



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of June 6, 2016

Report covers from May 21, 2016 to June 3, 2016

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Update Regarding Analysis of IT Audit Recommendations

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the prospect of hiring a consultant to review our auditor's Information-Technology recommendations from our FY15 audit. I have undertaken some additional vetting of the matter and have learned that a firm that has long provided free technical assistance to the Town will help us take a preliminary look at the recommendations and guide us toward a relationship with a future consultant, as necessary. I plan to take this preliminary step before working to formalize any consultancy.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Quarterly Safety Committee Meeting

The next Safety Committee meeting will occur on June 30, 2016. I have placed a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Investigation of IP/Cloud-based Phone System for Town Hall/Library (*)

As the Board is aware, the Town Hall/Library building at 30 Martin Street was still utilizing direct, copper pair phone lines prior to the move-out for renovations. Those same pairs got moved to the temporary Town Hall at 74 Martin Street and are in use today. It is evident that moving to a new, IP/cloud-based phone system will provide better, more flexible service at a lower cost if we are to move back into Town Hall with such a system in mind.

I met with representatives of Shore-Tel, a high-quality, IP-based phone vendor on the State Contract, on May 25, 2016. Unlike other vendors, Shore-Tel provides an "end-to-end" solution, meaning that Shore-Tel equipment syncs up with Shore-Tel cloud servers for a seamless experience, without latency in the conversation,

and for the maximum level of flexibility, remote technical assistance, and special features. According to the representatives, we would be able to replace our standard telephone equipment with IP-based equipment for a one-time fee to cover initial provisioning and training and we would be able to maintain that new system for less per month than our copper pair lines, which, for 30 Martin Street are approximately \$500 per month. I will have actual pricing by meeting time. We will also avoid the cost of moving our copper lines back to 30 Martin Street if we phase in the IP-based system while we are still at the temporary building. Since the new system is cloud-based, “moving” it to 30 Martin Street would be as simple as plugging in the phones. If we choose that path and the system works well, it is possible that we could follow suit in other Town buildings in the future.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Weekly Project Meeting, Town Hall/Library Renovation Project

I attended the subject meeting on May 25, 2016. The project contractor is presently focusing on wood framing (including the construction of the new, third-floor deck), exterior masonry renovation, and the continued construction of the elevator shaft.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Change Order Proposals - Structural Work, Conduit, Panel Relocation (*)

At a recent project meeting, our contractor provided us with three proposals for change orders associated with the ongoing project. The first proposal is related to inadequate framing that was installed years ago when the present, second-floor restrooms were constructed. The framing needs to be replaced and the conditions were not visible until after demolition.

The second proposal is related to getting our various communication lines from the basement up to the new server room. The line will need to pass through conduits that need to be installed before the walls are closed up. It is the Town’s responsibility to manage and route those lines and, therefore, we asked for a proposal for conduit installation from the electrical subcontractor. The quoted price of \$4,767.10 is not reasonable and we are allowed to hire our own electrical contractor for this work, which I will commence.

The third proposal is related to the relocation of an existing electrical panel that is in the middle of the Library space. The panel will be located near a computer workstation and, although not ideal, may blend in acceptably. We had asked for a proposal for relocation and the quoted price of \$6,303.09 is not justifiable only to improve aesthetics in a minor way.

Recommendation: Board approval of the bathroom framing change order and rejection of the two others, in favor of hiring our own electrical contractor for the conduit work and simply leaving the panel where it is.

(4) Review of Fire Sprinkler System Design by Construction Subcontractor(*)

The subcontractor responsible for installing the new fire sprinkler system at 30 Martin Street was in initial disagreement with the design engineer that the system could be fed by a four-inch service line. The subcontractor had suggested that a six-inch line was required. Another option would be to install a four-inch tap on the water main and then increase the size of the water service line to six inches immediately after the tap. The problem is that the Town already bid the waterline job using the four-inch specification. By meeting time, I will have more information about how this disagreement can be resolved.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

(5) Quotations for the Promotion of Town Resources

Town Meeting has once again appropriated \$20,000 to hire an organization to promote the various resources and attractions of the Town. This funding drives tourism visits to the Town and, in turn, helps to develop the Town's business sector and to maximize the annual meals tax, which provides non-property tax revenue of approximately \$180,000. I sent a request for quotations to three prospective vendors on May 31, 2016 and responses are due on June 16, 2016.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(6) Invitation for Bids for Real Estate Agent Services, Southern Conomo Point

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should finalize and release an Invitation for Bids for real estate agent services to represent and sell the five remaining former leasehold properties in the southern area of Conomo Point. The IFB ran in the *Goods and Services Bulletin* and the local paper on May 30, 2016 and bids are due on June 21, 2016. Interested agents can contact me at bzubricki@essexma.org for a copy of the bid package.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(7) Further Development of Proposal for N. Conomo Point Improvements (*)

At the last meeting, the Board began to review, on a very preliminary basis, a draft scope of work and cost proposal from Mr. James Heroux of Copley-Wolff for public waterfront access improvements at 153 and 138 Conomo Point Road. The Board asked me to follow-up on several questions and to add in any questions or comments that my own review might turn up. I also shared the proposal with the Chairman of the Conomo Point Planning Committee, which was not able to meet prior to the present Selectmen's meeting. Generally, Mr. Heroux has answered

several questions, has made various changes to the proposal, and has added a schedule component.

Recommendation: Further Board review and discussion relative to the draft proposal.

(8) Bid Specification for Town Hall Fixtures/Furnishings

At the last meeting, the Board was in agreement that I should continue working on the development of a bid specification and Invitation for Bids for the supply and delivery of all new fixtures and furnishings to be placed in the renovated Town Hall and Library when we move back in early 2017. I have continued to work on the specification by learning from industry experts and I have arrived at a final list of items, along with all necessary quality standards. I will continue to develop the specifications but the procurement should not go out to bid until the fall, since we want to be able to show prospective vendors our actual space and the further construction is along, the better the pre-bid picture will be.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Contract for Repointing and Crack Sealing at Stone Pier, Conomo Point (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the larger of the two stone piers at Conomo Point needed to be assessed for repair work. The pier was last repaired in 2013. However, a series of harsh winters and storms have once again opened up cracks and gaps in the stones and pier surface. As such, I contacted the mason who performed the repairs in 2013 and he provided the Town with a proposal, in the amount of \$2,200 for additional repair work.

Recommendation: Board vote to authorize the contract for this additional repair work.

(2) Renewal of Generator Maintenance Contract

I have renewed the maintenance contract for the Town Hall generator. As the Board may recall, the system was funded via a Federal grant and carried a one-year warranty. Thereafter, we entered into a one-year maintenance contract. This renewal represents the second term for maintenance.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Telephone Line Repairs

We arrived back from the Memorial Day holiday to find the Selectmen's main line with no dial tone and my line with extremely poor line quality. I contacted Verizon and the lines were repaired by the following day.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Completion of Work on Folsom Pavilion

As the Board may recall, the Folsom Pavilion was in need of structural shoring to ensure its safe use during the upcoming summer camp season. The contractor hired for the work completed the necessary repairs during the week of May 23, 2016 (including the construction of a wooden, handicapped accessible ramp) and our structural engineer signed off on the work thereafter. The Building Inspector has also reviewed the work and is satisfied that the structure can be opened for use.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Community Compact Signing Ceremony

Chairman O'Donnell participated in the signing ceremony for the Town's Community Compact with the Baker Administration on May 31, 2016. The Lt. Governor was also on hand for the ceremony. Our Compact involves fostering cooperation between the Town and the various State agencies that play a role in how we might utilize a sediment source (possibly from dredging) to increase the marsh elevation to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Massachusetts Municipal Management Association Annual Meeting

I attended the subject meeting at Martha's Vineyard from June 1-3, 2016. The meeting featured useful sessions regarding effective management as well as updates concerning changes in municipal law and labor law.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Conservation Commission Hearing, Demolition of 5 Southern Av. Garage(*)

I attended the Conservation Commission meeting of May 24, 2016 to participate in a public hearing relative to the Board's application to demolish the garage at 5 Southern Avenue (the Allen property). As the Board is aware, the Annual Town Meeting appropriated \$25,000 to demolish this structure and to erect a fence. We are presently still working to secure the permission of the court-appointed receiver that is managing the property.

At the meeting, the Conservation Commission did express understanding about the state of disrepair that the building is in (from a public safety perspective), along with understanding about the unattractiveness of the building. However, the Commission raised several valid points that need to be reviewed from both their own perspective and for the benefit of the Town.

Concerns included: a) Will the removal of the structure, which still has an intact roof, potentially cause any contaminants that are in, adjacent to, or under the building to migrate out onto the site as rainwater is introduced to the area? b) Past knowledge of the building in question suggests that it may contain drums of unknown substances. Does the Town have adequate funding to sample and then dispose of any hazardous materials beyond the normal asbestos abatement process? c) Would simply erecting a fence around the garage mitigate the public safety issue without exposing the Town to other liability by disturbing the garage? d) Would demolition activity damage an underground storage tank that is still in the ground, thereby accruing liability to the Town which the Town does not currently have? e) Generally, might a claim be made that the Town, by virtue of the demolition operation, made the potential environmental liability on the site worse for the Estate and/or the Receiver, thereby exposing the Town to much more financial liability than the demolition itself will cost?

The Commission also wanted to look into the provisions of an existing Order of Conditions on the site, which was acquired by the Receiver in the past. The Commission continued the hearing until July 19, 2016, to allow both the Commission and the Selectmen to study these questions further.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the best course of action. Simple erection of a fence may strike the best balance (preserves public safety without raising future questions of liability for the Town).**

(4) Informal Department Heads Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting on May 26, 2016 as I do from time to time. The meeting featured a discussion relative to the status of the Town Hall/Library renovation project and the potential to move back into the building with a new, IP-based phone system.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Enforcement of Residents-only Rules at Centennial Grove

As the Board is aware, the Centennial Grove became a residents-only facility as of the Memorial Day weekend (excepting youth sports games, Camp Dory, and official rentals). I issued a recorded call about this change on May 23, 2016 to all residents who are signed up for the Town's reverse notification system. Initially, some non-residents who were accustomed to being allowed to use the facility did show up and all had to be sent away after being informed about the new rules. Over the Memorial Day weekend, a total of approximately 60 residents/guests used the facility and approximately 80 non-residents had to be turned away. A total of approximately 50 residents have obtained resident tags from the Town Clerk. The Essex Police Department will continue to enforce the rules, educating both residents and non-residents in the process.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

(1) Meeting with Engineering Firm Relative to Thin-Layer Deposition (*)

I met with a representative of EA Engineering on May 26, 2016 to discuss the Town's interest in a technique known as thin-layer deposition (TLD) – the process of building up the salt marsh's elevation to be more effective in mitigating the effects of climate change. The firm is well versed in TLD and has overseen projects along much of the eastern seaboard. The firm is available to help write grant proposals as funding may come along. During our discussion, we arrived at an idea for a course of action that could serve to test TLD in a healthy salt marsh (which presently is a problem for regulators).

In the early 2000's, many dead or dying salt marsh sites were restored to good health via culvert widening and replacement projects. Roads and other features that had been constructed across healthy salt marsh in the past had taken their toll on many acres of salt marsh over the decades. Given that some of these restoration efforts produced healthy, "low" salt marsh, why not build on those efforts using TLD to transition to healthy, "high" salt marsh? In this way, we

would not be experimenting with pristine marsh, with a risk of degradation. Instead, we would be working with areas that were once already lost and which could contribute a great deal to future efforts.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion regarding how this idea may be incorporated into future studies.**

(2) Community Coastal Resiliency Grant Monthly Report

I obtained the subject report from our vendors during the week of May 23, 2016 and provided the report to the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management. The grant is beginning to wind down after a recent community workshop that highlighted areas in the various communities that will be most vulnerable to climate change, along with various strategies that may be implemented to mitigate expected effects. I will be working with our vendors to submit final invoices and work products during the month of June, since the grant ends as of June 30, 2016.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Community Coastal Resiliency Grant Application (*)

As noted above, Essex was the lead agency on a Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Community Coastal Resiliency Grant involving six communities, which chiefly identified climate-change related vulnerabilities and suggested some mitigation strategies. The same grant program is now accepting applications for additional work and Mr. Peter Phippen of the MassBays National Estuary Program is working to coordinate another potential grant with Essex as the lead agency and with several project partners. The deadline for application was prior to the Board's scheduled meeting and Chairman O'Donnell signed the necessary paperwork for the Board's ratification at the present meeting. If funded, this project will demonstrate and study the merits of several natural and nature-based mitigation techniques for possible application on a broader basis after evaluation.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to ratify the Chairman's signature of the application paperwork.**

(4) Letter of Support for Town of Newbury CZM Grant Application (*)

At the last meeting, I indicated that the Town of Newbury was seeking support for a Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Grant to quantify sediment accretion rates within the Great Marsh. This work will be beneficial to all Great Marsh communities since it may help establish a further basis for the future use of the thin-layer deposition marsh elevation technique. Incidentally, Essex is also applying to this same grant program for a demonstration project involving natural and nature-based climate change mitigation strategies (see item M3, above).

***Recommendation:* Board vote to ratify the letter of support signed by the Chairman previous to this meeting.**

(5) Downtown Parking Study Kickoff Meeting and Stakeholder Interviews (*)

As the Board may recall, Town Planner Matt Coogan successfully applied for a grant to study the parking situation in downtown Essex. The firm of Nelson Nygaard was chosen to assist the Town in this effort and the firm will conduct a kickoff meeting and stakeholder interviews over the course of the day on June 13, 2016. The Town Planner is working with others to finalize a list of stakeholders and steering committee members. Once this initial effort to characterize the issues has been completed, actual traffic surveys at the peak of the summer will assist the firm with formulating some recommendations.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on May 27, 2016.

(2) Memorial Day Holiday

The office was closed on May 30, 2016, 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.