



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of February 8, 2016

Report covers from January 30, 2016 to February 5, 2016

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Final Preparation for Public Forum Concerning Strategic Plan

On February 3, 2016, Town Planner Matt Coogan and I discussed with MAPC consultant Mark Fine the final arrangements for the subject public forum (which will be held at the school on February 10, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.). The discussion focused on the final PowerPoint presentation and on developing answers to some excellent questions that were asked at the department head and board/committee chair session that the Selectmen held back on January 25, 2016.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Visit from City of Melrose Staff to Optimize Virtual Platform

The City of Melrose datacenter that supports the Town's virtual computing platform is presently being upgraded. As such, City staff visited the temporary Town Hall on February 5, 2016 to review our system's present performance and to recommend steps to improve it. The assessment was very useful and Melrose personnel will be assisting with improvements right away.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 2 hours.

C. Personnel

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

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to explore with the Treasurer/Collector the prospect of creating a part-time payroll clerk position to handle payroll data input and rule checking, as opposed to hiring a full-time, Assistant Treasurer/Collector. The Treasurer/Collector has indicated that the part-time position will work very well, probably at around ten hours per week (and not to exceed 19 hours). After the Board's discussion this evening, I will provide an update to the Chairman of the Finance Committee regarding the present state of planning.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion relative to pay scales within the department and the potential creation of the part-time position starting in fiscal year 2017.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Signature of Construction Contract for Town Hall/Library Renovation Project
After the Special Town Meeting approved additional funding on February 1, 2016 to accomplish some bid alternates associated with the subject project, the Board voted to countersign the construction contract outside of a meeting as soon as everything was in order. Our architect and Project Manager then worked with the successful contractor (Campbell Construction, LLC) and Town Counsel to finalize the construction contract, insurance, and bonding provisions and the contract will be presented to the Board members as of the evening of February 9, 2016. It is my present understanding that the contractor will take over the building and commence work on or about February 10, 2016. A project kickoff meeting has been scheduled for February 9, 2016.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Disposition of Items of Value, 153 Conomo Point Road (*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed further how the Town might dispose of some potentially valuable items in the structure at 153 Conomo Point Road prior to its demolition in the early spring. Changes in State law to the procurement threshold for items of lower value will allow the Board to modify its present procedure regarding disposition from having a \$5,000 threshold to a \$10,000 threshold.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the preferred and alternate methods of disposition (sale).**

(3) Modification of Town Procedure for Disposition of Items of Low Value (*)

The Town presently has a written procedure allowing written offers for or auction of items less than \$5,000 in value. Changes in State Law allow that threshold to be increased to \$10,000.

Recommendation: **Board vote to modify the procedure to increase the threshold.**

E. Insurance

(1) Monthly Pothole Log

I received the pothole log from the Department of Public Works for the month of January during the week of February 1, 2016 and submitted it to our insurer as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. No potholes were reported.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Annual Inspection of Senior Center Elevator

The State Elevator Inspector made his annual inspection of the Senior Center elevator on February 1, 2016. Our fire alarm company and the Chairman of the Council on Aging were both on hand to assist our elevator contractor with support for the inspection. One minor issue was identified and will be addressed by our elevator contractor in the near future.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Information/Technology Element of Fiscal Year 2015 Audit

As was the case last year, I am handling the information/technology portion of our fiscal year 2015 audit with our auditor. I recently participated in an interview regarding our software and security practices and then provided answers to follow-up questions and certain documentation.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Adding Flexibility to Current Winter Parking Ban Bylaw (*)

At the last meeting, the Board began to discuss the possibility of asking the Town Meeting to consider revising the Winter Parking Ban By-law in May, in preparation for next winter. Presently, the ban is absolute, prohibiting overnight street parking between December 1 and April 1, regardless of weather conditions. In other municipalities, more flexible systems exist to lift and impose parking bans as conditions change. The Board asked me to reach out to the Chief of Police and the Superintendent of Public Works about this topic. Both officials are open to discussion regarding this topic but still see advantages in the absolute ban as opposed to making a change at this time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Preliminary Draft of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant (*)

I have begun to assemble a preliminary draft of the Annual Town Meeting warrant for the Board's initial review.

Recommendation: **Board review of the draft document.**

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

(1) Super Storm Sandy Municipal Task Force Conference Call

I participated in the subject call on February 4, 2016. The Task Force is aimed at guiding the various professionals who are working on the project to ensure that the local perspective is maintained throughout the process. Presently, the professional team is working on a time series of inundation maps. Each map keys into particularly sensitive areas in each community and factors in the expected state of sea level by some time in the future. Coastal storm surges and frequency are then added into each base map to demonstrate how sea level rise will increase the detrimental effects of coastal storms over time. The group on the call provided some useful feedback regarding how the various maps should be formatted and labeled to be simpler for the general public to assimilate. Also, the professional team will be producing a brief survey regarding what climate change means locally and, in Essex, I will work to publicize the survey.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Climate Resilience Planning Community Compact (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should apply on its behalf for a Community Compact relative to best practices for climate change planning. The Community Compact program is an effort initiated by Governor Baker to partner State resources at high levels with municipalities in order to tackle problems. Since the Town is involved with several major climate change research and planning projects, we will be able to demonstrate how the elevation of our sinking salt marshes will provide a "green" solution to combat sea level rise and coastal

storm threats. If the Community Compact can align the thinking of State regulators with our own, the Town's interest in using thin layer deposition (TLD) to elevate the marshes (while also accomplishing deepening of our River channel), will stand a much better chance of approval.

In addition, the Parker-Ipswich-Essex Rivers Partnership (PIE-Rivers) has already begun to involve a wide variety of stakeholders to investigate issues important to the health of three major river systems. PIE- Rivers, which is coordinated by the Ipswich River Watershed Association (IRWA), has recently announced its Municipal Services Program. The Program seeks to "...scope, fund, and implement projects that address both municipal and PIE-Rivers priority actions" – including coastal resilience issues. It is likely that the coalescence of the ongoing research (which involves the National Wildlife Federation and the IRWA), the PIE-Rivers Partnership, and a Community Compact with the Commonwealth will lead to exploration and potential implementation of the Town's TLD goal.

During the week of February 1, 2016, we already heard from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs regarding our application. Preliminary discussions on the matter are very encouraging and the State is interested in a proposal that outlines the necessary research scope of services and funding to begin to test TLD in Essex. I am presently working with Mr. Peter Phippen of the MassBays National Estuary Program and Eight Towns & the Great Marsh regarding developing a response to the State's request.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the implementation of our Community Compact with the Baker Administration.**

(2) Renewal of Town of Essex Hazard Mitigation Plan

As the Board may recall, the Town developed and got approved by FEMA a Hazard Mitigation Plan concerning various natural hazard threats to the Town. Through this plan, we were able to leverage the grant for the Town Hall generator. Hazard mitigation plans are valid for a period of five years, and our Plan expires in August of 2017. Given that a long lead time may be necessary for Plan revision and Federal review, I reached out to Mr. Sam Cleaves of MAPC, who had helped us with the initial version of the Plan. I will work with MAPC over the coming months to arrive at a schedule for the renewal process.

Recommendation: I will update the board as necessary.

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