



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Nov. 28, 2011

Report covers from November 12, 2011 to November 25, 2011

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Essex Youth Commission Program Offerings (*)

As the Board is aware, the summer camp program offered by the YMCA was well received and will be repeated next season. The YMCA also currently operates programs for students on school half-days whereby students are transported from the school for activities that occur at the YMCA's facility in Ipswich. Recently, the Board, acting as the Youth Commission, asked me to determine what other services the YMCA could provide to the Town (such as special events).

I met with YMCA staff on November 16, 2011 and learned that the YMCA would like to help with special events but also with half-day and after school programs right on the actual school grounds. If that is something that the Board would like to explore, discussion between the Board and District officials would be necessary.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) LAN Integration Device Cutover

IT staff from the City of Melrose visited my office on November 16, 2011 to install the new LAN integration device. This device takes both of the Town's Internet connections and allows them to be used simultaneously. We had previously only used our DSL connection as a backup. With both connections up, our throughput has increased, which is necessary for our plan to eventually have all Town data hosted in Melrose. We will run the device just for our typical Internet and e-mail needs until the end of November to ensure that we have no basic issues. The IT staff has also already configured a dedicated, secure tunnel between Essex and Melrose over the Internet in preparation for migration of files. Melrose staff is now focusing on configuring their own environment for file transfer.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Renewal of Firewall/Router Support Contracts

Our main firewall/router device requires annual software update support and annual rapid hardware replacement support (in the event of a failure). I have made preparations to have both contracts renewed.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Purchase of New Utility Billing Software

The Superintendent of Public Works has worked with the Town Accountant and personnel in his department to review various utility billing software packages to replace the current system. Quotations have been solicited and I am working with Town Counsel to review a draft contract with SoftRight, which offers all of the features and services we require at the lowest price. It will be necessary to work out final language with the vendor before moving forward.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Safety Committee Meeting

The Safety Committee will meet on December 21, 2011. I will attend as a member of the Committee. I have posted the meeting and a draft agenda is in the Board's reading folder.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Purchase of New Town Hall Copier

The Special Town Meeting of November 14, 2011 approved funding for a new copier for Town Hall. The timing was excellent since a promotion involving purchase of the copier on the State Contract with three years of free service was set to expire on November 15, 2011. As such, I ordered the copier the following day and it has been delivered and is in use. The old copier went to the Library.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Route 133 Reconstruction Project Update Meeting (*)

Selectman O'Donnell and I met with MassDOT staff on November 15, 2011 to discuss all outstanding issues associated with the subject project. Major remaining issues include final configuration of curbing and the traffic island at and near the Martin Street intersection, final grass seeding of all exposed soil, resetting and staking out of roadside trees, placement of granite benches, guardrail and handrail work, and other minor items.

Subsequent to the meeting, I was able to meet with a DOT traffic engineer to review the placement and size of the traffic islands relative to large truck passage. DOT will review the matter and will potentially propose changes. DOT has

already made changes to the markings associated with the new “turn only” lane at the Martin Street intersection to make the entry point more clear.

Further, at the Board’s meeting of November 21, 2011, the Board asked that I view issues recently raised by members of the Catholic Church regarding walkways leading to the church. I will have met on site with someone to better understand the issue by meeting time. I also have asked DOT to determine if one roadside tree that is badly leaning can be staked.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Permanent Pole Move Update

I have heard from National Grid that their effort to make the relocation of several poles on the causeway permanent will occur in early to mid-December. Unlike the move that got the poles across the street when seawall construction was just beginning, this final stage only requires slight moves and a power outage is not planned.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Successor Solid Waste Contract

At the Board’s meeting of November 14, 2011, the Board reviewed preliminary figures from our present solid waste contractor relative to a successor contract. I have arranged for the Board of Public Works and the Superintendent of Public Works to attend the Board’s meeting of December 5, 2011 to discuss the matter further, as requested by the Board. I have also provided the Board with tipping rates paid by other communities, including rates paid to another solid waste company – Wheelabrator. The proposed successor Covanta rate appears to be favorable.

Recommendation: Board discussion with the Board of Public Works on December 5, 2011.

(5) Subdivision of Northern Conomo Point (*)

At the Board’s meeting of November 21, 2011, the Board determined that the Town will work with the Horsley Witten Group to tailor a scope of services for the creation of a subdivision plan and an associated zoning district for northern Conomo Point. The recent Special Town Meeting approved a sum of \$60,000 for this effort.

Subsequently, on November 23, 2011, Selectman O’Donnell and I met with representatives of Horsley Witten and with the Chairman of the Conomo Point Planning Committee to discuss the approach further.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to finalizing a scope of services.**

(6) Subdivision of Southern Conomo Point

(*)

The Planning Board met on November 16, 2011 to deliberate over the Definitive Subdivision Plan for the southern area of Conomo Point. The Planning Board had conducted two public hearing sessions previously and is presently working to draft a decision for a potential vote on November 30, 2011. The approval will likely grant several waivers and will likely carry several conditions. I have asked our consultant to contact the Planning Board Chairman in the event that any additional information is needed in advance of the meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(7) Purchase of New Police Cruiser

At the Board's meeting of November 21, 2011, the Board approved the purchase of a new police cruiser under the auspices of the State Contract. The Chief of Police has placed that order, amounting to \$30,514.95.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Replacement of Basketball Hoop Backboard

Due to vandalism, a glass backboard at the Centennial Grove basketball court requires replacement. The Essex Police Department is working to resolve the case and requested that I provide a quotation for the replacement part and associated installation work. I have provided that information.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Installation of Gate on Road to Grove Cottage

(*)

It has occurred to me that the unrestricted vehicular access to the Grove Cottage from the upper Grove parking lot is both unnecessary and potentially conducive to destructive activities. As such, a locking gate could be installed and keys could be provided to the DPW and to the Fire and Police departments.

Recommendation: **Installation of a locking gate using Grove Revolving Fund with attention to any concerns of the various Town departments.**

(3) Purchase of 74 Martin Street

The Town Election of November 21, 2011 did not approve the necessary debt exclusion to purchase the Lahey property. As such, I informed the seller's representatives that the Town is no longer pursuing that purchase.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Setup of Modular Space for Police Department

The Chief of Police has been working on calculating the actual cost of all necessary materials and services to make the donated modular space for the Police Department fully operational, along with appropriate renovations to the interior of the police station. Town Meeting recently appropriated \$20,000 for these items and the Chief will proceed, potentially with assistance from the DPW, once he has calculated all of the necessary costs.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Draft Fiscal Year 2013 Capital Project Request Forms (*)

The Finance Committee has issued its annual call for capital budget requests from the various Town departments. I have updated last year's package to account for changes that have occurred. Final request packages are due January 10, 2012.

Recommendation: **Preliminary Board review of the fiscal year 2013 capital budget request package.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Regional Emergency Communication Center Finance Advisory Board

I attended the monthly meeting of the RECC-FAB on November 19, 2011 as the Town's representative to the Board. We received an update regarding the search process for the new center's Executive Director and an update regarding the ongoing construction of the center itself.

Regarding the Executive Director, the Executive Board plans to hold an assessment center for the top three candidates in early December. It is possible that the new Director will begin work shortly after the new year.

Regarding building construction, it is our understanding that the new building may be ready as soon as January 1, 2013. However, given a host of technical considerations, the exact date for actual cutovers is not known.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Parking Signage for Conomo Point (*)

At the Board's meeting of November 14, 2011, the Board asked that I advance the signage issue addressing resident and non-resident parking at the Point to the "proof" stage by working with the Superintendent of Public Works and his sign vendor. The Superintendent has received proofs from his vendor for the Board's review.

Recommendation: **Board review and modification or approval of the proofs.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Remote Participation at Public Meetings (*)

At the Board's meeting of November 21, 2011, I passed out a summary of new guidance for the allowance of remote participation by public officials at public meetings for the Board's review.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

M. Grants

No items.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Future Conomo Point Information Forum (*)

At the Board's meeting of November 21, 2011, the Board suggested that a forum be held this coming January regarding the status and future of Conomo Point.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to content and scheduling for that forum.**

(2) Thanksgiving Holiday

The office was closed on November 24 and 25, 2011 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.