



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of August 8, 2022

Report covers from July 23, 2022 to August 5, 2022

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Arrival and Configuration of New Domain Controller Server

As the Board may recall, the Annual Town Meeting approved funding to replace the Town's physical server that serves as a domain controller for the Town's local area network. The server was delayed by several months due to supply chain issues but arrived during the week of July 25, 2022. I set up and prepared the server for use and our IT consultant is in the process of transferring data from our old domain controller to this new unit, via remote sessions. The cutover from the old unit to the new unit should occur within the next few weeks.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Preparation for Transition to New Phone System

As noted previously, Town Hall and the Senior Center will be moving to a new VOIP phone vendor (NetTelOne) as of September 1, 2022. I have already been working with NetTelOne with respect to our present arrangement. All of our present phone numbers will need to be ported from MiTel to NetTelOne and all of our automated attendants and virtual voicemail boxes will need to be recreated on the new platform. After providing NetTelOne with a Customer Service Records (CSR) download from MiTel, a copy of our most recent Internet service bill, and a detailed spreadsheet containing all of our current data, I met virtually with our project manager on August 2, 2022. NetTelOne now has all of the information they need to begin developing our platform and I will continue to work with the vendor during August so that we are ready for the August 30 cutover (leaving August 31 for contingency).

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Completion of New Antivirus Deployment

Danvers IT personnel have finished installing the new, Fortinet-based anti-virus/anti-ransomware software to all of our Town network devices. This work is all part of the Town's participation in a new, regional security fabric. After this deployment, I went and removed the Town's old anti-virus solution from all devices.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

No items.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) 24 Martin Street Site Restoration Update & Request for Final Change Order(*)

The shed that will house the Town's antique, hand-powered fire pumper for display arrived at the site of the old fire station on July 25, 2022. The shed was prefabricated and the supplier's crew erected the various components in one morning.

The shed was subsequently properly fastened to the slab and our electrical contractor will install interior lighting, along with interior and exterior electrical outlets. Exterior lighting is not needed, since an existing spotlight at Memorial Park already illuminates the building very well. Our electrician will also relocate the power panel that is presently in an exterior junction box behind the building (visible from Martin Street) to within the building itself, allowing us to remove the junction box, which is unsightly. The box was planned into the job since the work was originally supposed to be concluded much in advance of having the building in place. However, that schedule was not adhered to by our general contractor and the box is no longer needed. Our general contractor has recently started to water the new lawn regularly and is responsible for getting it established, even if it means eventually replanting.

Further, as noted previously, our general contractor had been seeking a final project change order to account for differences between the design documents and conditions in the field to meet certain elevations for concrete work. Our designer and our Project Manager are reviewing that request for \$6,602.33 and will have a recommendation by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board consideration of the final change order request for the project.**

(2) Route 133 Essex River Bridge Replacement Project Update

I attended a construction meeting regarding the subject project on August 2, 2022. The demolition subcontractor for the project is scheduled to have the old bridge completely demolished/removed by August 8, 2022. The general contractor will then begin the process of bridge replacement by making repairs and modifications to the old bridge abutments. The contractor's goal is to have the basic new bridge deck and its sidewalks completed by October of 2022 so that utility relocation work can continue over the winter.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Analysis of Draft Pricing for Solid Waste/Recycling Disposal Services (*)

Just prior to the Board's last meeting, I received proposed rough pricing from Casella concerning possible solid waste and recycling services (both transfer station and curbside options) to replace our arrangements with Covanta as of January 1, 2023. While not fully included in the price of a transfer station sticker presently, the Board could consider including more services and expenses of the Town that would be in addition to Casella's pricing in the new fee established when a new contract begins. These services include labor for DPW employees to run and maintain equipment at the present transfer station and associated expenses, along with maintaining and organizing the transfer station grounds. Even if the Town elects to go to curbside pickup, Town labor and expenses beyond the services that Casella would provide will still be necessary (albeit to a lesser extent).

Generally, as anticipated, curbside pickup would be much more expensive than simply continuing to operate the transfer station, but will require separate, capital expenses such as the cost of a new compactor, a new perimeter fence, and new garage doors. The Board can consider whether negotiations with respect to the curbside option should proceed, versus focusing on only negotiating pricing for transfer station operation.

***Recommendation:* Board review of the two options and consideration as to whether one or the other should be pursued moving forward.**

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Replacement of Dry Sprinkler Head

As the Board may recall, this past winter, a dry section of fire sprinkler pipe extending outside of the Library entry door began to leak. At the time, our sprinkler contractor was able to plug the pipe inside and remove the leaky section, as a temporary measure. Our contractor returned on July 26, 2022 and installed

the replacement section, along with additional insulation. After his visit to the Library, the technician visited the Senior Center, where the Council on Aging Director recently reported a leaky head at that location. Our contractor will review that situation and also make any necessary repair.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Minor Repair to Bell Striker Winding Gear Attachment

The Town Hall clock bell stopped ringing recently. I reviewed the matter to determine if the pin between the striker cable and the striker had fallen out again, but it had not. However, I observed that the gear that is driven by the striker cable winding motor had become loose and was just spinning around the winding shaft. After tightening down the screws holding the gear to the shaft, the bell striker cable again wound properly and the bell is again ringing normally.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Discussion of Possible Electric Vehicle Charging Station

National Grid has been offering incentives for the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations by municipalities for some time now, along with other funding sources, such as State grants. However, the operation of the stations would typically fall on the Department of Public Works and the Department does not have the available administrative staff to process payments and maintain electric and cellular accounts. Further, depending on how much usage the stations get, they may or may not pay for themselves.

As such, on August 3, 2022, the Town Planner convened a meeting involving the DPW and personnel from the engineering firm Weston & Sampson (a vendor on the State Contract) to discuss how Essex might obtain some charging stations to be located at the municipal parking lot without any risk or increased administrative burden. Weston & Sampson is potentially willing to receive and pay all bills and to process all payments. The Town may even derive a small amount of revenue from the stations if usage is robust enough. Presently, Weston & Sampson is working on a new proposal for the Town's consideration.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Review of Preliminary List of Topics for Fall Town Meeting (*)

The Fall Town Meeting will be held on November 14, 2022 this year and I have put together a preliminary list of Town Meeting article topics for the Board's consideration.

Recommendation: **Board review of the preliminary list.**

K. Legal Issues

(1) Site Visit Concerning Recent Denial of Mooring Location

Chairman Pereen and I participated in a site visit held by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for an appeal of a recent decision by the Harbormaster to deny the siting of a new mooring in the Essex River. Town Counsel, counsel for the mooring applicant, the Essex Harbormaster, and an employee of DEP were also present. The mooring applicant had asserted that the denial was not well founded and legal counsel for the applicant explained his client's position, both by water (in the Harbormaster's boat) and by land (from the property of the mooring applicant). The DEP will now review all of the information and will either uphold the Harbormaster's original decision or will order the Harbormaster to issue the permit for the mooring.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

L. Grants

(1) Decorative Street Light Grant Update

The Town Planner and I met with Hunter Jay who represents "Light up Essex" on July 25, 2022. Light up Essex would like to fundraise to perhaps help the Town expand on the decorative street light grant by possibly funding additional lights. We are presently awaiting a Notice to Proceed from the State before we can engage our engineering firm in a final design process. Once that occurs, we plan to connect our engineer with Light up Essex so that the group can get a better idea of project scope, timing, and the estimated cost of various aspects of the work.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Alewife Brook Stream Study Final Report

(*)

The subject report pertaining to the possibility of managing the stream channel in the Alewife Brook to optimize fish migration and to possibly improve water quality in Chebacco Lake was delivered to the Town of July 27, 2022. Selectman Phippen and I, among others, reviewed the draft final version of the report and provided comments. The report is now being finalized by our consultant, Interfluve, and it may be available by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

M. Emergency Planning

No items.

N. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on leave, on July 28 and August 5, 2022, and for a portion of the day on August 4, 2022.

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