



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of October 7, 2013

Report covers from September 21, 2013 to October 4, 2013

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Testing of Virtual Desktops (*)

As the Board may recall, I had been working with Melrose personnel to make it possible for the desktops of our users to be stored virtually, at the Melrose server. After testing basic logistics, Melrose personnel set out to determine if our existing Microsoft Office licenses were transferrable to the server environment. That process took some time to complete and we have been informed that we will need to purchase new licenses (a one-time fee for each connecting workstation, not per user) in order to proceed. The cost per workstation is expected to be approximately \$370. My present inclination is to purchase perhaps two licenses at this time so that two of our users can be migrated to the virtual platform to fully test its capabilities using daily work tasks before we commit to migration of other users. I would also like to know more about the status of our emergency generator grant timing since uninterrupted power will be critical to a successful program.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to testing the system with routine work activities and understanding the emergency generator installation timeline before moving forward in a general sense.

C. Personnel

(1) Drug and Medical Screening Services

I met with a representative of our pre-employment/ongoing drug and medical screening vendor, Quadrant Health Strategies, on September 26, 2013. This annual meeting is held to review the various protocols for different positions (such as police officer, DPW-DOT, and Council on Aging van driver). The system has been working well and protocols will remain essentially unchanged.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Quarterly AMCO Report

I filed the subject report with the State in my capacity as the Town's Affirmative Marketing Construction Officer during the week of September 30, 2013. The report summarizes the Town's utilization of women and minority-owned businesses on State-funded construction projects. We had no such utilization over the past quarter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Award of Town Hall/Library Construction Contract (*)

General bids for the Town Hall/Library health, safety, and working environment improvement construction project were opened on October 3, 2013. A total four bids were received but all bids were substantially over budget, even when major deduct alternates were considered. Based on this actual test of the marketplace, we are finding that our project is coming in considerably higher than what the professional cost estimator had predicted. As such, the project either needs additional funding or the scope of the project needs to be narrowed to work within the funding we have.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the process going forward.**

E. Insurance

(1) Quarterly Building Self-Inspection Forms

I completed the subject forms for the Town Hall and Senior Center for the quarter beginning October 1, 2013 during the week of September 30, 2013. The forms are intended to identify safety hazards so that issues can be remedied. I did note the recent cleanout of the Town Hall stage and basement areas in preparation for the Town Hall/Library improvement project as a substantial safety improvement. The forms are discussed at quarterly Safety Committee meetings and other buildings are inspected by other departments.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Public Restrooms, Memorial Park

The schedule for the restrooms at Memorial Park will be changed from its present, 7-day schedule (in place from April 1 through September 30) to a Thursday-Sunday schedule as of October 1, 2013. As usual, this schedule will be in place for the month of October and the restrooms will be closed for the winter from November 1 through March 30.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Constellation Energy Efficiency Audit and Historical Rate Trends (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town should undergo a no-cost, no-obligation energy audit offered by our electricity supplier, Constellation Energy. As such, I began the process on September 30, 2013 with a telephone interview by Constellation staff regarding our various facilities. I then made arrangements to have the audit commenced and we expect that process to take approximately two months. We have already provided the auditor with copies of recent utility bills, as requested. Also, our Constellation account representative has provided us with information about historical market trends and will update this information on a regular basis in the event that the Board desires to lock in future rates beginning in 2016.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Solar Power Hosting Agreement (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that we should seek a sample contract from Synergy Energy relative to that company's offer to provide the Town with annual income relative to hosting solar energy capacity. The sample contract would enable us to review exactly what the company is offering versus what our obligations and restrictions might be so that an informed decision may be made (including an analysis of any procurement requirements). I contacted the company and we have been provided with a letter of intent between Synergy and the Town of Westborough, Synergy's first Massachusetts customer. We have also been provided with a draft virtual net metering and site assignment agreement. I plan to make contact with the Town Manager in Westborough to better understand their prospective arrangement by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion relative to Synergy's offer.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Surplus Debt Service Options, Vocational/Agricultural Project (*)

The Chairman of the Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical High School Committee recently provided me with information regarding debt service for the ongoing major construction project in Middleton. For fiscal year 2014, debt service needs were lower than originally anticipated, creating a surplus. The District is asking members to consider three options: immediate return of the pro-rated amount of the surplus to each community; application of the surplus to principal; or application of the surplus to next year's assessment.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the preferred alternative (which will likely ultimately be set by the majority opinion of the members).**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) ICMA Annual Conference, Boston

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) holds a conference on an annual basis, usually in a U.S. city. This year, the conference was in Boston and the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association (MMMA) hosted the event. I volunteered to assist as a MMMA member on September 25, 2013 and was allowed to attend that day of the conference without the need to pay a conference fee. One session of particular interest involved municipal managers from many different countries discussing challenges to their locales in an interactive fashion, including the use of an interpreter, where necessary. I was pleased to take advantage of the local venue since I am not normally able to attend.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Essex Division Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on September 27, 2013. I updated the group relative to various Town projects and initiatives.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Draft Special Town Meeting Warrant

(*)

I have developed an initial draft of a Special Town Meeting Warrant for November 18, 2013 in accordance with the Board's guidance.

Recommendation: **Board review and discussion regarding the draft warrant.**

(2) Draft Medical Marijuana Facility Special Permit Category

As the Board may recall, Town Counsel had been working on draft wording for adding "medical marijuana facility" as a use requiring a Special Permit in the Town's zoning bylaw. Counsel completed the drafting process and I provided the recommended wording to the Planning Board for review. The Planning Board decided on October 2, 2013 to hold a public hearing on the proposal, as worded by

Town Counsel, on November 6, 2013 at 8:00 p.m. at the Essex Elementary School.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Central Conomo Point Definitive Subdivision Plan Application

At the last meeting, the Board authorized the Chairman to sign the subject application as soon as it was finalized by our consultant, Horsley Witten. The application was finalized during the week of September 23, 2013 and was submitted to the Planning Board after the Chairman signed it, on October 2, 2013. The Planning Board has scheduled a public hearing on the application for November 6, 2013 at 8:30 p.m. at the Essex Elementary School.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Pedestrian Walkway License Renewal (*)

As the Board may recall, the stairs at the far end of the municipal parking lot enter onto the Village Restaurant property and the Town has a license for pedestrian passage. The present license expires after November 16, 2013 and I have prepared a new, two-year license for consideration by the property owner.

Recommendation: **Board vote to transmit the renewal license to the property owner and to countersign the license outside of a meeting once signed by the owner.**

(2) Walker vs. Town of Essex Legal Suit

I spent considerable time with Town Counsel and members of the Board during the week of September 30, 2013 attending and participating in court sessions pertaining to the subject case. The judge in the case has noted that his decision will be rendered in the near future.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

M. Grants

(1) Downtown Boardwalk Seaport Advisory Grant Quarterly Report (*)

I filed the subject report for the quarter ending September 30, 2013 with the Seaport Advisory Council during the week of September 30, 2013. The report featured discussion relative to how Salem State's work for the feasibility phase has been completed and how our engineering firm is continuing with final design and permitting. The Town's Project Review Form for the construction phase was submitted to the Council back in July and we had been awaiting further guidance from the Council. Recently, a representative of the Council advised me that the

Council does not have a meeting scheduled in the near future and that recent State funding constraints will make it unlikely for the project to be funded in the present funding year. Our engineer could be tasked with completing the permitting based upon an agreed-to final design so that the project could perhaps be ready for construction when Seaport construction funding is again available.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to our engineer's interim permitting work.**

(2) Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Grant Update

Two members of the Long Term Planning Committee (LTPC) have been working directly with the consultant on the subject grant to provide input on the consultant's preliminary work. The goal is to utilize the LTPC's, Selectmen's, and the general public's input to update the preliminary product with an eye toward a final public forum and report.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant, Emergency Generator

Personnel from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) were to conduct a site visit at Town Hall on October 4, 2013 as part of the continuing approval process of a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant for a new emergency generator for the Town Hall/Library. As the Board may recall, we had cleared the preliminary State vetting process and must now also clear the Federal approval process. Unfortunately, since FEMA personnel were also to be involved, the site visit had to be canceled due to the Federal shutdown. We expect to hear more about the status of this delayed grant in the coming weeks.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Potential Infrastructure Grant Funding

(*)

As the Board may recall, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) is in the process of preparing a climate change adaptation strategy for the Town. The Federation will also soon be applying for funding to a Department of Interior grant program through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for projects that would assist communities avoid infrastructure problems in future major storm events (such as Super Storm Sandy). Chris Hilke from NWF has asked for input on projects that might be a good fit in Essex. Examples might include the Conomo Point seawall system or bridge renovation replacement work.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to potential project ideas.**

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

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.