



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of July 25, 2016

Report covers from July 9, 2016 to July 22, 2016

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Endorsement of Definitive Subdivision Plan for Robbins Island

The Planning Board endorsed the subject subdivision plan on July 20, 2016. The subdivision approval had required the Town to meet a list of seven conditions, which were all satisfied prior to the Board's meeting. After the endorsement, I sent the Plan off to Town Counsel for recording. With conditions met and the Plan recorded, closings associated with the various sales may proceed.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

#### (2) Upcoming Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) will hold its next meeting on August 16, 2016. The meeting will cover three major items: the formulation of the Town's Community Compact regarding economic development; the review of a re-prioritized Strategic Plan document; and next steps for the constitution of a new Economic Development Committee (EDC).

Regarding the Community Compact, the Board agreed at the last meeting that the closest focus area offered by the State is the "Prepare for Success" focus area. To that end, I have provided that input to the Town Planner and to the SPC Chairman as they prepare for the SPC meeting. Regarding the re-prioritized plan, the Town Planner will have a draft of that ready for the meeting. Regarding the new EDC, the SPC will likely focus on a committee charge and a slate of Committee members from various relevant sectors.

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

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Troubleshooting/System Restoration Regarding Primary Domain Controller

While I was on vacation during the week of July 4, 2016, our primary Windows Domain Controller experienced problems and rendered network logon impossible. Once I was contacted about this matter, I worked with technicians in the City of Melrose datacenter to utilize a backup domain controller so users could continue working. During the week of July 11, 2016, I corrected the problems with the primary controller, which is now again functioning normally. I will be working to specify a replacement server in the near future, since the present unit is six years old.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 3 hours.

(2) Network Security Testing and Training Review (\*)

As noted previously, I had been working with a network services firm that commonly provides free consulting to the Town regarding the best way to approach various IT-related recommendations made by our auditor's technology department as part of the fiscal year 2015 audit. The firm recommended the use of network security specialist, INS, to potentially provide the Town with periodic network penetration testing and network user training regarding security best practices.

I spoke with a team from INS on July 19, 2016 and subsequently completed a questionnaire regarding how our IT infrastructure is generally organized. I have learned that the firm can provide a slate of basic services annually. In addition, I discussed with the team some of the other audit recommendations to understand whether INS could also eventually assist with other elements of the audit. INS plans to provide the Town with a scope of services and associated cost proposal in the near future.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.** Total time – 2 hours.

(3) Wiring and Number Porting Preparation for VOIP Phone System

As the Board may recall, we will be transitioning from copper, Centrex phone lines provided by Verizon to cloud-based VOIP connections provided by ShoreTel in the coming months. I have begun to prepare for this transition by running temporary network lines from each desk in the temporary Town Hall to the new switching equipment located near our Internet connection. I have also begun to fill out the appropriate forms and work with Verizon relative to how the porting of the phone numbers will proceed when the time comes. The goal will be to drop each Verizon connection and simultaneously pick up the ported line at ShoreTel. We will use this new system in our temporary quarters until we return to the renovated Town Hall and the new phones will simply be plugged into dedicated data connections at that location for instantaneous resumption of service. ShoreTel is presently processing our order and it is likely that we will test the connection using one of the new phone numbers (extra extension), which can be done independently of the Verizon lines and without interrupting the business of any department.

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

### **C. Personnel**

No items.

## D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

### (1) Town Hall/Library Renovation Project Meetings

I attended the subject weekly meetings on July 13 and 20, 2016. The contractor is finishing up interior framing work and the electrical, HVAC, and sprinkler subcontractors have been working steadily. The plumbing subcontractor is expected on site very soon. The new elevator shaft is nearly complete and the contractor will take delivery on the elevator equipment in the near future (to be stored on site while the elevator subcontractor begins the lengthy installation process). Also, National Grid has indicated that planning for the installation of the building's new gas service from the main on Martin Street is advancing and that installation will occur in the coming weeks.

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

### (2) Masonry/Window/Insulation/Varnish Change Order Requests, Town Hall (\*)

The masons working on the project had to unexpectedly remove and reset stones at the Library stair landing. However, it was not necessary to completely demolish and rebuild one of the building's chimneys (resulting in a credit for that portion of the work). The masons also were required to replace some brick chimney components on two chimneys and some repointing was also necessary. I had expected that the change order for this work would have been ready for the Board's last meeting but our architect preferred to wait until the masonry work could be bundled with other items. The net amount for the masonry work is \$2,058.69 and the preference is still to bring it to the Board in a package with other items in the future.

In addition to the masonry changes, during the framing of the third-floor offices, a window between the Board of Health Clerk's office and the Board of Health Administrator's office was added. This is due to the fact that the Clerk's office is the only office in the building without an exterior window and this interior window will help bring in natural light from the Administrator's exterior windows. Our contractor is presently working up pricing for this minor addition and the matter will be presented to the Board as part of a future change order.

Further, our architect has recommended that insulation be placed above the first-floor bathroom in the Town Hall foyer (in order to cut down on noise transmission to the Treasurer/Collector's offices above it) and has recommended that the ceiling of the portico overhanging the Town Hall entrance be stripped and then clear-varnished (as opposed to painting). A price for that potential work is forthcoming from the contractor.

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

(3) Library Electrical Change Order (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the need to get change order pricing that would allow for the future implementation of a new lighting plan for the Library, along with the installation of additional power outlets and the installation of data jacks for the MVLC computer network. Our architect developed specifications for these items and, after the Library Trustees approve those specifications, our General Contractor will provide us with a cost proposal for the work.

If the subject change order is executed, the Library will be fully prepared to accept new lighting fixtures in the future, which may be funded using project contingency (if available toward the end of the project) or using a new appropriation which may be sought at the Fall Town Meeting. Presently, due to meeting timing, it is likely that the contractor will need direction on whether to proceed prior to the Board's next meeting.

***Recommendation:* Board authorization of the Chairman to enter into the necessary electrical change order outside of a meeting, if necessary.**

(4) Review of Library Furnishing Items (\*)

Our architect is presently fairly certain that the Library circulation desk, some built-in bookshelves beneath the Library windows, and an associated counter can be constructed to the Library Trustees' specifications within the confines of the base bid amount.

The specialized architect that the Trustees are working with has also provided specifications regarding several other pieces that need to be custom-fabricated and the Trustees are presently seeking quotations from local craftsmen regarding those items. The Trustees would like to work within a furniture bid that I will be undertaking in the fall for some more standard items such as tables and chairs and we can also test the market in that bid for the custom pieces. Further, Campbell Construction could be asked to provide pricing for the custom pieces. Once we have more information regarding the best way to proceed with the custom items, funding may be considered in advance of the Fall Town Meeting (if necessary).

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

(5) Installation of New Town Hall Sprinkler System Water Service

At the last meeting, the Board approved a change order to account for the incorrectly-located water main on the sprinkler water service design plan. The actual water service work was conducted from July 18 to July 20, 2016 and it went very smoothly. The Town's water service contractor brought the new, four-inch service line from the main in the street to a point five feet away from where the service will enter the basement. The general construction contract for the building work includes getting the line into the building from that point.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(6) Update Concerning Folsom Pavilion Restoration/Replacement Analysis(\*)

As the Board may recall, McGinley, Kalsow & Associates had been retained to design and cost-estimate both a restoration and a replacement option for the dilapidated Folsom Pavilion at the Centennial Grove. Presently, it is my understanding from the project's principal architect that the replacement option would be less costly than the preservation option, which would consequently mean that the Town would end up with a completely new structure. Our architect is presently working on detailed cost estimates for each of the alternatives and plans to attend a future Board meeting, along with the Essex Historical Commission, to present the firm's findings.

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

(7) Northern Conomo Point Public Access Design Update (\*)

I have confirmed with Landscape Architect James Heroux that he is available to hold a conceptual review of the design for the vicinity of 153 and 138 Conomo Point Road on September 8, 2016. In addition to the Selectmen, invited boards will include the Conomo Point Planning Committee, the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, and the Strategic Planning Committee. Mr. Heroux is also available on September 22, 2016 for the first public input forum concerning the project. The same boards discussed above will be invited to that forum, so that their own ideas can be compared to the public input that will be collected. Both meetings will take place at the school, at 7:00 p.m., and the public forum will also contain segments concerning the Youth Commission, the Grove Cottage, and the Personnel Board (as requested by the Board). The Conomo Point Planning Committee met on July 21, 2016 to begin preparing for the design input process.

Further, I attended the Essex Conservation meeting on July 19, 2016 along with Mr. Dan Ottenheimer of Mill River Consulting to discuss the need for engineering investigations concerning the existing seawall at 153 Conomo Point Road. The Commission determined that this exploratory work is permissible under an abbreviated permitting approach and approved the work. Our consultant will determine whether the existing seawall is adequately tied into the land and any necessary additional structural work will be included in the scope of the construction project.

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

(8) Further Development of General Furniture Bid Specification (\*)

Through researching the industry and working with Town Hall employees regarding general furniture configurations and options, I have developed the necessary specifications to solicit bids for new or "like-new" furniture for the

renovated offices in Town Hall. This general furniture bid is expected to be released in September and will also solicit pricing on several custom items desired by the Library Department, along with two traditional library tables and a table for the shared conference room.

Relative to the shared conference room, two options exist for a 10-person conference table (a “racetrack” table, situated diagonally in the room, or a 7’ x 54” rectangular table). Of the two, the racetrack option uses the space most efficiently. Otherwise, many options exist for a less-cramped, 8-person table.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to which type of table is preferred in the shared conference room. The Board of Library Trustees may also wish to comment on this choice.**

#### **E. Insurance**

No items.

#### **F. Facilities**

##### (1) Field of Dreams Irrigation Well Problem

The Field of Dreams irrigation well had experienced production issues earlier this season and our well driller attempted an inexpensive approach to clear the well screen. The well worked for a while but the low production problem has returned. Our driller will eventually attempt a more extensive cleaning of the well casing but the well will remain out of service for the time being (appropriate given the drought conditions in the area).

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

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

##### (1) Use of Ryder Trust to Finish Third-Floor Meeting Space in Town Hall (\*)

Town Counsel has confirmed that the Ryder Trust can, in fact, be used to finish the planned, third-floor meeting space in the Town Hall. That space is essentially all part of the original Memorial Hall, the restoration of which is all eligible for Ryder Trust funding. It is possible that the approximately \$173,000 in the Trust, combined with perhaps project contingency toward the end of the project and/or a small amount of additional funding from the Fall Town Meeting, will allow for more than just an unfinished space on that floor. The Ryder Trust may be expended by a vote of the Selectmen and does not require Town Meeting action.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to next steps.**

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

### (1) Conservation Commission Hearing Regarding Southern Avenue Properties

The Commission met to continue the subject hearing on July 19, 2016 (continuation of a May hearing concerning the Town's potential demolition of the dilapidated garage at 5 Southern Avenue). As the Board may recall, this project has been placed on hold. More information is necessary about the contents of the structure, how the demolition of the structure may affect leaching of contaminants by rain, and how demolition may affect an underground storage tank beneath the garage. Personnel from the Essex County Greenbelt had previously visited the Commission to discuss that organization's collaboration with the Town. The Commission continued the hearing until their meeting of September 20, 2016.

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

## **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

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

No items.

## **L. Legal Issues**

### (1) Offers to Purchase All Five Remaining Southern Conomo Point Properties

Per the posted agenda, through the real estate firm contracted by the Town, the Town has received bona-fide purchase offers for the five remaining, occupiable, Town-owned properties in the southern area of Conomo Point. The prospective buyers are presently in the inspection phase and the next step will be the execution of formal Purchase and Sale Agreements. All offers actually exceed the minimum price set by Town Meeting and include the clearance of all tax arrearages. Prospective buyers do have the ability to drop out without penalty during the inspection period but would have \$10,000 at risk once a Purchase and Sale Agreement is signed.

*Recommendation:* Board vote to proceed with offer acceptances as per the posted agenda.

(2) Release of Grinder Pump Easement, 1 Riverview Hill Road (\*)

When the sewer system was installed, those in grinder pump areas executed easements with the Town relative to the placement of sewer facilities on their properties and the Town's right to enter and maintain the pump and associated equipment. At 1 Riverview Hill Road, the owner chose to install a new swimming pool, which required them to relocate some of the facilities in areas that would be difficult for the Town to maintain in the future. As such, during the building permit process, the owner agreed to release the Town from any future maintenance obligations on the property. Town Counsel has prepared a release agreement that the owner's attorney has reviewed and approved. Since the agreement was specific to a previous property owner and did not run with the property, Town Meeting action is not required.

*Recommendation:* **Board signature of the subject agreement.**

## **M. Grants**

(1) Final Request for Reimbursement, Coastal Community Resilience Grant

Both the Ipswich River Watershed Association and the National Wildlife Federation provided the Town with final invoices concerning the subject project during the week of July 11, 2016. Both organizations were paid and I subsequently sent a request for final reimbursement to the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management. The grant program was very successful and useful maps and materials concerning resources most susceptible to climate change/sea level rise and potential mitigation measures have been produced for six coastal communities (both electronic and in print).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Beneficial Use Study, Thin Layer Deposition, Army Corps of Engineers (\*)

I met with Mr. Kirk Bargerhuff and his associates from the US Army Corps of Engineers on July 21, 2016. The Corps is presently in a position to review the cost-benefit of adding sediment to the marsh via thin layer deposition (TLD) as a potential mitigation strategy to expected sea level rise. The Corps is also open to the idea of using sediment to restore degraded salt marsh areas and/or to create additional clam flat areas. Sediment could be sourced from the Essex River channel, thereby also improving the navigability problem that is apparent at lower tidal stages. Sediment with higher organic content could be used for TLD or marsh restoration. Sediment with higher sand content could be used to create new clam flats in areas currently under water for the entire tidal cycle. Sediment that is mostly sand could possibly be placed just offshore adjacent to area beaches.

As part of the Corps' Feasibility Study, all of these possible sediment uses would be compared with the more traditional methods for dredge spoil disposal – upland disposal and ocean disposal. Presently, it is necessary for Corps personnel to

actually visit the resource areas in question with Mr. Peter Phippen, a local expert regarding our salt marsh system, to determine if the above study elements seem feasible at a gross level. That field work is expected to occur by mid-August so that the Corps can make what is known as a “Federal Interest Determination”. The Determination will outline whether grounds exist to proceed toward a full Feasibility Study. If all goes well, it is possible that the Feasibility study would eventually translate to a formal project design and implementation (requiring some type of cost match from the Town).

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

## **N. Emergency Planning**

### (1) Regional Dispatch Center Joint Monthly Meeting

I attended the subject meeting of the various Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center advisory boards on July 15, 2016 in my capacity as Chairman of the Finance Advisory Board and the Executive Board for the Center. The meeting featured updates from the Director on a number of fronts, including the continued improvement of the Center’s software system and potential virtualization. The Director is also working to quantify how much additional capacity the Center has without taking on additional employees (both under the present operational model and under a revised model that will create efficiencies). Once that capacity is quantified, it is possible that other communities could join the Center (for police, fire, or both) and could thereby reduce the overall budget gap.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **O. Other Items**

No items.

*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.*