



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Sept. 27, 2010

Report covers from September 11, 2010 to September 24, 2010

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Town Building Committee Public Forums

I advertised the subject public forums in the community news sections of four newspapers (the Times and the Globe ran stories as well), on the Town Hall information board, and on the Town website during between weeks of September 6 and 13, 2010. The Town Building Committee held one forum back in May and the second forum was held on September 20, 2010. The final forum will be held on October 25, 2010 at the Fire Station (which will be advertised again as that date approaches).

At the forum on the 20<sup>th</sup>, the Committee provided an overview of its work and a detailed presentation of each of the phases of the proposed feasibility study. The Committee also answered questions that had been posed back in May and fielded new questions. The overall goal of the forums is to educate the public regarding the need for and content of the feasibility study that will be considered by the Special Town Meeting on November 15, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. at the Essex Elementary School.

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

#### (2) Essex Heritage Scenic Byway Update

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Mr. William Holton, the Town's representative to the Scenic Byway's Corridor Advisory Group, recently met with me to provide our office with an update on the Advisory Group's activities. Mr. Holton indicated that the next phase of the Group's effort to secure Federal status involves public hearings. Taintor Associates is handling the project for the Group and has provided a list of potential dates for a hearing in Essex. The Group asks that at least one Selectman attend the hearing to make opening remarks and to voice the Board's support for the effort.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to a member who can attend the hearing on a given date.**

#### (3) Department Head/Chairs Quarterly Meeting

The next department head/board chairs quarterly meeting will occur on October 18, 2010. The meeting will feature a presentation regarding the Public Records Law given by Town Counsel. Topics for upcoming quarterly meetings include

dogs, the Memorial Park tennis court project, reverse 911 capabilities, and a Long Term Planning Committee update.

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

## **B. Computer Systems**

No items.

## **C. Personnel**

### (1) Working Alongside Town Employees

Our insurer is preparing a seminar for this coming December which, in part, will discuss how managers can learn about working conditions and requirements from working side-by-side with employees in various departments. As such, along with some other administrators, I have offered to spend three hours working side-by-side with two different departments. I have arranged to work alongside the Treasurer/Collector's Clerk and a DPW employee during the month of October. I will present what I learn to the group in December. Taken collectively, the information shared with the group from a variety of towns will help provide a better picture for managers relative to the responsibilities and challenges of others.

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

### (2) Safety Committee Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on September 21, 2010 as a member of the Committee. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the elimination of a longstanding water problem in the basement locker room of the Police/Fire Headquarters. The Fire Chief has discussed a potential solution with a contractor and the installation of a drainage system designed to intercept groundwater will cost just under \$5,000. I have added that topic to the discussion for the upcoming Special Town Meeting.

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

### (3) Department Heads Meeting

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I held an informal department heads meeting in my office on September 23, 2010. The meeting focused on the upcoming development of both municipal and school budgets for FY12 in order to provide input on the topic prior to the next joint meeting of Essex, Manchester, and school officials. Other general topics of interested were also discussed.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the department heads' budget input.**

(4) Animal Control Officer and Animal Health Inspector Stipends (\*)

At the last meeting, the Selectmen, acting as Personnel Board, indicated that increasing the stipends for the subject positions to \$3,500 was reasonable, given the ever-increasing volume of complaints and cases. I discussed the matter with the Animal Control Officer and she felt that the approximately \$800 annual increase was reasonable as well.

***Recommendation:* Personnel Board vote to recommend to the November 15, 2010 Special Town Meeting both a Wage & Salary Scale change and a budget change to accommodate these increases.**

(5) Centennial Grove Committee Charge (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked that I develop a draft charge for the Centennial Grove Committee for review at the present meeting, which I have provided. After a final charge is developed, the Committee can meet for the first time, select a chair, and begin work. Also, I have learned from the Chairman of the Finance Committee that the Committee's representative to the Centennial Grove Committee will be Mr. Mark McKenna. Further, it appears that the original Committee vote did not include Board of Public Works Member Rullo (an oversight).

***Recommendation:* Board review of the draft charge and appointment of Mr. McKenna and Mr. Rullo to the Committee.**

(6) Essex Police Benevolent Association Collective Bargaining (\*)

The management team engaged the union in continued collective bargaining on September 27, 2010.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion in executive session.**

(7) Teamsters Collective Bargaining

The next bargaining session with the Teamsters is scheduled for October 14, 2010. The session has been rescheduled several times.

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

(8) Comprehensive Public Records and Technology Policy

I have begun work on the subject policy with Town Counsel. The policy will serve to highlight existing rules and new best practices for the management of public records and the use of technology within the Town.

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

## D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

### (1) Annual Heating Oil Quotations

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Quotations for the provision of heating oil for Town buildings were due on September 23, 2010 after having been solicited from three suppliers. One supplier (Fox Hill Oil Co.) responded with a quotation of 25 cents per gallon above the Journal of Commerce Low Daily Boston Wholesale Price.

*Recommendation:* **Board vote to award the contract for the upcoming year to Fox Hill Oil Co.**

### (2) Route 133 Reconstruction Project Communication System

At the last meeting, the Board endorsed a system of protocols to provide information to local businesspeople regarding the subject project (some new and some existing). The protocols include: a) biweekly informational reports from me to the merchants, based upon updates sought from the Resident Engineer, b) continuation of the dissemination of excerpts from each of my upcoming Town Administrator's reports regarding the project, c) monthly meetings with the Resident Engineer and the Route 133 Task Force (continuing through the end of this construction season and picking back up in the spring), d) immediate dissemination of any new, critical information (as has been the case in the past), and e) the development of a tentative timeline of construction benchmarks for the 2011 construction season.

It is important to stress that all of these elements are subject to change with the contractor's changing work plan. As such, reliance on any of these tools for specific business planning may prove problematic. To date, I have produced the first and second biweekly reports and the first of the monthly meetings will occur on September 30, 2010. Dissemination of report excerpts has continued and I am working with the Resident Engineer on the tentative timeline.

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

### (3) Pocket Park Design Contract

Our design consultant had been waiting for the final layout of the Village Corner pocket park but asked during the week of September 20, 2010 if the design work could begin since fall and winter are approaching. The consultant will work on the non-Village elements first and will move to that area once a final overall layout concept has been determined. Selectman O'Donnell and I conducted final revisions on the scope of services and schedule per the Board's past vote and the consultant has begun work.

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

## **E. Insurance**

### (1) MIIA Rewards Program

The fiscal year MIIA Rewards Program has been announced by our insurer and a variety of training opportunities for all departments have been offered. I have provided all major departments with this information and will coordinate the Rewards Program for the Town as I have done in years past. I will participate in a program overview webinar on September 28, 2010.

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

## **F. Facilities**

### (1) Automation of Town Hall Clock Winding

At the last meeting, after discussing a successful grant for a portion of the work associated with automating the Town Hall clock's winding mechanisms, the Board asked that I issue the contractor a notice to proceed. I have learned from the contractor that he intends to start as soon as possible.

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

### (2) Planning Board Office Move

I was able to prepare the old Youth Commission office for occupancy by the Planning Board during the week of September 20, 2010. The Planning Board Clerk will work with others to move all Planning Board files and equipment into the new office space and I will assist as necessary with phone and technology connections.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

### (1) Finance Committee FY12 Budget Planning and Outreach (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board reviewed the Finance Committee's plans for public education and outreach as they plan the FY12 budget process. The Committee developed a public survey which has been posted on the Town's website and hosted a meeting on September 23, 2010 featuring a presentation by Mr. Kurt Wise of the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center concerning the general state of the Commonwealth's finances. I attended the presentation along with Selectman O'Donnell and many other public officials. The Finance Committee is reviewing a variety of revenue strategies, including a discussion regarding the local-option meals tax.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the Committee's outreach efforts and future discussions.**

## H. Complaints

### (1) Signage on Town Property

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An individual has complained regarding permanent signage that appears to have been placed on Town property near Laurel Lane. Since such signage is not allowed on Town property, the owner should move the sign to private property, since it is otherwise in compliance with sign specifications.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to a relocation request and enforcement, if necessary.**

## I. Meetings Attended

See item G1, above.

## J. Final Judgment

### (1) Quarterly Report

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I have completed the Quarterly Report due October 1, 2010.

*Recommendation:* **Board approval to transmit the report to the various required recipients.**

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

### (1) Revised Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Regulations

At the last meeting, the Board approved a revision to the subject regulations requiring annual training pertaining to the service of alcohol for any type of alcoholic licensee in the Town of Essex. The Board indicated that a copy of the revised regulations should be provided to each licensee during the upcoming, 2010 re-licensure round, with attention called to the new requirement (effectively giving a year's notice).

In addition, the Board asked that a special notice about the State's new "OUI Last Drink" program be included for licensees' information in the same license renewal packages later this fall. The Licensing Clerk will ensure that both the revised regulations and the State program information will be disseminated as requested.

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

### (2) Revised Shellfish Sea Worm and Eel Regulations

At the last meeting, the Board approved a variety of revisions to the subject Regulations, including a restructuring of the rules for the various clamming

license categories and the requirements for proof of residency. The revised Regulations will be effective on October 15, 2010 and the Licensing Clerk will be filing a revised copy with the Division of Marine Fisheries.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Draft November 15, 2010 Special Town Meeting Warrant (\*)

I have developed the subject draft warrant based upon the Board's guidance from the last meeting.

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

## **L. Legal Issues**

(1) Water System Easement

As the Board may recall, a property owner had expressed interest in granting the Town an easement for a fire hydrant that was installed on his property by our sewer contractor. Language for the easement was finalized during the week of September 6, 2010 and the owner signed the document during the week of September 13, 2010. The Board of Public Works accepted the easement on September 24, 2010 and it has been forwarded to Town Counsel for recording at the Registry of Deeds.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **M. Grants**

(1) Clean Energy Choice Grant Program Report

As the Board may recall, the subject grant program funded the purchase of two, "Big-Belly", solar-powered trash compactors in October of 2009. The grant program requires a "project report" at this time and I have worked with the Superintendent of Public Works to generate and submit that report. One unit is located at Memorial Park and the other is located at the Centennial Grove.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Seaport Bond Bill Boardwalk Funding (\*)

The staff of the Seaport Advisory Council have announced that the Town's proposed boardwalk project is presently under consideration for funding by the Council. Two meetings will occur in October that will determine whether the funding is extended to the Town. On October 1, 2010, I will appear at the Seaport Professionals meeting in Boston with Dr. William Hamilton of Salem State University and likely also with Selectman O'Donnell. On October 7, 2010, I will appear before the Council in Fairhaven, MA.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to this recent, positive development.**

## **N. Emergency Planning**

No items.

## **O. Other Items**

### (1) PTO Halloween Event, Centennial Grove

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The Essex PTO has offered to run a Halloween event at the Centennial Grove on October 30, 2010. The event will include everything from games for younger children, to refreshments, to a “tour” of haunted houses made possible with the help of high school students. The event will last from 4 p.m. to as late as 9 p.m. and the Chief of Police has offered to station the Town’s portable light tower at the site. We also have some EYC-owned floodlights that may be deployed. Any profits will be donated to the EYC. Event participants will be required to arrive and leave with parents or legal guardians. A campfire will be offered (by permit) and police patrols can focus on the Grove during the event. The PTO has requested that the Town cover any special liability insurance that is necessary beyond our base policy.

*Recommendation:* **Board approval of the event (including opening the park past sunset) and approval of any necessary additional insurance elements.**

*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.*