



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Sept. 28, 2020

Report covers from September 12, 2020 to September 25, 2020

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Revised Version of Draft Essex Economic Development Plan

The Town Planner and personnel from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) have released a revised draft of the Essex Economic Development Plan (EDP) in response to comments made by the Economic Development Committee (EDC) and local businesses asking for additional development of the preface dealing with recovering from the COVID crisis. The revised draft is under review by the EDC and local businesses and a move to a final document will likely occur in the near future. The EDC will likely meet in October to make any final alterations and then vote on a final version of the Plan.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

B. Computer Systems

No items.

C. Personnel

(1) Safety Committee Meeting

After taking two meetings off, due to the need to focus on COVID preparation and management, the Safety Committee met on September 17, 2020. The Committee reviewed goals for the year. The DPW is focusing on trench safety, the Fire Department is focusing on compliance with a variety of new OSHA requirements, and the Police Department is focusing on its use of force policy and the potential use of body and cruiser cameras.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Public Safety Facility Construction Project Update

(*)

Chairman Preen and I participated in construction meetings on September 10, September 17, and September 24, 2020. The project is currently featuring the installation of exterior sheathing, blocking, and roofing materials and is on schedule for a March 5, 2021, or earlier, substantial completion date. Fascia and trim work is ongoing, as is the rough-in for mechanical, electrical, and plumbing on both building levels (completed on the lower level and sometime in October for the upper level). Window installation in the building is now complete and

roof work should be complete soon. Interior framing work is ongoing and spray insulation for the exterior walls should be installed by early October. Site work, including underground utility connections, sidewalks, and landscaping will be complete this fall, before snow. Local code inspections are occurring as necessary.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Change Order: Door Replacement, Public Safety Building (*)

Door 109 (Police Admin. Office) should have been called out as a standard wooden office door, but was incorrectly specified to be a security-type hollow metal door. This was clarified by Proposal Request No. 24 resulting in a net credit to delete the specified door type and add the correct door type (-\$128).

Recommendation: **Board approval of this work as part of Change Order 7.**

(3) Change Order: Training Room Audio/Visual, Public Safety Building (*)

Installation, blocking and wiring for Owner supplied AV equipment was not included in the scope of the construction contract. An amp pocket at the front of the room was also added in lieu of running sleeves to the storage room. The ceiling mounted projection screen that was included in the general contract scope was deleted in favor of direct purchase by Owner of a wall mounted projection screen by. These scope modifications result in a net added cost to the construction Contract (\$6,050).

Recommendation: **Board approval of this work as part of Change Order 7.**

(4) Change Order: Water/Sprinkler Line Retrofit, Public Safety Building (*)

The domestic water and fire protection services were installed outside the building in order to complete the slab work, however due to the delay in obtaining the MassDOT permits the work could not be continued out to connect to the existing water main in one mobilization. The additional labor accounts for backfilling, re-excavating to extend the lines from where they were originally left (\$1,158).

Recommendation: **Board approval of this work as part of Change Order 7.**

(5) Change Order: Minor Siding Change, Portion of Public Safety Building (*)

Due to a misalignment in the foundation wall, the brick shelf was not located to support the brick veneer specified in this area. The proposed resolution was to change the cladding in this limited area from brick veneer to the fiber cement board and batten siding called for in other building façade locations to provide a durable finish and cohesive appearance. This change in materials results in a net credit (-\$1,190).

Recommendation: **Board approval of this work as part of Change Order 7.**

(6) Change Order: Hose Bibbs, Public Safety Building (*)

At the request of the Fire Chief, additional hose bib locations were added within the apparatus bay to address operational needs resulting in added labor and materials cost (\$2,380).

Recommendation: **Board approval of this work as part of Change Order 7.**

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Memorial Park Restroom Schedule

As in past years, the Memorial Park restrooms will be on a Thursday through Sunday schedule only during the month of October. As of November 1, through March 30, the restrooms will be closed altogether.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Annual Risk Assessment and Monitoring Program Review

Each year, in September, all major department heads meet to review the Town's Risk Assessment and Monitoring Program document. The document is intended to cover all financial aspects of each major department and to highlight areas that could give rise to financial fraud, so that department heads can be vigilant about avoiding such problems. This year, a few minor comments were made and the document has been revised accordingly.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Fall Town Meeting Motions (*)

At the last meeting, the Board moved the date of the Fall Town Meeting up to October 3, 2020 (instead of November 16, 2020), so that the meeting can be held outdoors. I have developed draft motions for the Board's consideration.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Local Review of State Applications for Marijuana Establishments (*)

BB Botanics recently applied to the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) for two marijuana licenses in Essex (one for retail sale and one for cultivation). The Commission is interested in the Town's review of the applications against Town regulations and bylaws and we have been given 60 days to respond. Until the Office of the Attorney General approves the bylaw that enabled the Selectmen to develop local licensing regulations and until the applicant goes through the Site Plan Review and the Special Permit processes, it will not be possible to opine on whether the applicant is compliant. As such, for now, the Town should point out what the applicant has left to complete locally, so that the CCC is aware of the additional protocols that will have to be met in the coming weeks.

***Recommendation:* Board reply to the CCC with respect to the state of compliance of both of the BB Botanics proposed projects, indicating that some processes are still yet to unfold.**

K. Legal Issues

No items.

L. Grants

(1) Microenterprise Grants for Small Businesses Affected by COVID

As the Board is aware, Essex recently participated in a regional grant application to help small businesses with five or fewer employees that have been adversely affected by COVID. Income limits apply and information is available at the Town website, under the news and notices section on the homepage or at the Economic Development Committee page. Essex has about \$70,000 set aside for grants and the application process will be managed for all participating communities by a third party.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Community Compact Cabinet IT Grant Application, Police Cameras (*)

The Commonwealth has announced funding for its next round of IT grants to municipalities (up to \$200,000). The Police Department has been anticipating purchasing body cameras and, possibly, cruiser cameras and we have learned that this technology is eligible under the grant. Sergeant Bruce is working on getting all of the necessary pricing and I am available to help input the data into the on-line application offered by the State. The deadline is October 15, 2020. If the IT Grant does not fund this equipment, the Police Department will likely make a request to Town Meeting in the spring.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization of the on-line grant application for the cameras, when the Police Department is ready to submit (October 15, 2020 deadline).**

(3) Byrne Grant, Police Portable Radios

(*)

The Police Department is in need of new, portable radios, to replace its aging equipment, which is not capable of matching the new, digital frequencies that are going into use in surrounding communities (essential for interoperability with our neighbors). The Federal Byrne Grant has up to \$40,000 available and small communities are being favored this year. The grant deadline was prior to the Board's meeting and Chairman Pereen has already signed the paperwork authorizing the Chief of Police to sign and submit the application (which he has done).

***Recommendation:* Board ratification of the signature of the Byrne Grant paperwork by the Chairman.**

(4) Coastal Zone Management Coastal Resilience Grant Award

(*)

The Town has received a \$27,282 Coastal Resilience Grant from the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) to begin the design work on elevating the second dip in the road along Apple Street (at the Southern Avenue end) that allows the road to flood during tidal storm surges. As the Board may recall, we have already begun to design elevational and culvert changes the first dip in the road using a grant from the Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) last year. The Town also has pending a grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for this area and we may be able to apply for Federal funding this year to complete all design work and to construct the changes.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization of the Chairman to sign the grant award paperwork at the present meeting and a contract with TEC Engineering, outside of a meeting, when available and authorized by the State.**

(5) Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant Monthly Report

Personnel from Boston University prepared and submitted the monthly report for the month of September to the State recently. The project has been studying with computer modeling the normal and storm-related patterns of sediment deposition along Castle Neck Island (Crane Beach) and throughout Essex Bay. The study will wrap up by December and will be very useful in planning future efforts that involve sediment management in the system.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(6) Cape Ann Climate Change Planning Project

(*)

The Office for Urbanization at the Harvard Graduate School of Design has received funding to produce a comprehensive study highlighting key aspects of climate change on Cape Ann. Chairman Pereen and I discussed the project, in general, with project principals on September 24, 2020 and key officials from the other three Cape Ann communities will have similar discussions. The project will soon produce an overall proposal for the scope of work to be undertaken and each

community will have a chance to review the proposal and provide input before the study launches.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

M. Emergency Planning

(1) North Shore Regional 911 Center Executive Advisory Board Meeting

I presided over the subject meeting as the Executive Advisory Board chairman on September 10, 2020. The meeting featured a discussion about how other communities interested in joining the Center may approach the organization for admission. The Center is running well and we are hopeful that additional communities can partake of the Center's offerings in the coming months.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office, on leave, on September 8, 2020 and September 21, 2020, and for a portion of the day on September 15, 2020.

I expect to be out of the office, for a planned medical procedure, for the entire week of September 28, 2020.

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