



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of July 14, 2008

Report covers from June 28, 2008 to July 11, 2008

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Long Term Planning Committee Survey

Long Term Planning Committee (LTPC) Member Robert Coviello and I were trained in the use of the Survey Magik tool by our website vendor, Virtual Town Hall, on July 2, 2008. We learned how to access the tool that had been installed on our site and how to enter questions and gather responses. I entered the actual survey questions for the Committee's basic survey into the system and the survey recently went live. I provided a press release developed by the LTPC to four local newspapers and posted it on the Town website so that residents would be informed about the survey's existence. To access the survey, which will be available through August 15, 2008, an interested party can go to the Town's homepage at www.essexma.org and can click on the survey link.

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

(2) Cable I-Net Outage

The Cable I-Net experienced an outage related to a lightning strike on external power supply equipment. I contacted Comcast on the morning of June 30, 2008 and a Comcast technician was able to locate and correct the issue.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Walter Filtration Plant Tape Drive

The tape drive for the network server in the Water Filtration Plant malfunctioned during the week of June 30, 2008. I visited the site and updated the device driver. However, the backup jobs still did not run correctly. I contacted technical support for the system and the vendor sent me a new tape drive under warranty. I installed the new tape drive and its associated Symantec drivers and the device is now working properly.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 2 hours

(4) Wastewater Department File Maintenance

With the recent vacancy in the Wastewater Technician position, it was necessary to make the technician's computer files available to the Wastewater Clerk so that she could continue to access the technician's files while a replacement is being sought. I granted the necessary access and she can access what she needs from her own workstation in this interim time period. While I was working on the Clerk's system, I assisted her with a variety of system and file maintenance tasks to improve the operation of her system.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 1.5 hours

(5) DLS Gateway Website

The Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services (DLS) has developed a new tool for accountants known as DLS Gateway. DLS Gateway will allow our Town Accountant to produce and submit our tax rate recap and our Schedule A right on-line and DLS is encouraging the use of this new tool for fiscal year 2009. I had been set up by DLS as a system administrator in the past and the Town Accountant recently approached me for assistance with her logon credentials. We worked through the process together and the Town Accountant is now able to log onto the system and can access the necessary forms and schedules.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 0.5 hours

(6) Purchase of Additional Computer Systems

The Library recently took delivery of a new desktop computer system that I had assisted to configure and order. That system will be used on the Merrimac Valley Library Consortium system and was purchased with grant funds. As noted in the past, the Police Department is in need of a second officers' terminal and the Planning Board is in need of a new laptop system to replace their older model desktop system. Further, using the same grant, the Library would like a second system identical to the one they just received. I have requested quotations for the new systems and will purchase under the auspices of the same State contract used for the original Library order.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(7) Static IP Address Assignments

As noted previously, I have been working on eliminating the use of DHCP within our various networks in favor of static IP address assignments. I have now completed that process on both the Town Hall and the Water Filtration Plant networks and I have clearly labeled each workstation with its assigned address. I will be completing that process for the Fire/Police network in the near future and will then move on to the next recommended step in the network improvement plan provided recently by a network expert.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

C. Personnel

(1) Distribution of Sexual Harassment and Discriminatory Harassment Policies

Both of the subject policies were distributed to all employees with employee paychecks as is our practice each July.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Teamsters Contract Negotiations

The Management Team will engage the Teamsters in continued collective bargaining with the assistance of a State mediator on July 24, 2008.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

D. Procurement

(1) Draft Conomo Point RFP

I have continued to monitor drafts of the subject RFP and have provided commentary to the subcommittee of the Conomo Point Planning Committee that is putting the RFP together. The subcommittee will be presenting its recommendations to the full Committee on July 17, 2008 and I will assist with the document's finalization and presentation to the Selectmen at the next meeting.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Route 133 Project Update

Recently, I became aware of the fact that Mass Highway will be seeking to relocate the utility wires in the vicinity of the seawall that will be replaced as part of the subject project. The wires will be in the way of the cranes and other equipment that will be working in that area.

The project manager has commented that his agency has been working with the utilities on an ongoing basis to work out exactly what will be done. It is possible that the wires will be relocated only temporarily. We are presently still awaiting a meeting to discuss the burial of the wires in general and I will ensure that this construction issue is brought into that discussion.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) MIIA Rewards Program Credit

Participation in the MIIA Rewards Program earned the Town just over \$6,600 in credits toward our FY09 insurance premiums. We have been participating in the program for many years and this year's credit is the highest yet. We will enroll in the FY09 program once that is released this fall.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Building Study Group Update

As explained to the Board at the last meeting, the Building Study Group has continued to assess options for the future of the fire, police, and town offices. Representatives of the Library Department joined us on June 30, 2008 to become more familiar with the work of the group and to provide input. At that meeting, the Library representatives indicated that they would discuss the work of the group with the Board of Library Trustees on July 17, 2008 and would report back. It is likely that the study group will reconvene between the 17th and the next Selectmen's meeting on July 28, 2008 in order to receive Library feedback and to further develop some basic recommendations for the Selectmen.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Summer Hours for Memorial Park Restrooms

The Memorial Park Restrooms schedule has moved to seven days per week from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. as we have done in past years. Increased use of the Park and playground during the summer months necessitates this action and the seven-day schedule will continue through September 30, 2008.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Testing of Senior Center Fire Alarm System

The vendor for the Senior Center fire alarm system conducted the annual test of that system on July 3, 2008. As the Board may recall, I had arranged for an annual maintenance and testing contract in the past. I accompanied the technicians to the building and the tests were run early, before the building was in use for the day. The testing indicated that all aspects of the system were running properly.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Annual Inspection and Maintenance of Senior Center Cooling System

The vendor for the Senior Center cooling system conducted the annual inspection and maintenance of that system on July 9, 2008. The work was completed early in the day and the technician made minor adjustments to the system in addition to adding a small amount of refrigerant.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Municipal-School Financial Needs Discussion

Chairman Randall, Town Accountant Tieri, Finance Committee Chairman Soulard, and I joined our Manchester counterparts and two Regional School District members on July 9, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the major financial needs of the three entities and to determine whether collaboration could lead to economies of scale or improved efficiencies. A number of issues were discussed that could be developed further and the School District officials commented on how planning for the fiscal year 2010 budget will be initiated earlier than in past years in order to foster additional discussion and accommodate input. The group intends to meet again in mid-August and DPW staff and officials from both communities will be invited.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) FY09 Local Aid Estimates

The Legislative Conference Committee has announced local aid estimates for fiscal year 2009 and the Town's figures are virtually the same as last fiscal year. The Regional School District net total has decreased by approximately \$6,500 from last year. All numbers are subject to the Governor's approval.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

H. Complaints

(1) Dog Complaint

An individual living in the vicinity of a Milk Street farm complained that a dog that visits the farm frequently chases after people and other dogs passing in the street. The dog is present when a person who boards her horse at the farm comes to the farm to attend to the horse. The complainant did not have the identity of the dog's owner but did describe the dog. I contacted the owner of the farm and she indicated that she was aware of the dog in question and that she had spoken to the dog owner but the situation had not changed. The farm owner provided me with the contact number for the dog owner and I discussed the situation with that individual. The dog owner indicated that she would be training her dog to stay within the confines of an electric fence on the premises whenever visiting the

farm. I informed the dog owner that more formal action may be taken if dog cannot be satisfactorily controlled.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Sewer Service Area By-law Special Legislation

The special legislation that the Town re-filed recently that allows the Town's sewer service area by-law to be enforced under State law was approved by the Governor recently. The special legislation has been pending since the year 2000 and has required numerous renewals to the Selectmen's petition in addition to a renewal of the original Town Meeting vote.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Trench Permitting Authority Program

(*)

As the Board may recall, the recent Annual Town Meeting authorized the Board to appoint a Trench Permitting Authority within the Town for the purpose of issuing permits for trench excavations. I have been tracking the status of these requirements at the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) as requested by the Board and can offer the following update:

The MMA has taken the position that the new requirements are unduly complex and constitute an unfunded mandate. Thus far, the Department of Public Safety has refused to meet with MMA staff. The regulations requiring a Trench Permitting Authority will not be changing anytime soon according to the MMA analyst spoke to since an underlying change in the language of the statute would be required first. MMA will alert communities if any progress is made but that is not likely to occur before the January, 2009 effective enforcement date.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to appointment of a Trench Permitting Authority in order to be prepared for program implementation prior to the effective enforcement date.**

(3) Shellfish Resource Management

As the Board may recall, several months ago, I reported on a variety of activities relative to the clamming industry including a meeting that the Shellfish Constable and I had with staff from the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF). One aspect of that discussion was related to the ability of our Constable to review the weigh-in slips that shellfish dealers produce when local clammers drop off their daily catch. At that time, the DMF agreed that this would be an excellent management tool for ensuring that digging limits were being respected but could not promise those documents at that time. I have contacted DMF again to follow up on that past conversation since DMF staff had indicated that the topic would be reviewed further and am awaiting a reply. New tools such as a review of the weigh-in records are an important way for the Board and the Constable to oversee the management of the flats and to help protect the future of the industry.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Endicott College License

As the Board may recall, Endicott College holds a license from the Town to store boats at the Centennial Grove. That license expires in August and I contacted Endicott to determine if they still use that area and whether they desire to renew the license with the Board. The College has informed me that they now store their boats at Camp Menorah and will not need to renew the license with the Town.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Gloucester Sewer Billing

(*)

Further discussion relative to the Gloucester sewer billing dispute is warranted.

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

M. Grants

(1) Marine Oil Spill Response Trailer

(*)

The Department of Environmental Protection has informed the Town that the Town will receive the use of a new marine oil spill response trailer as part of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act of 2004. DEP will retain ownership of the trailer and will maintain and restock supplies in the event of an actual spill. The Essex Fire Department is in favor of receiving the equipment and I have prepared the necessary paperwork for signature by the Chairman. Training regarding the use of the trailer will be provided by a DEP contractor in the future.

Recommendation: **Board vote to approve the response trailer agreement.**

(2) Massachusetts Preservation Projects Emergency Fund Closeout

As reported previously, I had been working with our architect to provide to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) some final work products relative to the subject grant. The grant was in the amount of \$35,000 and was added to Town funds to completely develop plans and specs for the renovation of the Town Hall's exterior (which we now have). Other funds were used to perform temporary repairs relative to the most major roof leak problems. The final document, known as the Predevelopment Report, was delivered by our architect to MHC during the week of June 30, 2008 and it contains some interesting photos and information relative to the needs of the building (copy in Board's reading folder). The grant program is now considered closed out by the MHC.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items



(1) Independence Day Holiday

The office was closed on July 4, 2008 in observation 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.