



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 26, 2010

Report covers from April 10, 2010 to April 23, 2010

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Tree Warden Recommendation

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that a large cedar tree on leased land at Conomo Point could be taken down by the tenant at the tenant's expense after confirmation of the issue by the Tree Warden. The Tree Warden visited the site and did determine that the tree had been partially uprooted during the recent wind event and, as such, the tenant will have the tree removed.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Migration of Accounting Data to New Server

Our software vendor visited Town Hall on April 14 and 15, 2010 to migrate our accounting data from our old server to a new server that I had prepared. I worked with the technician to grant access to both devices and to assist with configuration choices and protocols as necessary. The new server is now completely operative and the old server has been taken off line. Since the printers used by the Treasurer/Collector's Office are not supported by the server's new operating system, I will assist that office with the replacement of those devices.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 7 hours.

(2) Migration of Financial Users to New, Master Domain

As the Board may recall, I had migrated all Town Hall network users (except the users of our financial software) to a new, master domain for the Town. The financial users could not be migrated until the accounting server migration was complete. I will begin these final user migrations according to a schedule that is convenient for each user since each workstation will be unavailable for a period of hours during the migration. At the completion of the user migrations, all users in both the Town Hall and the Police and Fire Headquarters will be using the new domain. The Water Filtration Plant users will continue with their old domain until a new server is purchased for that facility in the future.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Treasurer/Collector Clerk Computer System

A power surge damaged the Treasurer/Collector Clerk's computer monitor beyond repair and appeared initially to have affected the computer itself. However, after following some procedures, the computer was able to start normally. I replaced the failed monitor with a new one that I had in our equipment cache.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 0.5 hours.

(4) Migration of Replication System

As another facet of the continuing process of migrating all devices and protocols into a new, master domain, I have now migrated the device that replicates files to our disaster recovery server in Manchester, NH. The process required the re-creation of various paths after permissions under the new domain were set up and assigned.

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

C. Personnel

(1) Town Clerk Employment Offer

At a special meeting on April 13, 2010, the Board interviewed two additional applicants for the Town Clerk vacancy and decided to make an employment offer to Ms. Christina Wright. Ms. Wright has since accepted that offer and hopes to begin work, alongside retiring Town Clerk Sally Soucy, sometime in early May. Ms. Wright will transition from her present employer in the meantime and will make herself available for both the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(2) Appointment to the Cape Ann TV Board

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to inquire to Mr. Barry O'Brien as to whether he would be interested in serving on the subject Board to succeed retiring member Daisy Nell. I contacted Mr. O'Brien and he has arranged to attend the CATV Board's annual meeting to get a better sense of the roles and obligations of that body. He will determine his level of interest and will be back in touch with our office thereafter.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Essex Heritage Scenic Byway Committee Appointment

Mr. William Holton has confirmed that he is not required to be a Planning Board member to serve on the subject Committee. As such, he plans to continue to serve

on the Committee even though he will not be continuing with the Planning Board this year.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Town Building Committee Designer Evaluations (*)

As noted previously, the Town Building Committee had chosen to ask each of the three final design firms a series of additional questions for review at their meeting of April 20, 2010. At that meeting, the Committee decided to recommend the awarding of a contract to Reinhardt Associates, subject to cost negotiations and funding appropriation in the fall. The firm has agreed to participate in public information meetings on a pro-bono basis between now and the fall Town Meeting. The first meeting will likely be held in May. Also, the Committee is exploring the potential of hiring a firm, with separate funding, to provide technical assistance to the Library Department with respect to preparing a grant to defray a portion of future building costs.

Recommendation: **Board vote to offer a draft contract to Reinhardt Associates, subject to appropriation, after the firm provides and the Town accepts a cost proposal. I can use the time before an appropriation is considered to work out draft contract language with the firm.**

(2) Conomo Point Tenants Focus Group

At the Board's request, I worked with our consulting planner to coordinate a focus group comprised of Conomo Point tenants. I reached out to two tenants for a list of recommended focus group members and provided that information to the consultant. The consultant is presently working to set up a date and time for the focus group.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Route 133 Reconstruction Project Update (*)

I met with officials from MassDOT on April 15, 2010 to discuss two requests that the Selectmen have made recently, along with other issues. The first issue pertained to the potential of converting the approved, grassed area near the Main Street/Martin Street intersection into front-in parking (via paving) or parallel parking (via moving the sidewalk back). Due to Federal design requirements, safety concerns, and additional expenses, neither of these two options will be feasible. I contacted the members of the Route 133 Task Force to indicate that the Resident Engineer offered to conduct a site visit to explain the Department's reasoning and that will be held on April 26, 2010 (in advance of the present meeting).

The second major issue pertained to the Town's potential driving of pilings to support a future boardwalk off of the new seawall. In order for this to occur, it has been our understanding that the Town would have to use its own funds to drive pilings in the proper positions prior to the placement of rip rap. According to MassDOT officials, the seawall contractor will only have pile driving equipment on site for another two months. As such, if the Town is interested in using that contractor for the work (to potentially save on mobilization costs), funds would have to be identified very soon and permitting would have to unrealistically expedited. The Town's next opportunity to realize available funds (beyond the Finance Committee's Reserve Fund) will be toward the end of August, when free cash is certified for fiscal year 2010. Given this situation, it is more likely that the Town will need to hire a separate contractor for the pile driving work. Another limiting factor relative to piling installation is the scope and duration of the MassDOT's existing wetlands permits. The Resident Engineer provided me with MassDOT's DEP file number and I have passed that along to a DEP official along with copies of the seawall design plans so he can assist with developing the Town's permitting options. The permit duration, coupled with the ability to drive pilings potentially after rip rap is placed and potentially after the temporary steel sheeting has been cut back to the water line (likely in September), will determine when the Town will need to have funding in place.

At the same meeting, MassDOT officials commented that they have provided their design consultant with an extended contract to design proposed changes to the roadbed elevation in the vicinity of the Fortune Palace II Restaurant. Once that design is completed, MassDOT will evaluate the need for cooperation from abutters which may include easements, ramp and grading construction, and hold-harmless agreements.

Also, the officials present indicated that they are prepared to fund any necessary pole location adjustments for the utility poles that were moved to the landward side of the causeway (the poles will need to be aligned in new locations within feet of the present locations). The project actually carried sufficient funding to move the poles back to their original locations on the seaward side of the causeway but the Town's request to keep the poles on the landward side will actually save the project money. I am continuing to work with National Grid relative to finalizing a plan for permanent placement and abutters will need to be involved for the necessary easements.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to these issues.**

(4) Regional Dispatch Center Draft Agreement

(*)

Sheriff Cousins' Office has indicated that sufficient communities have signed onto the subject Center for the project to be built and for the promised, per-capita cost to be honored. Presently, the Sheriff's Office is asking the various

communities involved to review the latest draft of the Agreement under which the center will operate. I am presently working with several communities to have a review conducted by a single attorney as a cost saving measure. Once that review has been conducted, communities will prepare to present the Agreement to each board of selectmen or mayor for signature.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the joint legal review.**

E. Insurance

(1) Building Inspection Recommendations

An inspector representing our insurer inspected various Town buildings on January 28, 2010 and provided a variety of recommendations. In the Town Hall, he recommended better housekeeping on basement stairways (which we have corrected) and a monitored low temperature alarm system (which would be expensive and which we presently accomplish via nightly police patrols during cold weather).

In the Police and Fire Headquarters, some of the recommendations are associated with the aging building and need to be handled in the context of the Town building study that is presently being proposed. Additional ventilation in the Police computer server area was recommended and I will work with the Chief to implement a solution there.

No recommendations were made for the relatively new, DPW barn.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Lightning Protection System, Folsom Pavilion (*)

I have learned from a lightning protection system contractor that the installation of a system on the Folsom Pavilion will cost \$2,500.

Recommendation: **Board authorization to proceed with this work.**

(2) Pest Prevention Spraying of Town Trees

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should prioritize with the Tree Warden the Town trees that will be most susceptible to pests and that I should authorize a tree contractor to conduct as much spraying work as possible with existing funds. The Warden and I determined that certain trees on the Town Hall grounds and on the municipal parking lot grounds were the best candidates for spraying. We were able to identify sufficient funds for that work.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Standard and Poors Bond Rating

Standard and Poors has announced that the Town's bond rating has been upgraded to AA from its previous A+ level. This upgrade was in response to a recent due-diligence conference call with the rating organization.

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) Further Discussion Relative to Draft Town Meeting Motions (*)

The Board reviewed the draft motions for the first time at the last meeting and asked that the topic be brought back up at the present meeting for further discussion.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

(1) Safe Routes to School Assessment Grant

As the Board may recall, the Town had been awarded a grant from the Safe Routes to School program (via Mass DOT) to assess the need for pedestrian improvements in the vicinity of the school. The transportation consultant's draft report regarding this assessment is presently being reviewed by Mass DOT and both the Town and the Regional School District will be provided with copies in the near future (after the DOT review has been completed). Both entities will have the opportunity to make comments and the assessment will then be finalized.

Once finalized, the assessment will serve as an application to vie for State and Federal funding for actual implementation of the recommended improvements.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Eagle Scout Project

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that a shellfish seeding project would be a suitable Eagle Scout project for a local scout. As such, I provided the scout with the Board's feedback and put him in touch with a contact on the Shellfish Advisory Commission so that he could potentially dovetail his efforts with the Commission's existing project.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Community Covenant

At the last meeting, the Board agreed to enter into a symbolic, Community Covenant regarding Massachusetts' military members and their families in a show of community support. The Board reached that agreement after a presentation of the U.S. Army's Community Covenant program (which includes all branches of service) was made by Army personnel. I have provided the signed covenant to program personnel and will serve as the Town's liaison for future involvement.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(3) Essex Music Festival Pre-Planning Discussion

I met with Mr. Dana King on April 22, 2010 to review his plans for this year's Essex Music Festival. The event will return to the Centennial Grove this year (movie production prevented the use of the Grove last year). He had several questions that I will bring to the Board's attention under "other business".

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Patriots' Day Holiday

The office was closed on April 19, 2010 in observance of the subject holiday.

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