



Town Administrator's Report **Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Dec. 28, 2020**

Report covers from December 12, 2020 to December 25, 2020

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Regional IT Grant Progress Update

As the Board is aware, we have been participating in a regional effort to identify economies of scale and better service delivery through collaboration with the Town of Danvers. Essex presently replicates all data in real time to the Danvers datacenter (at an annual cost of \$5,200) and we would like to possibly take advantage of other services. Other communities are considering data replication and other services too. A meeting held December 17, 2020 featured a discussion relative to Danvers beginning to manage a regional IT services contract with a private vendor as of July 1, 2021 (for a total of six communities, including Danvers). Nearby Manchester, Hamilton, and Wenham are part of the group, along with Danvers, Topsfield, and Middleton. The cost of this expanded participation will be \$4,020 per community and services from the vendor will be a-la-carte and paid for only if utilized.

Recommendation: Include this proposed assessment in the fiscal year 2021 operating budget using the Town Technology Fund (which is maintained with Comcast subscriber surcharges) – see operating budget discussion below.

C. Personnel

(1) Public Safety Building Custodian Hire

(*)

As the Board may recall, the Town Hall Custodian took an indefinite leave, due to COVID, around June of 2020. In the interim, the Town has been using the services of a commercial cleaning company to clean Town Hall and to perform daily, high-touch area disinfection in the Water Filtration Plant, the Town Hall, the Fire and Police Headquarters, and the Senior Center. The Federal funding source that made the hiring of the commercial company possible was set to end on December 30, 2020 and the cleaning company was asked to discontinue service as of that date. Subsequently, we were informed that the Federal funding got extended through calendar year 2021.

In the spring, we had planned to hire a Public Safety Custodian for the new building. In order to assist with the present custodial needs of the Town in other buildings, it would be advantageous to hire the new Public Safety Custodian now

(as a Town Property Custodian) and have that person fill in for the Town Hall Custodian until the new public safety building is open in the spring. We do still have unused wage funding in the Town Hall Custodian line item and we presently still expect the employee on leave to return in the spring. Also, Town Meeting has appropriated separate funding for public safety building custodial wages in the fourth quarter. I posted the position, which will cover all of the buildings for the tasks the cleaning company was doing until transition to the new building is necessary. Despite the Federal funding extension, it is still advantageous to hire a Town employee for this function. We will be able to manage the custodial work more closely, get someone accustomed to the Town's expectations before the new building opens, and conduct some systems training. I will have more information regarding the applicant pool by meeting time.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization for me, with the consent of both chiefs, to hire a part-time employee for general Town custodial work on a temporary basis – and then transition permanently to the new public safety building when it opens.**

(2) Town Administrator Calendar Year 2021 Goals (*)

At the last meeting, I presented my suggested goals for the upcoming calendar year. The Board has begun its review of those suggestions and further discussion could be held at the present meeting or at a future meeting.

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

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

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

Chairman Pereen and I participated in construction meetings on December 17 and 23, 2020. The contractor is essentially done with the building's exterior (excepting the entry doors) and all efforts are now focused on the interior. Sidewalk work on the building's grounds was delayed due to snow but is continuing, despite cold temperatures. Work on tiling and bathrooms is moving along well and ceiling tile work on the lower level is far along. Work on the training room, the kitchen, and the fire bay doors will proceed/resume now that certain items have been clarified and authorized for necessary additional work on a time and materials basis. Permanent power to the building will be energized December 28, 2020. The work flow continues to have the lower level at the most complete state, followed by the upper level and then the apparatus bay. Some grounds issues like final paving, certain guardrails, and landscaping will occur in the spring.

Presently, our general contractor is working on pricing for enclosing the police vehicle area behind the building with a motorized gate and fence and for just providing the motorized gate (the Town would erect a fence with some other contractor later). Also, I am happy to report that all infrastructure for permanent

power to the building and for communication line taps off of the main lines in the street is in place (see next item for more details).

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Preparation for Communications Setup / Relocation, Public Safety Building

Now that the new communications pole has been set at the site of the new public safety building, I have begun the process of working with various utilities and vendors to plan for the setup and/or relocation of a variety of necessary, wired communications systems. Radio communications systems will be coordinated by the chiefs and other specific vendors.

The first order of business will be to have Verizon run a new bundle of copper phone lines into the building, off of the main line on John Wise Avenue. The new fire alarm system and the new elevator both require connectivity to monitoring services using standard telephone lines. To that end, I have placed an order for the individual lines, which will need to be live, for testing, well in advance of the building's completion. Verizon will run a service line that contains more wire pairs than we presently need, in order to allow for future expansion.

Comcast will bring in lines as well (one for high-speed Internet to feed the building and another for the free cable TV connection that police and fire are entitled to as part of Comcast's franchise agreement with the Town). The high-speed Internet will support: connectivity to the Regional Dispatch Center for a variety of services; connectivity for the police department to the State Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS); and the voice over IP (VOIP) phone system for the building. Internet access for regular computing will be provided over the Town's fiber optic municipal area network (FMAN) from Town Hall. I have made contact with our Comcast municipal liaison to get the service line request rolling.

For the extension of the FMAN, our fiber optic contractor, Comm-Tract, will run a new fiber spur between Town Hall and the new public safety building. The FMAN provides Internet connectivity, as well as connectivity to the Town's virtual computing infrastructure in Town Hall. Comm-Tract cannot begin its work until the server room in the new building is completely finished, with a door on it (since dust is a problem for setting up that system). We expect to be at this point by mid-February and Comm-Tract has tentatively scheduled our spur installation for February 15, 2021.

I have also made contact with representatives of NetTelOne, for the VOIP phone system; the Regional Dispatch Center, for a variety of services and functions; and CJIS, to plan for the eventual relocation of that agency's specialized equipment. I expect that I will be working on various aspects of the building's communications needs from now right through the opening of the building. Both CJIS and

NetTelOne indicated that I should be back in touch with them after I have a Comcast service line with a working new modem.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Change Order: Ledge at Mast Arm Foundation, Public Safety Stoplight (*)

Ledge was encountered during the Route 133 stop light mast arm foundation excavation, which necessitated redesign of the foundation. This resulted in a design cost for the contractor to revise the submittal and additional labor and equipment costs for the second mobilization. There is a minor offset to the added cost for the credit on reduced concrete quantity. The net cost increase for this work is \$10,851.

Recommendation: **Board approval of this change order item as part of Change Order 10.**

(4) Change Order: Delete Cord Reels in Public Safety Apparatus Bay (*)

It was determined that two of the cord reels specified are not needed within the apparatus bay and were deleted from the scope, resulting in a credit of \$1,088.

Recommendation: **Board approval of this credit as part of Change Order 10.**

(5) Change Order: Add Monitor in Sergeants' Office, Public Safety Building (*)

The Police Chief determined that an additional, closed circuit security system monitor should be included in the Sergeants' office. This includes the cost for the flat panel display as well as the infrastructure and programming required to connect it to the security system. The cost of this additional work is \$7,030.

Recommendation: **Board approval of this change order item as part of Change Order 10.**

(6) Change Order: Ceiling and Soffit Modifications, Public Safety Building (*)

The scope of this items includes miscellaneous ceiling changes to coordinate with utilities and structural elements as well as adding an access panel to provide means of accessing the make-up air unit suspended above the Fire Department locker area. The cost of this additional work is \$4,996.

Recommendation: **Board approval of this change order item as part of Change Order 10.**

(7) Change Order: Delete Cane Rail & Add Partition, Public Safety Building (*)

After installation of a specified cane rail and review on site, the Town's representatives decided that restricting access to the stairwell area at the lower level was not desirable and it should be removed. In order to still meet the code requirements, the area immediately under the stair stringers was instead closed off

with a partition wall. There is a net added cost to construct the additional partition, however it is partially offset by the credits for the minor reduction in flooring and painting. The net cost increase for this work is \$918.

Recommendation: **Board approval of this change order item as part of Change Order 10.**

(8) Affirmative Marketing Report

I will soon file with the State the Affirmative Marketing Report (AMP) for the quarter ending December 31, 2020, in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer (AMCO). The report is required to document the Town's utilization of woman and minority-owned businesses on State-funded construction projects. The Town had no such utilization during the last quarter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(9) Public Safety Building Furniture Bid Site Visit

I hosted the subject site visit at the new public safety building on December 22, 2020 after the bid package was released on December 14, 2020. A total of two prospective bidders attended to view the spaces and take measurements for custom new or like-new furniture (nine companies had requested a copy of the bid package). Bids are due by 1:00 p.m. on January 4, 2021 and the Board will be asked to consider awarding a contract to the successful bidder at its next meeting, on January 11, 2021.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Extension of Builder's Risk Policy, Public Safety Building (*)

The Builder's Risk insurance policy that protects the new public safety building from perils during the construction process was originally written through January 31, 2021. Now that we know that the building will not be completed until early March of 2021, it is necessary to purchase a two-month extension of the policy. The cost for this extension may be known by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board vote to purchase the policy extension, when available.**

F. Facilities

(1) Town Hall Bell Level Membrane Leak

The snowstorm of December 17, 2020 blew a larger-than-usual amount of snow through the louvers on the bell level of the Town Hall, resulting in melting snow on top of the membrane water barrier on that level. Heat from the building contributed to the melting and water began to pool overnight into December 18,

2020. When I arrived at work, water was leaking through the membrane on one side of the hatchway to the bell level and cascading down the stairs to the third floor. I was able to clear excess snow away and vacuum up the pooled water until DPW workers (still working on snow cleanup from the previous day) were able to respond and help empty and remove the vacuum. The membrane appeared to have minor tears in a few obvious areas (likely from ice freeze and thaw over time) and DPW applied some sealant as a temporary measure. To avoid this problem in the future, HVAC filter fabric can be applied to the inside of the louvers so that snow does not blow in to the extent we saw recently. I have located a contractor who will undertake that work. We have never had this problem occur in the past, probably due to the membrane retaining its integrity until now.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Town Hall Bell Striker Repair

As the Board is aware, the cable connecting the Town Hall clockworks with the bell striker was found to have broken recently. Our clock contractor visited Town Hall during the week of December 21, 2020 and the cable has been repaired.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Fiscal Year 2022 Selectmen's Operating Budget Request (*)

I have finalized the subject request package in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting. Submission are due to the Finance Committee by January 8, 2021.

Recommendation: **Board approval to submit the operating budget request package.**

(2) Fiscal Year 2022 Selectmen's Capital Budget Update (*)

I have finalized the subject capital budget update in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting. Submission are due to the Finance Committee by January 8, 2021.

Recommendation: **Board approval to submit the capital budget package.**

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

Selectman Bradford participated in the subject meeting on December 18, 2020, along with Finance Committee Chairman Buttrick and officials and personnel from the Town of Manchester and the Regional School District. He will be able to provide an update to the Board at the present meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Draft List of Potential Annual Town Meeting Topics (*)

I have revised the draft list of potential Annual Town Meeting topics in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting. I will bring a rough draft of the actual Annual Town Meeting Warrant to the Board's next meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

K. Legal Issues

No items.

L. Grants

(1) Review of Recent Accelerating Climate Resiliency Grant Application

As the Board may recall, I had submitted an application to the subject grant program from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). We were not successful in getting a grant award but grant personnel were willing to talk to me about how we might improve our application for the next grant round. Generally, as has been the case with other programs, we lost points with respect to the climate equity and the social cohesion elements of the application scoring process. While we may be able to improve the "regional coordination" score for our proposed project, I was still told that our project may just not be a good fit for this particular grant program, since Essex in general, and this project in particular, do not really present major issues in those areas (which generally require systemic environmental inequities among groups). Nonetheless, I will put together a new application when the next funding round is announced this winter.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

M. Emergency Planning

No items.

N. Other Items

(1) Christmas Holiday

The office was closed on December 25, 2020, in observance of the subject holiday.

(2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on leave for a portion of the afternoon on December 21 and all day on December 24, 2020.

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