



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 23, 2018

Report covers from April 7, 2018 to April 20, 2018

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Free Acquisition of State Surplus Vehicle to Replace Shellfish Pickup Truck

As the Board may recall, the Shellfish Constable's pickup truck was destroyed in the January flooding event. I had reached out to Senator Tarr's office about the possibility of acquiring a State surplus vehicle and that the effort has been successful. We have now received from the State a former, unmarked Environmental Police pickup truck at no cost and the Shellfish Constable has put the vehicle into active use. The vehicle is in exceptional condition. However, if the vehicle needs repairs or improvements in the future, we will be able to utilize the insurance proceeds that derived from the destruction of the previous vehicle.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

B. Computer Systems

No items.

C. Personnel

(1) Informal Staff Meeting

I hosted the subject staff meeting on April 12, 2018, as I do from time to time. The meeting featured a discussion relative to the upcoming Annual Town Meeting, along with updates from various department heads.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

No items.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Status of Route 133 Bridge Over Essex River

Recently, the State Department of Transportation has taken several actions relative to the subject bridge. Communication to the Town in advance of actions taken has been poor. Recently, I participated in a conference call organized by Senator Tarr to review the status of the bridge. The Department took full responsibility for the poor communication and will correct that problem going forward.

Relative to the condition of the bridge, jersey barrier have been placed along its edges to focus the weight of vehicles on the center bridge beams, since the outer beams are rusted and in disrepair. This strategy has allowed the bridge to continue to serve all but the heaviest vehicles (basically those vehicles that require a special permit known as an overweight permit). The Department will continue to monitor the status of the bridge and presently does not expect a replacement to be designed and constructed until 2021. Until then, the barriers that were put in place are expected to remain. Signage back at Route 128, Route 1A, and Route 22 will be expanded to warn overweight vehicles about the restriction well in advance. We expect to sit down with the bridge design team starting around mid-May.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Repair of Seawalls and Stone Piers, Conomo Point

At the last meeting, the Board indicated that the remainder of the final special appropriation for the management of the property at Conomo Point (\$48,500) should be focused on the repair of the two stone piers and the seawalls, to the extent possible. To that end, I have contacted a mason that has worked on the stone piers in the past and he will soon quote and begin that work.

The Superintendent of Public Works has also begun to review the seawall issues with an eye toward using his own forces for some of the work and a private contractor for other elements. Presently, he is working to get a quote from the contractor and will begin work in the near future.

Further, since the work referenced above will tend to be temporary and incomplete in nature, it is also important to consider a design for seawall repairs and replacement over a longer term. As such, I have begun to discuss the prospect of a design project with the coordinator of the Massachusetts Dam and Seawall Repair grant program, who will issue a call for grant proposals later this year.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Deployment of Conomo Point Park Water Access Stairs, Ramp, and Float

I have made arrangements with our project contractor to reinforce the Conomo Point Park float to be able to better withstand contact with the rocky bottom at low tide. A separate contractor will then deploy the water access stairs, ramp, and float. I expect the stairs to be in place relatively soon. The ramp and float will be deployed on May 12. In future years, ramp and float deployment will be earlier, since the ramp and float will be stored in a marine yard with access to hoisting equipment and will simply be floated down river and into position once hoisted into the water.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Water Service to Centennial Grove Cottage

The seasonal water serving the Centennial Grove Cottage was turned on by the Department of Public Works during the week of April 9, 2018. Subsequently, our plumbing contractor charged the interior pipes. The Cottage is being used, under license, by the Pingree School rowing program through Memorial Day.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(5) Elevator Inspections, Senior Center and Town Hall

The usual elevator certificate renewal inspection with the State inspector is scheduled for May 2, 2018 at the Senior Center. I have arranged for our alarm company and our generator company to be on hand for this annual event. With respect to the new elevator at Town Hall, its first renewal also needs to occur during the month of May. I have reached out to the company that installed the elevator to quote on this inspection, plus quarterly, preventative maintenance. I will compare that cost to a separate quote I have solicited from the company we use for the Senior Center.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(6) Prospect of Additional Donated Benches at Conomo Point

In the past, the Board agreed that I should find out more this spring about the variety of memorial and other donated benches that have been placed in various public areas on Conomo Point. Five new benches were donated and installed at the new Conomo Point Park and other potential donors have asked whether additional benches can be accommodated. I have learned that all of the benches that are presently out at the Point were donated (none are purely municipal benches). As such, replacing any existing benches with new donations would mean displacing benches donated by others. The Board should determine whether additional benches are needed and may want to visit the area to review what is already in place.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to assessing the need for additional benches at Conomo Point, per the posted agenda.

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Public Forums Concerning Plan to Construct New Fire Station (*)

The first and second of three public forums relative to a plan to acquire the Village Restaurant property and construct a new fire station there were held on April 12 and April 18, 2018. A third forum will be held on April 24, 2018. At the forums to date, many viewpoints have been expressed and many questions have been asked and answered. The Board may wish to discuss these past proceedings as we approach the date of the final forum.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Essex Division Meeting

I attended this special meeting of the Essex Division on April 11, 2018, along with Chairman O'Donnell and other Town officials. The meeting featured the proposal to acquire the Village Restaurant property to construct a new fire station at that location (a proposal supported by the Selectmen, the Finance Committee, and the Town Building Committee). Attendees asked a variety of questions and provided feedback on the proposal, which was generally well received.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Emergency Planning and Coastal Resilience Planning Public Workshops

I attended the subject workshops in Ipswich on April 11, 2018 and in Gloucester on April 17, 2018, as a representative of the lead agency on the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management grant that is funding the work. I was responsible for both opening and closing remarks and personnel from the Town of Ipswich, the City of Gloucester, CZM, MAPC, and the National Wildlife Federation also contributed. A third forum of this type will be held in Essex on April 25, 2018 (6-8:30 p.m. in Town Hall).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

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

I have revised the draft Annual Town Meeting motions in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting.

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

(2) Coastal Barrier Resources System Unit Boundary Updates (*)

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for managing the subject System, which is broken into individual units along the entire US coast. The use of Federal funding for "development" in any unit is prohibited. Recently, we received a notice that the Service is working to revise the boundaries of many units, some of which are in our area. Presently, a general expansion of unit boundaries has been proposed. I have learned that maintenance dredging of our Federal channel is exempt from the Federal funding prohibition in these areas. However, it is not clear as to whether the use of Federal funds for beneficial re-use of sediment within our own system is exempt. Whereas the units in our area are generally proposed for expansion and whereas public recreational development and beneficial sediment re-use in the future could propose the use of Federal funding, I recommend that the Board review the matter more closely.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Revision of Major Sewer Easement, Story Acres

The Wastewater Department and a property owner on Story Acres have agreed that it would be in the best interests of both parties to revise the original easement for a major sewer line that passes through this resident's yard. As such, the resident had a new plan drawn up and the Department is in agreement. I am now in the process of working with Town Counsel to revise the easement language and plan reference so that a superseding easement can be recorded. Before this can occur, the easement plan has been returned to the property owner so that additional necessary metes and bounds can be added by his surveyor.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

M. Grants

No items.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Grand Opening Celebration for Conomo Point Park

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the subject celebration should be held on Friday, June 22, 2018 out at the new Conomo Point park. The event will be put on by the Conomo Point Sailing Club and is open to the public. After an official ceremony hosted by the Board, the Club will offer a musical band, food, and alcohol for sale. The Club is presently working to obtain all of the necessary permits.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Patriots' Day Holiday

The office was closed on April 16, 2018 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.