



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of January 25, 2016

Report covers from January 9, 2016 to January 22, 2016

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Next Steps for Essex Strategic Planning Committee

Chairman O'Donnell, Town Planner Matt Coogan, MAPC Consultant Mark Fine, and I discussed the next steps for the Strategic Planning Committee in a conference call on January 12, 2016. As the Board may recall, the Committee plans to briefly present its draft Plan to department heads and board/committee chairs at the present meeting and will hold a public forum on February 10, 2016 (moved back from the originally-planned date of January 27, 2016). During the conference call, it was established that the managers and board/committee chairs would be asked to review the Strategic Plan in advance of tonight's meeting and that the Town Planner and our consultant will prepare a Powerpoint presentation for the public forum.

Recommendation: Board discussion with the Committee and others at the present meeting as necessary.

(2) Conomo Point Planning Committee Meeting to Discuss Improvements

The Chairman of the Conomo Point Planning Committee has set up a meeting of the Committee to discuss various options for designing and implementing waterfront access improvements at Conomo Point. The meeting will be held on January 28, 2016 at the Senior Center.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Preparation of Town Hall Copier for Use with New Network

After our movers delivered the Town Hall copier to our temporary quarters, it was necessary for me to configure the device so that network printing and scanning (features available in our former setting) would be available on our temporary network as well. The device is now providing all services that were available at our former location.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

C. Personnel

(1) Essex Police Benevolent Association Collective Bargaining

The Management Team engaged the police union in continued collective bargaining on January 20, 2016.

Recommendation: Board discussion in executive session per the posted agenda.

(2) Treasurer/Collector's Office Job Descriptions and Pay Scales (*)

As the Board may recall, the Treasurer/Collector's Office is now processing payroll using a web-based vendor that requires a significant amount of user input as compared with the Town's former, full-service payroll vendor, which is no longer in business. The office has been using the services of a temporary contracted specialist to accomplish this weekly task in order to get through fiscal year 2016. Next fiscal year, the office would like to hire an Assistant Treasurer/Collector to input and manage payroll, in addition to assisting with many other, non-clerical functions of the department. Also, although not necessarily needed in the near term, the Treasurer/Collector would like to explore adding a part-time clerk to the wage and salary scale for the department. This part-time position may become necessary in the future, depending on the final disposition of departmental structure.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to pay scales within the department and the potential creation of these positions starting in fiscal year 2017.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Moving of Large Items, Town Hall/Library

Movers for the Town Hall portion of the building at 30 Martin Street moved all large Town Hall items (such as file cabinets for active use and furniture that will be stored) to either 74 Martin Street (temporary Town Hall) or to a storage container at 30 Martin Street on January 11 and 12, 2016. Movers for the Library portion of the building moved all Library items (active use and storage) to 245 Western Avenue along a similar timeframe. The Town Offices did not need to close during this process and the Library did close and re-opened as of January 19, 2016.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Filed Sub-bid Deadline and Bid Opening, Town Hall/Library Project

Filed sub-bids for the subject project were due on January 12, 2016. Numerous filed sub-bids were submitted across a total of nine trades. For the most part, certain bids in each category were at or below our architect's estimate for those

items. General Construction bidders will choose from the various filed sub-bids to arrive at overall project pricing. General bids are due on January 26, 2016.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Congressman Moulton's Announcement of Federal Channel Legislation

Congressman Seth Moulton held a press announcement at the Essex Marina on January 14, 2016 to highlight his filing of legislation specific to the re-designation of the boundaries of the Federal Channel within the Essex River. The Congressman's Office and the Army Corps of Engineers have been working with the Town's consultant to arrive at suitable boundary changes which will make the Essex River encroachment free – a prerequisite to any Federal dredging funding. I attended the event along with the Board, Senator Tarr, various marina owners, business leaders, and others. It is possible that a promising coastal resilience technique known as thin layer deposition could allow dredge spoils to be cast up on the marsh (providing the necessary dredging and building up the marsh for sea level rise and storm tolerance at the same time, at a much lower cost than dry land or ocean disposal).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(4) Meeting with Army Corps of Engineers Regarding Thin Layer Deposition (*)

One distinct strategy that could be used to mitigate the effects of sea level rise and coastal storms would be the building up of the salt marsh with silty sediment. Using a technique known as thin layer deposition (TLD), material could be pulled out of the Federal Channel in the Essex River and cast upon the marsh in a controlled way that would elevate the marsh surface and allow marsh vegetation to be re-established at that higher elevation. In order for this technique to be explored, a Beneficial Use Plan would have to be developed that would lay out the advantages of the process. The Plan could demonstrate a benefit to the marsh itself, a benefit to the Town's plan for sea level rise and coastal storm mitigation, and a benefit to navigation in the River.

Chairman O'Donnell, Peter Phippen of the Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program, and I met with representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers on January 20, 2016 to review the potential merits of TLD and to determine the best course of action for exploring this plan. At the meeting, we learned that we first need to work on establishing a base condition (i.e. dredge spoils would typically be disposed of at some upland site as part of any conventional dredging project). The Town can either find a feasible upland site within a mile or two or can conclude that, after an analysis, no feasible site exists. Whatever the outcome, the TLD work would be compared to the base case via a cost/benefit analysis. If TLD ends up being more expensive than the typical project, the Corps would require that 35% of the difference in cost be covered by some non-Federal funding source.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the process necessary for continuing to make inroads with the Army Corps of Engineers' evaluation process.

(5) Appraisal Assignments Regarding Conomo Point

The Board signed a contract with Tyburski Appraisal Corporation at the last meeting for the appraisal of long-term lease values for properties at northern Conomo Point. The same appraiser had already begun the appraisal process for the potential sales of properties on Robbins Island. Presently, our appraiser is working through preliminary information and is reviewing the marketplace.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(6) Draft Request for Proposals for Management of Centennial Grove (*)

At the last meeting, the Board continued to review a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for entities potentially desiring to enter into a management contract at the Centennial Grove. The entity would serve to enforce potential residents-only rules and provide general upkeep in exchange for private event marketing rights. The entity would also pay a fee to the Town in addition to their management services for this marketing privilege. I have revised the draft document to take into account comments that the Board had regarding the various rating criteria.

Recommendation: Further Board review of this management contract RFP.

E. Insurance

(1) Builder's Risk Insurance Policy for Town Hall/Library Renovation

At the last meeting, the Board voted to sign any necessary builder's risk insurance policy paperwork for the subject project outside of a meeting as soon as the policy becomes available. Our insurance agent was able to place our project with Lloyd's and the policy paperwork was provided to the Town during the week of January 18, 2016. The Chairman will sign the necessary paperwork once we have the name of the General Contractor for the project and a check is being ordered to bind the coverage. The policy cost will be just under \$36,000 (under our original budget estimate).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Production of Replacement Signage, Town Landing and Municipal Lot

At the last meeting, given that no other department head had any comments on the new parking and associated signage for the Town Landing and the Municipal Parking Lot (designed to replace all current signage), the Board agreed that I should work with the Superintendent on final specification and production of the

new signs. The Superintendent will provide the recommended wording for the Municipal Parking Lot to the Board of Public Works (which oversees that area) for review at its meeting of January 25, 2016.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Debris Partially Blocking Clammers' Beach Boat Access

The Shellfish Constable had asked the Selectmen at a past meeting whether some debris originating from a seawall adjacent to the Clammers' Beach boat access way (part of the wall collapsed in the past) could be removed from that area. The Board asked that I check with the Conservation Commission regarding this request and I have learned from the Conservation Agent that the Town's Chapter 91 license for the adjacent property does allow that activity as a maintenance measure without any further permitting. As such, I asked the Superintendent of Public Works about the matter and he plans to eventually move the debris out of the access way and over next to the seawall. That action will open up access but will leave the stones in the general vicinity in the event that the abutting leaseholder decides to repair the wall at some point.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) School District Budget Discussion Group

Selectman Coviello and I attended the subject discussion group concerning the fiscal year 2017 budget for the Manchester Essex Regional School District on January 21, 2016, along with officials from Manchester and the District. All agreed that the District's proposal that would involve a 2.67% increase to Essex's apportionment was satisfactory. The public hearing on this final budget will be held at the Essex Elementary School on January 26, 2016. The group also discussed planning for the replacement of the Memorial Elementary School in Manchester and I will be meeting with the Manchester Town Administrator and District staff soon to go over the existing debt loads and retirement schedules of the two communities, so that school debt planning can be informed by that information.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(1) Enrollment in the Agricultural/Technical School District vs. Ability to Pay (*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed further an ability to pay issue caused by high interest in the Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical High School in Middleton. Essex students compete well for seats at the school and the current admissions process does not cap the number of students from any particular community. In addition to continuing to work with our State legislators regarding this issue, I have been in touch with Essex School Committee Representative

George Harvey about setting up an appointment to speak with the Committee or the Superintendent about exploring a locally-imposed Essex enrollment cap.

To date, I have learned that current education law does not allow for an enrollment cap. As such, remaining options would include some type of circuit breaker at the State level to assist Essex with annual apportionments or Special Legislation that might allow for some type of cap within the District.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Massachusetts Municipal Association Annual Meeting and Trade Show

I attended the subject meeting along with Selectmen O'Donnell and Coviello on January 22 and 23, 2016. The meeting featured a variety of useful presentations and networking opportunities. Some of the presentations were also eligible for credit under the MIIA Rewards Program.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Review of Present Winter Parking Ban Language (*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to review the present Winter Parking Ban language in the Town Bylaws for discussion at the present meeting. The present language reads:

“Winter parking ban goes into effect December 1 to April 1. No parking on any street, midnight to dawn, with the exception of Pickering Street, (easterly side).”

As such, the ban only affects overnight parking.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

No items.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Memoranda of Understanding with Emergency Resources

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should explore the development of Memoranda of Understanding with various local facilities and service providers to ensure availability during an emergency. Using the City of Gloucester's templates for these agreements, I have developed documents for use in Essex for coordination with the Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association (CAARA), the Cape Ann Regional Transit Authority (CATA), the Manchester Essex Regional School District (for use of the school as a shelter), and various vendors. Presently, CAARA, CATA, and the School District are reviewing drafts customized for Essex. I am also exploring with the Home Center in Essex an agreement for priority service during an emergency. Our DPW, Fire, and Police Departments already have priority arrangements in place for fueling vehicles.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

O. Other Items

(1) Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The office was closed on January 18, 2016 in observance of the subject holiday.

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