



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of October 3, 2022

Report covers from September 24, 2022 to September 30, 2022

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Final Preparation for Strategic Plan Revision Public Forum (\*)

Chairman Pereen, the Town Planner, Strategic Planning Committee Cameron, and I met on September 29, 2022 to finalize the presentation that will be offered at the SPC's upcoming public forum on October 6, 2022. The same group previously completed final editing and released for public review the [working draft](#) of the revised Essex Strategic Plan for 2022-2027 and the entire Committee will take public input on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

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

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Annual External Network Penetration and Phishing Testing

As is the case each year, I have arranged for a private IT consultant to attempt to penetrate the Town's computer network at its Internet-facing communication link. We have been conducting this testing for several years now and the consultant has not been able to penetrate. The consultant also conducts simulated e-mail phishing and social engineering campaigns to attempt to get users to disclose information or navigate to or open unsafe content.

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

### C. Personnel

#### (1) Safety Committee Meeting Summary and Loss Control Grant (\*)

I attended the Safety Committee meeting on September 29, 2022, along with Chairman Pereen. The meeting featured a discussion regarding what the Town might apply for with respect to our insurer's annual loss control grant. The Town is eligible for up to \$10,000 under that grant and two possibilities include work that is going to be needed to upgrade two Town elevators for fire code changes and the purchase of a backup server for body camera and, eventually, cruiser dash cam video files.

*Recommendation:* **Board selection of grant application topics and authorization of the Chairman to submit the application.**

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

### (1) Solid Waste/Recycling Services Contract Update (\*)

At the last meeting, I discussed how the Town's negotiating team had met with personnel from Covanta and Commonwealth Hauling and that we would meet again on September 27, 2022 to understand from these companies whether we might be able to extend the existing agreement for a short time. Previous to that discussion, the negotiating team had met with Casella and we had been awaiting a new set of figures for Casella to provide end-to-end transfer station services.

At the meeting of September 27, 2022, personnel from Covanta, Commonwealth Hauling, and Maguire Equipment proposed that the Town consider keeping existing arrangements in place, albeit via a new type of structure. Presently, Covanta utilizes Commonwealth and Maguire to deliver services under its expiring contract. Covanta has agreed to continue this arrangement for an additional six months (through June 30, 2023), with the understanding that the tipping fee will increase sharply on January 1, 2023 and that the Town will be responsible for keeping all equipment running during the extension period. The Town will be able to rely on Maguire for support in that area (at the Town's expense), during the short extension period. During the extension period, the Town could negotiate with Covanta, Commonwealth, and Maguire separately to cobble together complementary contracts to achieve what is being done already, under the expiring contract, and be ready for a new arrangement for July 1, 2023. The Town also already uses Dynamic Hauling for recyclable hauling services and that arrangement would not change under this scenario. Both Covanta and Commonwealth have provided the Town with draft contract documents.

Whether the Town chooses to go with the end-to-end Casella proposal (still waiting for new figures) or with a suite of complementary contracts, new transfer station equipment will be required and should still be sought at the Fall Town Meeting. Generally, new equipment will include two, new small compactors for recycling compaction (we had no such equipment in the past), a new solid waste compactor to replace the decades-old unit (style will depend on which contracting option the Town chooses), replacement of garage doors on the transfer station building, new fencing around the transfer station, and any related activities. The advantage to the end-to-end solution is that, albeit more expensive, the contractor guarantees an attendant to ensure that only official Town trash bags are going into the compactor. The Town has had a difficult time in always having Town personnel at the transfer station to monitor dumping during station hours. The advantage to the less-expensive suite of contracts is that we would continue to work with familiar companies and operations.

Another matter that is necessary to address during the six-month extension period is that the pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) system involving official Town trash bags will need to commence. As noted above, the tipping fee will increase dramatically on January 1, 2023 and the added cost will be defrayed with the bag

purchase program. In order to initiate that system, the Town must contact WasteZero, which will be handling the production and distribution of the bags to local merchants and the payment of the Town from bag fees that are paid in by residents to merchants. The hope is to have the program begin as of February 1, 2023. During the month of January, residents could still dispose of household solid waste without the use of official bags. Presently, transfer station stickers are valid through January 31, 2023. We need to act very soon in order to have things ready for February 1 and some steps can be initiated by WasteZero in advance of any obligation for payment.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion as necessary and authorization of the Chairman to sign a contract with WasteZero for the initiation of the PAYT system, contingent upon funding at the Fall Town Meeting.**

(2) Route 133 Essex River Bridge Replacement Project Update (\*)

In lieu of the September 27, 2022 construction meeting, the project contractor issued a brief, written update. The project contractor has rehabilitated and prepared the bridge abutments and completed associated drainage work. The main beams for the new bridge will be set on the nights of October 4 and 5, 2022 and the concrete deck should be poured during the second or third week of October. After the deck is in place, sidewalks will be poured, which will give the contractor the chance to work on the new utility crossings over the winter. The next project meeting is scheduled for October 11, 2022.

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

## **E. Insurance**

No items.

## **F. Facilities**

(1) Senior Center and Town Hall Elevator Retrofit Work

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town should undertake code-compliance work on both the Senior Center elevator and the Town Hall elevator that makes keyed elevator operation by firefighters easier and more flexible. The State has mandated these changes by the end of this calendar year and it is our present understanding that the relatively new elevator in the Public Safety Facility already complies. Given that this code change was not contemplated during the fiscal year 2023 budget preparation process, the Board has applied to the Finance Committee for access to the Finance Committee's Reserve Fund, which can be replenished at the Fall Town Meeting on November 14, 2022. I will request that our elevator contractor commence the work as soon as possible after receiving Finance Committee approval, especially given the expected lead time for parts.

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

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

No items.

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

No items.

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

### (1) Revised Draft of Fall Town Meeting Warrant (\*)

I have revised the draft Fall Town Meeting Warrant in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting. The Board plans to approve and sign the warrant at its next meeting, on October 24, 2022.

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

## **K. Legal Issues**

No items.

## **L. Grants**

### (1) Apple Street Roadbed Elevation Project Monthly Report

I filed the subject report with the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program during the week of September 26, 2022, after receiving a draft from our engineering consultant, TEC. Since the project has just recently commenced, the report provided information on upcoming events and activities.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Fiscal Year 2023 Green Crab Trapping Grant

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has once again offered area coastal communities funding for the trapping of invasive green crabs. Essex typically gets \$12,500 each fiscal year and Chairman Preen has signed the necessary paperwork to get the program rolling for this year. Local harvesters get a special authorization from DMF and harvests are certified by the Shellfish Constable before harvesters are paid (40 cents per pound of crabs caught and killed).

*Recommendation:* Board ratification of the Chairman's signature at the next meeting.

**M. Emergency Planning**

No items.

**N. Other Items**

No items.

*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.*