



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 13, 2009

Report covers from March 21, 2009 to April 10, 2009

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Town Building Committee Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on March 30, 2009 representing the Board of Selectmen. Committee Member Pratt had attended the Selectmen's meeting of March 23, 2009 and he provided the committee members with a summary of that discussion. The summary included mention of a 25 to 30 year building shell life expectancy with 5 to 10 year interior planning that would be capable of reconfiguration with changing needs.

As per the conversation at the Board's meeting of March 23, 2009, I was able to provide the Committee members with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's population growth study figures that could be used in building planning. MAPC has not actually compared actual population trends to the projections but has indicated that the upcoming 2010 Federal Census will be a good source of comparison. In any case, the projections do not predict a large increase in population in the future.

Presently, the Committee has decided that much background study is necessary before any new tasks are performed. To that end, I have provided Committee members with a variety of past data and studies. The Committee will also tour the Fire and Police Station and the Town Hall beginning with the Fire/Police tour as part of their next meeting on April 13, 2009.

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

#### (2) Summer Program Update

I discussed the prospect of a Summer Program audit further with Mr. Russell Harnish. At the Board's meeting of March 23, 2009, the Board agreed to accept Mr. Harnish's offer to perform that audit as a volunteer. I have provided Mr. Harnish with the most recent Department of Public Health camp standards that I obtained from the Board of Health Administrator. We will discuss the matter further when he is prepared to assist us in mid-May.

I will bring back to the Board this fall the prospect of forming a Summer Program Board of Directors for the 2010 Summer Program. At that time, the Board can consider the proposed Directors' charge and can provide guidance relative to solicitation of letters of interest. Various youth program recommendations from

former Youth Commission Member Jessica Yurwitz will also be brought back for discussion in the fall.

Further, the Board agreed at the meeting of March 23, 2009 that the Summer Program's temporary relocation for 2009 can include facilities at both the Essex Elementary School and Memorial Park. At that meeting, it was unclear as to which school facilities could be made available and for how long. Subsequently, I learned that the Summer Program will have the use of the school gym and art room as well as the school grounds. The school will be the participant drop off and pickup location and various small groups will walk back and forth from Memorial Park for certain activities at various times during the program day. I am presently in the process of reviewing and finalizing use protocol with school officials.

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

(3) Conomo Point Planning Committee Support (\*)

At the Board's meeting of March 23, 2009, Selectman Lynch explained to the Board that Horsley Witten had some additional questions requiring answers prior to the firm's next meeting with the Conomo Point Planning Committee. I reviewed the questions with Selectman Lynch as the Selectmen's Liaison and assisted with supplying the firm with guidance. The Committee met on March 26, 2009 to go over the questions and I supplied the Committee's guidance to the firm. The firm subsequently prepared for a meeting with the Committee on April 2, 2009. Presently, I am working with the consultant and Selectman Lynch to review the firm's next iteration of numbers after guidance from the Committee's April 2 meeting was provided to the firm.

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

(4) Senior Van Repair

The senior van recently had a problem with its starter on a trip to Peabody. The van is presently being repaired in Salem and will be retrieved by Council on Aging members upon completion.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **B. Computer Systems**

(1) Deployment of Aerial Oblique Angle Photography Data and Software

On March 26, 2009, a technician from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) delivered a hard drive containing new, high-resolution aerial oblique angle photography. I incorporated the drive into our network and we loaded the workstation software onto a total of nine computers in eight different departments.

Employees will have access to technical support for one year as they begin to use this new resource.

The workstation software allows a user to have a bird's eye view of specific properties from various angles and includes tools to measure distance, area, elevation, and other properties. The software allows a user to search by address and can depict property lines and a variety of other geographic information system layers. Users will be able to map physical features such as catch basins and even populate data fields about each object. Performance in the Water Plant and the Fire Station is slower due to the remote image database and the Fire Department has purchased an inexpensive hard drive for direct attachment to its workstation for faster performance.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 6 hours.

#### (2) Implementation of File Replication to Disaster Recovery Server

I worked with our computer consultant during the week of March 23, 2009 to implement the replication of data files to our disaster recovery server in Manchester, NH. We established a secure tunnel and the replication system is operative. However, as noted below, we will need additional bandwidth and speed for this remote backup system to function efficiently. Once I have established the new, more robust connection, I will continue the setup of server file replication.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 4 hours.

#### (3) Need for Additional Bandwidth

The recent implementation of communications with our disaster recovery server has pointed up the need for an Internet connection with additional bandwidth and speed. We have been using a low-cost, DSL connection for many years now but our operations have outgrown its capabilities. I contacted Comcast to determine if that company could provide us with a free connection and learned that the company is not in a position to do so.

I am presently working to ascertain the cost for a cable, business class Internet connection and I have confirmed that we can utilize the Town Technology Fund for that expense. As such, I will place an order for that service once I have the particulars. We will maintain the low-cost DSL connection as a redundant connection as part of our Continuity of Operations Plan.

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

#### (4) Purchase of Replacement Network Attached Storage Device

Part of our file backup strategy includes backups to network attached storage devices in each building. The Town Hall device recently failed. As such, I purchased and installed a new device to replace the old unit.

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

(5) Wireless Access Point Installation

The Fire Department requested that I assist with the installation of a wireless access point within the Fire Station network to allow Fire Department notebook computers access to the Internet and other files. Those systems typically roam around the station for various purposes and cannot be limited to wired drops. I configured the device and have deployed it. Testing indicates that the device is working well.

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

(6) Replacement of Tape Drive Unit

A tape backup unit in one of our servers failed recently and the system is no longer on warranty. I ordered and installed the necessary replacement drive and it is working well.

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

(7) Accounting Software Update

Our accounting software vendor released an update to our BudgetSense software during the week of March 23, 2009. I downloaded the update and performed complete uninstalls of the old version on the server and the various workstations before installing the update. After server installation, I performed the necessary database maintenance.

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

(8) Application Error

The Treasurer/Collector reported a problem with her accounting software after a power outage. I reviewed the situation and tried several potential fixes until I was able to correct the problem.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 2.5 hours.

(9) Virtual Town Hall Advisory Board

As the Board may recall, I had been invited by our website vendor, Virtual Town Hall, to participate as a member of a new Advisory Board. The company has rounded out the slate of members and will include a total of 12 from the various New England states. I recently completed a short survey and most meetings of the Board will occur via telephone or web conference.

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

(10) Replacement of UPS Battery

The battery in the uninterruptible power supply (UPS) protecting one of our servers failed during the week of April 6, 2009. I had a spare battery on hand and replaced the failed battery. I will return the failed battery and will potentially get a credit toward its replacement under its warranty.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – ½ hour.

**C. Personnel**

(1) Personnel Board Meeting

I attended the Personnel Board meeting on March 23, 2009 in my capacity as Personnel Officer. The meeting featured a vote of the Personnel Board to recommend the fiscal year 2010 Wage & Salary Scale to the upcoming Annual Town Meeting.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**D. Procurement**

(1) Affirmative Marketing Program (AMP) Quarterly Report

I completed and filed the subject report in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer (AMCO). The AMP report is required once each quarter to transmit the Town's women and minority-owned business usage on State-funded project to the appropriate State office. We presently do not have any State-funded work that is ongoing, and, consequently, no usage.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Trench Box Equipment

Our insurer has approved our order of trench box equipment under the MIIA Loss Control Grant program in the amount of \$4,636. As the Board may recall, I had researched more durable equipment with another supplier at our insurer's request. I have placed an order and the equipment will be delivered to the Department of Public Works. Our insurer will pay the invoice directly.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Provision of Documents to Consulting Planner

At the Board's meeting of March 23, 2009, Consulting Planner Carolyn Britt indicated that it would be helpful if I could assist her with the acquisition of a variety of documents. These included the new Floodplain District by-law, a variety of recent zoning by-law changes, the on-line survey results from the Long Term Planning Committee, and the Town's Open Space Plan. I provided those documents electronically on March 26, 2009 with a link to the on-line version of

the Town's Open Space Plan. I have also provided related documents to Ms. Britt's associate from Taintor & Associates.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **E. Insurance**

### (1) On-Line Learning

A number of employees had taken advantage of on-line learning courses through our insurer in the past as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. Some additional courses are now available and individual employees as well as groups are preparing to take advantage of this new material. I reviewed the procedure for logging on with our insurer and am assisting employees and groups to acquire credentials if they do not already have them from the past.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) March Pothole Log

I have received the pothole log for the month of March from the Department of Public Works. No potholes were reported. I have provided the log to our insurer as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. The reporting system will be initiated again in November.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **F. Facilities**

### (1) Quarterly Building Self-Inspection Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for the Town Hall and the Senior Center as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. The checklists are useful to determine if any safety-related hazards exist in our buildings and similar lists are completed by other departments and discussed at our quarterly Safety Committee meetings. I noted the recent replacement of a pressure relief valve on one of the Town Hall boilers.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Field of Dreams Outfield Fence

At the Board's meeting of March 23, 2009, Selectman Jones indicated that he would take the lead on the erection of the Field of Dreams outfield fence. At the time, he indicated that a piece of pipe stock would be necessary to complete the task. I asked the Superintendent of Public Works to obtain that stock and it has been delivered to the field.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) School Phone System and Computers

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The IT Director for the Manchester Essex Regional School District has indicated that a phone system with voicemail will be available to the Town at no cost when the new school building is occupied. The phone system would allow callers to dial the familiar, published phone numbers that departments presently utilize. Although the system can accommodate up to 16 lines (we have approximately 15), it will only come with six actual phones. New phones are available for about \$110 each. Also, the system would require a technician to install it in our building at a cost of \$600-\$800. In total, approximately \$2,000 will be necessary to make the system operational in our setting.

The Director also indicated that desktop computers approximately two years in age may also become available. He will provide with a list of those systems when he has gathered more details. I would like to use those systems in our near-site disaster center at the school and, possibly, at our far-site center in Manchester, NH.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the potential acceptance of the phone system.**

(4) Improvement of Old Town Beach

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At the Board's meeting of March 23, 2009, the Board asked that I look into the provision of sand to the old Town beach accessible via Redgate Road. I discussed the issue in person with the Conservation Commission on April 7, 2009. The Commission indicated that the past use of the property was likely sufficient to allow the placement of sand above the high water line (as was the case for the Centennial Grove Beach last summer) and I was asked to provide the Commission with a letter specifying the area to be covered, etc. I have provided the Commission with that letter (and a graphic from our new pictometry system) and it will be considered for approval at an upcoming Commission meeting.

In addition, I asked the Board of Health Administrator to prepare public beach permits for both the Redgate location and for the Centennial Grove Beach. She indicated that changes in the regulations contemplating the need for permitting have been delayed and may or may not even come to fruition. She will keep me informed and will likely just sample the water weekly as per the normal procedure.

Further, I discussed the ability to get equipment into the old Town beach with the Superintendent of Public Works. He indicated that the rocks that are presently blocking the path may be moved to allow for sand placement and then returned. He indicated that these activities are compatible with the high-pressure gas main easement that runs through the area.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the funding necessary to purchase and place the sand. Reserve fund money could be moved into the Town Property Maintenance line. The cost for placement of sand at the Grove was approximately \$1,100.**

(5) Memorial Park Restrooms

The Memorial Park restrooms have opened for the season on a Thursday-Sunday basis through Memorial Day (at which time the restrooms will be open seven days).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(6) Placement of Portable Toilet at Field of Dreams

The Selectmen's Assistant has arranged to place a portable toilet at the Field of Dreams for the start of the baseball season. Little League teams should be able to utilize the Field of Dreams through at least May 30, 2009. No portable toilets will be placed at the Centennial Grove this year due to the movie production.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(7) Veterans' Memorial Flagpole

At the Board's meeting of April 6, 2009, Mr. Paul Doucette indicated that a veterans' group he is involved with would like to purchase a new flagpole for the existing veterans' memorial at Memorial Park. The group needs assistance with shipping costs and I have learned that the Department of Public Works will be able to provide funding, in conjunction with funding from our office, to cover shipping. Also, it is possible in the future that the DPW may be able to run a ditch from Town Hall to the memorial for the installation of a lighting conduit.

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

(8) Potential Installation of Pad Transformers

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The movie production company that will be filming at the Grove may pad transformers installed on the ground in that vicinity. The equipment may be necessary to power the many devices and trailers that the company will have on site this summer. Alternatively, the company may utilize portable power generators. If the transformers are chosen, once the film production has been completed, the company may ask to leave the equipment in place for the benefit of the Town. The transformer near the Field of Dreams could be used to power future lighting and could be helpful to serve power needs at major civic events.

Presently, National Grid will not install the equipment without a license from the Selectmen. This temporary permission will allow installation to proceed rapidly and an easement will need to be granted by the Town Meeting if the equipment is to stay in place permanently. I have discussed the situation with Town Counsel

and he will be able to review any license that National Grid proposes. The equipment itself, if offered, can be accepted by the Selectmen as a gift to the Town. In this case, it would be in the best interest of the Town to have the production company offer the equipment as a gift via a letter to the Board. The letter would indicate that the company: a) will need to utilize the equipment until their production vacates the premises, b) will be responsible for all electric bills until they vacate the premises, and c) will perform and pay for the complete removal of the equipment in the future if Town Meeting does not vote to grant a permanent easement.

*Recommendation:* **Board vote to authorize the signature outside of a meeting of a license agreement approved by Town Counsel (if necessary) and to accept the equipment as a gift provided that a gift letter with the above-listed conditions is presented by the company (if necessary).**

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

### (1) Fiscal Year 2010 Finance Committee Report Booklet

The Chairman of the Finance Committee worked with the Town Accountant at the end of March to finalize the Town budget for fiscal year 2010. Along with other documents, the Finance Committee Report Booklet was synthesized during the week of March 30, 2009 and that document is presently out for printing. I am expecting to pick up the completed booklets on or about April 14, 2009 and they will be available to the public at Town Hall thereafter.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Arrival of Annual Town Report

The Annual Town Report arrived back from the printing company during the week of April 6, 2009. Reports are available to the public in Town Hall during normal business hours.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

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

I attended the subject meeting along with Selectman Lynch on March 24, 2009. We updated the group relative to various ongoing projects and initiatives.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Coordination of Town Business Quarterly Meeting

The Selectmen hosted the subject meeting on April 6, 2009 to allow all departments, boards, and commissions to discuss issues of common interest and to suggest ideas for new efficiencies and better public service. Issues of particular interest included Town building planning, Town finances, and a proposal to join a new Regional Emergency Dispatch Center.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**J. Final Judgment**

No items.

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

(1) Public Information Meeting Regarding Regional Dispatch

The Chief of Police has arranged to hold a public information session regarding the proposed Regional Dispatch center on April 15, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. at the school. Staff from the Sheriff's Office will be on hand to present the facts and to answer questions.

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

(2) Annual Town Meeting Motions

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The Board signed the Annual Town Meeting and Election Warrant at the meeting of March 23, 2009 and I have begun to develop draft motions for the May 4, 2009 meeting. The warrant is posted on the Town's website at [www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org). I have also begun to develop the usual handout for Town Meeting that summarizes the amounts and funding sources for the various monetary articles.

*Recommendation:* **Board review of the draft Annual Town Meeting motions.**

(3) Shellfish License Transition Reciprocity

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The Town of Essex Shellfish Regulations presently allow for Essex clammers who move to either Gloucester or Ipswich to continue to clam in Essex until they attain one year of residence in their new community. The same transition assistance does not appear to be available in either the Ipswich or the Gloucester Regulations.

*Recommendation:* **Refer to the Essex Shellfish Advisory Commission a directive to communicate with the Commissions in Ipswich and Gloucester to: a) confirm what transition assistance is available for those coming into Essex from those communities (if any), and b) inquire as to whether regulations in those communities could be revised to provide for such assistance if not already present in some fashion.**

## **L. Legal Issues**

### (1) Dog Hearing Discussion

At the Board's meeting of March 23, 2009, the Board held a hearing relative to a dog complaint. After the hearing had been closed, the Board decided to refer the matter to Town Counsel for analysis and advice. On April 6, 2009, the Board voted to re-open the hearing for April 27, 2009 and I have provided the parties involved with notice of that forum.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary at this time.

## **M. Grants**

### (1) Potential Shellfish Funding Under the Federal Stimulus

A professor at Salem State College recently asked our Shellfish Constable and those from other area towns to provide information on how the Federal Stimulus funding could assist the industry. The professor was designated as the information-gathering contact for the North Shore by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA). A Questionnaire was completed by the Constable on March 30, 2009.

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

## **N. Emergency Planning**

### (1) Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team Meeting

Essex hosted the subject meeting on March 27, 2009. The meeting featured updates from the various working groups within the Planning Team. Table top disaster drills will be planned for each of the four Cape Ann communities and a regional simulation of an ice storm event is also forthcoming. The next meeting will be held on May 15, 2009.

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

### (2) Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Update

The development of the subject plan had been on hold pending the establishment of a far-site backup system. Now that the Manchester disaster recovery server is up and running (pending a more robust Internet connection as discussed above in this report), I have begun to work on the next iteration of the COOP. Another required element will be the establishment of a near-site disaster recovery center at the Essex Elementary School. This near-site element is dependent on the availability of space at the school (which will be offered once the sixth grade moves out of the building this summer) and is also related to the Manchester disaster recovery server. It is possible that some fairly new desktop computers

that the School District does not intend to bring to the new school building will be available at no cost for me to configure for use in the near-site center.

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

## **O. Other Items**

### (1) Proposed Tourism Commission

At the Board's meeting of March 23, 2009, Chairman Randall agreed to serve with Merchants' Group Member Robert Coviello on a proposed Tourism Commission that Mayor Kirk is potentially putting together. I contacted the Mayor as requested by the Board and I am awaiting her reply.

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

### (2) Wind and Solar Energy Exploration

Chairman Randall asked me to organize a meeting among several individuals interested in exploring the potential for wind and solar energy in Essex. The group will meet on April 14, 2009 to organize thoughts and the Chairman and I will eventually report back to the Board relative to any promising topics.

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

### (3) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on April 10, 2009.

*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.*