



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of June 5, 2017

Report covers from May 13 to June 2, 2017

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Abatement of Uncollectible Conomo Point Taxes by Assessors

The Board took a vote at the last meeting to request the Assessors to abate certain uncollectible taxes associated with past leaseholds at Conomo Point. I provided the Board's request to the Assessors' Office immediately after the last meeting and all abatements have since been processed.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Posting of New Signage at Conomo Point

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that a new stop sign should be posted at the junction of Town Farm Road and Conomo Point Road. Also, the Board asked for a 15 m.p.h. sign and a Children Playing sign at Clammers' Beach (all after the situation was reviewed by the DPW Superintendent and the Police Chief). Also, now that two new parking lots are open (one at 4-8 Conomo Lane and one at 138 Conomo Point Road), the Superintendent is arranging for parking signs. At Conomo Lane, a "Resident Sticker Parking Only" sign will be placed. At the waterfront lot, the sign will also note that trailers are not allowed in that lot.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Potential Reconstitution of the Essex Youth Commission (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the recent survey that generated a list of residents who were willing to volunteer for town boards should be consulted concerning the potential reconstitution of the Youth Commission. I found that ten residents had expressed interest in youth issues and could start right away. One of the ten has already begun service with another board, leaving nine possible candidates from the survey. The Commission is appointed by the Selectmen and may range in the number of members from three to twenty-one. Once appointed, the Commission can hire and manage its own staff.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(4) Finance Committee Input Concerning Grove Master Plan Scope (*)

The Finance Committee met on May 23, 2017 to discuss what should be included in the scope of work for a consultant to write a Master Plan for the Centennial Grove. The Committee is very interested in keeping the Plan mostly focused on options for management, with an eye toward future changes on the ground, rather

than just a plan for facility improvements. The Committee has offered the following focus points:

- Usage / management plan (as opposed to a focus on large capital improvements and buildings).
- Include income / monetization, generated with little or no cost to town.
- Include programming strategy that interacts with / engages the new Youth Director and library programming.
- Ongoing collaboration of relevant committees.
- Include usage / plan for pavilion and cottage.
- Include strategy around Camp Dory.
- Suggest all stakeholder review earlier RFP and discuss results / history.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Purchase of Physical Server to Provide Redundant Live Computing Instance

As the Board is aware, I have been working with personnel in the City of Melrose datacenter to procure a new physical server that will allow the Town to have both a primary and a backup live instance of each of our virtual servers. Presently, while we do have a full archival backup of all server content, a catastrophe in Melrose would require time to retrieve the archival data and incorporate into a new physical server. I have worked with a vendor on the State Contract that Melrose commonly works with and Melrose personnel helped me to specify the appropriate hardware and software on a gross level. After the vendor provided exact technical specifications, Melrose personnel helped me to arrive at a final specification and the order for the necessary server has been placed, with a software order to follow soon.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Relocation of All Computers and VOIP Phones to Renovated Town Hall

With the Town Hall renovation completed, all personnel in Town Hall moved back into the building during the week of May 22, 2017. I moved each computer and phone to the renovated building and configured each system to work on the improved networks that were installed as part of the project. All systems are working well.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 9 hours.

(3) Wiring for State Voter Registration Computer System

During June, a State vendor will arrange for the move of a T-1 line associated with the State voter registration system (still at the temporary Town Hall) back to the renovated building. In preparation for the move, I installed a run of category 5 network cable between where the new Verizon interface will be installed (in basement) and the Town Clerk's office. The Clerk has retrieved the actual computer system and it will be connected to the new T-1 line as soon as that line is live. The Clerk will utilize a browser-based workaround provided by the State, in the meantime.

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

(4) Installation/Configuration of New Projector, Town Hall Auditorium

Our project contractor had installed the motorized projection screen and the projector ceiling mount to allow for the use of a new projector in the new Town Hall auditorium. Recently, I affixed the projector to the mount and configured the projector for use with our screen and room dimensions. The projector is fully operational and a laptop can be placed on the main table on the auditorium and connected to the projector using wiring that is available in the floor, under the table.

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

C. Personnel

(1) Annual Circulation and Acknowledgement of Town Policies

Each year, by July 30, all elected and appointed municipal employees, whether paid or unpaid, are required to review and acknowledge a variety of Town personnel policies. To that end, I have sent an e-mail to all department heads and all board/committee chairs seeking signed policy acknowledgement forms from all municipal employees. Copies of the acknowledgement form will also be directly sent to all paid employees with upcoming paychecks, as a reminder. All policies, along with the acknowledgement form, may be found at the Town website homepage under the "Town Policies" link, and not all policies apply to all personnel. Certain personnel in the Water and Sewer Departments must also review and acknowledge the Town's "Red Flags Policy", which is aimed at keeping personal data in billing accounts secure. Further, hard copies of the Town's Sexual Harassment Policy and Discriminatory Harassment Policy will be distributed with employee paychecks in the near future.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Informal Staff Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting in the Selectmen's Conference Room on June 1, 2017. The meeting featured a discussion regarding many of the features of the

renovated Town Hall and how best to utilize and operate things. Each department head also provided general updates to the group.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Update on Possible Student Community Service Roadside Trash Pickup (*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked that I investigate how other communities handle school students picking up roadside trash for community service hours. I have learned that most jurisdictions require the student participants to sign a hold-harmless form, waiving any liability. Our insurer agrees with this course of action and provided some sample forms for the Board's review. I was not able to determine that any specific environmental stewardship organization's template is in use in our area.

In discussing this potential offering with the High School Principal, I have learned that students could possibly serve in this way in conjunction with the School District's Green Team, but only if the Team decides to take that project on. A Green Team project would be self-contained, with supervision provided by the District. If individual students are to serve without participation by the Green Team, the Town would have to provide supervision, which would be a challenge, due to our small staff, working hours, and overtime considerations.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Delivery of Furniture to Renovated Town Hall/Library

American Office Furniture began delivering the custom, refurbished office furniture to the Town office and to the Library at 30 Martin Street on May 18, 2017. The company was the successful bidder on a procurement offering that was undertaken in the fall of 2016. Also, via the State Contract, Staples delivered the audience seating for the new, third-floor meeting space on May 15, 2017. The office furniture was fully in place in time for employees to begin returning to the building as of May 22, 2017. Portions of the Library furniture were procured as built-in elements as part of the construction project and some new Library shelving was procured separately, under a joint purchase contract.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Moving Back to 30 Martin Street from Temporary Quarters

The process for moving back into the renovated building at 30 Martin Street began on May 22, 2017 when each occupant of the Town offices sequentially brought their immediate office belongings into their new quarters. I assisted each employee with the breakdown and then set up and configuration of VOIP phones and computer equipment. Employee migration was complete by May 23, 2017

and our moving contractor moved all of the heavy items such as storage tubs and filing cabinets back into the building on May 24 and May 25, 2017. We were able to duplicate the process used when we left the building in 2016 and all offices were open to the public during the entire transition. The Library also began the moving process on May 22, 2017 and closed for a time in order to get organized in the new space. Temporary furniture used at the temporary Town Hall was picked up by other communities for municipal use.

Two storage pods have been in place at 30 Martin Street since we moved out. One pod contained the contents of the Town Hall basement (mostly archived files in storage tubs) and the other pod contained all of the old office furniture that was in decent condition. The Department of Public Works emptied the basement storage pod and the basement archive shelving system is back in place and organized (the Town Clerk and I supervised the sorting of file boxes). After Town Hall employees reviewed the contents of the furniture storage pod and other departments had a chance to take any items for official use, items were offered to other municipalities, leaving just several pieces that were heavily used and declared junk.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Final Town Hall/Library Renovation Project Construction Meeting

I attended the final project meeting on May 17, 2017 (coinciding with the contractor's completion deadline). The project is now complete with the exception of some final punch list tasks. The Town received the temporary certificate of occupancy from the Building Inspector on May 15, 2017, after various other inspectors had completed their inspections and had signed the building permit field card. A final certificate of occupancy for the building will be obtained after several minor code compliance items are completed (see next item). It is also possible that the Building Inspector will want to see some other work done, which would be over and above any applicable codes. If this is the case, additional funding will need to be considered in the future, since our designers did not factor in any work that goes beyond applicable codes.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Consideration of Miscellaneous Final Change Orders, Town Hall/Library (*)

We are in receipt of most of the pricing we requested for various final Town Hall and Library renovation tasks that require change orders. The list of items includes:

- Various code-compliance tasks, mostly involving the placement of emergency exit signs, cost – *should be available by meeting time*
- Stabilize the ladder to the belfry, cost - \$1,800.

- Additional power outlets and data drops in Library, cost - *should be available by meeting time*
- Upgrade Library exterior lighting, cost - *should be available by meeting time*
- Replace Library ramp lattice, cost - \$3,916.
- Apply galvanic paint to galvanized vent pipe in bell tower, cost - \$2,300.
- Paint basement bulkhead to match siding, cost - \$970.
- True-up Town Hall front light posts, cost - \$6,500 – recommend applying for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds in the future.
- Clean the historic safe doors that are on display in the Town Hall first-floor foyer, cost - \$5,500 – recommend applying for CPA funds in the future.
- Add a sail to a ship on the weathervane to match historic photo, cost - \$11,445. If this is to be pursued, CPA funds would be appropriate.

Total remaining funds in the project are \$8,627.01, with the possibility of a small increase after final bills arrive from our various moving companies, should those bills come in lower than expected.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to choosing the final tasks that should be performed with the remaining available funds.**

(5) Roadway Resurfacing Bid Process

The Town’s bid package for the resurfacing of Pond Street and Andrews Street using Chapter 90 highway funds from the State was made available to qualified bidders as of May 17, 2017. The project was advertised in the local paper, on Town bulletin boards, in the Central Register, and on the State procurement site known as CommBuys. Bids are due on June 14, 2017 and a contract with the successful bidder will be prepared for the Board of Public Works and for the Selectmen to sign.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(6) Contract for the Promotion of Town Resources and Attractions (*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked that I solicit quotations for the subject contract from the Essex Merchants’ Group, the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, and the North of Boston Visitor and Convention Bureau. Quotations were due on June 1, 2017 and we received a single quotation, from the Essex Merchants’ Group. The proposal will require the entire \$23,500 in available funding.

***Recommendation:* Board award of the contract for the promotion of Town resources and attractions to the Essex Merchants’ Group.**

(7) Provision of the Senior Center Generator

The new generator for the Senior Center was ordered shortly after the last meeting and we are presently waiting for the vendor to fulfill the order and deliver the unit, which includes haul-away and disposal of the old unit. It is likely that the unit will be delivered while I am away on an upcoming vacation and I will attend to the actual hookup and startup of the unit when I return.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(8) Delivery of New Copier

The new Town Hall copier arrived on May 30, 2017. I assisted the delivery technician to configure the machine for printing and scanning on our network.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(9) Change Order Proposal for Removable Water Access Stairs (*)

As discussed at the last meeting, the Board was in favor of getting pricing on a set of wide-treaded, removable stairs that will serve to convey people from the street to the water next to the new park out at northern Conomo Point. I reviewed the matter with the Conservation Agent and pointed out that we did have a permit for a ramp to occupy that space anyway, and he agreed. The contractor has indicated that the stairs can be constructed and set in place, with counterweights to prevent floating at high tidal stages. I expect to have a price by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the potential issuance of the water access stairs change order.**

(10) Replacement of Section of Fire Station Engine Room Floor

The work to replace a section of the upper engine room floor at the Fire Station will commence on June 12, 2017. The DPW will demolish the undermined section of the old floor and prepare the sub-base over a three-day period. As of June 15, the concrete contractor will prepare and pour the new slab. The Fire Department has a plan to house the apparatus during that week and the project is being coordinated by Assistant Superintendent of Public Work Michael Galli.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Safety Committee Meeting

The next Safety Committee meeting will be held on June 29, 2017. I have placed a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Planting of Evergreen on the Grounds of the Town Hall (*)

As the Board may recall, both of the large spruce trees that were in front of the Town Hall were removed as part of the renovation project. One of the trees was used in the past as the Town's "memory tree" each holiday season. While it is possible to plant a new tree on the Town Hall grounds (likely a balsam fir), the Essex Holiday Festival organizers (a private group) have expressed that the use of a cut tree by the Fire Station (as was the case last season while the Town Hall grounds were not available) was also an acceptable practice. I will have more information from the Fire Chief and the organizers by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the potential tree replacement.**

(3) Opening of Riverfront Park at Conomo Point

The waterfront deck portion of the new, waterfront park at Conomo Point was officially open for public use for the Memorial Day weekend. As reported previously, the long, continuous bench and the steel railing for the new deck will be installed later in the season (temporary wood railing will be removed). After a long permitting process toward the end of 2016 and a bid process that required two rounds of bidding in early 2017, the project came together rapidly starting in March. Our contractor and our DPW are working together to open the associated parking area and the remaining work at the waterfront park is progressing rapidly.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Seasonal Startup of Irrigation System at Field of Dreams

The irrigation system for the Field of Dreams was made operational for the season after I made arrangement for the startup with our irrigation contractor on May 31, 2017. The process went smoothly, without the need for any major repairs.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(5) Reaction from Verizon/National Grid Concerning Fiber Optic Network (*)

As the Board may recall, both Verizon and National Grid had been informed in writing about the Town's intention to exercise its rights to hang fiber optic cable on these utilities' jointly-owned poles, for a new fiber optic municipal area network (FMAN). Thus far, we have heard back from Verizon and I have been told that, contrary to original discussions, the Town will NOT be charged for pre- or post-construction surveys or make-ready costs. Verizon does want the Town to complete a customer profile and will eventually want the Town to enter into a contract, which needs review by Town Counsel. It is possible that I will also have feedback from National Grid by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(6) Construction of Railings on First Section of Town Landing Pier

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that railings should be added to the first wooden section of Town pier leading to the gangway and floats in the Essex Harbor. To that end, Selectman O'Donnell helped to research all applicable codes and Selectman Spinney offered to donate the necessary materials. A local contractor, Dexter Doane, has offered to donate the necessary labor.

Recommendation: Board discussion on next steps, as per the posted agenda.

(8) 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.**

(9) Potential License to Use Centennial Grove for Rowing Programs (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that a potential license or licenses should be explored with Gordon College, Endicott College, and the Pingree School relative to use of the cottage section of the Centennial Grove for those schools' rowing programs. The Town actually did issue a license to Endicott back in 2005 for a more limited presence at the Grove and I provided that to the school representatives as an example.

Presently, it is my understanding that all three schools are still very interested and are willing to entertain various benefits to the Town in exchange for a non-exclusive license (the only option available presently, since Town Meeting action is required for anything more durable). Benefits could include the schools' maintenance of that part of the property, repairs to buildings, or cash donations. For example, since the Town just paid over \$3,000 for hazard tree work - see item 11, below - those funds could be replenished via terms of a license.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to whether a license will be offered and whether the concept of a more durable instrument should be**

explored at the Fall Town Meeting. Even for a license, additional procurement steps may still need to be taken.

(10) Refinishing of Town Meeting Podium

An old oak podium has been stored in Town Hall for many decades. The wood is in great shape but the finish needs to be restored and some components need to be tightened. The company that we used for the provision of our refurbished furniture was able to take the piece to the shop and is refinishing it, including the additional of caster wheels (work will be paid for using the Town Hall furnishings budget).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(11) Hazard Tree Work at Centennial Grove

Selectman Spinney noticed a large, hazard pine tree at the Centennial Grove, near a structure. Tree Warden and Superintendent of Public Works Paul Goodwin reviewed the tree and agreed that it was an imminent hazard. Mr. Goodwin worked with a tree contractor to review trees in the area and two additional pine trees and two cherry trees also posed imminent hazards. As such, between the DPW's tree budget and the Centennial Grove maintenance budget, all of the hazard trees were taken down and the stumps were ground.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Budget Development Process Meeting w/ School and Manchester Officials (*)

I attended the subject meeting along with the Board, members of the Essex and Manchester finance committees, the Manchester Board of Selectmen, and other officials on May 30, 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how the process for developing each new School District operating budget may be improved in future years. Major points of discussion included:

- Should the timing of the annual town meeting in one or both towns be adjusted to better coincide?
- Several budgetary factors are not well-known until late in the budget process, such as State aid for the District and the towns, health insurance for the District, and final enrollment.
- Is there a better way to disseminate information that arises from informal meetings that include representatives of all three entities on an approximately monthly basis?
- Should the Regional Agreement be modified to require earlier public hearing dates?

- Long-range projections for both capital and operating budgets for all three entities should be updated and reviewed by all parties early in the cycle each year.
- The two hearings that are presently required by the Regional Agreement seem to be viewed as pro-forma and it is possible that the three entities could agree to other forums to supplement the hearings in different ways that may allow more people to participate in the process.
- The District should work out a better interface with each of the two finance committees, which may include individual meetings or meetings with both committees.
- Each new budget cycle should include a progression of elements from “projections” to “preliminary figures” to the “final budget”. This type of progression may provide a better framework for engaging all parties throughout the process.
- One possible model would be: a) large, joint meeting in September, b) tentative budget hearing per the Regional Agreement in December, c) joint meetings of the finance committees in January, and d) the final budget hearing per the Regional Agreement in February.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Regional Dispatch Center Monthly Meeting

I attended the subject meeting as Chairman of the Executive Advisory Board on May 18, 2017. The meeting featured a discussion regarding plans by the Town of Amesbury to withdraw from the Center over a two-year period and plans for the Center to replace its present computer-aided-dispatch (CAD) and records management system (RMS), which are now both Spillman produces, with products from another vendor, IMC. The Sheriff and the Director will be meeting with officials in Manchester regarding Manchester potentially joining the center in 2018.

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 Essex Police Officers to Work Details

The Board's petition to the Massachusetts Legislature was submitted shortly after the last meeting. Senator Tarr's staff has contacted the Town to indicate that the process has begun and State officials will be in touch as necessary.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Deposition with Respect to City of Beverly Lawsuit

I was deposed by attorneys for the City of Beverly in Boston on May 16, 2017 (represented by Special Counsel James Lampke). The City and the Sheriff's Office are involved in litigation regarding whether the City should have to pay assessments relative to the Regional Dispatch Center pursuant to the Intermunicipal Agreement governing the Center after an abrupt announcement that the City would not be cutting over, back in 2015. I became Chairman of the Finance Advisory Board and the Executive Board for the Center just after that time.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

M. Grants

(1) Provision of Development Grant from Regional Dispatch Center (*)

The Regional Dispatch Center received a grant of approximately \$88,000 in fiscal year 2015 on behalf of four of the member communities (Essex's share is \$16,444). Known as a "Transition Award", the grant is essentially a credit to a community that decommissions a local public safety answering point in favor of joining a regional dispatch center. At the time of this award, no mechanism could be identified to actually pass the money back to each community. However, recently, the finance director for the Center determined that each community could be considered a State vendor (since each community does have a State vendor number used in other grant programs). As such, I have made arrangements for the money to be paid to the Town and it will become available as part of the fiscal year 2017 free cash certification process.

Recommendation: **Board vote to accept this Transition Award grant.**

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team Monthly Meeting/CZM Grant

Fire Chief Dan Doucette attended the subject meeting on May 16, 2017 in Rockport. The Team was very receptive to being included in a new Community

Coastal Resilience Grant application that Essex is set to collaborate on with the National Wildlife Federation. One component of that grant would be to work with the Team to offer training workshops to the general public on how to best prepare for the effects of climate change and sea level rise. Chairman O'Donnell was authorized to sign that grant application at the last meeting, after confirming that the Team was on board with the concept. She was out of Town when the grant application paperwork needed to be signed (with a quick turnaround) and delegated the signature process to me. We will learn whether the grant application is funded in the coming weeks.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

O. Other Items

(1) Update Concerning House Move at Conomo Point (*)

At the last meeting, the Board approved the moving of structures from 9 Beach Circle to 98 Conomo Point Road pursuant to MGL Chapter 85, Section 18, with the following conditions: move to take place during high tide, so as not to disrupt clambers' vehicles, move must take place on a Tuesday-Thursday, the mover must name the Town as an additional insured, and the mover must provide a narrative and timetable for the work. I informed the project proponent about these conditions and it is my understanding that all will be adhered to, once more information is available.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on vacation leave, on May 26, 2017.

(3) Memorial Day Holiday

The office was closed on May 29, 2017, in observance of the subject holiday.

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