



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of May 7, 2018

Report covers from April 21, 2018 to May 4, 2018

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Economic Development Committee Meeting (*)

I attended the first meeting of the new Economic Development Committee (EDC) on April 30, 2018, along with Town Planner Matt Coogan. The meeting featured a review of the Committee's mission and Committee members resolved to meet again, on May 29, 2018, to learn more about the Town's recent parking and downtown mixed-use zoning studies.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Technology Hosting Agreement with the Town of Danvers (*)

As the Board may recall, since 2011, the Town's computer infrastructure has been hosted all or in part by the City of Melrose, providing the Town with a remote live computing site and backup site for all electronic data. The City is transitioning away from offering that service and the Town of Danvers has indicated that it will soon be offering similar accommodations. As such, given that our agreement with Melrose expires this coming June 30th, it would be advantageous to enter into a new agreement with Danvers, as of July 1, 2018. Danvers will provide a secondary live instance of the Town's entire virtual server environment (with archival backup), just as Melrose has been offering of late. I have begun to revise the Melrose Agreement for use in Danvers and the annual cost will be \$5,200 (within the existing budget for these services and actually less than the Melrose pricing). I expect that a formal agreement will be available by the Board's next meeting, on May 21, 2018.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

C. Personnel

No items.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Potential Visitor Kiosk to be Located in Essex (*)

In the past, the Board solicited assistance from the Essex Merchants' Group to help design Essex-specific content that will appear on visitor kiosks along the

Essex Coastal Scenic Byway. At that time, we were told that Essex itself would not have its own kiosk. It is my present understanding that Essex Heritage now does want to locate a kiosk in Essex. Locations that have been suggested include the Town's municipal parking lot and a visual depiction of the kiosk is available for the Board to review.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Stone Pier and Seawall Repair Update, Conomo Point

The Superintendent of public works will soon begin to make progress on Conomo Point seawall repairs using his own forces, along with a private contractor. Our masonry contractor will also soon begin work on the stone piers and certain critical segments of seawall.

As discussed at the last meeting, the Town should apply for more substantial funding, starting out with a comprehensive structural assessment and design, via the State's Dam and Seawall Repair grant program. The call for proposals for the program will be available in mid to late June.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Irrigation System Startup at Field of Dreams

Our irrigation contractor attempted to start the Field of Dreams irrigation system on May 1, 2018, in preparation for the upcoming sports season. Our contractor noticed a problem involving the power feed to the actual well and had to get our well contractor involved. Once the well issue is taken care of, our irrigation contractor will start the system.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(3) Annual Elevator Inspection and Re-Certification, Essex Senior Center

The subject inspection and re-certification by the State elevator inspector occurred on May 2, 2018. The procedure went smoothly and a certificate of compliance for the upcoming year has been forwarded to the Town for posting in the elevator.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) First Re-Certification of Town Hall Elevator and Stage Lift

I have made arrangements with the company that provides maintenance and certification assistance with the Senior Center elevator system to provide the same services for the Town Hall elevator system. The inspection certificate in the Town Hall elevator carries a May 31, 2018 date and we have applied for re-certification. It is not likely that the State inspector will get to our building before the expiration date but having applied prior to that date actually keeps us in compliance. The stage lift actually carries a May 31, 2019 certificate expiration date and won't need attention until next year.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Initial Planning Session Relative to Memorial School Financing Options

I attended the subject meeting on April 30, 2018 along with the Manchester Essex School District's Superintendent and budget director and the Manchester Town Administrator. The meeting was held to go over various potential financing scenarios for the construction of new elementary school in Manchester, a matter that will be considered by voters this coming fall. We reviewed the outlook for the Memorial School project and began some forecasting for the future renovation or replacement of the Essex Elementary School.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) School Budget Planning Discussion Group Meeting (*)

I attended the subject meeting with Chairman O'Donnell, along with School District and Manchester officials on May 4, 2018. The meeting featured a discussion relative to how the capital budgets of the two towns and the District will be affected by future projects. This information will be formally presented to the public at an evening meeting on May 16, 2018, along with a status update concerning the ongoing preliminary design work on the Memorial School replacement project.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Informational Session Relative to Fire Station Project

Chairman O'Donnell attended the subject session hosted by the Council on Aging on May 1, 2018, at the Essex Senior Center. The Council had been interested in

offering information relative to the potential acquisition of property and the construction of a new fire station. Many seniors have been asking questions and seeking the facts surrounding those proposals.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Final Annual Town Meeting Motions (*)

I have developed final versions of the Annual Town Meeting motions for the Board's review.

Recommendation: **Board review and discussion concerning the motions.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Quarterly Review of Executive Session Minutes

The Chairman has reviewed the Board's executive session minutes as is the case each quarter and no new sets of minutes (including minutes that were requested concerning the potential acquisition of the Village Restaurant property) were identified for release.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

M. Grants

(1) Essex Emergency Planning / Coastal Resilience Planning Workshops

The last of three public workshops highlighting how emergency planning and coastal resilience planning are related occurred in Essex on April 25, 2018. I was in attendance for all three and the Essex workshop was the most well-attended. The workshop fostered great discussion among residents relative to many emergency and coastal resilience planning topics, including how the Town's marshland could be its best asset in improving resilience to future storms and sea level rise. We were also able to add in a segment relative to the recent prioritization of local climate change action items that have been developed as part of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program (see next item).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Priority List (*)

As the Board may recall, on April 5, 2018, the Town held its stakeholder workshop covering a variety of possible challenges that will face the Town in the future as a result of climate change and sea level rise. Participants prioritized local action items in three separate categories: environmental issues, infrastructure issues, and societal issues. The top environmental issues, as voted by a broad cross-section of workshop participants, were salt marsh restoration and management and the movement and management of sediment and sand within our system, as these dynamics serve as a critical buffer to increasingly-severe storm events and expected increases in mean sea level. Since the Town is going to be submitting two grant applications to the MVP Action Grant program as a next step, the Town is required to finalize and attach its priority list to the grant applications (see next item). Our consultant has finalized the list for the Board's review and approval and the list was actually discussed, in draft, at the recent emergency planning and coastal resilience workshop (see previous item).

Recommendation: **Board vote to approve the Town's MVP priority list.**

(3) MVP Action Grant Applications (*)

Since the Town has now completed its MVP workshop and has prioritized its top areas of concern (see previous item), the Town is eligible to compete for funding as part of the subject grant program. We have learned much about the new grant program since the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs hosted a grant question and answer session in Essex on May 1, 2018. I also discussed some possibilities with two groups of scientists on April 26, 2018.

As the Board is aware, one project I have been working on with local and regional scientists is a marsh restoration/sediment management proposal. The project would involve the site selection and design for the eventual deployment of mussel reefs just seaward of degraded marsh banks, with infilling of the space in between with sediment sourced from our clogged navigational channel. We would plant native marsh grass on this "new ground". Future grant years would be devoted to permitting and then construction (a 3-year process from design to construction). This type of project would increase the Town's coastal resilience, assist with much-needed sediment management, and provide a sustainable resource that is beneficial to water quality.

A second project involves scientific monitoring of large areas of naturally-deposited sediment on the marsh. The January winter storm floated ice with a layer of sediment frozen to it up on the marsh and the sediment was left behind when the ice melted. If it can be shown over time that the marsh recovers well from this deposition event, the work may hold promise for the intentional deposition of material that is presently clogging our navigational channel, helping to build coastal resilience at the same time.

The Board has in the past expressed support for grant applications related to these topics and the deadline is May 18, 2018.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization of the Chairman to sign all necessary grant application paperwork for the projects described above, when the final applications are ready.**

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Private Well Informational Forum

Our Board of Health Administrator organized a training program relative to various aspects of private drinking water wells on May 3, 2018, in Town Hall. Being a Registered Sanitarian, I partook of the program, which covered a wide variety of related topics. The program was extremely well organized, informative, and well-received.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

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