



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of August 12, 2019

Report covers from July 27, 2019 to August 9, 2019

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

### B. Computer Systems

No items.

### C. Personnel

No items.

### D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

#### (1) Kickoff Meeting for Downtown Line Striping and Signage Project (\*)

Our traffic engineering firm, TEC, kicked off the subject project with an internal meeting on August 1, 2019. Chairman Spinney, Chief Francis, Officer Davis, and I were in attendance. The meeting featured a review of our objectives and a plan to prepare for the project's first public forum, which will be held sometime in September. The first forum will allow the Town and its designer to consider stakeholder ideas that could be incorporated into the draft plan. A second public forum will be held after the design has been completed but before the project goes out to bid, in order to make any final adjustments. Generally, this project will lay down new parking lines along the downtown stretch of Route 133 and will provide new wayfinding signage that will allow visitors to more easily find resources, such as the municipal parking lot and the Town Hall/Library.

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

#### (2) Consideration of Complete Streets Town-wide Assessment (\*)

During the kickoff meeting for the downtown parking striping and wayfinding project, our engineering firm called to our attention that a separate project, using grant funding, could be initiated to study how roadways and associated pedestrian and bicycle routes could be improved and made safer. The Complete Streets grant program is funded by the Commonwealth and could provide \$30,000 for our engineering firm to undertake a Town-wide study. While recommendations that pertain to the State Highway are not eligible for subsequent construction funding, other areas may be.

**Recommendation: Board discussion relative to whether the Town should inquire about this assessment and within what timeframe.**

(3) Finalization of Fixed-Price Natural Gas Contract (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town should move toward a fixed-price, long-term natural gas supply contract, similar to the strategy used for many years now with respect to electricity supply. In years past, our electricity supplier, Constellation, did not offer fixed-price gas contracts through the MunEnergy Program. I have been in touch with Constellation with respect to setting up a gas supply contract and may have more information by meeting time.

**Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.**

**E. Insurance**

No items.

**F. Facilities**

(1) Town Hall Elevator Re-inspection and Accessible Lift Inspection

As the Board may recall, the Town Hall elevator required repairs and was only provisionally approved back in May. The repairs were made and our elevator contractor returned with the State inspector on August 1, 2019. The elevator passed inspection. The accessible lift for the second-floor conference room was due for its first inspection (every two years) and it was inspected and passed.

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

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

No items.

**H. Complaints**

No items.

**I. Meetings Attended**

(1) Conservation Commission Notice of Intent Hearing, Public Safety Bldg.

I attended the subject hearing on August 6, 2019, along with members of our public safety building project design team. Our team had submitted on behalf of the Board a Notice of Intent (NOI) to construct a new public safety facility at 11 John Wise Avenue, pending final funding approval by a Special Town Meeting that will occur on September 23, 2019. Details concerning the Commission's review of the NOI were not available as of the printing of this report.

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

(2) Planning Board Meeting, Site Plan Review, Public Safety Building

I attended the subject meeting on August 7, 2019, along with members of our public safety building project design team. Our team had submitted on behalf of the Board a Site Plan Review application to construct a new public safety facility at 11 John Wise Avenue, pending final funding approval by a Special Town Meeting that will occur on September 23, 2019. Details concerning the Planning Board's review of the Site Plan Review application were not available as of the printing of this report.

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

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

(1) Regulation or Bylaw Concerning Banning of Certain Plastics (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board indicated that it would prefer exploring a plastic bag, drinking straw, polystyrene, and hot stopper ban in Essex to proceed via Board of Health regulation, rather than via a new bylaw. The Board asked me to determine whether the Board of Health is interested in proceeding in that fashion. I have learned that the Board of Health would rather the Town Meeting have a chance to debate and possibly adopt these rules as a bylaw. The Board of Health understands that it will be the enforcing authority even if adopted as a bylaw.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to developing an article for possible adoption of this proposed bylaw at the Fall Town Meeting.**

**K. Legal Issues**

(1) Sale of Sumac Dr. Lot and Development of Associated Documents (\*)

At the Board's meeting of July 15, 2019, the Board agreed that the Chairman should approach the prospective buyers of the lot at 0 Sumac Drive (Map 110, Lot 7) that the Town intends to sell. The Chairman may report at meeting time what the result of these discussions could translate to in terms of purchase price. Thereafter, the Board can determine whether to move forward with a Purchase and Sale agreement, including in the agreement whatever future restrictions the Board is interested in imposing.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to finalizing a buyer and possibly moving into the transaction document phase, if sufficient information is available by meeting time.**

(2) Further Review of Senior Center Property Line

(\*)

At the last meeting, I explained to the Board how an abutter to the Essex Senior Center property recently claimed that the property line that the Town has been enforcing is actually closer to the Senior Center than the Town asserts. It is possible that the abutter will provide additional information to substantiate this claim by meeting time.

**Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary, if additional information is available by meeting time.**

**L. Grants**

No items.

**M. Emergency Planning**

(1) North Shore Regional 911 Center Advisory Board Meeting

As of July 1, 2019, the State 911 Department took over the operation of the Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center, which is now known as the North Shore Regional 911 Center. The structure for governance of the center under its new management will still feature an Administrative Advisory Board (formerly known as the Finance Advisory Board, consisting of the various town administrators and the Mayor of Amesbury) along with Police and Fire advisory boards and an Executive Board (chairs of the other three boards, plus some at-large members). I had served as the Finance Advisory and Executive Board chairman since March of 2015 and this first meeting under the new Intermunicipal Agreement sought to elect new officers. Given that representatives from various communities have changed recently, for continuity sake, I agreed to continue to serve as Chairman of the Administrative Advisory Board and the Executive Advisory Board so long as a plan is in place to transition me out of that role over the coming year.

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

**N. Other Items**

(1) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office, on vacation leave, during the week of August 5, 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.*