



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 24, 2023

Report covers from April 8, 2023 to April 21, 2023

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

### B. Computer Systems

No items.

### C. Personnel

#### (1) Town Clerk Hiring Process

The Board met with two of the original five Town Clerk applicants who had been scheduled for interviews on April 13, 2023. Two of the applicants had dropped out of contention after having scheduled interviews, in order to seek other opportunities. The Board voted to offer one of the candidates the position subject to a reference check and the passage of a drug and medical screen. I performed the reference checks, which were all satisfactory, and provided the candidate with an offer letter. As of the time of printing of this report, we have not received any communication back from the applicant.

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

### D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

#### (1) Quarterly Affirmative Marketing Program (AMP) Report

I filed the subject report with the State during the week of April 10, 2023 in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer (AMCO) for the quarter ending March 30, 2023. The report is intended to identify the Town's utilization of woman and minority-owned businesses on State-assisted building construction projects. No such utilization occurred during the last quarter.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

#### (2) Placemaking Plan Grant Update

Chairman Preen, Town Planner Menon, Economic Development Committee (EDC) Chair Harris, personnel from Civic Space Collaborative (CSC) and I met virtually on April 11, 2023 to discuss that status of the Essex Placemaking Plan. CSC has received much public input along with guidance from the Placemaking Working Group and is in the final stages of pulling together the rough draft of the Plan. The full Working Group will meet with CSC on April 26, 2023 and a group

of business leaders and the Working Group members will meet at the 24 Martin Street site on May 3, 2023. Thereafter, the draft plan will be prepared for review, eventually culminating in a presentation (of the final Plan) to the Selectmen on June 26, 2023.

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

(3) Spring into Essex Event Logistics

The floral theme of the upcoming special event for the weekend of May 19-21, 2023 will feature two pieces of equipment decorated in flowers at either end of the Essex River Bridge. The new bridge will be open to traffic by the event and an excavator decorated in flowers and a vintage pickup truck with flowers in its bed will sit near the approaches to the temporary bridge (which will be closed by then). I met at the bridge with representatives of the contractor and Anna Hardy from the Event Working Group on April 13, 2023 and we received permission for the two placements and worked out exact locations and details.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(4) Transfer Station Solid Waste Compactor Replacement Contract Award (\*)

Bids for the replacement of the Essex Transfer Station Solid Waste Compactor were due on April 20, 2023. We received a total of two bids, with the lowest bid being from Northeast Compactor & Baler (NECB) of Abington, MA (parent company Reaction Distributing of Ontario, Canada). The base bid (for the solid waste compactor) was \$119,716. The add-alternate bids for up to two, smaller compactors for recycling were \$29,378 each (making the total \$149,094 if one add-alternate is elected or \$178,472 if both add-alternates are selected).

The Town apparently budgeted sufficient funds for the compactor replacement/additions (the transfer station special appropriation for \$280,000 presently has a balance of \$239,000 since new site fencing and a new garage door have already been charged to the account). The Superintendent of Public Works is presently verifying that the proposed equipment in the NECB/Reaction Distributing bid meets all of the Town's specifications. The second bid was from Maguire Equipment, Inc. and pricing was as follows: base bid - \$165,067, each add-alternate - \$26,465.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to award the compactor replacement contract to NECB/Reaction Distributing in the amount of \$178,472 (contingent upon the Superintendent's concurrence, which will be available by meeting time).**

(5) Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Consultant Contract Award (\*)

Proposals for consulting services to assist the Town with the update of its Hazard Mitigation Plan were due on April 20, 2023. We solicited a total of three proposals and only one consulting firm, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) chose to provide a proposal. The cost of MAPC's services will be

\$21,750 (within the not-to-exceed requirement of \$22,000). Work is proposed for commencement this coming July and is funded mostly by a grant.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to award the contract for consulting services to update the Town’s Hazard Mitigation Plan to MAPC.**

**(6) Proposed Schedule and Final Process for Sale of Gregory Island Lots (\*)**

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should work with Town Counsel to finalize guidelines for the sale of Town-owned lots on Gregory Island and that I should develop a draft schedule for the Board’s review.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion with respect to the schedule and process for the possible sale of the lots.**

**E. Insurance**

No items.

**F. Facilities**

**(1) Regional Electric Grid Discussion**

The Hamilton Town Administrator organized a virtual meeting of area municipal managers on April 14, 2023 to discuss the shortcomings of our regional electric grid and its improbable capacity to support future needs in the area. Generally, all of the area’s communities stand to benefit if the regional need for future economic development, climate change mitigation, distributed energy generation, future solar and wind projects, and other factors can be well articulated to both the State and to National Grid. The hope is that this challenge will present a common ground from which area communities can collaborate to drive the improvements that will be necessary.

Organizers are beginning to develop a list of the potential economic impacts that would result from insufficient electric capacity (centered around business expansion, commercial development, larger residential projects, solar/wind/battery projects, etc.). While not all of the impacts may be important to all communities, any improvements from the collective list of impacts from a regional perspective will benefit all communities. Concerns about the future reliability of the power grid are also being discussed. It is likely that the group will get together again, in person, in Gloucester, for a discussion of the matter with State legislators.

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

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

No items.

## H. Complaints

No items.

## I. Meetings Attended

### (1) Essex River Cultural District Designation and Grant Management (\*)

Chairman Pereen and I discussed the Essex River Cultural District with KD Montgomery of the Essex Shipbuilding Museum on April 12, 2023. The Town has always relied upon volunteers to apply for and execute Cultural District grants and to keep the District in good standing for renewals and such. Personnel at the Essex Shipbuilding Museum are again available to work in that role and we all agreed that it would be beneficial for me to establish an administrative account on the grant portal in my own name, with allowance for others to work on grants and other initiatives as “contributors” without the ability to actually submit or officially approve applications or certifications. I reached out to the Massachusetts Cultural Council and we have worked out those logistics.

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

### (2) Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Essex Division Meeting

I attended the subject meeting along with Chairman Pereen on April 19, 2023. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the Annual Town Meeting warrant, along with updates on various Town projects and initiatives.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

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

### (1) Consideration of a New Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Regulation Section (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to put together a new section in the Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Regulations addressing the issuance of one-day licenses. The new section has been crafted to underscore some basic requirements in the State law and to require both a Management Plan and a Security Plan from each applicant.

*Recommendation:* **Board vote to add the new section with respect to one-day licenses to the Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Regulations.**

## K. Legal Issues

### (1) Quarterly Review of Executive Session Minutes

The Chairman has completed her quarterly review of the unreleased Executive Session minutes and found no minutes that are suitable for release.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **L. Grants**

### (1) Regional Road Vulnerability Assessment Grant Discussion

The City of Gloucester expressed interest to the three other Cape Ann communities, plus Ipswich, about applying jointly for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant in the upcoming spring grant round. The project would assess roadway vulnerability in the area and make recommendations for mitigation. Gloucester hosted a virtual meeting of the communities on April 12, 2023 and Selectman Phippen and I were in attendance. The group agreed that each community should send its priorities for regional transportation routes that will be impacted by sea level rise and climate change to Gloucester personnel for analysis. Gloucester will determine if the input from the other communities shapes up in a way that would lend itself to a regional MVP application.

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

## **M. Emergency Planning**

No items.

## **N. Other Items**

### (1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on leave, for portions of the day on April 11 and April 14, 2023.

### (2) Patriot's Day Holiday

The office was closed on April 17, 2023, in observance of the subject holiday.

*This report is available at [www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org) on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.*