



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of March 8, 2010

Report covers from February 20, 2010 to March 5, 2010

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Internet Use Policy

The Librarian recently provided me with a draft Internet Use Policy to ensure that content viewed at the Library remains within acceptable standards. Town Counsel reviewed the document and recommended a format that the firm has developed for other communities. The Librarian will put the policy into effect.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Pocket Park Technical Assistance

(*)

As requested by the Board at the last meeting, I informed the Long Term Planning Committee that the Board does support the recent proposal from Community Investment Associates to provide technical support for the planning behind four pocket parks. However, funding for this type of support will likely not be available until this coming fall. The Committee has asked whether the proposal could also include what is known as the "Unified Design Concept" that was introduced in the Village Initiative Plan. This concept would include specific planning for decorative street lighting, signage (wayfinding), plantings, and other streetscape elements.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to a potential revision to the proposal for consideration in the fall.**

(3) Essex Youth Commission Survey

(*)

The Board finalized the questions for the Essex Youth Commission survey at the last meeting and asked that I publicize the survey with a response deadline of March 15, 2010. The survey was made available to residents both in a paper form and at the Town's website and was advertised on the website, in school backpacks, in the newspaper, in the Library, at a local daycare facility, via the school phone notification system, and via the Town Hall message board.

Recommendation: **Further discussion as necessary.**

(4) Town Building Committee Meeting

(*)

I attended the subject meeting on March 1, 2010. The meeting featured a discussion of the procedures that will be used to rate the various responses to the Committee's Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The Committee will meet again on March 8, 2010 prior to the Selectmen's meeting for each member to receive

copies of each of the proposals for review – with discussion to be held at a subsequent meeting on March 15, 2010. The Committee recommends that the article for the feasibility study remain on the Town Meeting Warrant even if it will be postponed due to finances (early in the meeting, if possible). This would give the Committee a chance to expose the process to date and the recommended future direction to the public (in addition to a public forum the Committee hopes to host in April).

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to feasibility study planning and exposure.**

(5) Summer Program Physical Audit (*)

As the Board may recall, the Youth Director and I worked with Mr. Rusty Harnish to conduct an administrative audit of the Summer Program during the last program cycle. The goal for the coming program cycle was to work with Mr. Harnish to assess the physical environment (the Centennial Grove area) and work on any recommendations that may arise.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the proposed physical audit.

(6) Building Inspector Reports (*)

It may be valuable for the Board to get a monthly report from the Building Inspector that lists each permit applied for and whether a permit was directly issued or passed into some other required process. For those permits that must move through some other process, the Selectmen would have a general idea about the status of less-conforming matters in the event they are asked about an issue by a member of the public or wish to become involved in some fashion.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the development of such a report.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Migration of DPW Clerk System

The DPW had been using the Clerk's computer system as a stand-alone system for some time and requested that I migrate the system onto the Water Filtration Plant network. I performed all necessary operations and the system is working well.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 1.5 hours.

(2) Conservation Commission Database Training

I recently assisted our Conservation Commission database vendor with certain aspects of a program upgrade. Following this upgrade, we arranged for a training session to review all aspects of the system, including new features. I participated in that session along with the Conservation Commission Clerk.

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

(3) DPW Office Storm Damage

The motherboard on the Wastewater Clerk's computer was irreparably damaged during a recent power surge associated with a storm. I was able to install the Clerk's hard drive into the Assistant Superintendent's computer system and the Clerk will use that arrangement temporarily. I have ordered a new computer system to replace the over five-year-old damaged system and the Superintendent will fund that new equipment. When the new system arrives, the Assistant will be provided with his old system and hard drive and the Clerk will use the new system. The Assistant will temporarily log onto the network using another terminal. The Police Department lost a monitor in the surge and I have replaced that with a spare unit.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 1.5 hours.

(4) Assessors' Server Migration

I recently migrated the Assessors' server into the new, Town-wide domain and, although the system worked well at first, a recent re-boot after the wind storm created circumstances that did not allow the client systems to communicate with the server. As such, I worked with technical support to find the problem and to revise several paths to restore communication.

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

(5) Arrival of New Accounting Server

The new Accounting Server arrived during the week of March 1, 2010. I set up and added the server to our network. Subsequently, I loaded a variety of necessary software programs and I am awaiting further preparatory instructions from our vendor. I am also waiting for our vendor to place our system into its installation schedule.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 4.5 hours +.

(6) Network Attached Storage Device Failure

We use several network attached storage devices (NAS) on our network to allow redundant data backup. During the recent windstorm, a power surge corrupted a disk on our Town Hall NAS. I tried some general recovery techniques but the device did not respond. I was then able to work with the vendor to apply more advanced techniques and the device is working properly once again.

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

C. Personnel

(1) Safety Committee Meeting

The next quarterly Safety Committee meeting has been scheduled for March 10, 2010. I have placed a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Personnel Board Meeting

The next quarterly Personnel Board meeting will occur as part of the Selectmen's meeting on March 22, 2010. I have placed a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Teamsters Collective Bargaining (*)

The Management team engaged the Teamsters in an initial collective bargaining session for a successor contract on February 25, 2010.

Recommendation: **Board discussion in executive session.**

(4) Essex Police Benevolent Association Collective Bargaining (*)

The Management team engaged the EPBA in continued collective bargaining for a successor contract on March 2, 2010.

Recommendation: **Board discussion in executive session.**

(5) Shellfish Constable Work Plan (*)

As requested by the Board, I shared the draft Shellfish Constable Work Plan with the Constable and with the Shellfish Advisory Commission for review and comment. The Constable had no comments and the SFAC Chair indicated that he was in agreement.

Recommendation: **Board vote to establish the document as the Constable's official work plan going forward.**

(5) Town Clerk Position (*)

Ms. Patricia Brown was presented with an offer for employment from the Board to become the Town's new, appointed Town Clerk. However, Ms. Brown has declined that offer.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the evaluation of other applicants.**

(6) Formation of Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC) (*)

All three unions have assented to the formation of the subject Committee. Under the law, the unions have seven out of eight seats on the Committee and the Selectmen appoint an eighth member to represent the Town's retirees. AFSCME will have three seats, EPBA will have three seats, and the Teamsters will have one seat.

Recommendation: **Board consideration of a retiree to potentially ask to be on the Committee.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Municipal Building Feasibility Study RFQ Responses

The deadline for responses to the Building Committee's Request for Qualifications (RFQ) associated with the subject study was March 4 at noon. Over sixty designers had originally picked up documents, twenty-one designers attended a site visit, and a total of 11 designers actually submitted proposals. All designers had to provide confirmation of an addendum that requires proposals to remain valid until the end of the calendar year in the event that sufficient funding is not available for consideration at the Annual Town Meeting. The Building Committee will meet briefly on March 8, 2010 to pick up copies of the proposals and will meet on March 15, 2010 to begin narrowing the field.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Route 133 Project Construction Hours for Coming Season (*)

The Board asked that I bring up the construction hours for the coming season at this time. The proposal is to allow work from 6:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. as opposed to 7:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. I will be meeting with the Route 133 Task Force in the near future and this topic could be discussed with that group as well.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the upcoming season's work hours.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Appraisal of Grove Cottage (*)

At the request of the Board I have discussed with an appraiser his ability to provide a market appraisal for the Centennial Grove Cottage. He can conduct the necessary market research and I can provide him with a tour of the property, including the interior of the various buildings on the cottage site. However,

several factors must be discussed further before we enter into a contract for the work.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to appraisal parameters.**

(2) Proposed Public Safety Building Site Preliminary Analysis (*)

I coordinated a site visit on February 26, 2010 among the Chairman of the Conservation Commission, the Chair of the Planning Board, the Planning Board's representative to the Town Building Committee, the Chair of the Town Building Committee, and the Chair of the Appeals Board as requested by the Board. The purpose of the site visit was to determine if there are any "fatal flaws" with the potential use of the site at a gross level before the Town engages a design firm to conduct a finer analysis (subject to funding). It was evident to the group that, although some water features are present, the site may very well be able to support the proposed uses. We agreed that the wetlands on the site should be flagged by a professional delineator and I arranged for a delineator to tour the site with me on March 8, 2010.

Recommendation: **I will report the preliminary findings of the delineator at the present meeting.**

(3) Maintenance of Future Pocket Parks

The Board had asked me to inquire with the Board of Public Works whether the Department of Public Works would be prepared to maintain the various pocket parks that have been proposed recently. I have learned that the Board is willing to provide that maintenance after the parks are designed and created and would be interested in providing input during the design stage. I reported this feedback to Robert Coviello of the Long Term Planning Committee.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(4) Historic Records Preservation (*)

The Town has worked with graduate students in the past relative to the preservation of the Town's historic records (primarily in the Town Hall basement vault). We have received a proposal for additional work but the number of hours necessary to complete the project is too large for us to fully fund. The records preservation appropriation that Town Meeting had put aside is presently at just over \$4,700.

Recommendation: **Authorize the two preservationists to begin work, not to exceed the present appropriation. Additional funding could be sought in the future.**

(5) Freeze-up Prevention Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for the month of March during the week of March 1, 2010 and provided those to our insurer. This is the last filing required for this winter season. I will resume the practice in November of 2010.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(6) February Pothole Log

The Department of Public Works forwarded to me the pothole log for the month of February, which I sent on to our insurer.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Storm Damage and Expense Assessment

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has requested all communities to summarize the cost of damage to public property and public expenses associated with the recent wind storm. The fire, police, and public works departments all completed assessments and I have forwarded the Town's package to the State. No Federal aid has been authorized to date but MEMA hopes that aid might be authorized once authorities review the scale of the damage.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

H. Complaints

None.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Essex Division Meeting

I attended the subject meeting along with Selectman Lynch on March 3, 2010. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the zoning by-law changes that will be proposed for the Annual Town Meeting (Planning Board Chairman St. John was present). Also, the Route 133 Task Force members who were present asked that I pull together a spring update meeting with personnel from Mass DOT. I am working on scheduling that meeting later in the month when the Resident Engineer knows more from the contractor about what to expect.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant (*)

I have further revised the Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant as per the Board's past guidance.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

(1) Google Community WiFi Grant

As authorized by the Board at the last meeting, I have submitted an application to Google for a demonstration community WiFi system in Essex.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Jury Duty

I was out of the office on jury duty all day on February 23, 2010.

(2) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on March 5, 2010.

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