



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of June 15, 2015

Report covers from May 30, 2015 to June 12, 2015

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Essex Police Department Certification Ceremony

I attended the subject ceremony in Dover on June 4, 2015. The Chief of Police and the Police Sergeant, along with several officers, were also in attendance. The attainment of this State certification by the Department represents the culmination of approximately five years of preparation. Congratulations to the Department!

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Initial Meeting of the Essex Strategic Planning Committee (*)

I attended the subject meeting along with Chairman O'Donnell on June 8, 2015. The meeting featured a presentation by Mr. Mark Fine of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, with other input from Town Planner Matt Coogan. The meeting provided an overview relative to the mission of this new Committee and reviewed past planning efforts and accomplishments. Matt Coogan will serve as the Committee's ex-officio Clerk and the Committee will consider the election of a Chairman at its next meeting (which will likely occur on June 29, 2015). At the meeting, I was asked to provide the Committee members with an e-mail with links to the many past planning-related documents that will assist the Committee with taking stock of what others had established as priorities for the Town. I have completed that task and will continue to meet with the Town Planner and the Committee to advance the strategic planning process. I have also worked with our website vendor to create a new page for the Committee and the Town Planner plans to populate and maintain it.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Cape Ann Regional Cable Advisory Committee Meeting

The Cape Ann Regional Cable Advisory Committee will soon resume regular meetings. The Committee is presently in the ascertainment phase of the Comcast cable license renewal process. Public input has been obtained via surveys and the Committee, as guided by municipal counsel, is presently working to develop a full package for discussion with Comcast later in the process.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Long Term Planning Committee Draft Final Report (*)

The Long Term Planning Committee is completing its final report entitled “Planning to Preserve the Best of Essex”. Chairman O’Donnell and I have provided comments and Andrew St. John of the Committee will be working in the coming weeks to incorporate comments and include any missing content.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Migration of Test Public Safety Accounts to Melrose Platform

I migrated two police officers as test users of the Melrose virtual desktop platform during the week of June 1, 2015. The Police Department has a complex environment and it is necessary to test the system for a while to ensure that all is working as designed (especially since some general components are not yet migrated and will be phased in over time). Once the officers determine that all bugs have been worked out and once all elements are migrated and working on the new platform (which may take some time), I will commence with the migration of others.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 3 hours.

C. Personnel

No items.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Town Hall/Library Designer Site Visit and Tour

Our Project Manager and I offered a tour of the Town Hall/Library building on June 11, 2015 as part of a site visit offered to all prospective designers interested in the upcoming Town Hall/Library renovation project. A total of 11 prospective designers attended the site visit and proposals are due by noon on June 23, 2015. Over 25 prospective designers have requested Request for Qualifications packages since June 3, 2015.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Contract for Promotion of Town Resources (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should solicit quotations from three organizations for the promotion of Town resources (the Essex Merchants’ Group, the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, and the North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau). I solicited quotations from all three, with a deadline of June 11, 2015. Only the Essex Merchants’ Group chose to submit a quotation, in the

amount of \$20,000. The quotation breaks down the various promotional activities and provides pricing for each element.

Recommendation: Board vote to award the contract for fiscal year 2016 to the Essex Merchants' Group.

(3) Selection of Engineering Firm for Letter of Map Revision Process (*)

At the last meeting, the Board decided to wait one more meeting cycle for a fourth engineering firm to make a proposal relative to the prospect of amending the FEMA flood maps through the Letter of Map Revision Application Process. That firm, Applied Coastal Engineering, will most likely not be making a proposal, since the firm is very busy with other work (we will know for sure by meeting time). In addition, Town Planner Matt Coogan completed his review of the initial three proposals we had received in the past and, like other reviewers, he favored the most basic approach, which was proposed by the Woods Hole Group.

Recommendation: Final Board discussion regarding the selection of an engineering firm for the FEMA map revision work.

(4) Survey and Master Plan for Memorial Park (*)

Funds were approved in November of 2014 to conduct a survey and create a Master Plan for Memorial Park. In speaking with the Chair of the Community Preservation Committee, it is my understanding that the citizen group that championed this funding is working on developing a full scope of work. I will interface with the group at the appropriate time so that any proposed contracts for services can be approved in advance by the Board of Public Works, and, if necessary, by the Selectmen.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Annual Municipal Health Insurance Reform Report

The subject report is due to the Executive Office for Administration and Finance by the end of June each year. The report compares the amount spent on employee health insurance as compared to a lower number that could be spent if the Town changed plan designs to be equivalent to the most-subscribed plan designs under the Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission (GIC). Our report, which I have filed with the State, reiterates how, previously, the Town agreed with our unions to offer more robust plans in exchange for other concessions.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Visit from Department of Labor Standards Inspector

An inspector from the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards (DLS) visited the DPW barn on June 10, 2015. The Superintendent of Public Works, our insurance loss control representative and I met with the inspector regarding a minor injury that occurred back in the fall. We report all injuries to our insurer and our insurer is required to share all reports with DLS. The DLS inspector was using the opportunity to come out and meet us and to go over basic workplace safety and training. He agreed that the minor injury was not the result of any safety problem and provided us with literature regarding trainings and various laws and regulations that any municipality should be adhering to. We explained how we work with our insurer to provide a wide variety of safety training each year and how we have quarterly meetings of our Safety Committee. The Superintendent and I will review our notes from the meeting and the materials provided so that our existing safety program and protocols can be improved, where necessary.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

F. Facilities

(1) Potential Demolition of Structure at 153 Conomo Point Road (*)

Now that the demolition of the structure at 1 Robbins Island Road is behind us, the Board may wish to consider the demolition of the structure at 153 Conomo Point Road, since that property is most likely going to be used for public waterfront access. The first step would be for me to explore with the Conservation Commission the permitting process that will be necessary. It is possible that the demolition could be permitted without the need for a full Notice of Intent, since the foundation is relatively shallow.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the demolition of the structure and exploration of the permitting process with the Conservation Commission.**

(2) Review of Street Light Status (*)

As the Board may recall, I had asked National Grid to summarize which streetlights were working and being billed, not working but being billed, and not being billed due to having been turned off years ago. National Grid has provided a list of just eleven lights that were turned off at the Town's request and that are consequently not being billed. Field crews also surveyed all lights that are being billed and found eight that were in need of bulb replacement. As such, we can be confident that all lights that are being billed are actually working. If a given light is off, it means that it is not being used or billed, at the Town's request.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Engineering Review of Tennis Court Renovation

(*)

As the Board may recall, a private group had begun to raise funds for the installation of new tennis courts between the baseball field and the softball field at Memorial Park. However, that effort did not generate sufficient funds for that purpose and just under \$7,000 is still available in a gift fund maintained by the Town. More recently, a resident approached the Board of Public Works to determine if that Board was interested in the potential renovation of the two, existing courts. The Board of Public Works is supportive of this work and it is possible that a combination of Community Preservation funding and grant funding could someday make it possible.

In order that we have accurate cost information for both the Community Preservation Committee and the US Tennis Association to consider, it is necessary to engage the services of a civil engineer to study the matter. To that end, on June 10, 2015, I met with an engineer from Hancock Associates and the Superintendent of Public Works at the courts. He is in the process of developing a proposal.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(4) Parking Along Town Landing Boundary

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to explore the prohibition of parking along the right-hand boundary line of the Town Landing going up toward the street. On busy weekends, vehicles with boat trailers need additional room to maneuver and to take advantage of both halves of the roadway leading down to the ramp. I visited the site with the Superintendent of Public Works and we spoke to an abutter who agreed that he would voluntarily ensure that no vehicles were parked along that frontage on weekends between Memorial Day and Labor day. As such, there does not appear to be a need for signage or further regulation at this point in time.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Monthly Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on June 3, 2015, along with Police Sergeant Paul Francis (acting for Chief Silva, who was away). The meeting featured discussion

regarding various Chamber programs and events and we updated the group relative to various Town projects and initiatives.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

No items.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Site View, Maher et al. Legal Suit

Judge Welch of the Newburyport Superior Court conducted a site view of 13 Town Farm Road, the former leasehold of Leah Maher, on June 5, 2015. Selectman Coviello and I were in attendance, along with Town Counsel. The judge conducted the view in order to become better acquainted with the structure, since upcoming litigation will consider whether or not it is affixed to the land.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

M. Grants

(1) National Wildlife Federation Grant Collaboration Update

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the prospect of collaborating with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) on State and Federal grant applications. Unfortunately, after further study, we learned that the local match required for the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) grants involving coastal resiliency cannot be satisfied with the Super Storm Sandy Grant Federal funding that NWF already has. However, after detailed discussion with CZM, NWF staff did develop a regional concept for a Coastal Community Resilience Grant Program application, which was submitted by the June 12, 2015 deadline. The regional application involves all six communities along the Great Marsh and the local match will come from NWF staff time and time invested by local staff and officials. If funded, the grant will produce three main products:

1. Two sets of “fine scale” sea level rise and storm surge vulnerability maps for each community. This effort will mark the first time that we take the general concept of sea level rise and storm surge damage and shift the focus to finding the actual areas in Essex that are the most vulnerable.

2. A report on innovative financing tools to start implementing ways to protect these areas, especially since no funds are presently identified for these important tasks.
3. Targeted outreach and engagement to those who have the highest stakes with regard to the most vulnerable areas.

Also, NWF is considering an application to a Federal grant program offered by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) concerning the same topic. However, it is not yet known whether NWF will have the time or capacity to also take on a NOAA project while working on two other major projects.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) National Grid Energy Efficiency Grant Program

As the Board may recall, Mr. Ray Randall had volunteered to coordinate the Town's participation in a National Grid grant program that could provide the Town with grant funding for its own energy efficiency projects. The amount of grant funding that the Town ultimately received would be directly dependent on how many Town residents signed up to receive energy efficiency audits and services from the utility. However, for Essex, the ultimate grant would only range between about \$650 and \$2,500 (with the lower amount most likely) and would require Mr. Randall to attend lengthy training and to coordinate multiple public events. In addition, National Grid only plans to fund six communities in this grant round. Given the time commitment versus the potential reward, Mr. Randall, with my concurrence, has chosen to not pursue this program further.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Meeting with New Regional Dispatch Center Director

I met with the new Director of the Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center, Mr. Shad Ahmed, on June 11, 2015. Mr. Ahmed is becoming acquainted with the operation of the Center and with the members of the various advisory boards (including me as present Chairman of the Finance Advisory Board and the Executive Advisory Board). We discussed the Town's expectations from the Center and also reviewed how we might get the Spillman records management software up and running on the Melrose public safety server.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

O. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on June 12, 2015.

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