



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of August 11, 2014

Report covers from July 19, 2014 to August 8, 2014

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Consultant's Report Regarding Assessment of Essex Fire Department (\*)

The Essex County Fire Chief's Association completed the subject report for the Essex Public Safety Committee during the week of July 14, 2014 and the report was distributed to the Selectmen at the last meeting. The Public Safety Committee is reviewing the report and will incorporate its findings into its final recommendations concerning both the police and the fire departments. The Committee may also ask for the report to be revised if its review so dictates. Presently, we expect that the Committee's final recommendations to the Board will be made in the near future.

**Recommendation:** Board discussion relative to the recommendations in the report.

#### (2) Commencement of Part-Time Planner Operations

Our new Part-Time Town Planner, Matthew Coogan, began work at the last Board meeting when he attended the quarterly department head and board/committee chair session. The following morning, he held his first office hours (which will be Tuesday mornings between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.). He will eventually also be in Town Hall on Wednesday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. when the Building Inspector is present for his usual office hours. I have worked with Mr. Coogan to set up the necessary office and computer resources and he will begin to tackle his first work assignment, which is to review the Town's potential path to becoming a "Green Community". That designation will allow the Town to compete for future funding for energy efficiency – translating to potential savings.

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

#### (3) Addition of Historical Commission to Building Permit Form and Guide

At the recent department heads meeting, the Chairman of the Historical Commission pointed out that the Commission needed to be added to the building permit department sign-off form and to the permitting guide on the Town website. I have reviewed these matters with the Building Inspector and I have learned that the permitting guide has been updated. The change to the building permit form will be made in the near future.

**Recommendation:** No further action is necessary.

#### (4) Memorial Park Public Parking and Restroom Signage

At the last meeting, the Fire Chief brought to our attention that the public is often inquiring about public restrooms in the Fire Station, which requires personnel to direct people to the public restrooms adjacent to the municipal parking lot. He also noted that the public parking sign may have been removed. As such, I followed up with the Superintendent of Public Works and he confirmed that the public parking signs on Martin Street are still present. Also, he has agreed to post new restroom signs on Martin Street so that the public will be more equipped to find these resources without assistance.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### **B. Computer Systems**

#### (1) Server Power Supply Failure

One of the two power supplies on one of our servers began to send an error code to the server's status screen during the week of July 14, 2014. After confirming that the power supply was the issue (as opposed to some other component, the grid power, or the power cord), I contacted the server's manufacturer for a replacement under warranty. Since we presently have a similar server that is not in service, I was able to immediately move a power supply from that machine into the in-service server. When the replacement power supply arrived, I simply inserted it into the server I had borrowed from.

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

### **C. Personnel**

No items.

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

#### (1) Downtown Boardwalk Site Visit

(\*)

Our Consulting Engineer and I met with the proprietor of the CK Pearl Restaurant on July 30, 2014, at the establishment. The purpose of the site visit was to review for the proprietor what he could expect to see if the boardwalk is constructed behind the establishment and to review some ideas he has for improvements to the establishment that would make the project more compatible with his goals. One idea is to narrow the boardwalk's width in the area of the establishments dining areas so that visitors would not tend to congregate in those areas (and would instead pass through on the way to wider areas with benches, etc.). Another idea is to expand the establishment's existing patio so that it would better complement the boardwalk. Presently, the proprietor is reviewing the matter with the property owner and he will provide us with more input in the future.

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

(2) Invitation for Bids for Auctioneer Services, Southern Conomo Point (\*)

I am working with Town Counsel to craft an Invitation for Bids for auctioneer services to allow the Town to auction off three southern Conomo Point properties that the Town has full control over (and possibly others). All three properties were authorized for sale by the Town Meeting in 2012 and are under full control of the Town as a result of former tenants deciding not to purchase them and vacating the premises. The properties include 8 Town Farm Road, 24 Cogswell Road, and 19 Cogswell Road. It is also possible that 31 Cogswell Road, 7 Cogswell Road, and 13 Town Farm Road could be auctioned off should pending eviction litigation be concluded at some point in the future that results in the Town obtaining full possession of one or more of those properties. Further, if sales of 20 Cogswell Road and 92 Conomo Point Road to specific parties do not come to fruition, those two properties could also be potentially auctioned off.

The Invitation could be crafted to procure an auctioneer for the three properties now under full control in the near-term. That same auctioneer could remain available for some or all of the remaining five properties for auctions that could possibly occur if circumstances warrant. It is possible for me to finalize the Invitation for Bids in time for the August 13, 2014 *Goods and Services Bulletin* deadline, which would yield a bid package release date of August 18, 2014. Copies of the solicitation could also be sent to Massachusetts auctioneer trade groups.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to a potential Invitation for Bids for auctioneer services.**

(3) Conversion of Town Hall Heating Plants to Natural Gas (\*)

At the last meeting, I explained that the gas company has clarified for us that no easement will actually be required to run a gas line from the street to the Town Hall. However, the gas company is reluctant to do that work before the Town has funding to do the internal conversion work that is necessary. As such, the Board will pose the need for internal conversion funding to the Fall Town Meeting in November and we can work with the gas company in the spring of 2015 to have gas brought in. That will make the coming winter the last heating season that will be fueled by heating oil.

It is also possible that waiting one additional season will allow the Town to partially defray the conversion cost via a green communities grant. Our Town Planner is presently exploring the “Green Community” designation process for the Town, which could lead to that grant funding. Alternatively, I have learned that our electricity supplier, Constellation Energy, that a new program may be offered whereby Constellation would assist with the conversion and then offer a fixed-rate natural gas contract, just like the fixed-rate electricity contract we now utilize.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the various possible methods of natural gas conversion funding.**

(4) Town Hall/Library Renovation Project Change Orders

At the last meeting, the Board signed a variety of small change orders associated with the subject project to deal with conditions that were not anticipated in the original project design documents. The Board also authorized the ongoing investigation of the structural problem with the Town Hall bell tower, which will be funded using the Finance Committee's Reserve Fund. Project contingency to cover any other items that may arise between now and project completion is now down to approximately \$13,000.

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

**E. Insurance**

(1) Town Hall Structural Investigation

As the Board is aware, as soon as we noticed signs of a structural problem with the Town Hall bell tower, we brought in our own engineer and installed precautionary shoring on the end wall of the building. Simultaneously, we contacted our insurer to determine if the problem will be covered by our policy. As such, our insurer sent their own consulting engineer to review the matter on July 22, 2014. Selectman O'Donnell and I pointed out the various issues that we had noted and provided some history and background regarding the building. Subsequently, on July 31, 2014, our consulting engineer and our Town Hall renovation project contractor began the investigation of the permanent solution by our contractor exposing various structural members for our engineer. This work is being conducted by a change order authorization approved by the Board at the last meeting.

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

**F. Facilities**

(1) Invitation for Bids, Asbestos Removal at Conomo Point Properties

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should develop and release an Invitation for Bids for the removal of asbestos in the structures at 103 and 138 Conomo Point Road in preparation for their demolition. An assessment of suspect building materials in each structure previously noted the presence of significant amounts of asbestos. As such, I developed the necessary Invitation for Bids and it was released during the week of August 4, 2014. Our asbestos assessment contractor's findings were included in appendices to guide bidders. A site visit for interested bidders will be held August 13, 2014 and final bids are due by August 21, 2014. The Selectmen will consider making an award at the next

meeting, on August 25, 2014, and all work must be completed by October 3, 2014.

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

(2) Potential Street Light Conversion to LEDs (\*)

Now that our electricity supplier, Constellation Energy, has completed our interior lighting retrofit in five Town buildings, I was asked whether the Town would be interested in converting streetlights to LEDs. Presently, National Grid owns the streetlights and a proposal would have to be made to purchase them before Constellation could conduct the conversion. In order to understand the inventory of lights and the purchase cost that National Grid would expect, the Town would have to write to National Grid for a preliminary analysis (no obligation at this time). As such, I have prepared a letter to National Grid that could be used to request that analysis should the Board wish to proceed with this first step.

*Recommendation:* **Board consideration of a letter requesting National Grid to provide the Town with a preliminary inventory and purchase price analysis.**

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

No items.

**H. Complaints**

No items.

**I. Meetings Attended**

(1) Informal Department Heads Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting on July 24, 2014 as I do from time to time. Individuals updated the group regarding various ongoing projects and initiatives and the meeting featured a discussion relative to the ongoing Town Hall/Library renovation project.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Massachusetts Municipal Association MunEnergy Meeting

Essex hosted the subject meeting at the Senior Center on July 25, 2014. The meeting featured a presentation from Constellation Energy personnel relative to the MunEnergy Program. Essex participates in this program by contracting with Constellation (the MMA's preferred vendor) for fixed-rate future energy supply. As the Board is aware, we recently also completed a lighting energy efficiency retrofit in five Town buildings through the Program. The various attendees asked

questions of the Constellation personnel and I was able to share the Town's experience with the Program.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

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

### (1) Potential Appeal of FEMA Flood Elevations in Essex

At the last meeting, the Board voted to back, in name only, an effort that may be undertaken by a group of private citizens to fund an appeal of the FEMA flood elevations that just took effect in Essex. If that effort is successful, the Town could be the appellant and the engineering firm necessary to develop the appeal methods and report could be paid for from that private funding. I have not heard back from the private group to date as to whether that effort will go forward.

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

### (2) Revision of Town Landing Regs. and Parking/Launch Fee Discussion (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the existing Town Landing Regulations should be reviewed and potentially revised to better comport with the Municipal Parking Lot Regulations. As such, I have developed proposed changes to the Landing Regulations, which, if enacted, could be followed up with a revision to the signage at that location. The Board also discussed the merits of charging a launching fee versus a parking fee to non-residents further at the last meeting and asked me to raise the issue again for additional discussion.

*Recommendation:* **Board review of proposed changes to the Town Landing Regulations and consideration of future launching or parking fees for non-residents.**

### (3) Revision of Centennial Grove Regulations (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Centennial Grove Regulations should be modified to only allow resident parking (in both the upper and the lower parking lots) for the months of June, July, and August. Exceptions to this rule would include non-resident summer camp staff, non-residents watching or participating in Field of Dreams sporting events, non-residents renting the Grove as part of an organized event, and City of Gloucester residents who have purchased an annual parking pass. As such, I have developed proposed changes to the Centennial Grove Regulations for the Board's review.

***Recommendation:* Board review of the proposed changes to the Centennial Grove Regulations.**

#### **L. Legal Issues**

No items.

#### **M. Grants**

##### (1) Council on Aging State Formula Grant, FY15

At the last meeting, the Board authorized the Chairman to sign the usual Council on Aging State Formula Grant application outside of a meeting as soon as the Chairman of the Council on Aging completed that package. The application was expected to be completed during the week of August 4, 2014 at the time of printing of this report and Chairman Jones was expected to sign it prior to its submittal by the August 12, 2014 deadline.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

##### (2) Town Hall Emergency Generator Grant Kickoff Meeting

Personnel from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) visited Town Hall on July 23, 2014 to review our plans to procure and site a new emergency generator on the premises. I was able to show our visitors the quotation for the generator I had obtained from a vendor on the State Contract and we reviewed the actual location that the generator is expected to be placed in (with consultation from our electrical contractor). The group agreed that we should move ahead and order the generator and that our plan to use the electrical contractor that is already on site for the Town Hall renovation project will be satisfactory. However, after further review of the State Contract in question, MEMA indicated that the generator type and cost that we require are not covered by that particular contract. I am presently working with MEMA and the State Operational Services Division to determine if another State Contract is applicable.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as 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 August 4, 2014.

*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.*