



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of June 15, 2009

Report covers from May 30, 2009 to June 12, 2009

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Summer Program Update (*)

Enrollment numbers for the Summer Program have been updated. At last count, total of 59 participants will attend for all eight weeks, 26 additional participants will attend for the first four weeks, and 12 additional participants will attend for the second four weeks (97 total participants versus last year's 195). At the last meeting, the Board indicated that counselor training by a third party was desired if enrollment revenue allowed for that. We have determined that sufficient funds will not exist. Fortunately, all of the returning staff members have had the benefit of that third party training for each of the past two years.

At present, due to the lower enrollment in this year's summer program, it appears that an approximately \$7,500 revenue deficit will be encountered when closing out fiscal year 2009. Summer program collections in May and June usually serve to balance a given fiscal year's budget. However, in this case, funds from a small summer program beginning this June are insufficient to meet expenses of the larger summer program that ran in July and August of 2008. As noted at the last meeting, total revenues for this year's summer program are estimated to be sufficient to cover this year's program expenses. It is the fiscal year mismatch that is causing the fiscal year 2009 deficit and the same mechanism will likely correct the situation in fiscal year 2010 if a larger summer program's revenue is used next May and June to offset this year's smaller program.

The Youth Director and I discussed this situation with the Town Accountant and two options are available: 1) utilize movie-related Youth gift funds to balance the deficit (we have a total of \$8,000), or, 2) raise the deficit on the tax recap (using the General Fund) with the realization that additional revenue from the movie production rental of Centennial Grove will serve as an offset. Either option can be accomplished administratively, without the need for a Town Meeting vote.

The first option serves to close out fiscal year 2009 cleanly but will take potential revenue from fiscal year 2010. The second option keeps the gift funds intact for use in fiscal year 2010 but effectively diminishes General Fund reserves. Also, with respect to the first option, an article at a fall Town Meeting may be utilized to adjust the fiscal year 2010 Youth Enterprise Fund Budget and/or appropriate funds from the newly-certified Youth Free Cash or the General Fund. As such, option 1 provides the most control over funding sources.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the desired fiscal option.**

(2) Southern Conomo Point Subcommittee Support (*)

The Southern Conomo Point Subcommittee met on May 26, 2009 to discuss the development of a potential overlay district by-law with our planning consultant. The discussion involved an overall analysis of the past acceptance of roads at Conomo Point and I subsequently researched the history of road acceptance. I provided our consultant with all of the past acceptance votes and other background information that we presently have available. Our consultant will consider this information as he works on the draft zoning district by-law and the preliminary subdivision plan. I have consulted with Town Counsel regarding the road acceptance issue as well and will have additional information by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Town Building Committee Site Visits

Members of the Town Building Committee toured the Hamilton and Wenham police and fire buildings and the Rockport police facility on June 8, 2009. The site visit went well and provided the group with additional insight regarding building planning.

The next Town Building Committee business meeting is scheduled for June 22, 2009 and field trips to the Rowley Library and the Byfield Fire Department will occur on July 13, 2009. I will be attending Selectmen's meetings on those two occasions but will join the Committee for their regular meeting of July 20, 2009.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Next Quarterly Departmental Coordination Meeting (*)

The next installment of the quarterly coordination meetings with all Town departments falls in July.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to scheduling and format.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Pictometry Training

As the Board may recall, staff from MAPC had loaded new aerial imagery on our computer systems and had provided pictometry manipulation software. On June 11, 2009, MAPC staff returned for more detailed training on a department-by-department level. Participants included the Assessors, the Fire and Police Departments, the Board of Health, the Conservation and Planning offices, and the Department of Public Works.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Antivirus Software Support Renewal

Our support contract for 25 client antivirus licenses expires in early June each year. As such, I have arranged for an additional year's coverage via a successor support agreement.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Migration of Assessors' Database Software to New Server

As the Board may recall, I had purchased and configured a new server to replace the aging Assessors' server and I had been awaiting an appointment with the proprietary software vendor to assist with the migration. On June 8, 2008, I worked with the vendor to install the necessary Oracle database software (an updated version) on the new server and to migrate the actual data from the old server to the new server. On June 17, 2009, I am scheduled to work with our vendor to install the client side software upgrades. The Assessors' Office will continue to work off of the old server until the client work has been completed.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 4 hours.

C. Personnel

(1) Personnel Board Business

(*)

At present, the Personnel Board has two vacant seats (on a three-member board). Therefore, no quorum exists and the quarterly business of the Personnel Board will need to be discharged by the Selectmen at the present meeting. Residents interested in serving on the Personnel Board should provide letters of interest to the Selectmen's Office, Town Hall – 30 Martin Street, Essex, MA 01929. The Personnel Board generally meets quarterly and is an excellent way to become involved in Town government without a major time commitment.

***Recommendation:* Discharge of Personnel Board business by the Selectmen in accordance with the Personnel Board agenda.**

(2) Playing Fields Committee

As requested by the Board, I asked the Superintendent of Public Works if he had a recommendation for someone else who would like to serve on the Playing Fields Committee. He provided some names of individuals who are associated with youth sports who I did reach out to. I am presently awaiting responses but have none to date.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Town Clerk Search Committee (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that an appropriate Town Clerk Search Committee would include the existing Deputy Town Clerk, the Treasurer/Collector, and two Registrars. At the Board's request, I contacted each of those parties and learned that they are all willing to serve. Before the Committee is officially constituted, however, I recommend that I work with the retiring Town Clerk to pull together a list of her duties and to develop a position description from that list and examples of Town Clerk position descriptions that are in place in other communities. To date, I have received many examples of existing position descriptions through various components of the Massachusetts Municipal Association.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the next steps in this process.**

(3) Teamsters Contract (*)

The Management Team engaged the Teamsters in collective bargaining on June 2, 2009.

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

D. Procurement

(1) Water Plant Generator and Skid-Steer Loader Orders (*)

I have worked with the Superintendent of Public Works and our financing vendor to develop a lease/purchase schedule appurtenant to our master lease/purchase agreement for the subject pieces of equipment (schedule number 5). The Superintendent of Public Works will order both items via the State Contract and I have the necessary paperwork for the Selectmen to execute relative to the financing arrangements. Both items will be delivered after July 1, 2009 since funds for the second payment for each item will not be available until the fiscal year 2011 budget is approved next spring. The first payment (due upon delivery and representing the fiscal year 2010 payment) for each item will be made using water and general free cash appropriated at the 2009 Annual Town Meeting.

Recommendation: **Board signature of the necessary lease/purchase financing paperwork.**

(2) Trench Box Equipment

The trench box equipment that I had ordered for the Department of Public Works using a grant from our insurer arrived recently. The equipment vendor will invoice our insurer directly.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Employee Motivation and Mentoring Seminar

I attended the subject seminar as part of the MIIA Rewards Program on June 11, 2009 along with the Chief of Police. The seminar provided practical strategies for motivating and mentoring employees in an organization with a goal of overall organizational improvement in mind.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Route 133 Reconstruction Project Update

According to the Resident Engineer for MassHighway, the construction contractor is likely to begin work by mid to late June and will concentrate on water and drainage work this season. It is likely that seawall work and the full-depth road reconstruction will occur next season. Traffic signage has been erected in and around the project area and I will be meeting on June 15, 2009 with the Resident Engineer from MassHighway and the contractor's General Manager along with members of the Chamber of Commerce's Route 133 Task Force to get a preliminary sense of what to expect.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Placement of Sand at Old Town Beach

Sand has been placed at the old Town beach off of Red Gate Road after receiving permission from the Essex Conservation Commission. The beach is small but the sand creates a pleasant environment and limited parking is available with a short walk down a wooded path.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Potential Placement of Sand at Clammers' Beach

At the last meeting, the Board indicated that it was in favor of approaching the Essex Conservation Commission on behalf of the Essex Enhancement Committee to request that additional sand be placed at Clammers' Beach. As such, I provided a written request to the Commission and I expect that they will consider it on June 16, 2009.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Window Screen Repair

The Treasurer/Collector's window screen had disintegrated to the point where large holes were present. The Treasurer/Collector obtained some new screen material and I installed it in the existing frame.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(5) Senior Center Fire Alarm System Repair

On June 2, 2009, our fire alarm system contractor and our elevator contractor worked together to begin repairs concerning two aspects of the fire alarm system at the Senior Center. The elevator itself was not in disrepair but its relationship to the fire alarm components in question required both contractors to be present. This work and the repair of a powered vent in the elevator shaft (completed the previous day by our electrical contractor) had been required as a result of our annual State elevator inspection. Both vendors returned the following week to complete the necessary work.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(6) Town Hall Power Circuit Problem

A particular set of wall outlets on one circuit in Town Hall intermittently experienced power loss during the week of June 8, 2009. I contacted an electrician to investigate the matter and he found one outlet in the Assessors' Office with a loose wire. Once that problem was corrected, the entire circuit was restored and all outlets were operational.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Meeting Related to Essex Regional Retirement Board Proposal (*)

I attended the subject meeting on June 12, 2009 along with the Essex Town Treasurer and other town administrators and officials from within our retirement district. The focus of the meeting involved a recent proposal by the Essex Regional Retirement Board (ERRB) to potentially move DPW employees into Group 4 for retirement purposes. Other related topics relating to the ERRB were also discussed.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

No items.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Ramsey Dog Banishment Case (*)

I have additional details to report to the Board regarding this case.

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

M. Grants

(1) Fire Station Construction Grant Program (*)

The Department of Homeland Security has announced a new grant program for the construction or renovation of fire stations. DHS expects up to 10,000 applications for the available \$210M and will likely fund approximately 100 projects (just one percent of the applications). Preference will be given to shovel-ready projects which improve response times (including the construction of living quarters) in departments that protect large populations with significant numbers of incidents and in communities with the highest unemployment rates. In Essex, our situation will likely not be very competitive. I discussed this grant with Mr. Jack Good who has assisted the Essex Fire Department to obtain many past grants and he agreed that the likelihood of success is low.

Recommendation: **I do not recommend proceeding based on the low likelihood of success.**

(2) Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (*)

As the Board may recall, I participated in a webinar regarding the subject grant opportunity on May 15, 2009. The grant program seeks to make municipal buildings more energy efficient. The Department of Energy Resources (DOER) has announced an application deadline of June 25, 2009. Grant awards will be capped at \$150,000, only about 10 percent of the funding needed for the exterior renovation of Town Hall. I did ask DOER if funding would likely be awarded for window replacement since the grant program will carry a preference for “thermal energy efficiency measures in oil-heated buildings”. DOER responded that insulation of buildings and conversion to “clean technology” were much more likely to be funded than window replacement since those other items have a much faster return on investment than do windows.

Recommendation: I do not recommend proceeding based on the low likelihood of success.

(3) Seaport Bond Bill Funding

(*)

Personnel from Salem State's Center for Economic Development and Sustainability have produced a draft plan of work for obtaining Seaport Bond Bill funding for the study of Essex River public access facilities at the causeway. The Center is prepared to make an application for both a Feasibility Study and a Practical Implementation Strategy (project design) on our behalf. If funding is sought by the Center and secured, the Center desires to become the contractor that would undertake the project.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the Center's proposal and approval for the Center to proceed with the application with the understanding that the Center will conduct any funded work.

(4) Discontinuation of Clean Energy Choice Program

(*)

The subject grant program is being discontinued by the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust since all "green" technology programs are being consolidated under the new Green Communities Division that was created by the Green Communities Act. As the Board may recall, it had elected to allow our funds to accrue toward an eventual purchase of a solar energy installation on a Town building. The present value of our funding is \$7,198 and that will increase slightly between now and the scheduled phase out of the program.

The Trust will be sending the Town a grant application in August that will indicate our final level of funding and that will provide instructions for applying for the use of the funds. Since our funding total will be less than \$25,000, we will be eligible to select items for direct purchase. Categories of goods include: school science kits, solar-powered trash compactors, membership fees for climate change management organizations, public outreach materials, teacher and staff training, and solar installations. Of these categories, the solar compactors may make the most sense based upon our funding level. Solar energy installations can leverage funds but generally require \$15,000 in base funding (the Town's original intent).

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the use of the funds.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) FEMA Flood Map Update

We received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) a letter referencing draft digital copies of the new Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and Flood Insurance Study (FIS) Report for Essex County for the Town's review.

The letter listed changes that had been made to the maps since the last printing (only two in Essex) and I informed FEMA that the street name in one of the two locations had been spelled incorrectly. I also passed along to FEMA that a variety of street names were incorrect on the enclosed draft maps and I provided the correct information. Other Town departments will also review the draft maps and any other corrections will be sent to FEMA. The agency may also hold a public input session in the near future.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

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