



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 28, 2008

Report covers from April 5, 2008 to April 25, 2008

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Memorandum to Youth Commission (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the development of a memorandum to the Essex Youth Commission inviting the Commission to comment on plans for their overall program, the summer program, and the duties and evaluation of the Youth Director position. I worked with the Chairman to develop that memo and the Youth Commission has responded.

*Recommendation:* **Board review of the Youth Commission's response.**

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) New Town Website Live

The new Town website went live on April 7, 2008. The website is accessed through the same URL as the old site ([www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org)). The new site contains a much wider variety of information and provides additional services not available on the old site. Unlike the old site, each department has their own login credentials to manage content on the new site and the result will be a much more robust offering.

Initially, we encountered a problem that would bring a user back to the old Town site if "www" was not typed in front of "essexma.org" (the whole address had to be typed to go to the new site). However, I was able to obtain the proper A Record IP address from our new vendor for the second level, essexma.org queries to be properly routed to the new site as well. I entered the address and the issue was corrected within 24 hours (delay due to the necessary DNS propagation).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

#### (2) Council on Aging Printer Problem

The Council on Aging Clerk contacted me during the week of April 7, 2008 to report a problem with output to the printer on her computer system. After troubleshooting the issue, I determined that there was a print buffer problem and was able to show the Clerk how to resolve it. The printer is working well.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (3) Comcast I-Net Outage

The I-Net that interconnects our various Town building computer networks experienced an outage on April 8, 2008. I contacted a Comcast technician who was able to pinpoint a problem associated with the I-Net server in Gloucester. He corrected the problem and service was restored.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (4) Dispatch Incident System Logon and Printer Problem

The Chief of Police informed me during the week of April 14, 2008 that dispatchers were having trouble logging on to the incident tracking database. I investigated the situation and found that a combination of a loose network connection and a corrupt MS Office file was the cause. I corrected both issues and dispatcher logons are again functioning well.

In the process of supplying the MS Office disk to fix the corrupt file I discovered that the system's CD drive, although capable of reading disks, could not be opened using the normal eject button and needed to be opened manually each time. Since the system was still under warranty, I contacted the vendor and was shipped a replacement drive at no cost.

Further, subsequently, I was informed that the printer serving the dispatch center was not picking up paper and a loud noise was evident. I investigated that issue and found a broken paper pickup mechanism. The printer is still in use via the front sheet feeder and I advised the Chief to either repair or replace the printer at his next opportunity.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (5) Accounting Server Tape Drive

The Accounting Server experienced a problem with its tape drive during the week of April 14, 2008. I was able to reseal the drive connections and to reflash the drive firmware to correct the problem.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (6) Board of Health Administrator System IP Address Issue

As noted in the past, the Board of Health Administrator's laptop that runs Windows Vista had been experiencing problems with maintaining an IP address lease. I had corrected the problem by restarting the DHCP server several times. However, the problem persisted. As such, I assigned her system a static IP address and that seems to have corrected the issue permanently.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(7) BudgetSense Program Update

Our accounting software vendor released an update to BudgetSense during the week of April 14, 2008. I downloaded and installed the update to the Accounting Server and performed the necessary database maintenance.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(8) Installation of Symantec Antivirus (Endpoint Protection) Update

As noted in the past, I had ordered a media kit for the subject software update to apply it to our main server and all clients. The media kit arrived recently and I set up the main server and performed all necessary client deployments. Installation of this new version of the program was also a prerequisite to the installation of an update to our server backup software (see below).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(9) Installation of Symantec Backup Executive Update

I had ordered in the past a media kit for the subject software update to apply to each of our servers. The media kit arrived recently and I installed the update on each server after first updating the antivirus software on each server (see above).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**C. Personnel**

(1) Teamsters Collective Bargaining

The Management Team was scheduled to engage the Teamsters in continued collective bargaining on April 14, 2008. However, that session was postponed at the request of the union. Bargaining has been rescheduled for May 15, 2008.

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

(2) Altus Dental Open House

A representative of our new dental insurance provider, Altus Dental, was available in Town on April 16, 2008 for Town employees to visit and ask questions relative to the switch (for existing participants) and to signing up (for new enrollees). The deadline for actual applications for new enrollees is May 15, 2008, payroll deductions will begin in June, and coverage will begin July 1, 2008.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Chief of Police Successor Agreement

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I have provided the Board with additional information relative to the subject contract.

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

(4) MIIA Employee Assistance Program

Our insurer recently announced that the enhanced version of the MIIA Employee Assistance Program that we participate in will now be offered to us at no extra charge (beginning in FY09).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**D. Procurement**

(1) Preparation for Municipal TIP Day

Each year, I attend Municipal TIP Day in Boston in order to highlight the importance of the Route 133 Reconstruction Project to the Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MPO). This year, the project is very much ready to proceed and I contacted the MassHighway Project Manager to confirm that status. At TIP Day, I will provide the MPO with this positive news and the Project Manager will attend as well to support the project.

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

(2) Potential Donation of Marine Cleats – Route 133 Project (\*)

A resident has offered to donate two large marine cleats to potentially be affixed to the new seawall once the Route 133 Project has been completed. It would be necessary for MassHighway to incorporate the cleats into the project or, at the very least, grant permission to affix to the wall.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the offer.**

(3) Delivery of New Fire Pumper

The new fire pumper was delivered to Town on April 22, 2008. The Fire Department has verified specifications and has officially accepted the vehicle within the allowable ten days of the delivery date. As such, I have made preparations for our financing company to send payment to the vendor.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**E. Insurance**

No items.

## F. Facilities

### (1) Town Building Group Meeting

At the last meeting, I informed the Board about the latest meeting of the subject group (April 7, 2008) that is studying future options for Town buildings. Members of the group are presently considering needs, costs, and options in addition to visiting actual facilities prior to making recommendations to the Board.

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

### (2) Return of Piano to Essex Senior Center

The Superintendent of Public Works and his staff assisted greatly with the return of the piano that had been stored in the First Congregational Church of Essex to the Essex Senior Center. I helped coordinate timing and access and DPW staff used a backhoe to transport the piano to the Senior Center on April 9, 2008.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (3) Town Events Sign

As noted previously, the Town events sign has become very popular. I changed the sign to highlight a public health workshop regarding caring for those with flu at home (April 9) and the Essex Enhancement Committee's first of two Community Cleanup Days (April 12). Following those events, I posted notices for Town Meeting (May 5), Household Hazardous Waste Day (May 10), and the second cleanup day (May 17).

Further, I noticed that one of the letter racks on one side of the sign was missing some rivets and letters were slipping behind the rack and out of position. I contacted the Rotary Club and the Club will bring the vendor in to make the necessary repair under warranty.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (4) Painting of Legion Hall

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At the last meeting, the Board reviewed a letter from a resident asking when the Shipbuilding Museum plans to complete painting of the Legion Hall. At the time, I had referenced the resident's position as a member of the Historical Commission. Subsequently, she pointed out that her inquiry was solely made as a resident and that it was not related to the Commission's official business (which I have noted here for the record).

At the last meeting, I explained that I had already placed an inquiry that would be responded to by the museum's facilities manager and the Board agreed that further discussion would be necessary after the museum responded. We have since

learned that a variety of other issues with the Legion Hall and the adjacent Hearse House are more pressing and the Historical Society desires to concentrate on those issues first given the limited available resources.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the Society's plan.**

(5) Grove Cottage Electric Service and Downed Line

Our Electrical Inspector investigated the lack of power in the Grove Cottage and determined that a major circuit breaker on a utility pole had tripped. He contacted National Grid and the power has been restored. Also, we have investigated a downed line that Selectman Jones had noticed and the Youth Director has commented that the line is an old cable television line that is no longer in service.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(6) Senior Center Plumbing Reset

The Chairman of the Senior Center Committee indicated that toilets were not flushing properly and he had snaked and plunged them several times. We brought in a plumbing contractor to investigate (thinking that a major clog must have been present) and the contractor found that the main drain line in the basement had lost the necessary pitch. I contacted the general contractor responsible for the building since the building was still under warranty and he sent his own plumbing contractor in to review and correct.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(7) Field of Dreams Sprinkler System Repairs

The Department of Public Works started up the subject system for the season but found what appeared to be a pipe break in one location and a missing sprinkler head in another. I contacted a sprinkler contractor and put them in touch with the Superintendent of Public Works. The contractor has agreed to perform our usual system startup and system winterization (both at set rates) and any maintenance and repair work needed (at an hourly rate plus materials).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(8) Evaluation of Town Hall Grounds, Essex Enhancement Comm. (\*)

The Essex Enhancement Committee has evaluated the landscaping needs of the Town Hall building particularly with respect to trees, shrubs, and plantings. The Committee has generated a list of recommendations for the Board's review and approval.

*Recommendation:* **Board review and approval of the recommended landscaping recommendations contingent on available funds. A planting gift fund does exist and it presently contains \$2,500.**

## G. Fiscal/Budget

### (1) Approval of Enterprise Fund Budgets (\*)

Pursuant to G.L. c. 44, s. 53F1/2, the Board of Selectmen is required to make a recommendation to Town Meeting with regard to each enterprise fund. As such, the Board should consider recommending the three enterprise fund budgets as presented in the Finance Committee's report. If approved, a note will be added to the Summary of Monetary Articles handout to inform the voters.

*Recommendation:* **Board vote to recommend the three enterprise fund budgets.**

### (2) Production of Custom Betterment Revenue Reports (\*)

As noted at the last meeting, it is necessary to be able to forecast expected principal and interest revenue from all betterments owing to the Town for budget planning purposes (sewer, water, septic, etc.). As such, I worked with our software vendor to commission two custom reports: one report that forecasts principal and interest revenue across a specific betterment group and all betterments together and another report that will allow the Treasurer to generate updated amortization schedules for betterment payers right from the existing software.

Our vendor delivered the report features during the week of April 21, 2008 and we have been able to answer the most pressing question: Given the specific amortization choices made by residents, what are the amounts of expected principal and interest that are still owing as sewer betterment components? Thus far, we had only been able to utilize a rough model to make those forecasts. The new forecasting report takes into account all payoffs and paydowns that have been made since September, 2006 along with the specific number of years each betterment payer has selected. It is likely that the Board of Public Works may recommend the use of a portion of the available surplus in the near future.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to this recent refinement.**

## H. Complaints

No items.

## I. Meetings Attended

### (1) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Cape Ann Caucus

I attended the subject forum along with Chairman Lynch on April 25, 2008. The Caucus focused on issues of general interest to the municipal officials and local businesspeople in attendance. Senator Tarr and Representative Verga were both

present and were able to field many questions and to receive ideas and input from the attendees.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

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

### (1) Final Draft Annual Town Meeting Motions (\*)

I have prepared the final drafts of the Annual Town Meeting motions for the Board's final review and discussion as necessary.

*Recommendation:* **Final Board discussion relative to the motions.**

### (2) Town Meeting Booklets

The Finance Committee booklets for use at Town Meeting arrived in Town Hall during the week of April 7, 2008. Booklets will be available to the public at Town Meeting and are available in advance at Town Hall (along with the Town Annual Report).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **L. Legal Issues**

### (1) Ramsey Dog Case (\*)

I have some additional information to report relative to the subject case.

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

### (2) City of Gloucester Billing Dispute (\*)

Town Counsel has recommended further discussion regarding the subject case.

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

## **M. Grants**

### (1) Dredging Study

As reported previously, both Senator Tarr and Representative Verga have been working to determine if the Army Corps of Engineers will be able to provide dredging work in our area in the future. As part of that effort, Ms. Martha King, the Director of Waterways for the Division of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has written to the Corps' District Engineer for the New England District.

Specifically, the Director requested on behalf of many north shore coastal communities that the Corps investigate the development of a regional sand management study and plan. If such a study were to go forward, the first \$100,000 in costs would be paid for by the Federal Government. Beyond that, the State and possibly local communities would need to contribute.

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

## **N. Emergency Planning**

### (1) Use of School for Localized Emergency Relocation Site

As discussed previously, although we will be able to operate from Manchester, NH in the event of a regional disaster without the ability to connect remotely (a plan of last resort), emergency situations could occur where we could still work in Town from another facility. I have contacted the Manchester Essex Regional School District Superintendent to inquire about the possibility of pre-positioning essential equipment and supplies in a classroom at the Essex Elementary School once a portion of the students move to the new middle school/high school. The space is not available now but may be available after the spring of 2009. The Superintendent has agreed to consider that request along with the School Committee and she will be getting back to me in the near future.

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

## **O. Other Items**

### (1) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on April 10 and 11, 2008.

### (2) Patriots' Day Holiday

The office was closed on April 21, 2008 in observance of the subject holiday.

*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.*