



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Nov. 29, 2021

Report covers from November 13, 2021 to November 26, 2021

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) "Affordable Housing Trust 101" Public Information Forum (\*)

The Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) will offer the subject public information program via the Town's video conferencing platform on December 6, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. MHP was consulted by the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), which coordinates the Essex Housing Coalition. Since it is possible that the Annual Town Meeting of 2022 may consider whether or not to establish an Affordable Housing Trust within the Town, the program is intended to provide the public with background surrounding the benefits of potentially taking that step.

The forum has been promoted in two local newspapers, Town social media pages, and via the [Town website](#). Key Town boards, committees, and personnel have also been directly provided with information concerning the forum.

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

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Regional IT Collaborative Meeting Summary

As the Board may recall, the Fall Town Meeting appropriated funding for the Town to participate in a new, comprehensive cybersecurity fabric rollout being offered through the Town of Danvers to a number of area communities. The cost of that work is being offset substantially by a State grant. I met virtually with members of the Collaborative on November 16, 2021 and we expect to soon have a document that will spell out the scope of services and costs for this particular project.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

#### (2) Renewal of Antivirus Software Licenses

A portion of the per-seat licenses for the Town's antivirus software will expire in mid-December. As such, I placed an order for the necessary renewal. Other licenses are renewed in June.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Renewal of File Backup Subscription

Even though the Town of Danvers maintains a full backup of the Town's computer infrastructure, we also update all user-created data at Carbonite on a nightly basis (as a fail-safe). As such, I have initiated the process for a renewal of that service for an additional year.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**C. Personnel**

No items.

**D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

(1) Town Zoning Bylaw Evaluation Project Update

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Planning Board Chairman Kim Drake and I met virtually with personnel from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) on November 16, 2021 in order for MAPC to continue to gather information concerning the Town's zoning bylaws and associated data and to work through their plan of services and schedule. As the Board may recall, MAPC personnel visited Essex recently to tour the community. During the recent call, we helped MAPC personnel to finalize the project work plan, with specific attention to how public input would be taken, and the schedule of project tasks and events. A summary document was subsequently developed as a guide to the sequence of events. Also, Chairman Drake and I recommended a list of about ten stakeholders for MAPC to interview. This draft list was reviewed by the Planning Board on November 17, 2021 and the Planning Board will finalize the list at their next meeting.

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

(2) Site Visit to Town Wells for Engineering Services RFP

I attended the subject site visit on November 18, 2021, along with the Superintendent of Public Works. The site visit was intended to show prospective respondents to the Town's Request for Proposals (RFP) for design work associated with the modernization and improvement of the Town's three public water supply wells. Proposals are due on December 8, 2021 and a total of 3 prospective firms attended the site visit (of ten firms that had requested a copy of the RFP). Participants had a variety of questions for the Superintendent... Proposals will be evaluated privately by a committee and the Board will be asked to award a contract at its meeting of December 13, 2021.

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

(3) Purchase of Display Shed for Antique Fire Pumper

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At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the display shed that will be placed at the site of the old fire station should be 16' x 30' and that the design I had put

together using an on-line tool was satisfactory (with the exception of removing two windows from the front of the building). Subsequently, the Fire Chief indicated that the Fire Department and the Essex Veteran Firefighters' Association would review that general design, as revised. We hope to have all input by meeting time and I can then initiate a procurement process that will involve solicitation of quotations via advertisement in the Central Register, at the Town's website, on Commbuys, and in Town Hall.

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

(4) Purchase of Permitting Software for Building Department (\*)

The Fall Town Meeting approved funding for the purchase of permitting software for the Building Department. I have solicited quotations for the OpenGov, on-line municipal permitting system and we intend to use a third party to set up the final on-line forms once the vendor sets up the Town's basic, on-line tenancy (generating a substantial savings). We expect that OpenGov itself will come in with the lowest quote (as opposed to one of its authorized resellers) but I have solicited quotes from resellers as well, per State procurement rules. I will have more information with respect to quotations by meeting time. The software contract carries a provision for a 5% increase in the annual product fee unless the parties arrive at some lower figure. As such, the Town will need to negotiate that figure as we approach the end of the first year.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion of the matter and possible authorization of the Chairman to place the order directly with OpenGov.**

(5) Old Fire Station Site Restoration Update and Change Orders (\*)

At the last meeting, I explained how the project had been disrupted by the need to replace an old storm drain line that had been impacted by the removal of the old building footings. That work was conducted on a time and materials basis and included the installation of a new, 12" PVC drain line connecting a catch basin on Shephard Memorial Drive with a pipe leading to a manhole to the north of the Town parking lot. The work also included the reconstruction of one face of the catch basin since it was in poor condition and had multiple pipes going into it which would no longer be used (resulting in the cracking of that face when the initial attempt to install the new drain line occurred). During the course of the work, it was clear that the old drain line was in poor condition and was cracked in numerous places. So, the replacement of the drain line was something that needed to be done anyway. The cost of this time and materials change order should be available by meeting time.

Additionally, our contractor will price a lump-sum change order for other items that need to be attended to. The drain line replacement work highlighted just how much groundwater is flowing underneath the project site. As such, our designer is developing a plan for a subdrain system to intercept the groundwater and to direct it into the new drain line. Also, after discussions with the Fire Department, it was

evident that the slab for the new display shed for the Town's antique fire pumper needed to be expanded (from 16' x 26' to 16' x 30'). Further, given that the area is already under construction, with loam and seed to be placed in the spring, now is the time to install a new, frost-free yard hydrant in the new green space (fed from the former water service to the old building). The cost of this lump-sum change order will be available soon.

Presently, we would like to see the subdrain system, the buried electrical conduit and associated equipment (part of the original contract), the frost-free hydrant, the granite curbing (part of the original contract), and the backfilling and grading of the entire site (part of the original contract) performed this winter. Concrete, paving, and loam/seed work will occur in the spring and the display shed will be placed on the new slab at that time.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion of the project status and consideration of both the time and materials and the lump-sum change orders, authorizing the Chairman to approve the lump-sum change order when final figures are available.**

(6) Route 133 Essex River Bridge Project Update

The contractor for the subject project has announced that the project will commence during the third week of December, 2021 (as opposed to the contractor's original proposal – which was the first week of December).

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

**E. Insurance**

(1) Safety Committee Meeting

The next Safety Committee meeting will take place on December 23, 2021.

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

**F. Facilities**

(1) Field of Dreams Irrigation System Winterization

Our sprinkler system contractor winterized the irrigation system at the Field of Dreams on November 15, 2021.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

No items.

## H. Complaints

No items.

## I. Meetings Attended

### (1) Cape Ann Caucus

Selectman Phippen attended the subject meeting on November 19, 2021. The Caucus brings local and State government personnel and officials together with members of the Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce twice a year to discuss topics of interest.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

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

### (1) Promulgation of Regulations for the Issuance of Resident Parking Stickers (\*)

The recent Fall Town Meeting authorized the Selectmen to promulgate regulations for the issuance of resident parking stickers. The Town Clerk has developed a memo to the Board that lays out some concepts that she feels would be valuable to consider when finalizing regulations. The regulations cannot take effect until the Office of the Attorney General approves the recent change to the Essex parking bylaw that authorizes this action.

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

### (2) Grant Agreement with Essex Housing Authority for use of CPA Funding (\*)

Now that Town Meeting has approved funding for roof replacement work by the Essex Housing Authority (EHA) at the Chebacco Terrace property, Town Counsel recommends the development of a Grant Agreement that will stipulate what needs to get accomplished and by when. As such, a draft Agreement was developed and circulated to the Executive Director of the EHA for review. The document will be finalized by filling in some necessary information and is available for the Board's review and approval at the present meeting.

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

### (3) Preliminary List of Potential Article Topics for Annual Town Meeting (\*)

I have developed a preliminary list of potential article topics for the Annual Town Meeting that will be held on May 2, 2022.

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

## K. Legal Issues

### (1) Proposal from Conomo Point Association to Modify Pier/Float License

The Conomo Point Association has annually received a license from the Board to deploy its ramps and floats from the two stone piers owned by the Town at Conomo Point. The Association has completed a review of the usual license language and wished to discuss that language for the upcoming license period (spring of 2022). Chairman Preen, Town Counsel, and I discussed the Association's ideas for changes with two representatives of the Association on November 24, 2021 and we will have an additional conversation before bringing the matter before the full Board.

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

## L. Grants

### (1) Apple Street Culvert/Roadbed Elevation Grant Update/Scope Revision (\*)

Our engineering consultant (TEC) has completed much of the field and preliminary engineering work necessary to advance the subject project toward final design. A grant from the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) was originally intended to bring the elevation of the Apple Street roadbed in the first of two low spots through its permitting phase. However, DER requested that our consultant revise the scope of services to include more in-depth modeling and analysis that DER feels will be key to eventual State and local permitting efforts (such as a downstream tide gauge study and more attention to sea level rise predictions). TEC provided a revised scope of services to DER and we will be discussing the finalization of project scope changes with DER on December 3, 2021. Ultimately, a revised scope of services will be sent to the Town by DER for approval and signature. It is necessary for the tide gauge study and sea level rise modeling to be approved out ahead of the full revised scope, in order to allow time to get that work moving.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization of the Chairman to sign a revised scope of services with DER and with our engineering consultant, when available.**

### (2) Expression of Interest for Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant (\*)

The DER roadbed elevation design project referenced above will bring the design for the first of two low spots along Apple Street to a completed state. The second low spot along Apple Street has had the benefit of a full feasibility study but has not progressed to the final design phase. We are looking to future Federal funding for the construction phase of this project but we need to get the final design for the second low area completed. As such, I have submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the MVP State grant program to ascertain with program staff whether our project is a good candidate for final design funding for the second low area and permitting for the entire stretch of roadway.

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

(3) Green Communities Grant Program Annual Report

The Town Planner filed the subject report with the State during the week of November 15, 2021. Filing the report each fall is a prerequisite to applying for new Green Communities projects each spring.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**M. Emergency Planning**

No items.

**N. Other Items**

(1) Thanksgiving Holiday

The office was closed on November 25 and 26, 2021, in observance of the subject holiday.

(2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on leave, all day on November 12, 2021 and for a portion of the day on November 23, 2021.

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