



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Sept. 24, 2012

Report covers from September 8, 2012 to September 21, 2012

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Draft Request for Services (RFS), Northern Conomo Point (*)

At the Board's meeting of September 10, 2012, the Board agreed that it could prove very beneficial to hire a consultant, perhaps Mr. Nicholas Cracknell, to serve as technical advisor to the Town regarding various elements of the northern Conomo Point planning and design procurement and implementation process. Mr. Cracknell and Chairman Lynch (Conomo Point Planning Committee) attended the Board's meeting of September 17, 2012 to review how that involvement might be structured after the Conomo Point Planning Committee supported the idea on September 13, 2012. Mr. Cracknell is hoping to provide the Board (by meeting time) with a potential scope of services and cost proposal for the Board's consideration.

The CPPC made great progress on September 13, 2012 concerning the finalization of a Request for Services document intended to define a northern Conomo Point waterfront access scope of work for planner/designer firms to propose on. I worked with the group on final editing and the Board approved the RFS at their meeting of September 17, 2012. I have provided a copy of the RFS to each of eight invited design firms and I have confirmed receipt by seven of the firms at the time of printing of this report. The Board indicated that it would also consider inviting up to two more firms if provided with names by an interested citizen through Selectman O'Donnell.

Recommendation: Board consideration of the Cracknell proposal and discussion relative to the potential for additional invitees.

(2) Filling of Vacancy on the Board of Registrars (*)

Two candidates have expressed interest in filling one vacant seat on the Board of Registrars. Pursuant to Chapter 51, Section 15 of the General Laws, the Town Clerk informed both of the local political party committees about the need to fill the vacancy and neither committee responded. After 45 days without response (which has elapsed), the Selectman shall make the appointment.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to potentially interviewing both candidates in preparation for making an appointment.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Failure of Network Connection, Police Office

The network wire installed by a contractor to serve the Sergeant's Office in the new police space failed during the week of September 17, 2012. I was able to use a small hub and long cable to restore service via another connection in the building as a temporary solution. The Chief of Police is contacting the original wiring contractor to investigate and correct the failed connection.

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

(2) Failure of Network Switch, Water Filtration Plant

A power surge in the Water Filtration Plant associated with a storm power outage damaged the network switch in the building on September 18, 2012. I was able to replace the failed switch with a spare I had on hand and have ordered a new switch to serve as a new spare.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Conservation Commission Clerk Desktop Problem

The Conservation Commission Clerk reported a problem viewing her normal desktop during the week of September 17, 2012. After review of the matter, I found that her system had saved her normal desktop configuration as a backup file and had created a new, blank one. I renamed the original profile so it could be read by the operating system and her desktop was restored.

Recommendation: No further action was necessary.

(4) Offer of Volunteer Website Improvement Assistance (*)

A resident who works as a web developer has offered his assistance in improving the organization of the Town's website. I indicated to him that I would consult the Board about that offer and would get back to him.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(5) Cable I-Net Problem

The Wastewater Clerk reported an Internet connectivity problem to me during the week of September 17, 2012. After investigation, I determined that the issue involved the Cable I-Net that is maintained by Comcast. I contacted a technician and he corrected the issue, which had to do with a recent power outage.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Personnel Management Webinar

I participated in the first part of a personnel management webinar sponsored by our insurer on September 12, 2012. The webinar provided recommendations to optimize the efficiency of work among members of a given department based upon strengths and talents. The second part of the webinar was offered on September 19, 2012 and continued to develop various concepts introduced in the first session, including a discussion of the MIA Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Safety Committee Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on September 19, 2012 as a member of the Committee. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the various vehicle maintenance and repair logs and pre-trip safety inspections utilized by our various departments and how these protocols might become more standardized. Additional discussion will occur at the next quarterly meeting. The Committee also discussed the recently-funded Fire Station asbestos assessment grant and is hopeful that the management plan that is to be written will provide additional safeguards against any potential exposure.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Pre-Construction Conference, Southern Conomo Point Road Work

I participated in the subject conference on September 11, 2012 along with David Ouellette, P.E. of Horsley Witten, representatives of Earthworks Constructors of Rockport, Essex Conservation Agent Jim Hankin, and Deputy Fire Chief Ramie Reader. We reviewed the contractor's plan of operations against the design plans and the Conservation Commission's approval documents. We determined that all parties had adequate information and permits to construct the project as specified and Deputy Reader indicated that particular attention should be given to the hammerhead turnaround on Cogswell Road to ensure that it gets constructed as per plan. The contractor will provide our engineers with a schedule and various shop drawings and our engineers will provide the layout for line and grade and will be on site to oversee the work. All work must be completed no later than October 15, 2012.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Development of Town Hall/Library Repair Scope of Work (*)

At the Board's meeting of September 10, 2012 I provided the Board with information from two of our designer's sub-consultants handling the basement dewatering and the mechanical/electrical analysis, respectively. The Board determined that it preferred a basement dewatering strategy based on exterior measures, rather than exclusively on interior measures (and I provided that feedback to our designer). The Board also reviewed the list of various electrical and mechanical needs and I provided the designer with their feedback on those items. Our designer has now taken both of those program areas and has added in the design elements that they are handling on their own so that final decisions can eventually be made regarding the final scope of elements for the available funding. Cost estimates for the various potential work elements are presently being developed.

Recommendation: Board review of our designer's present matrix.

(3) Heating Oil Quotations and Awarding of Contract (*)

We received a total of two quotations for the provision of heating oil to the Town over the upcoming heating season by the September 20, 2012 deadline. The lowest offeror was Old Yankee Fuel, Co, Inc., with a quote of 25 cents above the Low Daily Boston Wholesale Price.

Recommendation: Board vote to award the contract to Old Yankee Fuel, Co., Inc.

(4) Invitation for Bids, Used Aerial Fire Apparatus

The Fire Chief provided to me a specification for the used aerial fire truck that the Department is seeking (using funds appropriated back in May). I assisted with the finalization of the necessary advertising and the actual bid document. Bid packages will become available as of September 24, 2012 at the Fire Department office and the bid deadline is October 11, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. at the same office.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Occupational Health Provider Visit

Personnel from our occupational health provider, Quadrant, visited my office on September 11, 2012 to review the Town's present relationship and the services offered by Quadrant. We utilize Quadrant through our insurer to provide pre-employment drug and medical screening in addition to occupational therapy for any work-related injuries. We reviewed the Town's recent utilization and I was able to meet Quadrant's new head physician.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Workers' Compensation Discussion

I met with our insurer's workers' compensation representative on September 12, 2012 to review current protocols and discuss the program in general. The representative provided new materials summarizing best reporting practices. I encouraged her to bring back to our insurer that its new on-line workers' compensation reporting system does not seem to us to be more efficient than the telephone-based system that it replaced.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Property and Casualty Insurance Renewal Review

Each fall, our insurer's property and casualty representative visits to go over our lines of coverage (which are renewed each July 1). The representative visited my office on September 18, 2012 to review our coverage and to determine if we have any new circumstances that would warrant changes. We determined that several minor changes should be made in order to achieve the most coverage for our premium (including the potential to get replacement cost coverage on some items that are presently covered at actual cash value). I will make changes as necessary.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Location of Ship's Wheel Monument

(*)

At the Board's meeting of September 10, 2012, the Board agreed to meet Mr. William Bradford out at the Town Landing to review his proposal to slightly relocate the ship's wheel monument on the Town's property. The Board agreed to a site visit with Mr. Bradford on September 20, 2012 (Selectman O'Donnell attended to represent the Board) and he pointed out what he would like to do. It is possible that a small storage shed could be moved into several potential locations so that the monument could be slightly moved and reoriented into a more prominent position.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to potentially adjusting the monument's location, the location of an adjacent storage shed, or both. It is possible that surveying work to define the Town's property boundary will be necessary.**

(1) Requests to Open Roadway, Route 133 Gas Line Work

(*)

The Superintendent of Public Works was advised that National Grid was interested in road opening permits to conduct gas service work in the newly-paved Route 133. He passed that information on to me and I contacted MassDOT to determine whether DOT's permitting arm was aware of the requests. I learned that DOT was aware and that DOT would take care to require the disturbances to be repaired with great care. However, the Selectmen's Office was never consulted

about the proposed work by Grid and I informed our contact Grid about our dissatisfaction with the absence of direct communication, especially in light of the completion of the recent Route 133 Reconstruction Project.

I have learned that Grid is willing to delay three of four planned projects for at least five years and that Grid has temporarily delayed the fourth project to allow the Town to better understand what is planned (a 75-foot gas main extension with two connections to the Catholic Church property on Main Street). Once we have more information, we can better inform one of the abutters whose frontage will be impacted by construction.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Annual Review of Town of Essex Risk Assessment and Monitoring Program

Various department heads gathered on September 13, 2012 to review the Town's Risk Assessment and Monitoring Program with an eye toward modifying the document to remain in step with current practices and protocols. Like most years, a variety of minor comments were incorporated into the document to reflect the experience of the past year. I have developed an updated draft and have distributed to all relevant employees.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Management of Conomo Point Rent and Sale Proceeds (*)

The Department of Revenue recently certified the Town's General Fund Free Cash at \$629,311. Approximately \$200,000 of that figure is comprised of Conomo Point rent from the first half of the calendar year one Bridge Lease (one half of approximately \$608,000 reduced by the Town's usual reliance on \$110,000). At this juncture, it may be useful to begin planning, or at least segregating the use of these funds. Pending sales and future lease periods will add substantially to Conomo Point-related revenue as well.

Given that future waterfront improvements may occur at the Point, it is likely that the Department of Public Works will need additional funding to maintain the area. Also, it may be useful to solicit the input of other Boards and Commissions regarding the potential use of the funding (such as the Conomo Point Planning Committee, the Long-Term Planning Committee, and the Centennial Grove Committee).

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Cape Ann Caucus

I attended the subject meeting along with Selectman Gould-Coviello on September 20, 2012. The caucus is intended to provide a forum for communication between State and local government officials and the business community of Cape Ann. The meeting featured updates from local officials on major issues happening in each community and input from State Legislators.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Informal Department Heads Meeting

Various department heads gathered in my office on September 13, 2012 to informally discuss ongoing Town business and initiatives. The main topic of discussion was the upcoming Special Town Meeting for November.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

(1) DEP Quarterly Report

(*)

I have prepared the Quarterly Report regarding the Conomo Point Plan due to the DEP October 1, 2012.

Recommendation: **Board vote to transmit the report.**

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Draft November Special Town Meeting Warrant

(*)

At the Board's meeting of September 10, 2012, the Board reviewed a number of potential warrant articles and was considering calling a Special Town Meeting for November 5, 2012. However, since November 6, 2012 is the Presidential Election, it had been suggested that November 19, 2012 might be a better date. Therefore, the Board voted to hold a Special Town Meeting on November 19, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at the school at their meeting of September 17, 2012. I have begun to develop a draft Special Town Meeting warrant for the Board's review. The present target date for signature of the warrant is October 29, 2012.

Recommendation: **Board review of the draft warrant.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Purchase Vehicle for Elderly, Low-Income, Principal Residence Tenants(*)

At the last meeting, the Board announced that elderly, low-income, sole tenants of southern Conomo Point occupying a leasehold as their sole and primary residence could have a 30-day extension to the purchase and sale agreement signing date and a 50% reduction in the required deposit. One individual currently qualifies for that arrangement and two others are considering whether they wish to become sole tenants (only name on lease) to also take advantage of the arrangement. The Board further announced that it may be possible to allow the Town to sell the properties to these individuals with a portion of the sale price being deferred until their occupancy ceases. The total of annual required principal payments would start at a minimum of the second year Bridge Lease total. Presently, the one tenant that is a sole leaseholder has expressed interest in this potential arrangement.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Extensions to Bridge Leases

At the last meeting, the Board agreed to send to all southern Conomo Point tenants a letter indicating that the topic of whether a second Bridge Lease term will be offered will be addressed in the near future. The Board also agreed to send to all northern Conomo Point tenants (except regarding the leasehold for Map 19, Lot 100 – 5 Beach Circle) a letter indicating that a second Bridge Lease term would be offered, at the second-year rent rate contained in the original Bridge Lease. The Board will actually be signing the letters at the present meeting.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

M. Grants

(1) Resubmittal of 2011 Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Grant Application

At the Board's meeting of September 10, 2012, the Board approved the resubmittal of the Town's 2011 MDI grant application to the 2013 MDI grant round. I compiled the application and included an update summary indicating progress the Town has made regarding downtown improvement since the first application. The Chairman signed the resubmittal application during the week of September 10, 2012 and it was submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). DHCD commented that successful funding for the project would likely require more of a re-structuring of the original grant application and agreed to accept a revision if the Town desired to submit it. The Board withdrew the application package at its meeting of September 17, 2012 and authorized the Chairman to sign a revised application should our Cultural District representatives produce one that speaks to DHCD's comments. A revised

application is being produced by Cultural District Liaison Jean Grobe and that revision will be signed by the Chairman and submitted by the deadline.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Development of Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Sharing Agreement

The Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team (CAEPT), with the agreement of each member community, supports the development of the subject agreement so that communities can learn from each other's COOP documents without risk of compromise of sensitive information. As such, I have taken the lead on behalf of the CAEPT to develop a first draft of the document with Town Counsel (based upon a skeleton document that the CAEPT was in agreement with). Presently, I am working with Counsel to develop a draft for the next CAEPT meeting. Legal fees will be split among the three towns since Kopelman and Paige represents all three.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC) Monthly Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on September 21, 2012 as a member of the Finance Advisory Board for the RECC. Construction and outfitting of the new facility are almost complete and the RECC Director, Mr. Thomas Dubas, has indicated that everything is on schedule. The Finance Advisory Board will be working next on the first annual budget document.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

O. Other Items

No items.

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