



## **Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of June 6, 2022**

*Report covers from May 21, 2022 to June 3, 2022*

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

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### **A. Town Department Reports/Requests**

#### (1) Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Summary

Chairman Pereen and I participated in the Strategic Planning Committee meeting on May 26, 2022. The Committee completed its commentary on the working draft of the updated Strategic Plan and, after final editing is conducted by Strategic Planning Committee Chairman Cameron, the document will be shared internally with all necessary boards, committees, and personnel. Individual Committee members will collect input and the Committee will meet again in mid-July to revise the draft and prepare for a public forum to collect external comments and input.

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

### **B. Computer Systems**

#### (1) Replacement of UPS Battery

A battery within an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) unit in the server room in Town Hall failed during the week of May 31, 2022. I replaced the battery with a spare I had on hand and ordered another replacement for the future.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### **C. Personnel**

#### (1) AFSMCE Collective Bargaining

I participated in continued collective bargaining with the union, along with Chairman Pereen and Finance Committee Member Flynn on May 25, 2022. The next session is scheduled for June 16, 2022.

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

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

#### (1) Route 133 Bridge Replacement Project Update

I participated in a bridge replacement project construction meeting on May 24, 2022, along with personnel from MA DOT and the construction contractor. Presently, the contractor is still expecting traffic to divert over the temporary bridge by mid-June.

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

(2) Conomo Point Seawall Replacement Project Update

The Conomo Point seawall replacement project has been completed as planned. All sections of the new seawall have been poured and the landscaping contractor is finishing up that work. The general contractor plans to complete punch list work and some pavement repairs in the coming days.

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

(3) Old Fire Station Site Restoration Project Update

As the Board is aware, the contractor that is responsible for restoring the old fire station site at 24 Martin Street and constructing limited sidewalks and a slab for the new antique fire pumper display shed has caused substantial project delays. The contractor has simply not planned the project out well (especially with respect to lead times) and subcontractors have not received complete guidance on how best to proceed. After some additional work was completed in April, the contractor had another long lapse during May. We are prompting the contractor to resume work as soon as possible.

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

**E. Insurance**

No items.

**F. Facilities**

(1) Roofs at Centennial Grove

A professional roofing contractor paid by the YMCA replaced the roofs on the Grove Cottage, garage, and concession stand during the week of May 31, 2022. The Town paid for the materials.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

(1) SRF Safe Drinking Water Loan Fund Presentation

I attended the subject presentation offered by the office of the Massachusetts State Revolving Loan Fund, along with the project engineers for our water filtration plant upgrade work, on May 26, 2022. The presentation provided useful information on how the Fund will cover invoices during the project and how funds will begin to be repaid after the project has been completed. I will work closely with our engineers and with the Water Department to coordinate the payment of invoices during the project.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

### (1) Climate Change Workshop, Part Two

I attended the subject workshop on May 23, 2022, along with Selectman Phippen. This second of two workshops was made possible via participation in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Building Blocks for Regional Resilience Program and is the first of two workshops. TownGreen2025 hosted this workshop series to take a broader look at climate threats and vulnerabilities on Cape Ann. The workshops explored both increased flooding concerns and a 2038 Great Storm scenario revealing potential damages from a Category 3 hurricane.

At this second workshop, participants provided input on the most important tools to affect positive change for the future. Many participants were interested in seeing new zoning in all Cape Ann communities to limit future development along the coast, given the predictions for sea level rise and climate change. There may be new opportunities for communities, either individually or collaboratively, to meet these anticipated, common challenges.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Economic Development Committee Coordination Call Summaries

I participated in the subject call along with Chairman Preen on May 24, 2022. The Chairman of the Economic Development Committee had asked for the meeting so that the leaders of other policy boards could compare notes before the Economic Development Committee begins to execute its next steps within the Essex Economic Development Plan. The Chairmen of the Planning Board and the Strategic Planning Committee also participated, as did the Town Planner. At the meeting, the group agreed that a discussion of possible zoning changes for Essex will be integral to the future possible designation and promotion of a light commercial district (LCD). On May 26, 2022, some of the above parties participated in a second call, with the Town Accountant, to get a better idea about future budget capacity to accommodate changes that might come about as a result of additional development.

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

(3) Massachusetts Municipal Management Association Spring Meeting

I attended the subject meeting at the Beauport Hotel in Gloucester on June 2, 2022. The meeting featured professional development presentations from a variety of speakers.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

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

No items.

**K. Legal Issues**

(1) Consideration of Property Acquisition - Beneficial Re-use of Dredge Spoils(\*)

As the Board is aware, the Army Corps of Engineers has been funded to conduct full maintenance dredging of the Essex River during the winter of 2023-2024. That work will utilize traditional dredge spoil disposal methods (upland site or offshore disposal). On a parallel track, the Corps has been investigating the possibility of placing suitable dredged materials on the marsh to fill in old drainage ditches or perhaps even on or near Crane Beach. In order to make beneficial re-use of materials feasible, the Town would be responsible to acquire both temporary and permanent easement on private land, a matter that would require much legal work and Town Meeting votes.

While the prospect of the innovative use of dredged materials is enticing with respect to building up the Town's coastal resilience, the effort and expense involved to possibly bring that type of use to fruition is likely beyond our capacity. Given that the River is going to be dredged whether the Town looks into beneficial re-use or not and given that the Town will have to pay 35% of any costs that would be above the cost of traditional dredging, attempting to bring about beneficial re-use is not advisable at this time. That said, the Corps has completed a very important study and it may assist the Town in the future when the Town perhaps wants to conduct annual maintenance to keep the River from silting in over time.

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

**L. Grants**

(1) USDA Rural Development Water System Grant Update

In my last report, I indicated that the Town might be eligible for Federal grant funding under the USDA Rural Development Grant Program due to the Town's small size and its status as a "rural community". I have been working with USDA personnel and with our consulting engineer to complete a grant application to understand whether the Town is, in fact, eligible, and for how much. Funding would go toward our upcoming Water Filtration Plant update and modernization

project and would directly decrease the amount that the Town will need to borrow to complete the project. Presently, our consulting engineer is populating the application with the necessary technical data.

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

(2) GAP III Energy Grant Program

In addition to the USDA grant program discussed above, the Town may be eligible for energy efficiency funding under the subject grant program that could defray the cost of our upcoming Water Filtration Plant project. The GAP III program would address the upgrade of equipment like pumps and drives to move toward more energy efficient models. Our consulting engineer has registered for program materials and will guide us toward potential projects once the program is opened up for this new cycle.

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

**M. Emergency Planning**

No items.

**N. Other Items**

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on leave, all day on May 27, 2022 and for a portion of the day on June 3, 2022.

(2) Memorial Day Holiday

The office was closed on May 30, 2022 in observance of the subject holiday.

*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.*