



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of May 6, 2019

Report covers from April 20, 2019 to May 3, 2019

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Strategic Planning Cmte./Economic Development Cmte. Meeting Summary(\*)  
Members of the Essex Strategic Planning Committee met jointly with the Essex Economic Development Committee on April 30, 2019. The Town Planner and I attended. This meeting gave the two committees a chance to discuss matters of common interest and to prepare for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting. The Economic Development Committee is supporting an article that proposes funding for pavement marking and wayfinding signage in the downtown area. The Committee is also preparing to work with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to develop a formal Economic Development Plan for the Town. The group also reviewed recent progress toward fulfilling other goals of the Town's Strategic Plan.

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

(2) Town Building Committee Meeting and Public Forum Summary (\*)  
The Town Building Committee met jointly with the Selectmen at a regular meeting on April 24, 2019 and at a public forum on May 1, 2019. The featured content of both gatherings was the estimated cost of a new fire and police facility along John Wise Avenue. The Town already owns some of the required land and will close on the remaining area on or before June 1, 2019. Both meetings featured discussion concerning the projected cost of the project and I presented information concerning tax increase implications of the project at the May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. The Selectmen and the Building Committee voted on the 1<sup>st</sup> to only seek additional design funding at the Annual Town Meeting on May 6, 2019. This will allow the design process to offer up a more refined cost estimate and may allow the Town to call for changes in the underlying design, to possibly decrease the project cost.

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

### B. Computer Systems

No items.

### C. Personnel

No items.

#### **D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

No items.

#### **E. Insurance**

No items.

#### **F. Facilities**

##### (1) Annual State Elevator Testing, Town Hall and Senior Center

Our elevator contractor arranged to have the State Elevator Inspector inspect and test the Senior Center and Town Hall elevators on May 2, 2019. I had our fire alarm contractors (different for each building) and our generator contractor on hand, as required by the State. The Senior Center passed most aspects of inspection and requires parts and adjustments that our elevator contractor will perform and then certify the repairs to the State. The Town Hall elevator failed to operate properly on generator power (despite having no problem last year). The State Inspector needs to come back anyway to inspect the accessible lift associated with the second-floor conference room in Town Hall and will re-test the Town Hall elevator generator issue on that occasion. All other aspects of the Town Hall elevator testing were compliant. By the time the inspector returns, we will have arranged with our generator contractor (at no cost to the Town) to identify and correct the problem.

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

#### **G. Fiscal/Budget**

No items.

#### **H. Complaints**

No items.

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

##### (1) Essex Regional Retirement Board Spring Advisory Council Meeting

The subject meeting was held in the Essex Town Hall Auditorium on April 24, 2019. The Council likes to have its meetings hosted in various locations in Essex County and had asked Essex to host this particular meeting. I provided words of welcome and some general background about Essex, to kick off the meeting.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Informal Staff Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting on April 25, 2019, as I do from time to time. The meeting featured a discussion of the upcoming Annual Town Meeting and updates and collaboration between departments concerning ongoing issues and initiatives.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Essex Merchants' Group Meeting

I attended the Essex Merchants' Group meeting on May 1, 2019, along with Dana LeWinter of the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA). Ms. LeWinter is helping the Town formulate a community housing strategy by first using the collective input of a Housing Coalition to bring attention to the matter with various groups in Town. At the meeting, she presented some Town demographic and housing cost information. Group members had a chance to ask questions and provide feedback.

*Recommendation:*

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

(1) Final Annual Town Meeting Motions

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I have developed final versions of the Annual Town Meeting motions per the Board's guidance from the last meeting.

*Recommendation:* **Board review of the final motions.**

**K. Legal Issues**

No items.

**L. Grants**

(1) Essex Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Process Status

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As the Board may recall, over the past couple of years, we have been working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to revise and update the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan categorizes the various types of threats from natural forces that should be mitigated by the Town in a proactive way, to the extent possible. Towns with current plans remain eligible for a variety of Federal grant programs to assist with mitigation efforts, usually through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Essex plan was first completed in 2012, with a five-year shelf life. MAPC provided me with a draft final copy of the plan that I have commented on. A revised version with those comments incorporated has been posted on our website and the plan will soon be sent to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for initial review, and ultimately to FEMA.

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

(2) Economic Development Plan Grant Update

As the Board may recall, we have recently received from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) a District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) grant for assistance with the production of the Town's first-ever Economic Development Plan (EDP). I spoke with our primary grant contract, Raul Gonzalez, on April 25, 2019 in an effort to determine how and when the work should be kicked off by the Economic Development Committee (EDC) and to provide him with some background on the Town and our process thus far. We established that the EDC would first meet to review the project scope and proposed schedule on April 30, 2019 and would be back in touch with MAPC (through the Town Planner or myself) to set up an initial tour of the Town and working session. This will likely occur after MAPC does some preliminary work to prepare for the meeting.

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

(3) Regional Dredge Grant Update

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Selectman Phippen made a site visit to Bourne, MA on April 29, 2019 to better understand how the Cape Cod regional dredge program is set up (both on behalf of Essex and on behalf of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission). Various communities on the North Shore are working with Senator Tarr and others to possibly receive State funding for the necessary equipment. The program would then perhaps be operated using a regional council of governments model (provided for under Section 20 of Chapter 34B of the General Laws). I participated remotely in the meeting portion of the site visit, along with Selectman Spinney and Deputy Harbormaster Fialho. While the consultant working on this study (Woods Hole Group) will issue a report in June, many elements would need to come together, including enough annual demand for dredging and the council of governments framework, to make the idea viable.

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

(4) Dam & Seawall Repair Grant Quarterly Report

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I worked with GZA Geoenvironmental to provide the subject report to the State during the week of April 22, 2019. The design for the Conomo Point Seawall replacement project is moving along well and our consultant has issued an updated cost estimate totaling \$2,215,200. As such, at the Annual Town Meeting, the amount sought for the local match should be increased to be in step with this more refined cost estimate. Most design tasks will be completed on or before June 30, 2019 and we have asked the State to extend the deadlines for tasks concerning final permitting or comment incorporation as a result of the permitting

process. We hope to be able to apply for construction funding during the next grant funding round, which will likely open in June.

Further, I have had detailed discussions with personnel from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) concerning the possibility of using Federal funds provided through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help defray the non-State project match (25% of the total cost). I have learned that the time between applying for an applicable Federal grant and finding out if the application is going to be funded can be up to eight months (and longer if a full Environmental Assessment is required – which is likely for a seawall). Also, FEMA will not provide funding for any project that is already underway. It is conceivable that the Town will receive Dam & Seawall funding from the State by the early fall. Also, the FEMA application is complex and time-consuming and will require the Town to hire an engineering firm for the Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) section. It would not be advantageous to the Town to go through the process only to find out that the project is ineligible for funding due solely to timing.

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

(5) Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant Monthly Reports

I provided the subject monthly reports to the State during the week of April 29, 2019. The natural sediment deposition project grant is winding down and we are preparing to submit all final work products and a final invoice to the State. We are hopeful that a second year of marsh recovery monitoring will be funded pursuant to our recent grant application. The mussel reef feasibility study (a literature review) is also wrapping up and the principal also understands that we need to begin the grant closeout process.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(6) DIA OSHA Compliance Assistance Grant

The Department of Industrial Accidents (DIA) will soon be offering grant funding to assist communities with OSHA compliance. Town OSHA Coordinator Erin Kirchner will be arranging for a visit from program personnel and we invited the Town of Manchester to consider the matter with us. We have learned that the Manchester would like to collaborate with Essex on a regional grant application.

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

## **M. Emergency Planning**

### (1) Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team Meeting

I attended the subject meeting along with other Essex officials and officials from the surrounding Cape Ann communities, plus the Town of Ipswich. The meeting featured a debriefing session from MEMA with respect to the Lawrence gas explosions that occurred in the fall of 2018.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **N. Other Items**

No items.

*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.*