



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of July 15, 2013

Report covers from June 29, 2013 to July 12, 2013

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Shellfish Daily Phone Recording

The Shellfish Constable uses an answering machine in the Fire Station to record updates regarding shellfish closures and related information. The Fire Department is in the process of installing additional security in that area and, as such, I arranged to set up a virtual recording system through the phone company. The Constable will no longer need access to restricted areas and will be able to update messages from any phone.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Migration of Infinite Visions Accounting Software to Vendor-Hosted Platform

I began preparations with our accounting software vendor during the week of July 1, 2013 to migrate our in-house instance of our accounting database that resided on one of our servers to the vendor's hosted platform. I assisted our vendor with the actual migration process on July 11, 2013 and the system is working well on the new platform. Our accounting server has been powered down and will be used as an e-mail archiving solution after the new server room is constructed later this year.

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

(2) Installation of Regional Dispatch Center Client Software

I worked with IT personnel for the new Regional Dispatch Center during the week of July 1, 2013 to install the full version of the client software at the police department. The client software is necessary for our personnel to access the Center's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, Records Management System (RMS), and hosted Fire House fire incident reporting software. Presently, only the CAD system is available and the RMS and Fire House software will be added over the next two months, once the other four communities are migrated to the Center and the various applications are in full operation. However, since the State has chosen to run the connection between each of the participating communities and the Middleton Center through a certain secure State network, we do not yet have the ability to connect to Middleton. Once the State completes the necessary network provisioning we will continue with configuration on our end. Until then, officers will continue to use laptops for connectivity to Middleton.

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

C. Personnel

(1) Formation of Public Safety Committee (*)

The Board asked me at the meeting of June 20, 2013 to work with the Boston Globe to publicize the Board's desire to interview candidates for a new Public Safety Committee. The Globe covered this topic on June 30, 2013 and a letter of interest has arrived from a very strong candidate. One other statement of interest was received prior to the advertisement.

Recommendation: **Board consideration of the candidates who have expressed interest to date and discussion relative to fielding additional candidates.**

(2) Annual Town Policy Employee Sign-Off Program

Employee acknowledgement forms for various Town policies were provided with employee paychecks and via e-mail for non-paid employees during the week of July 1, 2013. Employees may read the various policies on the Town's website and signed forms are due by the end of the month.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

No items.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

No items.

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

No items.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Quarterly Review of Executive Session Minutes

The Chairman reviewed the Board's executive session minutes during the week of July 1, 2013, as is the case each quarter. He did not identify any new minutes that could be released at this time.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

M. Grants

(1) Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Site Visit (*)

Personnel from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and their subcontractor, Icon Architecture, met with me and various downtown stakeholders on July 9, 2013 at the Town Landing to review the scope of an upcoming study. The MDI grant provides \$10,000 in technical assistance from Icon to recommend ways to unify and improve the Town Landing and its immediate surroundings. The next step is to finalize the scope of services that Icon will provide and the following items that were raised at the site visit should be considered:

1. The funds available will not allow for a detailed analysis of the situation. Rather, it is incumbent upon the Town to determine how the funds will best serve our future planning efforts for the area so that the scope of services can be appropriately focused.
2. It will be important to incorporate the wider audience of area stakeholders and the general public into the planning process since input received is valuable in steering the consultant's work toward future improvements that have community support.
3. The consultant needs to be aware of the host of other programs and initiatives that are present in our downtown area such as the Essex River Cultural District, the Essex National Heritage Area, the National Scenic Byway, the soon-to-be completed historical walking tour, the deployment of benches

along the causeway, other off-street areas of interest such as Paglia Park and the proposed downtown boardwalk, and other items.

4. The consultant needs to be able to integrate his design and planning work across a variety of uses in the immediate area that include the Shipbuilding Museum and yard, the Town Landing itself, and Periwinkles Restaurant. The layout of existing features such as the ship's wheel/flagpole may need to be altered and new features such as benches and perhaps a scenic vista viewing platform could be recommended for addition.
5. The DHCD and Icon personnel present all commented that the Town's municipal parking area and restrooms need to be included elements of this project. Parking in the project area itself is quite limited and it was their feeling that someone unfamiliar with Essex does not presently have enough visual cues to know how to drive to the parking facility with the understanding that the stairs leading up to the Village Restaurant property are a convenient and rapid way to get back to Town Landing on foot. Also, the general public does not know that public restrooms exist adjacent to the parking lot.
6. The project might also include an analysis of how to better focus passing pedestrian and motorist attention on the Town Landing from the street. In that area, the natural line of site is along the causeway and strategies could be employed to call attention to the Town Landing/Museum area as a gateway.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the finalization of the scope of services. DHCD would like to complete the scope development phase during the week of July 22, 2013.**

(2) Downtown Boardwalk Construction Funding Application

At the Board's meeting of June 20, 2013, the Board agreed with the content of a draft Seaport Project Review Form, which is required to move on to the construction funding phase for the downtown boardwalk. After having the form reviewed by Salem State University one final time, we submitted it to the Seaport Advisory Council and we are expecting to be put on an upcoming Advisory Council meeting agenda to have a preliminary discussion with the Council about our project.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Town Hall Generator

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) recently recommended to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that Essex should receive funding for an emergency generator for Town Hall. The Town applied for this grant back in March of 2013 and this news of a favorable recommendation is an encouraging first step. FEMA must now undertake a detailed analysis of our proposal and will announce a final decision in the future.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Winter Moth Discussion

At the Board's meeting of June 20, 2013, the Board discussed a suggestion from a resident to potentially release a certain type of fly to eliminate winter moths, which are capable of a high degree of defoliation. The resident had suggested getting in touch with the former Tree Warden from Wenham since Wenham successfully used this type of fly in their program. Selectman O'Donnell has the Wenham Tree Warden's contact information and will be in touch with him to discuss the issue further.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Independence Day Holiday

The office was closed on July 4, 2013 in observance of the subject holiday.

(3) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on July 5, 2013.

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