



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Sept. 14, 2009

Report covers from August 22, 2009 to September 11, 2009

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Planning Board Discussion Relative to Southern CP Subdivision (*)

The Selectmen met with the Planning Board and our subdivision consultant on September 2, 2009 to informally discuss the future submission of a Preliminary Subdivision Plan application for the southern section of the Town-owned land at Conomo Point. At the meeting, a variety of questions were raised and I have worked on obtaining some answers and clarification.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the questions raised and answers obtained to date.

(2) Summer Program Audit – Policy Consolidation

The Youth Director has completed the consolidation of the various Summer Program policies as recommended as part of an audit performed in the spring by Russell Harnish. The Program's policies now include all of the recommendations that were made and the various documents offered to staff and parents have been coordinated in accordance with the audit. A final copy of the Program documents will be sent to Mr. Harnish for a final review. Once that occurs, all documents will be assembled in a binder with individual tabs for ease of use. With the administrative portion of the Summer Program audit complete, we will focus on auditing the physical property that will be used for the Summer Program in the spring of 2010.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Summer Program Board of Directors and Grove Cottage (*)

The Board had discussed the establishment of the subject Board of Directors last spring and asked me to bring the topic up for further discussion at this time. Next summer, it is possible that a Board of Directors could manage the Summer Program - assisted by the Youth Director. Also, once the movie production company vacates the Grove Cottage later this year, it will be necessary to determine which Summer Program-related items (now in storage) should be returned to that building.

Recommendation: Further Board discussion as necessary.

B. Computer Systems

No items.

C. Personnel

(1) Town Clerk Search Committee Meeting (*)

The Town Clerk Search Committee met on September 1, 2009 to discuss a scoring matrix that will be utilized during the candidate interview process. A draft document is presently being compiled and may be available by meeting time.

***Recommendation:* Board review and comment regarding the draft scoring matrix if available by meeting time.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Annual Heating Oil Quotations

We have solicited quotations from area oil supplies for the provision of heating oil for the upcoming year. Quotations are due on September 17, 2009 and the Board will award the contract to the lowest responsible offeror at the next meeting.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Route 133 Reconstruction Project Update (*)

Overhead utility, drainage, and waterline work in the vicinity of the causeway seawall is scheduled to be completed on or about September 25, 2009. This will allow the seawall reconstruction work to begin during the first week in October and seawall work will continue perhaps into early December (depending on weather conditions). Seawall work will be completed in the spring when weather conditions allow. Sidewalk and curbing work will not begin until next season. Four informational signs relative to businesses being open during construction were erected on September 11, 2009 at all major entrances to the project area as requested by the Chamber Task Force. Also, it is possible that a road reclamation technique (as opposed to full-depth road reconstruction) will be used throughout the project area (eliminating the need for substantial ramping to abutting properties, etc).

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the project and future planning.**

(3) Fire Department Air Packs

The air packs that were recently ordered via a lease/purchase agreement arrived during the week of August 24, 2009. The Fire Department verified that all equipment had been received and was in good working order during the week of

August 31, 2009. I sent the first lease/purchase check along with the necessary paperwork, including proof of insurance, to our financing company.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Town Hall Clock Maintenance

An historic clockworks expert performed necessary maintenance on the Town Hall tower clock during the week of August 24, 2009. The clock is now in good running order. I have inquired as to what the technician recommends for annual maintenance and we will likely institute that practice going forward.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Centennial Grove Restoration and Final Inspection (*)

At the last meeting the Board asked me to compile an update for the present meeting concerning the film production company's plans and schedule to restore and vacate the premises at Centennial Grove. I walked the site with the Location Manager on August 31, 2009 and learned that, although filming has wrapped up, the company will need until the end of October to complete all of the necessary site restoration. It is possible that the company will request that the cottage remain intact for the time-being and would continue to pay rent beyond October 31. The Centennial Grove will re-open to the public during this restoration phase but visitors will need to stay off of newly-restored and seeded areas and will need to stay away from restoration contractors' machinery and crews as each aspect of restoration occurs.

I provided a draft restoration punchlist to the Location Manager during the week of August 31, 2009 and I walked the site with the Selectmen on September 11, 2009. The Board added a few items to the punchlist and I have provided that updated document to the Location Manager. Toward the end of the expected restoration period, the Location Manager will participate in a final site inspection with the Board to ensure that restoration efforts have met the Town's expectations.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Town Building Committee Recommendations

The Town Building Committee met on August 31, 2009 to complete the formulation of its preliminary draft recommendations to the Board regarding

Town building needs for the fire, police, library, and Town Hall departments. The recommendation document lists each portion of the Committee's charge and provides the Committee's thought process and recommendation associated with each component. The Town Building Committee Chair will be present to review the document with the Board.

Recommendation: Board discussion with the Building Committee Chair relative to the Committee's recommendations.

(4) Installation of Security Doors

At the Board's meeting of September 2, 2009, the Board considered a request from the Treasurer/Collector to install a "half-door" in the entrance to the Collector's Assistant's office. Presently, that office has a standard door that does not permit the Assistant to see customers when the door is closed and locked. The Board agreed that a new door that has a securely-locking lower half with a small shelf on it would be desirable. The Treasurer/Collector has since indicated that she and her Assistant are soliciting quotations for half-doors on both the Assistant's Office and the Treasurer/Collector's Office (since the same security issue exists in both areas). The top half of each door will have a glass window in order to keep out the cold and keep in the cooling as necessary and still be able to see a customer who is waiting.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(5) Potential Creation of Temporary Office Space

As the Board is aware, the existing Town Hall office space is inadequate to house all departmental personnel without the use of makeshift dividers and extremely cramped quarters. It is possible that the area on the old stage could be retrofit with temporary partitions and the necessary ventilation systems and wiring and lighting for additional office space. A volunteer is willing to create some schematic drawings so that the idea can be presented to the Building Inspector and the Historical Commission for review. It is possible that building code and/or historical restrictions could make the proposal infeasible. I will be meeting with the volunteer draftsman during the week of September 14, 2009.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(6) Off-Site Storage/Digitization for Historic and Archived Public Records (*)

The Town's historic records are presently housed in a vault in the damp Town Hall basement. Also, recent records that need to be archived do not have the benefit of quality storage space within Town Hall. Further, it is possible to digitize Town records so that they can be easily searched.

I visited a storage facility in Essex during the week of August 31, 2009 to view storage options for climate-controlled storage. Just over 1,000 square feet of

space is presently available and the building could be insulated and climate controlled.

Recommendation: **Board discussion regarding these issues.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Essex Regional Retirement Board (ERRB) Investment Meeting

The ERRB hosted a meeting in Peabody on August 25, 2009 to present its own investment performance versus the State Pension Reserves Investment Trust (PRIT) fund in recent years. Representatives of the Pension Reserves Investment Management (PRIM) Board were also on hand to describe the PRIT's the operation and performance of the PRIT.

As the Board may recall, a vote had already been taken to transfer ERRB's assets to the PRIT but the Board was waiting to send a letter to ERRB regarding that preference until after the referenced meeting. At the meeting, it was apparent that a distinct advantage exists with respect to voluntarily moving assets to the PRIT now versus potentially being forced to move the assets under a 2007 law (since ERRB's performance will likely not meet the law's performance standards at the ERRB's next actuarial audit.

I developed a letter for the Board's signature in accordance with the Board's past vote and that letter was signed and sent during the week of August 24, 2009. The ERRB will reference similar letters from all member organizations when considering a voluntary move to the PRIT at its upcoming meeting on September 28, 2009.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Annual Financial Risk Assessment and Monitoring Plan Reassessment

I hosted the subject reassessment meeting in my office on September 10, 2009. The meeting provided an opportunity for department heads to suggest revisions to the existing plan, particularly if substantial changes to departmental operations occurred during the past year. At the meeting, it was agreed that references to several new departmental policies should be added to the Plan.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Essex Division Meeting (*)

I attended the subject meeting along with Selectman Lynch on August 25, 2009. The meeting featured updates relative to a number of ongoing projects. Also, those present asked about the potential formation of a committee to oversee implementation of a variety of improvements along the Essex causeway. Selectman Lynch suggested that a planning professional is needed for that work and the group agreed that a Request for Proposals could potentially be put together for such a professional, subject to appropriation of funds by Town Meeting. Once the present overall planning contract with Carolyn Britt is completed (end of October), the group agreed that her final report and the final version of the Long Term Planning Committee's Village development document could be used to form the scope of the RFP.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to this additional planning and implementation.**

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

No items.

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

No items.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Physical Setup of Near-Site Disaster Recovery Center

I brought to the Essex Elementary school a dedicated locking cabinet containing disaster recovery laptop computers and associated other hardware and software during the week of August 31, 2009. As the Board may recall, the School District has permitted the Town to store those provisions in the school library conference room in the event that emergency recovery space is ever needed. I have tested the Internet connectivity between the laptops and the school's wireless network.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(2) Next Iteration of Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) (*)

Now that both the near-site and far-site disaster recovery centers are operational, it will be necessary to finalize the first working draft of the subject plan. I have provided copies to the Board for review and several key sections are in need of discussion at this time. Once the Board approves the first working draft (which may require some input from Town Counsel), additional review by the various departments will be necessary.

Recommendation: **Board review of the draft COOP document.**

O. Other Items

(1) Labor Day Holiday

The office was closed on September 7, 2009 in observance of the subject holiday.

(2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on leave for a portion of the afternoon on September 3, 2009 and all day on September 4, 2009.

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