



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 25, 2022

Report covers from April 9, 2022 to April 22, 2022

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Possible Application to Opt Out of State Emergency Mosquito Spraying

As the Board may recall, last year was the first year that communities had to officially opt out of mosquito spraying by the Commonwealth in the event that a community did not want the State to perform that activity during a declared public health emergency. While Essex did not apply to opt out last year, it is our understanding that some communities were approved for opt out just by committing to public education and outreach. However, this year, the program requires any community in a "high risk" area (which Essex is in) to be able to perform its own spraying during a declared emergency. The only realistic way that Essex could claim to have at the ready the type of capabilities that the State is looking for would be to join the Northeast Massachusetts Mosquito Control and Wetlands Management District.

While the prospect of securing an opt-out from the State is not likely due to the limited capabilities that the Town possesses on its own, the Board of Health will be bringing on an intern to conduct public outreach and education regarding mosquito management best practices. The Board of Health Administrator is willing to put together the necessary State opt-out application to see what the result is. If an opt-out is not granted, the intern would still be working with the public to reduce the chances of mosquito-borne disease occurring. Not receiving an opt-out may not amount to any near-term consequence since Essex has never been subjected to mandatory spraying by the State. Nonetheless, climate change may affect patterns of mosquito-borne disease and the Town should monitor the situation closely in the future.

Recommendation: Board discussion as per the posted agenda.

B. Computer Systems

No items.

C. Personnel

(1) Continued AFSCME Collective Bargaining

Chairman Pereen and I participated in continued collective bargaining for a successor AFSCME union contract on April 19, 2022. The parties are meeting again on May 25 and June 8, 2022.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Essex River Bridge Replacement Project Update (*)

I attended a construction meeting for the subject project with MA DOT personnel and representatives of the construction contractor on April 12, 2022 along with Chief Water/Sewer Operator, David Frithsen. The construction contractor still plans to have traffic diverted over the temporary bridge by sometime in May and has worked closely with the Essex water and sewer departments to identify utility locations so that those can be rerouted while the bridge is being replaced.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Conomo Point Seawall Replacement Project Update

I attended a construction meeting for the subject project along with Selectmen Phippen and representatives of our contractor and our engineering consultant on April 13, 2022. The project is still on schedule and no additional change orders have been agreed to as yet. Even if new change orders do come along, each should actually represent a net savings to the Town.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Future Solid Waste Disposal Services Update (*)

At the last meeting, the Selectmen discussed the fact that the Board of Public Works has not yet come forward with a recommendation concerning the future type of solid waste service desired (continue with transfer station, move to curbside collection, offer a hybrid involving both, etc.). The Board of Public Works has indicated that they do favor a “pay-as-you-throw” system no matter what type of disposal service is ultimately chosen. The Board of Public Works is meeting on April 25, 2022 (while the Selectmen are also meeting) and additional information may be brought to the Selectmen at the present meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Addition of Furnace Emergency Cutoff Switch

When the Town Hall was renovated in 2017, no furnace cutoff switch was installed outside of the boiler room. Although several annual furnace inspections have been conducted since then, the Town was never told anything was missing. At the most recent inspection, in 2022, the inspector commented that such a

switch is mandatory and that the Town will be expected to have one in place for next year's inspection if we are to receive a renewed State permit. As such, our HVAC contractor installed the necessary switch on April 19, 2022.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Public Kiosk for Town On-Line Permit Applications

Although most people use our new, on-line permitting system from their own device, some applicants do walk into the Town Hall asking for a public terminal once they learn about the system. As such, I have set up a public kiosk in the second floor conference room in Town Hall. The kiosk provides access to on-line applications for building, plumbing & gas, electrical, and fire department permits.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) School Budget Collaboration Group Meeting Summary (*)

I participated in the subject meeting on April 12, 2022, along with Chairman Pereen and Finance Committee Chairman Buttrick. The meeting featured a discussion regarding preparations for the two annual town meetings coming up in Essex and Manchester. The group discussed how Essex will likely be including free cash as one of the funding sources for the school budget since that budget's increase is appreciably higher than the Town's allowable taxation increase under Proposition 2 ½. The use of Town reserves to fund the operating budget will be necessary in the coming fiscal year and the Board desires to allocate that total reserve figure throughout various Town Meeting articles that are driving its use.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Continued Review of Annual Town Meeting Motions (*)

I have revised the draft Annual Town Meeting motions in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting.

Recommendation: **Further Board review and discussion of the draft Annual Town Meeting motions.**

K. Legal Issues

No items.

L. Grants

(1) Community Planning Grant Preparation

(*)

As the Board is aware, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is presently under contract to assist the Town with an application for up to \$75,000 in additional grant funding to move toward specific recommendations for Essex zoning bylaw changes by the fall of 2023. We are interested in the Community Planning Grant that is available via the Commonwealth's One Stop for Growth Portal. We have learned that MAPC is interested in providing a 20% match to this phase 2 zoning evaluation project, which would make the total funding as high as \$90,000 and which will definitely increase the likelihood that our Community Planning Grant application is funded.

Another important aspect of our grant application will be an acknowledgement that MAPC will be assisting the Town with how to best meet the new Chapter 40A, Section 3A requirements for MBTA-adjacent communities. All such communities will need to grapple with State guidelines (which are presently in flux after the close of the recent public comment period) and this analysis can be just another part of the overall body of recommendations that MAPC ultimately makes to the Town.

Part of the Scope of Work that MAPC is drafting to include in the Town's grant application will be the concept of recognizing "zoning champions", who will be residents of the Town with a keen interest in the zoning review process. Champions should be from a variety of sectors and should live in different regions of the Town. The draft Scope of Work will likely be available during the final week of April and the Board can discuss at its next meeting. The grant application deadline is June 2, 2022.

Finally, letters of support are required as part of the grant application. One needs to be from the Board of Selectmen and others will come from MAPC, the Planning Board, the Economic Development Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee, the Essex Housing Coalition, the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce and the Essex Merchants' Group.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization of the Chairman's signature on a letter of support for the Community Planning Grant and authorization to sign the grant application and any necessary related documents when available. Also, Board discussion with respect to various aspects of the grant application.**

M. Emergency Planning

No items.

N. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on leave, for a portion of April 13 and 19, 2022 and all day on April 14 and 15, 2022.

(2) Patriots' Day Holiday

The office was closed on April 18, 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.*