



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of January 10, 2022

Report covers from December 25, 2021 to January 7, 2022

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Regional Information/Technology Collaborative Meeting Summary

I participated in a virtual meeting among representatives of communities participating in the North Shore Regional IT Collaborative on January 6, 2022. All participating communities have opted in to the Collaborative's first major project, which is the rollout of a regional security fabric using the Fortinet platform. Danvers is already putting a schedule together for that project, which will be completed between now and the start of the new fiscal year.

Also, after July 1, 2022, Essex will be moving its virtual servers that currently run on a physical host in Town Hall to host equipment in the Danvers datacenter. We will connect to those resources over the direct fiber link that already streams our real-time backups to Danvers. Danvers will add another virtual server to run the Assessors' database, allowing us to retire both the virtual host box and the current Assessors' physical server in Essex (both of which will reach end of life this year). The only server we plan to run on site will be a physical Windows Domain Controller, which will replicate to another domain controller in Danvers. Danvers will also provide as secondary live instance via the Danvers dedicated backup site. The Board's fiscal year 2023 operating budget requests carries ample funding for all of the above.

Further, this first of its kind in Massachusetts, regional, municipally-run IT collaborative is starting to get noticed at the State level. We expect that the collaborative will be able to compete very favorably for future State and other grants because of its cutting-edge formation and accomplishments.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) State Cyber Security Awareness Training Program Rollout

As the Board is aware, we applied for a grant offering the subject training program and the training has been awarded to us. I will serve as the program coordinator and I have begun to provide the State with requested data on our IT infrastructure and our users. I will be attending two webinars during the week of January 10, 2022 to learn more about how the program will unfold over the coming calendar year.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

C. Personnel

No items.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Contract for Provision of Prefabricated Shed, Old Fire Station Site (*)

As the Board may recall, I had solicited three written quotes for the provision of a prefabricated shed that will allow for the storage and display of the Town's antique hand fire pumper at the site of the old fire station. Two vendors provided quotes and a third vendor declined to quote. I had also advertised the project on the Town website, on the State Commbuys website, in the *Central Register*, and via local posting. While seven additional prospective vendors requested building specifications in response to that advertising, only one of them chose to submit a quotation (Kneeland Construction - \$89,000).

Of the two quotations we got via direct request (one from Post Woodworking and one from New England Outdoor Sheds & Gazebos), the lowest quote was from New England Outdoor Sheds & Gazebos (\$46,370). Post Woodworking came in at \$52,033. The project requires that the successful vendor keep their pricing valid through April of 2022 to be sure that the Town has a chance to get the building slab in place prior to building delivery.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to order the shed from New England Outdoor Sheds & Gazebos).**

(2) Old Fire Station Site Restoration Change Order Approvals (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that we should revise our request for a lump-sum change order by dropping the need for a sub drain system for the site and for a hose bib for a future water connection. The change order would therefore just consist of a) slightly enlarging the slab beyond the as-bid dimensions for the future, prefabricated building, and b) adding one length of perforated drainage pipe as a connection to a riser that was already installed when the replacement storm drain line was installed.

The week between Christmas and New Year's Day was not productive since staff from both the general contractor and their subcontractor were on vacation. However, early in the week of January 3, 2022, our general contractor provided us with pricing for the revised change order scope of work. Even though the \$5,700 price was higher than expected (although much lower than the previous scope that resulted in a \$61,000 proposal), our contractor agreed to complete all other aspects of the project at the as-bid pricing regardless of how long the project takes to complete. We proposed separately that the Town would pay for one additional

month of construction fence and toilet costs but that the contractor would have to cover any costs beyond that (the contractor was looking for a longer duration of coverage). Further, we have sorted through the contractor's request for payment with respect to the time and materials basis used to replace the storm drain on the site and our Project Manager will have a recommendation on that change order as well by meeting time.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to approve the lump-sum change order, the project carrying-costs change order, and the time and materials change order.**

(3) Conomo Point Seawall Replacement Project Update (*)

Selectman Phippen and I participated in a seawall construction project meeting with our consulting engineers and representatives of the project contractor on January 5, 2022. The Shellfish Constable attended the first part of the meeting, in order to help coordinate accommodation of clammers who need to get to Front Beach on a daily basis to launch boats. We determined that the clammers could cross over a grassy area known as the "fire lane" during occasions when the contractor has the easterly end of Conomo Point Road blocked. The contractor will also coordinate closely with the Constable when work near the boat ramp is set to occur.

The contractor has elected to begin work on the reconstruction of the revetment that is part of the job. In this way, when the contractor begins the demolition of each section of old seawall, stones that are suitable for use in the revetment can be brought directly to that location. The contractor plans to demolish 25-50 feet of existing seawall at any given time and to pour the new, reinforced concrete wall in that area before moving on to the demolition of the next short section. With respect to setting up the forms and rebar for each section, it appears that the subsurface conditions will require a customized form and rebar approach in some areas (the drawings had to make certain assumptions about bedrock). I discussed this situation with our engineering consultant and the contractor on January 7, 2022 and I expect to have more information concerning a possible resolution by meeting time.

The group also discussed the contractor's plan to replace any damaged areas of pavement along Conomo Point Road at the end of the project and the contractor generally does full-depth replacement in affected areas. Further, we discussed the possibility of the contractor holding off work near a precariously-positioned utility pole (set in 1945) until after National Grid has a chance to replace the pole with a modern pole. Based on National Grid's schedule, the contractor has opted to just work around the old pole and will contact National Grid directly to request temporary shoring or support when they work in that area.

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

(4) Quarterly Affirmative Marketing Program Report

I filed the subject report with the State for the quarter ending December 31, 2021 during the week of January 3, 2022, in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer (AMCO). The report is intended to identify the Town's use of woman or minority-owned businesses on State-funded building construction projects. No such usage occurred over the past quarter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Quarterly Facility Self-Inspection Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for the Town Hall and the Senior Center during the week of January 3, 2022. The checklists are intended to identify any safety hazards in Town buildings for Safety Committee review. I did note that a battery in the Senior Center's uninterruptible power supply (UPS) unit recently required replacement and that the Center's furnace also recently required replacement.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Monthly Pothole Log

I received the monthly pothole log for the month of December from the Department of Public Works during the week of January 3, 2022. The log is intended to rapidly address any potholes that are reported. No potholes were reported during December.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

No items.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Submission of Selectmen's Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget Request (*)

I have revised the Selectmen's Fiscal Year 2023 operating budget request package in accordance with the Board's comments at the last meeting. The package is ready for submission to the Finance Committee, through the Town Accountant.

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

(2) Submission of Selectmen's Fiscal Year 2023 Capital Plan Update Package (*)

I have revised the Selectmen's Fiscal Year 2023 capital plan update package in accordance with the Board's comments at the last meeting. The package is ready for submission to the Finance Committee, through the Town Accountant.

Recommendation: **Board vote to submit the capital plan update package.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Development of Affordable Housing Trust Draft Bylaw (*)

The Town Planner has reviewed the various examples of Affordable Housing Trust bylaws we obtained from area communities and has developed a comparison table comparing and contrasting various features from each example.

Recommendation: **Board discussion with respect to the features desired for Essex.**

(2) Continued Review of Draft Annual Town Meeting Article Topics (*)

I have revised the list of possible Annual Town Meeting article topics in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Development of Scope of Services for Zoning Grant Application (*)

As the Board is aware, MAPC has been engaged via a recent grant to conduct a first phase of review with respect to the Town's existing zoning bylaws. That process is expected to be wrapped up in March of 2022 and we are looking forward to competing for a second grant that will culminate with specific zoning bylaw revision recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting of 2023. Specifically, using funds appropriated at the 2021 Fall Town Meeting, MAPC will be paid to: a) file an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the State One Stop for Growth (OSG) grant program (OSG is a prerequisite to the Planning and Zoning Grant as we presently understand things); b) file an actual OSG grant application after the EOI is commented on by State grantmakers; and c) file an application for the State Planning and Zoning Grant (up to \$75,000) assuming that the Town gets accepted via the OSG process.

According to the project coordinator at MAPC is presently working on a scope of services for a separate project that will accomplish the above elements (using funding provided by the Fall Town Meeting in 2021). He is also working to better understand the relationship between applying to be a One Stop for Growth

community versus being able to apply for the specific grant we are interested in, the Planning and Zoning grant.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

K. Legal Issues

(1) Consideration of Whether to Opt-out of Emergency Mosquito Spraying (*)

In 2021, the Town decided not to opt out of any aerial mosquito spraying that the Commonwealth wants to undertake in the event of a public health emergency. The Town does not have the resources to properly manage mosquito populations using alternative methods and the Town has not been interested in joining the Northeast Massachusetts Mosquito Control and Wetlands Management District. In 2022, the deadline for opting out, which requires an application demonstrating how a community has a plan to manage mosquitoes on its own, is not yet known.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Quarterly Review of Executive Session Minutes

The Chairman reviewed the Board's unreleased executive session minutes and found no new minutes that are recommended for release.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

L. Grants

(1) Seawall Construction Grant Quarterly Report

I provided the subject report to the State during the week of January 3, 2022. I am keeping the grant coordinator at the State level up to date with project developments on a regular basis. The project is on schedule and on budget.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Possible MVP Grant for Further Apple Street Roadbed Elevation Work (*)

Selectman Phippen and I discussed a possible Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant application with the regional MVP coordinator on January 4, 2022. We are hopeful that MVP could fund final design and permitting work for the elevation of two low spots on Apple Street to be up out of the coastal storm surge zone in the future. The coordinator indicated that the Town's recent Expression of Interest with respect to this project was well received by reviewers and went over a variety of items that could help us score well during the grant ranking process. We expect that the Request for Responses (RFR) from the MVP program will be released in March, with applications due by late-April or early-May.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

M. Emergency Planning

No items.

N. Other Items

(1) New Year's Holiday

The office was closed on December 31, 2021 in observance of the subject holiday.

(2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on leave, from December 27-29, 2021.

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