



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of February 10, 2014

Report covers from January 18, 2014 to February 7, 2014

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Planning Board Discussion of Revised Central Conomo Pt. Subdiv. Plan

I attended the Planning Board meeting of February 5, 2014 along with all three Selectmen. The purpose of the meeting was to review the process and schedule for a revision to the Central Conomo Point Subdivision Plan via a reopening of the public hearing concerning the matter. As the Board is aware, the Plan has been revised to only include the Beach Circle neighborhood, as opposed to both Beach Circle and Robbins Island. At the meeting, the Planning Board decided that a completely new application was not required and, as such, that the hearing could be re-opened to address the revision.

I did point out that nothing in local or State law requires the pure narrowing of scope of a subdivision plan that has already been heard to have a new or re-opened hearing. However, the Planning Board's own convention and policy deems the revision a major change in their eyes and re-opening the hearing will be required. A butter notification will commence and the hearing will be held on March 5, 2014 at 8:00 p.m. The Planning Board also voted to extend their decision deadline until April 2, 2014.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Network Router Failure

The router that connects Town Hall with the Fire/Police Headquarters and with the Water Filtration Plant failed during the week of January 20, 2014. After identifying the router as the source of the problem, I worked with expert personnel from the City of Melrose to remote into the unit to correct the issue. A setting had become corrupt and my usual means of access to the device had become blocked. The router is again functioning properly. As a follow-up, I took a spare router that I had in storage and I worked with Melrose personnel to configure it as an exact copy of the in-service router. As such, any future failure will have a rapid restoration solution. I have also since purchased and pre-configured separate spare devices for routers serving other buildings.

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

(2) Printer Failure

The main printer for the police office failed during the week of January 20, 2014 and required replacement. In order to enable officers to continue printing, I shared out a printer in an adjoining office and configured several workstations to use it until the new printer arrived. I then installed and configured the new printer on various workstations.

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

(3) Renewal of Information Technology Agreement with City of Melrose (*)

As the Board is aware, Essex and Melrose entered into an Intermunicipal Agreement for Information Technology Services back in 2011. The implementation of the hosting of Essex's data and, more recently, desktops, by Melrose has gone very well and the Agreement should be renewed in order to allow for full implementation and a continued relationship.

Recommendation: **Board vote to renew and sign the Intermunicipal Agreement with the City of Melrose for Information Technology Services, for a five-year term.**

(4) Video Surveillance Server

The vendor of the police video surveillance system recommended the installation of a separate computer just to run the system as an improvement over the non-dedicated situation we have been working with. As such, since two users have already migrated to the Melrose virtual desktop environment, I had a surplus system that I reconditioned for use as the video server. I then installed that system on the police network and worked with the vendor to make the video system software operational. The actual images are stored on a separate, dedicated device.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 3 hours.

(5) Further Preparation for Server Room Construction

As reported previously, I have already worked with an electrician to provide equipment and wiring necessary to move the various network devices in my office to a new server room, once constructed. I am presently working with the DPW to plan for the passage of the wires from my office to a new switch within a large conduit and to construct a locked, mounted cabinet for the necessary intermediate switching devices. I have also begun to label and separate various network cables and to produce a cable routing chart so that teardown and reconstitution of the network components will proceed smoothly when the server room is ready.

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

C. Personnel

(1) Fire Chief Compensation Discussion

At the last meeting, the Board reviewed a letter from the Fire Department about the need the Department sees for moving to a full-time Fire Chief position. I have provided that correspondence to the Finance Committee and their representative to the Fire Department will be engaging in further discussions between now and the planned, joint meeting of the Selectmen and the Finance Committee to discuss the budget on February 24, 2014.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Energy Efficiency Retrofit Contract Commencement

At the last meeting, the Board signed a contract with our energy supplier, Constellation, to retrofit lighting in Town Hall, the Fire/Police Headquarters, and the Water Filtration Plant. Work will begin soon (a project manager has been assigned and order verification site work will occur on February 11, 2014) but we will not have to begin paying for the new equipment until 2016, when our energy supply contract is set to renew. As such, we will enjoy the benefit of the savings from more efficient equipment immediately but will begin paying, on an interest-free basis, in the future. Also, we will monitor the market over the next two years and, when we see energy prices dip to the level of our current fixed contract, or below, we can lock in that rate for the future (perhaps offsetting a portion of the adder for the retrofit). I have filed the new contract with three State agencies, as required by State law.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Contract for the Provision of Summer Camp Services (*)

At the last meeting, the Board ranked the sole offeror of a contract for summer camp services, the YMCA of the North Shore, as Highly Advantageous and voted to award a contract to the organization at the present meeting. I modified the contract that we had used in the past to reflect the duration of up to ten years, with a reassessment every three years, and the YMCA has signed the document.

Recommendation: **Board countersignature of the contract for the provision of summer camp services with the YMCA.**

(3) Finalization of RFP for the Promotion of Town Resources (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the insurance provisions in the subject Request for Proposals should be structured to provide options to the successful proposer (including a review of necessary limits and/or a statement of

indemnification). I have now revised the draft RFP to incorporate those concepts and I am seeking final review of the various rating criteria from the Board.

Recommendation: **Board review and finalization of the RFP.**

(5) Hiring of an Appraiser for Potential Sales at Beach Circle (*)

At the last meeting, the Board authorized me to proceed with the necessary procurement actions to retain the services of an appraiser to arrive at market sale values for the eight Beach Circle properties. I released a request for quotations on January 27, 2014, with responses due by February 3, 2014. Of the four appraisers contacted, only one appraiser submitted a quotation (Tyburski Appraisal Corporation), at a price of \$12,000. I have developed a contract with the firm to conduct the work that is available for the Board's signature.

Recommendation: **Board signature of the contract with Tyburski Appraisal Corporation.**

E. Insurance

(1) Inspection of Town Buildings

An inspector for our insurer visited various Town buildings on January 28, 2014 for our annual review of potential hazards and areas for improvement. The inspector will develop a full report containing all recommendations and we will address those items within 30 days of the report.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) MIIA Rewards Program Overview Webinar

I participated in the subject webinar on January 30, 2014 and learned about various incentives that are available through the MIIA Rewards Program. This program includes grant incentives (which we have already successfully applied for this year) and insurance premium credits for taking steps to further avoid losses in various lines of coverage.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Annual Steam Boiler Inspections

Our insurer's boiler inspector visited the Town on January 31, 2014 to inspect the steam boilers at Town Hall and at the Fire/Police station. Both boilers had benefitted from code-compliance work the previous year and no issues were raised at the time of inspection. I have also applied for new State certificates for the upcoming calendar year.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Monthly Pothole Log

I obtained the subject log for the month of January from the DPW. One pothole in Essex had been reported and repaired and one pothole was found to be in Ipswich and the complainant was asked to contact Ipswich.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

No items.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) School Budget Group Meeting

Selectman Coviello, Finance Committee Soulard, and I met with School District and Manchester officials on January 29, 2014 to discuss the District's latest fiscal year 2015 operating budget figures and approach. As reported previously, it is necessary to view operating budget needs against the expected capital needs of all three entities since all of these elements will intersect. Generally, the District is considering increasing fees for certain services, use of reserves, attrition, and allowing a certain level of new choice student enrollment to keep the present program and class sizes intact. Looking ahead, however, it appears that an override may need serious consideration from both communities if the current program and class sizes are to be maintained. Cumulative enrollment increases over the past few years has outpaced the normal ability to increase revenue and declining reserves will not sustain the budget in the future.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

(2) Joint Meeting of Town/School Boards and Budget Final Hearing

I attended the subject hearing on February 4, 2014, along with the boards of selectmen and finance committees from both communities, the Regional School Committee, and various management personnel from all three entities. Many members of the public were also in attendance. At the hearing, those present discussed the most important elements of the District's fiscal year 2015 budget. At the conclusion of the hearing, the budget was approved by the School Committee with an overall 3.7% increase in the portion of the budget that is funded via apportionments from the two towns. Under that scenario, the funding formula will put Essex's apportionment increase at about 3% and Manchester's at about 4.1%. The School Committee may be able to reduce that number in advance of the respective town meetings once more information is known about State aid, health insurance increases, and other factors.

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) Preliminary Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant (*)

I have developed the subject draft warrant based upon the Board's guidance at the last meeting.

Recommendation: Preliminary review of the draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

(2) Medical Marijuana Cultivation Facility Proposed in Essex

Garden Remedies successfully competed for a provisional permit for a medical marijuana dispensary in Newton. The cultivation facility for that dispensary has been proposed to be in Essex. Garden Remedies will need to approach the Building Inspector and the Planning Board for the requisite Special Permit and building permit for the new facility. The permitting phase is expected to begin in the near future.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

(1) Next Round of State Funding for Downtown Boardwalk Project

I have been working with both Senator Tarr and Representative Ferrante relative to the availability of construction funds for a boardwalk along the Essex Causeway. Senator Tarr's staff recently reached out to me to get a better understanding of the remaining design, permitting, and construction costs necessary to bring the subject project from the feasibility state to reality. I am working with our project engineer to provide the requested information and the

Senator's office will update us on any new funding initiatives that the project may benefit from.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) MassGIS Data Conversion

Through our vendor that is currently developing our digital tax maps (Cartographic Associates), we have learned about an opportunity to have the digital data format upgraded by the State from simple CAD format to ArcGIS format at no cost to the Town. MassGIS has an interest in collecting Town parcel information on a regular basis but needs to have participating communities standardize on the ArcGIS format. The initial conversion process is costly but the State will possibly pick up that cost (should Essex be chosen for funding) and will, in turn, leverage more value from the digital products we will be receiving. If the conversion goes forward, in the future, when minor changes are made to our tax maps, our vendor will simply ensure that all work is done in the new format and that location identifiers are produced and imported into our tax assessment database. All of this work will keep the Town in step with the ability to collaborate better in the future with MassGIS.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office for a portion of the afternoons of January 22 and February 3, 2014, and for the afternoon of January 28, 2014.

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