



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of February 22, 2010

Report covers from February 6, 2010 to February 19, 2010

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Shellfish Constable Work Plan (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should develop a standard work plan for the Shellfish Warden based upon recent input from the Shellfish Advisory Commission and sound practices for the regulation of the industry. I have developed a draft plan for the Board's review.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the draft work plan.**

(2) Youth Commission Community Survey (*)

Selectman Lynch is developing survey questions relative to how the community values the services and programs offered by the Youth Commission.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Migration of Users to New Domain

I have begun the process of migrating all Town Hall users to the new Town Hall file server (11 users plus the Assessors' server so far). Since the new Town Hall server is operating in the new, Town-wide domain, each user's desktop must be migrated after their workstation is joined to the new domain. Five additional users/systems need access to the Accounting Server and will not be migrated until that server is replaced outright and joined to the new domain during its initial configuration.

The old Town Hall file server will be brought offline once all migrations are complete. The new, Town-wide domain was initiated with the installation of the new Fire/Police server after the old server there experienced problems. Sharing the active directory among buildings across one domain will allow for a better level of protection via redundancy.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 11.5 hours.

(2) Specification of New Server and Client Systems (*)

I have specified a new server to replace the Accounting Server in Town Hall. The specification has been checked by our accounting software vendor and the new system can be funded using the Reserve Fund and/or line-item transfers and/or

limited remaining funds in our tech fund. I have also specified and ordered a new desktop computer for the new Town Clerk since the system in use by the present Town Clerk requires a complete upgrade.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization for me to sign the necessary Reserve Fund transfer and/or line-item transfer forms for the new Accounting Server once the Finance Committee determines the preferred funding path.**

(3) Accounting Software Update

Our accounting software vendor released an update to our BudgetSense software during the week of February 8, 2010. I downloaded and installed the update and performed the necessary database maintenance. The vendor subsequently required the installation of an updated version of Microsoft DotNet Framework (which I also installed).

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

(4) Google Community WiFi Trials (*)

Google is going to deploy trial WiFi networks in a limited number of local communities as an experimental measure. Communities can apply for consideration via Google's on-line application.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to authorize me to file an application.**

(5) Creation of SurveyMagik Account

The Long Term Planning Committee plans to develop and release a focused survey using our web-based SurveyMagik tool (planning an April release date). The Committee is working with Ms. Lori Henderson to create the survey and I have provided her with the ability to log into the tool directly.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(6) On-Line Version of General Planning Study Report

I have uploaded to the Town website the various files that make up the general planning study report that Consulting Planner Carolyn Britt has delivered to the Town. The files are organized on an index page that is available from the home page at www.essexma.org.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 0.5 hours.

C. Personnel

(1) Cape Ann TV Board Representative

At the last meeting, the Board acknowledged the resignation of Cape Ann TV Board Member Daisy Nell and inquired as to the replacement process. I have

learned that the Cape Ann TV Board is responsible for finding a replacement and making that appointment (not the Selectmen) pursuant to the TV Board's by-laws. The Selectmen were involved during the initial appointment process when the TV Board was first being constituted. The TV Board may choose an Essex resident, although that is not a requirement of the Board's by-laws.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Town Building Feasibility Study Site Visit

I coordinated the subject site visit along with the Chair of the Town Building Committee and several of its members on February 17, 2010 (postponed twice from February 11, 2010 due to snow). A total of 19 design firms (out of approximately 60 firms that picked up documents) sent representatives to the site visit to learn more about the project and the actual sites involved. Final proposals are due on March 4, 2010.

Also, at the last meeting, the Board agreed that representative from the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, and the Appeals Board should meet on the site in advance of Town Meeting to allow for a basic feasibility determination from the perspective of Town agencies. That site visit will occur on February 26, 2010 and the Town Building Committee will discuss its results when they next meet on March 1, 2010.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Village Initiative Plan Technical Planning Assistance (*)

Consulting Planner Carolyn Britt has now developed her proposal for Village Initiative technical assistance concerning the pocket park concept, inclusive of planning work for the Town Landing.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to Ms. Britt's proposal.

(3) Northern Conomo Point Focus Group and Public Forum

The consulting planner studying future options for the northern section of Conomo Point will be hosting a public forum on March 11, 2010 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Essex Elementary School. The purpose of the forum is to develop a list of desirable land uses for the study area using public input. I will work with the local press to advertise the forum as the date approaches. Prior to the public forum, the consultant will have already hosted a focus group to get a good cross-section of ideas and concepts that are at play among a wide variety of stakeholders.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Small Business Loans

I have learned that Mr. Peter Milano of the Massachusetts Office of Business Development has been able to arrange for the participation of several State and Federal partners in the follow-up meeting relative to small business loans for downtown businesses. The Essex Merchant's Group originally sought this assistance and participated in an initial meeting. The follow-up meeting will occur on March 9, 2010 and will again include Senator Tarr and Representative Ferrante.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Monthly Pothole Log

I acquired the pothole log for the month of January from the Department of Public Works and sent the document to our insurer. No potholes had been reported during January.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Freeze-up Prevention Checklists

I completed the checklists for all Town buildings during the week of February 8, 2010. The checklists are intended to call attention to factors that could contribute to frozen pipes. I provided the checklists to our insurer.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Field of Dreams Improvements

At the last meeting, the Board agreed with some improvements that the Manchester Essex Little League would like to make at the Field of Dreams. The Board also reiterated that two new sets of aluminum bleachers and a new scoreboard should be installed.

I passed that information along to MELL officials and MELL is making preparations to implement both the Selectmen's requested work and MELL's own, proposed improvements. The Selectmen's request includes the installation of a fixed scoreboard and two sets of aluminum bleachers at the main field.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Boy Scout Camporee

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board considered a request from the Boy Scouts of America to hold their spring camporee at the Centennial Grove in May. The Board requested that I inquire as to whether the scouts needed the Field of Dreams area and, if not, where they would pitch tents and park vehicles. The District Activities Chairman has indicated to me that the event is proposed to take place in the Grove only and that the Field of Dreams is not needed. Tents are proposed to be pitched in and around the upper Grove area and vehicles could be parked offsite, if necessary (supplies and equipment would be driven in and vehicles would likely be parked on nearby, private property).

As also requested by the Board, I discussed the proposed event with a local scout leader. He indicated that he saw no problem with the event so long as vehicles were parked off site. A fire permit must be obtained from the Fire Department and extra portable toilets should be brought in.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to approve the use of the Grove for the proposed event with the stipulations that: vehicles are parked remotely, the facility remains open to the public, a fire permit is obtained for any planned fires, and extra toilets are brought in and out by the scouts. The fee may be waived in exchange for a service project such as cleaning up the Grove nature trail after the winter season.**

(5) Future Maintenance of Potential Pocket Parks

At the last meeting, I asked the Board how the proponents of potential pocket parks in the causeway area should approach the topic of future maintenance with the Department of Public Works. The Board asked that I contact Board of Public Works Chairman Paul Rullo for analysis of this question with his Board and department. Mr. Rullo was appreciative of the effort to discuss the topic in advance and he indicated that he would take the issue up with his Board at an upcoming meeting.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Latest FY11 Operating Budget Revision

(*)

The Chairman of the Finance Committee has reported that we have closed the gap considerably relative to the FY11 operating budget since the Town's health insurance rate increase will only be 3.32% for the coming year. A small gap does still remain.

***Recommendation:* Board review of the present budget estimate.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Discretion of the Dog Officer (*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to review with Town Counsel the amount of discretion that the Dog Officer has to decide upon the issuance of a vicious dog order under the existing Vicious Dog By-law. Counsel has indicated that certain elements in the by-law provide for the ability of the Dog Officer to refer a matter to the Selectmen before issuing an order.

Further, I learned that the State Law requiring local impoundment of a dog for ten days prior to turning the dog over to a public pound should simply be read in parallel with our local by-law. In order to allow for effective enforcement, Counsel agrees that a revolving fund with a per-day labor and expense fee on the Wage & Salary Scale would be a prudent step. To redeem a dog from the pound, the owner would need to pay all fees and expenses into the new fund and the fund would pay the money back out to the Dog Officer. I recommend a rate of \$65 per day, plus expenses, for dog impoundment based upon rates charged by area kennels.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Potential Deauthorization of School Debt

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Chairman should discuss with the Chair of the Manchester Board of Selectmen whether the two communities should investigate the deauthorization of that portion of the school building debt authorization that is not needed in light of the School Building Assistance reimbursement. The Chairman will be having that discussion in the near future.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant (*)

I have continued to revised the draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant in accordance with the Board's guidance.

Recommendation: Continued Board discussion relative to the draft warrant document.

(4) Alcohol Awareness Training

(*)

The Board had asked that I look into the possibility of requiring alcohol awareness training for all alcohol license holders on an annual basis. The Chief of Police is working to hold a one-time, regional training presented by an ABCC employee this spring. However, I have learned from that individual that the ABCC does not offer this type of training on an annual basis.

The training provides license holders with a good idea of what ABCC inspectors will be looking for and what the potential penalties are for violations. The inspector I spoke to indicated that the Board could make the annual training part of its local regulations and that the ABCC typically refers restaurants to the Massachusetts Restaurant Association and Package and Convenience Stores to the Massachusetts Package Store Association.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the potential for an annual training requirement.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Annual Legal Update

(*)

The Board indicated at the last meeting that the annual legal update from Town Counsel should be scheduled for the month of April, 2010. I have arranged for Attorney Gregg Corbo to deliver that update at the Board's meeting of April 12, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. If the Board would like Leonard Kopelman to attend as well, the date would have to be postponed until May of 2010.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to its choice of arrangements.

(2) Review of "Approval Not Required" Application

The Selectmen granted the Planning Board access to Town Counsel at the last meeting in order to review an application for the creation of an "Approval Not Required" lot. The proponent holds that a long-established way that abuts the property provides sufficient frontage. I have forwarded the proponent's paperwork to Counsel and the matter is presently under review.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

M. Grants

(1) House Appropriations Committee Funding

At the last meeting, I informed the Board that Congressman Tierney's Office was collecting input from communities relative to special project funding that could be considered by the House Appropriations Committee. The Board reviewed the Town's project priorities as listed on Senator Tarr's usual request form along with the Town's past submission for ARRA project funding. As requested by the Board, I reviewed those lists with the Congressman's Office and the staff agreed that the best project to propose would be our boardwalk with transient docks for the downtown area. I provided the Congressman's Office with the necessary cover letter and application form and attached a copy of the Salem State feasibility and design proposal.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team Monthly Meeting

I attended the subject meeting along with other Essex employees on February 19, 2010. The meeting featured a status update relative to coordinated emergency planning on Cape Ann.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

O. Other Items

(1) Presidents' Day Holiday

The office was closed on February 15, 2010 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.