



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of January 7, 2019

Report covers from December 15, 2018 to January 4, 2019

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Economic Development Committee Meeting Summary (\*)

The Town Planner and I participated in the Economic Development Committee meeting on December 19, 2018. The meeting featured a discussion concerning preparing a scope of work and budget for downtown parking striping and improved wayfinding signage. The Committee would like the Selectmen to support a Town Meeting appropriation in May to possibly fund this work and we will identify a traffic engineering firm that will be suitable to assist the Town with scope and cost estimates. Further, MAPC should soon be approaching the Committee to kick off its technical assistance effort toward the production of an Economic Development Plan for Essex. We expect to engage in that effort in early 2019.

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

#### (2) Replacement of Shellfish Rain Gauge

The Shellfish Constable reported recently that the rain gauge he uses to record rainfall at the Fire Station was no longer providing a readout at the monitor. This gauge is necessary to determine when shellfish flats should be closed. After contacting the manufacturer, he replaced the internal battery but this did not correct the problem. Thereafter, the Constable, the Chief of Police, and I inspected the unit and its wiring within the old dispatch room and did not find any other explanation for the malfunction. It is likely that this unit, which is over 20 years old, simply reached the end of its service life. Fortunately, technology has come a long way over the last 20 years and I was able to order a new, wireless system for about \$200. That system will be put in place as soon as the Fire Department can help deploy the exterior portion of the unit (which includes an anemometer like the previous unit did) on the roof. The Constable has been using the Department of Public Works' gauge at the Water Filtration Plant as a backup in the interim.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### B. Computer Systems

No items.

## C. Personnel

### (1) Safety Committee Meeting

I participated in a Safety Committee meeting on December 20, 2018. The meeting featured a discussion relative to the recent awarding of two grants from our insurer (one to expand the closed-circuit video system in the police station and another to purchase a backup beeper and warning arrow for one fire truck). The Committee also discussed the Town's continued preparation for the applicability of OSHA standards to the municipal workplace (February 1, 2019).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Informal Staff Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting on December 20, 2018, as I do from time to time. The meeting featured a discussion relative to the development of the fiscal year 2020 budget and updates from each of the major Town department heads.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (3) Calendar Year Goals, Town Acct., Treasurer, Town Admin., Police Chief

The Town Accountant, the Treasurer/Collector, and I all have existing employment contracts that require the establishment of goals at the start of the calendar year. The incoming Chief of Police is presently negotiating a contract, to be effective August 1, 2019, and he will also need to establish goals from that date through the end of 2019. Each of these employees will attend the present meeting to discuss their proposed goals with the Board.

*Recommendation:* Board discussion with each employee at the present meeting, per the posted agenda.

## D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

### (1) AFSCME and EPBA Collective Bargaining Sessions

Chairman O'Donnell and I participated in an EPBA collective bargaining session on December 18, 2018 and Selectman Spinney and I participated in an AFSCME collective bargaining session on December 19, 2018. Both unions are in the process of negotiating successor collective bargaining agreements.

*Recommendation:* Board discussion in executive session in accordance with the posted agenda.

### (2) Public Safety Building Site Selection and Design Update (\*)

The Town Building Committee met on January 3, 2019. Our Project Manager and our Designer reviewed possible site scenarios at a variety of previously-discussed and new sites. At the December public forum, a site at 34 John Wise Avenue had

been suggested but we have confirmed that this site has too many wetland constraints to be viable. Owners of other new sites have not expressed any interest in selling. The only owner willing to sell is asking an unreasonable price.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to that status of the site selection process.**

(3) Affirmative Marketing Quarterly Report

I filed with the State the Affirmative Marketing Report (AMP) for the quarter ending December 31, 2018 during the week of December 31, 2018, in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer (AMCO). The report provides the State with information concerning the Town's use of any woman or minority-owned businesses on State-funded construction projects. No such utilization occurred during the quarter.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**E. Insurance**

(1) Monthly Pothole Log

I received the pothole log for the month of December from the DPW during the week of December 31, 2018. No potholes were reported during December.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Annual Motor Vehicle Records Checks

At the recommendation of our insurer, each year, I work with the Chief of Police to run motor vehicle records checks on all Town employees who commonly operate Town vehicles. This exercise confirms that all employees have valid drivers' licenses and that there is no pattern of excessive driving violations. The Chief will complete the checks during January and will report back any concerns.

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

**F. Facilities**

(1) Town Hall Clock Auto-Winder Relay Malfunction

For several years now, we have been relying on an automated system installed by our clock contractor for the rewinding of both of our clock weights. Recently, that system failed to rewind the weights and none of the usual, simple causes were to blame. As such, I contacted our clock contractor and he was able to get the system restarted.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Building Inspector's Office Cabinets

When the Town Hall was re-furnished after the renovation, the Building Inspector's Clerk at the time did not opt for storage cabinets. The Building Inspector recently asked for cabinets (like many other departments have) in order to free up a desk area for the review of large-format plans. As such, I contacted our original furniture contractor and a set of cabinets is now in place (installed during the week of December 17, 2018).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Prioritization of Culverts and Other Stream Barriers

The Superintendent of Public Works and I met with Kaitlyn Shaw from the Ipswich River Watershed Association (IRWA) on December 19, 2018. Kaitlyn is the new Restoration Manager at IRWA and is looking to work with communities to clear barriers to hydraulic flow and fish passage throughout the Great Marsh. At the meeting, we agreed that the focus should be at stream crossings on both ends of Apple Street. The crossing at the Western Avenue end is critical to alewife migrations and the crossing at the Southern Avenue end is critical to vehicular passage during coastal storms, when the Route 133 Bridge on the causeway is inundated. Ms. Shaw will review our priorities with her colleagues and may have ideas for future grant funding to improve these areas.

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

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

(1) Finalization of FY20 Capital and Operating Budget Requests (\*)

I have developed final versions of the fiscal year 2020 capital and operating budget requests in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting. These proposals are due to the Town Accountant by January 10, 2019.

*Recommendation:* **Final Board review and approval of these requests.**

(2) Finalization of Financing Plan for Memorial School Project (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board met jointly with the Finance Committee and the group, collectively, was leaning toward the issuance of loans with a level principal repayment term (meaning that the total annual payments are higher at first and decline over time, as interest payments drop due to a more rapid decrease in principal). The group asked that I check with the School District and with the Town of Manchester with respect to their preferences for the financing plan. It is my understanding that the Town of Manchester was also leaning toward this repayment plan. The Manchester Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen will be in attendance at the present meeting and further discussion can be held concerning this matter.

**Recommendation: Further discussion concerning the financing plan for the Memorial School project with Manchester officials at the present meeting.**

#### **H. Complaints**

No items.

#### **I. Meetings Attended**

No items.

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

**(1) Further Discussion Relative to 2019 Annual Town Meeting Topics (\*)**

I have revised the list of potential 2019 Annual Town Meeting topics in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting.

**Recommendation: Further Board review and discussion relative to potential topics.**

#### **K. Legal Issues**

**(1) Quarterly Review of Executive Session Minutes**

The Chairman has reviewed the Board's collection of unreleased executive session minutes and has not identified any new minutes that are suitable for release at this time.

**Recommendation:** No further action is necessary.

#### **L. Grants**

**(1) Essex Downtown Boardwalk Feasibility Study Quarterly Report**

I filed the subject report with the State during the week of December 31, 2018 for the quarter ending December 31, 2018. The project is on hold since the State Legislature did authorize borrowing for construction but the Governor has not to date actually include the borrowing in any budget.

**Recommendation:** No further action is necessary.

**(2) Apple Street Traffic Study Technical Assistance (\*)**

The Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) have commenced a study relative to making recommendation that may allow school buses to drive to and along Turtleback Road for the middle school/high school bus run early in the morning. The elementary school students have the benefit of a later bus run along Turtleback

Road, after there is more morning light in the sky and morning traffic along Apple Street has subsided. Selectman Phippen and I met with CTPS personnel, the incoming and outgoing police chiefs, and the Superintendent of Public Works on December 19, 2018 to provide CTPS with necessary background information. Presently, we expect CTPC to perform their necessary field work by mid-January, with written observations and recommendations to follow.

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

(3) Future Use of Apple Street as a Strategy for Coastal Resilience (\*)

Selectman Phippen and I recently asked personnel from CTPS (see item above) whether the MPO has begun to look at coastal resilience as part of its transportation planning efforts. While this type of consideration has not yet begun at MPO in earnest, it may be something that will be considered soon. Apple Street improvements were noted in our recent Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Plan as an alternative transportation route when the causeway is flooded. As such, it would seem prudent to inquire at the MPO as to whether the organization would consider a study concerning how to improve resilience at the Causeway and perhaps with respect to Apple Street. To that end, Selectman Phippen and I worked on a proposed letter to the MPO to determine if any such assistance can be offered.

*Recommendation:* **Board consideration of the proposed letter to the MPO.**

## **M. Emergency Planning**

No items.

## **N. Other Items**

(1) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on December 24, and 26-28, 2018, and on January 4, 2019.

(2) Christmas Holiday

The office was closed on December 25, 2018, in observance of the subject holiday.

(3) New Year's Day Holiday

The office was closed on January 1, 2019, 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.*