



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Nov. 27, 2017

Report covers from November 11 to November 24, 2017

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Setup of Workstation for Future Youth Director

Given that the Youth Commission expects to have a new Youth Director on board by early February, 2018, I have gone ahead and set up a computer workstation for that position. The Director will work out of the shared office on the third floor of Town Hall that is dedicated to part-time staff. Others working from that office include the Conservation Commission Clerk and the Shellfish Constable (who is full-time but spends most of his time in the field). As the start date gets closer, I will also order a ShoreTel phone set for the Director. The old Youth Commission number was already ported over to ShoreTel and has since only existed as a cloud-based voicemail box.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

#### (2) Wiring and Deployment of Senior Center VOIP Phones

As reported previously, the Council on Aging recently opted into the Town's cloud-based VOIP telephone system. The actual handsets arrived during the week of November 20, 2017 and I have set up and deployed all three units, after identifying suitable existing building wiring and adding some new wiring. The process required connecting applicable wiring runs at the network switch in the basement and "attaching" each user profile to the appropriate handset. Our VOIP vendor, ShoreTel, did experience some problems getting the new devices to connect properly at first, but I worked with them to correct the problems.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 4 hours.

#### (3) Construction of Fiber Optic Municipal Network

(\*)

Now that the Town Meeting has appropriated funding to construct the subject network, it is necessary to work toward hiring a contractor for the project. We are interested in using Comm-Tract, via the State Contract, to have the work completed. However, presently, we have still not received any clear communication from Verizon or National Grid concerning our plans to exercise past rights to hang the fiber on their utility poles. I am continuing to work with Town Counsel on this matter and will have more information by meeting time.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to next steps.**

### **C. Personnel**

(1) Revision of Custodian Position Descriptions, Hiring of Second Custodian(\*)

Now that the Town Meeting has approved funding to hire a second, part-time custodian, it is necessary to advertise the vacancy and to discuss the necessary job duties. It is envisioned that this second custodian (Town Hall/Library Custodian) would be assigned exclusively to the Town Hall/Library building, in order to provide much more in-depth cleaning and maintenance than has been possible with just a single custodian, known as the Town Property Custodian (who also covers the Senior Center, the Fire and Police Headquarters, and the public restrooms at Memorial Park). Two separate position descriptions already exist but are in need of updating by the Selectmen (acting in your capacity as Personnel Board). I have developed revised position descriptions for the Board's review and approval.

*Recommendation:* **Board review and approval of the revised Town Property and Town Hall Custodian position descriptions. The Town Hall/Library Custodian description should be approved now and the Town Property Custodian description should be considered at the next vacancy.**

### **D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

(2) Contract for Restoration of Decorative Safe Doors (\*)

Now that the Town Meeting has approved funding for the in-place restoration of the decorative historic safe doors that are mounted in the Town Hall foyer, it is possible to contract with a conservationist for the work. The project will involve cleaning and some repainting and the cost quoted by Mehlin Conservation is \$3,400. Lisa Mehlin plans to conduct the work on weekends, since solvents are involved that might be unpleasant if used during the work week.

*Recommendation:* **Board approval of the restoration project.**

(3) Contract for Straightening of Town Hall Historic Lamp Posts (\*)

Now that the Town Meeting has approved funding for the straightening of the historic lamp posts in front of Town Hall (which are out of plumb), I am working with the Department of Public works and a masonry contractor to investigate the issue further. The Town does have a quote for \$6,500 from the contractor that renovated the building but it is likely that the masonry contractor will provide a lower quote, if he can find out more about the nature of the problem, in advance. Once the masonry contractor completes his exploratory work, if his price is lower than our original quote, I recommend having the masonry contractor conduct the work.

*Recommendation:* **Board authorization for work to proceed after the necessary exploratory work and new cost estimate have been completed.**

## **E. Insurance**

No items.

## **F. Facilities**

### (1) Acquisition of Cut Spruce Tree for Memory Tree Ceremony

As is the case each year, the Essex Holiday Festival includes a Memory Tree ceremony (November 30<sup>th</sup> this year) to remember loved ones who have passed on. The ceremony was formerly held at the Town Hall property, using one of the large spruce trees that have now been removed. The event is now held at the Fire Station, using a cut tree that is displayed during the holiday season. As such, I have arranged for the delivery of a cut tree for this year's ceremony. The DPW will stand up and secure the tree and it will be lit prior to the ceremony.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Repair to New Town Hall Heating Systems

As the Board may recall, the Town Hall has two heating systems: an electric, split HVAC system, and a high-efficiency natural gas baseboard heat system. A key component on one of the condensers in the split system recently failed and shut the entire system down. As such, we switched over to the gas baseboard system. However, some areas of the building do not have baseboard registers and we needed to ensure that adequate heat was making it into those spaces, mainly by keeping doors open. Also, in one office, the baseboard heating element warms up only along one portion of its length. It is my present understanding that the original HVAC subcontractor that installed both systems will be addressing both matters under warranty very soon.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary at this time.

### (3) Winterization of Conomo Point Park

At the end of each season, it will be necessary to maintain the plantings at the new Conomo Point Park and to apply fall fertilizer. Now that the Town Meeting has renewed the funding for the management of areas at Conomo Point, I am working with the Superintendent of Public Works to retain the services of a landscaping contractor to complete this work for the season.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## G. Fiscal/Budget

### (1) School Budget Coordination Group Meeting (\*)

I attended the subject meeting on November 20, 2017 along with Chairman O'Donnell and Finance Committee Chairman Dyer. The meeting featured a discussion relative to the final preparation for a joint meeting of the finance committees and boards of selectmen from both Essex and Manchester, along with the School Committee and various personnel from all organizations that will occur on November 29, 2017. Those assembled agreed that each entity will provide an overview of its own operating budget modeling efforts, which are aimed at generating five-year predictions. Some discussion may occur relative to major budget drivers, including items that are not necessarily predictable. The meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> will last 90 minutes and will include an opportunity for questions.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

### (2) Continued Review of Draft Fiscal Year 2019 Capital Budget Update (\*)

The Board reviewed a preliminary draft of the subject document at the last meeting. It would be helpful at this point for the Board to make some general decisions about content so that I may continue to develop the document.

*Recommendation:* **Further Board review of the draft capital budget request document.**

### (3) Fiscal Year 2017 Audit

As the Board may recall, I recently provided our auditor with IT-related materials for the technology portion of the annual audit. The financial portion of the audit is now underway and I have provided additional requested materials and have participated in interviews with the auditor.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

## H. Complaints

No items.

## I. Meetings Attended

### (1) Massachusetts Health Officers' Association Annual Meeting and Trade Show

I attended the subject conference in Falmouth on November 15 and 16, 2017 in order to obtain continuing education credits for my Registered Sanitarian license, as well as my Approved System Inspector and Approved Soil Evaluator licenses. The conference provided excellent updates on the state of on-site wastewater in Massachusetts, along with other useful updates regarding public health.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

## **K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations**

### (1) Petitioning of Legislature for Retiree Police Detail Special Legislation (\*)

As was the case back in May, the Town Meeting authorized the Selectmen to petition the State Legislature for Special Legislation that would allow retired Essex police officers to work police details in the future. During the first attempt, the Town was informed that a change in law concerning unemployment benefits would not allow the Special Legislation to exempt the Town from unemployment liability for retired officers. Since this development amounted to a substantive change in the language approved by the Town Meeting, that particular provision was removed and the Town Meeting voted on the revised language. Town Counsel has now prepared a letter to the Legislature that will allow the Selectmen to request the revised Special Legislation.

*Recommendation:* **Board vote to sign the letter requesting the Special Legislation.**

### (2) Status of Revised Harbor Regulations (\*)

The Chief of Police has completed his final edits concerning the Town of Essex Harbor Regulations and Town Counsel has provided a final review. The Chief, in his capacity as Harbormaster, is ready to enact the revised version.

*Recommendation:* **Final Board review and discussion relative to the proposed revisions.**

### (3) Results of Noise Control Bylaw Survey (\*)

Only a few people decided to fill out and return noise control bylaw surveys that were offered at the recent Fall Town Meeting. Of the seven responses, six respondents were in favor and one was opposed. Most people experienced noise only occasionally, and common noise issues included neighbors playing music or having late gatherings, barking dogs, boat engine noise on the Essex River and on Chebacco Lake, music from restaurants in the summer, use of power yard tools, and guests staying in short-term rentals.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

## **L. Legal Issues**

No items.

## M. Grants

### (1) Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Update

Now that the State has completed MVP training classes for the various State-certified vendors that will assist communities to attain the MVP designation, we have begun to work through the process. In Essex, we are working with the National Wildlife Federation (which is also our contractor for our fiscal year 2018 Coastal Resiliency Grant). On November 20, 2017, I participated in a webinar walking municipal officials through the MVP process and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) has begun to develop our plan, which will be closely dovetailed with our Coastal Resiliency Grant and with our effort to update the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. All of these efforts will require public forums and it is possible that some forums can be consolidated. During the recent webinar, State personnel reviewed what to expect from our service provider (NWF) and what Town personnel are expected to undertake, in conjunction with NWF. The project will commence soon, with preparatory meetings for two, half-day workshops that will be aimed at increasing public engagement with climate change and sea level rise planning and mitigation efforts.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

### (2) Green Communities Grant, Fiscal Year 2018 (\*)

Our Town Planner is contemplating the next round of Green Communities Grant funding. He could continue to collaborate with the Regional School District or could develop a proposal for a purely municipal project or projects. Of course, one possible municipal project would be the conversion of street lights, but the Board is not presently seeking to convert and own those lights. At the present meeting, the Board will consider a proposal from PowerSecure to lease the lights (a hybrid between National Grid converting and owning the lights and the Town converting and owning the lights). Otherwise, we could look at items such as efficiency in the water and sewer system or LED bollards to at least light the crosswalks on the causeway.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion of the options so that the Planner can receive guidance on grant goals for the next round of funding.**

## N. Emergency Planning

No items.

## O. Other Items

### (1) Thanksgiving Holiday

The office was closed on November 23 and 24, 2017, in observance of the subject holiday.

*This report is available at [www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org) on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.*