



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of December 4, 2023

*Report covers from November 25, 2023 to December 1, 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 Administrator's Performance Review and Goal Setting (\*)

At this time each year, the Board arranges to review my performance and to set goals for the upcoming year. In the performance area, I will rely on the detailed reports filed with the Board at each Board meeting as a record of my activities and accomplishments. As the Board may recall, my evaluation template was updated with seven specific goals at the outset of this past calendar year for use at this time.

Also, it is necessary to work with the Board to develop goals for the upcoming calendar year. In addition to the general roles and responsibilities in my position description, which I will continue to update the Board on in detail for each new Board meeting, I recommend the following specific scope and welcome discussion with the Board:

1. Coordinate the process for specifying, bidding, and completing repairs and corrections to the Essex Public Safety Facility roof and building envelope based upon recommendations from our roofing and building envelope consultants.
2. Explore the possibility of grant funding for a road across the Town-owned parcel at 30 Apple Street between Apple Street and the Town Transfer Station and DPW facility. A portion of the funding for the road may be possible via coastal resilience grants and moving forward may be dependent on whatever other uses are being considered for the parcel, both from a timing and from a physical perspective.
3. Continue to work collaboratively with the Superintendent of Public Works and the Board of Public Works with respect to the ARPA-funded public water supply modernization project and the State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF)-funded water filtration plant modernization and partial

renovation project. Work will involve overseeing procurement for the water supply construction contractor and proper reporting and closeout associated with both projects.

4. Continue to serve as a coordinator of and adviser to the Essex zoning bylaw evaluation project. Work will involve continued coordination among the Selectmen, the Planning Board, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and the general public. The Community Planning Grant that the Town was awarded in 2023 will be aimed at continuing to collect public input and adding zoning components in 2024 to the changes that were successfully approved at the two Town Meetings in 2023.

5. Continue to work with the Selectmen and the Town Planner to support the work of the Essex Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) to allow the Trust to work toward the development of a Housing Production Plan.

6. Coordinate the acquisition of all materials necessary to complete the downtown decorative lighting project, along with overseeing the subsurface preparation work, the lighting system installation, and final power connection.

***Recommendation:*** Preliminary Board discussion relative to this year's evaluation process using the current template and the goal setting process for the upcoming calendar year.

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

(1) Possible Manchester Essex Regional School District Operations Review (\*)  
Even though the Manchester Town Meeting was not in favor of appropriating funds for a review of the Manchester Essex Regional School District's operations, the Essex Town Meeting did appropriate the sum of \$40,000. While this sum may not be sufficient to procure the entire scope of consultant services that had been envisioned, it may be sufficient for some preliminary work. As such, if the Board desires to explore hiring a consultant for this operations review, a scope of services could be arrived at and presented to the School Committee for discussion.

At the last meeting, the Board recalled that the Town of Manchester mentioned in the past (prior to the Manchester Town Meeting), via its Town Administrator, that the Town of Manchester may have access to funds to contribute toward the operations review not dependent on the Manchester Town Meeting. To that end, the Board asked that I reach out to the Manchester Town Administrator to see if Manchester still sees the use of other, existing funding as a possibility. I have learned that Manchester is not interested in using any funds on hand since the matter was not supported conceptually by the Town Meeting.

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

(2) Procurement of Public Restrooms at the Centennial Grove

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should start putting together the procurement process for new public restrooms at the Centennial Grove. The Board agreed that we are seeking a modular, precast concrete restroom building with six separate bathroom spaces, which will allow the structure to also serve as a changing facility. The goal is to have the structure be delivered complete, with the only onsite work being the preparation of the crushed stone pad and connection of plumbing and electrical feeds to the building (all by others). A separate procurement effort will also be undertaken for the design, approval, and installation of the tight tank that will serve the restroom facility.

Presently, I have worked out that the project will go out to bid starting on December 20, 2023 and bids will be due by January 18, 2024. The Board will consider the bids and potentially make an award on January 22, 2024.

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

(3) Second Round of Sale Offerings of Town Lots on Gregory Island

At the last meeting, the Board decided to move forward with the offering of five, Town-owned lots on Gregory Island for sale, for a second time. In this offering, no restrictions of any kind will be placed on the use of the properties (outside normal zoning and wastewater constraints applicable to any property in Essex), each property will carry a fairly high minimum offer, and the Board will reserve the right to cancel the procurement, even after offers are received, for any reason.

I have begun the process of setting up the schedule for this procurement and notices of the sale offerings will be sent to all Essex property owner on Gregory Island during the week of December 11, 2023 (exactly like the first procurement round earlier this year). Offers will be due on January 18, 2024 to allow the procurement to be advertised in the Central Register for the required 30 days. The Board will consider all offers at its meeting of January 22, 2024.

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

(4) Development of Scope of Services for Public Safety Building Repairs (\*)

Now that the Town has the final report from our building envelope consultant concerning various siding issues at the new public safety facility, plus the final report from our roofing consultant regarding the issues with the roof, plus a cash settlement with the original building construction contractor regarding the roof defects, attention may now be focused on making all of the necessary repairs. Unfortunately, the siding issues are all beyond the warranty period. It is likely possible to have Copeland Building Envelope Consultants team up with our

roofing consultant (Northeast Roof Consultants) with Copeland managing the overall specification and bidding process for all necessary repairs.

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

## **E. Insurance**

### (1) Weekly Pipe Freeze-up Prevention Inspections

Each year, beginning in December, the Police Department and the Department of Public Works conduct pipe freeze-up prevention inspections in all Town buildings at least once per weekend. The inspections are aimed at discovering heating system failures early so that no damage sets in. I have provided the Chief of Police and the Superintendent of Public Works with the necessary documentation forms and inspections will continue into March.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **F. Facilities**

### (1) Town Hall Backflow Preventer Test Failure

The Essex Water Department uses a consulting engineering firm to regularly test backflow prevention devices in buildings with fire sprinkler systems. This year, the device serving Town Hall failed the test. As such, I contacted the company that maintains our sprinkler system and seals will be replaced in our device at a cost of just under \$900.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

No items.

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

### (1) Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Meeting Summary

The group of personnel and officials that is working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to update the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan met to continue the update process on November 29, 2023. The meeting featured a discussion with respect to the action items that were finalized in the 2019 version of the Plan. In advance of the meeting, MAPC sent around a matrix illustrating all of those items and I was able to use the matrix to suggest an update for each item so that the discussion at the meeting could be more focused. The group was

able to tackle the entire list and MAPC is in the process of making the necessary changes for the next phase of the Plan update process. The group will meet again in early February and the Selectmen will host a second public forum at its meeting of February 26, 2024.

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

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

##### (1) Zoning Bylaw Review Project Meeting Summary

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Personnel from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) hosted a check-in meeting with Town personnel and officials on November 30, 2023 to review preparations for an upcoming public forum on the topic (to be held December 6, 2023). The meeting featured a discussion regarding the format of the meeting and the topics to be covered. The Board is posted along with the Planning Board to participate in the forum. The main focus of the meeting will be to allow the public and Town personnel and officials to discuss possible areas to be carved out of the Town's General Zone (perhaps starting with areas that most agree should be residential or residential with light commercial).

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

#### **K. Legal Issues**

No items.

#### **L. Grants**

No items.

#### **M. Emergency Planning**

No items.

#### **N. Other Items**

No items.

*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.*