



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of March 25, 2013

Report covers from March 9, 2013 to March 22, 2013

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Board of Assessors' Physical Property Inspections

The Board of Assessors is required by the Department of Revenue to physically inspect properties in the Town at least every nine years. The Board began that process for this cycle on March 18, 2013 with the assistance of a contracted vendor. I assisted the Assessors with the release of a Code Red message to inform residents that the process is beginning and to refer them to the Town's website or the Assessors' office for more detailed information. I also assisted with the posting of the necessary information on the Assessors' page.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Migration of Accounting Software to Hosted Platform

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the best ultimate solution for our various major applications is to migrate them from our own servers to vendor-hosted servers. I am working with the Town Accountant to plan for migration of our accounting software during fiscal year 2014 and she will include the necessary hosting fees in her departmental budget. The accounting vendor has provided us with a draft contract for hosting services and I will be working with Town Counsel to revise that contract to comply with all of our necessary standards (in a fashion similar to how we worked with City Hall Systems for our hosted tax collection software).

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

#### (2) Pilot Program for Cyber Insurance

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Our insurer is considering offering a line of cyber insurance coverage for municipalities and would like to have a consultant "test" the data security level in a small, medium, and large community. Our insurer is considering Essex as the small community and would ask their consultant to attempt to gain access to the Town's network. After the testing, the Town would be provided with a confidential report concerning any weaknesses that were discovered.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to potentially participating in the testing.**

## C. Personnel

### (1) Essex Police Benevolent Association Collective Bargaining

Management engaged the union in continued collective bargaining on March 14, 2013.

*Recommendation:* Board discussion in executive session.

### (2) AFSCME Collective Bargaining

Management engaged the union in continued collective bargaining on March 22, 2013.

*Recommendation:* Board discussion in executive session.

### (3) Safety Committee Meeting

I attended the subject meeting as a member of the Committee on March 20, 2013. The meeting featured a formal presentation of the “Excellence in Loss Control” award that our insurer had announced at the Massachusetts Municipal Association meeting back in January. Mr. Kevin Perkins from our insurer was on hand to present the award to the Town (our seventh such award). Mr. Perkins covered other emerging topics with the group.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (4) Informal Department Heads Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting in my office on March 21, 2013. The meeting featured a webinar presented by Attorney Lauren Goldberg of Kopelman and Paige concerning various aspects of Town Meeting. I will continue to hold such meetings from time to time.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (5) Fiscal Year 2014 Wage & Salary Scale, Cost of Living Increase (\*)

Each year at this time, the Board, acting in its capacity as the Personnel Board, determines the amount of a cost of living allowance that it desires to recommend to the Annual Town Meeting. The chosen figure gets added to the existing Wage & Salary Scale to update that document for the coming fiscal year.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the cost of living allowance figure for fiscal year 2014.**

## **D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

### (1) Town Hall Health and Safety Improvements (\*)

I met with the project manager for the subject project on March 21, 2013 to review a proposed final draft of designs and cost estimates for various Town Hall/Library improvements. The project manager is presently working to obtain final approval of the Historical Commission and is working with the Building Inspector regarding final code questions. Our goal is to wrap up the design and cost estimation process soon so that the Board can approve the final scope of the project prior to preparation for bidding. It is likely that our designer will meet with the Board at the next meeting, on April 8, 2013.

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

### (2) Downtown Boardwalk Final Report Update

Salem State University has now combined the technical analysis of Vine Associates into a final report attesting to the feasibility and value of the proposed project to the Town. I met with Dr. William Hamilton of Salem State on March 21, 2013 to review the draft and provided updates on several ongoing initiatives. Dr. Hamilton will make revisions and the University will forward a draft final document to the Town. At that point, Dr. Hamilton will be interested in the Town's final comments regarding the report.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

## **E. Insurance**

### (1) Potential Changes to Retiree Health Insurance Plan Design (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to continue exploring changes to both of our retiree health insurance plans that will result in much lower rates without major benefit changes. To that end, I informed the members of the Town's Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC) about the potential for changes and the Committee will organize a meeting in the near future. The Committee still does not have a retiree on it since all of the retirees the Board considered in the past declined to serve.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to potential changes to retiree health plans.**

## **F. Facilities**

### (1) Asbestos Awareness Training

As the Board may recall, the comprehensive assessment of asbestos in the Fire Station produced an operation and maintenance manual for the building. The manual recommends that all personnel that are involved in everyday building

maintenance and/or future renovations take a short training course to avoid unintended exposures. Our insurer has agreed to sponsor such training on April 16, 2013 here in Essex. Town personnel and perhaps as many as a dozen personnel from the Regional School District will participate in the training.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

### (1) Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Finalization

Members of the Finance Committee will be in attendance at the present meeting to discuss the finalization of the fiscal year 2014 operating and capital budgets.

*Recommendation:* Board discussion with the Finance Committee at the present meeting.

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

### (1) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Essex Division Meeting

I attended the subject meeting along with Selectman Coviello on March 13, 2013. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the finalization of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant and the progress of the downtown boardwalk project and Town/Hall Library improvement project. The group also discussed the pros and cons of a proposal to adopt a local, 0.75% meals tax.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Regional Dispatch Finance Advisory Board Meeting

I attended the subject meeting as a member of the Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center Finance Advisory Board on March 15, 2013. The meeting featured a discussion regarding finalization of the Cherry Sheet assessments with the Department of Revenue and logistics necessary to make the Center live by July 1, 2013. Essex will be going on line at the new center on June 24, 2013 (we will be the first to cut over). The center's Director is presently working to interview, evaluate, and hire the necessary staff and mobile cruiser terminals will be made available, with the necessary training, to police departments by mid-June.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

## **J. Final Judgment**

### (1) DEP Quarterly Report

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I have produced the Quarterly Report due to the DEP for the quarter ending March 31, 2013. The report touches upon expected Town Meeting topics and compliance with the Conomo Point Plan.

*Recommendation:* **Board vote to transmit the report.**

## **K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations**

### (1) Central Conomo Point Zoning District Bylaw

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At the last meeting, the Board agreed that a change to the language regarding one of the “exception” lots on Robbins Island should be reviewed by Town Counsel and presented to the Planning Board in advance of the March 20, 2013 public hearing (and again during the hearing). Town Counsel conducted an overall review as well and recommended a variety of other changes for discussion at the hearing. Personnel from Horsley Witten assisted with the development of a variety of figures that show how the proposed zoning district sits in relation to the rest of the Point and that show more close-up views of the proposed district. Much public discussion was accommodated at the hearing and personnel from Horsley Witten, Brown Sardina, and Town Counsel were all present. The Planning Board did not provide any specific recommendations relative to the public hearing draft and, as such, that content has been added to the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

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

### (2) Finalization of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant

I have made final edits to the Annual Town Meeting Warrant per the Board’s guidance at the last meeting. Recommended votes of the Board appear on the Selectmen’s meeting agenda.

*Recommendation:* Board approval of the warrant per the agenda.

## **L. Legal Issues**

No items.

## **M. Grants**

No items.

**N. Emergency Planning**

No items.

**O. Other Items**

No items.

*This report is available at [www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org) on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.*