



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of January 26, 2009

Report covers from January 10, 2009 to January 23, 2009

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Shellfish Advisory Commission Initiatives (*)

The Shellfish Advisory Commission visited the Board at the last Board meeting and discussed a variety of topics including: a) the Commission's desire not to lease any public land to private shellfish harvesting interests; b) the Commission's plan to host a workshop in Essex regarding shellfish management that includes clambers from surrounding communities and may feature a speaker from the Division of Marine Fisheries; c) the Commission's plan to submit a grant application for shellfish propagation equipment; d) the potential to limit parking on front beach to vehicles with a trailer in tow; e) the Commission's plan to develop a information package that could be distributed to each clammer at annual relicensure time that would include the official Town of Essex Shellfish Regulations; and f) the Commission's research regarding the potential to eliminate the digging limit that is presently in place (an initial conversation only).

Regarding the grant application, I reviewed it at the last meeting and recommended that the Commission include some additional details requested in the grantmaker's call for proposals. The Commission plans to add those details and to compare their application to one that has been funded in the past before submitting.

Regarding the request for a parking limitation, I reviewed the present duration of the season during which parking on front beach is presently prohibited and a past plan to gate off the entrance ramp during the prohibited season. I also contacted the President of the Conomo Point Homeowners' Association for input regarding the proposed restriction. The prohibited parking season presently runs from June 1 to October 1 and a past plan for a chain gate was modified to allow vehicular traffic for launching (not parking) of trailered boats, car top boats, or gear drop-off before 8:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m. during that "summer" season. Chain gating is still possible if those modified rules are not respected. As for the Association, the President felt that the new rule should be implemented on a trial basis. Given the above information, it does seem feasible to restrict "on-beach" parking to only vehicles with trailers in tow outside of the summer season (from October through May). Vehicles without trailers that need to drive onto the beach to drop off gear or to offload a car-top boat should also be allowed access during the off-season so long as the vehicle does not park on the beach.

Regarding the discussion of digging limits, the Selectmen had asked parties that had made comments about the Commission's findings to submit written substantiation for their dissenting viewpoints. To date, no such submissions have been made.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the suggested "on-beach" parking restrictions.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Town Network Router Configuration

I was able to configure the Water Filtration Plant internal router for incoming traffic after some analytical assistance was offered by a Cisco expert working for our computer consultant. After confirming proper operation of the routers at the Fire Station and the Water Filtration Plant, I have begun to prepare for activation of the internal router in Town Hall (which will be a more complex process). Eventually, no server will have a routing role.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 2.5 hours.

(2) Installation of Coldfusion Application

I assisted the police officer who is working to upgrade the reporting capabilities of the Department's incident tracking system with the installation of the necessary Coldfusion application and a browser-based tool on one of the Department's client systems. In the past, I had provided the officer with test data and he will now begin to develop query and report templates using the test data until he has successfully provided the Department with the desired capabilities. The Coldfusion application will then be set to query the live database on the Police/Fire file server.

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

(3) Resolution of Network Share Problems

As noted in the past, we had trouble with Town Hall users connecting to their personal file shares. I had been able to address that issue but problems were still being reported sporadically. Further, at a later time, the shares necessary for certain users to access our accounting software experienced a similar disconnection problem (on another server). I contacted our computer consultant and he indicated that his company had just recently experienced similar issues on their own, unrelated equipment, and was working to track down the cause. Later, he was able to inform me that hotfixes for Windows 2003 Server were necessary to correct the problem. The problem had been apparently created by the application of past Windows updates that were deficient with respect to the service that normally manages shares (explaining the sudden onset of the issue). I updated the Service Pack on both servers and applied two hotfixes to correct the

issue. I also worked with the Treasurer/Collector and the Assessors' Office to restore client access.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 6 hours.

(4) Cable I-Net Outage

The Cable I-Net link between Town Hall and the Water Filtration Plant failed over the Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend. I contacted Comcast on January 20, 2009 and a technician discovered and repaired a problem at the I-Net headend in Gloucester.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) FY2010 Draft Wage & Salary Scale (*)

I have begun to develop the subject document and have added market-rate adjustments for the Treasurer/Collector and the Town Accountant's Clerk as discussed by the Board at the last meeting. The Personnel Board will review the document in March of 2009 and will vote to recommend a final version to Town Meeting. In order to complete the first draft, I will need to apply a cost of living allowance figure that is set by the Board. Also, the Board of Health has requested market-rate adjustment components for the Board of Health Administrator and for the Public Health Nurse (also to be considered by the Personnel Board).

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the FY2010 cost of living allowance percentage for non-union, non-contract employees.**

(2) Federal Employment Poster Update

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was recently revised and our employment law posters containing information regarding six Federal laws required replacement. I therefore ordered the necessary replacement posters and they will be distributed to the various worksites upon receipt.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement

(1) Consulting Planner Scope of Services

At the last meeting, the Board met with a Planning Board subcommittee and arrived at a scope of services that is desired for the procurement of a consulting planner. The Board determined that the scope of services should be procured on a quotation basis. I have since finalized the scope of services and solicited quotations from three planners recommended by the Planning Board

subcommittee on January 22, 2009. Responses are due no later than February 5, 2009.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Conomo Point Subdivision Options

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that Horsley Witten should develop three basic outlines of the various planning options that they would like to introduce to the public at three, upcoming public forums (to be scheduled). The outlines are intended for review by the Selectmen and by the Conomo Point Planning Committee so that additional guidance can be imparted to the consultant before the options are finalized for each forum. The consultant is working on that task and may need input from the Board. I am scheduled to meet with representatives of the consultant on January 29, 2009.

Recommendation: **Continued Board discussion relative to the three, potential options and relative to a process for gathering future input from the Conomo Point Planning Committee.**

(3) Route 133 Reconstruction Project Update

The Project Manager for the subject project has indicated that bids for the project will be opened on January 27, 2009. Subsequently, as plans are being made for project implementation, he will continue to review the prospect of raising the roadbed elevation slightly in one area of the causeway with cooperation from two abutters. Further, it is possible that pilings for a future public access project using Seaport Bond Bill funding might be driven by the Route 133 Reconstruction contractor if plans for the access project are sufficiently developed.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Procurement of Public Buildings

The Board had asked me to explore with Senator Bruce Tarr whether any avenues exist to utilize creative, alternative methods to procure the construction of public buildings as opposed to the strict application of public bidding laws (such as public/private partnerships). The Senator has set up a meeting to discuss that topic with a representative from the Office of the Attorney General in late February.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Senior Center Fire Alarm System Testing

Our Senior Center fire alarm contractor inspected and tested the Senior Center fire alarm system on January 12, 2009. The system was found to be in good order and no additional work was necessary.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Fire Alarm Testing – Town Hall, Water Plant, DPW Barn

A separate fire alarm testing contractor tested the fire alarm systems at each of the subject buildings on January 20, 2009. All systems were found to be working properly.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Formulation of Town Building Committee

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board indicated that a Town Building Committee should be appointed to continue to study and make recommendations regarding the future of Town Hall/Library, the Fire Station, and a potential new building on John Wise Avenue. The Board asked that I develop a list of potential names for appointment to the Committee including past members of the Ad-Hoc Building Study Group, a member of the Finance Committee, and a member of the Planning Board.

I have compiled a list of potential appointees as follows and all have agreed to serve if appointed: Peter Silva, Chief of Police; Daniel Doucette, Deputy Fire Chief; Beth Cairns, Board of Library Trustees; Deborah French, Librarian; Edward Lafferty, Finance Committee; Juergen Dietrichson, Planning Board; and Stuart Pratt.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to potential appointment of candidates to the Town Building Committee.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Joint Roundtable Meetings

(*)

I participated in a joint roundtable meeting on January 14, 2009 hosted by Chairman Randall. Officials from Essex, Manchester, and the Regional School District gathered as usual but the focus of the roundtable was the fiscal year 2010 school budget (as opposed to the more general topics discussed in the past). At the meeting, District officials presented a potential plan to cut approximately \$500,000 from the proposed FY10 budget. The group met again on January 21, 2009 for further updates and is scheduled for a third meeting on January 28, 2009.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the school budget.**

(2) Youth Commission Budget Discussion

(*)

At the last meeting, the Selectmen were presented with some recommendations from former Youth Commission members regarding Youth Commission issues that may affect the FY10 budget if implemented. Those members will be in attendance at the Board's next meeting (February 9, 2009) to discuss those recommendations further.

The Board also asked me to review the present overlap between the Youth Director's year-round responsibilities and the Summer Program Director's role that the Youth Director also takes on during the Summer Program. During that time of year, the Youth Director's normal, half-time schedule is devoted exclusively to administrative support for the Summer Program and the Youth Director is paid as the Summer Program Director for an additional 30 hours of time for the physical operation of the Summer Program each day.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to whether changes to the existing arrangement should be developed for the upcoming Summer Program. In addition, further discussion of the list of recommendations from the former EYC members may help prepare the Board for their visit at the next meeting.**

H. Complaints

(1) Speeding Concern, Southern Avenue

At the last meeting, the Board considered further an issue that had been brought up in the past regarding speeding on a stretch of Southern Avenue after a resident asked for the issue to be discussed again. In the past, the Board had agreed to defer to the judgment of the Chief of Police and discussion at the last meeting confirmed that the Board's position had not changed. I contacted the resident and let him know that the Board had not changed their position.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Massachusetts Municipal Association Annual Meeting

I attended the subject meeting in Boston along with Chairman Randall on January 23-25, 2009. The meeting featured a wide variety of presentations and forums that were very relevant to the present status of the economy and to programs and functions administered by Town government.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant (*)

I have revised the subject document in accordance with the Board's guidance at the last meeting.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion relative to the Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Community Preservation Act Seminar (*)

Town Counsel has been assisting with the preparation of the necessary Community Preservation Act appropriation article for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting. During my discussion with Attorney Lauren Goldberg, she offered to provide our Community Preservation Committee with an overview seminar relative to the Act at no charge.

Recommendation: **Board consideration of the offered seminar.**

M. Grants

No items.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Census Bureau Homeless Shelter Request

The Census Bureau recently requested whether the Town of Essex has any soup kitchens or homeless shelters within our limits as part of the agency's preparation for the 2010 Federal Census. We do not have any facilities of that nature in Essex and I noted that on the survey form that I returned.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Ipswich's 375th Anniversary Celebration

Long Term Planning Committee Member Ed Howard recently inquired about the subject celebration to its Ipswich planners. He indicated that the planners of that

year-long event may be in touch with Essex in the near future to discuss how we may be involved (Essex was once part of Ipswich).

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

The office was closed on January 19, 2009 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.*