



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of October 19, 2009

Report covers from October 3, 2009 to October 16, 2009

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Summer Program Information Gathering

At the last meeting, the Board requested that I oversee the collection of examples of programming that exists in summer programs held in other communities. As such, I have asked the Youth Director to reach out to other communities for copies of their most recent summer program booklets through the State association that she belongs to. Once the booklets are in our possession, the Youth Director will summarize the various activities and the Board can review that summary along with the collection of booklets.

Also, I informed the Youth Director that the Board would like her to develop a plan for the Essex Summer Program that does not involve the use of the Grove Cottage. It is possible that the cottage will be used for other purposes in the future. The Director will work on that task and will describe any other needs that are apparent due to the loss of the cottage facility.

Work on both the programming task and the facility task will be completed by the end of November, 2009.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Essex Fire Department Incident Database Upgrade

The Fire Department's incident reporting system database vendor (Fire Programs) recently released a major upgrade to the software. The upgrade involved the installation of pre-requisite Windows updates on both the server and the client and the conversion of the data to the new format. I completed the upgrade during the week of October 5, 2009.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 4 hours.

C. Personnel

(1) AFSCME Successor Agreement

(*)

AFSCME has contacted our office to determine when the Town might begin negotiations for a successor agreement (the present collective bargaining agreement expires June 30, 2010).

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

(2) FY10 Wage & Salary Scale Modification (*)

The November 9, 2009 Special Town Meeting Warrant will contain an article to modify the FY10 Wage & Salary Scale to allow for payment of an appointed Town Clerk. The Selectmen, in their present capacity as Personnel Board, should vote to recommend the change to Town Meeting.

Recommendation: **Personnel Board vote to recommend to Town Meeting a change in the FY10 Wage & Salary Scale that will rename the “Town Clerk” title in the elected officials section to “Elected Town Clerk” and that will add in the appointed officials section the title of “Appointed Town Clerk” with an annual salary range of \$43,000 - \$53,000.**

(3) Town Clerk Search Committee Update (*)

The Town Clerk Search Committee has produced a draft Interview Skills and Grading Grid for the Board’s review and approval. The Committee has also forwarded an offer from our present Town Clerk to serve as an Assistant Town Clerk on a volunteer basis after she retires. Further, the Committee has requested that the Town Clerk opening be posted on the Massachusetts Town Clerks Association website in addition to *The Beacon* and other outlets when the job is ready to advertise.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the above matters.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Route 133 Construction Questions (*)

At the last meeting, the Board posed several questions relative to upcoming construction activities including: a) whether the new construction hours signs could be professionally changed if construction hours change, b) whether the utility poles along the causeway are being physically removed during the seawall work, and c) what types of construction activities could possibly be performed at night.

I discussed these issues with the Resident Engineer from MassHighway and he indicated that he would be able to alter the signs in a professional manner; that the poles on the seawall side of the causeway are being physically removed; and that the potential exists for any construction-related activity to occur at night. Regarding night work, he indicated that the Town, the contractor, and MassHighway would need to discuss each proposed activity and work each one out on a case-by-case basis.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion regarding potential night work.**

(2) Proposed Amendment to Agreement with Horsley Witten (*)

Our Southern Conomo Point Subdivision consultant, Horsley Witten, will require additional funding to provide additional public meeting attendance that is outside the scope of the original contract in order to complete the project. An amendment in the amount of \$5,000 has been proposed by the firm and \$2,945 of that figure can be covered by the original appropriation. An additional appropriation of \$2,055 will be required before this additional work can be performed.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to approve the contract amendment subject to appropriation by the Town Meeting on November 9, 2009.**

E. Insurance

(1) Annual Insurance Coverage Review (*)

I met with a representative of our insurance company on October 7, 2009 to review the Town's present lines of property & casualty, police and fire accident, and workers' compensation coverage.

I inquired as to whether various items covered under our "special property" schedule could be insured for replacement cost versus cash value and how we would compare the premium for our current coverage to that modified coverage. Our agent has generated a quotation comparing the premiums for our existing coverage versus the cost should we choose to cover every other eligible item and the difference is \$1,168 annually.

I also learned that the Town can purchase flood and earthquake coverage (\$1M policy with a \$25,000 deductible) for \$479 annually.

Further, we discussed our present police/fire accident coverage policy and our agent indicated that some adjustments are possible.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to additional replacement cost coverage, flood and earthquake coverage, and the present police/fire accident policy.**

F. Facilities

No items.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Update

The Massachusetts Recovery and Reinvestment Office has released an update relative to the subject Federal funding. Disbursement of funds to communities less than 35,000 in population will be limited to about \$12.2M and, as anticipated,

the eligible project list does not put Essex in a prime position for funding. However, as noted in the past, all communities will eventually receive funding relative to Building Inspector training on the new Stretch Code and Energy Code and will eventually be granted access to a new Energy Information Reporting System that will allow for tracking and analysis of municipal energy use.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Conomo Point Planning Assistance Update (*)

Selectman Lynch and I met with Ms. Carolyn Britt, Ms. Juliet Walker, and Ms. Susan Brown on October 6, 2009 to discuss progress concerning the Conomo Point portion of Ms. Britt's planning services contract. We learned that Ms. Walker had met with the Conomo Point Planning Committee and had begun to collaborate with Ms. Brown (a landscape architect) about ideas for the future of the northern area of Conomo Point. The consultants have estimated that the type of work that has been generally discussed would likely cost approximately \$25,000 and a more exact figure could be arrived at via a specific scope of work.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the potential for this study.**

(2) Coordination of Expanded Premises Permitting

I met with the Building Inspector, the Fire Chief, the Board of Health Administrator, and representatives of the The Farm Restaurant on October 8, 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to ensure that the establishment has all of the necessary approvals and permits in place before a recently-approved alteration of premises and expansion of the establishment's alcohol permit become effective. The various department heads were able to provide the restaurant's management with guidance and compliance has been achieved. The expanded alcohol service area will become effective upon approval of the expansion application by the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Special Town Meeting Warrant (*)

I have developed a final version of the Special Town Meeting Warrant for the Board's review and approval based on the Board's guidance from the last meeting. The Board had asked me to investigate the possibility of a playing fields study using Community Preservation Act funding. I learned that the portion of CPA funds available for that purpose is still very small. Also, sufficient time did not exist to thoroughly vet this proposal with the Community Preservation Committee. I recommend that the concept be considered for the Annual Town Meeting.

Recommendation: **Board vote to close the warrant; to approve the warrant as presented or with modifications; and to sign the warrant.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Pedestrian License, Village Restaurant (*)

As the Board may recall, I had provided the Village Restaurant with a successor license allowing continued pedestrian traffic over the Village property by parties traveling to and from the municipal parking lot. That successor license for an additional, two-year period has been signed by the appropriate officers.

Recommendation: **Board signature of the successor license.**

M. Grants

(1) Seaport Bond Bill Public Access Grant (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should reach out to our Senator and our Representative relative to the status of the Town's Seaport Bond Bill grant application for public access to our waterfront. I contacted both offices and confirmed that the funding environment is generally poor presently and that additional funding will likely not be available until fiscal year 2012.

Also, I was able to discuss further with a representative of National Grid the potential for leaving the utility poles adjacent to the seawall on the marsh side of the causeway permanently. It is likely that any project that is funded for public access facilities at the seawall will require the same types of heavy equipment necessary for the Route 133 project and we would like to avoid moving the poles again in the future.

I learned that the relocated poles were not installed with permanency in mind. However, National Grid is willing to determine what would be necessary to make those poles permanent (i.e. additional guy wires, etc.). If a permanent installation

is not possible, National Grid will also review whether the poles could at least remain in place for a period of several years.

If the poles are suitable for permanent placement, National Grid would like to know what the comfort level of the businesses on the marsh side of the causeway is relative to leaving them in place. If the poles are not suitable for permanent placement but can remain for several years, National Grid cautions that MassHighway's sidewalk planning should provide seamed areas that could be easily removed to install new poles. Also, since MassHighway would be gone, the Town would have to find funding for at least the restoration of the sidewalk, etc. once the new poles are installed (and possibly for the move itself).

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion relative to the pole relocation issue.**

(2) Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) Grant (*)

Consulting Planner Carolyn Britt has explored possible planning grant opportunities and has highlighted the potential use of the MDI planning grant to help further develop the Long Term Planning Committee's (LTPC) Village Initiative. Ms. Britt has broken down the possible MDI topic areas and has recommended certain topics that might server the LTPC well. The LTPC will next be meeting on October 20, 2009.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the subject grant program.**

(3) Clean Energy Choice Grant

As the Board may recall, the Town had applied for funding through the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust's Clean Energy Choice Program for two solar-powered compactors. That equipment has been funded and a check for the full amount arrived during the week of October 12, 2009. I have placed an order for the equipment and it will be shipped to the Department of Public Works.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Columbus Day Holiday

The office as closed on October 12, 2009 in observance of the subject holiday.

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