



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of August 22, 2011

Report covers from August 6, 2011 to August 19, 2011

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Power and Connectivity Issues

During the week of August 8, 2011, I assisted with the restart of the server and other equipment at the Water Plant after a power failure and with the reconnection of a client computer in the Police Station after a network cable issue was resolved.

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

#### (2) Review of Intermunicipal Agreement

At the last meeting, the Board authorized the review by Town Counsel of a draft intermunicipal agreement that will form the foundation for a gradual placement of the Town's technology resources at a datacenter hosted by the City of Melrose. The process will proceed in a step-wise fashion and can be arrested at any time if it appears that any element(s) will be unworkable. Counsel has completed an initial review of the document and is presently working on recommendations after discussing his first pass with me.

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

#### (3) System Logon Problem

One of the computers at the Water Plant was having a problem with one user logon. I reviewed the situation and edited the system's registry to correct the issue in accordance with a Microsoft guidance document. The system is now working well.

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

### C. Personnel

#### (1) Municipal Health Insurance Reform

(\*)

The Board previewed changes to municipal health insurance laws at the meeting of July 25, 2011 and asked that the topic be reviewed in more depth at the present meeting. I will be attending a State-wide conference concerning the implementation of these reforms that is being sponsored by the Massachusetts

Municipal Association on August 25, 2011. We are also in receipt of some helpful materials from the Office of Senator Bruce Tarr as well as a set of draft regulations concerning the implementation of the available reform measures. Further, our insurer has indicated that it will provide analysis of potential savings for the Town based upon a variety of plan change options that will be available.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the topic of health insurance reform under the revised law.**

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

##### (1) Slope at Town Landing Entrance

At the last meeting, the Board asked that I discuss with MassDOT officials the potential need to lessen the slope coming down into the Town Landing from the new, mountable curb sidewalk there. The higher profile of the new sidewalk has created a steeper slope into the landing that might be difficult in the colder months. The Resident Engineer reviewed the situation and the finished coat of pavement has been drawn out longer than originally planned, lessening the slope to the degree reasonably possible. In the winter, drivers will have the choice to use either of the two Landing entrances, and may elect the lesser slope, depending on conditions.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

##### (2) Planning for Route 133 Project Zone Benches

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that some granite capstones (from the old seawall), some surplus granite curbing set on its side (if available), and some metal benches with high backs should be incorporated into the various available areas in the project zone. I contacted the Resident Engineer regarding the potential to acquire surplus curbstones and he will offer further discussion when the Route 133 Task Force meets on August 24.

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

##### (3) Decorative Banner Program

As the Board may recall, I had provided the local Merchants' Group with paperwork from National Grid outlining the steps and conditions necessary to hang decorative banners from utility poles in the downtown area. The group desires to pursue this project and, at the last meeting, the Board agreed to provide the necessary insurance coverage when the project is more developed and is ready to roll.

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

(4) 25<sup>th</sup> Biweekly Report

I issued the subject report on August 15, 2011. The report featured an update on construction progress and estimated that all major work will be completed by mid-September. The next monthly meeting with MassDOT officials is scheduled for August 24, 2011.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(5) Permanent Pole Relocation

All three abutters to the various utility poles that have been relocated across the street from the causeway have now signed the necessary pole and guy wire easements for the work to actually be commenced. National Grid will work with MassDOT to adjust the location of some poles slightly and to install any necessary additional guy wires.

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

**E. Insurance**

No items.

**F. Facilities**

(1) Rail Trail Prospect

(\*)

At the last meeting, the Board requested that I contact the railroad company that owns a narrow strip of land on the edge of the marsh behind Martin Street since that property may make an excellent walking and biking trail. I contacted the company representative during the week of August 8, 2011 and presented the Board's offer for the property (\$12,500). The railroad company representative explained that it is generally company policy to require purchase prices to be in the vicinity of the assessed value. I am continuing to discuss the matter with the company and may have additional information by meeting time.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion based upon the most current information available at meeting time.**

(2) Modular Unit for Police Department

At the last meeting, the Board voted to accept a donation of a modular unit for the Police Department contingent upon the Department securing adequate funding for the setup and connection of the unit to all necessary utilities, etc. Funding could be from a Town appropriation in the fall, the Reserve Fund, grants, other funding sources, or a combination of the above. We are presently awaiting word from the Senator's Office about potential grant funding.

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

### (3) Assessment of Lahey Building

I attended a site visit to the Lahey building on Martin Street on August 15, 2011 along with experts in various trades and professions. The group inspected the building, along with its major systems and individuals are in the process of providing me with comments and questions for the owner. The goal is to compile a report for review by the Town Building Committee at its next meeting on August 29, 2011.

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

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

### (1) Establishment of Electricity Supply Benchmark Price (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed three programs offered by our present electricity supplier (successor supply contract, peak response program, and energy efficiency program). The Board elected to pursue the first two items and desired to discuss a suitable benchmark for a successor contract that can be committed to by the Chairman when the desired pricing is offered (likely toward November). The Board also desired to hear about the results of the peak response program analysis that our supplier was in the process of conducting. Pricing dipped to its lowest level since March of 2011 recently but the contract required by the supplier had not yet been reviewed by Town Counsel. I expect to have comment on that contract for the present meeting.

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

### (2) Successor Solid Waste Disposal Contract

At the last meeting, the Board was interested in comparing the overall cost of continuing our present, favorable rates through the end of the present contract, with perhaps a six-month extension at a very modest increase to the overall cost of a new contract, beginning now, at a competitive rate. I discussed these issues further with the Superintendent of Public Works and he is working with the Board of Public Works to acquire those rates and possible scenarios.

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

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

### (1) Cape Ann TV Discussion (\*)

I met recently with Ms. Donna Gacek of Cape Ann TV. Ms. Gacek is working to expand the coverage capabilities of the organization and is looking for assistance

from the four communities. One suggestion would be for each community to purchase camera equipment that could be used by volunteers in the community to record events or to even stream live video to the station.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the Town's and Cape Ann TV's needs.**

## **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

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

### (1) Special Town Meeting Warrant (\*)

I have developed a final version of a Special Town Meeting warrant for September 12, 2011, in consultation with Town Counsel, as requested by the Board. The warrant features an additional petition to the Legislature to amend Special Legislation allowing clemency to Chapter 30B with respect to Conomo Point.

*Recommendation:* **Board votes to hold a Special Town Meeting on Monday, September 12, 2011 at the Essex Elementary School at 7:30 p.m.; to open the warrant; to add and approve the articles as they appear on the draft warrant; to close the warrant; and to sign the warrant.**

### (2) Approval of Annual Town Meeting Bylaw Changes (\*)

The Office of the Attorney General has approved all of the bylaw changes that were made by the Annual Town Meeting from this past May. I have notified various departments, boards, and committees about the approvals. Part of the plan for the southern area of Conomo Point is to present the Definitive Subdivision Plan to the Planning Board after approval of the underlying zoning change (which has now occurred).

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the Definitive Subdivision application process.**

## **L. Legal Issues**

No items.

## **M. Grants**

### (1) MIIA Loss Control and Risk Management Grants

It is possible that our insurer, MIIA, will fund the purchase of new audio and video recording equipment for police interviews. The Chief of Police is presently

working on expanding the Police Department space and, eventually, reconfiguring some areas to allow for an adequate interview room. That room will require recording equipment. I have begun to complete the grant application and the Chief of Police is presently working to obtain a list and quotation for the necessary equipment – which will be attached to the grant application.

*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 on August 12 and from August 17-19, 2011.

*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.*