



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of July 27, 2015

Report covers from July 11, 2015 to July 24, 2015

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Delivery of New Front End Loader

The Town Meeting appropriated funding for a front end loader (the Town's first ever) back in May. As the Board may recall, we have already processed the required lease-purchase contract with our financing company and the order was approved and placed. The loader was delivered on July 13, 2015 and was accepted by the Superintendent of Public Works on July 15, 2015. Subsequently, our office overnighted the necessary first payment and other paperwork to our financing company so that the vendor could be paid. I also worked with the DPW relative to insuring the new equipment. The vendor then conducted training for DPW staff and the new loader is now in operation.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Strategic Planning Committee Update

(*)

The Strategic Planning Committee held its third meeting on July 20, 2015. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the general areas of focus that might have the most impact on the Town's future, with goals built around each. Much of the content for this first iteration of the Town's Strategic Plan has its roots in the recently-released Long Term Planning Committee final report, which is available on the Town website. Before the next meeting, which will likely be held in mid to late-August, Committee members will individually develop action items and measuring tools for each goal, for discussion at the meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Installation of Regional Dispatch Software on Virtual Server

I worked with IT personnel from the Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC) on July 13, 2015 to install the client portion of the records management system software on the public safety virtual server in Melrose. Until now, officers have been connecting to the RECC's database using local PC's in the police station. With the installation of the software on the Melrose platform, an officer can access the database from his or her virtual desktop. This function was necessary so that all officer activities can be run from that platform, allowing complete portability using any Town network terminal and, eventually, remote

logon capabilities. The two test users will utilize this arrangement for a while before other users are migrated.

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

(2) Replacement of Failed Zero-Client Device

The Assistant Superintendent of Public Works was experiencing connection disruption issues with respect to his virtual desktop in Melrose. After investigation, it appeared that his actual zero-client device at his desk was malfunctioning as a result of a circuit board problem. I replaced the device with a new one that I had on hand and the problem has been corrected. This situation actually illustrates one of the many advantages of the new, virtual desktop system. The zero-client devices are inexpensive and are very easy to change out in the event of a failure.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – ½ hour.

C. Personnel

(1) Informal Staff Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting on July 23, 2015 in my office as I do from time to time. The meeting featured updates relative to ongoing issues and initiatives in the various Town Departments as well as an overall discussion relative to the upcoming Town Hall/Library renovation project. Logistics of having to vacate the building during construction were also discussed.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Commencement of Pre-Dredging Survey and Testing Work

The Army Corps of Engineers has commenced with the necessary survey and testing work in the Essex River that the agency would need to perform prior to any dredging project. While there is no actual dredging funding currently available, the Town's planning progress to date, including the Town's ongoing conversation with Congressman Moulton's office to re-designate the boundaries of the Federal Channel, is sufficient for the Corps to start this necessary pre-cursor work. As noted in the past, survey and testing work requires personnel and sophisticated equipment and is quite valuable to the Town. This work is being funded by the Corps, out of its annual operating budget, at no cost to the Town. Essex Marina has graciously agreed to provide a staging area for the Corps' boats, vehicles, and other equipment.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Field Testing Concerning Proposed Tennis Court Renovation

I met our consulting engineer and a DPW backhoe operator at the tennis courts in Memorial Park on July 16, 2015. As the Board may recall, we have contracted with Hancock Associates to study what will be required to properly renovate both courts and field work to collect subsurface conditions was necessary. Our consulting engineer was able to determine from the work that the area was filled extensively in the past. As such, it is likely that a large amount of excavation will be necessary in order to replace the present material with material that will not continue to settle. Presently, our engineer is working on a formal field report that he plans to provide the Town with before he moves into the design phase.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Replacement of Handicapped Accessible Ramp at Folsom Pavilion (*)

During our Building Inspectors pre-youth camp inspection for this season, he noticed that the concrete handicapped ramp leading into the Folsom Pavilion was settled and starting to break apart. He indicated that the ramp should be addressed before next year's camp season and also asked that we have the entire structure assessed as to its ground support system, due to its age.

I am in the process of obtaining from a concrete contractor a quotation to replace the handicapped ramp. This work could be done later in the summer, after the camp has concluded for the season. I expect to have a quotation by meeting time. As for the Pavilion's support system, additional discussion is necessary as to how best to approach that request.

Recommendation: **Board consideration of the concrete ramp replacement work and discussion relative to evaluation of the structure's ground support system.**

(3) Site Visit and Securing of 153 Conomo Point Road (*)

The Board conducted a site visit at 153 Conomo Point Road on July 16, 2015. At the site visit, it was evident that a party had recently broken into the building. The structure has many windows and doors, making a break-in fairly easy (especially if an intruder is willing to simply break a window). It may be prudent at this time to board the building up and I will have a quotation for this service by meeting time.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to observations made at the site visit, including whether the building should be boarded up to prevent break-ins and for overall public safety.

(4) Potential Spaces for Temporary Library Location (*)

I have been working with the Librarian to review a variety of potential solutions for temporary quarters for the Library when 30 Martin Street is under renovation in 2016. Several spaces available for lease have been viewed but have not been deemed adequate for the Library's needs. Recently, the idea was presented that the Centennial Grove Cottage may offer a suitable solution. Also, the former White Elephant Annex building on John Wise Avenue will soon be for lease. As such, the Librarian and I, and others toured both buildings during the week of July 20, 2015.

The Centennial Grove Cottage does not currently have a HVAC system nor a source of water in the winter. The Cottage is also at the end of a difficult road in the winter, since no salt can be used in that area. The former White Elephant building is on the State Highway and offers much more space than the Cottage (has an open floorplan).

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the potential use of the Centennial Grove Cottage or the former White Elephant Annex building for a temporary Library facility.

(5) Management of the Centennial Grove Facility (*)

It has become apparent that the intensity of use of the Centennial Grove has increased sharply in recent seasons. As a result, given that parking at the facility is reserved for residents, many non-resident users have sought parking along the side of neighboring roads. This situation was, in the opinion of the Chief of Police, detrimental to the maintenance of public safety. Therefore, he placed a weekend-only temporary parking ban along roads in the general vicinity of the Grove for the duration of the season. At this time, it would be beneficial for the Board to discuss this matter and propose options for best managing the facility over the long term.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to potential future management steps.

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) Intermunicipal Agreement Concerning Chebacco Lake Patrols

At the last meeting, the Board agreed to explore a potential Intermunicipal Agreement with the Town of Hamilton regarding authority of each community to render assistance and to enforce rules on Chebacco Lake, even if personnel happen to be patrolling in the other community. The Hamilton Town Manager is presently reviewing the draft Intermunicipal Agreement that was drafted by Town Counsel.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

M. Grants

(1) MIIA Flex Grant Application

(*)

As the Board may recall, each year, our insurer provides us with a credit toward our insurance premiums associated with our participation in the MIIA Rewards Program. For the most recently-completed fiscal year, FY2015, our Rewards credit amount was \$5,223. This year, MIIA has introduced the subject new grant program, which makes up to 50% of the credit available for loss control-related projects.

As noted above, I have recently learned through the Building Inspector that the handicapped accessible ramp to the Folsom Pavilion has settled to the extent that it needs to be replaced. The Pavilion is an important element of the summer camp program offered by the YMCA at the Centennial Grove. The MIIA Flex Grant will allow us to spend approximately \$2,600 toward this project.

Recommendation: **Board approval of the Flex Grant application for funding to replace the ramp.**

(2) Contract with McGinley, Kalsow & Associates, Town Hall/Library Design (*)

At the last meeting, the Board voted to obtain from McGinley, Kalsow & Associates a cost proposal for design, bid assistance, and construction oversight services for the renovation of the Town Hall/Library building. The firm was ranked first out of the three, top-ranked proposals for this work and I worked with the Chairman and our Project Manager to review the firm's proposal. After minor adjustments, the Board signed the contract and our designer is now officially underway. A kickoff meeting was held with personnel from the firm, our Project Manager, and Chairman O'Donnell on July 22, 2015.

The very first step in the design process is the firm's hosting of a "summit" of all building users. The summit will be aimed at reaching consensus on how any interior space within the project scope will be potentially modified or repurposed, and it will be undertaken in two parts. Presently, the firm plans to hold the first part of the summit on July 28, 2015 at 9:00 a.m., in the Library. Using guidance from the group, our designer will produce a set of plans and the group will meet again during the week of August 24, 2015. After final consensus is reached, the firm will have a clear direction on how their final design work should proceed.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Lease of Temporary Office Space at Lahey Building

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town should enter into lease negotiations with the owner of the so-called Lahey Building at 74 Martin Street. The Board made a Unique Acquisition Determination at that time, since further advertising for the Town's need for space would not benefit the Town's interest, given the highly advantageous attributes of the building. The owner of the building will be in attendance at the present meeting to discuss what he feels is reasonable for lease terms.

Recommendation: Potential Board vote to enter into the lease for space at 74 Martin Street.

(4) Delivery of Office Furniture for Temporary Quarters

The temporary office space at the Lahey building may be vacant as of the middle of August. As such, the potential lessor for the space is potentially willing to allow the Town to store the temporary office furniture that the Board authorized at the last meeting in that space, prior to our potential move-in (early 2016). I have arranged for delivery of the furniture sometime in September, which will avoid having to deliver the items to Town Hall, only to have to move them again when we move into the space.

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 a portion of the afternoon on July 16, 2015 and all day on July 17, 2015.

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