



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Dec. 16, 2019

Report covers from December 1, 2019 to December 13, 2019

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Host Community Agreement Advisory Committee Meeting Summary (*)

The first meeting of the Host Community Agreement Advisory Committee was held on December 4, 2019. At the meeting, this new Committee began to discuss its basic organization, scope, and charge. The Committee will meet again on December 18, 2019 in Town Hall.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Regional Computer Services Discussion (*)

As the Board is aware, Essex is involved in a regional study to determine if there are a suite of services that could be efficiently offered to area communities by the Town of Danvers' IT personnel and the Danvers datacenter. Danvers recently brought in a consulting group to review the status of infrastructure and IT practices in seven communities and the consultant presented its findings on December 10, 2019, in Danvers. Generally, all of the participating communities were very receptive to many of the concepts presented and the group hopes to reconvene in January of 2020 to discuss next steps. Essex already receives its entire IT disaster recovery solution from Danvers.

Recommendation: **Board discussion 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 seven 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:

- Work with the Board, the Fire Chief, the Police Chief, our Project Manager, and our architects to manage the construction of the new public safety facility at 11 John Wise avenue. Work will include attendance at regular construction meetings with the project contractor and the consideration and recommendations regarding proposals for project change orders. I will serve as the Town's primary contact for the project.
- Serve as coordinator and administrator of the MVP Action Grant that will improve our understanding of sediment dynamics along Castle Neck Island and throughout Essex Bay. Work will include ensuring that our contractor (Boston University) continues to adhere to grant scope, timing, and reporting, including the development of all necessary deliverables.
- Continue to work with the Board, the Town Planner, MAPC, and the Economic Development Committee (EDC) to bring to completion the Town's new Economic Development Action Plan (EDP); and to include the EDC in the Essex Housing Coalition's effort to support the Planning Board's proposal for a downtown mixed-use zoning District. Work will involve participating in various meetings and community forums that the EDC will be hosting with MAPC.
- Continue to work collaboratively with the Superintendent of Public Works and the Board of Public Works to plan next steps recommended in the water system facilities plan. Funding for the first elements recommended by these analyses 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 and the DEP.
- Re-apply for the Conomo Point seawall construction grant and manage the construction project, if funded. Work will involve interfacing with our engineering contractor to revise, improve, and resubmit the grant application and, if funded, working with the chosen construction contractor to complete the work. Work may also involve the production and submission of all necessary grant requests for reimbursement and reporting. I will continue to serve as the Town's primary contact for the project.
- Serve at the Town's primary contact and coordinator of the proposal by a retail marijuana company to locate a dispensary in Essex. Work will involve coordination with the Board, the negotiating committee, the project proponent, and Essex public safety departments. A Host Community Agreement (HCA) will need to take into account all key Town official and resident interests and concerns.

***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.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Award of Contract for the Promotion of Town Resources and Attractions (*)

As the Board may recall, I had solicited quotations for an organization to promote the resources and attractions of the Town via advertising back on November 19, 2019. Quotations were due on December 11, 2019 and we received a single quotation (after soliciting three). The quotation was submitted by the Essex Merchants' Group, which has been the awardee for this program in the past. The Merchants' Group's proposal is for the entire \$23,500.

Recommendation: **Board vote to award the contract to the Essex Merchants' Group.**

(2) Continued Discussion Relative to Downtown Parking Line Striping (*)

At the last meeting, the Board dismissed the idea of continuing to seek wayfinding signage in the downtown area, due to the size of the signs and lettering required by MA DOT. The Board is presently weighing whether to seek line striping for either: a) areas where parking is allowed, or b) areas that are dangerous and should be striped out as no parking areas. The Board is also considering not continuing with the project at all. The Board asked me to verify with MA DOT that any striping that is requested will have to be completed using thermoplastic material, as opposed to just paint. Preliminary discussions between our designer and DOT indicated that thermoplastic would be required, in perpetuity. I expect to have more information from the District Highway Director by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Public Safety Facility Project Update and Possible Change Order (*)

Chairman Spinney and I attended construction project meetings on December 5 and December 12, 2019. The contractor has made great progress with respect to land clearing and is working to prepare the existing structure on the property for dismantling. As it turns out, only the top layer of roofing shingles contained asbestos, so there was no need to continue to discuss a potential change order to get to the second layer. Our contractor's base bid therefore still covers the entire dismantling and removal of the structure. After the meeting on the 5th, a group of Town officials, accompanied by representatives of the project contractor, our architect, and our project manager, participated in a ceremonial ground breaking event.

At the meeting on December 12, 2019, we learned that there is a need for a bottle filler in the vicinity of the fitness room, since there is no water fountain in that area. Also, on December 11, 2019, the Building Inspector signed the actual building permit for the new facility. The permit for the demolition of the existing barn on the property will be issued as soon as we have clearance concerning hazardous materials, the electrical connection, and the natural gas connection.

Recommendation: Board authorization of the Chairman to sign off with respect to the addition of a bottle filler when the change order for that new feature is available.

E. Insurance

(1) Monthly Pothole Log

I received the pothole log for the month of November from the DPW during the week of December 2, 2019. No potholes were reported during November.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

No items.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Preliminary Review of Selectmen's FY21 Operating Budget Request (*)

The Town Accountant has released a request for all departments to develop fiscal year 2021 operating budget requests, which are due to her and the Finance Committee by January 10, 2020. I have developed a preliminary budget request package for the Board's review at the present meeting.

Recommendation: Board review and discussion relative to the preliminary operating budget request package.

(2) Continued Review of Selectmen's FY21 Capital Budget Update (*)

I have revised the Board's fiscal year 2021 capital budget update document in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting. The final document is also due to the Town Accountant and the Finance Committee by January 10, 2020.

Recommendation: Further Board review and discussion regarding the capital budget update document.

(3) Regional School District FY21 Tentative Operating Budget Hearing (*)

Officials from the Manchester Essex Regional School District provided the District's Tentative Operating Budget for fiscal year 2021 to the two towns during the week of December 2, 2019. A public hearing relative to the Tentative Budget was held on December 11, 2019 and I attended along with Finance Committee Member Michael Flynn. Generally, the District is looking at a 3.85% increase in total Town apportionment funding and still needs to find about \$434,000 in internal budget reductions to hit that target.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) PIE Rivers Partnership Annual Meeting

I attended a portion of the annual meeting of the Parker-Ipswich-Essex (PIE) Rivers Partnership in Byfield on December 5, 2019, along with Selectman Phippen. I participated in a presentation concerning how local communities have benefitted from the MVP Action Grant program and explained the mussel/oyster reef concept that we studied with Northeastern University about a year ago. PIE Rivers strives to bring together all stakeholders in the PIE watershed to coordinate best practices for the environment, water supply, and other issues.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Continued Review of Annual Town Meeting Possible Topics (*)

At the last meeting, the Board briefly discussed a list of possible topics for articles at the Annual Town Meeting in May of 2020.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion relative to the list of topics.**

K. Legal Issues

No items.

L. Grants

(1) LED Street Light Conversion Project Update (*)

At the last meeting, I explained that the use of the Ipswich Light Department to convert the Town's street lights to LED lamps was likely not going to be feasible, since Ipswich's schedule would not be in step with grant funding deadlines. I followed up again with personnel from the Green Community Grant Program during the week of December 2, 2019 and I learned that Ipswich's schedule was out of the question in order to apply for the next round of grant funding. As such, we have continued to focus on having the conversion done commercially and our materials and labor for the conversion work are separately out to bid. Barring any change in policy with respect to allowing more time (use of Ipswich), we will likely soon be presented with a full plan and budget for the commercial conversion.

Recommendation: **Board authorization of the Chairman to sign contracts with a materials supplier and an electrical contractor (both as approved by our grant programs) outside of a meeting so long as the grant budgets allow.**

(2) Loss Control Grant

As the Board may recall, our insurer, the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) had offered a loss control grant that the Town applied for. This year, we focused on DPW needs, such as truck backup cameras, a trench box, and oily rag disposal containers. MIIA funded all of our requests, with a total award of \$7,431. The DPW will now acquire what was funded and MIIA will pay the invoices directly.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Dam and Seawall Grant Program

The Commonwealth announced awards for the most recent round of Dam and Seawall Grant funding during the week of December 2, 2019. As the Board may recall, the Town had applied for a grant to replace the Conomo Point Seawall back in the summer, and had pledged an all-cash match of over \$500,000 for about \$1.6M in State grant funding. The Town's application was not funded. Of the fourteen projects funded, eleven were dam repair or removal projects and only three were seawall repair or construction projects (Quincy, Salem, and Plymouth – in its 400th celebration year). I will soon have a chance to discuss the Town's application with the grant program manager to understand how it could be improved for the next round of funding.

Recommendation: Re-application for this program when the next round of grant funding is announced.

M. Emergency Planning

(1) Planning Meeting for Emergency Medication Dispensing Tabletop Exercise

Essex and other communities will participate in a regional tabletop exercise in January, in Beverly that will simulate an event whereby a vaccine or medication must be administered quickly to combat a serious outbreak or problem. At the planning meeting, which was held in the Essex Town Hall on December 11, 2019, various department heads and others in the community refreshed understanding of the structure that is presently in place to respond to such events should a situation arise. State officials will run the tabletop exercise and will assess the performance of each community participating, including recommendations for improvement.

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.