



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of July 30, 2018

Report covers from July 14, 2018 to July 27, 2018

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Request for Work Moratorium by Steelworkers Union

At public comment time at the last meeting, a representative of the Steelworkers Union suggested to the Board that the Town, either through the Selectmen or through the Board of Public Works, put in place a moratorium on any requests for road opening permits for non-emergency gas line work. Union workers have apparently been locked out by National Grid due to a contract dispute and National Grid is utilizing alternate personnel for these types of tasks. At the meeting, I commented to the Board that I did not think that the Town could do this with respect to any third party under these circumstances. I confirmed that to be the case and informed both the union representative and the Department of Public Works about the Town's position.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

#### (2) Dog Waste Bag Dispensers and Waste Receptacles

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the Board of Public Works' decision regarding the potential deployment of the subject units at Conomo Point and at the Centennial Grove. Although the Selectmen are in favor of these units, the Board of Public Works has commented that they are not in a position to maintain the units. As such, the Board declined to authorize the deployment of the units and I informed the Animal Control Officer and a private party who wanted to donate one unit about that decision. The private party has since requested that the Town at least post signage warning about fines for failure to pick up waste (listed separately on the meeting agenda).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary with respect to installing the units.

#### (3) Deployment of Truck Restriction Signs Associated with Apple Street

At the last meeting, the Board agreed with the Board of Public Works' recent statement that, if truck restriction signs are to be posted at either end of Apple Street, other signs needed to precede Apple Street in either direction on Southern Avenue and on Western Avenue. As such, I informed the Department of Public Works about the Selectmen's agreement and the department will work with the Chief of Police to coordinate the appropriate sign locations and to order the signs. The signs along Southern and Western will simply indicate that truck restrictions are in place on Apple Street.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(4) Future Use of Centennial Grove Cottage and Environs (\*)

Two selectmen joined me to visit the Centennial Grove Cottage area on July 18, 2018. Also present were the Youth Director, two youth commissioners, the Building Inspector, and personnel from the Pingree School and the YMCA. The purpose of the site visit was to get a better idea of which aspects of the Cottage may require repairs and improvements in order for the Commission to run programs from that facility in the future. Others were present to point out how they may factor into the future use of the facility as well. All agreed that the matter needed to come back to the present meeting in order to facilitate discussion.

Relative to the Pingree School, it was clear that the school has a continuing interest in running its rowing program from the Grove Cottage area, with the most concentrated need being from mid-March to about Memorial Day. Typical use would be every weekday from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m., with several weekend rowing meets. The school would like the use of the Cottage at that time and also suggested that school funding could perhaps improve the adjacent garage and construct an addition for school use. In return for the school's presence and use of the facility, the school could provide ongoing maintenance and repair services, along with valuable improvements to the facility. The school could also offer a "learn to row" program to the public. If this type of arrangement is to be explored further, a long-term, durable agreement should be proposed to Town Meeting.

Relative to the YMCA, the organization has interest in being able to use the Grove Cottage during the Camp Dory season, especially on rainy days. The YMCA may also eventually offer additional programming at this location, beyond Camp Dory and may be willing to staff a community boating program that could be sponsored by the Youth Commission or even via use of various types of boats that the YMCA already owns.

Relative to the Youth Commission, the agency has interest in utilizing the Grove Cottage for programming or a teen center when municipal water is offered (roughly April 15 through October 15) with other programming even after that, knowing that heat and water are not presently available outside of that window.

The group also discussed the possibility of deploying some type of camera system in the future, to deter vandalism and possible theft at the site. Presently, no Internet exists in the area, but this may change if the Youth Commission can get that services budgeted in the future.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the harmonization of the various interests that have been expressed, possibly translating to defraying**

**with private funds the future cost of maintenance and repairs, along with certain program offerings.**

(5) Meeting with Developer Relative to Proposal for Allen Property (\*)

I met with Chairman O'Donnell, Board of Appeals Chairman Nelson, Planning Board Chairman Burnham, Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Galli, and representatives of a developer on July 18, 2018. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the developer, which is interested in purchasing the Allen property from the Estate of William Allen, with information on how the permitting process for residential site development might proceed.

We were careful to preface the discussion with statements indicating that no individual at the meeting had the power to bind future decisions of any public body, that the developer should not rely on any statements made at the meeting, and that the permits that may eventually be sought may or may not be granted in the future. The developer explained how the environmental challenges of the site may or may not translate to a deal going through and generally asked about various permitting processes and protocols.

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

(6) Planning for 2018 Essex Holiday Festival

As the Board is aware, it is necessary to determine the role of the Essex Youth Commission in the Essex Holiday Festival for the coming season. Planning for this event starts in the summer and other groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Merchants' Group, the PTO/5<sup>th</sup> Grade Class, and a non-Town holiday festival committee are also involved. Presently, we have scheduled a meeting among the various players for August 13, 2018.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

## **B. Computer Systems**

(1) Migration of Town Website to Drupal Platform (\*)

As the Board is aware, the fiscal year 2019 budget includes funding for the upgrade of the Town's website from the FirstClass platform to the Drupal platform. Our vendor, Civic Plus, conducted a conference call with me on July 19, 2018 to summarize the migration process and to request input on certain aspects of the new site format. Generally, the Board needs to choose a style of masthead and/or site background, along with the basic layout of the homepage. I will present various options, based on actual sites in use in other communities, so that the Board can provide me with the guidance necessary to get our vendor started on site design.

*Recommendation:* **Board selection of some over-arching site design parameters.**

(2) Assistance with Setup of Printer, Youth Commission

The Youth Director purchased a new printer and required assistance with configuration for use with the Town's network. As such, after the Director unpacked the printer, I was able to make it operational on the virtual server that she computes from.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

(3) Memory Increase for Virtual Server Host

Now that we have migrated our computer replication system over to the Town of Danvers, the staff there has recommended that the total memory in the physical host server that we purchased about a year ago be increased, in order to meet increasing user demand. As such, I have made arrangements with our original vendor for the additional memory to be installed, with the adjustment of our replication system to accommodate the new parameters to be handled by Danvers staff.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

## **C. Personnel**

(1) Exploration of Part-time Worker Health & Safety Officer (\*)

During a past discussion about future Town Meeting warrant article topics, I introduced the concept of the Town possibly hiring a part-time Worker Health & Safety Officer. The Commonwealth's Department of Labor Standards will begin enforcing OSHA rules as of February, 2019. As such, the Town will need to stay current with training and will need to put many protocols in place, in addition to monitoring continuous compliance.

I reached out to other communities via the Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association's list-serve and found that the area is so new that many other communities are seeking similar information. In communicating with one Town Administrator who formerly worked in the health and safety field, the new requirements will demand focused effort in order to stay in compliance. In that community, several existing workers will take on duties relative to their own areas and I am awaiting data relative to expected hourly wages. I received no recommendations for vendors who may also provide this type of service but I am working in other circles to get more information. Our insurer has indicated that it may have information on suitable vendors in the future and may provide information on how OSHA compliance could be coordinated by a regional employee shared by a group of communities.

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

#### **D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

(1) Briefing Session for Public Safety Project Manager Candidates (\*)

The subject briefing session was held on July 26, 2018 at the police and fire headquarters. A total of three project management firms attended the session and had the chance to ask questions about the Town's objectives. The Chief of Police, the Police Sergeant, and the Fire Chief were also in attendance. The group toured the existing building and walked the various Town properties that are possible locations for new facilities.

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

(2) Army Corps of Engineers Coordinated Site Visit (\*)

As the Board may recall, the Army Corps of Engineers is continuing to conduct a Section 204 study of the Essex River to determine the feasibility of possibly using material dredged from the River beneficially somewhere else within the River/salt marsh system. As part of the study, the Corps needs to conduct a "Coordinated Site Visit" or CSV, which involves both an informal meeting component and some land-based site viewing (boat-based viewing if possible). The Corps will be holding the CSV on August 22, 2018, beginning in Town Hall. After a short meeting, the group will view the River system from the Town Landing and from Conomo Point. It is possible that a large boat will also be made available to the group.

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

#### **E. Insurance**

No items.

#### **F. Facilities**

(1) Final Discussion of Building Systems with Town Hall/Library Architect

Although we have been back in the Town Hall and Library for over a year now, I am continuing to track several minor items with our architect. These include a final evaluation of the archive vault dehumidification system and final project closeout documentation. The vault issue will be evaluated once the HVAC contractor for the project issues the final air balancing report. Our architect will then also provide us with a binder that contains certain project technical information and information relative to all of the warranties provided as part of the project. I will follow these items through completion.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Final Discussion of Minor Items with Town Hall/Library Contractor

As noted above, certain minor elements remain unresolved with respect to the Town Hall and Library renovation project. I am presently working with the project contractor with respect to the following: a) verifying that all windows have properly-fitting windows screens installed, b) installation of mid-rail brush weather stripping on all of the new windows (some windows may be missing this), c) receipt of pricing to install “bulb” style seals on the bottom of each of the historic windows that were refurbished (the contractor met specification for the project but our architect recommends this added seal for better energy efficiency – not part of the original specification), d) the mortar in a small set of stone stairs at the front exterior of the library appears to be breaking down prematurely and I have asked our contractor to have the masonry subcontractor review the issue. I will follow these items through completion.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Final Discussion of Conomo Point Park Items with Contractor

The new Conomo Point Park has been in use for two seasons now and our project contractor is still working to resolve some minor items. These include: a) making sure that at plantings that did not survive get replaced, b) repair of the end of a walkway that has prematurely started to break up, and c) attention to any items that the Conservation Agent raises once he completes his final inspection. I will follow these items through completion.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(4) Centennial Grove Cottage Security-Related Repairs

The Police Department responded to an alarm activation at the Grove Cottage during the week of July 16, 2018. Windows had been broken and the basement door had been breached. The Department of Public Works then took steps to make the building secure.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

(1) Upgrade to Version 2.0 of Visual Budget Platform

As the Board discussed during our approach to fiscal year 2019, the vendor that hosts the Town’s visual budget tool available on our website is moving to a new platform (version 2.0). Funds were included in the fiscal year 2019 operating budget for this upgrade and the vendor will be completing the work soon. The visual budget may be found here: <http://www.essexvisualbudget.org/> or at the link on the Town’s home page.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Federal Disaster Relief Also Declared for March 13-14 Storm

As the Board is aware, the Federal Government had already declared the availability of disaster relief for the March 2-3, 2018 nor'easter. FEMA has now announced that the March 13-14, 2018 storm has also met that threshold. The Town sent personnel to the reimbursement forum on July 20, 2018 and we will soon be working to summarize eligible costs for both storms. The relief will provide back to the Town 75% of all eligible costs.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

**H. Complaints**

No items.

**I. Meetings Attended**

(1) Update Meeting Concerning Proposed Memorial School Project (\*)

The Manchester Essex Regional School Committee met jointly with the two boards of selectmen and the two finance committees on July 25, 2018. The meeting featured a presentation relative to the status of the proposed Memorial School replacement project. Officials also discussed preparations for October town meetings and a November debt exclusion vote at the State Election. School District officials will provide an updated frequently asked questions document to the Board in advance of the Board's next meeting.

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

**J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations**

(1) Final Warrant for August 27, 2018 Special Town Meeting

I have developed a final version of the warrant for the August 27, 2018 Special Town Meeting, in consultation with Town Counsel, per the Board's guidance at its last meeting.

*Recommendation:* Board vote to approve and sign the warrant as per the posted agenda.

**K. Legal Issues**

No items.

## **L. Grants**

### (1) District Local Technical Assistance Grant Application (\*)

Our Town Planner has developed an application for technical assistance from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) through the subject grant program (known as DLTA). The application is seeking assistance from professionals at MAPC to develop an Economic Development Plan in concert with the Town's newly-formed Economic Development Committee. DLTA grants are normally approved for about \$15,000.

**Recommendation:** Board authorization for the Town Planner to submit the grant application.

### (2) Citizens' Housing and Planning Association Grant Application (\*)

Our Town Planner recommends that the Board authorize him to apply to the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) for a Municipal Engagement grant. CHAPA's Municipal Engagement Initiative would be an excellent opportunity to continue the affordable housing dialogue on a Town-wide basis with professional facilitators. No financial commitment is required from the Town and CHAPA would conduct public education and community discussions while developing strategies in support of affordable housing production. This work is consistent with one of the pillars of the Town's Strategic Plan.

**Recommendation:** Board authorization of the Planner to apply for the grant.

## **M. Emergency Planning**

No items.

## **N. Other Items**

### (1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on bereavement leave on July 16, 2018 and on vacation leave on July 23, 2018.

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