



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 10, 2017

Report covers from March 25 to April 7, 2017

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Fully-Functional Phone System, Renovated Town Hall/Library

I completed the installation and testing of the voice over IP (VOIP) phone system in the renovated Town Hall/Library during the week of March 27, 2017. Our Internet routers in Town Hall had previously been configured for this system (identical to the setup we have in the temporary building). The routers connect to the power over ethernet switch in the basement that manages all VOIP traffic and each, individual phone jack in the building also connects back to that switch. Users will simply plug their VOIP phone into the jack and it will be instantly operational. We will inform our vendor about the location change, for 911 purposes, once we are back at 30 Martin Street. In limited cases (such as fax machines and the Library phone line), we will be able to connect jacks with copper phone lines, since the VOIP patch panel in the basement is located adjacent to the conventional phone panel.

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

(2) Replacement of CJIS Network Router

The State office that runs the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) visited the Essex Police Department on April 5, 2017. The existing CJIS router was in need of upgrade/replacement and I was available to help the technician understand how CJIS ties in with our local area network. CJIS is used by the Police Department to look up criminal histories and to connect to the Regional Dispatch Center in Middleton. The transition went smoothly and all network services are working well.

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

C. Personnel

(1) Informal Department Heads Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting on April 6, 2017. The meeting featured a discussion relative to preparing for the move back into the Town Hall at 30 Martin Street and a review of the various Annual Town Meeting topics.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Town Hall/Library Project Weekly Construction Meetings

I attended the subject meetings on March 29 and April 5, 2017. Work is wrapping up and most interior painting has been completed. Most floors have been sealed and the main stairway will be sealed very late in the job, since it accommodates constant contractor traffic presently. The final internal test of the elevator will occur on April 13, 2017 and the State test will occur shortly thereafter. Our contractor has brought in a locksmith to fully implement the keying plan for the renovated building. Relocation and cleaning of the clockworks is complete and bathroom and kitchenette fixtures, countertops, and partitions, along with bathroom flooring, will all be installed in the near future. The new, high-efficiency gas boiler is on line and the heat pump registers are being hung on the walls.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Change Order for Town Hall Clock Tower Lighting Solution (*)

At the Board's meeting of April 3, 2017, the Board authorized the Chairman to sign a change order for a fiber optic clock tower lighting solution if the net price was \$12,000 or less. At the time of printing of this report, it is still not known whether final pricing will be available for the present meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary, if final pricing information is available.**

(3) Change Order for Replacement Library Exterior Lighting (*)

The Board had asked for our architect and contractor to provide pricing for replacing the existing, old, exterior Library lighting with new fixtures. It is possible that this information will be available by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the lighting change order, if available by meeting time.**

(4) Change Orders, Town Hall Light Post Alignment & Paint Vent Pipe (*)

These items are not critical to the completion of the overall project and the Board had indicated that they should be revisited after the cost of the final clock tower lighting solution is known.

Recommendation: **Board discussion only if more information on the clock tower lighting solution is available by meeting time.**

(5) Quarterly Affirmative Marketing Report

I completed and filed with the State the subject report during the week of March 27, 2017, in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer (AMCO). The report details the Town's usage of women or minority-owned businesses on State-funded building construction projects. No such utilization occurred this quarter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Monthly Pothole Log

I obtained the pothole log for the month of March from the DPW during the week of April 3, 2017. One pothole had been reported and was promptly repaired.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Quarterly Facility Self-Inspection Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for the Temporary Town Hall and the Senior Center during the week of April 3, 2017. This was the last inspection that will involve our temporary quarters and we have managed to work in a tight space safely for the past 15 months. Relative to the Senior Center, work on the Wellness Room and other interior aspects of the building has been very beneficial to safety. Further, the Annual Town Meeting will consider the replacement of the Senior Center generator in May.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Seasonal Freeze-up Prevention Logs

As the Board may recall, the police department and the DPW assist with the conduction of weekly freeze-up prevention checks in Town buildings on weekends during the winter. I received the seasonal logs from both departments during the week of April 3, 2017 and provided them to our insurer as part of the MIA Rewards Program. No major issues were recorded over the winter and no instances of frozen pipes occurred.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Demolition of Structures at 4 and 8 Conomo Lane

Our demolition contractor commenced the demolition of all three structures at 4 and 8 Conomo Lane on April 3, 2017. The work took 3 days and the Essex Fire Department was present with the fire tanker to control dust. The debris was

deposited into waiting dumpsters and the Department of Public Works will conduct the “fine cleanup” of the site in the near future.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Preparation for Telephone Line Relocation

While most of the telephone lines that will be in use at 30 Martin Street when we move back to that building have already been converted to cloud-based, voice over IP (VOIP) lines, several will remain as copper lines. These include the Town Hall fax line, the Library fax line, and the Library phone line. The two fax lines will serve conventional fax machines but will also serve as backup phone service should the VOIP system ever go down for an extended period. With respect to the Town Hall fax line, that will also be wired to each of the three conference room spaces, so that we can have telephone connectivity in each space without paying for either a separate copper line or separate VOIP phones. The Town Hall fax line will also serve the basement vault emergency telephone. I have ordered the line move as of May 1, 2017 and Verizon will provide dual service (at the two temporary locations and at 30 Martin Street) until May 31, 2017, so that users will not be without these capabilities during the transition.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(5) Grand Opening Celebration for Town Hall/Library Renovation (*)

The Board discussed at the last meeting the potential of holding the grand opening ceremony for the Town Hall/Library on June 24, 2017, to coincide with Essex Riverday. I have spoken to Riverday organizers and that idea has support. The Strategic Planning Committee plans to use its public outreach funding to help with the event and will be available to speak to visitors about becoming more involved in Town government, by participating more or by serving on a Town board or commission. Also, the Board of Library Trustees is in agreement with the date and plans to participate.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion regarding the grand opening event, including time of day.**

(6) Seasonal Preparation of Centennial Grove

The Water Department has turned on the summer water service to the Centennial Grove, including the cottage. I will arrange for a plumber to open the cottage later in the month. I have also made arrangements with our irrigation contractor to start the Field of Dreams irrigation system in May. The Selectmen’s Assistant has already arranged for a portable toilet at the Field of Dreams and additional toilets will be placed in the upper Grove in May.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Finalization of Fiscal Year 2018 Operating Budget Proposal

The Town Accountant made final adjustments to the subject proposal during the week of April 3, 2017, in accordance with Finance Committee past guidance. I worked with the Accountant to produce the Town Meeting booklet, which includes the operating budget proposal and I delivered it for printing as of April 6, 2017. The Town Meeting will consider the budget on May 1, 2017. Booklets should be ready in about a week.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Regional School District Budget Group Meeting (*)

I attended the subject meeting along with Selectman Coviello on March 31, 2017. The meeting featured a discussion regarding a budget process refinement and improvement meeting that the finance committees, boards of selectmen, town staff, and District staff and officials will attend on May 11, 2017, at 6:00 p.m., at the Middle School/High School. The budget group will be meeting on April 28, 2017 to better define the agenda and objectives for that evening. Also, although we were under the impression that the replacement of the foot bridge in Manchester (connects the high school/middle school campus with the elementary school campus) would not involve any Essex funding, we were told that the situation is still in flux.

Further, Chairman O'Donnell and I will likely participate in a meeting involving the District's banking expert and the District's Project Manager, along with a Finance Committee Member on April 11, 2017. That meeting will focus on whether bringing the Memorial School construction project vote to voters could be moved to a time earlier than the currently-planned Annual Town Meeting of 2019. The idea would be to determine if accelerating the voting schedule could lead to savings in project escalation due to inflation, lower interest rates, and less money spent on keeping the existing building operational.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary, including discussion relative to any updated information concerning the foot bridge replacement project.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Draft Annual Town Meeting Motions (*)

I have prepared preliminary draft Annual Town Meeting motions for the Board's review.

Recommendation: **Board review and discussion of the draft motions.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Comcast Successor Cable Television Franchise Agreement (*)

The Board had discussed in the past potential terms for the negotiation of a successor license with Comcast. The Board was in agreement that one goal of the contract should be to provide the Town with funding for a fiber optic municipal area network (FMAN) to replace the now-obsolete Institutional Network (known as the Cable I-Net).

Back on March 3, 2017, I had participated in the Cape Ann Regional Cable Advisory Committee meeting and the parties had tentatively agreed to a contract that would achieve the above goal, a package which included a \$20,000 grant from Comcast toward the FMAN. Comcast had also agreed at that time to upgrade a portion of the line between Town Hall and the cable plant headend in Gloucester. While most of this line is already fiber, the coaxial portion needs to be upgraded by the utility so that the Town will have a new, modern video return line in place.

The funding for Cape Ann TV's plant and equipment needs will come from a surcharge on cable subscriber bills equal to \$45 per subscriber over the life of the contract. A portion of the Town's FMAN reimbursement will come from that surcharge. To operate, Cape Ann TV will utilize a portion of a separate surcharge equaling 4.85% of gross annual cable revenue. Comcast will provide approximately 1.25% of that surcharge to the four communities to continue to fund each community's Cable Technology Fund over time and Cape Ann TV will retain the remainder for operations. The 1.25% figure mirrors what has been in place for the past ten years.

While the actual successor contract documents are still in drafting with the attorneys, we are told by Town Counsel that we can expect the final contract to afford the Town with the features discussed above, plus all of the features of the expiring contract, excepting the continued maintenance of the old cable I-Net, since our new fiber system will replace that system. A separate Memorandum of

Understanding, also in a form approved by Town Counsel, can be signed with Cape Ann TV simultaneously with the signature of the Comcast documents for that Cape Ann TV's portion of the FMAN project funding.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion of this matter during tonight's public hearing and potential vote to sign a successor contract with Comcast and a separate MOU with Cape Ann TV, outside of a meeting, once approved by Town Counsel.**

(2) Quarterly Review of Executive Session Minutes

The Chairman has again reviewed the Board's executive session minutes with an eye toward anything that should be released and is not recommending any releases this quarter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

M. Grants

(1) Downtown Boardwalk Feasibility Study Grant Quarterly Report

I completed and submitted the subject report to the Department of Recreation and Conservation during the week of March 27, 2017. The project is still on hold, pending the possible release of project funding by the Governor. Borrowing was authorized by the State Legislature a few years back but has not actually been included in any actual funding plan to date.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Assessment of Garage at Allen Property, EPA Grant

As reported previously, I have been working with the Mass DEP and the US EPA relative to whether any brownfields resources are available to help the Town with the future of the Allen property on Southern Avenue. The entire site is still under the care and custody of a court-appointed receiver and anything that the Town would do to improve the situation at the property would have to be allowed through court.

One possibility is for the US EPA's Targeted Assessment Grant Program to help us with understanding what is in the garage at the property. That structure is structurally unsound and, although the Town appropriate money for its demolition, too many environmental risks exist for the Town to conduct this work without more information. It is possible that the grant program could be used for a comprehensive assessment, after which demolition could occur with risks more clearly identified. I met with a representative of the grant program on March 27, 2017 and I am awaiting and update on whether the program can help.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) Technical Assistance Grant

As the Board may recall, Town Planner Matt Coogan had written a grant application for a MDI grant that will provide technical assistance to develop a mixed-use zoning bylaw that will encourage housing in the downtown area. A state-appointed consultant will provide up to \$15,000 in technical assistance to help the Planner and the Planning Board develop bylaw language that may eventually come before voters at Town Meeting.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team Monthly Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on March 28, 2017, in Gloucester, along with the Fire Chief and Mr. Ralph Hawley of the Council on Aging. The meeting featured a discussion relative to shelter training and readiness, among other topics.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

O. Other Items

(1) Great Marsh ACEC Resource Management Plan Development Process

As the Board is aware, Essex and four other communities have been working toward an effort that would rejuvenate planning concerning a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Great Marsh. This effort was discontinued in 2011, when the State program for these plans was cut back.

Over the past winter, I have been working with the other communities to study the State's RMP planning guide, the Pleasant Bay ACEC Regional RMP, and a summary document authored by the Horsley Witten Group back in 2011 summarizing options for communities to pursue. Recently, I reached out to the others to try to capture the top goals of each of the communities, so we can begin framing the content of a summit that will be held in Essex in September.

Presently, in addition to the usual topics covered by a RMP, we are looking at customized sections regarding coastal resiliency, invasive species management, public education, clearer standards for permitting and enforcement (including the potential for permitting new piers and structures), seasonal home conversion, and ACEC boundary possibly tracking future flood plain boundaries.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

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