



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 24, 2017

Report covers from April 8 to April 21, 2017

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Application for Bathing Beach Permit Renewals

Every two years, it is necessary to renew the Town's permits for its three, public bathing beaches (Clammers' Beach, Front Beach, and Centennial Grove). The Board of Health issues the permits and actually conducts the sampling. I have applied for the necessary renewals.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Advanced IT Support Planning

(*)

As the Board is aware, the Town has benefitted from free consultation with IT professionals at Edgewater Technology for the past 17 years, whenever advance support has been necessary. The Essex resident who offered that generous relationship as CEO of Edgewater has moved on to another company and, while we are still able to receive support, it will come at a cost going forward. Generally, we only consult with advanced professionals when we are planning for and implementing major infrastructure changes. Within any given infrastructure platform, I am able to manage the system on a day-to-day basis.

I met with personnel from Edgewater during the week of April 10, 2017 to discuss what type of continuing support can be offered and at what cost. Our existing relationship will benefit us since the company is willing to serve us on an as-needed basis, with no need to pay a retainer or an on-call fee. In the future, advanced support will be billed to us at a rate of \$168 per hour. I recommend staying with the company, since personnel there have been involved with our infrastructure evolution since 2000, when the Town was still using non-networked PCs, and they know our needs very well.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to continuing our relationship with Edgewater on a paid basis.**

C. Personnel

No items.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

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

I attended the subject meeting on April 12, 2017. Work on the building is almost complete, with present activities including Library light fixtures, interior glass service windows and railing panels, carpeting, and bathroom flooring and partitions. The clock faces are expected to be installed during May.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Conomo Point Public Waterfront Access Improvement Project Update

Our contractor has completed demolition work on both of the project sites and has begun to shape the final layout of the parking lot site, with granite curbing work starting soon. Much of the concrete necessary for various aspects of the park site has been poured as well, with most concrete work expected to wrap up near the end of April.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) 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 that time, a fiber optic solution was being priced. After a mockup of the lighting fixture was developed by the manufacturer, it became evident that additional fibers would be necessary, taking the price of that solution to perhaps as high as \$16,000, for materials only. As such, our architect renewed a search for a LED fixture and lamp and found a "bullet" type fixture with a 35,000-hour service life (12 years at 12 hours per day) that is only slightly larger than the LED fixture head would have been. After testing using a hand-held lamp, it appears that this solution will work well. I am hopeful to have cost information by meeting time.

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

(4) 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.**

(5) 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.

(6) Change Orders, Town Hall Railing & Bulkhead, and Library Ramp Lattice (*)

Our architect and our contractor have pointed out a few minor items that the Board may wish to consider accomplishing via project change order. These are: a) replacing the old railing to the bell tower, for safety reasons, b) painting the Town Hall bulkhead to match the color of the building, and c) replacing the broken lattice on the Library ramp. I am hoping to have cost information by meeting time.

Recommendation: Board discussion of these matters if pricing information is available by meeting time.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Recent Tours of Town Hall

Our architectural firm, McGinley Kalsow & Associates, has an ongoing relationship with the City of Gloucester Building Committee, since MKA was the designer for the Gloucester City Hall tower restoration, in 2009. As such, the firm asked if the Building Committee could tour the Town Hall, which occurred on April 12, 2017. I also led the Town's own Finance Committee on a tour of the building on April 14, 2017. Both groups were very impressed with the result of the project and the quality of the workmanship.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Repairs Requested to Farnsworth Pier (*)

It has been called to our attention that the smaller of the two stone piers at Conomo Point (Farnsworth Pier) has some missing stones and significant undermining at its end. I contacted a mason who has worked on our piers in the past and he has assessed the situation. It is possible that the DPW could place large stones at the end, where the old stones have been scoured away and the mason could then fill and patch the pier. The estimated cost for this work is \$7,500.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the necessary scope and cost of repairs.

(3) Maintenance at Clammers' Beach

(*)

In the past, the Town has placed sand, above the high-water line, at Clammers' Beach. The DPW is willing to repeat that task if the Conservation Commission will approve the work relatively simply. Also, a seawall that is part of an abutting leasehold has continued to collapse, with one major piece leaning over precariously. The DPW is willing to pull that piece over and move it out of the way if we can get clearance and a waiver from the tenant, after review by Town Counsel. I did contact the tenant by telephone on April 19, 2017 about this matter and he is getting up to speed on the issue (has not been in Town yet for the season).

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the beach sand and the wall issue at Clammers' Beach.

(4) Signage at Conomo Point

(*)

The Shellfish Constable and his Assistant have suggested a need for some new signage and for some replacement signage at Conomo Point. The sign explaining the rules for launching and parking at Front Beach is missing and needs to be replaced. Also, suggestions have been made to bring the speed limit from Clammers' Beach all the way around the northern loop down to 15 m.p.h., to add Children Playing signs at Clammers' Beach and at the front fire lane, and to add a stop sign on Town Farm Road, where it meets Conomo Point Road. As usual, suggestions for new traffic signs should be reviewed by the Superintendent of Public Works and the Chief of Police before any changes are implemented.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the signage suggestions.

(5) Portable Restroom Facilities to Support New Park, Conomo Point

(*)

I have discussed with a vendor various options to provide restroom facilities out at the new Northern Conomo Point park for the coming season. Options range from expensive and very formal trailers with fully-flushing toilets, to traditionally-sized units with foot-actuated flushing, to standard units. The vendor does not recommend the trailer units, due to price and the fact that they are not suited to this type of beach/park use. The foot-actuated units provide flushing. However, the units tend to clog if the user is not attentive and would end up being worse than the standard units. He recommends two, standard units (one handicapped accessible and one not). The cost per month would be around \$350, which includes cleaning and pump out both before and after each weekend. The units could be placed at the edge of the park or perhaps in a corner of the parking lot.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the desired units and placement.

(6) Initial Exhibit for Third-Floor Town Hall Glass Display Cases (*)

To coincide with the grand re-opening of the Town Hall/Library, it would be good to find an exhibit that could be set up in the eight, glass display cases in the new, third-floor auditorium. The Essex Shipbuilding Museum and Historical Society has offered to place a portion of its “Women of Essex” exhibit in the cases as our first display. This exhibit is presently at the museum and it highlights women that have contributed in many ways in the past in the Town of Essex.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to allowing this exhibit as the first display in our new cases.**

(7) Sound System for Third-Floor Auditorium, Town Hall (*)

As the Board may recall, Mr. Barry O’Brien helped to recommend a ceiling-mounted projector and a motorized, drop-down screen for the new, third-floor auditorium at the Town Hall. Those items have been purchased and installed and Mr. O’Brien has offered to now assist with the selection of an audio system for the space. The system will have the future capability to send sound through the cable system for coverage of any live events (along with video), in addition to amplification of sound within the auditorium itself (either from electronic sources or a person’s live speech). Mr. O’Brien and I walked the site on April 20, 2017 and he will recommend an appropriate system that can be wired from above. I may have more information by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Comparison of Two Options for Memorial School Project Timing (*)

Chairman O’Donnell participated in a conference call with bankers for the Regional School District on April 12, 2017. The call focused on a couple of different project start date options, to determine whether starting earlier would lead to any appreciable cost savings. The analysis of the potential start dates did not demonstrate any substantial cost savings by starting the project earlier.

Also important to the discussion will be the addition of the future debt for the renovation or replacement of the Essex Elementary School. With Essex contemplating other borrowing, such as funding for the fire/police headquarters replacement, it will be useful to be able to compare the entire school borrowing package (existing debt for middle/high school; new, near-term debt for the Memorial School project; and eventual debt for the future Essex Elementary School project) to the Town’s existing and anticipated debt for municipal projects. To that end, I have begun to discuss adding the future Essex project to the analysis with the District’s Director of Finance and Operations.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Manchester Essex Rotary Club Meeting

I spoke at the subject meeting on April 12, 2017. The Club had contacted me to arrange for an update regarding ongoing Town projects and initiatives. I covered many ongoing and emerging topics and answered questions.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Continued Review of Draft Annual Town Meeting Motions (*)

I have revised the draft Annual Town Meeting motions per the Board's guidance at the last meeting.

Recommendation: **Continued Board review of the draft motions.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Comcast Contract & Cape Ann TV Memorandum of Understanding

At the last meeting, the Board discussed at a public hearing the terms 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). The cost for a new, fiber network with video-only capabilities (the only capabilities that Comcast has an interest in, relative to local cable programming) is approximately \$70,000.

On March 3, 2017, I had participated in the Cape Ann Regional Cable Advisory Committee meeting and the parties tentatively agreed to a contract that provides sufficient funds to Cape Ann TV to reimburse the Town for \$50,000 toward this new FMAN; with Comcast to provide a grant for the other \$20,000. The FMAN will actually be constructed to handle all of the Town's data interconnectivity needs as well (a total cost of just over \$90,000), but the Town will use other, existing funding for that additional portion of the work. Comcast must also 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. 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.

I expect to soon have: 1) a copy of the successor contract that has been approved by Town Counsel; 2) a side agreement with Comcast for the provision of \$20,000 that will be put toward the new FMAN; and 3) a Memorandum of Understanding signed by Cape Ann TV and reviewed by Town Counsel to provide the Town with \$50,000 in reimbursement toward the new FMAN over a total of three fiscal years. At the last meeting, the Board authorized the signature of these documents, outside of a meeting, once in order.

Recommendation: Board signature of all necessary documents, simultaneously, once they have all been put in final form and approved by Counsel.

M. Grants

(1) Proposed Coastal Camera System (*)

At the last meeting, the Chief of Police introduced an initiative from the Massachusetts Harbormasters Association that is proposing to several public surveillance cameras along the coastline of each community between Salisbury and the Cape Cod Canal. The Association is able to offer the project via State and Federal grant funding that it has secured. I am told that some communities are actually already operational. The Board will be hearing from the Chief and a representative of the grant's technology vendor on May 15, 2017.

In the meantime, I met with the vendor, on April 20, 2017, in order to get additional facts concerning the project:

- The bulk of the funding for the project comes from the State and Federal Governments (\$1M in FEMA maritime/port security funding, with an additional \$1M pending; and \$300,000 in matching funding from the Commonwealth, with an additional \$330,000 pending).
- The Association has selected as a vendor the Lan-Tel Corporation, which is a technology vendor available via State Contract FAC-64.
- The United States Coast Guard, while not contributing financially, is in full support of the project.

- Four fixed cameras would be placed at three locations (one location with two cameras) from the harbor out to Water Street (all on existing utility poles, with pole rights already secured). A fifth camera, with pan, tilt, and zoom capabilities, would be placed out at Conomo Point. The harbor cam (at the boat ramp) and the Water Street cams (two) would be installed as part of round 1, with the Conomo Point cam and a cam at Woodman's Beach planned for installation when the second round of funding arrives.
- The cameras would send video back to a dedicated terminal in the police station, via radio, and the video would also be available across the entire camera network via a "back-haul" system that ties all of the communities together.
- Any individual community will have real-time and archived access to video from its own cameras and will have real-time access (but not archived) to any other camera on the system.
- All equipment will carry a five-year warranty on parts and labor and it is very likely that a future grant will pick up any equipment maintenance and replacement in the future.
- Annually, the Town will likely be expected to pay about \$200 to the Association as a maintenance fee and the cost of electricity for all of the equipment will likely be less than \$200 per year.

Beyond the technical aspects of the grant, the Board may also wish to discuss this proposed system from a public policy standpoint and Town Counsel has offered some preliminary legal feedback.

Recommendation: **Preliminary Board discussion relative to this potential project.**

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Regional Dispatch Center Monthly Joint Meeting

I participated in the subject meeting on April 14, 2017 as Chairman of the Executive Advisory Board and the Finance Advisory Board. The police and fire advisory boards were also in attendance. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the Center's improved ability to continuously track dispatch performance in a number of areas and to compare to national standards. The Center is doing quite well and we expect the Center's data analytics to become even more robust in the future.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

O. Other Items

(1) Patriots' Day Holiday

The office was closed on April 17, 2017, in observance of the subject holiday.

(2) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on April 21, 2017.

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