



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of October 4, 2010

Report covers from September 25, 2010 to October 1, 2010

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Centennial Grove Committee Organization (*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked that I provide the members of the new Centennial Grove Committee with the Committee's charge so that the Committee can arrange for a first meeting. At that meeting, the Committee can appoint a Chair and a Clerk and discuss revisions to the charge that could be posed to the Selectmen before work begins in earnest. I provided the information as requested and it appears that the Committee will first meet on October 6, 2010 (at the Grove Cottage).

Recommendation: **Board approval of the use of the Grove Cottage.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Collector's and Assessors' Data System (*)

Treasurer/Collector Ginny Boutchie has provided professional input in the development of a new management system for tax billing and collection. In exchange for her input, the vendor that is developing the new system has offered to bring Essex on board on a test basis. If the system performs as promised, Essex will have the chance to opt into the software without a purchase fee in near future. The new system is web-based and does not require an in-house server. Eventually, the company may release an accounting package as well. If the change is made, the use of our present tax billing and collection system will be discontinued. We will still operate an accounting server for our accounting package and an assessing server for our tax assessment database product.

Recommendation: **Ms. Boutchie will attend the present meeting to explain the scenario in more detail.**

C. Personnel

(1) AFSCME and EPBA Successor Agreements (*)

I may have more information regarding these agreements by meeting time.

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

(2) Part-Time DPW Specialist (Clerical) Position Description (*)

The subject position has existed on the Town's Wage & Salary Scale for some time but a specific position description was never developed due to the varied nature of the required, sporadic work tasks. The Department of Public Works plans to backfill the full-time position of the retiring DPW Clerk with a part-time (not to exceed 19 hours per week), clerical position. As such, the Superintendent will propose a series of position descriptions tailored to the main focus of a given specialist on an as-needed basis (beginning with this permanent, part-time, clerical focus).

Recommendation: **Board approval of the subject position description.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Affirmative Marketing Quarterly Report

I completed the subject report for the quarter ending September 30, 2010 in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer (AMCO) and filed it with the State. The report is intended to detail any woman-owned or minority-owned business utilization by the Town on State-funded contracts. No such utilization occurred over the past quarter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Monthly Route 133 Reconstruction Update Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on September 30, 2010 along with members of the business community and Selectman O'Donnell. At the meeting, the Resident Engineer explained that no changes in the construction plans for the remainder of this construction season have occurred and that sidewalk and curbing work will continue between Southern Avenue and Dunkin Donuts on Main Street through the end of this construction season (November). The steel sheeting associated with the seawall will be cut back and/or removed in the near future. The Resident Engineer also commented that it is still plausible that all major construction work will be wrapped up by the end of the next construction season.

Representatives of the business community agreed to provide me with a list of alternate parking locations that patrons of downtown businesses may use if the business they are visiting has limited street parking available due to the project. I will post that information on the Town website and will include it in my biweekly reports. Businesses have the option of notifying patrons about the alternate parking locations via signage in windows or businesses websites, etc.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Right of Entry Documents, Roadbed Elevation Increase

Right of Entry documents have now been signed with all six abutters in the area of the Route 133 Reconstruction Project where the roadbed will be increased further to lessen the impact of flooding along a stretch of the causeway. I provided the signed documents to MassDOT staff during the week of September 27, 2010. MassDOT will now continue with the design and construction of the elevation increase – which will involve offgrading and downramps onto abutting private properties.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Ambulance Invitation for Bids

As the Board may recall, the 2010 Annual Town Meeting appropriated funding for a new ambulance. The Fire Department has now completed the development of specifications for the new vehicle and I am in the process of finalizing the necessary Invitation for Bids (IFB) and associated advertising. A notice of the IFB will likely appear in the October 11, 2010 editions of the *Goods and Services Bulletin* and *The Gloucester Daily Times*. Bids will likely be due on Tuesday, October 26, 2010.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(5) Comments Relative to Taintor Associates Draft Report (*)

At the last meeting, the Board received a presentation from Taintor Associates regarding the subject draft report concerning the northern section of Conomo Point. The consultant is presently waiting for any comments that the Board desires to issue so that appropriate changes may be made for the final report.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

E. Insurance

(1) FY11 MIIA Rewards Program Overview

I participated in a webinar on September 28, 2010 that provided a useful overview of the subject program for FY11. The Town has participated in this loss-reducing program since its inception and employees receive valuable training and guidance. I will continue to manage the program for the Town by coordinating participation with other departments.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Building Self-Inspection Forms

I completed the subject forms for the Town Hall and the Senior Center for the quarter ending September 30, 2010 as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. Building inspections are performed each quarter and discussed at our quarterly Safety Committee meetings.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) September Pothole Log

I have provided the subject log to our insurer as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. We send pothole logs to our insurer during the colder months. Several entries appeared and all potholes were repaired rapidly.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Fall Restroom Hours

The restrooms at Memorial Park returned to limited hours for the fall as of October 1, 2010. The facility is now open only Thursday through Sunday from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. until October 31 (at which time the facility will be closed for the season).

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(4) Essex Elementary School Generator

At the last meeting, the Board asked that I check the status of the installation of the subject generator. In discussions with the School District Facilities Manager, I have learned that the work is planned for the week of October 18, 2010.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(5) Essex Elementary School Fence

In order to meet safety standards, the Essex Elementary School must erect a fence around the small pond on the property. I worked with the Conservation Agent to assess the situation and he issued an emergency permit for the fence. The School District will apply for a building permit through the Building Inspector and will erect the fence as soon as possible.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Risk Assessment and Monitoring Program Update Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting with department heads in my office on September 28, 2010. The meeting featured our annual review of the subject program document in an effort to include new material based upon experiences over the past year. Several ideas were discussed that will be incorporated into the document, including a reference to our forthcoming comprehensive policy regarding public records management and the use of technology.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Paid Senior Van Drivers

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board determined that the topic of paid senior van drivers needed to be vetted against other Town needs during the upcoming, FY12 budget planning process. The Council on Aging had inquired about this topic for the November 15, 2010 Special Town Meeting. I informed the Chairman of the Council on Aging about the decision to consider the topic for May, instead. The Board had also asked me to collect additional details concerning Manchester's paid drivers (which I have obtained).

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

(1) Location of Business Signs, Laurel Lane

(*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to review the access rights of a landowner to the rear of a Town parcel. Businesses on the rear lot have maintained signs at the junction of Laurel Lane and Southern Avenue for some time and the Board is reviewing a complaint regarding those signs. I researched the issue with the Assessors' Office but we were unable to locate a deed reference for the Town property at that location. The Assessors' Clerk also researched surrounding deeds for a deed reference for the Town property or evidence of a right of way over the Town property but was not able to locate any further information.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion relative to the question of signage at the subject location.**

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Essex Division Meeting

(*)

I attended the subject meeting along with Selectman O'Donnell on September 28, 2010. The meeting featured a discussion regarding ongoing Town projects and initiatives along with a discussion regarding the need to sustain various holiday events in the absence of EYC funding. Such events include: the annual Easter

egg hunt, Halloween festivities, the turkey hunt, the Memory Tree, the Santa parade and gathering, and Santa's Breakfast. For this season, Halloween (group of volunteers), Santa's Breakfast (Essex Elementary 5th Grade Class), the Memory Tree (group of Chamber volunteers), and the Santa gathering (the Essex Shipbuilding Museum and other volunteers) are covered. I have reached out to other organizations regarding the Easter egg hunt and the turkey hunt.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to future holiday events.**

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Revised Draft Special Town Meeting Warrant (*)

I have revised the draft Special Town Meeting warrant in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting. The Board is scheduled to approve and sign the warrant at the next meeting (October 18, 2010).

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the revised draft document.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Snow and Ice Removal (*)

A recent court case has expanded the potential liability associated with snow and ice removal for private parties and municipal governments alike. As we approach winter, it may be useful to discuss our preparations. Currently, the Department of Public Works is responsible for all work with the exception of the on-premises walkways, ramps, and stairways at the Town Hall/Library, the Fire and Police Headquarters, and the Senior Center. The Town utilizes a separate, part-time employee for the Town Hall/Library and the Senior Center and the Fire Department covers the Fire/Police Headquarters. We do have an individual lined up for the coming season and we should assess that arrangement versus the potential need for a private contractor after each event. The Board of Public Works may attend the Board's meeting of November 1, 2010 to discuss this issue.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to this issue.**

M. Grants

(1) Seaport Professionals Presentation (*)

I participated in the subject presentation along with staff from the Salem State University Center for Economic Development and Sustainability and Selectman O'Donnell on October 1, 2010. The presentation provided the Seaport Advisory

Council's professional staff with an overview of the Town's proposed boardwalk project in advance of a meeting planned for October 7, 2010 at which the Seaport Advisory Council will be making near-term funding decisions. Dr. Bill Hamilton and Dr. Lorri Krebs of Salem State presented a PowerPoint presentation and Selectman O'Donnell and I added commentary. We explained how the new seawall has been designed to accommodate the new boardwalk should the project be deemed feasible. We also explained how the ongoing Route 133 Reconstruction Project has been a strain on local businesses.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the upcoming Seaport Advisory Council meeting.**

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Essex Heritage Scenic Byway Public Forum

At the last meeting, it was determined that either Selectman Jones or Selectman O'Donnell will attend the subject forum to make opening remarks. The Selectmen's Assistant and I have worked with the Town's representative to the Corridor Advisory Group (Mr. Bill Holton) and the Group's coordinator (Bonnie Sontag) to schedule the event for November 16, 2010 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the school. Selectman O'Donnell will attend to make opening remarks.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Halloween Event, Centennial Grove

A group of volunteers has continued with plans to offer a Halloween event at the Centennial Grove. I spoke to the lead organizer about the Board's recent offering of movie tickets (as prizes) that had been purchased by the Youth Commission and she will incorporate those into the program. The event will occur on Saturday, October 30, 2010, beginning at 4:00 p.m.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

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