



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of August 15, 2016

Report covers from July 23, 2016 to August 12, 2016

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Council on Aging Rules

The Council on Aging has chosen to develop rules concerning how the Council runs meetings, appoints officers, relates to the Director, etc. I have reviewed the draft rules and have made suggestions. The Council will tentatively attend the Board's September 12, 2016 meeting to provide an update on operations.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Replacement of Primary Domain Controller and Assessors' Server (*)

As the Board may recall, the Windows server known as the Primary Domain Controller (PDC) for our Windows domain experienced problems in early July. I was able to get that server working correctly again after directing traffic to our alternate server, but this primary server is now six years old. Given that we plan to always run the PDC in our own server room (with replication, for redundancy, to a virtual server in Melrose), it is time to replace that server. I have worked with the Melrose IT Department on a suitable specification and the cost, under the State Contract with Dell is \$3,003.90.

Also, the server that presently runs the Board of Assessors' tax assessment software is even older than the PDC discussed above. We had been holding off on purchasing a new server since the software vendor was hoping to release a cost-effective, vendor-hosted solution by now. However, that solution has not materialized and we do not expect it to soon. As such, we need to continue to run this critical software in-house and a new server is necessary. I have received from the vendor (Patriot Properties), a suitable server configuration that we can migrate the AssessPro software to. Under the State Contract with Dell, the cost will be approximately \$4,750 (waiting for final software cost).

Recommendation: **Board authorization to place the order for the replacement servers.**

(2) Migration from Copper Phone Lines to ShoreTel Cloud System, Town Hall

After the Town placed the order to migrate to cloud-based, VOIP phone lines from our existing copper lines for Town Hall circuits, a logistics specialist from ShoreTel began working with me regarding required paperwork and detailed

phone and network information. Our plan is to install a few phones (on lines that are getting new numbers) to test the system, end-to-end, before we port our actual numbers over to the new system. I participated in a project kick-off conference call with ShoreTel personnel on July 29, 2016 and a call flow meeting on August 8, 2016 and ShoreTel began programming the system thereafter. Presently, I am awaiting the assistance of a network expert to configure our Comcast router for communication with ShoreTel and for communication between our local area network and the phone network. Once all programming and technical preparations are complete, we will select a port date for the switchover.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 4.5 hours.

(3) Finalization of Assessors' On-line Tax Map/GIS

As the Board may recall, our tax map vendor, CAI, has been hosting a digital version of the Town's tax maps for some time now. The system has not been opened to the public, however, since the Assessors have been working to achieve a perfect match between the maps and the new numbering system (down to the structure level for condos). Personnel from CAI met with the Assessors on August 10, 2016 and it is my understanding that we should expect a public release of the on-line system before October.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

C. Personnel

No items.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Town Hall/Library Renovation Project Weekly Meetings

I attended the subject meetings on July 27 and August 10, 2016. The contractor has completed interior framing and began work on the exterior renovation of the building as of August 1, 2016. The elevator shaft has been completed, the elevator equipment is in storage on site, and elevator crews are beginning to assemble the inner workings of the elevator. All subcontracted trades continue to make great progress with interior work. All work on the building's chimneys has been completed and roofing work will begin in a few weeks. The new server room has been framed and walls have been constructed and plastered. I will be working with the contractor on arranging for the eventual move from the old server room to the new server room. The concept of insulating the ceiling above the new bathroom has been dropped, since the new bathroom will be even more sound-containing than the existing bathroom in the Library, which does not present noise issues upstairs.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Library Electrical Change Order

At the last meeting, the Board authorized the Chairman to sign the subject change order outside of a meeting after the final pricing was determined by our general contractor. The Library Trustees attended the last meeting and agreed at that time that the specifications for the change order that had been prepared by our architect were acceptable. Our contractor is still working on that pricing and the Chairman will consider the change order, when available, to ensure that this work will be performed before any finish work commenced in the Library. Work will eventually proceed and all wiring will be put in place to allow for the replacement of lighting fixtures toward the end of or after the project, depending on available or new funding sources.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Library Furnishings/Built-in Component Update and Discussion (*)

At the last meeting, the Selectmen and the Library Trustees agreed it would be beneficial for our architect to ask our general contractor to price various custom, built-in items that had been recommended by specialized architect Richard Smith. Presently, our general contractor has been asked to provide pricing. Also, the Trustees are working on soliciting quotations relative to those features being constructed by local craftsmen. Further, when the general furniture bid is finalized, it will carry Mr. Smith's specifications for those items as a third possible avenue for acquiring them.

Several built-in items are already included in our general contractor's base bid and we have confirmed that those items will be constructed and finished to the Trustees' preferred specifications for the original bid price. After the present meeting, I will also provide to the Trustees a list of general furniture items that will be included in the general furniture bid so that those specifications can be approved by the Trustees. At the last meeting, the Board and the Trustees had not completed a discussion regarding the seating for the eight-person conference table in the first-floor shared conference room.

Recommendation: **Finalization of the seating specifications for the first-floor shared conference room so that all general furniture specifications can be prepared for a fall bid.**

(4) Design Recommendations for Third-Floor Town Hall Finish Work (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town should pursue the use of the existing Ryder Trust funds (\$173,000) and perhaps other funding (available contingency at the end of the project and/or additional appropriation) to make the third-floor Town Hall space useable. Presently, the base construction bid is preparing that area as a roughed-in space only and that is separated into two parts by the decorative arch from the old stage area. Our architect has produced an overall design recommendation and a rough cost estimate for the work (which will

be available by meeting time). Given that the area needs to be separated into two spaces (removal of the arch would not likely be allowed from a historical perspective and would be cost-prohibitive, even if allowed), it is possible that the rear space could be made into a dedicated employee break room, with kitchenette (instead of locating the kitchenette in the second-floor conference room).

***Recommendation:* Board consideration of our architect's recommendations and cost estimate, with attention to how this additional work will affect project schedule and incidental carrying costs.**

(5) Masonry/Window/Varnish Change Order Requests, Town Hall (*)

As reported previously, 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. Another activity, involving the addition of grout to a certain area also ended up in a credit status. The net amount for the masonry work is just over \$2,000 (a final amount will be available by meeting time).

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. This change has been priced at \$3,681 since it is a custom window that will require framing, setting, and final trim. Our architect estimates that, if we had received permission to install a similar window in the exterior wall (denied by the Massachusetts Historical Commission), the cost would have been approximately \$6,000.

Further, our architect had recommended that the ceiling of the portico overhanging the Town Hall entrance be stripped and then clear-varnished (as opposed to painting). I have confirmed that the clear varnish recommendation was made because our architect was able to confirm that finish as matching the original finish. The portico work came in at over \$13,000 and is not recommended.

***Recommendation:* Board consideration of each of the above change order proposals.**

(6) Review of Previously-Concealed Structural Issues, Town Hall (*)

As work has continued on the Town Hall/Library renovation project, various structural components that have been concealed until this point in the construction project underwent inspection by our architect's subcontracted structural

engineering firm (Structures North). In two cases, Structures North has identified damaged or rotted members that will need attention that is outside the scope of the original design and bid. These circumstances will result in change order proposals that our contractor is presently putting together.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(7) Review of Cost to Replace Certain Baseboard Heat Elements, Town Hall

In many areas in the Town Hall and Library, new baseboard heat is being installed. In the four, pre-existing, second-floor offices, baseboard heat already existed. The original design did not include the replacement of those baseboard elements and our architect is investigating with our contractor what it would cost to replace at least the register covers, and, in some cases, bent sections of heating fins.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(8) Status Update Concerning Appeal of FEMA Flood Maps

As the Board is aware, the Town's consultant, Woods Hole Group, has been working on the Town's behalf to appeal the 2014 coastal FEMA flood panels in Essex. Most recently, Woods Hole Group provided FEMA with output from an additional computer model (SWAN-2D), at FEMA's request. FEMA has asked our consultant to provide an updated data set from each of two, previous model runs and a sample newspaper advertisement stating the intent to revise flood hazard information. As such, it appears that we are approaching the end of a successful appeal process.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(9) Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Enhancement Site Visit

Mr. Peter Phippen and Dr. Alyssa Novak hosted a boat tour of the Essex Bay marsh system for me and two Army Corps of Engineers scientists on August 9, 2016. The purpose of the tour was to show the Corps personnel portions of the marsh system that have degraded over time. The hope is to have those areas studied further since they may benefit from being built back up using sediment taken from the clogged Essex River channel. The tour went well and the scientists agreed that they are able to make a case to others in the organization that a Federal interest is present. If that case is successful, the project may move into a full feasibility study.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(10) Design for Northern Conomo Point Public Waterfront Access Improvements

As the Board is aware, two major meetings will occur in September regarding the initial design concepts for waterfront parcels at 138 and 153 Conomo Point Road.

Our landscape architect has discussed some of the underlying technical issues with his team and it is possible that additional permitting hurdles will need to be overcome if the design ends up being supported in accordance with the present concept. Engineering/permitting sub-consultant Dan Ottenheimer has suggested that these complexities, which have become apparent as part of ongoing site survey and design development activities, should be summarized in a matrix and that pre-permitting discussions should be held with all relevant authorities. This exercise will provide us with a better understanding of whether any desired improvements will either not be possible or will require unanticipated schedule changes. A proposal regarding the cost of this separate exercise can be available in the near future.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Folsom Pavilion Repair/Replacement Designs and Cost Estimates (*)

At the last meeting, I reviewed with the Board our designer's initial drawings concerning the potential renovation or replacement of the Folsom Pavilion at the Centennial Grove. The design firm has now indicated that it will be ready to provide preliminary information on the possible options and associated costs by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to our designer's preliminary information.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Water Filtration Plant Filter Repair Bids

As reported by the Superintendent of Public Works at the recent Department Heads quarterly meeting, the low bid for the maintenance and repair of the main filters in the Water Filtration Plant was still \$70,000 higher than available funding will allow. As such, on August 8, 2016, the Board of Public Works met with the Finance Committee and the parties agreed that a combination of the Committee's FY17 Reserve Fund and the Water Department's FY17 operating budget (via line-item transfers) would be made available to enter into the contract. Both of these funding sources will be considered for replenishment by the Fall Town Meeting. After the August 8 meeting, the Board of Public Works issued a Notice to Proceed to the successful bidder and work is expected to begin after Labor Day.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Merrimack River Beach Alliance Meeting

Chairman O'Donnell attended the subject meeting on July 22, 2016. The Alliance is working to develop plans for a regional dredging initiative.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

No items.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Robbins Island and Southern Property Sales Update

Of the twelve property sale offers made to current Robbins Island tenants at Conomo Point, all twelve decided to enter into Purchase and Sale Agreements with the Town by the August 8, 2016 deadline. To date, four properties have been prepared for closing and deeds will be signed by the Board at the present meeting. Other deed signings and closings will follow.

Also, of the five prospective buyers of southern Conomo Point properties, all parties that made initial offers (accepted by the Board at the last meeting) are presently reviewing identical Purchase and Sale Agreements. The Board will countersign each Agreement as it arrives and deed signatures and closings will be set up thereafter.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Conomo Point Leases, North, Beach Circle, Robbins Island Garage Lots

The posted agenda lists a total of nine forms of lease for property in the northern Conomo Point area plus one property on Beach Circle and two leaseholds for garage properties on Robbins Island. Most of the leases are for the twenty-year occupancy of northern properties which habitable structures on them. Other forms of lease include year-to-year use of accessory lots (vacant or with outbuildings). As discussed in the past, all leases will be offered at the land-only appraisal values from this past spring.

Recommendation: Board vote to offer the various forms of lease and associated cover letters per the posted agenda.

(3) Proposed Letter Regarding Removal of House at 9 Beach Circle (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the July 21, 2016 written assertion made by Ms. Thayer Adams to remove the house at 9 Beach Circle as her personal property was valid. The Board asked me to determine what a suitable amount of time would be for Ms. Adams and her associates to apply for any and all necessary permits required for the removal and site restoration. I have learned that all permit and approval applications can be made in advance of October 31, 2016. As such, I have worked with Town Counsel to recommend a second letter to Ms. Adams requiring that permit/approval application deadline to be met, with the actual removal and site restoration to be completed by no later than April 15, 2017.

Recommendation: **Board signature of the letter to Ms. Adams.**

(4) Cable Franchise Agreement Renewal Update (*)

I met with Barry O'Brien, the Essex representative to the Cape Ann Regional Cable Advisory Committee on August 11, 2016. Mr. O'Brien explained how the Committee has made progress regarding the various issues before it. In particular, the Committee is unanimous that the communities should lobby for the full 5% surcharge relative to the support of local programming and supports the negotiation for over \$1.1M in equipment upgrade grants to allow local access broadcasting in high definition.

Also, the Committee will recommend continuing the 1.25% surcharge for the various community technology funds, with perhaps some much-needed upgrades to the existing Cable I-Net system, via grants. The I-Net could be modernized by either the installation of a new, dedicated fiber network, or at least the payment of fees for standard Internet drops at municipal buildings beyond the Library and the school (we currently pay for high-speed drops at these other buildings). Further, Essex and Manchester should poll the School District relative to what their needs are, since these may also be possible to include in the negotiations.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

M. Grants

(1) Green Community Grant Quarterly Report

Town Planner Matt Coogan completed a report for the quarter ending June 30, 2016 during the week of July 25, 2016. I assisted by providing data concerning the percentage of grant-eligible items that have been completed within the Town Hall/Library renovation project to date. The grant will end up contributing just over \$130,000 toward the project for the various energy efficiency upgrades.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) MIIA Grant Program

(*)

Each year, MIIA (our insurer) offers a grant program for activities and equipment that tend to reduce the chance of accidents and loss. This year, MIIA has combined the two usual grant program areas into a single grant, with a maximum award of \$15,000. I have learned from the DPW, the Police Department, and the Fire Department that each department would like to participate (allowing approximately \$5,000 for each). The DPW hopes to get funding for the development of a formal sewer system maintenance program to deal with fats, oil, and grease, along with other considerations (study will cost \$9,000 and DPW will provide funding for \$4,000); the Police Department hopes to continue to enhance its closed-circuit camera system, at a cost of \$4,921; and the Fire Department hopes to acquire an additional thermal imaging camera, which will be partially funded using the Department's budget.

Recommendation: **Board authorization for the Chairman to sign the contract, when finalized.**

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave for the entire week of August 1, 2016.

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