



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of March 27, 2017

Report covers from March 11 to March 24, 2017

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Town Building Committee Meeting Summary (*)

Shortly after the last Selectmen's meeting the Board of Public Works determined that they were leaning toward not supporting a fire-only facility on the Town Hall side of Shepard Memorial Drive. In addition, at the last meeting, the Town Moderator had suggested more public input and discussion before the issue of public safety building renovation/replacement goes before any Town Meeting. Chairman O'Donnell called a Town Building Committee meeting on March 20, 2017 to discuss these matters, along with our engineer's final report regarding potential site planning for a new building. The Committee agreed that bringing the matter before voters in May is too soon and recommended getting architectural renderings of the possible new fire station to be used in upcoming public forums. An article for design and construction could be advanced to voters in November.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to obtaining funding for renderings and with respect to the process for public input.

(2) Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Summary (*)

I attended the subject meeting along with Chairman O'Donnell on March 22, 2017. The meeting featured an update from the Town Planner relative to the Committee's quarterly Strategic Plan Update document. The Planner and I will be looking at the makeup of Economic Development committees (EDC) in other towns to gauge how Essex's new committee might be set up. The SPC plans to make a recommendation for EDC members after their next quarterly meeting. Also, the Committee plans to use its \$2,500 in volunteer recruitment/public involvement money to help sponsor the grand opening of the Town Hall. Committee members plan to be on hand for that event to discuss involvement opportunities with the public. The Committee would like the Board's thoughts on when the grand opening might occur.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the coming Economic Development Committee and a date for the Town Hall grand opening.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Preparation of Voice Over IP (VOIP) System in Renovated Town Hall

As the Board may recall, we migrated to a cloud-based VOIP telephone system during our time at the temporary Town Hall quarters. This change will make it

very easy to move phone lines and systems back into the renovated Town Hall. Recently, I began preparing the infrastructure necessary for that system in the renovated building. I ran two ethernet cables between the server room and the basement, where the phone switches will be located. This will allow all of the phones (which operate using power-over-ethernet) to make the connection from the phone switch back to our redundant router system to get out to the Internet. I will soon be installing the first phone switch and its associated uninterruptible power supply.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

C. Personnel

No items.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Town Hall/Library Renovation Project Construction Meetings

I attended the subject meetings on March 16 and March 22, 2017. Our contractor has made additional progress and the interior of the building is rapidly moving toward a finished state. Recent work includes the sanding and sealing of the floors, hanging the drop ceiling grids, weathervane restoration completion, off-site clock face production, clockworks reconfiguration/cleaning, trim work, casework, and electrical finish work. The contractor has been informed that the Town intends to reoccupy the building during the week of May 22, 2017 (present construction deadline is May 17, 2017). I have also been working with our architect and our contractor to develop and implement a comprehensive door keying plan for the building.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Change Order for Concealing Exterior Town Hall/Library Furnace Pipes (*)

As the Board may recall, the new, high-efficiency natural gas furnace for the Town Hall/Library is vented and draws fresh air through PVC pipes that exit via the front chimney. Given that this arrangement is not aesthetically pleasing, our architect has proposed to cover the pipes with copper. Pricing should be available by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board review of the pipe concealment change order.**

(3) Change Order for Substitution of Granite Curbing, Conomo Point (*)

At the last meeting, the Board did not get a chance to discuss whether the concrete curbing at the new parking lot associated with the Northern Conomo Point public waterfront access improvement project should be replaced by granite curbing, via change order. The cost for this substitution would be \$7,500, but it does not

appear that the project will require any structural underpinning of the seawall, for which we carried an allowance of \$10,000.

Recommendation: **Board consideration of the change order for granite curbing.**

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Chairs for Town Hall Third-Floor Auditorium (*)

The new meeting space on the third floor of Town Hall will accommodate approximately 120 chairs, according to our architect. As such, I have researched a good stacking chair solution, based on seating we have seen at the Ipswich Town Hall. We are also able to purchase rolling carts which may be used to move stacks of chairs in an out of storage or off to the side for floor maintenance.

Recommendation: **Board approval of the order for the stacking chairs.**

(2) Fire Station Slab Settling Problem (*)

Members of the Essex Fire Department recently noticed that a portion of the slab in the engine room floor appears to be approaching a failed state. It is possible that a small portion of the floor has been undermined by drainage and groundwater over the years, leaving a void between the bottom of the slab and the top of the ground beneath it. Since the slab in this building is designed to be supported by the substrate, it is not holding up as the apparatus crosses that area. As a temporary measure, the Department of Public Works has placed steel plates in the damaged area. We have received permission from the State to undertake an emergency procurement action for a contractor to either inject grout under the slab or to remove the damaged area and then fill, compact, and replace.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Finalization of Fiscal Year 2018 Operating Budget

At the last meeting, the Board and the Finance Committee made some final decisions concerning the fiscal year 2018 operating budget proposal that will be considered by the Annual Town Meeting. That budget includes a two-percent cost of living increase for union and non-union positions. I have since worked with the Town Accountant to finalize the budget sheets so that the Annual Town Meeting booklet can be sent out for printing by the end of the first week in April.

The Finance Committee will make any necessary final changes and will vote on the budget prior to printing.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Sustainability by Land & Sea Conference

I presented at the subject conference on behalf of the Town at Endicott College on March 17, 2017. The conference included a broad variety of sustainable community and campus approaches to move toward energy efficiency but also to mitigate the effects of sea level rise and climate change. I was invited to highlight what the Town is undertaking relative to potentially using the Essex salt marsh and river system to mitigate rising sea level and predicted more frequent and more intense storms. I explained how we are positioning to utilize source materials that are presently clogging the River channel to make the marsh and river system more resilient to climate change. The presentation went well and I was able to connect with others who may be helpful in advancing the Town's goals.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Caucus

I attended the Cape Ann Caucus, sponsored by the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce on March 24, 2017, along with Selectmen O'Donnell and Coviello. The event brings government officials from local and State government together with business leaders from the four Cape Ann communities to discuss issues of common interest. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the widening State budget gap and how SeniorCare is working to implement local programs to help residents with dementia in daily life.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) MassMoves Transportation Visioning Session

I attended the subject event hosted by Senator Bruce Tarr and other State Senators on March 21, 2017. The Commonwealth has partnered with the Barr Foundation to understand transportation needs in each region of the State. In Essex, and in other small communities, one major issue is providing custom transportation to seniors who may need to travel to medical appointments and other errands and do not have family to help with those trips. Also, transportation in our region could enhance our local economy if more public options to travel from regional hubs into the Town are offered.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Finalization of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant

I have developed a final draft of the Annual Town Meeting warrant for the Board's review, approval and signature, based upon guidance received at the last meeting.

Recommendation: Board approval and signature of the warrant as per the posted agenda.

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

No items.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

No items.

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