



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Dec. 10, 2018

Report covers from November 24, 2018 to December 7, 2018

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Town Building Committee Meeting Summary (*)

I attended the subject meeting along with Chairman O'Donnell and Selectman Spinney on December 4, 2018. The meeting featured a presentation of relative costs of the two most-preferred site alternatives for the proposed, new public safety building. Generally, building a single, combined-facility on a newly-acquired, larger site will save at least \$2.5M in site and other-related costs over building separate facilities on property the Town already owns. Of course, that number would be decreased in accordance with the final cost of acquiring a new property. Our Designer also reviewed how well various scenario would fit onto other sites that the Committee had identified, especially since the owner of 42 Western Avenue recently indicated he was no longer interested in selling that property (or a portion thereof) to the Town.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Transition to Vendor-hosted Mooring Management and Renewal System

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town should transition from our outdated, in-house mooring management and renewal system to a vendor-hosted system known as mooringinfo.com. The use of that system will come at no cost to the Town, is entirely web based, and will allow mooring holders much more convenience at renewal time. The Board indicated that the contract should be finalized after all necessary indemnification and hold harmless language is worked out with the vendor. The vendor is presently still in the process of reviewing the Town's preference for that language. The spring mooring renewal process will likely proceed via this new system.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Upgrade of Server Operating Systems

As the Board is aware, we had arranged for the IT professionals in the Town of Danvers (which hosts our computer infrastructure replication system) to upgrade the operating systems on four virtual servers plus the Town's primary domain controller. I discussed the process with Danvers staff on November 29, 2018. The staff expects to begin that work in December and will upgrade and test one server at a time. The process will leave us with current operating systems,

upgraded MS Office software, and a Windows 10 desktop experience for virtual users.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Town Administrator's Performance Review and Goal Setting (*)

At this time each year, the Board arranges to review my performance and to set goals for the upcoming year. In the performance area, I will rely on the detailed reports filed with the Board at each Board meeting as a record of my activities and accomplishments. As the Board may recall, my evaluation template was updated with eight specific goals at the outset of this calendar year for use at this time.

Also, it is necessary to work with the Board to develop goals for the upcoming calendar year. In addition to the general roles and responsibilities in my position description, which I will continue to update the Board on in detail for each new Board meeting, I recommend the following specific scope and welcome discussion with the Board:

- Continue to work with the Town Building Committee (TBC) and the Board to firm up a recommendation regarding the best siting/building plan alternative for new or renovated police/fire headquarters building(s). Two options exist at 24-30 Martin Street, one option exists on John Wise Avenue, and the purchase of new property is being explored. After one option is chosen by the TBC and the Selectmen, in consultation with the Finance Committee, our Project Manager, and our architect, coordinate a proposal to Town Meeting to potentially fund final design, construction, and construction oversight of the new facility. Work may include a process to acquire new land by the Town and, if the project is funded, final design and bidding.
- Continue to advance the Town's readiness for Essex River dredging. Work will involve continued collaboration with the Army Corps of Engineers to complete a beneficial use study concerning the re-use of dredge spoils within the Essex River/Essex Bay system. Work will also involve continued participation in Senator Tarr's Coastal Coalition for regional dredging support, including encouraging others to work with the Senator. Further, traditional dredging will be promoted on a parallel track, involving continued coordination with Congressman Moulton's office.
- Serve as coordinator and administrator of two MVP Action Grants that will improve our understanding of methods that could help stabilize the Essex salt marsh in the future, both horizontally and vertically. Work will include ensuring that our contractors (University of New Hampshire and Northeastern University) continue to adhere to grant scope, timing, and reporting, including the development of all necessary deliverables and

promoting study results for possible funding of next steps in the upcoming grant round.

- Continue to work with the Economic Development Committee (EDC) to review existing Town parking study recommendations and prepare for an Annual Town Meeting striping and signage proposal; to work with the Town Planner toward the completion of an Economic Development Action Plan using a recently-funded technical assistance grant; and to include the EDC in the thought process as the recently-funded CHAPA housing technical assistance grant unfolds and as final policy relative to the recreational marijuana industry in Essex takes shape.
- Work collaboratively with the Superintendent of Public Works and the Board of public works to plan next steps after reviewing recommendations within the soon-to-be completed water system facilities plan. Funding for the first elements recommended by the Plan should be considered in the spring, by the Annual Town Meeting. This goal is dependent upon the ultimate direction that is set by the Board of Public Works.
- Administer the recently-funded seawall design repair grant. Work will involve interfacing with our engineering contractor and using the design project's results to apply to the State for actual construction money in the next grant round.

***Recommendation:* Preliminary Board discussion relative to this year's evaluation process using the current template and the goal setting process for the upcoming calendar year.**

(2) Hiring Process for Assistant Superintendent of Public Works/Chief Operator

The Board, acting in its capacity as Personnel Board, approved an update to the position description for the subject position at the last meeting. Subsequently, I worked with DPW staff to advertise for candidates for the position (which was recently vacated when Michael Galli was promoted to Superintendent of Public Works). Mr. Galli and the Board of Public Works are accepting applications and will conduct interview and select a candidate as soon as the process allows.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Commencement of Collective Bargaining Agreement Renewals

Chairman O'Donnell and I met with representatives of the Essex Police Benevolent Association on November 28, 2018 and Selectman Spinney and I met with representatives from AFSCME on December 5, 2018 to commence negotiations for success collective bargaining agreements.

Recommendation: Board discussion in executive session as per the posted agenda.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Potential Purchase of 42 Western Avenue for Future Public Safety Building

At the last meeting, the Board reviewed the appraisal of the subject property that had just been completed by our appraiser. The Board asked that I provide that document to the property owner for his consideration, which I did the following day. Subsequently, the owner informed me that that he and the family are not interested in selling the property.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Annual Insurance Coverage Review Meeting

Our insurance representative from MIIA (the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association) provided me with MIIA's annual review of insurance coverage on December 4, 2018. The meeting featured a review of each line of coverage. This year, our insurer conducted a new assessment of values for our various Town buildings and found that a slight increase in value was warranted (translating to an annual property insurance increase of only about \$300). We also covered the new insurance policy for our new fiber optic municipal network, which has now been put in place.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Repair of Town Hall Elevator Weight Guard

We were informed by the elevator contractor that installed the Town Hall elevator (Delta Beckwith) that the elevator manufacturer (Otis) had issued a safety bulletin relative to the length of the guard that keeps the elevator weights safely in place. As such, we scheduled the free repair work as soon as we were notified and the work was conducted on December 3, 2018.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Preliminary Review of FY20 Capital Plan Update and Operating Budget (*)

The Finance Committee, through the Town Accountant, has already released the annual calls for capital budget updates and operating budget requests. I have updated the Board's Capital Budget Plan in a preliminary fashion and I have developed a draft memorandum that highlights significant features of the FY20 Operating Budget Request, along with a preliminary version of the FY20 budget worksheet. I will provide more refined materials as we progress through the

budget process and final requests are due to the Town Accountant by January 10, 2018.

Recommendation: Preliminary Board discussion relative to both capital and operating budget considerations for FY20.

(2) School Budget Group Meeting Summary (*)
Chairman O'Donnell, Finance Committee Chairman Buttrick, and I met with personnel from the School District and the Town of Manchester on December 7, 2018. The meeting featured a discussion relative to planning for the financing of the Memorial School Construction Project, the FY20 School District budget, and updates on particular town finance matters.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) PIE Rivers Partnership Annual Meeting
I attended the subject meeting in Newbury on December 6, 2018, along with Selectman Phippen (who also attended in his capacity with Eight Towns and the Great Marsh and MVPC). The meeting is a chance for stakeholders in the Parker, Ipswich, and Essex River watersheds to annually review and discuss current issues and solutions. The meeting this year featured an evaluation of the group's action plan, which will probably be revised to include more attention to resilience building, in the face of climate change.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Preliminary List of Annual Town Meeting Article Topics (*)
I have developed a list of possible topics for the Annual Town Meeting in May. It is useful to have these ideas at hand as we move through the budget process.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to this preliminary list.

K. Legal Issues

No items.

L. Grants

(1) Community Compact Best Practices Program Grants

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should apply on its behalf for a second Community Compact with the Commonwealth involving two “best practices”. The first best practice involves an evaluation of how we might work together with the Town of Manchester to share services. The Commonwealth has now officially awarded \$25,000 for the two communities to hire a consultant. The Manchester-by-the-Sea Town Administrator and I were recently asked to provide a brief scope of services in order for the grant maker to continue consideration of our request. We provided the following, broad summary, which will be more fully defined as we approach getting a consultant on board:

The towns of Essex and Manchester-by-the-Sea propose to hire a consultant to review the universe of possibilities for regional cooperation. The consultant’s analysis will span a continuum of possibilities from simple off-hours work by personnel from one community for the other community, to formalization of agreements to deliver certain services to the other community, to the creation of third-party entities (such as municipal police commission) to manage the affairs of both communities in a particular discipline. The two towns will begin by reviewing the intersection of apparent needs and capacity to offer services and will use that process to guide the consultant toward the most productive use of time. A steering committee comprised of the Town Administrators and a Selectman and Finance committee member from each community will guide the work of the consultant. Frequent updates at joint meetings of the Selectmen from both communities are anticipated.

I am meeting with the Manchester Town Administrator on December 11, 2018 to further prepare for the identification and hiring of a suitable consultant and to begin the process of refining which elements should be most featured in the study.

The second best practice involves supporting SeniorCare with respect to logical next steps moving toward age and dementia-friendly communities on Cape Ann. That proposal has been funded at \$20,000 and will work toward the establishment of an Age and Dementia-Friendly Action Plan for Cape Ann. Scott Trenti of SeniorCare will spearhead the effort for Cape Ann and the funding will be routed through Essex.

Recommendation: Board signature of all grant paperwork that is available by meeting time and discussion relative to first steps for each grant.

(2) MVP Action Grant Monthly Reports

I filed the subject reports for the month of November during the week of November 26, 2018. Relative to the natural sediment deposition study, personnel

from the University of New Hampshire have made significant progress with data analysis and are beginning to provide results to the State. Relative to the mussel reef feasibility study, personnel from Northeastern University are on track for a January, 2019 commencement.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

M. Emergency Planning

(1) Revised Regional Dispatch Intermunicipal Agreement

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town, along with the other four communities involved in the Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center, should move toward a new IMA with the Commonwealth's 911 Department. The Department would move to common protocols and frequencies eventually and, for the ten-year term of the agreement, would cover all costs. The various advisory boards which help set policy for the Center met jointly on November 27, 2018. I chaired that meeting as Executive Board Chairman and the various community representatives provided useful feedback to the Department concerning the draft version of the IMA that had been circulated. The group agreed that formal comments should be submitted to the Undersecretary of Public Safety by December 14, 2018 and we are expecting to receive a revised version of the draft IMA shortly thereafter.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) FEMA Recovery Scoping Meeting, Winter Storms

Personnel from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) met with DPW personnel and me on December 4, 2018. The meeting allowed officials to collect from the Town information concerning costs expended in response to two significant winter storms back in March. The first storm caused a need for significant repairs to the Conomo Point Seawall system and the second storm involved snow and ice management costs. Since both of the storms were declared as Federal disasters, the Town will receive a 75% reimbursement with respect to any eligible costs.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Other Items

No items.

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