



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of December 2, 2019

Report covers from November 16, 2019 to November 30, 2019

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Essex Economic Development Committee Business Roundtable Breakfast (*)

The Essex Economic Development Committee (EDC) held the subject breakfast on November 20, 2019. The event was well attended and featured an interactive discussion about the state of business in Essex and various strategies that could be employed to foster the desired future for economic development. Personnel from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) organized the event and I was in attendance along with Selectman Phippen. The presentation given by MAPC may be [found here](#).

The EDC has also released an Economic Future survey that will be used to collect information from residents and business owners concerning various attitudes toward economic development in Town. The survey is available into mid-December at www.essexma.org/future. The EDC will also host an Economic Development Community Open House on January 8, 2020 in the Town Hall Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Completion of Server Operating System and Client Equipment Upgrades

Now that the Fall Town Meeting has approved funding that will allow all non-public safety personnel to benefit from upgrades to zero-client devices and monitors, I placed the necessary equipment order, received the equipment, and have begun to migrate users to the new server. We had tested the client devices and migrations with a few users prior to this time and worked out the protocols in advance. When work is completed, all non-public safety personnel will be running with a higher performance virtual desktop with a Windows 10 theme and a large-format monitor. Public safety personnel will continue to use existing equipment but will be migrated to the new public safety server. New equipment will not be purchased for public safety personnel until the new facility is completed, in about a year's time.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 12 hours.

C. Personnel

(1) Safety Committee Meeting

The next Safety Committee meeting will be held on December 19, 2019. I have placed a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Public Safety Facility Construction Project Update

(*)

Meetings involving the ongoing construction of the new public safety facility were held on November 19 and November 26, 2019. Chairman Spinney and I were in attendance along with other Town personnel and officials, our consultants, and personnel representing G&R Construction. On November 19th, the project team met two abutters to the right of the project site, who had a chance to ask some questions and to express some concerns that may require consideration from the Board in the future. We met on the site with one of the abutters the following week to better understand their perspective on existing trees that form a natural screen. As it turns out, most of those trees are on the abutting property, which means they will stay in place. The project contractor did not begin any work with respect to demolition of the existing dwelling and clearing of the land until the following week and that work is now in full swing.

On November 26th, the project team was alerted to a couple of issues that may make their way to becoming project change orders. First, it is possible that the layer of roofing shingles that came back positive for asbestos is actually below a newer roof. As such, the outer roof would have to be carefully stripped before abatement could be conducted on the lower roof. Stripping of an outer roof was not called out in the design. Second, MA DOT may require that an embedded sidewalk be installed as a mechanism for pedestrians the various driveway entrances to the new facility (as opposed to just painted lines on the pavement). Future construction meetings will be every Thursday at 1:00 p.m. The project ground breaking event will be held on December 5, 2019 at 2:00 p.m., out at the site.

Recommendation: **Board discussion regarding the overall project and the two issues that may require future change orders.**

(2) Street Light LED Conversion Project Update

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town of Ipswich needed to find a way to get its cost to convert the Town's street lights over to LED lamps in line with our lighting designer's estimate, which is under \$10,000. After further discussion with Ipswich, an arrangement was offered, but the project would be spread out over a twelve-week period. That will unfortunately be too long for us to remain in good standing with present grant funding deadlines and our

application for next year's Green Community Grant. As such, unless we hear that the State will provide an exemption from the deadline, we will need to pursue commercial vendors for the conversion work. To that end, our lighting designer (Citelum) is working with MAPC to specify and order the necessary materials and will assist with the procurement of a contractor to do the actual conversion work.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Request for Quotations, Promotion of Town Resources and Attractions

Now that the Town Meeting has approved funding for the promotion of Town resources and attractions, as in past years, I have solicited quotations from three organizations in the business of such work. Quotations are due on December 11, 2019 and the Board will take up the prospect of entering into a contract for this service at its meeting of December 16, 2019. All funding will need to be expended by June 30, 2019.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

No items.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Preliminary Draft of Capital Budget Plan Update (*)

The Finance Committee has released its annual call for each department to update its 5 to 10-year capital budget plan. I have begun to develop a preliminary version of the update for the Board's initial review. The final version of the update is due to the Finance Committee by January 10, 2020.

Recommendation: **Initial Board review of the preliminary capital plan update.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) MassBays Barrier Mitigation Workshop

The Town hosted the subject workshop in the Town Hall auditorium on November 21, 2019. The workshop featured discussions relative to a regional

effort to make stream crossings that pass beneath roadways via culverts or bridges more ecologically sound; and to eliminate dams that are no longer used. Both of these types of activities are critical to restoring historic, seasonal fish spawning runs. In Essex, we are working with the State Department of Environmental Restoration (DER) to improve the crossing on the Southern Avenue end of Apple Street while giving attention to possibly raising the roadbed elevation to be free from flooding during major coastal storm surges. I assisted with the presentation of the Essex project and, generally, workshop participants learned about past case studies and how these hold out hope for future projects in our area.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Northeast Coastal Coalition (NECC) Meeting Summary

Essex hosted the subject meeting in the Town Hall auditorium on November 22, 2019. Senator Tarr organizes and sponsors the meetings of the NECC every few months to work on issues of common interest in coastal communities (such as dredging). The meeting featured a discussion relative to how the insurance industry is gearing up to deal with the prospect of sea level rise and climate change. While the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is utilized by most people living in a Federally-designated flood zone, private insurance is beginning to become more cost competitive in certain situations. The Federal insurance program is still the only program available for high-risk properties (such as beachside properties). Many different stakeholders attended the meeting, which served as an excellent overview of the flood insurance system.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Discussion Relative to Outdoor Entertainment Application/Policy (*)

Chairman Spinney and I met with three representatives from the Essex business community and three residents on November 5, 2019. The group discussed opinions concerning whether the Selectmen should continue to work toward establishing some type of outdoor entertainment noise policy. Various major themes emerged including:

- Possibly revising the Town's application forms for annual and one-day entertainment licenses, in order to collect more information for the Board in advance of considering a particular application.
- Whether moving to a general policy only allowing acoustic music, without percussion, outdoors will offer a good compromise between business interests and ability of area residents to enjoy their own properties.
- Whether the State's noise control regulation should be referenced and/or enforced in some way by the Town.
- What roles the collection of baseline background noise data and the history of complaints for a given location might play.

Also, as had been requested previously by the Board, the Economic Development Committee met to discuss formulating its own recommendation on the topic (on November 13, 2019). The Committee has determined that it views the topic as something that the Licensing Board should specifically deal with, since the intricacies of creating new licensing rules are beyond its charge. However, the Committee did recommend that the Board begin with revising its existing entertainment application forms to collect more detailed information.

Further, the Board made a noise survey available to attendees at the recent Fall Town Meeting on November 18, 2019. About 25% of the attendees returned a completed survey. The Board conducted a similar survey of Town Meeting attendees in November of 2017. Generally, respondents were most concerned about boat and motorcycle noise and most were almost never or occasionally bothered by noise.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the possible development of a more detailed application form and a more involved application process, in addition to further consideration of the need for a policy.**

(2) Preliminary List of Possible Topics for 2020 Annual Town Meeting (*)

I have developed a preliminary list of possible article topics for the Annual Town Meeting that will be held in May of 2020.

***Recommendation:* Initial Board review and discussion of the topics.**

K. Legal Issues

No items.

L. Grants

(1) Department of Industrial Accidents (DIA) Safety Grant

As the Board may recall, the Town OSHA Coordinator and I had applied for the subject grant for safety training that will help the Town stay in compliance with OSHA regulations. DIA has announced that the grant has been funded at the requested amount of \$17,200 and will go toward DPW-related topics. Our grant application was written with mention of the Town of Manchester and the training will therefore benefit both communities. Hopefully, the Town of Manchester can be the lead agency on the next round of grants, naming Essex as a participant next fall. The OSHA Coordinator will now work with personnel in both communities to line up and hold the training, likely starting in the new year.

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

(2) Implementation of Municipal Collaboration Recommendations (*)

Now that the [final report of the Collins Center](#) with respect to collaboration between Essex and Manchester has been completed, the Board may wish to begin reviewing the report with an eye toward implementation. A step-wise approach may make the most sense, perhaps working from the easiest items toward the more difficult items.

Recommendations: Board discussion relative to getting started toward the implementation of some of the report recommendations.

(3) MVP Action Grant Monthly Report

I worked with personnel from Boston University to file the subject report for the month of November with the State, during the week of November 25, 2019. The project that is focusing on the transport of sediment along Crane Beach and throughout Essex Bay is presently in a data analysis mode.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

M. Emergency Planning

No items.

N. Other Items

(1) Thanksgiving Holiday

The office was closed on November 28 and 29, 2019, 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.