



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 9, 2012

Report covers from March 24, 2012 to April 6, 2012

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Conomo Point Planning Committee Meeting (*)

The Board met with the Conomo Point Planning Committee on March 29, 2012 to discuss the draft Northern Conomo Point Zoning District Bylaw that will be considered by the upcoming Annual Town Meeting. The group also discussed plans for a second Conomo Point public information session to be led by the Conomo Point Planning Committee on April 12. The various entities have been posted for that session and I have worked with the Chairman on the Planning Committee to advertise the session via a story in the Gloucester Times and using the Town's e-mail blast list. It has been suggested that the Town's Code Red system also be used for advertisement.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary, including whether Code Red may be used.

(2) Joint Meeting Among Planning Board, Selectmen, CP Planning (*)

The Selectmen and the Conomo Point Planning Committee attended the Planning Board's meeting of April 4, 2012 to further discuss the draft Northern Conomo Point Zoning District Bylaw. The three boards had begun a joint discussion regarding the draft bylaw on March 21, 2012 and all parties had the benefit of additional review and discussion since that first meeting. On the 4th, the parties discussed a variety of substantive issues and agreed that additional input and review will be available at the public hearing on April 18, 2012 at 8:00 p.m. at the Fire Station. I have organized the issues that are presently before the various boards and committees relative to the formulation of the final motion for this northern bylaw.

Recommendation: Board review of the various pending issues.

(3) Quarterly Committee Chair/Department Head Coordination Meeting (*)

The subject session will occur at the Board's next meeting on April 23, 2012 at 8:00 p.m. We have informed the various department heads and board and committee chairs about the opportunity to attend. It may be useful to feature a discussion of Town Meeting articles that require input from several boards or committees (such as the Conomo Point articles).

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to featured content.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Melrose Datacenter Update

(*)

Melrose personnel have worked to optimize the performance of the secure tunnel between Essex and Melrose that utilizes publicly-available Internet routes. That tunnel is stable but does not operate at speeds that are free of delay when working with files. As such, Melrose personnel are presently working on optimizing their Internet point of presence to provide a dedicated “channel” over the Internet, which would effectively eliminate delays. The cost of the new service that Melrose hopes to purchase may be absorbed by the City and will likely not affect the rates we have agreed to in our contract.

Also, I have been discussing with Comcast the possibility of upgrading the existing Cable I-Net that interconnects our buildings from the old, LAN-City technology that exists today to newer, much faster technology. Improving this link in some way is essential even if the connection between Melrose and Essex Town Hall becomes delay-free (since the signal needs to travel to other buildings once it reaches Town Hall). I met with a Comcast representative on April 4, 2012 and have learned that Comcast will only continue to grandfather the arrangement we currently have and will not entertain system throughput improvements. In speaking with Melrose personnel, it is possible that Internet-based solutions may offer suitable replacements to the I-Net when we reach that point in the deployment of the datacenter.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to Essex building interconnection options and strategies.**

(2) Fire/Police Server Network Card Failure

The network interface card (NIC) that was in service on the fire/police network server failed during the week of March 26, 2012. Since all of our servers have dual NICs, I was simply able to configure the second card to return the system’s connectivity to Town Hall, the Internet, and local terminals to normal. I contacted the manufacturer since the system is still under warranty. Since the NICs are integrated with the system’s motherboard, after diagnostic testing, the manufacturer decided to replace the motherboard (a technician made the replacement during the week of April 2, 2012).

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

(3) Data Wipe on Old Accounting Server

The old accounting server had been placed into storage in case its data was ever needed for the new server. Now that enough time has elapsed to be certain that all necessary old data has been transferred, I have formatted all of the server’s drives in preparation to donate the device to the North Shore Technical High School. It was necessary to add a new video card to the server since that integrated feature

had stopped working. I will make arrangements for the Technical High School to pick the device up in the near future.

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

C. Personnel

(1) Chief of Police Calendar Year 2012 Goals (*)

At the Board's meeting of March 12, 2012, Selectman O'Donnell agreed to discuss with the Police Chief his recommended goals for this calendar year, along with some other suggestions from the Board.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the Chief's goals.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Affirmative Marketing Quarterly Report

I completed and filed the subject report with the necessary state office during the week of April 2, 2012 in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer (AMCO). The report is designed to document the Town's utilization of woman and minority-owned businesses on State-assisted building construction projects. No such utilization occurred during the past quarter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Survey Work for Future Downtown Boardwalk

Engineering contractor Vine Associates conducted preliminary survey work associated with the subject project during the week of March 26, 2012. The survey data is necessary to determine which elements of the proposed downtown boardwalk in the area of the new seawall will be feasible with and without dredging. Additional survey work will be performed in the near future at an extremely low tidal stage in order to get a very accurate representation of the river's bathymetry.

Vine has also lined up a geotechnical drilling company to perform two soil borings in the project area, on private property, to better understand the environment for future pilings and such. This data will be compared to drilling logs available from MassDOT from when DOT was designing the new seawall. We are presently awaiting permission to proceed from the private landowner.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) One-Year Extension of City Hall Systems Software Contract (*)

The initial, one-year term of the contract for our City Hall Systems tax collection software expires May 15, 2012. The contract carries a provision for a one-year

extension that may be exercised at the sole discretion of the Town. Our Treasurer/Collector reports that the software has been excellent and she recommends continuing with the vendor. In fact, after the second year, the Treasurer/Collector may recommend that the successor contract be for three years.

Recommendation: **Board vote to exercise the one-year extension term of the current contract.**

(4) Appraisals for Potential Sale of Southern Conomo Point Properties (*)

I have been in contact with our appraiser for the southern Conomo Point properties. He has indicated that he is on schedule for the delivery of the appraisals (April 17, 2012). I have provided him with answers to various questions and some additional data that he requested (such as the most recent editions of the Assessors' field cards).

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

E. Insurance

(1) Quarterly Facility Self-Inspection Forms

I completed the subject forms for the Town Hall and the Senior Center as part of the MIIA Rewards Program during the week of April 2, 2012. The forms are aimed at recognizing and eliminating safety hazards in Town buildings and issues discovered are usually discussed by the Safety Committee. With respect to the Town Hall, I highlighted the plan to repair and repaint the walls and ceilings in the Planning Board office now that the new boiler is in place (the old boiler's steam leak had caused damage there).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Appraisal Values for Town Buildings

An appraiser working for our insurer recently completed updated appraisals for the values of the various Town buildings. I reviewed his report and discussed several items with him to improve his understanding of the facilities. He will be issuing a revised report in the near future and our insurer will carry those revised values as part of our policy.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Monthly Pothole Log

I obtained the Town's pothole log for the month of March from the DPW and have forwarded the log to our insurer as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. No potholes were reported during March. I will resume reporting in November.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Annual Startup of Field of Dreams Irrigation System

Our irrigation contractor has been scheduled to start up the irrigation system at the Field of Dreams on May 15, 2012. The contractor will check for proper system operation and will replace any faulty parts.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Initiation of Summer Water Service to Grove Cottage

The Department of Public Works will soon initiate the summer water service to the Grove Cottage. After water is run to the foundation, I will coordinate the provision of water to the interior, which includes filling the water heater and turning on electrical service to it.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Permanent Placement of Causeway Utility Poles

The several poles that had been moved from the water side of the causeway to the landward side of the causeway were scheduled for permanent placement recently. However, the utility determined that the locations it had chosen in the past conflicted with the location of an existing gas line. As such, the utility will attempt to excavate holes for the final pole location using vacuum technology during in the near future (traditional drilling-type excavation was ruled unsafe).

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Town Hall Wall and Ceiling Repairs

A painting contractor repaired wall and ceiling damage in the Planning Board office and wall damage in the Town Clerk's office that had been caused in the past by excess boiler steam and an exterior wall leak, respectively. The Town Clerk's office received matching paint in the area of the damage and the Planning Board office received new paint on all walls and on the entire ceiling after repairs had been made (since the damage was extensive). Work began on March 28, 2012 and was completed by March 31, 2012.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(5) Proposal to Reduce Electricity Costs Via Solar Panel Installation (*)

A representative of the Solar City Company visited my office recently to suggest that the Town could save on electricity costs via the installation of solar panels on Town buildings or on the ground at Town-owned property. The representative provided me with information on how the company's program works.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the potential exploration of solar panel installation.

(6) Sponsorship of Downtown Streetscape Features

(*)

The Board briefly discussed the topic of sponsorship of downtown streetscape features at the last meeting and asked that the topic be brought up again at the present meeting. Numerous parties have inquired as to how they might sponsor a pocket park or a traffic island, with recognition given to their business via a small sign. Consideration must be given to how sponsorship signage will match with future signage for other purposes and exactly what streetscape elements will be made available for new sponsorships. It is also possible that some parties desire to maintain areas without recognition via signage.

Recommendation: Board discussion regarding a system for assigning sponsorships, including a determination of whether long-time past sponsors should be simply reassigned the areas each formerly maintained.

(7) Senior Center Forced Hot Air System

I received a report that hot air was coming to the second floor even when that floor's zone was turned off. After investigation, I found that the batteries in the thermostats on both levels needed replacement and that the small motor that actuates the second floor zone damper was simply spinning on the damper shaft. After re-seating the motor the system worked properly.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(8) Parking of Boats/Trailers at Clammers' Beach

(*)

Last year at this time, the Board discussed whether the practice of leaving unattached trailers or trailers with boats at the Clammers' Beach parking lot should be reassessed. The matter had been referred to the Shellfish Advisory Commission at that time but no input has been registered to date. Presently, since the area is signed "Sticker Parking Only" and, since only vehicles are allowed to display stickers, the Police Department has been asking owners of all unattached trailers and boats to move those items out of the area.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Enterprise Fund Indirect Cost Allocation Policy

(*)

Our auditor recommended that the Town develop the subject policy to memorialize our procedures for attributing portions of certain costs to the Sewer Enterprise Fund and the Water Enterprise Fund (such as health insurance, retirement, liability insurance, debt service, etc.). I developed a preliminary draft and the Town Accountant is in agreement with its content.

Recommendation: Board approval of the policy and forwarding to the Board of Public Works for subsequent review and approval.

(2) Finance Committee Report/Town Meeting Booklet

The Town Accountant, Finance Committee Chairman, and I finalized the subject booklet by the end of the week of April 2, 2012. I have delivered the booklet to our printing contractor and it should be available in the next couple of weeks.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Town Building Committee Meeting

(*)

I attended the Town Building Committee meeting of April 2, 2012. The Committee primarily discussed the potential cost of bringing in modular units for temporary Library quarters if the Town decides to purchase a building for Town offices. The Committee had received information regarding the lease of new units in the past but the cost was relatively high. As such, I had requested a quotation for the lease of refurbished units, if available. I learned that refurbished units would be “construction grade” and would only be slightly less to lease per month.

The Committee also discussed the prospect of purchasing the Lahey Building since the matter will become before the Town Meeting and the Town Election for a second time in May. The Committee determined that the building purchase and most major renovations could not be accomplished for \$1,000,000, a figure that the Finance Committee supports. Certain important project elements would be left out at that cost. Presently, a Request for Proposals is pending under which the owners of the Lahey Building or other qualifying buildings could propose a selling price. I have begun to explore whether the North Shore Technical High School would like to be involved with this project, which would drastically reduce renovation costs.

The Committee agreed that if the Town decides not to purchase a building for Town offices, certain renovations to the existing building must be undertaken. In the near term, the cost of such renovations will be approximately \$500,000. Committee Chair O'Donnell will be contacting our Town Building Feasibility Study contractor to provide him with the Committee's position relative to the purchase of another building so that issue can be reflected in the final report. Also, I am working on various analyses and exhibits that may be helpful in comparing the various options. The Committee will meet again on April 24, 2012

in the Senior Center and will offer an open forum to foster public discussion and debate (at 7:30 p.m.) in advance of Town Meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to overall public building planning based upon the factors and costs we are presently aware of.**

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Annual Town Meeting Draft Motions (*)

The Board signed the Annual Town Meeting Warrant at the last meeting and the warrant has been posted via the Town Clerk. I have begun to develop draft motions for the Annual Town Meeting. Issues that I have been studying with the Superintendent of Public Works include how the current bylaw and regulations might deal with fees for vacant lots as they become developed and whether the purchaser of additional flow should have a time limit to actually construct the changes requiring said flow. It is also a function of the Selectmen to vote to approve the Town's Enterprise Fund budgets at this time.

Recommendation: **Preliminary Board review of the draft Annual Town Meeting motions and vote to approve both the Sewer and Water Enterprise Fund budgets.**

(2) Revised Facility Naming Policy (*)

The Board had asked that I work with Town Counsel to revise the draft Facility Naming Policy to include a requirement that requests from the general public be accompanied by at least 50 supporting signatures in order to be considered. Counsel has developed a revised draft for the Board's review.

Recommendation: **Review of the revised draft policy.**

(3) Special Legislation Relative to Chapter 30B for Conomo Point (*)

By meeting time, the Chairman and I will have met with our legislators and the Senate Chairman of the Municipalities Committee to discuss the Town's pending petition for Special Legislation. The Town has applied for clemency to Chapter 30B to allow potential sales and long-term leases of property at Conomo Point to be offered to current leaseholders as a right of first refusal.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Countersignature of Covenant and Endorsement of Approved Plan

The Planning Board countersigned the Covenant relative to the future transfer of lots in the Southern Conomo Point Subdivision on April 4, 2012. The Planning Board also formally endorsed the Subdivision Plan for that area at the same meeting. Both documents have been provided to me and I have arranged for Town Counsel to record them at the Registry of Deeds (making them legally-cognizable lots).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

M. Grants

(1) Seaport Grant Quarterly Report

Now that our Seaport Grant for the Boardwalk Feasibility Study has begun in earnest, I am required to file a quarterly progress report with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). I filed the report for the quarter ending March 31, 2012 with DCR during the week of April 2, 2012.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team Monthly Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on March 5, 2012. The meeting featured a presentation of a new PowerPoint show and a collection of poster boards that will be used to highlight the Team's mission and accomplishments in a variety of venues. The Team also held discussion relative to how an Intermunicipal Agreement might be formulated that would allow the four communities to share each other's Continuity of Operations Plans in a secure fashion. I had provided the group with an outline of the Agreement's potential content and asked for input. I will continue to coordinate the development of the potential Agreement over the next few meetings. Also, I will work with our reverse-911 contractor, Code Red, which all four communities use, to set up custom call-out lists that span all four communities and a wide range of other organizations. These lists will be available in each community's on-line console to improve inter-agency emergency communication.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

O. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave for a portion of the day on April 2, 2012 and for the afternoon of April 4, 2012.

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