



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

Report covers from February 22, 2014 to March 7, 2014

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Review of Central Conomo Point Subdivision Plan (*)

On March 5, 2014, the Planning Board held a public hearing relative to the revised Central Conomo Point Subdivision Plan, which now only includes the Beach Circle area. Simultaneously, our appraiser has begun work on appraising the various properties in that area so that Town Meeting voters will have value figures for properties that the Board may propose to sell via an Annual Town Meeting vote in May. The Planning Board's written decision is expected out in early April.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Public Safety Committee Community Survey

The Public Safety Committee has developed a survey for residents to take that will help the Committee understand various viewpoints concerning the Town's public safety services. The Committee expects to release the survey as of March 12, 2014 (through March 28, 2014) and a link will be made available from the Town website homepage.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Interaction of Medical Marijuana Provisional Licensee with Town (*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed a recent conference call with the Department of Public Health relative to the permitting process associated with opening provisionally-approved medical marijuana facilities. Attorney Richard Kallman, representing Garden Remedies, the organization hoping to open a cultivation facility in Essex, indicated that he would be reaching out to key Town departments and officials during the process. To date, Mr. Kallman and Garden Remedies personnel have met with me, the Chief of Police (along with Selectman O'Donnell), the Board of Health Administrator, and the Fire Chief. The State plans to offer another municipal conference call on March 13, 2014.

Also, the Board asked that the Chief of Police provide a proposed calendar year 2015 goal relative to protecting public safety to the maximum level possible when the cultivation facility is operational. The Chief will provide a draft goal for the Board's review by meeting time.

Further, the Board began a discussion with Attorney Kallman relative to the potential establishment of a “hosting agreement” with the new facility to help defray new costs associated with public safety. Selectman Coviello and I have arranged to meet with Attorney Kallman and Garden Remedies personnel during the upcoming week to continue that discussion.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the draft hosting agreement and the Police Chief’s recent meeting with Garden Remedies personnel.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Configuration of Regional Dispatch Center Software Updates

The software vendor that manages the computer-aided dispatch software at the new Regional Dispatch Center has begun to push a variety of GIS map updates out to the client computers in the various communities served by the Center. As such, it was necessary for me to configure some of our client computers to allow these updates, if the process was not working. I reviewed the matter with the Police Department on February 25, 2014 and followed up with Regional Center personnel on February 26, 2014 and was able to make the necessary changes to correct the issue, where necessary.

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

(2) Update to Antivirus Software Master Server

Our antivirus software vendor provided a notification during the week of February 24, 2014 that the main control element of our master antivirus software required an immediate update to deal with a vendor-recognized security weakness that had not yet, but theoretically could be, exploited by hackers. I downloaded and applied the new version of the software and all systems are functioning normally.

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

C. Personnel

(1) Continued Review of FY15 Wage & Salary Scale (*)

At the last meeting, the Board, acting as Personnel Board, reviewed a preliminary draft of the FY15 Wage & Salary Scale. The document is scheduled for final approval at the next meeting.

***Recommendation:* Final Board discussion relative to the development of the final document.**

(2) Safety Committee Meeting

The next Safety Committee meeting will occur on March 20, 2014. I will attend as a member of the Committee. I have placed a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Labor Relations Webinar

Our insurer recently offered a pre-recorded webinar discussing the intricacies relative to certain elements of labor relations such as past practice establishment and management, the investigation of complaints, and the imposition of discipline. I viewed the webinar during the week of March 3, 2014. The webinar was very informative and may be eligible for credit under the MIIA Rewards Program. The Chief of Police and the Superintendent of Public Works also plan on viewing in the near future.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Award of Contract for Promotion of Town Resources (*)

Responses to the Town's recently-released proposal for the promotion of Town resources were due on February 5, 2014. One organization, the Essex Merchants' Group, submitted a proposal. The Board's next step is to rate the proposal and then consider making a contract award.

Recommendation: **Board review and rating of the sole proposal and consideration of issuing a contract award.**

(2) Cape Ann Regional Cable Advisory Committee Update (*)

All four Cape Ann communities have now agreed that a regional cable advisory committee should be assembled leading up to our next cable contract renewal in 2017. Gloucester already has a committee and the City is open to simply expanding it to include representatives from the three towns. The Gloucester committee also has other goals, such as grant funding for communications infrastructure, which could benefit all of the communities. As such, it appears that the four communities have a venue to collaborate on both contract and other issues going forward. The three town administrators will meet with the Mayor's Chief of Staff on March 10, 2014 to discuss pulling the committee together and additional information will be available by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

E. Insurance

(1) Fiscal Year 2015 Health Insurance Premium Figure

We learned from our insurer during the week of February 24, 2014 that our health insurance rates for active employee plans will NOT increase in fiscal year 2015 (a zero-percent increase). This excellent news will allow the Town more flexibility as the Finance Committee and the Selectmen continue to work on the fiscal year 2015 operating budget package.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Town Hall/Library Renovation Project Update (*)

Work on the basement drainage work element and the server room work element continued in earnest during the weeks of February 24 and March 3, 2014. Presently, the server room framing and rough electrical is complete and much of the sheetrock has been hung. By early April, I hope to be able to move all network equipment out of my office and, in turn, to allow crews to begin working on the soundproofing of my office. The basement work is proceeding on schedule and crews have completed the drain excavation around the interior perimeter of the building's basement.

Also, we have been contacted by our architect with a request to consider an increase in fees, due to a longer-than-expected bidding period, changes in design, and other factors.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to potential architectural fee increases.**

(2) Centennial Grove Cottage Phone Service

Our alarm company noted that phone service to the Grove Cottage had been interrupted. After confirming that the trouble was with the phone company's network, and not internal, I contacted the phone company for service, and actually had to request a follow-up visit. The issue has since been resolved.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Continued Review of Fiscal Year 2015 Operating and Capital Budget Items

At the last meeting, the Finance Committee met with the Board to review the status of the various departmental requests for operating budgets and capital items in fiscal year 2015. The Finance Committee will also attend the present meeting to continue that discussion.

Recommendation: Further discussion relative to the fiscal year 2015 operating budget and capital requests.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Continued Review of Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant

I have revised the Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting. The Board is scheduled to close and sign the warrant on March 24, 2014. The Town Moderator will attend the present meeting to join in the discussion.

Recommendation: Further Board discussion relative to the draft warrant.

(2) Implementation of New FEMA Flood Maps and Rates (*)

At the last meeting, Selectman O'Donnell summarized an informational meeting that was sponsored by Congressman Tierney relative to steps that communities could take to minimize the impact of the new FEMA maps on residents. The chief approach would be to utilize something known as the Community Rating System that may be able to provide rate discounts for some residents. More information regarding the use of that system is forthcoming.

The Board asked that I also reach out the Congressman's office to determine how best to support the Congressman's overall effort to perhaps delay the implementation of the new maps and/or the new rate structure. The Congressman's staff provided me with a letter from the Massachusetts Legislative Delegation to the Director of FEMA pointing out how a recent successful appeal of the new maps in Rockport should be applied to the entire Commonwealth. At this juncture, we are advised to stay on track with bringing the matter before Town Meeting for a floodplain bylaw update in May. If the implementation schedule or mapping protocol should change, we will be advised and the matter can be postponed.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

(1) Massachusetts CZM Coastal Resiliency Grant Funding

As the Board may recall, the Town has been working with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) relative to climate change/sea level rise planning. NWF recently explored with personnel from the Horsley Witten Group the possibility of grant funding through Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management (CZM) for coastal infrastructure planning. However, since any grant award would be subject to public bid requirements and NWF might not be chosen, NWF was not able to use the time spent on the Essex project (or future time) as the required local match.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program Grant

As the Board may recall, Alyssa Novak, Ph.D., of the University of New Hampshire, and several collaborators had applied to the subject research and planning grant program for eelgrass restoration efforts in Essex Bay. We have learned that the program has funded the grant application and work should begin in the coming months.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Meeting with Manchester Officials Relative to Regional Dispatch Center

The Essex Police Chief, the Essex Fire Chief, and I met with Manchester officials at their request on February 27, 2014 so that they could learn more about Essex's experience with the new Regional Dispatch Center. The Town of Manchester is studying various future options for dispatch by means of an ad-hoc committee. We recounted the process that took us from having our own center to where we are today and commented on some of the minor issues that we experienced during the migration. We also commented on the various issues that the new Regional Center is presently facing (such as the final erection of the permanent communications tower and the final selection of a fire department database product).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team Meeting

I attended the subject meeting in Manchester along with other Essex officials on March 6, 2014. The meeting featured discussions regarding ongoing preparations for drills and tabletop exercises and potentially bringing in guest speakers from the ranks of the five communities' police, fire, and health departments for short presentations about real-life situations at each meeting on an alternating basis.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

O. Other Items

(1) North Shore United Way Volunteer Hub

At the last meeting, a representative from the North Shore United Way visited the Board to demonstrate the organization's new volunteer matching website, known as volunteer hub. Citizens can search for organizations and initiatives in need of volunteers with certain talents and interests. I have placed a link to the site at the Town's website, under the community links section. The site can be found at volunteer.nsuw.org.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on February 28, 2014.

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