



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 22, 2019

Report covers from April 6, 2019 to April 19, 2019

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Town Building Committee Public Forum Summary & Project Cost (\*)

The Selectmen and the Town Building Committee met jointly on April 10, 2019 to offer a public forum concerning the design progress on the combined public safety facility at the combined site along John Wise Avenue. The forum featured a presentation on the latest design drawings and elements from Johnson Roberts Associates and an interactive public discussion to collect input on how the design may best serve the Town. Generally, those in attendance had a variety of conceptual questions, some of which were answered on the spot, and others which are being taken into consideration. It is possible that we will have an idea of the overall expected cost of the project by meeting time.

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

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Connection of Council on Aging Personnel to Town Network

I have been working steadily with Council on Aging Personnel to prepare them for migration to the Town's central computer network ever since the fiber optic connection was installed at the Senior Center. Work has involved discontinuation of the Center's old Internet connection and offering of Wi-Fi supported by the Town's central Internet connection, as well as maintenance and provisioning of existing computer systems. Soon, we will be looking to provide personnel with network accounts in order to begin the actual migration process.

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

### C. Personnel

No items.

### D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

No items.

### E. Insurance

No items.

## F. Facilities

### (1) Reassembly of Town Features at Paglia Park (\*)

As the Board may recall, the area by the Essex River Bridge on Route 133 known as Paglia Park (the Town uses this area by license agreement with the property owner) was temporarily closed to be used as a staging area for the emergency bridge repairs. At that time, various features that had been placed in the park by the Town and by the Essex Merchants' Group needed to be moved elsewhere.

The occupancy of the area by MassDOT, National Grid, and others has ceased until the permanent bridge work begins in the future and the park can be returned to its present state for the time being. The area has been maintained partially by the DPW, partially by the Merchants' Group, and partially by volunteers. Wheel ruts from large equipment have yet to be repaired by others and I met on the site with the property owner and Bob Coviello from the Merchants' Group on April 11, 2019. It would be useful to understand the Board's goals for this site going forward.

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

### (2) Spring Deployment of Conomo Point Park Stairs, Ramp, and Float

I asked our marine contractor to deploy the subject equipment at the Conomo Point Park now that the warmer weather has arrived and he has completed that work. This equipment provides excellent seasonal access to the waterfront. The Selectmen's Assistant is also arranging for portable toilets to once again be placed at the large parking lot at Conomo Lane.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (3) Spring Startup of Centennial Grove

I have arranged for our plumbing contractor to start the water system at the Grove Cottage on April 25, 2019, after the Water Department charges the summer water line to that area. Our irrigation contractor will be starting the Field of Dreams irrigation system on April 26, 2019. The Selectmen's Assistant has already arranged for the deployment of portable toilets at the Grove and at the Field of Dreams. I will work with the YMCA to deploy the swim float at the beach, once the condition of the float has been assessed for the season.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

## H. Complaints

No items.

## I. Meetings Attended

No items.

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

### (1) Continued Review of Annual Town Meeting Motions (\*)

The Board reviewed a preliminary draft of the Annual Town Meeting motions at the last meeting and I have revised the motions per the Board's guidance.

***Recommendation:* Further Board discussion relative to the Annual Town Meeting motions.**

### (2) Guide to Selected Annual Town Meeting Articles

At the last meeting, the Board provided input concerning a guide to selected articles for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting. I posted the guide on the Town website on April 12, 2019 and it can be easily accessed through the Town Meeting tab on the home page. I will update the figures associated with the new police and fire facility as soon as those figures become available from our project designers.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## K. Legal Issues

### (1) Deposition in City of Gloucester CSO Payment Dispute

I will be deposed by counsel for the City of Gloucester on April 22, 2019 concerning a lawsuit filed some time ago by the City of Gloucester. The suit claims that the City is owed money from the Town with respect to the City's costs for combined sewer overflow (CSO) remediation work even though the City shifted all of those costs from the sewer rate to Gloucester taxpayers back around 2011. Town Counsel will be present for the deposition.

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

### (2) Development of Policy Potentially Allowing Advertising at Field of Dreams

The Manchester Essex Little League recently asked the Board whether paid advertisements that help the League with its mission could be placed on the outfield fences at the Field of Dreams during the baseball season. At the last meeting, I provided the Board with a sample policy concerning this activity and have now customized it for use in Essex, at the Board's request. Any final adoption of the policy should involve review by Town Counsel.

*Recommendation:* Further review of the draft policy by the Board, as per the posted agenda.

(3) Quarterly Review of Executive Session Minutes

The Chairman has reviewed the Board's unreleased executive session minutes through the end of last quarter. No new minutes have been recommended for release at this time.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**L. Grants**

(1) Federal Disaster Relief Update, 2018 Nor'easters

As the Board may recall, the Town will be receiving the standard, 75% reimbursement for snow and ice operations associated with one of the March, 2018 nor'easters. With respect to seawall damage at Conomo Point that was caused by another storm, we were originally told that our costs would not be eligible. I continued to work with FEMA personnel, including hosting a site visit on March 8, 2019 and participating in a conference call on April 12, 2019. Unfortunately, the result will not change, and the costs will not be deemed eligible.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Status of Recommendations for Collaboration with Manchester (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board reviewed a memorandum from the Collins Center that provided interim insight on some simple action items that Essex and Manchester could take to begin working together. I have begun to follow up on a number of items per the Board's request:

- a) The Board asked that I determine whether the Essex DPW is interested in being included in an on-call utility contractor bid that the Town of Manchester will soon be renewing. I put Essex DPW Superintendent Mike Galli in touch with the Superintendent in Manchester and he will evaluate whether he wants to be included in Manchester's next request for proposals.
- b) I have discussed the pathway forward toward signing up for Alternative On Bill Credits (AOBCs) with the Manchester Town Administrator and a member of the Manchester Energy Committee. AOBCs allow the Town to take advantage of sustainable energy produced in other regions as credits against our electric bills. Manchester already worked out a suitable contract through its own legal counsel (same firm Essex uses) and I am told that entry into the program is relatively simple. I am presently working on assembling a picture of the Town's electricity consumption over the past year and will then proceed with setting up a potential agreement for the Board to consider in the future.

- c) The Manchester Town Administrator and I are in the process of communicating further with the manager of the Ipswich Light Department, with an eye toward some type of future, formalized agreement for Ipswich to serve as our on-call street light servicing contractor.

Also, we will soon learn from the Collins Center when they would like to schedule a working session with the two boards of selectmen. At that session, the Boards would hear about all of the possible avenues for collaboration and would begin to prioritize future actions based upon what the collaboration study has recommended.

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

(3) MVP Action Grant Applications

I spent a great deal of time during the weeks of April 8 and April 15, 2019 collaborating on two MVP Action Grant applications with personnel from Boston University (BU) and the University of New Hampshire (UNH). Both applications were signed by the Chairman, as authorized in the past by the Board, and submitted by the April 19, 2019 application deadline. The Selectmen's Assistant provided much-needed support with respect to the compilation and mailing of the final UNH product. BU compiled and submitted the other proposal directly, on the Town's behalf. We should know more about funding status in a few weeks.

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

**M. Emergency Planning**

No items.

**N. Other Items**

(1) Patriots' Day Holiday

The office was closed on April 15, 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.*