



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of July 25, 2011

Report covers from July 9, 2011 to July 22, 2011

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Conomo Point Design Services Subcommittee (\*)

At the Board's meeting of June 20, 2011, Selectman Coviello indicated that the Conomo Point Planning Committee had formed a subcommittee to develop the scope of work for a designer to assist with planning and facilities at Conomo Point. Committee members Marsh, Randall, Bediz, Witham, Drake, and Lynch will serve on that subcommittee and Selectman O'Donnell will serve as the Selectmen's liaison to the group. Selectman O'Donnell indicated at the Board's meeting of July 11, 2011 that she will provide suggestions for goals and direction to the Board at the present meeting. The full Conomo Point Planning Committee will meet with the Selectmen on July 28, 2011.

**Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the subcommittee's overall goals and direction.**

#### (2) Town Building Committee Update (\*)

I attended the Town Building Committee meeting of July 12, 2011 along with Selectman O'Donnell, who chairs the Building Committee. Project Manager John MacMillan of Reinhardt Associates was present to update the Committee regarding the status of the ongoing Town Buildings Feasibility Study. The Committee provided Mr. MacMillan with feedback and guidance with respect to his interim work products and he will now go and finalize his analysis based upon that guidance.

The Committee also discussed the prospect of purchasing the Lahey Clinic building as requested by the Board. The Committee did not make a recommendation concerning that potential purchase since Committee members need additional information first. Factors like final purchase price, building condition based upon inspections and surveys, and appraised value are necessary. It is possible that Reinhardt Associates could provide those services via change order, if desired. Or, it is possible that Committee member and volunteers with expertise in building inspection and analysis could provide the necessary information. The Committee also discussed the possibility of purchase with enough funding for full building renovation since temporary solutions often become much longer-term than expected.

Further, the Committee discussed a letter that had been forwarded by the Board to the Committee from a resident who suggested that construction of a new

elementary school in a new location would free up the existing building for use as Town offices and fire and police headquarters. The Committee's general consensus was that the existing school building is in very good condition and is in an ideal location for the Town's elementary students. Also, it appeared to the Committee that the cost of acquiring land and building a new school would far exceed the cost of accommodating police, fire, Town offices, and the Library in some other fashion.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to conducting some analysis of the building in order for informed recommendations to be made.**

## **B. Computer Systems**

No items.

## **C. Personnel**

### (1) Safety Committee Meeting

I attended a Safety Committee meeting as a member of the Committee on July 13, 2011. The meeting had been rescheduled due to a lack of a quorum back in June. The meeting featured a discussion regarding a new odor in the police evidence and property room. Efforts will be made to identify the source of the odor and to more thoroughly ventilate the space or purify the air using appropriate technology. It is possible that aging evidence, such as drugs, can create such an odor.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

### (2) Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association Wage Update

The MMPA has released a new wage and compensation survey system that allows members to compare compensation for various municipal job titles rapidly. MMPA formerly used a different system and this new system is more intuitive and easier to use. I have updated the system through fiscal year 2011 (the system's current reporting year) regarding data for Essex.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

### (1) Patriot Properties Contract

Just prior to the last meeting, I worked with the Board of Assessors to finalize a contract with Patriot Properties to assist the Board of Assessors with their functions. Patriot will migrate the Assessors from their present proprietary database known as Vision to Patriot's own software and will assist the Assessors with various tasks. The Board signed the new contract at the last meeting, after review by Town Counsel.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Conomo Point Property Appraisal Contract

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The Board voted to award the subject contract to Tyburski Appraisal Corporation at the last meeting. The contract price, including interior inspection, was \$36,750. The contract has an effective date of July 15, 2011 and the firm will soon begin preliminary work. All work products are due no later than September 9, 2011. I will have more information to report by meeting time.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Crosswalk Over Main Street at Martin Street

As reported previously, we had been in the process of arranging a meeting with the Route 133 Reconstruction Project designer to determine if a crosswalk over Main Street at Martin Street could be relocated from its originally-designed location. The Board (in previous meetings) and the Chief of Police had expressed safety concerns regarding the “as-designed” crosswalk scenario.

Selectman O’Donnell and I met with the Resident Engineer and the Project Designer on July 12, 2011 and we determined that the crosswalk either had to stay in the as-designed location or had to be eliminated completely (pending review by the MassDOT’s Traffic Division). Alternative locations were not possible due to the intersection and planned Village Corner crosswalk toward the causeway and unsafe sight lines and planned crosswalk at the congregational church toward Western Avenue. The Traffic Division subsequently approved the elimination of the crosswalk and it will no longer be installed as part of the project.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) 23<sup>rd</sup> Biweekly Report

I issued the subject report on July 14, 2011 (in advance of my vacation) to the members of the Chamber’s Route 133 Reconstruction Project Task Force. The report included an update on progress and the plan for two-way traffic during construction on the section of roadway between Burnham Court and Western Avenue. Base and binder pavement have been installed between the causeway bridge and Burnham Court and reconstruction work within the remainder of the project zone will progress steadily after that. A curbing and sidewalk crew will follow the roadway work once base and binder paving has been installed in the entire zone between the causeway bridge and Western Avenue.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

(5) Sponsorship of the Village Corner Pocket Park

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Manchester Essex Rotary Club could sponsor/maintain the subject pocket park, once it has been completed. The Selectmen suggested that the Club reach out to the proprietor of the Village Restaurant, in the event that the restaurant owner wished to collaborate regarding that effort. I have informed the Club's representative about the Board's discussion.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary at this time.

(6) Solid Waste Successor Contract

The Town's present solid waste disposal contract with Covanta expires in January of 2013. The Superintendent of Public Works and the Board of Public Works met with the Selectmen at the last meeting to discuss the best process to arrive at a successor contract. Presently, I am working with the Superintendent to ascertain pricing and contract features that our current contractor will offer. Once we understand those terms, we will conduct a comparison with pricing and contract features that are presently in existence between other vendors and other communities. We will make recommendations once that analysis is complete.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

(7) Constellation NewEnergy Successor Electricity Supply Contract (\*)

The Town's present contract with Constellation NewEnergy was executed when electricity supply pricing was climbing and the Town locked in a favorable rate for much of the contract term (i.e. market pricing was much higher than the Town's fixed rate). Constellation is the vendor associated with the Massachusetts Municipal Association's MunEnergy Program. Recently, pricing has decreased in response to lower natural gas pricing and it is possible for the Town to either blend its current rate with the new, lower rate for the term of a new contract or to lock in a lower rate now for the successor contract. I am presently waiting for figures associated with both of those options.

*Recommendation:* **Preliminary Board discussion relative to future electricity supply.**

**E. Insurance**

(1) Municipal Health Insurance Reform (\*)

The Governor recently signed legislation that provides communities with the freedom to make health insurance plan design changes or to join the State's Group Insurance Commission without requiring the traditional bargaining process. The new process does have a variety of limits, protocols, and other requirements.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to this new opportunity.**

(2) Quarterly Building Self-Inspection Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for the Senior Center and the Town Hall for the quarter beginning July 1, 2011 during the week of July 11, 2011. The forms are used at each Safety Committee meeting to discuss any safety issues found in Town buildings. Other departments inspect their buildings as well and bring any findings to the meetings. I did not discover any issues this quarter.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**F. Facilities**

(1) Library Reconfiguration

The Library Department has reconfigured the Library to accommodate better ergonomics and logistics. As part of the reconfiguration, I assisted with troubleshooting of an existing telephone jack in the new location of the Librarian's office area. The phone line in that area is working well and may be extended using a longer cord in the future.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Road Adequacy, Ownership, and Maintenance – Southern Conomo Point

At the last meeting, I described for the Board various scenarios regarding future road ownership and maintenance at Conomo Point. The Board favored a process whereby the Town would simply retain ownership of the roads without moving forward for acceptance as public ways. The Town would continue to plow and patch roads as necessary as is the case today. I summarized that information and the Board's preference to the Planning Board Chairman and Vice-Chairman, who have taken the information under advisement as the Planning Board prepares to write its decision.

Also, as requested by the Board, I asked the Fire Chief and the Police Chief to begin reviewing the proposed subdivision plan in advance of the official review window that will occur as part of the Definitive Subdivision Plan review. Each of these officials will consider the proposal from a public safety perspective.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Use of Beach at Centennial Grove

At the last meeting, the Board heard public comment regarding the YMCA summer camp's use of the beach at the Centennial Grove and reviewed a letter about the same topic. The Board determined that the camp should continue to close the beach to the general public from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Also, the Board offered a suggestion that parties interested in using the beach in the morning could explore the use of the Town's property off of Red Gate Road.

That lakefront area was prepared in 2009 as an alternative beach area while the movie was being filmed at the Grove. Subsequently, I was able to confirm that the parking area and the path to that property were not overgrown with vegetation and that the small area of sand placed in 2009 was still intact. I then offered that suggestion to both parties who had expressed concern about the use of the beach.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary at this time.

#### **G. Fiscal/Budget**

No items.

#### **H. Complaints**

No items.

#### **I. Meetings Attended**

##### (1) Regional Emergency Communications Center Finance Advisory Board

I attended a Finance Advisory Board meeting relative to the planned regional dispatch center as a member of the Board on July 15, 2011. The meeting featured an update regarding final construction bidding and a review of the job announcement and job description for the regional center's new director. The project is now expected to break ground sometime during August.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

#### **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

#### **K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations**

##### (1) Sewer Rate Relief Bill

As in years past, Senator Tarr has sponsored legislation to allow communities with extraordinary wastewater expenses (both construction and operation) to be eligible for the State's Sewer Rate Relief Program. The Senator's office offered me a draft of this year's bill and I developed a letter of support for the Board's signature at the last meeting, which included two suggestions for changes that would best suit the Town. The hearing on the bill occurred on July 14, 2011 and the measure is presently under advisement.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Sewer Capacity Allocation Fee Rules

At the last meeting, the Board agreed with the Board of Public Works that a reasonable fee structure should be worked out in order to grant parties within the existing Sewer Service Area additional sewer capacity under certain circumstances. At the request of the Board, I am working with Counsel to identify all of the steps necessary to achieve the Board of Public Works' goals, which may include bylaw modifications, changes to regulations, or other actions. We will continue to work together to develop the necessary bylaw modifications for the next Town Meeting.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

**L. Legal Issues**

(1) Oral Arguments, Gloucester Billing Case

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Attorneys for Essex and Gloucester presented their oral arguments relative to the City's sewer billing protocol on July 14, 2011.

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

(2) Department of Public Works Red Flags Policy

I am working with the Board of Public Works and Town Counsel to establish the subject policy with regard to the Department of Public Works' water and sewer utilities (pursuant to Federal law). The Board of Public Works reviewed a model policy provided by Town Counsel and revised it for Counsel's further review. The policy is designed to detect and address efforts that might be made by others to improperly access customers' private information. Once a final version of the policy is arrived at, the policy will be distributed to all necessary personnel and will be implemented.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

**M. Grants**

(1) Emergency Management Performance Grant

As the Board may recall, we had applied for a \$3,000 grant for emergency communications equipment back in March of 2011. The police and fire departments have now purchased that equipment and I have applied for reimbursement. The required Federal match was satisfied by the Town's purchase of the Code Red emergency notification system.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **N. Emergency Planning**

No items.

## **O. Other Items**

### (1) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave for the entire week of July 18, 2011.

*This report is available at [www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org) on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.*