



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of December 1, 2008

Report covers from November 15, 2008 to November 28, 2008

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Quarterly Town Officials/Employees Meeting

As referenced in the past, the Board desires to ask all Town officials and department heads to attend a Selectmen's meeting on a quarterly basis to discuss coordination of Town business. The next such appointment will occur during the Selectmen's meeting of January 26, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at the Essex Elementary School. I will ask the local press to publish briefs on the session for the benefit of the public and I have posted the session on the Town's website. I have informed all board/commission chairs and all department heads.

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

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Transfer of Server Roles

The Town Hall network presently has dual domain controllers (servers) with the older machine designated as the primary controller. In anticipation of replacing that older machine in the future, it was necessary to transfer the primary roles from the older machine to the newer machine. I followed a variety of prescribed procedures and the roles were transferred successfully.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

#### (2) Firewall Router Support Renewals

I have renewed our hardware and software support licenses for our main firewall/router device for the upcoming year. The present licenses will expire in early December.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

#### (3) Arrival of Disaster Recovery Firewall/Router

The disaster recovery server that will be located in Manchester, NH requires a firewall/router device for connectivity to our host's Internet point of presence and for remote management. The device arrived during the week of November 24, 2008 and I have prepared it for delivery with the actual server when our host provides us with a deployment date that is convenient for them (likely during December).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### **C. Personnel**

#### (1) Town Administrator's Performance Review and Goal Setting (\*)

During this time every year, the Board arranges to review my performance and set goals for the upcoming year. In the performance area, I will rely on the detailed reports filed with the Board at each Board meeting as a record of my activities, service, and accomplishments. As the Board may recall, an evaluation tool was developed at the outset of this year for use at this time.

Also, it is necessary to work with the Board to develop goals for the upcoming year. In addition to the general roles and responsibilities in my position description, which I will continue to update the Board on in detail for each new Board meeting, I recommend the following specific scope and welcome discussion with the Board:

- Coordinate the upcoming construction phase of the Route 133 Reconstruction Project with MassHighway and serve as a contact for local residents, businesses, and the Chamber's Task Force (much like my role regarding the past sewer construction project). The project will likely commence this coming spring.
- Assist the Board, the Conomo Point Planning Committee, and the Horsley Witten Group as necessary relative to issues associated with Conomo Point.
- Continue to work with all Town departments relative to the further development of a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Now that the off-site disaster recovery server is ready for installation, the process can move on to implementation of a near-site operations contingency at the school (once the 6<sup>th</sup> grade moves to the new building) and the further specification of the written plan.
- Work with the Selectmen, the Chief of Police, the Fire Department, the Library, and others as necessary to expand upon the work of the Ad-Hoc Building Study Group regarding the development of a plan for the future of Town offices, the Fire/Police Headquarters, and the Town Hall building.
- Assist the Board with the procurement of a Town Planning Consultant and assist the chosen Consultant with the coordination of planning activities as necessary.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to this year's evaluation process using the new tool and the goal setting process for the upcoming calendar year.**

(2) Teamsters Collective Bargaining (\*)

The Management Team engaged the Teamsters in continued, mediated collective bargaining on November 25, 2008. The next session is scheduled for January 7, 2009.

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

(3) Town Planner Priorities (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to reach out to a consulting planner from the Horsley Witten Group who has been engaged in planning issues with the Planning Board in the past. As requested, I asked him to provide his thoughts on a prioritized planning process for Essex. The Board discussed the planner's preliminary thoughts at its meeting of November 24, 2008 and I followed up with the planner later that day. I am expecting the firm to provide me with a revised proposal for the Board's review by meeting time.

Also, the Board asked that I reach out to the Chairmen of both the Long Term Planning Committee (LTPC) and the Conomo Point Planning Committee (CPPC) to ask them how a planner might serve their respective committees if a few hours of time were made available. LTPC Chairman Dyer commented that the Committee did not get to that order of business at a recent meeting and that the requested feedback will be provided in the future. CPPC Chairman Madsen commented that he will consider the matter further and will be back in touch.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the revised proposal.**

(4) Safety Committee Meeting

The next Safety Committee meeting will be held on December 15, 2008. I have placed a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder.

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

## **D. Procurement**

(1) Commencement of Conomo Point Data Collection

An employee of the Horsley Witten Group arrived at our offices on November 18, 2008 to begin collecting data relative to wastewater systems, Assessors' information, deed research, etc. for Conomo Point. During the previous week, I had already collected a variety of other requested information and had provided that to the firm in advance of the site visit in order to plan the visit more efficiently.

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

(2) Purchase of New Swim Float

The Board approved the purchase of the new swim float for the beach at Centennial Grove at the last meeting. I have since ordered the float and it will be delivered to the DPW barn for winter storage on December 4, 2008.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Contract for Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC)

The Board discussed the subject Center at the last meeting and agreed that the process for establishing the potential cooperative venture should be clarified by Town Counsel. Town Counsel is presently considering whether the use of an Intermunicipal Agreement among communities interested in the subject Center may be employed without the need for a Town Meeting vote. In addition, he is considering whether the contract can include terms covering both the Essex County Sheriff's Office and the cooperating municipalities.

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

**E. Insurance**

No items.

**F. Facilities**

(1) Dismantling of Town Hall Chimney

One of the three Town Hall chimneys was scheduled to be dismantled to the roof line and capped between November 21 and November 22, 2008. However, that work has been postponed until December 5-6, 2008 due to a contractor scheduling conflict. The chimney in question poses the potential for a public safety threat as determined by a recent inspection. The two boilers that had utilized the chimney in question for exhaust have been re-piped to another chimney. The loose bricks will be placed on pallets in the Town Hall boiler room and will be available for reuse at the time the building is renovated.

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

(2) Review of National Grid Pole Analysis

At the last meeting, I explained to the Board that National Grid had completed its pole-by-pole analysis of the causeway area and had suggested an informal meeting to describe the matter further. The Board agreed that a subcommittee of the Essex Division of the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce (Selectman Lynch, Ed Perkins, Sue Lufkin, and Robert Coviello) and I should meet with National Grid staff to receive National Grid's report. That meeting has been scheduled for December 9, 2008 and a representative of Verizon will also attend (at National Grid's request).

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

(3) Town Buildings Study

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At the last meeting, the Board spoke with members of the Ad-Hoc Building Study Group regarding the potential next steps for Town building planning. After some discussion, the Board agreed that: a) I should research with Town Counsel the potential that may exist for public/private partnerships in the context of public procurement laws; b) the Ad-Hoc Study Group should provide to the Board some cost estimates for development of Town-owned land on John Wise Avenue and the renovation of the Fire Station (after the first of the year); and c) the Board may consider the appointment of a special committee just to propose the best future use of the Town Hall building with an associated cost/benefit analysis.

I have discussed with Town Counsel the potential to utilize private construction to creatively supply new Town buildings. We covered both the potential of private construction on public land and private construction on private land. Presently, it does not appear possible to commission a public building without going through the normal public procurement and contracting process.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the public/private partnership update.**

*Recommendation:*

(4) Cosmetic Ceiling Cracks, Essex Senior Center

Users of the Senior Center had reported some cosmetic cracks in the second floor ceiling in the vicinity of the main carrying beam. Even though the building is no longer under warranty, I contacted our original prime contractor and that company has agreed to repair the situation. The cracks are merely a product of minor settling and shifting of the sheetrock after the modular building was transported over the road and placed on its foundation. I will be meeting our contractor on the site in the near future so he can further assess the situation.

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

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

(1) LA-5 Certification

At the last meeting, the Board authorized me to sign the electronic LA-5 tax form relative to the recent hearing on the residential tax factor. The Board of Assessors completed that form and I was able to log in and provide the electronic signature. This is the first year that the Department of Revenue is offering a new, on-line system known as DLS Gateway for the submission of necessary annual tax forms. I also assisted the Town Clerk with her login credentials and with another section

of the LA-5 and a variety of other tax rate-related forms that required her electronic signature.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Revised Fiscal Calendar

The Town Accountant has released the revised Town fiscal calendar for this budget cycle and I have provided copies to the Board. The calendar includes meetings between the Board and the Finance Committee on December 15, 2008 and on February 9 and March 9, 2009.

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

(3) Fiscal Year 2010 Capital Budget Request

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The Finance Committee released its call for fiscal year 2010 capital budget requests on November 24, 2008. I have revised last year's document and the new version is due by January 12, 2009.

*Recommendation:* **Preliminary Board discussion relative to the draft FY10 capital budget request document.**

## H. Complaints

(1) Impedance of Drainage

At the last meeting, the Board reviewed the potential that yard waste may have been deposited in a low area, contributing to the impedance of runoff drainage in an area of Conomo Point. At the request of the Board, I developed a letter to a tenant for the Chairman's signature asking for that practice to cease if it is indeed operative.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## I. Meetings Attended

(1) Joint Roundtable Meeting

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I hosted the monthly roundtable meeting among Essex, Manchester, and School District officials on November 19, 2008 on behalf of Chairman Randall. This month's meeting featured a discussion relative to the potential sharing of senior services with the Town of Manchester. At this point in time, the various senior groups that were represented at the meeting did not indicate that they see a need for collaboration beyond the Manchester services they already partake in (these include various trips and meals on a space-available basis). The Council on Aging will likely consider consulting with Ms. Nancy Hammond, Manchester's Director of Senior Services, in the event there are other elements of the Manchester program that would be helpful to Essex seniors.

The group also discussed Manchester's plans to construct its own fuel depot and whether other entities could potentially share that facility. In fact, the School District does plan to utilize the facility and Essex is welcome but the presently-anticipated tank size may need to be increased with Essex participation. Manchester officials commented that Essex is welcome to use the depot in emergencies (such as late-night storms, power outages, etc.) even if Essex decides not to use the depot on a regular basis.

After the meeting, I discussed the matter with the Superintendent of Public Works and the Chief of Police (the Town's two largest fuel users). The Chief of Police is very interested in this arrangement and would like to explore it further. There may be times when cruisers cannot travel to Manchester for fuel (weather and situation-related) but most refueling could occur there. However, the Superintendent of Public Works has indicated that the proximity of the depot to Essex would be problematic. At the Board's meeting on November 24, 2008, the Board asked that I provide an update on the issue at the present meeting involving: a) fuel use projections from the Chief of Police based upon the past two years, b) the Police Chief's plan for maintaining public safety while a patrol car is involved in refueling, c) the cost for Essex to construct its own facility, d) the current difference between retail and wholesale fuel pricing.

The next roundtable meeting will occur on January 14, 2009 and will feature a joint School District budget discussion among the three entities.

***Recommendation:* Further Board discussion relative to the Manchester fuel depot based upon available information at meeting time.**

## **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

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

(1) Draft Annual Town Meeting Article Topics (\*)

I have developed a draft list of Annual Town Meeting topics for the Board's preliminary consideration.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the referenced topics.**

## **L. Legal Issues**

No items.

## M. Grants

### (1) Regional Emergency Communications Center Grant Letter of Support (\*)

The Essex County Sheriff's Office is applying for a grant to construct a new, Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC). The funding for the grant program is made possible by a recent change in State Law that allows surcharges on phone bills to accumulate for this purpose, among others. The grant application is due on December 15, 2008 and the Sheriff's Office has asked that the Town provide a letter of support (which I have developed for the Chairman's signature).

*Recommendation:* **Board consideration of the requested letter of support.**

## N. Emergency Planning

No items.

## O. Other Items

### (1) Response to Resident's Inquiry

At the Board's meeting of November 24, 2008, the Board reviewed an inquiry from a Town resident about the potential to broaden the scope of the Conomo Point Subdivision Project by adding cluster zoning and a windmill as topics for consideration. At the request of the Board, I developed a reply to the resident indicating that cluster zoning is not outside the realm of possibilities that our consultant is already studying and that wind power, although of interest to the Board on a Town-wide basis, is not part of the present scope and will not be added at this time.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave during the afternoon of November 26, 2008.

### (3) Thanksgiving Holiday

The office was closed on November 27 and November 28, 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.*