



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of October 7, 2019

Report covers from September 21, 2019 to October 4, 2019

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Contract for Fiber Optic Service Extension to New Fire/Police Facility (*)

Now that Town Meeting has approved the funding for the new public safety facility, various related matters need to be set into motion. The Town's municipal buildings are all linked by a Town-owned fiber optic system. Since the new building will be at a new location, it is necessary to install a spur on the system to serve the new building. Our fiber optic vendor, Comm-Tract, which is a vendor on the State Contract, has proposed a price for the installation of \$14,610. With incidentals, such as police details, the entire installation will cost approximately \$16,600.

Recommendation: Board vote to authorize me to sign the contract with Comm-Tract for the necessary fiber optic extension at the appropriate time.

(2) Contract for Audit, Design, and Oversight of Street Light LED Conversion (*)

As authorized by the Board in the past, the Chairman was authorized to enter into a contract with Tanko Lighting to audit the Town's existing public street lights and to design and supervise the acquisition of materials and labor to convert the lights to LED lamps. Unfortunately, due to the small number of street lights we have in Essex, Tanko is unable to honor their pricing under the MAPC bid (which was geared to larger systems, with more economy of scale). As such, the Town Planner and I have discussed our project with another bidder, Citelum, during the week of September 30, 2019, and we are confident that this new company can deliver what we need, within the grant budget. In order to get the process started, a new municipal subscription form needs to be executed. The approximate contract value is \$3,105 – all in grant funds.

Recommendation: Board vote to authorize the Chairman to sign a new municipal subscription form, with Citelum.

(3) Server Operating System Upgrades for Windows Desktop Servers

As the Board may recall, the Town of Danvers IT Department has been steadily assisting Essex by upgrading the operating systems on all of our virtual servers to Windows Server 2016. The present operating system goes end of life in January 2020 and only two virtual servers remained in need of upgrade after Danvers

personnel processed upgrades on other servers. During the week of September 23, 2019, Danvers personnel began the migration of users from the virtual server that serves up Windows desktops for non-public safety personnel. We tested the new system using a newer type of zero-client device at the Selectmen's Assistant's desk and, initially, encountered some issues that needed to be addressed. After overcoming those issues, the system is working well – with better performance than the older client device provided.

The migration process will be repeated for all users of the non-public safety server and I will eventually also install new client devices for each user (funding could be sought at the Fall Town Meeting, using the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund). Thereafter, the final server – the public safety Windows desktop server – will be upgraded and users will be migrated in a similar fashion.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 3 hours.

(4) Regional IT Assessment Grant Survey

The Town of Middleton Assistant Town Administrator is coordinating the regional IT assessment grant that we are participating in with several other communities. The assessment process will bring in a professional consultant to learn about the setup and needs of the IT environment in each community and will subsequently recommend services that could be offered on a regional basis, likely by the Town of Danvers. As the Board is aware, the Town of Danvers already provides Essex with file replication for disaster recovery and with certain IT services on an as-needed basis. I completed and submitted the survey during the week of September 23, 2019 and I assisted the grant consultant with an on-site inventory of our hardware and software systems during the week of September 30, 2019. A formal interview with the grant consultant will occur during the week of October 14, 2019.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(5) Interconnection of Essex Fiber Optic Network with Other Municipal Networks

It is possible that the Town of Danvers, using primarily grant funding, will be able to interconnect several Fiber Optic Municipal Networks (FMANs) in nearby communities to provide a dedicated fiber connection between Essex and Danvers. Presently, Danvers receives replication data with respect to the Town's network resources and that proceeds over a secure tunnel using the Internet. Having a dedicated fiber connection will allow for much more efficient and more frequent replication of the data and may allow the Town to undertake some direct computing from Danvers as well. The interconnection effort is expected to occur before the end of the calendar year and Essex may be asked to bear the cost of some police details associated with the Essex portion of the work.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Safety Committee Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on September 26, 2019 as a member of the Committee. The meeting featured a discussion concerning the recently-funded new public safety facility and plans to utilize our insurer's loss control grant by purchasing items needed by the Department of Public Works. The Committee also began to frame safety goals for the upcoming year.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Downtown Parking Striping and Signage Public Workshop Summary (*)

The Board and I, along with other Town officials, attended the subject workshop on September 25, 2019. The meeting was intended to present to all stakeholders in the downtown area the preliminary plan developed by our engineering firm, TEC, for new parking striping and wayfinding signage in the area. Representatives from the business community requested that the next draft of the plans be discussed in a daytime meeting intended for the Essex Division of the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce and the Essex Merchants' Group. I am able to organize that meeting and can put the next draft on the Town website in advance.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Construction of New Public Safety Facility and Asbestos Abatement (*)

Now that Town Meeting has approved funding for the new facility, I am working with our designers and our Project Manager to get the project through the bid and contract award phases. Final bids are due on October 30, 2019 and a site visit for bidders will be held on October 9, 2019. As the Board may recall, we had considered getting separate bids on asbestos abatement in the existing structures at the project site so that the selected general contractor would not have to deal with that process as they prepare to demolish and remove those structures. Our design professionals have had more time to review the matter and they no longer feel that a separate bid is necessary, since the selected general contractor will probably be able to get the abatement done during their project mobilization and general site clearing phase anyway. I am also working with our insurer to apply for the necessary builder's risk insurance policy. Once we have the final bid price, the application that I have already started will go to our insurer for policy pricing and commencement.

Recommendation: **Board authorization to keep the asbestos abatement as part of the general bid.**

(3) Quarterly Affirmative Marketing Report

I filed the subject report with the State in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Compliance Officer (AMCO) during the week of September 30, 2019. The report documents the Town's utilization of woman and minority-owned businesses on State-funded construction projects. No such utilization occurred this quarter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Facilities Self-Inspection Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for the Town Hall and the Senior Center for the quarter beginning October 1, 2019 during the week of September 30, 2019. The checklists are used to detect any safety hazards and are discussed at Town Safety Committee meetings. This quarter, I noted the major renovation work that was required on the Senior Center side fire escape stairs (some structural rot was repaired and all decking was replaced).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Winterization of Facilities at Centennial Grove

The DPW will soon remove the swim float and fishing dock at the Centennial Grove for the season. The Selectmen's Assistant has made arrangements to have the portable toilets removed for the season after the Youth Commission's Halloween event. I will soon make arrangements for a plumbing contractor to blow out the pipes at the Grove Cottage and for our irrigation contractor to blow out the sprinkler system at the Field of Dreams.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Removal of Stairs, Ramp, and Float from Conomo Point Park

I have made arrangements with a marine contractor for the removal and winter storage of the stairs, ramp, and float at the Conomo Point Park. This work should be taking place within the month.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Annual Risk Assessment and Monitoring Plan Review Meeting

Each September, department heads gather to review the Town's Risk Assessment and Monitoring Plan. Since Town operations and services can change from time to time, this meeting is intended to ensure that the Plan keeps in step. The Plan is

intended to raise awareness about areas where financial fraud could be committed and includes detailed breakdowns concerning areas to be vigilant in with respect to each major Town department. This year, the meeting, which was held on September 23, 2019, pointed up some minor changes in the Plan.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) School District Budget Discussion Group Meeting Summary

As has been the case for many years, officials from Essex, Manchester, and the Manchester Essex Regional School District began a series of meetings on September 27, 2019 that will help to understand operating and capital budget needs as the organizations approach the FY21 budget development process. I attended for Essex and provided a general overview of factors that will contribute to the formulation of budgets going forward. The group also acknowledged that the original leases of municipal property in Essex and Manchester (the three school campus properties) expire in 2020 and a renewal process needs to be undertaken. I will provide more information on that process in the future.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Essex Division Meeting

I attended the subject meeting along with Selectman Phippen on September 26, 2019. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the proposal for a plastics ban bylaw that will be considered by the Fall Town Meeting in November. Personnel from Seaside Sustainability assisted with the presentation. Also discussed was the recent approval by Town Meeting of the funding necessary to construct a new public safety facility at 11 John Wise Avenue, the hope of the business community to have the promotion of the Town line item restored in the Town budget, and other Town projects and initiatives.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Draft Fall Town Meeting Warrant

(*)

I have continued to refine the draft Fall Town Meeting warrant per the Board's guidance and have produced a revision that also includes Town Counsel's input. The Board is scheduled to sign this warrant at its next meeting, on October 21, 2019.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion relative to the draft Fall Town Meeting warrant.**

K. Legal Issues

(1) Quarterly Review of Executive Session Minutes

The Chairman has reviewed the Board's executive session minutes that have not been released to date and has determined that no new minutes are ready for release at this time.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

L. Grants

(1) Dam & Seawall Repair Grant Quarterly Report

I received from our engineering firm and filed with the State during the week of September 23, 2019 the required quarterly report for the quarter ending September 30, 2019 for the Seawall Repair Design grant we are working on. Most of the tasks included in the grant have been completed and tasks such as project bidding and award are on hold until we know if the Town will be awarded a separate grant for construction (application was made back in July).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(2) MVP Action Grant Monthly Report, Sediment Transport

The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) research grant concerning sediment transport and dynamics modeling along Castle Neck and within Essex Bay is well underway and Boston University (BU) has already completed most of the required field work. This grant requires monthly reporting and I received from BU and filed with the State the monthly report for September during the week of September 23, 2019.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Culvert Replacement Grant Update

(*)

Personnel from the State Department of Ecological Restoration (DER) will visit Essex on October 21, 2019 to conduct the kick-off meeting for the subject grant. The general idea is that the grant will fund design plans and permitting for the replacement of a culvert under Apple Street for ecological improvement while also elevating the roadbed in the area to be above the flood elevation for extreme tidal surges. Review of the matter thus far by our engineering contractor (preliminary work conducted at no cost to the Town) suggests that Apple Street actually has two low spots over about a 600-foot length of road. It is our current understanding that the grant may pay for culvert replacement and roadbed elevation in the low spot where the culvert is, but will not likely pay for the design in the second area. As such, the issue could be dealt with in two phases,

with the second low spot coming from some future vulnerability preparedness grant program.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(4) MIIA Loss Control Grant Application

(*)

Every year, our insurer, the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA), offers a grant program to assist communities to obtain items or provide training that will be helpful in avoiding losses. This year, after discussing the grant opportunity at the recent Safety Committee meeting, the DPW would like to apply for several safety-related items including: flammable rags disposal containers, a new trench box, and backup cameras for existing vehicles. I am presently working on the application with the DPW.

Recommendation: **Board authorization for the Chairman to sign the application when it is completed.**

M. Emergency Planning

(1) North Shore Regional 911 Center Meeting

I presided over the subject meeting on September 26, 2019 in my capacity as Chairman of the Executive Advisory Board for the Center. I also serve as Chairman of the Finance Advisory Board. The meeting featured a discussion relative to the process of moving toward common radio frequencies and the eventual conversion of historic dispatch data from the Center's old software (Spillman) to its new software (IMC). The conversion and migration process will likely take as long as the end of calendar year 2020 to complete. Until then, the Center will maintain a copy of the old software for departments to query for data related to pre-IMC incidents.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

N. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave all day on October 4, 2019.

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