



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of July 28, 2008

Report covers from July 12, 2008 to July 25, 2008

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Joint Planner Discussion Meeting

As noted at the last meeting, Chairman Randall is working to set up a joint discussion among the Essex and Manchester boards of selectmen and planning boards to determine the level of interest in sharing a part-time planner. The meeting will likely occur in the coming weeks.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Long Term Planning Committee Survey

The Long Term Planning Committee reports that residents have begun to respond to the Committee's survey which allows residents to provide their input on the future of the Town. The survey's availability was highlighted in local newspapers and I recently added a note to the Town Events board in front of Town Hall. *The Beacon* will be running a story on the survey in the near future. Parties interested in taking the survey can go to www.essexma.org through August 15, 2008.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Regional Dispatch Center

The Massachusetts Senate recently passed a bill that is pending House signature that would assist with the acquisition of equipment for a new, regional dispatch center. The bill proposes to, among other things, create a new State department known as the State 911 Department and to establish a surcharge on telephone bills that would be pooled and provided to local and regional dispatch centers for equipment, etc.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Computer Network Analysis

Now that DHCP has been eliminated from each of the three Town networks (Fire/Police Headquarters Network now completed), I reviewed the list of suggestions from our computer consultant again to plan the next step in network simplification. He has recommended the purchase of inexpensive, individual routing devices for each of our three main buildings. This step will move routing from the individual network servers to these much simpler and more dependable

routers. I have ordered those devices and our consultant will visit the Town in the future to help move both our Cable I-Net routing and our Domain Naming Service (DNS) functions from the servers to the routers.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 1.0 hour.

(2) Purchase of Wireless Access Point

At the request of the Planning Board and with the Board's concurrence, I ordered a wireless access point which will allow the Planning Board Clerk to connect to the Town Hall network wirelessly from her office desk and from anywhere else in the building. The Planning Board has a need for the Clerk to take notes on a laptop at Planning Board meetings and, since they meet in the Library, the Clerk can be directly connected to network resources including files, Internet, and e-mail. I have installed and tested the access point with my laptop and the Clerk will utilize the access point once the new laptop we have ordered for her use arrives.

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

(3) Board of Health Payroll Database

Now that the Board of Health is employing a Public Health Nurse for a few hours per week, it was necessary to revise that department's payroll database to include the new name and wages in various data entry forms and output. At the request of the Board of Health Clerk, I made the necessary changes and the Nurse's information is working well within the modified system.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – ¾ hour.

(4) Additional Library Network Drop

The Librarian was in need of a new network drop in order to offer a Merrimac Valley Library Consortium terminal in a new location. MVLC personnel were not able to assist with that task. Therefore, I assisted by running the new wire between the MVLC hub in the Essex Room and the new terminal location. The MVLC terminal is up and running.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

(5) Mooring Database

The Harbormaster's Clerk indicated that she was in need of a custom report relative to the mooring database program that I had developed. As such, I visited her office and helped to create the report. I also showed her the basic report writing techniques within Lotus Approach in the event she has need for additional reports. Further, we reviewed the overall operation of the waiting list and active mooring list databases in preparation for next season.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 2.5 hours.

(6) Green Energy Link

Chairman Randall suggested that a link to green energy information be added to the Town website to provide users with that resource. As such, I have added a link to the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) on the Town's homepage.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Teamsters Mediated Contract Negotiations

The Management Team was scheduled to continue negotiations with the Teamsters with the assistance of a State mediator on July 24, 2008. Due to a conflict, the Teamsters representative was not able to attend and the Management Team met with the mediator. The Teamsters will also meet with the mediator separately before our next session (scheduled for August 22, 2008).

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

D. Procurement

(1) FY09 Chapter 90 Paving Bid

The Department of Public Works opened bids for paving in various locations in Town on July 14, 2008. The successful bidder was BitCon Industries of Topsfield with a bid of \$59,812.50. Since the bid amount exceeds the DPW's \$50,000 threshold, the contract had to be approved by the Board. The vote necessary to enter into the contract was taken at the last meeting and the contract has since been signed.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Further Development of Conomo Point RFP

The full membership of the Conomo Point Planning Committee met on July 17, 2008 to discuss the status of the Conomo Point Request for Proposals. Prior to that meeting, Selectman Lynch provided me with some policy guidance from the subcommittee that is working on the RFP and I was able to insert that desired content into the required legal framework of the document and to make suggestions for focusing the full Committee's work. The full Committee provided me with some additional guidance and determined that some final consultation with the subcommittee would be adequate. The subcommittee will meet soon to finalize all outstanding items and I will assist with the preparation and release of the final draft.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) FY09 Insurance Renewal

Our insurer has provided us with our FY09 property and auto insurance renewal package. I reviewed the list of insurance certificates issued to other parties such as vehicle lien holders and provided updated information for the new fiscal year. Also, the Police and Fire Accident policy selected by the Board (Chubb Group) in the past has gone into effect at the quoted rate. Further, the Selectmen's Assistant is working to coordinate departmental updates to our auto fleet schedule, our building schedule, and our special equipment schedule. That information will be combined onto one update and sent to our insurer once compiled.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Annual MIIA Insurance Survey

Our insurer recently invited us to respond to an on-line survey relative to the level of service and quality of products that we experienced over the past year. I completed the survey with a suggestion that the e-learning training feature that was introduced two years ago be updated with additional courses. The update would provide new training opportunities to municipal employees without traveling to distant meetings, especially in light of recent fuel cost increases.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Town Building Study Group

(*)

As noted previously, the study group was waiting for input from Library staff and officials relative to the future of the Town Hall and Library building. The Board of Library Trustees met during the week of July 14, 2008 and took the matter under advisement to allow additional time to consider the topic. At this point, the group would like to consider the potential next step with the Selectmen while we are awaiting further input from the Library.

Also, discussion with the School District Superintendent indicates that classroom space that will be freed up at the school when the sixth grade moves to the new building is in high demand. Competing requests from within the District's program will likely utilize that space. As such, the idea that has been discussed in the past relative to potential permanent use of school space for Town purposes does not appear to be feasible. As discussed below in this report, it is possible that the Town will be able to utilize a small amount of school space for emergency quarters but nothing more.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the next step.**

(2) Fire Station Drainage

The Safety Committee has been monitoring sporadic wet conditions in the basement locker room in the Fire Station. The problem may be related to clogged/crushed pipes and/or the change in grade that was made when the new parking lot was constructed. The problem may also be related to subsurface changes resulting from the sewer construction project. The Department of Public Works has tried to assist but more specialized equipment may be needed. To that end, I have worked with the Fire Chief to provide a sewer contractor with as much information as possible on the original building drainage system and on the parking lot and sewer projects. The contractor will utilize a camera system and a water jet unit to attempt to study the problem more closely during the week of August 11, 2008.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Annual Sprinkler System Inspection, Senior Center

Our sprinkler system contractor conducted the annual inspection of the Senior Center sprinkler system on July 22, 2008. I visited the Senior Center in advance of the technician to ensure that the occupants and the emergency center were aware of the testing.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Window Screen Replacement

A baseball from Memorial Park was hit through the screen of the Planning Board office window (window glass was up at the time). The Clerk informed me of the damage and I replaced the broken screen with new screen material.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(5) Bulb Replacement

The fluorescent light fixture in the Planning Board office was in need of a replacement bulb. The Superintendent of Public Works happened to be in the building and was able to reach the fixture without a ladder.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(6) Grove Cottage Repairs/Maintenance

A resident noticed that the Grove Cottage ramp and stairs are in need of some minor repairs and maintenance including the application of a sealant. He will be donating his time and the Town will purchase the supplies and materials.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(7) Accrual of Clean Choice Program Funds

(*)

As the Board may recall, the Town is presently accruing funding toward the installation of a solar panel on a Town building via the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) Clean Choice Program. That program credits funding to the Town from electricity customers who have elected to utilize green forms of electricity. Chairman Randall recently became aware of a program in Sharon that is designed to accrue funds more quickly by challenging residents to donate \$100 toward wind energy in Massachusetts. That program, known as the Sharon Community Solar Challenge, will leverage funding that goes back into the MTC fund. I contacted the Town Administrator in Sharon and learned that Sharon had just joined the program recently and, as such, has no experience yet.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the potential implementation of a similar program in Essex.

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) School Issues Discussion

I met with Manchester Essex Regional School District Superintendent Marcia O'Neil on July 23, 2008. We discussed various issues including the potential use of a small area in the Essex Elementary School in the event of an emergency (an ongoing topic – see past reports); the development of a joint finance working group; the recent development of a joint town/school discussion group; and the provision of meeting minutes and other information/updates.

Relative to the use of space in an emergency, the Superintendent will continue to discuss that topic with the School Committee and additional information may be available by the fall.

The joint finance working group would consist of regular meetings among personnel from the two towns and the District to keep current on budgeting and other financial developments. That group may interface somehow with the collaborative discussion group that Chairman Randall kicked off recently and the Superintendent will attend the August 13, 2008 meeting of the discussion group to review further.

Also, the Superintendent recommended that parties interested in School District news (town officials and general public alike) subscribe to the various subscriptions at the District's website at <http://www.mersd.org/subscriber>. Users are able to choose various topics for e-mail updates in a fashion similar to the subscription service available on the Town's website at <http://www.essexma.org/subscriber>.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Trench Permitting Authority (*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked that I: a) find out from other municipalities which entities have been chosen as Trench Permitting Authorities along with their major duties, their workload, and problems encountered, b) determine if Town Counsel has any all-town memos on the topic, and c) what written legal statements the Department of Occupational Safety has made on the topic.

From my investigation of the subject, I have learned that most communities have yet to make the appointment and implement the requirements. I have also learned that many communities have the same questions that we have about the new rules. To that end, I understand that our insurer, MIIA, will be holding a seminar in the fall and will be producing a publication on the topic. I was also directed to some web resources from the Division of Occupational Safety. Further, Town Counsel has just released an all-towns memo on this topic.

***Recommendation:* Continued Board discussion relative this issue in light of the above information.**

(2) Local Authority for Intermunicipal Agreements

Chapter 188 of the Acts of 2008 has amended section 4A of Chapter 40 of the General Laws by authorizing the Board of Selectmen to enter into intermunicipal agreements without Town Meeting approval. This change in the law will be important with respect to any future efforts to share resources among communities since it serves to streamline the process.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Sewer Billing Dispute

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I have additional information relative to this issue.

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

M. Grants

(1) Grant Writing Resources

A member of the Long Term Planning Committee noticed that Congressman Tierney is preparing a resource package relative to grant writing. I contacted the Congressman's office and the package will be forwarded to the Town for our use in mid-August. I will provide the package to the Long Term Planning Committee via Chairman Randall at that time.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan Grant

As the Board may recall, the Town Meeting funded in the past the Town's share of a Federal grant for the production of the subject plan. Such a plan is necessary if the Town is to be eligible for Federal funds in the future that will assist with the mitigation of hazards before they become problematic. Like many other communities in the region, Essex is having its plan written by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). MAPC staff will take input from various Town departments and officials and will develop a plan that specifically lists the natural hazards that could create problems given the right conditions. To kick off the planning process, MAPC planner Brad Stoler will meet with Chief Silva, Chief Carter, Superintendent Goodwin, and myself on August 14, 2008.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Provision of Ipswich Municipal Water to Essex Address

(*)

A party is converting the old lobster shack at the Ipswich line on Route 133 to a new, seasonal ice cream stand. Essex Town water service stops near the Cape Ann Golf Course and well water is not feasible due to transient public water supply regulations. As such, the Town of Ipswich has agreed to allow a connection from the Ipswich water system to this Essex property (the Town of Ipswich and the property are separated by the Castle Neck River). Presently, the

Town of Ipswich requires a letter from the Essex Selectmen that approves that connection. I spoke with our Superintendent of Public Works and he does not have any concerns about the connection. In fact, some Essex addresses by Chebacco Lake are served by the Hamilton water system already. The water service will not be under any Essex Town land or road and its installation will need to be reviewed and approved by the conservation commissions in both communities. The water service will have an Ipswich meter which will be read and billed by the Ipswich Water Department.

***Recommendation:* Board approval of the water service from the Town of Ipswich to this new Essex business.**

(2) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave all day on July 10, 2008.

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