



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of July 11, 2022

Report covers from June 18, 2022 to July 8, 2022

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Economic Development Committee Meeting Summary (*)

I participated in the subject meeting along with Chairman Preen on June 23, 2022. The Committee has decided to focus on several issues including: sale of surplus Town parcels (starting with Gregory Island Road neighborhood), verifying ownership of large parcel adjacent to Manchester town line for possible future commercial use, revising the Town's guide to permitting, rejuvenation of the Centennial Grove as a revenue-generating asset, compilation of a business database, support for the downtown lighting/placemaking project, and support for the ongoing zoning bylaw analysis.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Cutover to New Firewall Platform

I assisted personnel from the Town of Danvers IT Department with a cutover from the Town's Cisco ASA firewall/router appliances to a new firewall/router that is based on the Fortinet platform on June 22, 2022. As the Board may recall, the Town of Danvers is rolling out a regional security fabric involving several area communities and Essex is the first community to make the change. The Fortinet regional security fabric will be centrally managed by Danvers personnel and will offer state-of-the-art security features that will be updated continuously over time. The cutover involved an approximately one-hour Internet service outage to all users and the new system came up without any major issues. The new system includes its own VPN feature, which replaces our former VPN system for allowing remote work. The new VPN was not immediately on line but was made available to applicable users soon after the cutover and several employees are now using it successfully.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Signature of Successor AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement

The union has come to terms with management with respect to a successor collective bargaining agreement for the next three years. The contract will not be in effect until the Fall Town Meeting votes to fund and ratify the agreement in November.

Recommendation: Board signature of the agreement in accordance with the posted agenda.

(2) Annual Distribution of Sexual and Discriminatory Harassment Policies

Each year, in July, we distribute the subject policies with employee paychecks. The Selectmen's Assistant has arranged to provide copies of these documents to the Treasurer's Department for inclusion in an upcoming paycheck distribution. Employees already must acknowledge the two policies via a separate process.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Annual Distribution/Acknowledgement of Red Flags Policy

Each year, in July, certain employees of the Department of Public Works must receive and acknowledge the subject policy. The Red Flags Policy is intended to raise awareness with respect to individuals who may attempt to obtain unauthorized customer information through a utility.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Safety Committee Meeting Summary

Chairman Pereen and I participated in the subject meeting on June 30, 2022. We were joined by our loss control representative from our insurer. The Committee developed a number of goals for the upcoming fiscal year and discussed the Town's state of compliance with respect to OSHA, among other topics.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Old Fire/Police Station Site Restoration Project Update

(*)

The site work subcontractor working for our general contractor has now poured the new slab that the prefabricated viewing shed for the Town's antique fire pumper will sit on. I notified the shed contractor that the shed should go into production and we expect delivery by early August, 2022. Also, the site work subcontractor has installed new granite curbing and has poured certain sections of new, concrete sidewalk. The electrical connection between Martin Street and the Town parking lot lights to the rear of the site has now been made and we are waiting for National Grid to energize the new circuit.

Further, since the design plans for the project had to only generically depict the plan for the building slab (no building had been ordered prior to the project going out to bid), it was necessary for our architect to modify the design in the field to accommodate our specific shed design. The site subcontractor may require a change order given that the revised design required additional labor and materials. However, since less overall concrete was needed, the net cost of the change order will be reduced. The parties are presently working out the final figures and

funding may be taken from the Community Preservation Fund appropriation for the viewing shed, along with the cost of the shed itself. I will bring this matter to the Board at a future meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Conomo Point Seawall Replacement Project Completion Summary

Selectman Phippen and I walked the site on June 21, 2022 after final project completion (which occurred on June 17, 2022), along with our engineering team and a representative of our general contractor. We had attended a construction meeting the day before, on June 20, 2022. A relatively short punch list was assembled and all items were attended to by the end of June. Our general contractor reviewed all project costs from the start of the project through its recent completion and proposed a final, balancing change order that will bring the total project cost in just under the original bid figure of \$1,951,000 – at \$1,933,560, was approved by both our engineering team and Selectman Phippen (as previously authorized by the Board). We will continue to monitor the ongoing watering of the new plantings that were part of the project and we will work to continue watering using DPW personnel after six weeks.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Essex River Bridge Replacement Project Update

I attended construction meetings with personnel from the MA DOT and from the bridge replacement contractor (MAS Building and Bridge) on June 21 and July 5, 2022. Paving for the temporary bridge bypass occurred on July 7, 2022 and the contractor is anticipating that the temporary bridge will be open to traffic by Tuesday, July 12, 2022. All required detour signage for large trucks must be in place on other major roads such as Route 128 before traffic diversion can begin and the contractor is working to make that happen.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Solid Waste and Recycling Services Future Contract Costs Update (*)

I have worked with DPW personnel to attempt to get more detailed cost estimates with respect to various solid waste and recycling scenarios after the current arrangement ends at the end of this calendar year. We have reached out to seven area companies in the industry and, to date, only two have expressed interest in making a proposal (Innovative Waste Systems, LLC and Casella). We had a meeting with Innovative on July 6, 2022 and discussed the Town's needs in detail. While we will not have pricing on the various options for the present meeting, we expect to have it by the Board's next meeting, on July 25, 2022.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(5) Quarterly Affirmative Marketing Program Report

I provided the subject report to the State during the week of July 4, 2022 in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer (AMCO). The report is intended to document the Town's use of women or minority-owned businesses on State-funded building construction projects. No such utilization occurred over the past quarter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Town Hall Building Automation Controls Site Visit

The Town Planner and I walked the Town Hall with a building controls automation specialist on June 23, 2022. As the Board may recall, we have been looking at whether an upcoming Green Communities Grant round might fund some additional energy-saving measures in the building. While our baseboard heating system and our split HVAC system are both very efficient, controlling them in a more coordinated fashion could bring additional energy efficiency to the building. We will await a report with respects to various options and pricing and will then determine if any of the options would be a good candidate for grant funding.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Facility Self-Inspection Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for the Town Hall and the Senior Center during the week of July 4, 2022. The checklists are aimed at identifying safety hazards and making rapid corrections if any are found. No hazards were identified this quarter beyond a small section of loose roofing shingles on Town Hall, which I am working to have repaired. Other departments will complete the checklists for other buildings and the Safety Committee will discuss at its next meeting.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Town Hall/Senior Center Phone System Provider Change

Last year at this time, the Board was in favor of moving to a new VOIP phone provider for Town Hall and the Senior Center. However, we still had one additional year of service with our current provider contractually obligated. This year, we are able to terminate our present provider as of August 31, 2022 with no penalties or further obligations. We are moving from MiTel to NetTelOne. NetTelOne is the provider for the Essex public safety facility and for the North Shore 911 Regional Emergency Dispatch Center. Our new contract with NetTelOne will allow us to lease to own all of the necessary equipment for

slightly less per month than a straight lease with our current provider. At the end of three years, the Town will own the equipment and the cost per month will decrease. I am presently working with our new provider to develop the appropriate plan for the service change.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Request for Cybersecurity Reports from Financial Vendors

Each year, during our financial audit, our auditor also conducts an IT audit. While we have provided to our auditor various cybersecurity reports from vendors who process financial data, our auditor asked that we pro-actively seek out these reports and review them as a management team (Treasurer, Accountant, and myself) annually. As such, we have contacted all applicable software vendors and we should soon have the most current reports and policies on hand. I will meet with the Town Accountant and the Treasurer/Collector in the near future to review the information.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Essex Division Meeting

I attended the subject meeting, along with Chairman Pereen, on June 29, 2022. The meeting featured a discussion with respect to the ongoing Route 133 Essex River Bridge replacement project and how Essex continues to plan to improve coastal resilience in the face of climate change and sea level rise. We also updated the group on various other Town projects and initiatives.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Regulation of Heavy Truck Traffic on Essex Roadways

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Chairman and I should seek a meeting with the Hamilton Town Administrator and Hamilton's Board of Selectmen Chair to learn more about plans for routing blasted rock from a possible development site in Hamilton to a gravel yard in Ipswich. After I contacted the Hamilton Town Administrator, he indicated that several other abutting communities were also concerned about the same issue and that it would be best to wait for more information to be available so that all communities could be updated at the same time.

In the meantime, I reached out to the Director of District 4 for MA DOT and asked him about the situation, given that coming through Essex would only exacerbate congestion associated with the Route 133 bridge replacement project. I indicated to the Director that the Board was considering promulgating regulations concerning heavy trucks and having them reviewed, as required, by DOT. The Director indicated that, although the Board does have that option on local roads, any type of State-numbered route is exempt from having regulations placed on it. He recommended that the various communities involved get together to try and reach an agreement with the developer as to the preferred travel path.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

K. Legal Issues

(1) Quarterly Review of Executive Session Minutes

The Chairman has reviewed all unreleased executive session minutes for the quarter ending June 30, 2022. No minutes have been recommended for release at this time.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

L. Grants

No items.

M. Emergency Planning

(1) North Shore Regional 911 Executive Advisory Board Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on July 7, 2022, along with Chief Francis. I chair the Executive Advisory Board for the Center. The meeting featured a discussion with respect to the Town of Manchester's desire to join the Center, following a recent vote by the Manchester Board of Selectmen. The Executive Advisory Board unanimously voted to allow the Town of Manchester to join. The onboarding process will likely take 12 to 18 months.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

N. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on leave, on July 1, 2022.

(2) Independence Day Holiday

The office was closed on July 4, 2022, 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.*