should consider approving that change order now.

**Recommendation: Board approval of the Library ramp painting and staining.**

(3) Interior Door Framing Change Order (\*)

An inconsistency within our architect's plans has led to the framing of 11 door frames at a 6'8" height when the frames are supposed to accept reclaimed antique doors that are 7'0" in height. Our contractor has priced the necessary reframing at approximately \$150 per door, for a total cost of approximately \$1,650. Cutting the doors down, moving hinges, re-coring for knobs, or a combination of these things will all translate to odd looking doors when the full appearance of these antique doors is what is envisioned (and would probably cost more money anyway).

**Recommendation: Board authorization of the change order for this door frame work.**

(4) Chandelier Transport Change Order (\*)

The Board approved in the past a change order with a third-party vendor to restore the chandelier that is featured in the Memorial Hall of Town Hall (as part of the third-floor finishing work). The general contractor is responsible for taking the chandelier down and re-hanging it when it is returned. What is not covered presently is the transport of the piece to the third-party's shop and crating and transport back to the job site. Our understanding is that this item will not exceed \$1,613 and we are awaiting additional pricing that may be lower.

**Recommendation: Board approval of the transport change order, not to exceed \$1,613.**

(5) Finalization of Northern Conomo Point Improvement Project Bid Package (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the bid package for the subject project should be structured to get pricing for the whole job (waterfront park and adjacent parking lot) and, separately, just for the park portion. This arrangement will provide flexibility in the event that price becomes a factor and/or should the DPW wish to become involved with the parking lot portion of the project. I have worked out the format with Town Counsel and with our Landscape Architect and the bid will be released as of December 28, 2016. Bids are due and will be opened on February 1, 2017. The best price will be determined in accordance

with the option the Town actually chooses, which may make one bidder the lowest for one option and another bidder the lowest for the other option.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

## **E. Insurance**

### (1) MIIA Driving Simulator

After I made a request on behalf of our Safety Committee, our insurer is making available its mobile driving simulator for the better part of a week, on-site, in Essex (January 24-27, 2017). I am presently working to determine how many fire, police, and DPW personnel will participate in the training.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Monthly Pothole Log

The Department of Public Works has provided the pothole log for the month of November. One pothole was reported and was filled right away. The log is important since it documents reports and mitigates the Town's liability by prompting immediate attention.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **F. Facilities**

### (1) Potential Purchase of Streetlights from National Grid

(\*)

At the last meeting, the Town Planner commented on how the State will soon be announcing a new grant program dealing solely with conversion of streetlights to LED lamps. Preference will likely be given to those communities which already own their streetlight inventory and, as the Board may recall, National Grid had quoted an approximately \$14,000 purchase price for Essex in the past. As requested by the Board, I contacted National Grid to explore a \$1 purchase, similar to what was offered to the City of Gloucester, and others.

My contact at Grid has explained that it is true that several communities have completed purchases for just \$1. However, that is because the equipment in those communities was antiquated, with much of it having a negative value to Grid. When the overall valuation in a community comes in at a net negative, Grid does, in fact offer the sale at the \$1 level. Also, in discussing the timing of any such purchase, Grid estimates about a year's lead time to be necessary. The computer systems for switching lights over from Grid to the municipality take about 90 keystrokes per light and Grid is required to handle such requests in the order received. As such, if several large communities are already in the queue, the wait time can be very long.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Potential Replacement of Essex Elementary School Fire Alarm System

At the last meeting, the Board discussed on a preliminary basis the fact that the Essex Fire Department is recommending the complete replacement of the fire alarm system at Essex Elementary School. After discussing the matter with the Fire Chief, I contacted the District Business Manager about the anticipated cost and funding source. It is my understanding that the District intends to accomplish this project using the District's stabilization fund. A similar project was undertaken in the past at the Memorial School in Manchester, at a cost of approximately \$175,000.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Rerouting of Telephone Service Lines, Town Hall

The construction of the elevator foyer at street level at the Town Hall required our contractor to cut into the building below the sill. The various telephone service lines that serve the building happened to cross the foyer area above the new floor level and needed to be rerouted. As such, I contacted Verizon and, after a technician visited the site to review the situation, arrangements will be made to replace the old service lines with a single, 12-pair line, with a maze of old network interface boxes and wires being cleaned up in the process.

When we return to the building, most of the phone lines that we formerly used will not be in use (due to our transition to a new, Internet-based VOIP phone system). However, fax lines and several specialty lines for the fire alarm system and the elevator telephone will still be in service, and the new, 12-pair service line will be sufficient.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

(1) Further Discussion Relative to FY18 Capital Budget Update (\*)

I have revised the Board's FY18 Capital Budget Update document in accordance with the Board's input from the last meeting. The final submission is due on January 10, 2017.

*Recommendation:* **Further Board discussion relative to the Capital Budget Update document.**

(2) Review and Discussion Relative to FY18 Operating Budget Request (\*)

At the last meeting, I reviewed some of the major features of the Board's FY18 Operating Budget request in a preliminary fashion. The formal memo for budget

requests has since been released by the Finance Committee through the Town Accountant and the final submission is due on January 10, 2017.

**Recommendation: Board review and discussion relative to the first draft of the FY18 Operating Budget request package.**

(3) Manchester Essex Regional School District FY18 Tentative Budget (\*)

I attended the subject hearing on December 14, 2016 along with the Board members and members of the Essex Finance Committee. School District officials reviewed the Tentative Budget proposal for fiscal year 2018, which includes an overall 3.68% increase in revenue derived from town apportionments. The actual Essex increase will likely be slightly lower than the overall figure, once inputs are known in January.

**Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.**

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

(1) North Shore Public Health Collaboration Workshop

I attended the subject workshop in Hamilton on December 7, 2016. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is working with area communities to improve collaboration relative to public health issues and services. The Board of Health Administrator was unable to attend due to a schedule conflict and I represented the Town. At the workshop, several different models for collaboration among communities were discussed. MAPC is next going to summarize in one document the various collaborative efforts that are already underway in our region. The next meeting will occur sometime in January of 2017 and it is possible that public health nurse and food inspection services will be featured topics.

**Recommendation:** No further action is necessary at this time.

## **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

## **K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations**

### (1) Further Review of Potential Topics for Annual Town Meeting (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board began to review in a preliminary sense the range of topics that might be expected to be addressed at the Annual Town Meeting in May of 2017. I have revised the preliminary list in accordance with the Board's input.

**Recommendation: Further discussion relative to the preliminary Annual Town Meeting topic list.**

## **L. Legal Issues**

### (1) Re-designation of Essex Federal Channel Complete

We have learned that the legislation that contained the new boundaries of the Federal Channel in the Essex River passed the conference committee early on December 12, 2016. The legislation is now on the President's desk and he is expected to sign. With the passage of this legislation, the Essex River will officially be encroachment-free, making it eligible for Federal dredging funding in the future.

**Recommendation:** No further action is necessary.

## **M. Grants**

### (1) District Local Technical Assistance Grant Application (\*)

The Town Planner has indicated that the subject grant program, offered through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), would be a good source of support for economic development planning. Similar to the DLTA grant that the Town received relative to our Strategic Plan, this grant would provide MAPC staff time for developing an Economic Development Plan for the Town. The Planner intends to submit an application to MAPC by the deadline of January 15, 2017.

**Recommendation: Board authorization of the Chairman to sign the grant application, when available.**

## **N. Emergency Planning**

### (1) Regional Dispatch Center Monthly Meeting

I presided over a joint meeting of the various Regional Dispatch Center advisory boards as Chairman of the Executive Advisory Board on December 16, 2016. Outgoing Sheriff Frank Cousins appeared at the meeting to indicate that the transition to Sheriff-elect Kevin Coppinger is going well. Those in attendance thanked Sheriff Cousins for his years of dedication and wished him well in future endeavors. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the draft fiscal year 2018

operating budget, which will be presented at a public hearing at the Finance Advisory Board's February, 2017 meeting. Presently, the fiscal year 2017 operating budget is on track, with no anticipated need for changes in the assessments to the participating communities.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**O. Other Items**

No items.

*This report is available at [www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org) on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.*