



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of October 16, 2017

Report covers from September 23 to October 13, 2017

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Town Building Committee Meeting Summary (*)

I attended the subject meeting on October 4, 2017 along with Chairman O'Donnell, who also chairs the Building Committee. Selectman Spinney attended the meeting strictly as an observer. At the meeting, the Committee was able to provide our architect who is developing site renderings with input on how to make the next iteration of edits. Given that this matter will not be presented to the Town Meeting until the spring, the architect has more time to develop the visual renderings with the Committee. The goal is to have public forums in January of 2018 that will enable a comparison between a single, new building at the site of the existing public safety building and renovating the existing building for police use only with a new fire house between the existing building and Town Hall.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Summary (*)

I attended the subject meeting on October 11, 2017 along with Chairman O'Donnell and Town Planner Matt Coogan. A quorum was not present but suggestions were made for the Town Planner and I to make contact with some people who may like to serve on the future Essex Economic Development Committee. The Planner and I will make these contacts before the next SPC meeting and the entire Committee can consider any interested parties and perhaps even suggest other names for consideration at that time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Possible Request for Proposals to Purchase Property for Fire/Police Bldg. (*)

As noted above, the Town Building Committee is continuing to work on visuals for two possible scenarios for new/renovated public safety facilities on existing Town property. Also briefly discussed at the Committee's recent meeting was perhaps ruling out that other suitable property cannot be purchased in the same general area. As such, Chairman O'Donnell would like to explore a possible Request for Proposals that could be widely advertised in Town to see whether any private property could be purchased.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to a potential RFP.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Demonstration of Alternate Website Editing Platform (*)

We utilize a back-end website editor known as FirstClass to edit and update our present website, which is hosted by Virtual Towns and Schools. The company has a second method for editing and updating known as Drupal. Recently, I viewed a demonstration of this alternate platform.

Drupal is an open source editor that is now being used by many cities and towns (including Boston) and by the Commonwealth's website. The system will automatically scale the view of the website in accordance with the device being used to view it. Editing takes place on the website itself, after a user logs into an editing shell. Drupal provides a more customizable look and feel than we have now, is very secure, and is easy to work with. It also enables content on side panes to follow the user better, is very compatible with social media postings, and allows a single edit to show up in multiple places on the website.

Our vendor charges a one-time conversion fee of \$5,000 to go from FirstClass to Drupal (for vendor staff time on conversion and user training). However, the annual fee for hosting and support decreases by \$1,000, which pays for the conversion in 5 years (less if increased worked productivity that comes with Drupal is factored in).

***Recommendation:* Board discussion regarding adding this one-time cost to the fiscal year 2019 operating budget.**

(2) Intellitime Scheduling and Payroll Software Demonstration

On September 26, 2017, I participated in a demonstration of web-based scheduling and payroll software that can be provided for use by our Police Department at no cost to the Town, through the Regional Dispatch Center. The Town Treasurer and members of the Police Department also participated. While the system is very robust, we agreed that the Department would start by using only the shift scheduling component. In the future, the Department and the Treasurer may also look at a feature that would upload payroll information into the Town's general payroll software. For now, the Department will benefit from being able to post open shifts electronically so that officers can respond these openings remotely.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(3) Setup and Configuration of New Printer

The Treasurer/Collector purchased a new printer for her new Assistant. I had already set up the Assistant's new workstation but the printer was not available at that time. The new printer is now ready for use.

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

C. Personnel

(1) Consider Nominations for Employee and Volunteer of the Year (*)

The nomination period for employee and volunteer of the year closed on September 29, 2017. This year, no nominations were received for Employee of the Year by the program deadline and two people were nominated for Volunteer of the Year. One Employee of the Year Nomination was submitted after the program deadline. I have provided the nomination letters to the Board for discussion. The Board needs to deliberate over the nominees and arrive at a Volunteer of the Year recipient for this year (using the number assigned to each party, since the chose name will be a surprise at the Fall Town Meeting). The Employee of the Year award requires further discussion, since accepting a late nomination may not be a fair process to others who may have wanted to submit after the deadline and an extension at this point will not allow enough time for reviewing candidates and getting the award made up prior to Town Meeting.

Recommendation: **Board choice of a Volunteer of the Year from the two names nominated and further discussion relative to the Employee of the Year.**

(2) Staff Meeting Summary

I hosted an informal staff meeting as I do from time to time on October 5, 2017. The meeting featured a discussion between Town Hall and Library personnel relative to the use of the building's various shared spaces. Also, a representative of software vendor City Hall Systems (CHS) met with Town Hall personnel to inform departments about the vendor's ability to offer custom permitting software in the future. The Town already has a master agreement with CHS concerning offering web-based "software as a service" at no cost to the Town. A number of departments expressed interest, particularly the Building Department. Individual departments may contact the vendor to develop specifications and trial versions of new applications.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Computer Application Training for new Building Inspector's Clerk

Since I wrote the Lotus and Excel applications that are presently used by the Building Department to track and issue building permits, I spent some time with the new Building Inspector's Clerk to familiarize her with how those applications work and to set her up with a fresh Windows desktop containing all of the resources she needs for the job. As noted above, the Building Department would like to move to a more modern permitting system that may eventually be dovetailed with systems in other departments. For the time being, the new Clerk has what she needs to keep the office running well.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Permanent Certificate of Occupancy for Town Hall/Library

As the Board may recall, the Building Inspector had issued a temporary Certificate of Occupancy to allow us to move back in to the Town Hall and Library in May. I have been working with our inspectors and with our architect to accomplish certain final code compliance work, to provide additional code compliance explanations, and to provide a suite of standard final building certifications. The Building Inspector is in agreement that we are ready for the final Certificate and will issue it in the near future.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Quarterly Facility Self-Inspections

Each quarter, I complete facility self-inspection checklists for the Senior Center and the Town Hall. Other departments complete similar checklists in other buildings. The point of the inspections is to recognize safety hazards and take corrective action as necessary. Much housekeeping work has been completed in the Senior Center lately and our project contractor is almost done with punch list items in the Town Hall/Library building. No new hazards were observed this quarter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Annual Insurance Coverage Review

I met with a representative of our insurer (the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association – MIIA) on October 10, 2017 for our annual review of Town insurance coverage. We reviewed our policy information in detail and I responded to a number of questions that MIIA uses to ensure coverage is adequate.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Removal and Storage of Conomo Point Float, Gangway, and Stairs

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the subject equipment be removed by a contractor and stored in the Town parking lot. While it would be less costly to store this equipment on a neighboring leasehold, a lease amendment would be required and timing on putting in and taking out our equipment would not be

flexible. Further, our marine contractor will be on site during October anyway to remove the remnants of the old marine railway as part of the Conomo Point Park project and he will accomplish the equipment removal at the same time.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Conversion of Street Lights to LED and Crosswalk Illumination (*)

At the last meeting, the Board was inclined to move toward the program that would have National Grid continue to own and maintain the street lights in Town, after converting the lamps to LED. The Town could also purchase and convert, using grant funding but would have to commit to perpetual maintenance and emergency services. With respect to the Grid-convert program, the utility had proposed to use 4,000K color temperature lamps. The Board asked me to see if the utility would consider 3,000K lamps and I have learned that Grid will ONLY install 4,000K lamps if the utility is going to continue to own the lights. Their reasoning is that 4,000K is bright white, which provides better visibility. This may help in certain areas, such as near crosswalks, where pedestrians may be near or in the roadway.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Memorial Park Restrooms

The public restrooms at Memorial Park will go back on a limited schedule for the month of October (Thursday-Sunday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.). The restrooms close for the season as of November 1 and will re-open as of April 1.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Relocation of Wheel Stop, Conomo Point

The Department of Public Works will move one wheel stop back toward the water out at the flagpole area of Conomo Point. This will allow a vehicle with a trailer to park in that space. However, other wheel stops will remain in that area to accommodate only vehicles without trailers and the Police Department will educate drivers who have been backing trailers over the stops, and then move on to enforcement. The two spaces closest to the Front Beach boat ramp will be signed to permit loading and unloading only. At the same time as the work discussed above, the DPW will post the signage across from Clammers' Beach permitting parking for vehicles with trailers attached only.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(5) Donation of Two Additional Memorial Benches at Conomo Point Park

Two other parties have offered to donate two additional memorial benches at the new Conomo Point park. As the Board may recall, three parties had previously donated funds and those benches are on site, awaiting assembly. Since a total of

five concrete slabs were poured at the park, these two additional benches can be accommodated nicely. Both additional benches have been paid for and the order for these has been placed.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(6) Final HVAC Training

As noted previously, I had already undergone basic training on the operation of our split-system HVAC with the installer in the past. On October 3, 2017, I participated in training with a more advanced technician from the manufacturer. We worked out certain protocols and I plan to test the cost of our heat pumps versus our high-efficiency gas heat this winter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(7) Town Hall Accessible Entrance Wayfinding

It has come to our attention that those needing to take the elevator from the ground level do not always know about the elevator door to the right of the main door (which has a short set of stairs). As such, the DPW has ordered signage that will clearly show someone who is approaching the Town Hall entrance from either side that there is a fully accessible option at ground level. The signs will be installed by the DPW as soon as they are available.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Town/School Budget Group Meetings

(*)

Chairman O'Donnell and I met with personnel and officials from the Regional School District and the Town of Manchester on September 22, 2017 and on October 12, 2017. The group has continued to make progress with respect to arriving at a common platform for five-year operating budget projections and the Essex Selectmen and Finance Committee will meet with School District personnel and officials in late October or early November to continue the planning. A public forum that reviews operating budget projections for both towns and the District will occur on November 29, 2017. At the October 12 meeting, District officials began to review the Memorial School building project timetable and options review that is underway.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Vote Timing Options Concerning Manchester Memorial School Project (*)

Regional School District officials have provided the Town with reasoning to suggest that the necessary Town Meeting and referendum (election) votes concerning the Memorial School project should occur in the fall of 2018 (as

opposed to the spring of 2019). The District would like both towns to consider this suggestion and to verify whether each is in agreement by November 1, 2017. The Board can discuss this matter at the present meeting and potentially has the opportunity to review it again, with the Finance Committee, at a future meeting (the Board's meeting with the Finance Committee that was set for October 18 is in the process of being rescheduled, which may occur after November 1). We have also invited the Finance Committee to the present meeting, in the event members can make it.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to timing options, possibly with the Finance Committee in attendance at the present meeting.**

(3) Joint Budget Meeting of Essex and School District Personnel/Officials(*)

In late October or early November, the Essex Finance Committee will host personnel and officials from the Regional School District to discuss a number of budget planning items. One major item will be the finalization of the five-year operating budget projection model that I have been working on with the Town Accountant. As noted above, the Selectmen and Finance Committee will also have a discussion relative to the timing of the Manchester Memorial School project vote.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the meeting agenda and progress on the projection model.**

(4) Regional Dispatch Center Audit Interview Process

On September 26, 2017, I was interviewed by Municipal Resources, Inc., the firm that is conducting a management, operations, and financial audit of the Regional Dispatch Center. I was able to provide my perspective as Chairman of the Finance Advisory Board and Executive Advisory Board for the Center, having been involved since the Center's inception. The auditor is also interviewing staff from the Center and many other parties who interface with it (such as police and fire chiefs). Further, I had a chance to provide additional input to MRI, along with other members of the Finance Advisory Board on October 13, 2017. Hopefully, the effort can help point the Center toward more efficient and standardized operations in the future, especially now, with the Beverly lawsuit having been settled and a new dispatch software suite being prepared for rollout.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Essex Division Meeting

I attended the subject meeting along with Chairman O'Donnell and Selectman Spinney on October 11, 2017. I updated the group concerning the visual rendering process for two different future public safety building options and on other ongoing Town projects and initiatives. The Chamber will soon be hosting forums on education and common issues facing local government in the four Cape Ann communities.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Approval of Fall Town Meeting Warrant

The Board met with the Finance Committee at the last meeting and provided some final guidance relative to the Fall Town Meeting Warrant. I have prepared a final draft with Town Counsel for the Board's approval.

Recommendation: Board vote to approve and sign the warrant per the posted agenda.

(2) Final Version of Revised Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Regulations (*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked that Town Counsel assist with the incorporation of the new progressive discipline framework into the Town's Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Regulations, including any necessary due process language. Counsel has completed that task and a revised version of the Regulations is available for the Board's review and potential approval.

Recommendation: **Board review and approval of the revised regulations.**

(3) Continued Review of Town of Essex Harbor Regulations (*)

At the last meeting, the Board made various comments concerning the Harbormaster's proposal for revised Harbor Regulations. I have reviewed that content with the Harbormaster and he developed a final draft of the Regulations for the Board's review. The Regulations could go into effect after the Fall Town Meeting, since a bylaw change concerning non-criminal disposition is necessary to make that portion of the Regulations valid.

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

L. Legal Issues

(1) Renewal of Pedestrian License, Village Restaurant (*)

Every two years, the Selectmen consider entering into a license with the Village Restaurant to allow the public to pass over the Village's property from the stairway at the end of the municipal parking lot. The present license ends this November and I provided renewal documents to the Village for consideration.

Recommendation: **Board countersignature of the license if available by meeting time.**

(2) Quarterly Review of Executive Session Minutes

As is the case each quarter, the Chairman has reviewed the Board's executive session minutes. No minutes were identified as being suitable for release at this time.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

M. Grants

(1) Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Webinar

As the Board may recall, the Town received grant funding to update its Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan was originally written in 2012 and requires an update every five years in order to remain eligible for certain Federal grant programs. We are working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to write the update and we have already had an in-person kick off meeting with officials from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), which is the grant maker. On October 3, 2017, I and others from Essex participated in a general webinar presented by MEMA personnel that provided an overview of the update process (MAPC staff participated as well). We will now work directly with MAPC to work through the process, which will entail much internal coordination and public participation. This effort will be dovetailed with our recently-awarded Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant, since resiliency planning will be within the focus of the Mitigation Plan.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Preparation for Migration to New Emergency Notification System

As the Board is aware, the Town will soon transition from the Code Red emergency notification system to the Swift Reach system (available through the Regional Dispatch Center). I met with the Director of the Center on October 10, 2017 to go over the logistics and the new system will be available to us as of October 20, 2017. Since our contract with Code Red does not expire until

December, we will continue to use Code Red for a while, to give people a chance to sign up for the new system. We will advertise the need to sign up via the local press, our website, and at the upcoming Fall Town Meeting. The deadline for interested residents to make the switch will be November 30, 2017.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

O. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on September 28-29 and on October 2, 2017.

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