



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of October 21, 2013

Report covers from October 5, 2013 to October 18, 2013

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

---

### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Conomo Point Overview (\*)

It has been suggested that an overview of major milestones concerning Conomo Point be produced to help voters understand the history and background of this topic. It is possible that the Selectmen, the Conomo Point Planning Committee, and the Finance Committee could eventually consider reviewing and approving the production of this type of resource.

*Recommendation:* **Preliminary Board discussion relative to this concept.**

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Presentation of Results for Cyber Security Audit

A representative of our insurer visited my office on October 9, 2013 to present a summary of results associated with a cyber security audit our insurer arranged for us earlier in the year. A specialized consultant had been hired by our insurer to test the integrity of our Internet security and preliminary results had been relayed to us as favorable at that time. Essex's final rating was similar to other communities that our insurer tested and no serious security concerns were raised. That said, the consultant did recommend areas that could be improved upon and recognized that our migration to the virtual services offered by the City of Melrose will require attention to that environment in the future. As such, I will work with Melrose to institute best practices as we move forward.

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

#### (2) Testing of Virtual Desktops

The Board agreed at the last meeting that we should test the virtual desktop environment with sample users to ensure that it provides the full functionality we now have with our desktop machines. As such, we will begin the testing by migrating the Selectmen's Assistant's desktop to the new environment. Thus far, Melrose personnel have installed Microsoft Office on the virtual server using the new license that we have acquired and I am awaiting an updated version of the program that performs the migration protocol.

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

## C. Personnel

### (1) Team Development Webinar

I participated in a webinar offered by our insurer on October 17, 2013 relative to developing effective teams to solve problems and address issue. The webinar provided insight relative to how a team approach can be fine-tuned to improve results and service.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

### (1) Town Hall/Library Improvements Project Funding (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board determined that the Town Meeting should be asked to consider providing additional funding to accomplish the scope of work in the base bid and the second-floor air conditioning alternate for the subject project. As such, through our architect, we requested bidders to extend their bid pricing through the end of November, 2013, and all have obliged.

Pursuant to State Law, in order to exercise the air conditioning alternate, we must also exercise the deduct alternate limiting keyless entry locks to just the two exterior doors. The bidder with the lowest price when both alternates are considered is Classic Construction with a total bid of \$863,251 (a figure that represents \$217,451 over our presently-funded budget amount). Our architect is also recommending that we carry at least 5% above the bid price to account for unforeseen circumstances. If the base bid plus the second floor air conditioning is the desired scope of work, the total that we would need to seek from the Town Meeting is \$260,614 (a total construction cost, with contingency, of \$906,414 – and a total project cost, with design and oversight, of \$997,614).

It is also necessary to consider a challenge from a higher bidder relative to a work statement that three of the four bidders did not provide at bid time. Town Counsel is working with the Office of the Attorney General to confirm that the work statement may be provided by the successful bidder prior to the commencement of work, since it may be viewed as waivable informality.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

## E. Insurance

### (1) Annual Property and Casualty Policy Review

A representative of our insurer visited my office on October 10, 2013 to review the various property and casualty insurance coverage lines that the Town has in place. This annual review highlights areas where coverage may need to be

increased or modified. No changes were necessary this year beyond minor adjustments.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Monthly Pothole Log Reporting

I obtained the pothole log for the month of September from the Department of Public Works and provided a copy to our insurer as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. No potholes were reported in September.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**F. Facilities**

(1) Facility Lighting Audit

As the Board is aware, we authorized our electricity supplier to conduct an audit of our lighting fixtures in our older buildings (the Town Hall, the Fire/Police Headquarters, and the Water Filtration Plant). Field personnel toured all three buildings on October 10, 2013 and our supplier is presently working on specific calculations regarding potential savings from lower-wattage fixtures, the cost of new fixtures to be potentially added to our future rate, and the amount of any rebates that might be available from National Grid.

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

(2) Centennial Grove Seasonal Winterization

The Selectmen's Assistant will arrange for the removal of all portable toilets at the Field of Dreams and the Centennial Grove for the season by mid-November (upper Grove first and Field of Dreams later). The Department of Public Works has removed the fishing dock and the swim float. Once the seasonal water to the cottage has been turned off, I will arrange for a plumber to blow out the pipes in the cottage. I have also arranged for our irrigation contractor to blow out the sprinkler system at the Field of Dreams on November 8, 2013.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Closure of Public Restrooms for the Season

The public restrooms at Memorial Park will be open through the end of October and will close from November 1 until April 1, as usual.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

No items.

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

No items.

## **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 warrant for the Special Town Meeting to be held on November 18, 2013. The Board will review and approve in accordance with the meeting agenda.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **L. Legal Issues**

### (1) Walker Legal Suit Decision

The judge rendered a decision in the Walker et al. vs. the Town of Essex legal suit on October 16, 2013. The judge determined that the Town properly set Bridge Lease rental rates.

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

## **M. Grants**

### (1) MIIA Loss Control Grant

Our insurer has announced that the next grant year is upon us and, after discussion at the Essex Safety Committee, we opted to apply for a work zone safety trailer for the DPW. This trailer will be filled with various safety items such as cones and horses, safety tape, etc., and can be brought to work sites to deploy these items in an efficient fashion. I received a quotation from a vendor for the trailer, with as many new safety items as could be purchased within the grant budget of \$5,000. I also prepared a grant application for the Chairman's signature at the last meeting.

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

(2) MIA Risk Management Grant

In addition to the Loss Control Grant discussed above, our insurer is offering a Risk Management Grant for up to \$10,000 for the implementation of processes that will likely decrease the risk of losses in certain areas. This year, our insurer is providing funds for projects that analyze and preserve historic documents. At the last meeting, the Board authorized the signature of the application for this grant outside of a meeting once the Town Clerk finalizes it. The application will likely be signed and submitted during the week of October 21, 2013.

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

(3) Department of the Interior Storm Surge Mitigation Grant

At the last meeting, I explained to the Board that personnel from the National Wildlife Federation are interested in potentially applying for construction funding through a Department of the Interior grant to improve the ability of existing coastal infrastructure to survive a major storm surge. We have now suggested such projects as the improvement of the Conomo Point seawalls or the improvement of one or more of the small bridges that would be affected during a surge.

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

(4) Downtown Boardwalk Final Design and Permitting, On Hold

Given the inability of the Seaport Advisory Council to commit to new construction project starts in the near future, the Board agreed at the last meeting that final project design and permitting should be put on hold with our engineering firm until we know more about timing. I contacted the firm and asked them to put the project on hold until we have more information.

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

(5) Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) Grant Update (\*)

The Long Term Planning Committee (LTPC) and the Selectmen will meet jointly on October 30, 2013 to receive a presentation from Icon Architecture, Inc. relative to potential future improvements to the Town Landing and its environs. As the Board may recall, Icon had presented preliminary ideas over the summer and has now worked with members of the LTPC and with public input received at the first public forum to arrive at final recommendations.

***Recommendation:* Discussion relative to any final input that the Board wishes to impart to Icon prior to the presentation, particularly with regard to the draft final slide, entitled “next steps”.**

## **N. Emergency Planning**

### (1) Regional Dispatch Center Monthly Meeting

I attended a meeting of the Essex Regional Dispatch Center Finance Advisory Board (FAB) on October 18, 2013. At the meeting, the Center's Director, Tom Dubas, updated the group relative to a variety of items concerning the Center's operations and infrastructure, including the Center's new role as the call taker for cellular phone calls for our area. I have also learned that our new Virtual Private Network (VPN) solution for high-speed connection between the Essex Police Department and the Center will be installed on October 28, 2013.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **O. Other Items**

### (1) Columbus Day Holiday

The office was closed on October 14, 2013 in observance of the subject holiday.

### (2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on leave for a portion of the afternoon of October 9, 2013.

*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.*