



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of September 9, 2019

Report covers from August 24, 2019 to September 6, 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

#### (1) Trial of New Computer Systems in Police Department

Whether or not the proposed, new police and fire facility moves forward, the public safety departments will be in need of new client-side computer systems in the near future. We have upgraded the ten-year-old systems that are in place today to Windows 10, in order to stay compliant with overall security recommendations and to utilize the state-of-the-art software at the Regional Dispatch Center. However, the systems are overdue for outright replacement. To that end, I specified two test systems for the police department to evaluate. The systems feature small form factor PCs that mount in an integrated monitor stand. I have assembled and configured the two systems (one in the old dispatch room and one in the prisoner processing area – which had no workstation in it yet anyway) and they are in use. We will be able to compare these new systems to other options that may also be suitable in the future. If the new public safety facility is funded, the equipment budget for the project will include funds for PC replacement.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 5 hours.

### C. Personnel

#### (1) Employee and Volunteer of the Year Awards

I am getting started with respect to nominations for Employee and Volunteer of the Year for 2019. I have provided notice of the nomination period (which ends October 3, 2019) to all of the usual parties. Anyone wishing to make a nomination can get in touch with me before the deadline to learn the proper procedure.

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

### D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

#### (1) Periodic Review of Summer Camp Contract with YMCA (\*)

The ten-year contract that the Town has with the YMCA to run the Camp Dory summer camp is reviewed by the Board every three years and we have just

completed year six. The review simply gives the Board a chance to determine whether the arrangement should be continued. I have met with the North Shore YMCA's Executive Director, Chris Bevilacqua, and he has indicated that the YMCA is very interested in continuing the contractual relationship. He mentioned that the YMCA hopes to partner with Project Adventure next season to install a low ropes course that will be set up and taken down each night. He also mentioned that he may be able to help find individuals willing to donate materials and professional labor to improve facilities at the Grove. One item that may need attention is the trimming of dead branches on large trees in the area, to eliminate the hazard. It may be possible to find a company that would donate or discount those services.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to a continued relationship and the various items that have been raised.**

**(2) Preliminary Draft of Downtown Line Striping and Wayfinding Plans (\*)**

Our consulting engineering firm, TEC, has completed a preliminary draft (75% design stage) of the plans for parking striping and wayfinding signage in the downtown area. The Economic Development Committee will review this draft on September 17 and a public workshop will be held on September 25. Any comments that the Board has at this stage can be incorporated into subsequent plan drafts. Eventually, a final design package will be submitted to Mass DOT for permitting purposes.

***Recommendation:* Board review and comment concerning this preliminary plan draft.**

**E. Insurance**

No items.

**F. Facilities**

No items.

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

**(1) State Funding for a Portion of Town's Public Safety Building Costs (\*)**

Our local legislative delegation was successful in getting \$40,000 into the fiscal year 2020 State budget to help defray the cost of the Town's planning and design of the proposed, new public safety facility. I was advised by the Senator's office that the Town had to make an administrative request for the funds, which I completed on August 27, 2019. We have not yet received a contract to facilitate the transfer of funds. Once the funds are released to the Town, they are eligible to pay for new costs or to be used as reimbursement for costs already incurred.

**Recommendation: Board vote to authorize the Chairman to sign, outside of a meeting, the contract with the State that will facilitate release and use of the funds.**

(2) Development of Municipal Finance Calendar

Every year at this time the Town Accountant and I begin to put together the Municipal Finance Calendar for the coming fiscal cycle (FY21). The Accountant will provide me with an initial draft and we will begin filling in dates for significant events.

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

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

(1) Local Officials Appearance on Cape Ann Report

Chairman Spinney, Town Building Committee Chairman O'Donnell, Police Chief Francis, and I appeared on Cape Ann Report, which is a production of 1623 Studios, on September 4, 2019. The taping featured a discussion relative to the status of planning and design for the proposed, new public safety facility.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

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

(1) Presentation and Motion for Special Town Meeting Article (\*)

I have developed with bond counsel a draft motion for the single article that will be presented at the September 23, 2019 Special Town Meeting – concerning the proposed funding for the proposed, new public safety facility.

**Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the presentation of and motion for the single article.**

(2) Review of Preliminary Draft of Fall Town Meeting Warrant (\*)

I have developed a preliminary draft of the Fall Town Meeting warrant based upon the Board's guidance from past meetings.

**Recommendation: Initial Board review of the preliminary draft of the Fall Town Meeting warrant.**

## K. Legal Issues

### (1) Possible Acquisition of Easements Over Private Property for Marsh Ditch Work (\*)

The Army Corps of Engineers is continuing to develop possible scenarios for the possible beneficial re-use of materials dredged from the Essex River. I met with Corps personnel on August 28, 2019, including Dot Lundberg, Ph.D., who is a leading authority on mosquito ditch remediation, to discuss some possibilities. Two possible techniques involve the restoration of eroded marsh banks and the infilling of mosquito ditches which are not serving a useful purpose. In order to even attempt these techniques, the Town would have to secure temporary and/or permanent easement rights on the private properties where the techniques would make sense.

While the Town could use the value of those rights as a cost match for the eventual work, the Town is not in a position to pay the private property owners for the rights. Further, the techniques may or may not be successful over the long term and neither the Town nor the Army Corps would be culpable for any efforts that end up failing. That all said, if the Selectmen are inclined to ask property owners for their opinions on such a proposal, that can be arranged.

While most of the candidate properties are private, there is one property that is listed as “owner unknown”. That property may somehow be eventually deemed Town property after a particular process is undertaken (with guidance from Town Counsel). If so, the experimental process could be streamlined. Also, generally, the Army Corps requires each potential project sponsor (the Town in this case) to complete a questionnaire entitled “Assessment of Non-Federal Sponsor’s Real Estate Acquisition Capability”, which also needs review by Town Counsel.

A final, less complex possibility is that sandy material at the mouth of the Essex River could be dredged and used to nourish the barrier beach on Castle Neck Island to the north (Crane Beach). The Trustees of Reservations, which owns that site, may be interested in allowing the beach nourishment and our ongoing study with Boston University relative to sediment transport in that area could help inform such a project.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to whether private property owners should be approached about beneficial re-use possibilities, whether Town Counsel should be involved in the “owner unknown” and questionnaire issues, and whether the prospect of a beach nourishment project at Crane Beach should be explored further.**

## L. Grants

### (1) Green Community Grant Award (\*)

As the Board is aware, the Town applied for and received \$6,706 under the Metropolitan Area Planning Council’s Rapid LED Retrofit grant program for a portion of the funding necessary to convert the Town’s street lights to LED lamps.

The remainder of the funding was contingent upon receiving a grant award through the Commonwealth's Green Community grant program. We have learned that we will be receiving the requested Green Community grant funding later in September, in the amount of \$28,929. Between the two grants, plus guaranteed utility-based incentives and rebates, we will be able to undertake the entire project, valued at \$46,485, entirely with third-party funding. We are presently awaiting clearance to begin working with our chosen project consultant, Tanko Lighting, relative to moving the conversion process along.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to authorize the Chairman to sign the necessary Green Community Grant paperwork and to sign a contract with Tanko Lighting, outside of a meeting, when that becomes available.**

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

No items.

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

(1) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave for part of August 29, 2019 and all day on August 30, 2019.

(2) Labor Day Holiday

The office was closed on September 2, 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.*