



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of June 15, 2020

Report covers from May 30, 2020 to June 12, 2020

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

#### (1) Replacement of Failed Host Server Physical Disk

One of the two, identically-populated physical disks in the physical host server that runs the Town's virtual servers failed during the week of June 1, 2020. The disk was out of warranty and I made arrangements through the vendor who designed and provided the host in 2017 to have a replacement disk drive shipped overnight. The Town Treasurer installed the new disk drive in the host in my absence and it automatically populated it with a copy of the information on the surviving disk. No downtime was experienced during this incident.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 3 hours.

#### (2) Renewal of Live Instance Server Backup Software

I have worked with personnel from the Danvers IT Department to arrange for FY 21 renewals of the software that copies our server infrastructure to Danvers on a nightly basis. Now that Danvers has spearheaded a new fiber optic system that interconnects the in-town fiber networks in various communities, we will soon be able to connect to Danvers via municipally-owned fiber, as opposed to the VPN we presently use. This new connection will allow us to continually stream backup data to Danvers (instead of once per night), for a more robust version of our live instance backup and recovery system.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### C. Personnel

No items.

### D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

#### (1) Review of MassDOT Plans for Route 22 Speed Study and Route 133 Parking/Speed (\*)

At the last meeting, I provided the Board with an update from MassDOT on two initiatives that DOT had offered to help the Town with when the matters were discussed last fall. The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has slowed progress on both

fronts but DOT is now prepared for more action. The Board has been able to use the time between meetings to review DOT's materials.

First, DOT had pledged to conduct a speed study along the entire length of Route 22 in Essex. Residents have registered comments about speeding and lack of crosswalks along the route. DOT has indicated that this study should be completed within the month of June. Our hope is that the study will identify areas where speed limits are presently too high and should be reduced. However, it is also possible that the study will recommend increasing speed limits in some areas as well. The study will not include an analysis of crosswalks but the speed data is needed as a precursor to that discussion.

Secondly, DOT has provided two different options for narrowing the travel lanes in the vicinity of Farnham's Restaurant on Route 133, which would provide a wider shoulder for parking across from the establishment. Further, DOT has indicated that it may be able to pay for half of a new digital speed board (or boards) in that area that will serve to calm traffic (along with the lane narrowing). We can arrange for a presentation from DOT so that the Board can have a chance to ask questions and choose an option.

***Recommendation: Board review of the Route 133 plans and discussion as necessary.***

**(2) Public Safety Building Construction Project Update** (\*)

Chairman Pereen and I participated in construction meetings on June 4 and June 11, 2020. The project is generally moving along very well and our Project Manager and design team are presently reviewing the overall schedule with the contractor to determine what a reasonable time extension for the project should be given that ledge removal was far more involved than originally envisioned.

The contractor is working now to set parking lot light pole bases, to complete drains for future downspouts, to set the oil/water separator for the building, and to complete with the steel erector the erection of the main building frame. All of these items will be complete by the middle of June. Grading of all parking and apron areas will occur soon so that binder pavement can be placed by the end of June. The large concrete slab on grade for the lower part of the building will be poured soon and will be fully cured by the end of June and sewer manholes are going in.

Our project designer has met with the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief in order for those department heads to choose all necessary interior finishes and colors. Also, we continue to coordinate with MassDOT and National Grid on power supply, pole set, and highway access permits and approvals. No change orders are coming before the Board at the present meeting, but several are likely for the June 29, 2020 meeting.

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

## **E. Insurance**

No items.

## **F. Facilities**

### (1) Town-wide Cleaning and Sanitization During the COVID Crisis

As a condition of operating Town buildings with employees reporting for work (even if the building is closed to the public), the Town needs to undertake daily sanitization of “high-touch” areas in all buildings, in addition to normal custodial duties. The Town is already using weekly electrostatic disinfection in the fire/police station and all emergency vehicles, since these departments deal extensively with public contact. One of the two Town custodians has now gone on hiatus, since he is in a high-risk category and chooses not to work at this time. He will resume duties for the Town once the crisis has come under control.

As such, we have engaged the services of the cleaning contractor that is also utilized by the Manchester Essex Regional School District and the contractor will provide general custodial services in the Town Hall and the Memorial Park public restrooms. The contractor will also provide daily high-touch cleaning in the fire/police station, Town Hall, the Memorial Park public restrooms, the Senior Center, and the Water Filtration Plant. Services will be tailored to the Town’s needs as the crisis evolves. Funding for the contractor will come mostly from the open FEMA disaster declaration (75%) and partially from the Town’s CARES Act funding (25%).

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

### (2) Town Hall Elevator Annual State Inspection

The Town Hall elevator was inspected by the State Inspector on June 8, 2020. I had arranged for our generator contractor and our fire alarm contractor to be on site to support the testing. The elevator passed inspection and no follow-up is necessary.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

### (1) Application for Federal CARES Act Funding

During the week of June 1, 2020, I worked together with our auditor, the Town Accountant and the DPW Clerk to compile all of the Town’s COVID-19-related expenses through June 30, 2020. The Town has a total of \$334,000 earmarked for this purpose and the balance can be applied for in FY21. Since most of our costs are FEMA disaster declaration eligible, most costs will be reimbursed by FEMA

at the 75% level. The other 25% is part of our CARES Act application and we have applied for just over \$41,000 in CARES Act funding in FY20. FEMA reimbursements are an ongoing process being managed by the DPW office and the Selectmen will eventually receive official reimbursement packages for approval (much like the process for storm even damages).

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

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

No items.

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

### (1) Annual Town Meeting Follow-up (\*)

Now that the Annual Town Meeting has been held (June 13, 2020, outdoors, at the school), the Board may want to take the opportunity to go over next steps for select articles that have been approved.

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

## **K. Legal Issues**

### (1) Negotiation of Host Community Agreements with BB Botanics (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board and the Clerk of the Essex Host Community Agreement Advisory Committee agreed that talks between the Town and BB Botanics concerning a proposed, combined marijuana cultivation and retail facility at 242 John Wise Avenue should commence. BB Botanics already had a copy of the proposed retail Host Community Agreement (HCA) and we will soon provide the company with a copy of the proposed cultivation HCA (after vetting the Committee's first cultivation draft with Town department heads and Town Counsel).

The Town negotiation group discussed BB Botanics' initial comments on the Town's first draft of the retail HCA on June 10, 2020. Town Counsel is presently reviewing the group's feedback and we will arrange for the negotiation group to begin negotiations with BB Botanics as soon as possible.

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

## L. Grants

### (1) Submission of Several Grant Applications

This spring, the Board had authorized the application for three different grant programs: the Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) Culvert Grant (second phase of funding for the Apple Street first road dip and culvert replacement), the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Coastal Resilience Grant (first phase of funding for the second road dip on Apple Street), and the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant (studying how material dredged from local navigable channels might be used to infill non-functional mosquito control ditches). We will also re-apply for a grant to replace the Conomo Point Seawall system, but that application has been delayed until sometime this summer.

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

## M. Emergency Planning

### (1) COVID-19 Response Update and Status Report (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board, in concert with the Chief of Police and the Board of Health Administrator, reopened a variety of Town recreational areas to varying degrees. Discussion should now be held concerning possibly continuing to lift restrictions, in a stepwise fashion. This week, it seems possible that ballfields should reopen, with their use being controlled per the Governor's standards and that the Board should again consider whether and changes need to be made to existing Conomo Point or Town Landing rules. The Board is working at the present meeting to grant restaurants the ability to add or expand outdoor seating.

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

## N. Other Items

### (1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on leave for a portion of the day on June 11, 2020.

*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.*