



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of May 15, 2017

Report covers from April 29 to May 12, 2017

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Review of Request for New Signage at Conomo Point (*)

As the Board requested, I met the Superintendent of Public Works and the Chief of Police out at Conomo Point to review a variety of suggestions for new signage in the area. Topics included consideration of a one-way loop in the northern area, posting the speed limit on the northern loop at 15 m.p.h., posting of children playing signs, and posting of a stop sign at the Conomo Point road end of Town Farm Road.

Regarding the one-way loop, portions of that area are already posted as one-way. Coming toward Clammers' Beach from the southern area, traffic must already continue on the waterfront portion of Conomo Point Road and not up the hill to the left (which is the end of Middle Road). A "Do Not Enter" sign is posted there. Also, after Conomo Point Road swings around to the left to drive along the waterfront, a small access road is available to the left. If that left is taken, it crosses Middle Road but signage already prohibits a right turn on Middle Road. The Stretch of Conomo Point Road between Clammers' Beach and Front Beach (location of the front boat ramp) is NOT posted as one-way, since it is not physically possible for vehicles pulling trailers up the ramp to turn right. I have provided the Board with a birds-eye view of the area, for discussion purposes.

Regarding the speed limit posting, that seemed reasonable to the Chief and a single sign could be posted at Clammers' Beach, stepping down from 20 m.p.h. to 15 m.p.h. for the entire loop. An existing sign across from Clammers' Beach, headed back toward Town, would step the speed back up to 20 m.p.h.

Regarding the children playing signs, it appears as if one will work at Clammers' Beach. However, out front at the fire lane property, the area is shallow to ledge and getting a post in would be difficult. Even if this can be accomplished, the sign would definitely detract from the view in that area.

Finally, regarding the stop sign, the Superintendent of Public Works can set one at that corner, so long as the area is not too shallow to ledge.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Declaration of Utility Pole Rights to National Grid and Verizon (*)

As the Board is aware, the successor cable franchise agreement with Comcast will provide funding for a fiber optic municipal area network (FMAN) that will replace our present virtual private network system for interconnection of Town buildings. In order to be prepared to actually build the network after an appropriation is hopefully obtained from Town Meeting in the fall, it is necessary to provide notice to both Verizon and National Grid regarding the Town's intention to exercise its municipal rights on the existing utility poles. Pole location petitions approved by the Town in the past to allow the utility place or upgrade poles within the Town's roadway right of ways reserved a place on each pole for future municipal use. I have worked with Town Counsel regarding a letter that may be sent to both utilities (all poles in Essex are jointly-owned) notifying them of this near-term intention.

Recommendation: **Board signature of the notification letter.**

(2) Purchase of Hardware and Software for Redundant Live Instance of Servers

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town should purchase a new physical server that will be capable of hosting live instances of all four virtual servers that we now utilize from the City of Melrose datacenter. The City does back up all of the servers but, not in a live-instance sense (just archival). Personnel from Melrose visited Essex on May 4, 2017 to tour our facilities and they have actually recommended that the new server be housed in Essex, rather than at the Melrose backup site (where the archival backup presently resides).

While housing the new machine at the Melrose backup site would work, the new server can actually become the primary host for our virtual machines and the Melrose virtual machines can become the live instance backup site. This will allow for better performance on our end, due to the elimination the hop to Melrose as our primary connection. That link will remain in place, since it will need to continuously feed the backup live instance and it would be utilized immediately if something happened to the new primary live instance in Essex. Further, the archival backup site in Melrose would remain in place as safeguard to store an image of the backup live instance. Presently, Melrose personnel are assisting with the specification of the necessary hardware and software.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Replacement of Redundant Hard Drive, Journaling Server

We presently use a re-purposed old server to journal all of the Town's e-mail traffic as an extra level of backup. The virtual servers in Melrose contain primary copies and backups reside at Melrose's backup site, in an archival format. Recently, one of the redundant hard drives in the journaling server failed.

Fortunately, we kept another old server of the same generation for parts and I was easily able to swap out the failed drive for the server to automatically rebuild from the surviving drive due to the server's RAID configuration.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – ½ hour.

C. Personnel

No items.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Conomo Pt. Waterfront Access Improvement Project Update/Changes (*)

The project is moving along well and most concrete work has been completed. Granite curbing has been installed at the parking lot site and framing for the new, waterfront deck will begin soon. Also, I have worked with our designer to specify and have placed an order for the steel-framed wooden benches that will be brought in separately and bolted down to the new deck. The Board had identified the funding for and had approved of these benches in the past. The lead time for the benches is such that they will be installed later this summer, after the park is opened. Lead time is also a factor for the steel railing at the park. As such, our contractor will put up a temporary, wooden railing (at no added cost) until the steel railing can be installed (allowing the park to open for the Memorial Day Weekend).

We have had inquiries regarding whether smaller benches could be donated and also placed at the park. It is possible that commemorative benches would fit well along the semi-circular edge of the grassy area, nearest the street. Benches may form a nice border there and could face out toward the water.

Further, given that the project scope had been reduced, the fifty-foot-long ramp into the water was removed from the design and is not part of the project. It may be possible to instead use project contingency to have a set of wide, removable stairs constructed or a ramp constructed/purchased. I could work with the contractor and the Conservation Agent to arrive at a solution that meets our permit and our budget. By meeting time, I will also know about whether our structural engineer's desired specification for the gangway attachment at the park site will represent the need for a change order or not.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Town Hall/Library Renovation Project Construction Meetings

I attended the subject meetings on May 3 and May 10, 2017. The project is substantially complete with the installation of the four clock faces and the building's restored weathervane. The building's new elevator passed the State

elevator inspection and test on May 10, 2017 and the custom, refurbished furniture will be delivered starting May 18. Chairs for the third-floor meeting hall will be delivered on May 15, 2017 and our alarm vendor installed the panic alarm buttons and panel on May 10, 2017. We expect to receive a temporary certificate of occupancy that will allow us to move in on schedule (commencing May 22, 2017). The permanent certificate of occupancy will follow after certain final punch-list elements are completed and code compliance issues are sorted out with our inspectors and our architect.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(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, but must be considered with respect to any final project code compliance costs before a decision is made.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the lighting change order, if lighting pricing and final code compliance costs are 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 was known (now known to be \$12,273). While we do have pricing for these items, costs need to be considered in light of any final project code compliance costs before a decision is made.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to these items, if final code compliance costs are available by meeting time.**

(5) 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) reinforcing 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. Cost proposals may be available by meeting time, but must be considered with respect to any final project code compliance costs before a decision is made.

Recommendation: **Board discussion of these matters if pricing and final code compliances cost information is available by meeting time.**

(6) Specifications for Centennial Grove Management Master Plan (*)

The recent Annual Town Meeting approved \$35,000 in funding for the development of a Master Plan for the Centennial Grove. The Plan is intended to review and recommend various management options for the area, as well as to point toward how future infrastructure improvements may assist with the implementation of chosen options. The Selectmen have expressed interest in working with the Finance Committee relative to developing the specifications that will be utilized to hire a firm to write the plan.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to development of specifications for the Master Plan.

(7) Order for Replacement Generator, Essex Senior Center (*)

Prior to the Annual Town Meeting, I had solicited three quotes for the provision of a new generator for the Senior Center. We received two quotes back and FM Generator was the lowest responsive and responsible offeror, at \$16,700.

Recommendation: Approval of order to FM Generator for removal of old unit, delivery/placement of new unit, and initial startup and testing. Reconnection of electrical and gas services will be by others.

(8) Order for Replacement of Town Hall Copier (*)

The recent Annual Town Meeting appropriated funds for the replacement of the main copy machine for Town Hall. I have worked with a vendor on the State Contract to specify a replacement machine and the plan would be to move back to Town Hall with the old machine and have the new machine delivered there later (to avoid any possible damage in a non-vendor move). The cost for the new machine, with an approximately \$400 allowance for trade-in of the old unit, will be \$7,000 and it will have a color capability (old machine is just black and white). Color printing will be password protected and will only be used under very specific circumstances. Regarding the ongoing maintenance contract, the black and white printing fee will actually be decreasing by 25%, which will offset the limited times where color jobs are run.

Recommendation: Board vote to approve the order for the new copier, including the trade-in of the old copier.

(9) Contract for Completion of Wellness Room, Senior Center (*)

At the recent Annual Town Meeting, funding was approved for the completion of the Wellness Room in the Senior Center. The Council on Aging is obtaining a quote from a sole proprietor who has performed excellent work in the building in the past.

Recommendation: Board vote to approve the contract for this completion work, if the quotation is available by meeting time.

(10) Solicitation of Quotations, Promotion of Town Resources and Attractions (*)

The fiscal year 2018 operating budget contains a line item in the amount of \$23,500 for the promotion of Town resources and attractions. Each year, the Board has solicited quotations from the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, the Essex Merchants' Group, and the North of Boston Visitors and Convention Bureau. The Merchants' Group is the only organization that has ever provided a quotation and is the holder of the expiring contract.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization to solicit quotations for fiscal year 2018.**

(11) Third-Party Ambulance Billing Agreement Renewal (*)

The third-part ambulance billing contract is considered on an annual basis. Our present vendor, Comstar, has provided excellent service and has developed a successor agreement for fiscal year 2018.

***Recommendation:* Signature of the successor agreement with Comstar for fiscal year 2018 (effective July 1, 2017).**

(12) Designer Selection Board Evaluation Form, McGinley Kalsow & Assoc.

As the Board may recall, I had filed the subject form at the conclusion of the design phase of the Town Hall/Library renovation project. The Town is also required to file the form upon substantial completion of the project. Now that we have reached substantial completion, I have completed the form and, as was generally the case with the first filing, comments are very positive concerning our architectural firm, McGinley Kalsow & Associates. I will submit the form to the State Designer Selection Board upon receipt of the certificate of occupancy for the renovated building and after coordination with our Project Manager.

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

(13) DCAMM Evaluation Form, Campbell Construction Group, LLC

Similar to the evaluation of the project designer, discussed above, it is necessary for the Town, through its Project Manager, to evaluate the performance of our project contractor for the Town Hall/Library renovation project. Both the Project Manager and a representative of the Town are required to sign the evaluation form. I plan to coordinate this review with our Project Manager in the near future so that the necessary evaluation can be submitted to the State. Generally, I expect that our contractor will receive high marks for the work that has been completed.

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

E. Insurance

(1) Pothole Log for the Month of April

I recently obtained the pothole log for the month of April, 2017 from the Department of Public Works. One pothole was reported and was filled the same day.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Stone for Parking at 4-8 Conomo Lane (*)

Now that Town Meeting has transferred the properties at 4 and 8 Conomo Lane to the category of General Municipal Use, it is possible to place crushed stone in the area that was once occupied by two houses and a garage. The DPW has already begun this process.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Possible Fall Development of Conomo Point Road Shoulder Parking (*)

With the new park nearing completion at Northern Conomo Point, it is possible that use of the area by residents will increase, translating to a larger parking need. The project itself included a new parking lot near the park that can accommodate 16 vehicles. Also, the area once occupied by two houses and a garage on Conomo Lane will soon have crushed stone put in place, creating parking for approximately 20 more vehicles. After use patterns are established this summer, it is possible that even more parking will be necessary. To that end, when the Southern Conomo Point Subdivision was approved, the right of way width of the road was set at 50 feet. The traveled road surface is much narrower than that, which will make the addition of shoulder parking possible. The area in question is not near wetlands and funds were set aside in the past as part of other road work that was completed at the Point.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the timing and extent of additional parking along Conomo Point Road in the southern area.**

(3) Eventual Public Access Improvements at 1 Robbins Island Road (*)

Now that Town Meeting has transferred the property at 1 Robbins Island Road to the category of General Municipal Use, it is possible to begin working toward some improvements that will help transform the site into a scenic overlook and picnic area. The site is presently split into two levels by an old retaining wall that is beginning to fail. It would be useful to understand the Board's ideas for the site, so that the appropriate design and/or permitting steps may be initiated, subject to available funding.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to what is envisioned at the site.**

(4) Possible Placement of Sand at Clammers' Beach

I have learned from the Conservation Agent that an "Abbreviated Notice of Intent" will be necessary to permit the placement of sand at Clammers' Beach. As such, I completed a DEP Form WPA4, along with a site plan, and provided that application to the Commission for review. The matter will be taken up by the Commission on June 6, 2017 and I will be in attendance.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(5) Completion of Utility Planning for Move Back to 30 Martin Street

As of May 1, 2017, I have made all necessary arrangements for the cancellation of our utilities at the temporary facilities (including electric, heating oil, and Internet). Final electrical reads will occur on May 31, 2017 and meters will go back into the names of the property owners. Internet service and oil service will be discontinued at that time as well. Our landlord will provide us with a final gas bill after we have moved out. As the Board may recall, telephone service is now provided for the Town office via cloud-based voice over IP and, as such, most Town office lines will entail simply moving the phones and plugging them into the network at Town Hall. Other lines, such as fax lines and Library lines, are set up for dual service through the moving period and will drop off at the temporary locations as of May 31, 2017. Of course, accounts for water, sewer, electric, gas, and Internet are already in place at 30 Martin Street, and will continue as such.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(6) Production of Visual Renderings for Fire/Police Building Options (*)

The recent Annual Town Meeting appropriated \$10,000 for the production of visual renderings that will assist Town officials to illustrate to residents how two options for new or renovated buildings will impact aesthetics related to Memorial Park and the historic Town Hall. One option would be to demolish the existing public safety building (requiring some solution for temporary quarters) and building a larger facility in that general area, with some expansion of the footprint and relocation of the road. The other option would be to renovate the existing building for use as a police-only facility, with a new fire station to be constructed on the adjacent corner of Shepard Memorial Drive. Once a vendor is selected and the renderings are complete, public forums can be scheduled to review both visual impact and cost considerations.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to choosing an appropriate vendor.**

(7) Process for Purchase of Street Lights from National Grid (*)

Now that the Town Meeting has appropriated funds for the purchase of all public street lights from National Grid, the Board can consider commencing with the process. The next step would be to send a letter to National Grid expressing the intent of the Town to purchase the lights. Once the street lighting group at National Grid receives the letter, the company will run a new inventory, review it, provide a final purchasing price, and provide draft closing documents to the Town. I have prepared a letter for the Board's signature.

Recommendation: **Board signature of the letter of intent.**

(8) Possible License for Use of Centennial Grove Cottage Area (*)

Local educational institutions (secondary and post-secondary) may have an interest in utilizing the cottage and its surrounding area at the Centennial Grove for rowing programs and other student programs. Presently, only an initial inquiry has been made, but that interest is worth exploring, since a relationship could lead to needed repairs and ongoing maintenance without cost to the Town.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the use of the Grove cottage area.**

(9) Power Line-Related Tree Work to Impact Centennial Grove Road Area (*)

A much-needed power line and pole replacement project will be implemented by National Grid soon along Centennial Grove Road. The current infrastructure there is very old and prone to failure. This upgrade will greatly improve reliability for residents as well as our own Water Filtration Plant. Tree work in the area will be disruptive to traffic and may require complete road closure. As such, I have begun to work with National Grid and the Superintendent of Public Works to plan for notifications, etc. The work will impact area residents, Town operations, the use of the Grove and the Field of Dreams, and, unless conducted soon, the YMCA summer camp. I am presently waiting to hear back from National Grid's Forestry Supervisor for the North Shore relative to project duration, impact, and the utility's notification plan.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Abatement of Uncollectible Conomo Point Taxes (*)

Now that the Annual Town Meeting has funded the Assessors' Overlay Account sufficiently to abate uncollectible taxes that accrued after the expiration of certain Conomo Point leases, it is necessary for the Selectmen to request the Assessors to process the abatements, pursuant to MGL Chapter 59, Section 72A.

Recommendation: **Board vote to request the abatements from the Board of Assessors.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Mass in Motion – Cape Ann Update Meeting

I attended the subject meeting in Gloucester on May 3, 2017. The meeting featured an update with respect to activities that the Mass in Motion grant has undertaken since the grant's inception. The grant involves all four Cape Ann communities and is aimed at improving mobility and overall healthy food choices in our region. The Mass in Motion program at the State level has a new director and the focus of the various regional programs will shift in response to new goals. Over the coming year, the program will delve into the root causes of lack of mobility and healthy food choices and participants will work to develop a new workplan to address problems from a cause and effect point of view.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Meeting with Senior Care Personnel

I met with SeniorCare Executive Director Scott Trenti and SeniorCare Director of Community Programs & Planner Linnea Hagberg on May 10, 2017. SeniorCare is embarking upon a plan that will strive to make communities in its service area, including all four Cape Ann communities, "aging and dementia-friendly" communities. The fastest-growing sector of our population is the senior sector and, with the increase in this sector comes an increase in challenges related to aging. To that end, Ms. Hagberg will visit the Board's meeting on June 5, 2017 to review SeniorCare's plan to apply for grant funding in this area and to solicit a future letter of support from the Board.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Special Legislation to Allow Retired Officers to Work Details (*)

The recent Annual Town Meeting authorized the Selectmen to petition the State Legislature for a Special Act that would allow retired Essex police officers to

work police details. Town Counsel has since assisted with the preparation of a letter from the Board to our legislators that will begin the process.

Recommendation: Board vote to petition the legislature using the correspondence developed by Town Counsel.

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

(1) Emergency Management Performance Grant (*)

The Essex Fire Department applied for the subject grant to assist with the acquisition and installation of a mobile data terminal and wireless modem in the Department's primary response vehicle. We have learned that the grant has been awarded, in the amount of \$3,240 and the State requires the Board's written authorization to proceed, before an official contract may be forwarded for signature. The Department will be contributing \$2,460 from its own budget as well.

Recommendation: Board approval of the EMPG award.

(2) Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program (*)

From the MVP Grant announcement:

Municipalities who wish to receive designation from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) as a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program municipality. Designation will be given to municipalities who complete the Community Resilience Building Workshop process and associated deliverables. Financial assistance will be provided through this opportunity to allow municipalities to pay for technical assistance to complete assessments and planning using the Community Resilience Building workshop guide (CRB). Municipalities who complete this process and develop a final report will be designated as a "MVP Community," which may lead to increased standing in future funding opportunities and signify the commitment of this municipality to building resiliency and preparing for climate change. Communities who have already completed the process of assessing vulnerability and planning for climate change may also receive the designation by applying to the program for EEA's review.

Attaining the MVP designation through the State will allow the Town to be more competitive regarding future funding opportunities and will complement the Town's existing Community Compact in this area. It is likely that the work already done in Essex will qualify the Town for MVP status.

Recommendation: **Board approval of an application seeking MVP status.**

(3) Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant Program

Ms. Lisa Cheney, Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) Coordinator for our region, is working on grant funding that will benefit students in the Manchester Essex Regional School District and young patrons of the Essex Library. CFCE is a State program that is intended to enrich the early childhood experience of children in the Commonwealth. Ms. Cheney offered the following summary of the program's offerings:

"We serve families with children ages 0-8 and the CFCE grant is held by the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District. We provide the following in our community [and hope to soon provide in Essex]:

1. Free playgroups, parent workshops, and special events in the community.
2. Free screenings and referrals to high quality programs to make sure that every child receives the support they need to be ready for school.
3. Resource hub for parents and early childhood providers.
4. Assist parents in finding appropriate child care.
5. Provide Early Literacy, Social-Emotional Learning, and Child Development sources and information throughout the community.
6. Provide the Countdown To Kindergarten calendar that is distributed to all students entering school in Hamilton, Wenham, Manchester & Essex. We have provided the calendar in Essex for the past 3 years even though we only received funding to support Manchester with programs. We felt strongly that all children attending the MERSD should receive the transition support calendar, not just families living in Manchester.
7. We have an advisory council that is made up of educators, town representatives, museums, libraries, and other stakeholders and we meet monthly to plan events and guide our work in such a way that we support all families in our area."

CFCE was formerly provided to Essex residents via the Birth-to-Three Center in Ipswich and will hopefully now be provided directly in Town by Ms. Cheney's organization. Ms. Cheney visited me during the week of May 1, 2017 and I

provided her with a signature on a register of support that includes many community sectors.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Hazard Mitigation Plan Revision/Renewal Grant (*)

We have been informed by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) that the Town's application for the revision and renewal of the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan has been funded. The grant will provide \$13,500 and the Town has already put aside \$4,500 to work with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) over the next two fiscal years relative to the revision (these plans require renewal every five years and the Town's plan was first developed in 2012). It is likely that we will have a grant contract from the State by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board approval of the contract with the State for our plan revision and renewal, if available by meeting time; or authorization of the Chairman to sign outside a meeting.**

(5) MA Coastal Zone Management Community Coastal Resilience Grant (*)

As the Board is aware, Essex was the lead agency on a recent regional approach to increasing awareness concerning the predicted effects of sea level rise and climate change in our area. That work was funded by the Community Coastal Resilience Grant Program offered through the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management and one of our partners, the National Wildlife Federation, has proposed a second round of funding through the program. In this round, the effort would focus on emergency planning related to coastal climate change (via the Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team), interpretive signage along the causeway, and a Coastal Hazards Atlas for the Great Marsh. The grant application is due in advance of the next Board meeting.

Recommendation: **Board vote to authorize the Chairman to sign any necessary grant application documents provided that the Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team agrees with the approach.**

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.