



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 7, 2008

Report covers from March 22, 2008 to April 4, 2008

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) MAPC Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Team (*)

At the last meeting, the Board reviewed correspondence from MAPC relative to a regional grant that MAPC will use to write a Regional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan for several area communities. The correspondence asked that the Board designate two local officials who can serve on the Planning Team that will help MAPC write the Plan. The Board suggested that I contact the Essex Fire Department and the Board of Public Works. I made those contacts and have learned that Superintendent of Public Works Paul Goodwin from the Department of Public Works and Fire Engineer Dan Doucette from the Fire Department are both available to serve.

Recommendation: Board designation of Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Doucette as the Town's official representatives to the Planning Team.

(2) Setup of Little League Fence

The Department of Public Works placed the little league outfield fence out at the Field of Dreams for the Selectmen to setup recently. The fence will likely be set up by meeting time (weather permitting).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Return of Piano to Senior Center

The First Congregational Church has been storing the piano that was in the old Scout House before that building was torn down. It is now time to return the piano to the new Senior Center. I have made arrangements with the Superintendent of Public Works to have the piano moved by backhoe to the Senior Center on April 9, 2008. I will be present to help coordinate the move.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Cleanout of Drainage Culvert, Conomo Point

A resident of Conomo Point has written the Board in your capacity as Conomo Point Commissioners and has asked if the Town can assist with reopening a drainage culvert that crosses beneath a gravel road at the Point to allow rain runoff to disperse into the adjacent marsh. I discussed the request with the Superintendent of Public Works and he indicated that his crew would make an effort to clean out the area immediately preceding the pipe since, apparently, that

area has filled in with grasses, roots, and weeds steadily over the years. The crew has already completed that work and the Superintendent reports that the area is draining very well.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Town Website Administration Training and Kickoff

I participated in both group training and individualized training provided by our new website vendor along with the Selectmen's Assistant and many other departments on March 24, 2008. During the group training, the vendor covered the basic operation of a program that is used to modify and update the live website. During the individualized training, we had a chance to review our own department's content and to ask questions specific to our needs. The site went live on April 7, 2008 (I made preparations to have the appropriate Internet record point to the new site hosted by Virtual Town Hall instead of our old site hosted by Verizon/Superpages.com).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Specification of New Library Computer

The Librarian will be ordering a new computer for the Library office using grant funds. She requested that I assist with a quotation on the new system using the specifications desired by the Merrimac Valley Library Consortium. I have requested the quotation and will order the system after I receive the quotation and the Librarian has reviewed it.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Board of Health Computer IP Problem

The Board of Health Administrator informed me that her computer system suddenly arrested its connectivity to the Town Hall server and associated web and e-mail services. I investigated the issue and found that the system was being blocked by a corrupt IP address record in our DHCP server. Once I cleared the record, the system was able to acquire a new IP address and the problem was resolved. The problem may have stemmed from a Windows Vista instability problem (this system is the only Windows Vista system on the Town Network).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Conservation Software Webex Session

The vendor for the Conservation Commission's new tracking database contacted me to arrange for a Webex session to adjust some parameters in the system

remotely. I was able to log on to the Commission's system and initiate the Webex for the vendor. The updates were all successful and the system is working well.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(5) Hospital Display Capacity Problem

The Emergency Center uses an old computer system to monitor hospital bed capacity via a web-based program. Recently, the Fire Department commented that the system was experiencing memory problems (just after the web-based application changed to a more complex format). I was able to clean out some old files and adjust the paging file size to correct the issue.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(6) Network Printer Malfunction

The Town Hall network printer experienced paper jamming problems during the week of March 31, 2008. I investigated the situation and found that a section of paper glide backing in one of the roller areas had become dislodged from its usual place. I was able to glue the material back onto the underlying frame and the printer is working well.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(7) Youth Director Website Training

The Youth Director was on vacation during the recent website training that was hosted by our site vendor. As such, I assisted her with the download of the necessary management software and showed her how to accomplish the tasks that were covered in the group training.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(8) Police Department Clerk Printer Problem

The Police Department Clerk informed me that her printer was not working properly. I investigated and determined that the print driver had been corrupted. I reloaded the driver from the original CD and the printer is working well.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Personnel Board Meeting

(*)

I attended the subject meeting on March 24, 2008 in my capacity as Personnel Officer. The Personnel Board voted to recommend the fiscal year 2009 Wage & Salary Scale to Town Meeting. Also, Mr. Copeland indicated that he was

interested in being reappointed to the Personnel Board when his term expires at the end of this coming June.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to reappoint of Mr. Copeland to the Personnel Board.**

(2) Chief of Police Successor Agreement (*)

I have additional information from the Chief of Police relative to his successor contract.

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

(3) Centennial Grove Summer Worker

The Superintendent of Public Works has agreed to allow one summer worker to perform odd jobs at the Grove each week. The Grove Revolving Fund will cover the employee's wages for time spent on Grove work. We will work out those logistics together as the season approaches.

***Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.**

(4) Teamsters Collective Bargaining

The Board reviewed the Teamsters collective bargaining status in executive session at the last meeting. The next session is scheduled for April 14, 2008.

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

D. Procurement

(1) Delivery of New Fire Pumper

The original estimated delivery date for the new pumper was late March. However, it will likely be closer to mid-April. The Selectmen's Assistant and I have worked to process all necessary paperwork, to insure the vehicle, and to have the payment to our leasing company prepared. Our leasing company has advised that we keep all of the necessary documents in a file until the actual delivery date and we will provide each document to the necessary parties at that time.

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

(2) Affirmative Marketing Program Quarterly Report

I filed the subject quarterly report with the State relative to the Town's minority and women-owned business utilization during the week of March 31, 2008 in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer (AMCO).

***Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.**

E. Insurance

(1) Dental Insurance Switch

At the last meeting, the Board voted to change the Town's dental insurance provider to Altus Dental. I have since contacted that provider and they have begun the transition process. I have completed the necessary group application based on the Board's vote and the Treasurer/Collector is working with Altus to advertise the availability of the new plan to Town employees and to set up the actual transition process and documents. A representative from Altus Dental will be in Town on April 16, 2008 to assist employees with signing up, switching over, and answering questions. Enrollment forms will be due no later than May 15, 2008 for an effective plan start date of July 1, 2008.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Monthly Pothole Log

I provided our insurer with the Department of Public Works' monthly pothole log as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. Our insurer is interested in timely follow-up relative to pothole complaints.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Completion of Legion Hall Painting

(*)

The Board reviewed a letter from a member of the Historical Commission at their meeting of April 1, 2008 inquiring about the completion of a paint job that the present building tenant (the Essex Historical Society) began in the past. The Board asked that I contact the Society about their plans for completion. Mr. Kurt Wilhelm of the Society will discuss the matter with the Society's facilities manager and will report back with an update in the near future.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to expectations for completion.**

(2) Seasonal Startup of Field of Dreams

Now that the risk of frost has passed, it is possible to restart the Field of Dreams well and irrigation system for the season. The Superintendent of Public Works has offered to supply that service and will get the system running. However, if the irrigation network needs maintenance such as head replacement, I will contact an irrigation contractor for that work. The Superintendent has also arranged for the usual infield conditioning using the services of a fields contractor (to be paid from the Grove Revolving Fund). Further, the Selectmen's Assistant has arranged for the placement of a portable toilet for use by sports teams and spectators and the Water Department will soon turn on the summer water service.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Quarterly Facilities Inspection Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for Town Hall and the Senior Center as part of the MIIA Rewards Program during the week of March 31, 2008. Each of the other Town buildings is also inspected quarterly by other employees and any findings are discussed at the next Safety Committee meeting. I did not have any findings relative to the two buildings I looked at.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Memorial Park Restrooms

The Memorial Park restrooms opened for the season on April 3, 2008 on a Thursday through Sunday only basis (8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) per the usual schedule. The restrooms will be open seven days per week beginning July 1, 2008.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(5) Town Building Planning Meeting

(*)

By meeting time, I will have met again with the Chief of Police and members of the ad-hoc building study group relative to future options for Town buildings.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the status of that planning effort.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Final Fiscal Year 2009 Budget

The Chairman of the Finance Committee worked with the Town Accountant during the week of March 31, 2008 to finalize the FY09 budget document based upon past discussions and votes that occurred at Selectmen's and Finance Committee meetings.

Recommendation: 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) Filing of Revised Shellfish Regulations

The Board promulgated revisions to the Shellfish Regulations at the last meeting. The revised version has been filed with the Division of Marine Fisheries and posted locally as part of the process and the revised Regulations are effective April 15, 2008.

Also, now that the Regulations have been thoroughly reviewed and revised, it is necessary to reprint the Constable's ticket books since the existing books reference an old version of the Regulations on the back of each ticket. The Shellfish Constable is presently working to determine what portion of the revised Regulations should be printed in the new books and our office will assist him with the order once those plans are finalized.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Changes to Annual Town Meeting Warrant

The Town Clerk indicated that the Town Meeting/Election Warrant signed by the Board on March 24, 2008 did not include a notation for a second Planning Board seat. As such, since the Board had been posted for March 26, 2008, and since the warrant had not yet been officially posted, the Board made the necessary revision that evening along with several other changes that they deemed prudent. The revised version of the warrant dated March 26, 2008 has now been officially posted.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Draft Annual Town Meeting Motions

(*)

I have developed draft Annual Town Meeting motions for the Board's consideration.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to these preliminary motions.**

(4) Finance Committee Report/Town Meeting Booklet

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, the Town Accountant and I collaborated on the completion of the subject booklet during the week of March 31, 2008. The booklet is now being printed and will be available in advance of the Annual Town Meeting as usual (target date is April 14, 2008).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(5) Town Annual Report

Copies of this year's Town Annual Report have arrived from the printer and are now available in Town Hall.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Route 133 Reconstruction Project Right of Way Compensation

At the last meeting, I explained to the Board that 60-70 property owners will be paid small amounts of money for the right of way needs of MassHighway with respect to the subject project. Since the Town is a lien holder on most properties (i.e. the recent sewer betterments), MassHighway is required to list the Town as a payee on each check unless the Town waives that requirement. The Board determined at the last meeting that a waiver was appropriate (since the property owners in question should have the privilege of paying the betterments over time like all other betterment payers in Town) and I sent the necessary letter to MassHighway.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Ramsey Dog Case

(*)

I have additional details relative to the subject case.

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

(3) Cape Ann Regional Response Team MOU

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board reviewed the subject Memorandum of Understanding that had been provided by the Chief of Police. The Board indicated support for the work of the Regional Response Team and asked that I request the Chief to prepare a final signature draft of the document. The Chief has since provided me with the requested document.

Recommendation: **Board signature of the Cape Ann Regional Response Team MOU.**

(4) Gloucester Billing Dispute

Chairman Lynch and I attended the court session on March 25, 2008 relative to the court's consideration of the Town's motion for a preliminary injunction against the City. Subsequently, on March 27, 2008, the judge handling the case denied the motion. The Board met to discuss on April 1, 2008 and the Board of Public Works plans to be in attendance at the present meeting to discuss the matter further.

Recommendation: Board discussion with the Board of Public Works and Town Counsel in executive session at the present meeting.

(5) TRIAD MOU

At the last meeting the Board reviewed a draft of the TRIAD Memorandum of Understanding which involves regular outreach by public safety agencies to the Town's senior population. The Board supported the MOU and asked that a final version be prepared for the signing at the Senior Center on May 12, 2008. The Chief of Police is presently making those preparations.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(6) Complaint from Allen Abutter

(*)

The Board reviewed a letter from an abutter to William Allen at its meeting of April 1, 2008. The abutter indicated that he is concerned about a number of health and safety issues he has observed at the Allen property and has also made an appointment to speak with the Board on April 28, 2008. At the Board's request I have worked with Counsel to develop a response to the abutter for the Board's consideration.

Recommendation: **Board signature of the letter to the concerned abutter.**

M. Grants

No items.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Incident Command System Tabletop Exercise

Selectman Jones and I participated in the Cape Ann Emergency Preparedness Team's Incident Command System Tabletop Exercise on March 28, 2008. The exercise simulated a flu pandemic in our area and involved officials from all four Cape Ann communities as well as hospital professionals and area amateur radio operators. The web-based incident management system, Web EOC, was used in the tabletop to simulate how it would be used in a real event.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Continuity of Operations Plan Development

(*)

I have revised key elements of the COOP since the decision to locate backup server capabilities in Manchester, NH was made. Specifically, each department must have a plan for moving to another Town building and sharing network resources or accessing the Manchester facility remotely. In a regional emergency or a severe disaster, departments may actually have to physically operate from

Manchester. In order to implement the recent decision, I have revised both the departmental specific need table and the multi-year strategy component.

Recommendation: Board review of the revised COOP elements and discussion relative to further COOP implementation.

O. Other Items

(1) Town Events Sign

I changed the Town Events Sign message on March 25, 2008 to alert residents to the Agricultural/Residential Overlay District By-law forum that the Selectmen hosted on April 5, 2008. Present plans for new messages include a Board of Health public training, Annual Town Meeting on May 5, 2008, the Department of Public Works' Household Hazardous Waste Day, and the Essex Enhancement Committee's Community Clean-up Days. I will work with each of the requesting parties to manage sign content.

Also, I have learned that an Ipswich nursery is likely willing to donate some flowers and/or plants to arrange around the base of the sign once the final sign location is known.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Essex River Dredging Research

(*)

As the Board is aware, former Selectman Bob Dawe has been interested in assisting the Town by investigating a maintenance dredging provision in the law that authorized the original River dredging work. Mr. Dawe brought his assertions to Representative Anthony Verga and the Representative has written the Town to indicate that his office will review the matter further. Also, Senator Bruce Tarr has indicated that his office is looking at an overall Sand Management Plan for the northeast coast of the State and that an invitation to a meeting on that topic is likely forthcoming in the future.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the dredging issue.

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