



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 26, 2021

*Report covers from April 10, 2021 to April 23, 2021*

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

---

### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Planning Board Zoning Bylaw Public Hearing Summary (\*)

The Selectmen attended the Planning Board's virtual public hearing on April 14, 2021 concerning the three zoning bylaw proposals that will come before the Annual Town Meeting on May 15, 2021. The Planning Board presented its proposal for the mixed-use downtown zoning district. Chairman Pereen presented the Selectmen's proposal for a moratorium on certain changes of use and a representative of a citizens' group that developed a new cell tower/wireless communications bylaw presented that proposal. Generally, the Planning Board took a range of input on the various proposals and may adjust minor aspects of the mixed-use downtown zoning district proposal in the motion at Town Meeting.

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

#### (2) Zoning Board of Appeals Cell Tower Variance Application Hearing Summary (\*)

I attended and provided the audio/video broadcast support for the subject hearing that was part of the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) meeting held April 21, 2021. TowerNorth Development, LLC sought variances associated with the proposed location of a new cell tower near 73 Eastern Avenue. About 45 people attended the meeting virtually, with the ZBA members assembled in person at Town Hall. Town Counsel was in attendance. After hearing a presentation from the attorney representing the applicant, the ZBA decided to continue the hearing until June 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. The applicant agreed to extend the ZBA's decision deadline to allow the ZBA to hire a consultant to review the applicant's application in more detail.

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

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Video Return Line to 1623 Studios

The cable franchise agreement with Comcast that was signed in 2017 required Comcast to provide a fiber optic line between Essex Town Hall and the local cable access provider in our area, 1623 Studios. The fiber line will serve as a "video return line" that could enable 1623 Studios to broadcast to their station from any of the Essex buildings that are connected to the Town's own fiber optic system (including the school, perhaps to cover a Town Meeting). We presently do not have plans to activate and use this line but it has now been installed for possible future use.

I joined personnel from the various Cape Ann communities to speak to the director of 1623 Studios on April 21, 2021 concerning the access company's ideas for using the line. One possibility is to of course broadcast live to local cable TV from a location within Essex. 1623 Studios is also going to offer the rebroadcast of select meetings that are conducted over Zoom or similar platforms on the cable TV system (to perhaps reach residents who are not able to connect to public meetings using a computer system).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary at this time.

(2) Installation of VOIP Phone System in New Public Safety Building

Personnel from our VOIP telephone vendor (NetTelOne) installed the various components of the new phone system in the new public safety building on April 14, 2021. I was present at the start of the install to coordinate aspects of the project involving the communications room on the street level of the building. The vendor installed a large number of phones in the building and the remaining phones will be brought over from the old building when it closes (the phone system in the old building is new and its components are transferrable). The installation went well and the system is in use.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Cutover of Criminal Justice Information System to New Public Safety Bldg.

The police department is connected to various State-hosted law enforcement resources via the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). This system is accessed through a State-owned router in the soon-to-be former police station. The router was moved to the new station on April 20, 2021 and service to the Town's new computer network in the new building was established. Since the old building is still in use, we were able to also keep the old computer systems connected to CJIS over the Town's own fiber optic network. We were also able to keep in place connectivity from individual users' remote Windows desktops (which are hosted in Town Hall).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(4) Continued Preparation for e-mail Platform Migration

As the Board may recall, I had been working with each of the Town's e-mail users to prepare their accounts for migration to the Outlook 365 platform in late May (pending funding of the necessary computer consultant fees at the Annual Town Meeting). My work on the preparation side has been extensive since it would not be cost effective to assign that work to the consultant. I am working with a group of users who already use on-premises Outlook and a group of users who only use the webmail application from our current e-mail host. The consultant will be setting up the new tenancy at Microsoft, changing key entries in the Town's DNS records at our zone file host, and uploading the completed

Outlook data files that I will deliver to him for upload to the Microsoft platform. He will also help coordinate the viewing of new versus old e-mail during the migration.

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

### **C. Personnel**

No items.

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

#### (1) Public Safety Building Construction Project Update (\*)

Chairman Perea and I attended construction meetings on April 15 and April 22, 2021. Work on the grounds of the building is moving along well after our contractor recently mobilized a site crew. Presently, weather permitting, we are expecting our contractor to complete the top course of paving for the driveways, apparatus apron, and parking areas very soon. The police department has almost fully moved into the building and is mostly working from the new location. The fire department will steadily move in after the new pavement cures, likely through mid-May.

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

#### (2) Change Order: Public Safety Building Elevator Sill Angle Credit (\*)

In the elevator design documents, a steel angle bracket that would pick up the public safety building elevator sill if it cantilevered out from the slab was specified. It was included in the Miscellaneous Metals scope in case it was required based on the elevator manufacturer's submittal. The sill angle bracket was not required to be installed in coordination with the elevator installation, resulting in a credit for the associated labor cost in the amount of \$1,994.26.

*Recommendation:* **Board approval of the subject credit.**

#### (3) Change Order: Public Safety Building Camera System Modifications (\*)

Additional security camera coverage was requested by the Essex police department, including main stairwell, physical training, patrol entrance corridor, evidence storage and processing, and booking areas, resulting in added cost for the equipment supply and installation, programming, and power (\$27,490.22).

*Recommendation:* **Board approval of the subject change order.**

#### (4) Revision of Base Plans for Old Fire Station Demolition/Site Restoration (\*)

In the past, the Board briefly reviewed a second draft of the restoration plan for the old fire station site, which included final grading. The Board had made certain comments that I passed along to our designer but the revised plans were

not ready for the two meetings. Revised plan sheets and sizing recommendations for the shed that will house the antique fire pumper are now available for further review. In the past, the Board also asked if Community Preservation Committee Chairman Kim Drake (also Planning Board Vice-Chair) could review the plans in her capacity as a landscape architect. She has agreed to do so, and will provide comments as soon as possible.

***Recommendation:* Further Board review of the revised plans and recommendations.**

#### **E. Insurance**

No items.

#### **F. Facilities**

##### **(1)Folsom Pavilion Demolition & Plan to Fund Design/Construction for Replacement(\*)**

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Folsom Pavilion needs to be demolished as it is unsafe for continued use and is too far deteriorated to repair. As such, I have made arrangements with a demolition contractor to have the building demolished in the near future if the Board still wishes to proceed (see below). In preparation for the work, I obtained a demolition permit from the Building Inspector and arranged for an electrical contractor to remove the power feed to the building.

Subsequent to the last meeting, the Chairman of the Historical Commission questioned the demolition of the structure in advance of a full plan for replacement. However, given that the structure is unsafe and that Summer Camp Dory will be opening as usual, in June, it makes more sense to remove the building sooner than later. The Board may wish to begin discussing a possible plan for a new pavilion at the present meeting. Funding for design and construction will be necessary.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion of the present demolition plan and about a future plan for a possible new pavilion.**

#### **G. Fiscal/Budget**

No items.

#### **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

No items.

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

### (1) Draft Annual Town Meeting Motions (\*)

I have prepared draft Annual Town Meeting motions for the Board's initial review and discussion.

*Recommendation:* **Board review and discussion concerning the draft motions.**

## **K. Legal Issues**

No items.

## **L. Grants**

### (1) Regional IT Grant Status Update

I met virtually with personnel from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and personnel from various communities collaborating on a regional computing project with the Town of Danvers. As the Board may recall, once all communities are directly connected to the Town of Danvers datacenter via municipally-owned fiber optic lines, we hope to be able to benefit further from shared services offered by Danvers. Essex is already connected and already uses the datacenter for file backup/disaster recovery. We would like to explore shared software and possibly VOIP phone service as well. Soon, the Board will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the participating communities that will kick off as of July 1, 2021. The group is also preparing a request for quotations from IT vendors on the State Contract to provide a variety of possible support services.

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

### (2) Regional Pilot Project Grant Program Award (\*)

Cape Ann communities have received the subject grant award in the amount of \$180,000 for an economic recovery plan known as Cape Ann ComeBack. The grant application was submitted by the four Cape Ann Communities, in partnership with the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, the Essex Merchants' Group, and others. Town Planner Matt Coogan, Ken Riehl from the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, and Donna Roy from the Essex Merchants' Group were instrumental in assisting with the application. The program will work in three main areas: direct business support, a virtual innovative marketplace program to supplement in-person sales, and a coordinated marketing campaign. A kickoff meeting for the new program was held on April 21, 2021.

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

**M. Emergency Planning**

No items.

**N. Other Items**

(1) Patriots' Day Holiday

The office was closed on April 19, 2021 in observance of the subject holiday.

(2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on leave, for a portion of April 22 and all day on April 23, 2021.

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