



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of June 3, 2014

Report covers from May 17, 2014 to May 30, 2014

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

---

### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Shellfish Advisory Commission Recommendations (\*)

At the last meeting, the Shellfish Advisory Commission visited the Board to make several recommendations including: 1) whether certain moorings could be moved or phased out over time that appear to be conflicting with clam harvesting areas; 2) whether the Town's former rule that a commercial clamming applicant had to live in Essex for at least one year before applying can be revisited; and 3) whether the current regulations could be modified to allow the Commission to screen commercial clamming applications each year.

Regarding the moorings, the Harbormaster will be taking James Haskell of the Commission on a tour of the various mooring fields. In this way, the Harbormaster can get a flavor for the concern over clam flat conflicts and the Commission can get a flavor for the various mooring fields and how recently mooring blocks have been placed in various areas.

Regarding the one-year residency rule, I have reviewed the discussion that was held surrounding this matter a few years back and have discussed with Town Counsel whether reinstating the rule would be advisable. Neither Counsel nor I recommend reinstatement of the rule.

Regarding the screening of applications by the Commission, it is possible to revise the regulations to allow for that. If the Board does want to proceed in that fashion, I would recommend that the Commission only be provided with a list of names and the various forms of proof that each applicant submitted to prove residency. However, such an arrangement would merely be duplicative of the work that the Town Clerk is already doing.

**Recommendation: Further Board discussion relative to these matters as necessary.**

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Implementation of Cable I-Net Replacement System

An expert from Edgewater Technology, Mr. Robert Perry, visited Town on May 19, 2014 to configure a series of routers that now control inter-building communication. This communication was being accomplished by the Cable I-Net, a slow-speed system that we had been using for the past fifteen years.

Recently, that system had become less reliable, was not capable of keeping up with today's need for increased throughput, and was in jeopardy of total failure since replacement parts are no longer readily available. I was able to learn much about the new system by working alongside Mr. Perry. Another benefit of the new system is that each building now has its own Internet point of presence and users in the two satellite buildings now have high-speed Internet access, rather than running over the I-Net to the Town Hall's connection. We did encounter a few unexpected circumstances that evening and the next day but Mr. Perry stayed on call to assist with troubleshooting. The system is working very well and we are very grateful to resident Shirley Singleton, President and CEO of Edgewater, for making Mr. Perry available and for Edgewater's vigilant assistance with high-level IT issues since 2001.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 11 hours.

(2) Relocation of Network Equipment to New Server Room

I coordinated the relocation all network equipment that has occupied my office for many years to the new server room on May 21, 2014. Network service was interrupted for about three hours as the DPW Superintendent and Clerk assisted with wire routing and the transport and cleaning of various items and I was able to bring each system up successfully in the new location. Now that this equipment is operating in the server room, the Town Hall renovation contractor can begin the process of renovating my office to provide soundproofing and a higher degree of physical security.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 8 hours.

**C. Personnel**

(1) Informal Department Heads Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting on May 22, 2014, as I do from time to time. The meeting featured updates from the various departments and a discussion regarding the recent information/technology upgrades and the status of the Town Hall/Library renovation project.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Advertising for Part-Time Planner

At the last meeting, the Board approved the position description for the new part-time planner and indicated that advertising should occur during June for a potential start date sometime in July. Since the Town of Manchester is also interested in hiring a part-time planner, it is possible that some applicants will be interested in both positions. I am presently working to coordinate our advertising schedule with Manchester's.

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

#### **D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

##### (1) Town Hall/Library Renovation Update

The project contractor poured the new slab in the building's basement on May 23, 2014 and, as noted above, the new server room has been completed and is in use. Work continues on the new, handicapped accessible restroom that will be entered from the Library and the contractor is working on planning for the replacement of many doors and the renewal of the Town Hall entryway. The renovation work related to my office has also begun. Work on this project is expected to be completed around August.

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

#### **E. Insurance**

No items.

#### **F. Facilities**

##### (1) Conservation Commission Approval of Demolition at 103 Conomo Point Rd.

I attended the Conservation Commission meeting of May 20, 2014 to review with the Commission the Board's plan to demolish the structures at the subject property. The Commission agreed that a full Notice of Intent is not necessary in this circumstance since the structures do not have foundations and can easily be pulled off of the ground and deposited into dumpsters. Erosion controls will still be installed as a precaution. I will continue to work on other precursors to the granting of a demolition permit.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

##### (2) Conservation Commission Review of Paving of Cogswell Rd. Extension (\*)

I attended the Conservation Commission meeting of May 20, 2014 to review with the Commission the Board's plan to pave the gravel stretch of Cogswell Road at Conomo Point, known as the Cogswell Road extension. The Department of Public Works already has a blanket Order of Conditions allowing resurfacing of areas that are already paved but the Extension required this additional inquiry. The Commission agreed that a full Notice of Intent is not necessary in this circumstance since the recent improvement of the gravel road segment was done under its own Order of Conditions and since that work installed a drainage swale that will assist with the treatment of any runoff from the new pavement.

However, concurrent review by the DEP has indicated that the Request for Determination of Applicability may need to be amended to ensure that all

applicable storm water regulations are met. The Commission has continued the hearing until guidance can be provided on what has to be added to the application. To that end, I have put the Conservation Agent in touch with our engineering consultant, Horsley Witten, and our consultant has reached out to the DEP. An eventual approval in the coming weeks would allow the Department of Public Works to include this segment in a larger paving project at southern Conomo Point later this summer. This matter will be reviewed by the Commission on June 3, 2014 after our consultant provides the Commission with her opinion. One potential outcome is that additional measures will need to be taken that cannot be accommodated at the site within the present timeframe and within the context of the present permitting effort. In such case, the paving of that road segment will need to be dropped.

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

(3) Conversion of Town Hall Heating Plants to Natural Gas

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that it would be wiser to convert both Town Hall heating plants to gas than it would be to replace the existing oil tanks with double-walled tanks or install containment systems. As such, I reached out to National Grid and I have learned that the utility will bring a gas line and meter to the building foundation at no cost. I plan to do some research on what the cost of removing the old oil tanks, piping to the two appliances, and installing gas burners will be. An appropriation for this work may be sought at the Fall Town Meeting, in November.

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

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

(1) Auditor's Review of Information/Technology Systems

As part of the fiscal year 2014 audit, our Auditor will be analyzing how the Town operates and maintains its various information/technology systems. As such, during the week of May 26, 2014 I completed a questionnaire that will be used by our Auditor to review our various policies and protocols.

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

(2) Standard & Poor's Bond Rating Call

The Treasurer/Collector, the Town Accountant, and I participated in a bond rating call with Standard & Poor's on May 29, 2014, relative to the re-funding of bond anticipation notes for the ongoing renovation of the Town Hall and Library and for a 2004 bond related to the sewer project. Personnel from Standard & Poor's interviewed us relative to the Town's overall financial picture and various internal protocols. If the bidding process goes as the Treasurer has planned, her efforts

have the potential to save the Town over \$84,000 over the remaining life of the borrowing.

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

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

### (1) Massachusetts Municipal Management Association Spring Conference

I attended the subject conference on May 29 and 30, 2014 in Lenox, MA. The conference featured several useful sessions including sessions on leadership, labor law, and a legislative update.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

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

### (1) Zoning Amendment Public Hearing

I attended a Planning Board public hearing on May 21, 2014 regarding a citizens' proposal to amend the zoning bylaws to include more stringent setbacks from medical marijuana facilities to dwellings and to property uses related to where children congregate. The hearing was very well attended and the Planning Board voted no to recommend the bylaw since they did not feel they had enough information concerning whether the proposed setbacks would result in a reasonable opportunity for a facility to actually be sited in Town. A Special Town Meeting will consider the adoption of this zoning bylaw amendment on June 3, 2014.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **L. Legal Issues**

### (1) Essex County Police Mutual Aid Agreement

(\*)

As the Board may recall, Town Counsel was in the process of reviewing the subject agreement, which had been presented to the Board by the Chief of Police. Town Counsel has concluded his review and has pointed out several items of interest. I am also consulting further with our insurer relative to the agreement and should have additional feedback by meeting time.

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

## **M. Grants**

### (1) Federal Generator Grant

As the Board may recall, the Town had applied through the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant for a new generator for Town Hall back in March of 2013. While we were told that the process of determining whether a grant would be awarded could take about a year, we did not expect to not have heard back by now. I reached out to MEMA officials recently and I am told that the grant application is still in active review by FEMA.

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

## **N. Emergency Planning**

No items.

## **O. Other Items**

### (1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on June 23, 2014.

### (2) Memorial Day Holiday

The office was closed on May 26, 2014, 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.*