



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of February 24, 2014

Report covers from February 8, 2014 to February 21, 2014

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Configuration of Fire Department Database

Additional fire personnel have been trained to use the Fire Department's incident tracking database. As such, I made arrangements for the necessary connection and also provided Internet access for the management of burning permits.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – ½ hour.

(2) Video Surveillance Security Configuration

I have been working with the Chief of Police relative to the configuration of the Police Department's video surveillance system. Together with the vendor for the system, we have made various improvements to the system's configuration and security.

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

(3) Replacement of UPS Battery

A battery an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) for one of the servers in Town Hall failed during the week of February 10, 2014. I replaced the failed battery with one that I had on hand and ordered a new battery to replenish our stock.

Recommendations: No further action is necessary. Total time – ½ hour.

C. Personnel

(1) Draft Fiscal Year 2015 Wage & Salary Scale (*)

I have produced a preliminary draft version of the fiscal year 2015 Wage & Salary Scale for non-union, non-contract personnel. The updated document includes a two percent cost of living increase and various market-rate and merit increases that were approved by the Board at the last meeting.

Recommendation: **Board review and discussion as necessary.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Request for Proposals for Promotion of Town Resources

At the last meeting, the Board approved a final version of a Request for Proposals for an organization to promote a wide variety of Town resources and attractions. The RFP was released on February 18, 2014 and proposals are due by March 5, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. The Board can rank proposals and award a contract at the meeting of March 10, 2014.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Commencement of Town Hall/Library Renovation Project

The subject project, which is intended to improve the health, safety, and working environment associated with the Town Hall/Library building, commenced on February 21, 2014. The contractor began work both in the area of the Town Hall stage (where a new server room will be constructed) and in the building's basement (in which a new drainage system and basement slab will be constructed). The project will be undertaken while the building is still open to the public and I will be working with the contractor and employees to coordinate activities as well as possible. However, the construction activity will still be inconvenient and potentially disruptive to employees and residents alike. We will do our best to accommodate the public and to keep operations running as smoothly as possible. A full schedule of activities is due from the contractor in the near future.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Lighting Retrofit Project Field Verification

I arranged for a subcontractor associated with our upcoming lighting efficiency retrofit project to walk through the Town Hall, the Fire Station, and the Water Plant on February 11, 2014. The subcontractor was field verifying the various fixture and light bulb specifications that were raised during the initial site visit. On February 20, 2014, other personnel visited my office for further verification. Whereas the Town Hall Renovation Project is also now just beginning, we will probably elect to have the lighting retrofit work in Town Hall to be completed at night, so it will not conflict with that project. At the meeting, we were able to establish which fixtures will be updated via the Town Hall Renovation Project so that we may ensure that the lighting retrofit project will not include those items. We also verified the specific lighting color temperature that will be used in most

fixtures (using an example from a new fixture in the Treasurer/Collector's office that most employees find appealing).

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Replacement of Town Hall Master Thermostat

The steam distribution system from the steam boiler that heats most (but not all) of the Town Hall and Library malfunctioned during the week of February 17, 2014. The steam system is actually controlled by a single thermostat, due to its age, architecture, and layout, and does not have true zones. Instead of replacing the thermostat with a regular unit, a fully-programmable unit will be installed instead. Hopefully, this unit will provide for more even heating throughout the day and for the Library and various public meetings during the evening, when a locked office prevents easy access to the unit.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Municipal Budget and Capital Improvement Request Priority Forms

Each year at this time Senator Tarr reaches out to the various communities he represents to get a clear understanding of each community's priorities for both operating and capital budget elements. I have provided him with the Town's priorities, which include a funding source for the downtown boardwalk project.

Recommendations: 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) FEMA Flood Map Revision Process Informational Meeting (*)

We recently learned from personnel at the State Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) that FEMA does not expect to delay the release of new, coastal flood map panels for our area. A delay is expected in Plymouth County as a result

of a technical challenge but, since each section of the State is based upon its own methodology, the Plymouth challenge will not necessarily affect maps in Essex County. Subsequently, Congressman Tierney's Office put together a meeting with an ex-FEMA official who recommended certain steps communities could take to make the ultimate map changes less costly for local constituents. Selectman O'Donnell attended that meeting on February 13, 2014.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Further Review of Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant (*)

At the last meeting, the Board reviewed an initial draft of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. I have revised the document based upon the Board's guidance. The deadline for Town departments to submit article requests is March 3, 2014.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion as necessary.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Renewal Process for Comcast Cable Contract (*)

The cable contract with Comcast comes up for renewal in March of 2017. Since we are now approximately three years from the renewal date, it is time to determine what process will be used to engage the company in discussions (known as the ascertainment process). During the last renewal process, the four Cape Ann communities formed a Regional Cable Advisory Committee that was able to work out the issues common to all four communities in a group forum. As in the past, each community would ultimately sign its own contract (which would also contain community-specific provisions) and shared counsel could be used to control legal costs. I understand from Gloucester and Manchester so far that those communities are in favor of repeating our past process and I expect to hear from Rockport in the near future. Also, I have been in touch with our past Cable Advisory Committee representative, Nancy Dudley, and she is not interested in that role this time. However, I have learned from Barry O'Brien, who is the Town's representative to Cape Ann TV, that he is interested.

Recommendation: **Board vote to repeat the collaborative process using a regional cable advisory committee and to appoint Mr. Barry O'Brien to the committee, once the concept is ratified by all four communities.**

(2) State Conference Call Relative to Provisional Medical Marijuana Facilities(*)

I participated in the subject call with other municipal officials on February 13, 2014, which was hosted by the Department of Public Health (DPH). The call was offered to all communities which presently are expected to have some element of a medical marijuana facility license located within corporate limits. In our case, Garden Remedies has been granted a provisional license to cultivate medical marijuana at a property on Western Avenue. That site will support Garden

Remedies' dispensary site in Newton, MA. The organization will need to apply to the Building Inspector for the necessary building permit and the matter will be passed to the Planning Board since a Special Permit will be required under the Town's Zoning Bylaws.

On the call, we were introduced to the staff of the unit charged with regulating medical marijuana and learned that the DPH will be reviewing and verifying all of the information in each applicant's application package over the next several months. Generally, organizations hoping to operate facilities would like to commence operations by sometime this summer. The DPH will be meeting with applicants and will keep communities informed about progress.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

M. Grants

(1) Dam and Seawall Repair and Removal Fund Grant Program (*)

Superintendent of Public Works Paul Goodwin attended an informational meeting on February 12, 2014 concerning the subject fund, which is administered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The fund will pay for the design, permitting, and construction of seawall repairs (among other projects) and could be very useful for seawall work out a Conomo Point or in other locations. Any funding would be provided in the form of a partial grant and a low-interest loan. As such, the community would be required to authorize borrowing for the non-grant portion. Alternatively, the community could vote to appropriate existing funds as the non-grant portion. According to the grant program manager, award packages usually include approximately 25% grant funding and 75% loan funding.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Regional Dispatch Center Meeting

I attended a meeting of the Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC) Finance Advisory Board on February 21, 2014. At the meeting, the Board held a public hearing relative to the proposed fiscal year 2015 budget (after which, the budget was adopted) and the Executive Director updated the Board regarding the Center's operations and remaining facilities issues (such as the anticipated completion of the permanent radio tower). The cost to the Town for RECC services for fiscal year 2015 will remain at the fiscal year 2014 level (\$16.26 per capita).

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

O. Other Items

(1) Presidents' Day Holiday

The office was closed on February 17, 2014 in observance of the subject holiday.

(2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on leave all day on February 14 and February 19, 2014.

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