



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of April 28, 2014

Report covers from April 12, 2014 to April 25, 2014

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Consideration of Consulting Contract for Fire Department Analysis (*)

The Public Safety Committee has solicited a proposal from the Essex County Fire Chief's Association to assist the Committee with the analysis of the Essex Fire Department as the Committee continues to fulfill its charge. The Association has proposed a fee of \$4,500 and an appropriation does exist to cover the work. Presently, the Committee may decide to ask the Association for more detail in the scope of work and additional information regarding the work experience of the individuals who would conduct the assessment.

Recommendation: Board review and potential approval of the contract (a final version of which may be available by meeting time).

(2) Recommendation for Security Study for Proposed Marijuana Facility (*)

The Chief of Police has recommended that Garden Remedies, the applicant for the siting of a marijuana cultivation facility in Essex, should pay for the Town's choice of an independent security consultant to analyze the organization's safety and security plans. While the Chief does have expertise in this field, he feels that an expert that specializes in the analysis of commercial security applications should be retained for a full review.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the Chief's recommendation.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Continued Network Performance Problems

Network speed between Town Hall and our two major satellite networks has continued to be slower than normal. In order to determine whether the speed issue was related to the actual link between the buildings (provided by the Comcast Cable I-Net) versus Town equipment within the Town's network, I conducted direct testing on April 21, 2014. During the testing (which took the network down on a holiday, when users were not impacted), I used two laptop computers to test the throughput directly between Cable I-Net modems, without transmission through any Town network equipment. I learned that the Cable I-Net is only presently operating at half capacity. As such, I am continuing to work with Comcast technicians and experts from the Manchester Essex Regional School District, the City of Melrose, and Edgewater Technology who have all agreed to help troubleshoot the matter.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 8 hours.

C. Personnel

(1) DRAFT Position Description for Part-Time Town Planner (*)

At the last meeting, the Board suggested that I take various elements from Town Planner position descriptions I had collected from other towns to compile a recommended position description for Essex. I have completed that task and the draft can be circulated for review, beginning with distribution to relevant parties at the department head and board and committee chair discussion that will take place at the present meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to draft position description distribution and a timetable for review and finalization.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Appraisals Related to the Potential Sale of Beach Circle Properties (*)

The subject appraisals have been conducted by Tyburski Appraisal Corporation in accordance with the required standards and the final report is expected to be available by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Updated Master Lease-Purchase Agreement and Associated Schedule (*)

As the Board may recall, the Town has been under a Master Lease Purchase Agreement with the financing company All American Investment Group for many years. In anticipation of the lease-purchase of a new dump truck for the Department of Public Works (pending appropriation of funds at the upcoming Annual Town Meeting), the company would like to renew the Master Agreement (with language identical to the old agreement) and has provided a lease-purchase schedule specific to the dump truck.

Recommendation: **Board authorization for the Chairman to sign the new Master Agreement and the associated schedule outside of a meeting, contingent on the successful passage of the year-one appropriation at the Annual Town Meeting on May 5, 2014.**

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Centennial Grove Seasonal Preparation

Our irrigation contractor started the Field of Dreams sprinkler system for the season on April 15, 2014. Presently, I am working with our plumbing contractor to turn on the water service in the cottage. The Department of Public Work has already turned on the water to the outside of the cottage foundation. The Selectmen's Assistant will be asking our sanitation contractor to bring the portable toilets in for the season as well.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Potential Demolition Two Houses Conomo Point (*)

The Board conducted a site visit with members of the Conomo Point Planning Committee at Beach Circle on April 12, 2014 to determine how to formulate an upcoming Town Meeting motion. During the visit, it was apparent that the chimney on the house at 103 Conomo Point Road (which is property that is now under the full control of the Town) was likely unstable and was likely posing a public safety hazard. As such, I contacted the Building Inspector and he agreed upon inspection that the chimney should be taken down immediately. The Department of Public Works expeditiously completed that task on April 23, 2014.

After reviewing the status of the house at 103 Conomo Point Road in general and in recognition of the fact that the Selectmen and the Planning Committee would like to see the subject property used for some public purpose or perhaps even as a site for house relocation in the future, I have begun to determine what steps need to be taken to potentially demolish the structure (in a fashion similar to another house on Beach Circle that has already been removed). To that end, I have lined up our asbestos assessment contractor for a site visit in early May to be able to develop a cost proposal for a full assessment.

Also, the Town now has full possession of the house at 138 Conomo Point Road. The Essex County Sheriff's Department is expected to be on the site in early May to clear out the personal property of a former occupant. Once that has been completed, the Town will have full control of the property and the condition of the house suggests that it should be torn down as soon as possible. Like the house at 103 Conomo Point Road, the first step is to get our asbestos assessment contractor on site to be able to develop a cost proposal for a full assessment.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to demolish the house at 103 Conomo Point Road, and, contingent upon gaining full control of the property at 138 Conomo Point Road, to demolish the house at that location as well, including the authorization of all costs necessary to assess, permit, and accomplish both demolitions.**

(3) Requests for Determination of Applicability, Demolition and Paving (*)

In order to review issues within the jurisdiction of the Essex Conservation Commission with respect to the potential demolition of two houses and the potential paving of the Cogswell Road extension at Conomo Point, it is necessary to file three Requests for Determination of Applicability with the Commission. The RDA process allows the Commission to review the proposed scope of work for each potential project and to determine whether a higher level of permitting is necessary. I have begun to develop the documents and will review drafts informally with the Conservation Agent in the near future.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization for the Chairman to sign the final versions of the three RDA documents, once they have been completed.**

(4) Renewal of Use License for Property Comprising Paglia Park (*)

As the Board is aware, Paglia Park exists via a license granted by the Paglia Family, which allows the Town to use the area as a park. The license runs for two years at a time and the present license expires May 31, 2014. I have developed a successor license for the Paglia Family to consider signing.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to transmit the successor Paglia Park license to the Paglia Family and to countersign the document outside of a meeting once the Paglia Family considers and potentially signs the license.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

(1) Discussion Relative to Items Left at Donation Box

At the last meeting, I described to the Board concerns of an abutter to a commercial property that accommodates a donation box. Apparently, people are not just donating useable goods by inserting them into the box but are also placing items of questionable value (which are likely junk items) on the ground around the box. The donation box vendor does remove all items on a regular schedule but items do tend to pile up in between pickups. With the Board's concurrence, I contacted the owner of the commercial property about this matter and the owner is willing to have a discussion with residents in the neighborhood about their concerns. The owner does plan to continue the arrangement with the vendor.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Essex Division Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on April 17, 2014. I provided those present with an update relative to various ongoing Town projects and initiatives. Topics included the upcoming Annual Town Meeting, the downtown boardwalk project, and the ongoing renovations to Town Hall.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Revision of Municipal Parking Lot Rules and Regulations

At the last meeting, the Board voted to amend the Town of Essex Rules and Regulations governing the use of the municipal parking lot. Specifically, the Board has determined that only residents will be able to park vehicles with boat trailers attached in the municipal lot (center area only, as was always the case). The penalty for those not displaying a valid resident or transfer station sticker will be towing or a \$300 fine. I am presently working with the Superintendent of Public Works and the Chief of Police relative to the appropriate signage, which will be posted as soon as possible, thereby making the new rules effective. Discussion on this topic will be held at the present meeting during the Quarterly Department Heads session.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Continued Review of Draft Town Meeting Motions (*)

I have revised the draft Annual Town Meeting motions per the Board's guidance from the last meeting. Also, the Chairman, the Town Moderator, the Town Clerk, and I met on April 22, 2014 to review the various articles and motions.

Recommendation: **Continued review of the draft motions.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) License to Attach Ramps and Floats to Stone Piers at Conomo Point

At the last meeting, the Board approved a new form of license to offer to the Conomo Point Association for the attachment of the Association's ramps and floats to the Town's stone piers at Conomo Point. The license also allows the Association to conduct maintenance at their own risk and expense. The Association has not signed the license at the time of printing of this report but the

Board voted previously to sign outside of a meeting should the Association choose to sign.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

M. Grants

(1) Downtown Boardwalk Funding (*)

It is my present understanding that the Town is very likely to receive notification concerning funding for the downtown boardwalk project by early 2015. The recently-approved Transportation Bond Bill did carry a total of \$1.5M for final design, permitting, and construction of the project. Once more is known about the timing of the expected funding, we can again engage the various project stakeholders and work with our consulting engineer to complete final design and permitting. Town Meeting has already authorized the Selectmen to accept easements from private property owners that will be necessary to construct the boardwalk.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center Meeting

I attended the subject meeting as a member of the Finance Advisory Board on April 17, 2014. The meeting featured a discussion relative to various reimbursements to communities for transitional costs and the Executive Director was happy to announce that great progress that has been made on the permanent antenna installation. The antenna should be fully operational by June 1, 2014.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

O. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on leave on April 25, 2014.

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