



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of May 20, 2019

Report covers from May 4, 2019 to May 17, 2019

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Historical Commission Hearing Concerning 11 John Wise Avenue

The Essex Historical Commission had in the past found the principal structure on the property that the Town is purchasing at 11 John Wise Avenue to be "significant". As such, the Commission took the further step of considering whether the structure should be "preferably preserved" by holding a hearing on May 17, 2019. Selectman Spinney and I were in attendance. The Commission did vote to make that designation and, as such, a demolition delay of four months has been instated. In addition, the Commission has reiterated its interest in portions of the structure being saved and incorporated into the proposed, new police and fire facility at that location. The Commission also stated it would actually prefer to see the structure kept whole, some place on the site. The delay will not affect the schedule for the proposed public safety facility project at the site, since it will run its course well before we have a contractor on board for the actual dismantling/possible re-use. The Commission's Chairman plans to bring the Commission's decision and recommendations for future re-use to the Town Building Committee on May 22, 2019.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Application for Bathing Beach Permit Renewals

Every two years, it is necessary to renew the Town's permits for its three, public bathing beaches (Clammers' Beach, Front Beach, and Centennial Grove). The Board of Health issues the permits and actually conducts the sampling. I have applied for the necessary renewals and the Board of Health will issue new permits on May 23, 2019.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Renewal of Computer Infrastructure Replication Software

The software that allows us to replicate our entire computer infrastructure to the Town of Danvers datacenter will be due for renewal soon. When we moved over from Melrose to Danvers last year, we unbundled our licenses from the Melrose platform and re-bundled with Danvers. I have worked with Danvers IT staff to order licenses renewals specific to our involvement and the renewals will soon be fulfilled.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Annual Sign-off on Town Policies

Each year, in late-May, all municipal employees (this term includes traditional employees as well as appointees and elected officials, whether compensated or not) are prompted to review all Town policies and to provide an acknowledgement form to my office. This prompt will soon be sent for the new fiscal year (2020) and acknowledgement forms are due back by the end of July.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Alternative On Bill Energy Credit (AOBC) Project Subscription (*)

As the Board may recall, we were hopeful to be subscribed to a new, alternative energy project being offered by a company known as SunRaise that would allow the Town to deduct 10-15% each month from its usual electricity cost. Under the AOBC system, alternative energy projects in other regions are allowed to provide cost benefits to interested customers. We learned about this concept from the Town of Manchester, which had already vetted the benefit and had not found any downside. The project that Manchester is subscribed to is already fully subscribed and we were looking at a new project, known as “4-pack” (a rooftop solar array project). However, SunRaise was not able to offer that project at all and we are now being considered for participation in a larger project, in the western part of the state. The time horizon for that project, if everything works out, would be 2020 or 2021.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Third-Party Ambulance Billing Agreement Renewal (*)

Our third-party ambulance billing contract is considered on an annual basis. Our present vendor, Comstar, has provided excellent service and has developed a successor agreement for fiscal year 2020. The Fire Chief concurs with this course of action.

Recommendation: **Signature of the successor agreement with Comstar for fiscal year 2020 (effective July 1, 2019).**

(3) Status of Design for Public Safety Facility (*)

At the last meeting, the Board authorized the Town’s architect to work directly with the Essex fire and police departments to determine if either department could find economies in the design by reducing the size of spaces and/or eliminating

certain design features. As such, both departments have provided our designer with their ideas for potential, cost-saving design changes.

Prior to this action, our architect had already performed a first pass at economization and was able to recommend changes that should equate to approximately \$1,000,000 in construction savings. Also, we have learned that the recommendations of the departments may save an additional \$500,000. The total savings increases to approximately \$1,800,000 if the \$300,000 option to excavate for storage space under the training room is not exercised. Further, as the design process continues, our designer will be able to reduce overall project contingency in accordance with narrowing down the list of unknown issues.

Department heads, Town officials, and our design team participated in a site visit to the new Rowley police and fire facilities (separate buildings) on May 15, 2019 in order to understand how certain issues were handled in those designs and how we might introduce more economy into the Essex design using those examples. The Town Building Committee will meet on May 22, 2019 to go over the design and will be working to choose the best overall solution for HVAC.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(4) Change Order for Promotion of Town Resources and Attractions (*)

The recent Annual Town Meeting appropriated \$5,875 in additional fiscal year 2019 funding for the promotion of Town resources and attractions. The current contract for this promotion is held by the Essex Merchants' Group and the Group expects to provide by meeting time a change order proposal for the use of that additional funding through June 30, 2019.

Recommendation: **Board review and approval of the request for a contract change order, if available by meeting time.**

(5) Scope of Services and Contract for Downtown Parking Lines and Signage (*)

The recent Annual Town Meeting appropriated \$84,000 to design, permit, and construct parking lines on the roadway and wayfinding/parking signage in the downtown area (primarily along the State Highway). This scope of services was recommended as part of a recent [parking study](#) that the Town received grant funding for. Transportation design firm Stantec has provided us with a specific proposal for the necessary work. The scope requires discussion in order to ensure that the Town will be able to realize its specific goals.

Recommendation: **Board review and discussion of the scope of work proposal from Stantec and potential vote to sign a contract for the work outside of a meeting, once the scope and contract documents have been finalized.**

(6) Potential Sale of Conomo Point Lots

(*)

The Annual Town Meeting authorized the Board to sell two vacant lots in the southern area of Conomo Point that had originally been set aside in the Southern Conomo Point subdivision for future Town use. If the aggregate value of the property were over \$35,000, the Board would need to develop a Request for Proposals laying out the proposal requirements and any conditions of sale. However, in this case, since the combined assessed value of the properties is far less than the applicable threshold, the Board may also choose to use “sound business practices” for the sales. For example, the Board may assign a member to discuss interest in purchase with abutters or any other interested parties and report back. Any sale may include a deed restriction deeming the parcel unbuildable in perpetuity, if desired, and any other type of restriction that the Board is interested in pursuing. The Board may also arrange to have the buyer of each parcel pay all of the Town’s legal costs associated with each sale. While the issuance of a RFP is not a requirement, the Board may also choose to use that process, if desired.

Recommendation: **Preliminary Board discussion concerning the process and conditions desired for the sale of the properties.**

E. Insurance

(1) Monthly Pothole Log

I have obtained the pothole log for the month of April from the Department of Public Works. No potholes were reported during April.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) MIIA Rewards Program

Each year in May, our insurer, the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) collects evidence of best practice training and other activities performed by the Town over the past fiscal year. The Town receives credit on its insurance premiums for various insurance lines for eligible initiatives since these activities tend to reduce overall risk of loss. Examples include building pipe freeze-up surveillance, cybersecurity audit work, police department accreditation, DPW safety training talks, and more. This year, the deadline for submitting items for credit is May 24, 2019 and I have already submitted most items. Any remaining items will be provided to MIIA in the next week.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Future Route 133 Resurfacing and Targeted Safety Project

MassDOT has informed the Town that its Highway Safety Division is working through the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to seek funding

for future roadway resurfacing and safety improvements along Route 133 in Essex (primarily along the John Wise Avenue section). The project will cost just over \$2M in today's dollars but likely won't be funded for several more years. While the project will probably not affect any new line striping that the Town puts in place for on-street parking improvements, anything that is covered up would be replicated by the project.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Regulation of Small Wireless Facilities (5G Technology Rollout) (*)

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued a new rule that allows municipalities to regulate the "small wireless facilities" that will become the backbone of the new 5G wireless system. Most of these wireless antennae will be affixed to existing utility poles and, even though the Town does not own the poles, the Town does own the pole right of way in most cases and many facilities will also have a ground component. As such, the Town will be allowed to review applications for these new facilities and to charge initial and ongoing fees for their installation and continued presence. Our law firm is presently working on sample regulations that the Board could adopt in order to be ready for 5G applications if and when this next generation is proposed for installation in Essex.

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

(2) Passage of Public Safety Facility Debt Exclusion by Town Meeting

A majority of voters at the Annual Town Election on May 13, 2019 voted to approve the assessment of debt associated with a future public safety facility appropriation and borrowing authorization outside the Proposition 2 ½ levy limit. As such, if a Town Meeting held anytime within the next year votes to authorize the necessary borrowing and appropriates sufficient funding for this purpose, the project may move forward without any further Town Meeting or voter approval.

The Selectmen would then discharge the project, with input from the Town Building Committee and the Finance Committee. The Annual Town Meeting already voted to utilize cash on hand to continue with the design process for the facility, through the bid phase.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

K. Legal Issues

No items.

L. Grants

(1) DIA Workplace Safety Training and Education Grant (*)

In my last report, I stated that the Department of Industrial Accidents (DIA) would soon be offering grant funding to assist communities with training programs that will assist with OSHA compliance. The grant information has now been officially released, with a rolling application due date, through September 27, 2019. Town OSHA Coordinator Erin Kirchner arranged for a visit from program personnel on May 16, 2019 and we invited personnel from the Town of Manchester, since Manchester would like to collaborate with Essex on a regional grant application. This year's focus will be on the DPW and Essex Superintendent of Public Works Mike Galli also attended the meeting. It seems that a training topic that is important to both communities involves a basic OSHA course known as OSHA-10 (ten hours of training). The course includes many important safety topics such as fall prevention, work zone safety ("struck-by" and "caught in-between" prevention), and basic electrical safety. We may also be looking for specific training on electrical lock-out, tag-out procedures and confined space entry.

Recommendation: **Authorization of the Chairman to sign the grant application once the topics have been finalized and quotes for the training have been obtained.**

(2) Regional Senior Transportation Planning Grant (*)

Lt. Governor Karyn Polito will likely visit Essex in the near future to announce several grant awards as part of the State's collaboration and efficiency grant program. Essex is part of a healthy senior living grant application that was submitted as a regional application by Cape Ann Mass in Motion and the Gloucester Health Department. The grant will seek to address transportation for those who reside in low-income senior housing and to increase healthy food access and physical activity opportunities. On May 13, 2019, I attended a meeting in Gloucester relative to how the grant funds will be distributed to the four communities and what each community is expected to undertake.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to this grant award and authorization of the Chairman to sign any necessary paperwork as it becomes available.

(3) Dam and Seawall Repair and Removal Grant Application (*)

As the Board is aware, the recent Annual Town Meeting appropriated a 25% local cash match for the Conomo Point Seawall replacement project. We hope to receive the other 75% from the subject grant program and we expect that the grant application will be released soon, with an application deadline sometime in late June. The total project cost will be approximately \$2.2M and we are hoping to receive approximately \$1.6M in State grant funding. I have already been working with our engineering consultant GZA Geoenvironmental (which has been steadily design the project using design funds from the same grant program) to develop the necessary materials and information for the construction grant.

Recommendation: Board authorization of the Chairman to sign all necessary grant application paperwork when it is completed.

(4) MAPC LED Rapid Streetlight Retrofit Grant Update

The Board applied recently for the subject grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for some aspects of retrofitting all street lights in Essex with LED lamps. MAPC has announced that the agency should have a street light supplier on board by early June, from which the Town could purchase the necessary materials. On a parallel track, the Town applied for Green Community Grant funding for the actual installation labor and any other elements that are not covered by the MAPC grant. We expect to hear about that grant soon as well. Ideally, both grants will combine to allow for the retrofit project to be accomplished without any funding from the Town.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

M. Emergency Planning

(1) FEMA Recovery Transition Meeting

I met with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) personnel on May 9, 2018 to discuss the formal closeout of the Federal disaster funding for snow and ice management associated with a winter storm in 2018. The Board has already provided the necessary paperwork to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to collect the reimbursement, which is in process.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

N. Other Items

No items.

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