



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of October 20, 2008

Report covers from October 4, 2008 to October 17, 2008

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Long Term Planning Committee Update

The Chairman of the Long Term Planning Committee (LTPC) has indicated that the LTPC is interested in exploring planning grant funds under Chapter 43D of the General Laws. At his request, I am working to find a speaker who understands that process well and is willing to speak to the LTPC. I have started with a contact at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and will report back to the Chairman. Also, the LTPC is continuing to work on the formulation of a detailed community survey to follow up on the basic survey from this past summer. I will meet with the LTPC Chairman and Chairman Randall in the near future to help coordinate the LTPC's effort.

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

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Accounting Software Update

Our accounting software vendor released an update to the BudgetSense accounting program during the week of October 6, 2008. I downloaded and installed the update and performed the necessary database maintenance.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

#### (2) Computer Monitor Failure

The Police Chief's computer monitor failed during the week of October 6, 2008. I was able to take another flat screen monitor from the firearms computer system (which is used infrequently) for the Chief. I installed an old, CRT monitor on the firearms computer temporarily and have since replaced that with a new flat screen under warranty.

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

#### (3) Arrival of Desktop Computer Systems

Two new desktop computer systems arrived during the week of October 6, 2008. I had ordered one system for the Library and that system will be paid for via grant funding and will be set up by staff from the Merrimac Valley Library Consortium (MVLIC). The second system will serve as an additional terminal for the officers of the Police Department. The Chief of Police identified a space for the new

system within the Police office and I started up the system and connected it to the existing network. The system is fully operational and provides an additional resource when more than one officer requires computer access at the same time. I will work with the Sergeant to migrate settings for each officer as time permits.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 1.5 hours.

#### (4) Arrival and Deployment of Planning Board Laptop System

As noted in the past, I had ordered a new laptop computer system for the Planning Board to replace that department's older model desktop system. The new laptop will be wirelessly connected to the Town Hall network to allow the Planning Board Clerk to access network files and the Internet during Planning Board meetings that are held in the Library. I set up the new laptop and the wireless network access point that I had previously configured and moved files and settings from the old system to the new system for the Clerk. The new system is working well.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 2 hours.

#### (5) Arrival of Backup Server

The server that will be placed in our disaster recovery site in Manchester, NH arrived during the week of October 13, 2008. I am presently waiting for our consultant to assist me with proper configuration. Once that occurs, I will schedule a time to actually bring the device to Manchester and to work with staff at that facility to get it up and running.

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

#### (6) Replacement of Town Clerk's Computer System

The Planning Board's desktop computer system that was just taken off line due to its replacement with a new laptop will in turn be used to replace the Town Clerk's desktop system. The Town Clerk's system is older than the Planning Board desktop and will actually improve speed and performance for the Clerk. I have made that switch and the newer system is working well for the Town Clerk.

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

### **C. Personnel**

#### (1) Migration of Occupational Health Services

As noted previously, our present vendor for drug/medical screening and for occupational therapy (in Danvers) will no longer be offering those services through Health Resources. After speaking with our insurer, I learned of another clinic, Quadrant, (presently in Peabody but moving to Beverly) that is affiliated

with Health Resources. I met with a representative of the clinic and we will be migrating those services to Quadrant as of November 1, 2008.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

#### **D. Procurement**

##### (1) Selection of Conomo Point Subdivision Consultant

The various proposals from consultants regarding the subdivision of the southern portion of Conomo Point have been evaluated by the RFP Subcommittee of the Conomo Point Planning Committee (CPPC). Presently, the Subcommittee has created a short list of two consultants for interviews on October 21, 2008 (Horsley Witten and Oak Engineers). After the interviews, the Subcommittee will recommend to the CPPC and the Selectmen a final choice - subject to funding at the upcoming Special Town Meeting. If the Town Meeting funds the project, the Board will be asked to sign a contract with the selected firm at its meeting of November 17, 2008.

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

#### **E. Insurance**

##### (1) Annual Review of Insurance Coverage

The account executive from our insurer visited my office on October 9, 2008 to review the extent of the Town's various policies as our insurer does each year. We discussed recent changes such as the addition of some relatively new vehicles and the recent decision to increase our umbrella limit. Our policy choices are in good order and no changes were necessary.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

#### **F. Facilities**

##### (1) Facilities Roundtable Seminar

I attended the subject seminar hosted by our insurer on October 14, 2008. The seminar featured a discussion regarding best practices for facilities management and highlighted the more complex systems that are designed into newer buildings. Manchester Essex Facilities Manager Joe Lucido also attended and is presently planning for the use and ongoing care of the systems that will be included in the new school building. Further, in the coming months, the State will be introducing a program that will help communities and districts to evaluate energy efficiency in public buildings (under the Green Communities Act).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary at this time.

(2) Causeway Utility Cleanup Planning

At the last meeting, the Board met with Senator Tarr and representatives of Verizon and National Grid to discuss potential efforts that could be made to clean up the existing overhead utility infrastructure along the causeway. National Grid (the owner of the utility poles) agreed to review the situation on a pole-by-pole basis and to determine if a pole could be eliminated along the span of the future new seawall. Presently, National Grid is conducting the necessary analysis and we expect to have a report within a month or so.

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

(3) Repainting of Grove Concession Stand

The church group that has volunteered to repaint the Grove Concession Stand is preparing to kick off that work. The group leader will be coordinating with the Eagle Scout candidate who will be managing the repainting of the Folsom Pavilion so that identical paint colors will be used.

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

(4) Town Hall Chimney Work

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Further evaluation of all three Town Hall chimneys by a contractor indicated that the chimney that serves as our active boiler flue has a major crack in it and may pose a safety hazard. As such, it may be necessary to tear that chimney down and rebuild it to historic standards as soon as possible. I am also working to determine if the boilers can be re-piped to another chimney.

I spoke to our architect and he agreed that this plan of action is necessary. I contacted both the Essex Historical Commission (EHC) and the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) to get permission for the necessary work. MHC has asked that a letter be sent to them indicating what is being proposed once the details are known. EHC will be copied on the MHC letter and requires no further notification. I am awaiting a general cost estimate for the work and we may need to pay our architect to properly specify and package the job for bidding. I will have more information by meeting time.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion and authorization to perform the work as necessary.**

(6) Potential Conversion of Town Hall to Natural Gas Heating Fuel

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As noted previously, I had contacted National Grid at the request of the Chairman to determine the cost that would be associated with converting the two Town Hall heating systems from oil to natural gas. National Grid completed their preliminary analysis and a sales manager contacted me relative to pricing and any special incentives that may be offered. Thus far, I have learned that Keyspan would provide the gas service between the street and the building at no cost so

long as the entire building was converted. Beyond that, he indicated that it would be necessary for us to work with contractors to determine how much the interior renovations would cost.

It is likely that the steam boiler we have in the building would need to be converted to forced hot water for efficiency and the entire heat delivery system for the building would therefore need to be replaced. As for incentives, Keyspan would either provide a cash rebate in the neighborhood of \$2,000 or would be able to help us purchase a new boiler at a better price than a contractor would offer. However, the majority of the cost would be the conversion work and would be very expensive. Given the uncertainty relative to the future use of the building and the tremendous cost associated with the need for exterior repairs (which are partially necessary to improve the energy efficiency of the building anyway), there does not appear to be much of an incentive to conduct this work at this time.

*Recommendation:* **I do not recommend taking action at this time.**

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

### (1) Town of Essex Risk Assessment and Monitoring Plan Update

As the Board is aware, key department heads met in mid-September for the annual reassessment of the subject plan. A deadline of October 15, 2008 had been established for comments and revisions to be provided to me for inclusion in the revised draft. I have since produced this year's iteration of the Plan (Version 6.0).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **H. Complaints**

### (1) Dog Complaints

A resident contacted me to indicate that a number of dogs are usually present in an area on Milk Street and they tend to chase children and adults walking and biking in the area. I contacted the owner of a farm in that area and, apparently, the dogs commonly come into Town with visitors who board horses at the farm. The owner will indicate to the boarders that dogs must be kept under control if visiting. If dogs are not kept under control, it is likely that a formal complaint will be filed.

Another resident contacted me about an encounter with an aggressive dog near the Winthrop Street junction with Martin Street. However, the resident could not determine where dog lived. If she is able to provide any further information she will do so.

I have notified the Dog Officer about both of these situations and she will investigate to the extent possible.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary at this time.

### **I. Meetings Attended**

No items.

### **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

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

#### (1) Special Town Meeting Motions (\*)

The Board signed the November 3, 2008 Special Town Meeting Warrant at the last meeting. I have developed draft motions for the Board's consideration.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion of the draft motions.**

#### (2) Approval of Community Preservation Committee By-law (\*)

The Attorney General has approved the subject by-law. As such, in accordance with its terms, the actual membership of the Committee must now be appointed. The by-law requires the appointment of seven members as follows: one member of the Conservation Commission designated by the Commission; one member of the Historical Commission designated by the Commission; one member of the Planning Board designated by the Board; the Superintendent of Public Works or his designee; one member of the Housing Authority designated by the Authority; one member of the Board of Selectmen or its designee; one additional member designated by the Board of Selectmen.

As such, the Selectmen have two appointments to make. In the past, the Board discussed the potential appointment of the Town Treasurer plus a member of the Finance Committee to fill those two seats. Other parties may also be interested. Further, I have notified the other five entities that need to make appointments and all appointees should eventually receive appointment cards and be sworn in. To date, the Conservation Commission has appointed Stephan Gersh and the Planning Board has appointed Susan Robinson.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to its own appointments.**

#### (3) Trench Permitting Program

I have finalized with the help of Town Counsel the necessary permit forms relative to the new trench permitting program that all communities will need to implement as of January 1, 2009. The Department of Public Works, acting under the authority of the Board of Public Works (the Town's official Trench Permitting

Authority), will begin to issue permits as of the effective date. The program will be completely ready to proceed once the Board of Public Works establishes a permit fee.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary at this time.

## **L. Legal Issues**

No items.

## **M. Grants**

### (1) Hazard Mitigation Plan

I met with Mr. Brad Stoler of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council along with other key department heads on October 8, 2008 to discuss the ongoing development of the subject plan. MAPC had visited Essex twice in the past to review our key hazards and our key buildings and facilities. In advance of this latest meeting, Mr. Stoler provided the group with his notes on the process to date and we were able to provide him with comments and corrections.

At the meeting, Mr. Stoler provided us with the status of the plan and revised language based upon the input he had just received. The group discussed the content further and Mr. Stoler will be making additional revisions.

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

### (2) Route 133 Reconstruction Project Proposed Adjustment

Selectman Lynch and I met with two causeway business owners and the Route 133 Project designer just prior to the last Board meeting. The topic was a proposal to bring the roadbed elevation up slightly more than already planned in one area to reduce the potential for flooding even more. The designer indicated that he could draft the change if authorized by the Massachusetts Highway Department and that MassHighway may want the two abutters to sign a hold harmless agreement since they would have to elevate their own parking lots (something they are willing to do).

The MassHighway Project Manager indicated that he is willing to seek authorization from the Department for the design change. If he is successful, he will direct the designer to draft the change. Presently, we are awaiting the Project Manager's reply.

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

(3) Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Assessment

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As the Board is aware, Essex Elementary School participates in the Safe Routes to School Program. One element of that program is the potential for Federal funding to improve pedestrian access to the school. This year, Essex Elementary is eligible for a no-cost assessment of walking and bicycling routes within a mile of the school. If chosen for the assessment via a competitive process, it is possible that the need for additional sidewalks on Story Street will be highlighted. If so, Federal funding could be applied for to actually leverage the sidewalk project that the Town funded on Story Street recently.

The assessment application requires a letter of support from the Board of Selectmen and I have developed that letter for the Chairman's signature. The program does not require that any of the assessment recommendations be funded by the Town. I have reviewed the program with Principal Eric Gordon and he is also in support. Principal Gordon will undertake the completion of the necessary application form.

***Recommendation:* Board consideration of the program and signature of the letter of support by the Chairman. The application is due by November 7, 2008.**

**N. Emergency Planning**

No items.

**O. Other Items**

(1) Subsidized Housing Inventory Update

Each year, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) provides each community with a list of known, subsidized housing units. In Essex, the only such units are the 40 senior housing units at Chebacco Terrace. After confirming with the Planning Board that the Town does not have any other such units, I returned the inventory pages noting "no changes" as requested by DHCD.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Columbus Day Holiday

The office was closed on October 13, 2008 in observance of the subject holiday.

*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.*