



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of July 13, 2015

Report covers from June 20, 2015 to July 10, 2015

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Release of Public Safety Committee Report (*)

The Public Safety Committee has officially released its report relative to the study of the Town's existing fire, police, and EMS operations. I have posted the report on the Committee's web page at www.essexma.org. It is expected that the Strategic Planning Committee will utilize the report as part of its overall planning evaluation process.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

(2) Release of Long-Term Planning Committee Report (*)

The Long-Term Planning Committee has officially released its report relative to the character-defining elements of the Town of Essex entitled "Planning to Preserve the Best of Essex". I have posted the report on the Committee's web page at www.essexma.org. It is expected that the Strategic Planning Committee will utilize the report as a key resource as it undertakes the planning process.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

(3) Strategic Planning Committee Update (*)

Chairman O'Donnell and Town Planner Matt Coogan participated in the second Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) meeting on June 29, 2015. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the recently-released Long-Term Planning Committee final report entitled "Planning to Preserve the Best of Essex". The draft plan was distributed to the SPC and the Committee was asked to review and create goals based on this plan, as well as the recent Building Committee report and other previous Town plans and reports. The Committee discussed how zoning could be used as a tool for preserving what the Committee agreed are the Town's best characteristics as presented in the report. Further, the SPC discussed protection of the Essex River via best practices for boating and recreation, and, perhaps, via a new conservation group or organization. Capital planning and economic development were also discussed.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Continued Progress Regarding Police Virtual Server

As the Board may recall, two police officers are currently serving as test users of a separate, public safety virtual platform in Melrose. Connections to the State Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) and the software at the Regional Dispatch Center were, at first, still being handled using local PCs. However, I worked with our router expert and staff at CJIS recently to establish a CJIS connection from the virtual server. Now that the CJIS connection has been established and tested, IT personnel from the Regional Dispatch Center will work with me to establish a connection from the virtual server to the Spillman records management system (which relies upon the CJIS network, for security reasons). Soon, the test users should be able to perform all necessary functions from the virtual server. After some additional use to ensure that all issues have been worked out, I will begin to migrate other police users.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 2 hours.

(2) Updated Accounting Software Connection Protocol

Our accounting software vendor (Tyler Technologies) provided an updated connection protocol for its web-based software during the week of July 6, 2015. I have installed the necessary application and users are able to connect using this new method. I have also uninstalled the old application, which is no longer supported by the vendor.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

C. Personnel

(1) Safety Committee Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on June 24, 2015 as a member of the Committee. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the Committee's progress with respect to various goals to date and the upcoming Town Hall/Library renovation project.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Award of Contract for Town Hall/Library Renovation Design Work (*)

Proposals from designers interested in competing for the design contract for the upcoming Town Hall/Library renovation work were due on June 23, 2015. We received a total of four proposals and the Town Building Committee met on June 30, 2015 to reach consensus on the top three firms (without ranking them). Subsequently, on July 8, 2015, the Town Building Committee interviewed all

three firms and voted to rank them after the interviews. The top-ranked firm was McGinley Kalsow & Associates of Somerville (followed by Perry Dean Rogers and Johnson Roberts).

Pursuant to the Town's designer selection procedure, the Board may now negotiate with McGinley Kalsow as to the cost of their services and may enter into a contract for services once the price has been set.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to award the contract for the Town Hall/Library renovation project design to McGinley Kalsow & Associates, contingent upon a successful price negotiation process that the Chairman and I can undertake, in conjunction with our Project Manager.**

(2) Lease of Temporary Quarters for Town Offices During Renovation (*)

I have continued to review potential solutions for temporary quarters for Town offices and the Library during the upcoming building renovation project. I have spoken to many other municipalities about their experiences with temporary office trailers or modular buildings and all agree that a certain premium is necessary to meet MA standards. That said, when trailer/modular delivery, setup, and eventual demobilization are concerned and combined with the monthly lease rate, this on-site option is almost certainly more expensive, even if square footage is held to a bare minimum. Also, although phone and network connectivity are logistically easy with this option, items such as water and sewer service (especially during cold weather) and handicapped accessibility will prove difficult.

As such, I have been exploring on a parallel track the prospect of leasing space near the existing Town Hall/Library. To that end, the former Lahey building, which the Town once considered purchasing for Town offices, will soon be vacant on the entire lower level. This level is directly accessible from the large parking lot in the rear and will provide more square footage for less money than trailers/modulars. Given the lack of suitable, existing buildings in Essex in general, I would encourage the Board to seriously consider engaging into lease negotiations with the owner as soon as possible. Further, the space meets the Town's unique requirements for space, office layout, off-street parking, and proximity to the existing building, which will allow the Board to enter into an agreement without further advertising or competition.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to enter into negotiations with the present owner of the lower level of the building at 74 Martin Street and to declare that formal advertising for this temporary space need will not benefit the Town's interests in this situation.**

(3) Purchase of Used Office Furniture for Temporary Quarters (*)

Due to the reduced size of the space that the Town offices will be housed in during building renovation, it will not be possible or cost effective to move

existing office furniture to the temporary quarters. As such, I have learned that used, modular office furniture may be purchased and delivered at a very reasonable price. This equipment may be sold at the end of the project and some may be retained, as it may actually represent an upgrade versus furniture that is in use in Town Hall presently. A total of twelve units will be necessary for the Town offices and the Library could use two more for whatever space it eventually ends up in.

Recommendation: Board authorization to purchase 14 identical modular office furniture units, including delivery, setup, and temporary storage, if necessary.

(4) Coordination of Regional Dredging Initiative (*)

At the last meeting, Chairman O'Donnell reviewed the topics covered in a regional dredging meeting pulled together by Senator Bruce Tarr on June 19, 2015. The Board agreed that the initiative is important and discussed the progress the Town has made toward its own future dredging preparations. Subsequently, I have worked with the Chairman and the Harbormaster to develop a letter to Senator Tarr outlining the Town's own initiatives and encouraging the Senator to bring the regional group together as often as possible in order to build momentum toward an eventual solution.

Recommendation: Board review and potential approval of the letter to the Senator.

E. Insurance

(1) Facility Self-Inspections

I completed facility self-inspection checklists for the Town Hall and the Senior Center for the third quarter of the calendar year. The checklists are aimed at identifying safety issues and anything discovered is discussed at quarterly Safety Committee meetings. No issues were identified.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Potential Solar Installation with Virtual Net Metering Agreement (*)

The Town has been approached by SunEdison to potentially locate a large solar array in the Town of Essex (or elsewhere in our National Grid load zone). The company would acquire an interest in property either in Essex or elsewhere and the Town could benefit from a net metering agreement that would have the effect of lowering municipal energy bills. A representative of the company has prepared a general proposal that demonstrates how the savings would work and he has indicated that his company already has a State-wide procurement exemption (from

a prior, competitive process). I have discussed this proposal with the Town Planner, who has experience with this type of arrangement. Given that SunEdison is just one of several companies that offer this type of service, our Planner suggests that we take the matter under advisement and look at this option in the future, after we have secured the Green Communities designation.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion regarding potential further exploration of this concept as a future component of our Green Community plan.**

(2) Asbestos Survey/Conservation Commission Hearing, 153 Conomo Pt. Rd(*)

I met our industrial hygienist at 153 Conomo Point Road on June 24, 2015 so that he could familiarize himself with the existing dwelling there. He later produced a proposal, at a cost of \$2,665, for his crew to fully survey the structure for asbestos and his company is prepared to start that work in the near future.

I also attended the Essex Conservation Commission Hearing on July 7, 2015 in regards to the Town's application for a Request for Determination of Applicability for the demolition of the structure. The Commission decided to table action on the Town's application until they can be provided with additional information as to the post-demolition use of the site and the timing of any future modifications and improvements. As such, the hearing was continued to September 22, 2015.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion regarding a potential notice to proceed relative to the asbestos survey and discussion relative to the Conservation Commission's comments from the recent hearing.**

(3) Potential Beautification or Modification of Causeway Seawall (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed with a resident's idea to reach out to Mass DOT to inquire whether the concrete seawall could be beautified in some way as a local project. The Board also asked me to inquire about the potential to replace the upper part of the wall with a railing, to allow for a view of the river and marsh (as an alternative to beautification). I contacted the appropriate personnel and learned that either option may work, but that all costs would have to be borne by the Town.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion regarding potentially pursuing one of these options.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Meeting with Congressman Moulton's District Representative

I met with Ms. Morgan Bell, of Congressman Moulton's Peabody office on June 25, 2015. Ms. Bell visited Essex to learn more about issues facing the Town and I thanked her for the Congressman's work regarding the Federal Channel reconfiguration process to date. Ms. Bell will continue to help coordinate that issue and will be coordinating with Senator Tarr's regional dredging work as well.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

No items.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Intermunicipal Agmt. - Harbormaster/Police Powers, Chebacco Lake (*)

Town Counsel has developed a draft intermunicipal agreement that would provide full harbormaster and police powers to Essex personnel while patrolling the Hamilton section of Chebacco Lake, and vice-versa. I requested this drafting assistance after the Police Chief/Harbormaster commented that it is always possible that enforcement action or boater assistance will be necessary beyond the Essex line even if the Town of Hamilton has not formally requested mutual aid in a given situation. I have provided a copy of the draft to the Hamilton Town Manager for preliminary review and comment.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the eventual signature of such an agreement.**

M. Grants

(1) MIIA Loss Control and Risk Management Grant Applications (*)

As the Board may recall, our insurer offers a \$5,000 Loss Control Grant and a \$10,000 Risk Management Grant to its members each year. I have worked with both the Police Chief and the Superintendent of Public Works to identify appropriate topics for this year's grant round. For the \$5,000 grant, the Police Department proposes to offer de-escalation training for its officers. For the \$10,000 grant, the Department of Public Works proposes another five days of

field data collection to complete the GIS mapping of our various utility systems (the first five days were paid for using last year's grant).

Recommendation: Board approval of the applications for both grants and vote to authorize me to sign contracts with either vendor should the application(s) be successful.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Signature of Revised Continuity of Operations Plan (*)

As noted previously, I had revised the Town's Continuity of Operations Plan to stay in line with our new, remote computing capabilities that we have arranged with the City of Melrose. All applicable departments had a month to review the revised document and only minor comments were received. Subsequently, I circulated the signature page for the revised plan to all departments and all have signed.

Recommendation: Board signature of the revised Continuity of Operations Plan.

O. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave for the entire week of June 29, 2015.

(2) Independence Day Holiday

The office was closed on July 3, 2015, 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.