



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Nov. 26, 2018

Report covers from November 3, 2018 to November 23, 2018

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Renewal of File Backup System Support

In addition to the Town of Danvers maintaining a secondary live instance of our computing environment and backing that instance up archivally, we maintain a third-party vendor account for redundant backup of just our user-created files. The subscription for that service expires in early January and I have arranged for renewal.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Fiber Optic Municipal Area Network Update

After the subject network connecting all major Town buildings was completed, I purchased the necessary switchgear and other equipment to make the network operational. Our network consultant completed the initial configuration of this new equipment offsite and then deployed it in our buildings during the week of November 5, 2018. I assisted with the preparation of the equipment spaces at each of the various locations. Our consultant then worked to complete configuration remotely and our VOIP telephone component was cut over on November 19, 2018. We are completing testing of the now-operational network in order to begin moving users from our present, VPN-based network to the FMAN, hopefully beginning the week of December 3, 2018. I have already made arrangements with Comcast to upgrade the speed/bandwidth of our service at Town Hall, since all users will be relying on that. Once the new system is proven, we will cancel Internet service at the other buildings, translating to appreciable savings over time.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 4 hours.

(3) Annual IT Audit

Our financial auditing firm also conducts a full IT audit each year. I have been contacted by personnel from that department and am working to provide them with updated information concerning our operating environment and any necessary logs and output.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Safety Committee Meeting

The next meeting of the Safety Committee will occur on December 20, 2018. I have placed a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Commencement of Collective Bargaining with EPBA and AFSCME

Both of the union collective bargaining agreements with the Town expire as of June 30, 2019. As such, both unions have notified the Town that they wish to engage in collective bargaining to arrive at successor agreements that will be effective July 1, 2019. Chairman O'Donnell and I will meet with the EPBA on November 28, 2018 and Selectman Spinney and I will meet with AFSCME on December 5, 2018. The Board can discuss these matters in executive session on December 10, 2018.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Status of Public Safety Building Project Site Selection and Design (*)

The Selectmen met jointly with the Town Building Committee on November 8, 2018, to review updates from our Project Manager and our architectural team concerning the ongoing site selection and building design process. On the 8th, the two boards reviewed a variety of possible public safety siting scenarios and determined that the best solution would be to purchase private property for a combined facility at 42 Western Avenue. The next best option (barring the purchase of some other private property) would be to build a new fire station at the Town-owned John Wise Avenue site and to demolish the existing public safety building in favor of a new police station, on the existing footprint.

The Committee met again on November 20, 2018 to review the two best options in more detail and to assemble information as to why certain other options are not recommended. The Committee also looked at the prospect of a police station at the Memorial Park site, with fire at the John Wise Avenue site. The Committee determined that the 42 Western Avenue site is still the preferred option and will await more information from the Selectmen concerning the potential purchase of that property. Further, the Committee received from our Project Manager a report concerning the ground-penetrating radar and magnetic imaging work that has recently been performed along Shepard Memorial Drive and in the small portion of Memorial Park between the baseball field backstop and Martin Street. This work was conducted since the Town hit buried drums of chemicals when the

sewer system was being constructed in the area in the past. Imaging work suggests that other items may be buried in the area, requiring hazardous materials removal costs to be factored into any proposal to use that area.

Concerning the potential purchase of private property at 42 Western Avenue, the Board should, by meeting time, be in possession of an appraisal of that property, both as a single parcel and as a divided parcel with a 3-acre lot (which the Town would use for the public safety building) and an approximately 1.8-acre lot (which the Town could potentially re-sell). The appraisal was conducted to determine the highest and best use(s) under each of those scenarios and the Board will review and discuss the appraisal report at the present meeting.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the Town Building Committee's progress and direction and relative to the 42 Western Avenue appraisal and potential commencement of purchase negotiations with the owner.**

(2) Community Compact Application (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town should apply for a second Community Compact – focusing on three best practices involving age and dementia-friendly communities, regionalization and efficiency, and water resources management. Subsequently, in speaking with the Director of SeniorCare, I have learned that the specific elderly-related best practice that is most aligned with the concept of a future regional grant is:

Convene leaders of municipal departments, businesses, local citizen groups, regional planning agencies, and private and non-profit organizations to align interests with a goal of creating an ongoing process of community assessment, action planning and implementation, and prioritize age and dementia-friendly efforts. Create process to support, acknowledge and reward local businesses and non-profit entities that work to become age and/or dementia friendly.

In speaking with the Superintendent of Public Works about a water resources-related best practice, I have learned that the Board of Public Works would like to pursue the following best practice area:

Address Infiltration and Inflow to reduce unintended storm and wastewater in the system and the cost of treating it.

Further, with respect to regionalization and shared services, only one best practice is offered.

Regionalize services and share resources among municipalities for efficient and effective service delivery to residents and taxpayers in this

era of shrinking budgets, loss of seasoned employees to retirement, and increased need for service improvements.

However, we have learned from the State that they are no longer accepting three best practices in a second Compact – only two. As such, the Board will need to choose which two (with the realization that the regionalization and efficiency best practice will lead to immediate grant funding – see item I3, below). Thereafter, I will be able to complete the on-line application on behalf of the Board.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization for me to electronically sign the Town's Community Compact application on the Board's behalf, once it has been completed.**

E. Insurance

(1) Monthly Pothole Log

I received the monthly pothole log for the month of October from the Department of Public Works during the week of November 5, 2018. No potholes were reported during October.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Freeze-up Prevention Inspections for Town Buildings

Each year at this time, the Police Department and the Department of Public Works assign various employees to check each of the Town buildings for heat once per weekend until the weather warms up again. I have provided the necessary log sheets to the Chief of Police and the Superintendent of Public Works and monitoring will commence as of the first weekend in December.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Annual Inspection and Replacement of Town Fire Extinguishers

The Selectmen's Assistant and I arranged for our fire extinguisher contractor to inspect all fire extinguishers in Town Hall and the Senior Center. This vendor also inspects extinguishers in all of the DPW facilities and has replaced any units that are ready to expire.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) School Budget Group Meeting / Project Financing Call Summary (*)

I attended a school budget group meeting with Chairman O'Donnell and Finance Committee Chairman Buttrick on November 9, 2018. The meeting featured a discussion relative to the kickoff of the fiscal year 2020 operating budget preparation season, along with preparations for choosing an appropriate financing strategy for the recently-approved Memorial School construction project. Thereafter, on November 20, 2018, Finance Committee Member Flynn, Treasurer/Collector Soulard, and I participated in a conference call with the District's financial adviser relative to financing options.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the schedule for School District operating budget review and adoption and preferences for Memorial School financing options.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Massachusetts Health Officers' Association Annual Meeting and Trade Show

I attended the subject conference in Falmouth on November 14 and 15, 2018. The conference offered updates on on-site wastewater systems and solutions, along with other health-related topics. Presentations qualified for credit with respect to my status as a Registered Sanitarian, Approved Septic System Inspector, and Approved Soil Evaluator. The conference also offers great networking opportunities with other municipal officials, State personnel, and vendors.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Great Marsh Symposium

I attended the subject conference with Chairman O'Donnell and Selectman Phippen on November 8, 2018. This year, the symposium featured a historical and artistic context, covering aspects such as early Native American life in this area, hunting, fishing, and local art. Senator Tarr and Representative Ferrante both made remarks after Chairman O'Donnell offered the opening greeting.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Joint Meeting w/ Manchester Selectmen, Regionalization/Shared Services (*)

I attended the subject meeting with the Board members on November 19, 2018. The two boards of selectmen discussed a variety of areas that might offer possible avenues for sharing services or equipment or even regionalizing certain functions.

The goal of both boards with respect to future analysis and discussion will be to determine if cost savings can be achieved and/or improved services can be offered, with an eye toward not increasing costs or decreasing the quality of services.

Of particular interest was the possibility of Essex entering into a Community Compact for the efficiency and regionalization best practice area. We thought that such an action would allow the two towns to be more competitive in an application for a grant that could fund a consultant to help review these types of opportunities. Manchester Town Administrator Greg Federspiel and I contacted the grantmaker the next day and we learned that the grant program we were interested in will not be funded this year. However, since Essex has the ability to apply for a new Community Compact, the State is willing to provide perhaps as much as \$40,000 directly from the Community Compact program.

At the meeting, all present agreed that the two town administrators should develop a preliminary recommendation for the scope of work that both boards of selectmen could review, revise if necessary, and approve, with a January timeframe. Given the more rapid availability of the grant funding that will be offered, it will be useful to discuss how this plan may be adapted.

Part of our initial recommendation will involve an analysis of what each town is presently doing in the realm of shared and regionalized services and equipment, what could be done without the help of a consultant, and what the grant program could help develop and better define. Presently, Essex has the following practices in place along a continuum from simple sharing to full regionalization via a third-party entity:

<u>Simple Sharing (off hours)</u>	<u>Formal Shared Services</u>	<u>Third-Party</u>
Sewer Camera (Rockport)	IT Services (Danvers)	MERSD
Building Inspector (Glouc)	Patrol of Lake (Hamilton)	Veterans' Dist.
Conservation Agent (Glouc)	Fire Explorers (Manchester)	Regional Dispatch
Town Planner (Newburyport)	Sewage Treatment (Glouc)	Retirement Dist.
	Emergency Planning (Cape Ann plus Ipswich)	Greenhead Fly Dist.
	Coastal Resilience Research (north up to NH)	
	Mass in Motion Cape Ann (Cape Ann)	

Areas that may hold promise for further exploration include Council on Aging van service, police, fire, DPW (especially perhaps equipment), board of health, youth and recreation, and OSHA training/compliance. Whether it is broadening something that Essex has already put on the continuum or offering/receiving

something new, the exploration of possible avenues should be an extremely beneficial exercise.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to Essex’s preliminary view on this matter, in order to enable productive discussion with Manchester as we approach this grant opportunity.**

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Passage of Manchester Memorial School Debt Exclusion

As the Board is aware, the Fall Town Meeting approved the appropriation of funds for the Town’s share of the Memorial School replacement project on October 16, 2018. Voters at special elections in both communities on November 6, 2018 passed the necessary debt exclusion, a form of a Proposition 2 ½ override. As such, the project final design and bidding will proceed as planned and the construction project will follow.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

K. Legal Issues

No items.

L. Grants

(1) MVP Action Grant Monthly Reports

I will soon file the subject reports for the month of November with the State. With respect to the natural sediment deposition study, University of New Hampshire personnel continue to analyze data from the past field season. With respect to the mussel reef literature review, we expect Northeastern University personnel to kick this off in January.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Regional Grant Application for Age & Dementia-Friendly Communities (*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed its support for a regional grant application that would assist the Cape Ann communities with becoming more age and dementia friendly. SeniorCare would put the grant application together but it will be important for at least one of the communities to have a Community Compact in place with respect to the age and dementia-friendly best practice area. I spoke further with the Director of SeniorCare and he suggested the most appropriate best practice area (discussed above in item D2). No State grant program has yet been identified but we will be well-poised to apply for a grant once a program does emerge – should the Board decide to apply for this area.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion concerning support for a future regional grant application involving age and dementia-friendly practices.**

(3) CHAPA Municipal Engagement Technical Assistance Grant Update

I discussed the subject grant program with Ms. Dana LeWinter of the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) on November 7, 2018. Ms. LeWinter was in support of a list of names that the Town Planner and I had put together concerning convening a Housing Coalition within the Town. We agreed that the first meeting of the Coalition will occur on December 12, 2018 and Ms. LeWinter provided a suggested form of letter to reach out to the various potential Coalition members. Response to the meeting invitation was excellent and I will update the Board after that first session.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Preliminary Coordination of FEMA Storm Reimbursements

Personnel from the DPW and I discussed the two, early-2018 storms that have been declared for Federal disaster aid with FEMA personnel on November 20, 2018. We had been waiting for a FEMA representative to be assigned to our case. In the first storm (March 2-3), much damage was done to the Conomo Point seawall system. In the second storm (March 13-14), we will be claiming some DPW snow removal expenses. We will determine in the coming weeks how much reimbursement we may be eligible for. The process will include an on-site meeting with FEMA and MEMA personnel on December 4, 2018.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

M. Emergency Planning

(1) Contract for Regional Dispatch Services, State 911 Department (*)

As the Board is aware, the State 911 Department recently offered to take over the operation of the Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center in Middleton, at NO cost to the participating communities. As such, the Town's cost to operate a dispatch function has gone from over \$250,000 per year (when we had our own center) to just over \$50,000 per year (when we joined the Regional Center), to zero (when State 911 takes the Center over as of July 1, 2019). To this end, the State has developed a new Intermunicipal Agreement for the Board's review.

Notably, the ten-year proposed Agreement requires the Town to remain with the Center (to be known as the North Shore 911 Center) for at least seven years, with at least three years notice given to leave the Center (i.e. earliest possible notice would be given after year four). Since the Town would likely need to pay upward of \$300,000 per year to reinstate this service locally, it makes sense to consider this long-term commitment. Representatives of the five existing participating

communities will meet with the Sheriff and with personnel from the State 911 Department on November 27, 2018 to discuss the draft agreement for the first time.

***Recommendation:* Board review and discussion concerning the proposed Intermunicipal Agreement with the State 911 Department for continued regional dispatch services.**

N. Other Items

(1) Essex Holiday Festival

The Essex Holiday Festival will take place between November 29 and December 1, 2018 and will feature the usual events: Memory Tree lighting (29th), Santa's Arrival (30th), and Breakfast with Santa (1st). Chairman O'Donnell provided the overall coordination of the Festival in this transitional year between past volunteers and Youth Commission involvement – including the Chairman's updating, printing, and dissemination of the [Holiday Festival flyer](#). I assisted with the procurement of a cut tree for the Memory Tree lighting and our office assisted with the management of donations and payment of expenses concerning the Memory Tree and Santa's Arrival events. Volunteers will run the Memory Tree lighting, the Essex Youth Commission will run Santa's Arrival, and the parents of the fifth grade Essex Elementary School class will run Breakfast with Santa.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Veterans' Day Holiday

The office was closed on November 12, 2018, in observance of the subject holiday.

(3) Thanksgiving Holiday

The office was closed on November 22 and 23, in observance of the subject holiday.

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