



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of January 25, 2021

Report covers from January 9, 2021 to January 22, 2021

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Regional IT Coordination Meeting

I participated virtually in the subject meeting on January 14, 2021. The group of communities that has been working to organize around the regional IT offerings of the Town of Danvers has made significant progress with respect to implantation. All participating communities will be contributing a \$4,020 fee to the Town of Danvers in fiscal year 2022 so that Danvers can help manage service contracts and coordinate what can be offered to communities over direct, municipally-owned, fiber optic links (Essex's link has been up and running for some time now). At the meeting, we began to agree a possible Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with respect to how more services may be offered and priced in the future. The goal is to have the MOU in place for the start of fiscal year 2022 and I will be bringing the document to the Board in the future for possible signature.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) UPS Battery Replacement

A battery in one of our uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) in the Town Hall server room failed during the week of January 18, 2021. I keep spare batteries on hand and made the replacement. A new battery has been ordered to keep the replacement stock in order.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Position Description for Public Safety Building Custodian (*)

As the Board is aware, the Town has already hired a new Public Safety Custodian and he is presently doing general custodial work in other buildings. The Fire Chief and the Chief of Police have both provided input with respect to finalizing the position description for the new custodian. The draft position description is based upon the Town Hall/Library Custodian position description (customized for duties required in the new public safety building).

Recommendation: **Board review and discussion in its capacity as Personnel Board relative to finalizing the new position description for the new Public Safety Custodian.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

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

Chairman Pereen and I attended construction meetings on January 14 and 21, 2021. Our project contractor is moving into a final push to deliver the building to the Town by early March (barring any delays in workforce availability due to COVID). Work on the elevator is moving along well and tiling, fixture installation in the various bathrooms, and casework will wrap up soon. Ceiling tile work is well along and the focus will soon shift to hanging interior doors and laying down flooring. Sidewalk/hardscape work in the immediate area of the building will soon be completed (other elements will be completed in the spring). The building entry door elements (known as “storefronts”) are being installed and exterior finishes that had been left open in those areas has been tied in. The lower garage door associated with the police department have been installed and work on the fire bay garage doors will begin soon.

Comcast began to install Internet service to the building during the week of January 11, 2021 (work is proceeding in phases, starting out at the main line) and we are beginning to work with several entities that will begin to build systems off of that connection (like the State Criminal Justice Information System, the Regional Dispatch Center, and our VOIP phone vendor).

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Change Order: Public Safety Building Dryer Vent (*)

During the design process, a dryer vent was inadvertently omitted from the contract scope for the dryer location on the upper level. The design team confirmed that a vent is required, resulting in additional labor and material cost for the vent and roof penetration totaling \$3,409.

Recommendation: **Approval of this change order item as part of Change Order 11.**

(3) Change Order: Public Safety Building – Extend Vehicle Exhaust Vent(*)

The plymovent system (which safely vents vehicle exhaust gasses from within the fire station truck bays) was not anticipated to be required to the full depth of the eastern-most bay, based on the design team’s understanding of how the bays are anticipated to be utilized. Upon further discussions with the Chief, it was determined that the Fire Department would benefit from flexibility offered by having the vehicle exhaust rail system available for the full depth as it would be much more difficult to extend later. This represents additional material and labor cost from the mechanical filed sub-bidder’s system vendor totaling \$20,099.

Recommendation: Approval of this change order item as part of Change Order 11.

(4) Change Order: Credit for Unsuitable Soil Allowance, Public Safety Site(*)

An allowance was included in the bid documents for potential unsuitable materials within the building footprint area requiring over excavation. The limited materials encountered were able to be addressed on site, resulting in a credit for the allowance in the amount of \$12,500.

Recommendation: Approval of this credit as part of Change Order 11.

(5) Change Order: Concrete Slab for Police Storage Container (*)

A concrete pad was added as an Owner-requested change to accommodate a storage container for Police Department storage items. Fill had previously been placed to create a level area for the mason's mixing operation, limited the additional cost to \$1,353 for forming and placing the concrete pad only.

Recommendation: Approval of this change order item as part of Change Order 11.

(6) Public Safety Building Project Representation for Duration of Project (*)

The original budget for representation of the Town concerning the public safety building construction project by our Project Manager included full on-site coverage through January 31, 2021 and limited coverage for the demolition of the old building later in the year. With respect to our project architect, which is more task-oriented, no hard and fast "coverage date" exists in that firm's contract. As the Board is aware, the project will wrap up about a month to a month-and-a-half later than originally expected, requiring additional funding for our Project Manager's on-site professional to oversee the project to completion.

Our architect did carry the design and coordination of demolition of the old building and basic site restoration in the firm's original budget. However, if the Town desires to add more complex site preparation elements related to the future use of the site to the demolition contract, depending on scope, additional design funding may be necessary. Presently, it appears that Project Manager fees will not increase more than around \$30,000 to get to final project closeout and any architectural fee increase is dependent on what is asked for with respect to re-use preparation for the former site. If workforce shortage problems materialize, due to COVID, there is a chance that the schedule could be pushed out farther and result in additional oversight carrying costs.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the desired plan of project oversight coverage and former site re-use preparation through the end of the project.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Snow Shield Installed in Town Hall Bell Tower

As the Board may recall, we had an issue with snow blowing into the Town Hall bell tower through the louvers during a December snowstorm. Accumulated snow can cause meltwater problems in that area. As noted previously, I had been working to find a contractor to install filter material that would still allow for air exchange but would keep snow out. That work has been completed and it should alleviate any future issues.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) School Budget Collaboration Meeting Summary (*)

I participated in the subject meeting on January 15, 2021, along with Selectman Bradford and Finance Committee Chairman Buttrick. Personnel and officials from the Manchester Essex Regional School District and the Town of Manchester were also in attendance. The meeting featured a discussion with respect to what the District would have to do in order to bring the increase in town apportionments for fiscal year 2022 to no more than 2.5%. Both cuts and use of reserves would be necessary. Over the longer term, it will be necessary for policy makers to discuss whether the desire is to decrease programs offered by the District versus the possible need for a Proposition 2 ½ override every 7 to 10 years to maintain present offerings.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Annual Meeting

I participated in the subject annual meeting on January 21 and 22, 2021. The meeting is usually offered in Boston, in person. However, this year, due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the meeting was offered entirely on a virtual platform. The Annual Meeting offers a variety of presentations and seminars on emerging topics of interest to municipal management.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant

(*)

I have revised the draft Annual Town Meeting warrant in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting and new input received from departments.

Recommendation: **Continued Board review of the draft Annual Town Meeting warrant.**

K. Legal Issues

(1) Eastern Avenue Cell Tower Matter

It is our present understanding that a company will be applying to the Zoning Board of Appeals for variances necessary to site a new cell tower just outside of the downtown area, off of Eastern Avenue. The company will also need to seek a Special Permit from the Planning Board. Chairman Pereen and I participated in a conference call involving Town Counsel and other Town officials during the week of January 11, 2021 to begin coordinating the matter. It will be essential that both boards are properly advised throughout the process.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Quarterly Review of Executive Session Minutes

The Chairman has reviewed unreleased executive session minutes, as she does on a quarterly basis. The Chairman did not identify any unreleased executive session minutes that are ready for release at this time.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

L. Grants

No items.

M. Emergency Planning

No items.

N. Other Items

(1) Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The office was closed on January 18, 2021, in observance of the subject holiday.

(2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on leave for a portion of the day on January 12, 2021.

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