



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Nov. 14, 2022

Report covers from October 22, 2022 to November 11, 2022

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Process for Board Review and Adoption of 2022-2027 Essex Strategic Plan

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) met on October 27, 2022 to review input received at the recent public forum with respect to the draft revised Strategic Plan, including further input from SPC members. The SPC is now fine-tuning the revised Plan and should have the final version completed after it meets again on December 1, 2022. The Board of Selectmen will be asked to endorse the plan at its meeting of December 12, 2022 .

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

B. Computer Systems

No items.

C. Personnel

No items.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Route 133 Essex River Bridge Replacement Project Update

I attended construction meetings for the subject project on October 25 and November 8, 2022. All bridge deck and sidewalk concrete work is now completed and the contractor has turned attention to the bridge railings, wingwalls, and four, pre-cast corner posts. The wingwalls will be the last concrete pouring work for the season and the railings should be in place before December 1, 2022. After Thanksgiving, attention will turn to the installation of utility support brackets and water and sewer connection preparation. The contractor will most likely shut down operations for winter conditions in January and February.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Monthly Pothole Log

The Department of Public Works provided me with the pothole log for the month of October during the week of October 31, 2022. The log is intended to document

any reported potholes and efforts made at repairs. The Town does not have liability for potholes if repaired immediately after a first report has been made.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Town Hall Clock Tower Water Leak Repair

At the last meeting, I explained how we had verified where water is leaking into Town Hall between one of the clock faces and the exterior wall during certain wind and rain conditions. The Board agreed that the Essex Fire Department should be asked to provide its ladder truck to allow for the application of sealant, which I purchased. That work was to occur on November 4, 2022 but sufficient personnel were not available. I will reschedule this repair with the Fire Department as soon as possible.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(2) Process for Choosing Donors for Bench & Picnic Tables at Conomo Point (*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to get in touch with all parties who had expressed interest in donating park benches on Conomo Point in the past. I made contact with all parties during the week of October 24, 2022. Of the six parties who had expressed initial interest in the past, only four parties still have interest. The Board has determined that space exists for one more bench and two new picnic tables. It is possible that all parties may be accommodated by two of the four parties doubling up on either a bench or a table.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Seasonal Closure of Memorial Park Restrooms

The Memorial Park restrooms were closed for the season as of November 1, 2022. The restrooms will reopen on April 1, 2023.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Annual Fire Extinguisher Inspection/Replacement

The Selectmen's Assistant arranged to have our fire extinguisher contractor inspect and replace as necessary all fire extinguishers in Town Hall and the Senior Center. Other departments perform inspections in other buildings on a separate schedule.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Massachusetts Health Officers' Association Annual Meeting

I attended the subject meeting in Falmouth on October 26 and 27, 2022. The conference provides a wide variety of public health and environmental updates that are suitable for continuing education credits for my Registered Sanitarian, Approved Soil Evaluator, and Approved Septic System Inspector certifications.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Review of Final Fall Town Meeting Motions

(*)

I have prepared final Fall Town Meeting motions in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting and the Finance Committee's meeting of November 8, 2022.

Recommendation: **Board review of the Fall Town Meeting motions.**

K. Legal Issues

No items.

L. Grants

(1) Off-Season Event Grant Award

(*)

The Town Planner had applied for a grant through the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and has received an award of \$51,000 under the Urban Agenda Grant Program to hold an off-season event. Given that the Town is working to design and install decorative street lighting in the downtown area, we asked the program director if some of the funding could be put toward planting and banner hanging accessories for the new poles. If lighting system installation occurs next spring and summer, a fall event could be promoted and held to formally welcome residents and visitors to see the newly-completed downtown Essex streetscape. To date, Chairman Preen has signed and returned a signatory authorization form and the Town Planner is working to finalize the scope of the contract so that final contract documents can be sent to the Town.

Recommendation: **Board discussion about the scope of the project and possible authorization of the Chairman to sign all necessary grant paperwork and sign contracts for supplies and services as necessary, when available.**

(2) Apple Street Project Public Site Visit and Public Information Forums (*)

As part of the Apple Street Roadbed Elevation and Culvert Replacement Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant project, the Town offered both a public site visit and two public forums on November 2, 2022. The grant is providing funding for design and permitting for the proposed project and one important aspect of the grant is public outreach.

At 10:00 a.m., I offered an overview presentation of the project at the Essex Senior Center and, at 10:30 a.m., a bus was made available to tour both the Essex causeway (which often floods during extreme high tides and storm events) and the project site on Apple Street (which can also flood during more extreme events and which is predicted to flood more often in the future). The presentation was well attended, as was the site visit. Many questions and comments were received during the presentation and site visit and most questions were answered directly. Our engineering consultant will incorporate suggestions involving trying to save as many existing trees as possible within the scope of the present alternative and to replant some trees after the project has been completed.

At 7:00 p.m., I coordinated a virtual forum concerning the project, which featured a detailed presentation of the project by our engineering consultant and a subsequent period of time to allow for questions from the public and other public input. Comments and questions were very similar to those received at the earlier presentation and site visit and our engineering consultant will review all input and will report back.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Monthly Report

I worked with our engineering consultant to file the subject report with the State during the week of October 24, 2022. The grant is providing design and permitting funding for the proposed elevation of about 800 feet of Apple Street near its Southern Avenue end and the replacement of an inadequate culvert under Apple Street with a box bridge capable of meeting Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Analysis of Town Vehicle Fleet for Possible Future Electric Replacement

In the future, as the Town continues to make progress toward the elimination of the direct use of fossil fuels, as a Green Community, it may be advantageous to consider the purchase and operation of electric vehicles. To that end, on November 1, 2022, the Town Planner, the Chief of Police, the DPW Superintendent, and I met with personnel from National Grid with respect to incentives that are available for electric vehicles. Generally, the only possibilities for the Town presently would involve the Police Department. The Chief of Police

will review recommendations that are developed by National Grid once those have been completed and conveyed to the Town.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(5) Community Planning Grant Award (*)

As the Board may recall, the Town had applied with the help of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to the subject grant program for the development of proposals for the amendment of the Essex zoning bylaws, and the grant has been awarded (\$75,000 in State funds, plus a \$15,000 pledge of matching funds from MAPC). MAPC has already provided the Town with a full zoning diagnostic process and report under a different grant program and that initial work will be drawn upon as MAPC helps the Town develop actual proposals for zoning amendments. I participated in a webinar on October 25, 2022 that described the contracting and grant management policies and procedures for the grant program and will administer this grant along with MAPC staff. The State has provided the Town with certain contracting documents, which Chairman Pereen has signed and returned, and MAPC is working out the final scope of services for the project with members of the Planning Board.

Recommendation: **Board ratification of the Chairman’s signature of the grant contract with the Commonwealth and authorization of the Chairman to sign the contract with MAPC for the work, when available.**

(6) Alewife Brook Surface and Groundwater Monitoring Contract (*)

As discussed previously, the Town has received a \$30,000 legislative earmark that will allow for additional study of the Alewife Brook and its environs. The Board had determined that the best use of that funding would be to obtain some long-term surface and groundwater level monitoring within the system. Interfluve, the consultant that performed the initial study of the system, has provided a proposal to amend its existing contract with the Town to deploy, maintain, and analyze data from water level monitoring loggers in the brook and subsurface, near the Town wells.

Recommendation: **Board signature of the contract with Interfluve.**

(7) Apple Street Project Construction Funding Preliminary Grant Application (*)

As reported previously, the Town may be eligible for 90% Federal construction funding for the Apple Street Roadbed Elevation and Culvert Replacement Project after final design and permitting are completed. In order to remain eligible, the Town needs to submit a preliminary application to the Federal grant program known as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The program is funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) but is administered in Massachusetts by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).

If the Town submits the preliminary HMGP application by December 1, 2022, MEMA will likely add it to a waiting list for hazard mitigation projects. Being on the waiting list is what preserves the possibility of 90% Federal funding (as opposed to the usual, 75% Federal funding) in the future. I have begun to work on the grant application with assistance from MEMA personnel. We are hopeful that the minimum Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) threshold will be met since only projects that meet the threshold are allowed to advance to actual grant competition. The BCA is a very technical process and MEMA's own technical consultant, Atkins Global, is presently working through that process on behalf of the Town.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization of the Chairman to sign the grant application when completed.**

(8) Loss Control Grant Award

As the Board may recall, the Town had applied to our insurer's Loss Control Grant program, requesting a total of \$10,000 to purchase a backup device for the new police body camera system and to help defray the cost of two necessary elevator control system upgrades. Our insurer's membership applied for so many different things that our insurer had to limit each applicant and we are receiving the total cost of the backup device (\$2,256.27) and \$2,743.73 toward the elevator work (for a total grant award of \$5,000).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

M. Emergency Planning

No items.

N. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on leave, for much of the day on November 3, 2022, and for a portion of the day on November 7, 2022.

(2) Veterans' Day Holiday

The office was closed on November 11, 2022, 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.