



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of January 9, 2012

Report covers from December 17, 2011 to January 6, 2012

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Building Permit Forms

The Building Department has been using a multi-part carbon form with a manual typewriter to issue building permits. Recently, the old typewriter ceased to function and it seemed a good time to investigate more modern options. As such, I developed a system of worksheets in an Excel workbook that correspond to the multi-colored pages of the old carbon system. The user types the information into the first form and the other forms populate automatically. A pre-sorted deck of various color pages (including card stock for the weather card) may be inserted into any printer to achieve the same result as the old forms did. When the system is up and running, the user will be able to actually save the workbook for that particular permit in case documents ever need to be reproduced due to loss or disaster. The Selectmen's Assistant helped to finalize the forms and will work with the Building Clerk to implement the system in the near future.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Burning Permit Database Archiving

As is the case every year, I have prepared the Fire Department's burning permit database for the upcoming burning season by archiving the 2011 data. The Fire Department will begin issuance of 2012 burning permits as of January 1, 2012. Regular, seasonal permits will cost \$20 (\$10 for seniors) and agricultural permits will cost \$50.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

#### (2) Accounting Software Update

Our accounting software vendor released an update to its BudgetSense accounting system during the week of December 19, 2011. I downloaded and installed the update and performed the necessary database maintenance procedures.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – ½ hour.

#### (3) e-mail Archiving

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Presently, we duplicate all of our incoming and outgoing e-mail messages and archive them using a central computer in Town Hall. Periodically, I burn large

batches of messages to DVD since the file storage space will grow beyond the capacity of the system. I have learned about a cloud-based service that will archive all of our e-mail for \$4.00 per mailbox per month with unlimited storage space. The system will work with our existing e-mail platform and I would essentially be re-pointing our collection mechanism from Town Hall to the vendor's server. The service would cost approximately \$220 per month.

I have also begun to investigate whether the City of Melrose, which Essex has recently partnered with, could offer a similar service for less money. According to Melrose staff, it is possible that the City will be able to help us in this capacity. As such, I plan to wait to determine the City's timeline and cost structure before hosted archiving of any type is implemented.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the concept of hosted archiving, including any necessary budget request.**

## **C. Personnel**

### (1) Safety Committee Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on December 21, 2011 as a member of the Committee. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the effort to improve air quality in the police evidence room. An air purifier was purchased but old evidence that is eligible for destruction should be removed in order for the device to work effectively. A clean-out of the room will be undertaken by the Police Department in the new year. Also, Chairman Doucette ceded his chairmanship to Officer Robert Gilardi.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) OccHealth Connect Status Report and Agreement

A status report relative to the Town's usage of our occupational health provider is due to our insurer every May and every January. I have completed the January report for this year and it updates our insurer on topics such as pre-employment screenings and injured on duty occupational therapy (had no workers' compensation incidents for this period). Further, I provided our insurer with a renewal of the Agreement between the Town and our provider.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (3) Annual Motor Vehicle Records Checks

Each year at this time, at the recommendation of our insurer, I ask the Chief of Police to conduct Motor Vehicle Records (MVR) checks on all Town employees who commonly drive Town-owned vehicles. The Chief determines that each employee still holds a valid license and that no pattern of dangerous driving has emerged. He is presently conducting the checks for this year.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary unless the MVR checks turn up unexpected issues.

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

(1) Sponsorship of Downtown Streetscape Features (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed to review the recent recommendations of our downtown planning consultant with respect to the format of signage used to acknowledge sponsorship of downtown streetscape features by local businesses and individuals. At the present meeting, the Board can arrive at a standard format and can discuss the protocol for assignment of various features to various parties.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to final signage format and final protocol for assigning sponsors.**

(2) Update of Appraisals for Southern Conomo Point Properties (\*)

In order to allow ample time for the production of new appraisals of the Conomo Point properties south of Robbins Island Road, it will be necessary to seek quotations in the near future. The appraisals that were conducted for bridge lease purposes utilized certain assumptions and provided a snapshot of the marketplace that will be dated in comparison to the May, 2012 Annual Town Meeting date on which Town Meeting will consider the sale of the southern area. As such, quotations should be sought that ask for appraisal values as of mid-April, 2012. Asking for quotations now will provide respondents with ample time to plan the work into their schedules when considering their fee.

*Recommendation:* **Board authorization for me to seek quotations from three appraisal firms relative to the valuation of the southern Conomo Point properties, for sale purposes, with a mid-April, 2012 timeframe.**

(3) Affirmative Marketing Quarterly Report

I have completed and submitted to the State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance the Affirmative Marketing Report for the quarter ending December 31, 2011 in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer. The Report indicates to the State the Town's usage of women or minority businesses on State-funded projects. We had no such utilization over the past quarter.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(4) Northern Conomo Point Subdivision Development Process (\*)

Our planning consultant, Horsley Witten, has almost completed task 1 of the northern Conomo Point subdivision process – the existing conditions survey. The

consultant has asked the Town to pull together key players in the formulation of guidance for the remainder of the project, which will include the development of a northern Conomo Point zoning district and an actual subdivision plan.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the individuals who should be involved with respect to providing guidance to our consultant for the next steps in the process.**

## **E. Insurance**

### (1) Freeze-up Prevention Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for the month of January during the week of January 2, 2012. The checklists are designed to minimize the potential for frozen pipes and I complete a checklist monthly during the cold months as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. I made special notations on the checklist for Town Hall based on the current boiler issues.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Monthly Pothole Log

The DPW has provided me with their pothole log for the month of December, which I have forwarded to our insurer as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. No potholes were reported for the month.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **F. Facilities**

### (1) Freeze Warning Light

Given the tenuous nature of the present steam boiler in Town Hall, I purchased a device that will turn on a light if the temperature in the building drops below a certain threshold. The blue-colored light has been placed in a second-floor window that is visible from the Fire Station so that routine patrols or even views out of the station window can detect a loss of heat more expeditiously. Patrols will also still enter the building nightly to check whether the steam radiator in the first floor foyer is hot to the touch.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Gate at Grove Cottage Road

As the Board may recall, I had been working with the Superintendent of Public Works to contract for the installation of a gate at the beginning of the road to the Centennial Grove Cottage. The Superintendent solicited quotations from several contractors and a steel gate will be installed for \$1,650. Work will begin in the near future (frost-permitting).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Construction of Additional Changing Facility, Centennial Grove

At the last meeting, the Board authorized the expenditure of up to \$3,000 for materials for the construction of a new changing facility at the Grove that would primarily benefit the summer camp. The YMCA is willing to design and build the structure using their own labor forces if the Town provides the materials. Presently, I am working with the YMCA to obtain an exact stock list so that I can inquire with the Home Center as to whether the materials could be partially donated and/or provided at reduced cost. Robert Coviello of the Historical Commission has offered some design suggestions to the YMCA.

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

(4) Town Hall Boiler Assessment

At the last meeting, the Board authorized me to obtain the services of a mechanical engineer who is well-versed in public bidding to assess the status of our present steam boiler and to eventually provide options and estimates relative to future solutions. I contacted the architectural firm that performed the exterior historic renovation study for Town Hall and I was referred to MacRitchie Engineering for our desired boiler analysis. The principal of the firm visited Town Hall on December 22, 2011 to develop an appreciation for the overall space involved and to photograph and collect technical data relative to our existing boiler and its environs.

After the visit, I provided the engineer with a summary of fuel oil quantities used over the past four years along with plans of the building, both to be used in heat loss calculations. Further, the Planning Board Clerk noticed that the chimney that passes through her office (the active boiler flue) had begun to weep moisture as evidenced by yellow stains, with a strong odor present – likely related to the excess steam that is traveling through the flue. I provided this information to the engineering firm to be included in the assessment proposal. I also asked the employee to work in another space until the problem can be more fully assessed.

Subsequently, the firm provided me with a proposal that will develop plans and recommendations for emergency heat loss, short-term management, and a long-term solution. The firm will work with lead and asbestos experts that we will hire directly to evaluate those items as related to the heating system issue (sampling begins on January 10, 2012).

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

(5) Annual Fire Alarm System Inspection and Testing

Each year at this time, I arrange for a fire alarm contractor to inspect and test the fire alarm system in Town Hall, the Water Filtration Plant, and the DPW barn. The contractor will likely conduct this year's testing during the month of January. The Senior Center alarm system is maintained by a different contractor.

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

(6) Quarterly Facility Self-Inspection Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for the Town Hall and the Senior Center during the week of January 2, 2012. The checklists are intended to point out matters that could give rise to safety hazards in Town buildings. Other departments inspect the other Town buildings and the checklists are discussed at quarterly Safety Committee meetings. I noted the ongoing steam boiler issue on the Town Hall checklist.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

(1) Final Selectmen's FY13 Budget Package

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I have revised the Selectmen's FY13 operating and capital budget request package in accordance with guidance from the Board at the last meeting. The package includes an operating budget transmittal memo, an operating budget summary spreadsheet, detailed operating budget line item worksheets, and the latest iteration of the Board's capital plan. The package is due to the Town Accountant on January 10, 2012.

*Recommendation:* **Board approval of the FY13 budget package.**

**H. Complaints**

No items.

**I. Meetings Attended**

No items.

**J. Final Judgment**

No items.

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

### (1) Draft Annual Town Meeting Topics

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I had provided to the Board at the last meeting a preliminary draft list of potential topics for the 2012 Annual Town Meeting. I have begun to develop a draft of the actual Annual Town Meeting warrant.

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

### (2) Youth Commission and Personnel Board Annual Reports

Annual reports from all departments are due to the Selectmen's Office no later than February 1, 2012. I have developed reports for the Youth Commission and the Personnel Board (which are both presently comprised of the Selectmen) and have submitted those to the Selectmen's Assistant.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **L. Legal Issues**

### (1) Conomo Point Bridge Lease Wrap Up

At the Board's meeting of December 19, 2011, a number of transfers of the expiring lease were approved. Two parties receiving transfers of the expiring lease were on hand at the meeting to sign the bridge lease. One additional party resides out of State and one party accepting a transfer jointly was not on hand.

Regarding the out-of-State party, I provided originals of the Bridge Leases for two transferred properties to her electronically the day after the meeting. She returned signed originals during the week of December 19, 2011 along with signed originals for a leasehold that had already been in her name. The Board had already voted to authorize the signature of all three Bridge Leases outside of a meeting, subject to review of the documents and the transmittal of any necessary cover letter(s) recommended by Town Counsel. As such, Bridge Leases for all three properties have been signed and countersigned.

Regarding the joint party, she and her husband informed the Board in writing that they desired to add their three children to the expiring lease. The Board had already voted to authorize the signature of the Bridge Lease with all five individuals listed on it should such a request be made. As such, a Bridge Lease for that property has been signed and countersigned and it includes all five joint leaseholders.

To date, a total of 116 Bridge Leases have been signed by leaseholders and countersigned by the Board out of 121 Bridge Leases that had been offered. It is possible that this total could climb as high as 118.

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

(2) Request for Modification to Planning Board Subdivision Decision

At the last meeting, the Board signed a letter to the Planning Board requesting a modification to the Planning Board's December 7, 2011 approval of the definitive subdivision plan for the southern area of Conomo Point. The Planning Board had listed properties with current year-round privileges in the Seasonal Cottage Sub-District incorrectly. The Planning Board held a public hearing on January 4, 2012 to consider the matter and voted to modify the decision to read as requested in the Selectmen's letter. All three Selectmen and I were in attendance at the hearing.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Renewal of Code Red Emergency Notification System Contract

At the last meeting, the Board authorized the signature of the subject contract outside of a meeting after Town Counsel arrives at favorable contract terms. Unfortunately, Code Red recently changed their standard contract terms and the renewal contract that the company provided to the Town was not acceptable. We had requested that the renewal be developed under the same terms as the expiring contract but the company has new general counsel and required revisions. Town Counsel was able to speak directly to general counsel for Code Red and favorable terms were worked out. The new contract is in force.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **M. Grants**

(1) Essex River Boardwalk Project

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I understand from Salem State University that the school has almost completed contracting with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) so that the Center for Economic Development and Sustainability can begin the feasibility study for the project. The Town is the primary grantee for the \$155,000 Seaport Advisory Council grant and Salem State will serve as a sub-grantee. Normally, the grantee works out the contracting for sub-grantees but the University has dealt directly with DCR in this case since both are State agencies. The Salem State portion of the project will require \$75,000 and the \$80,000 remainder is for supporting engineering work.

It will be necessary for Salem State to coordinate their efforts with the engineering group that we bring on as a second sub-grantee. To that end, we are in the process of obtaining a detailed proposal from Susan St. Pierre Associates in collaboration with Vine Associates (a division of GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc.) for the necessary engineering support. These entities had been consulted by Salem State during the original grant proposal phase and they are familiar with the project goals and are recommended by the Center. We are free to utilize them without

further competition since engineering services are exempt from Chapter 30B. The present goal is to complete the sub-grantee approval process with DCR for both the University and the engineering group and to hold a project kick-off meeting that will serve to coordinate the efforts of all parties to arrive at the most useful work product(s).

**Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary and authorization to sign contracts with Salem State and with the engineering group outside of a meeting as necessary (after review by Town Counsel).**

## **N. Emergency Planning**

### (1) Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team Monthly Meeting (\*)

I attended the subject meeting along with other Essex officials on January 5, 2012. The meeting featured updates from the various subcommittees. Also, the group felt that it would be worthwhile to explore with each of the executive branches of the four Cape Ann communities the possibility of developing a Memorandum of Understanding or an Interagency Agreement regarding the sharing and protection of each community's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). To that end, I provided a summary of what the group hopes to achieve to the CAEPT chairman so he could disseminate to the various communities as they consider the matter. The levels of interest from each of the communities will be discussed at a future meeting.

**Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the preliminary exploration of a sharing agreement.**

## **O. Other Items**

### (1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave all day on December 23 and December 30, 2011 and for a portion of the afternoon of December 29, 2011.

### (2) Historical Site Walking Path Brochure (\*)

A private committee has been formed to produce a six-fold brochure that would guide visitors down a path of historical sites within the Town. The committee is working with various business and civic groups to fund the brochure and has asked if the Town had any funding available to contribute. In the spring, the group plans to approach the Community Preservation Committee for funding to actually produce and install historical interpretive signs at the various sites.

**Recommendation: Board discussion relative to potential funding sources and an amount.**

(3) Christmas Holiday

The office was closed on December 26, 2011 in observance of the subject holiday.

(4) Essex Council on Aging Annual Christmas Luncheon

I attended the subject luncheon as a guest of the Council on December 27, 2011.

(5) New Year's Day Holiday

The office was closed on January 2, 2012 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.*