



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of July 29, 2019

Report covers from July 13, 2019 to July 26, 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 Meeting Summary (\*)

The Board met jointly with the Town Building Committee on July 24, 2019. The meeting featured a presentation by our design professionals concerning the updated project cost estimate that was derived from the completion of the design development (DD) phase. The presently-anticipated figure of \$15,994,869 is about \$1.54M lower than the preliminary figure of \$17,534,795 that was estimated during the schematic design (SD) phase. The decrease is partially due to much more specific information about the project being available now and the removal or downsizing of some project elements between the SD and DD phases. Also, our designer has used value engineering (VE) techniques to provide minor cost reductions in several areas.

One additional cost estimate will be produced at the end of the construction document (CD) phase. This final estimate will be offered to bidders as they prepare bids for the project. The Committee and the Board both agreed that the existing house should simply be demolished and disposed of as part of the project, since a recent cost estimate predicted a cost of over \$200,000 to incorporate the timber frame into the new building.

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

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Upgrading of PC Operating Systems

Just as our virtual server operating systems were set to hit "end of life" (meaning they will no longer be supported by Microsoft) in 2020, we have PCs running Windows 7, which will go end of life around the same time. Working with IT personnel in the Town of Danvers, we are on track to update our server operating systems well in advance of the deadline. I have also begun the process of updating the operating systems on applicable PCs to Windows 10. This action will allow us to use the same machine, in a secure way, for a longer time. The action also will keep us compliant with respect to PCs in the police and fire departments since, because of the Windows 7 end of life issue, the North Shore Regional 911 Center will not be allowing Windows 7 computers to connect to its resources after January 14, 2020. I have converted 13 PCs over to the new operating system and three remain.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Update of Central Antivirus Server

The vendor for our central antivirus server software offers a version that is compatible with Windows 10 client computers. With the recent update of some PCs to Windows 10, it was necessary for me to install this server software update.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

**C. Personnel**

No items.

**D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

(1) Advertisement of Public Safety Facility Bidder Pre-qualification Process

Since the proposed public safety facility construction contract will exceed \$10M in value, it is necessary for all interested general contractors and filed sub-bidders (trades) to pre-qualify to bid on the Town's project (in addition to any Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance – DCAMM – certification requirements). As such, I worked with our Project Manger to post all of the necessary advertisements that allow prospective bidders to learn about our upcoming, potential project (Gloucester Times, Massachusetts Central Register, Commbuys, NV5 website, and local posting) – all ran on July 24, 2019. Our Project Manager will continue to work with the prequalification subcommittee to complete the advertisement process and eventually to vet applicants. Pre-qualification packages are due to NV5's offices from prospective bidders on August 9, 2019.

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

(2)Further Review of Alternative Electricity Supplier Contract and Pricing (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should take steps to further vet a proposal from another energy supplier (Engie) versus the Town's existing supplier (Constellation – under the MMA's MunEnergy Program). Engie actually came in slightly higher than the Constellation renewal pricing for the same date and I have learned that the Engie figures do not even include some of the cost components that Constellation's base figures include.

I also have begun to inquire with other companies. Power Options, another non-profit which also uses Constellation as its underlying supplier, will provide power at the same rates we can get under MunEnergy. The MunEnergy and Power Options contracts with Constellation are very similar. However, the MunEnergy contract requires Constellation to allow us to add and delete accounts without

penalty, an important consideration with the proposal for a new public safety building on the horizon.

Aspen Energy and Direct Energy may also quote us by meeting time.

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

(3) Exploration of Long-term, Fixed Price Contract for Natural Gas (\*)

Presently, the Town pays the standard rate charges by National Grid for the supply of natural gas to Town buildings and pump stations. It may be advantageous to enter into long-term, fixed price natural gas contracts like we presently do for electricity supply. Aspen Energy, Engie, and MunEnergy, Direct Energy, and Power Options (all suppliers we are looking at for the new electricity contract) also supply natural gas. Once the Board arrives at a final supplier for electricity, we could begin to look at a natural gas contract.

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

(4) Furniture Planning for Proposed Public Safety Facility

During the design process for the Town Hall and Library renovation project, we met with a commercial furniture expert to understand the overall type and quantity of furniture that we should expect to need. That process demonstrated how slight changes in the design could actually improve the furniture layout at no additional construction cost. On July 23, 2019, the incoming chief of police and the fire chief met with me and with furniture experts to review the current state of the design plans for the proposed public safety facility. Similar to the renovation project, the experts had recommendations for door placements and other elements that will be very beneficial to the utility of each space when furnishings are considered. This information has been reported to our architects so that these small changes can be incorporated into the final design plans.

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

## **E. Insurance**

No items.

## **F. Facilities**

(1) Results of Voluntary OSHA Inspections, Fire and Police

The Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards (DLS) conducted inspections of the fire and police facility, policies, and procedures on July 11, 2019, at the invitation of the Town. DLS has now issued an inspection report for each department with minor corrective measures required. The reports also recommend other actions, several of which will be addressed if a new facility is

constructed as proposed. Each of the departments will take the necessary steps to address the mandatory items at this point.

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

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

### (1) Proposal to Station a School Resource Officer (SRO) in District Schools (\*)

As the Board may recall, one of many ideas for collaboration with the Town of Manchester that the Collins Center is presently studying is the possible future sharing of the costs of a School Resources Officer (SRO). We have learned that the Town of Manchester may be able to station a SRO in District schools as early as this coming school year, if a cost-sharing mechanism can be worked out. District and Manchester officials met to discuss the concept on July 22, 2019 (our incoming Chief of Police was in attendance) and the Manchester Town Administrator contacted me thereafter to provide an update.

Essentially, Manchester is potentially able to restructure work assignments within its police department to allow for an officer to be dedicated to a regional SRO role. The District would pick up the majority of the cost from its own operating budget and each town would need to contribute as well. The SRO would spend 85% of his or her time in the middle/high school and 15% of his or her time between the two elementary schools. The results of the Collins Center study will be coming out toward the middle of August and Essex has a chance to re-assess its budget and revenue targets at the Fall Town Meeting in November.

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

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

### (1) Review of Traffic Study Concerning Apple Street School Bus Routes (\*)

Selectman Preen and I met with Manchester Essex School District personnel and the owner of the District's transportation provider on July 23, 2019. We discussed the results of the traffic study that the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) completed this past spring concerning bus operations along and off of Apple Street. While all acknowledged that the CTPS study did not find any significant safety issues with the expansion of service to include an early run along Turtleback Road, the transportation provider made it clear that he is not at liberty to provide expanded service under the scope and terms of the present contract. He is willing to grandfather in all existing routes and stops and a more formal process

will be put in place between the District and the provider to review any new requests going forward.

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

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

No items.

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

(1) Signature of Purchase and Sale Agreement for Sale of Cogswell Rd. Lot (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board provided a draft Purchase and Sale agreement for the sale of the Town-owned, vacant lot at 0 Cogswell Road (Map 110, Lot 38) to a group of abutters for \$12,000. That document was not intended to be a binding agreement and simply gave the buyers a chance to review the language before finalizing a documents for both parties to sign. The abutters' review process is complete and no substantive revisions have been requested. The abutters provided a plan showing how they would like to subdivide a parcel in order to add a small piece of it to each of their existing lots and Town Counsel will incorporated that plan reference into the purchase and sale agreement and the associated proposed deed. I hope to have final documents to Town Counsel and possible signature by the buyers by meeting time.

*Recommendation:* **Board countersignature of the final Purchase and Sale agreement for the sale of the subject property, if available by meeting time. The agreement will include the agreed-upon form of deed that will be used in the transaction.**

#### **L. Grants**

No items.

#### **M. Emergency Planning**

No items.

#### **N. Other Items**

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on leave, on July 29, 2019.

*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.*