



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of December 1, 2014

Report covers from November 15, 2014 to November 28, 2014

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Request for Renewal of Alewife Brook Clearing Order of Conditions

The current Order of Conditions for the cyclical clearing of the Alewife Brook to keep the alewife fish run clear expires this coming February. Since it is possible to have the same Order of Conditions renewed for an additional three years, I have requested in writing that the Conservation Commission take that action.

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

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Installation of Carbonite Backup Capability

Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding that the Board recently signed, we have received access to the Carbonite on-line backup system through a one-year grant from the Community Software Consortium. I have set up the system on our virtual file server in Melrose and it will provide an additional level of file backup beyond the measures already in use in Melrose.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

### C. Personnel

#### (1) Domestic Violence Leave Act Applicability

The Domestic Violence Leave Act was enacted this past summer and it requires that certain employers notify employees about a right to 15 days of unpaid leave per year if an employee or a covered family member is a victim of abusive behavior. Since the new law only applies to employers with over 50 employees (full time vs. part-time not specified), I am working with Town Counsel to determine whether that definition applies to Essex.

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

#### (2) Safety Committee Meeting

The next Safety Committee meeting will be held on December 17, 2014 and I will attend as a member of the Committee. I have placed a draft agenda in the Board's reading folder.

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

## D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

### (1) Northern Conomo Point Final Planning Process

Now that the Fall Town Meeting has approved \$25,000 for final planning efforts at Northern Conomo Point, the Board should discuss whether a process will be undertaken to arrive at a planning firm versus simply utilizing a firm that has conducted similar work for the Town in the past. The Conomo Point Planning Committee (CPPC) may wish to provide input regarding this selection and regarding the potential scope of work. As such, the CPPC will be meeting in advance of the Selectmen's meeting to deliberate over what they would like to see.

*Recommendation:* Board discussion with the Conomo Point Planning Committee regarding the selection of a firm and critical elements that should be included in a preliminary proposal from that firm.

### (2) Contract for Subdivision Development and Application Process (\*)

Now that the Fall Town Meeting has approved \$8,500 for an engineering firm to produce a new iteration of the Robbins Island neighborhood subdivision plan, I recommend retaining the services of the Horsley Witten Group to continue with the project. Horsley Witten's proposal for the necessary services includes a price of \$8,150.

*Recommendation:* **Board approval of the Robbins Island Subdivision production proposal from Horsley Witten.**

### (3) Contract for Owner's Project Manager Services, Town Hall/Library (\*)

Now that the Fall Town Meeting has approved funding to retain the services of an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) for the exterior rehabilitation and associated work on the Town Hall/Library Building, I have worked with construction management firm NETCO to finalize the contract. NETCO is prepared to begin work immediately and the final cost figure is \$57,500. NETCO President David Lager visited Town Hall on November 19, 2014 to conduct a comprehensive site walk with me so he could familiarize himself generally with the project. He also picked up plans and specifications from past projects that he will duplicate for his use and reference.

*Recommendation:* **Board approval of the contract with NETCO.**

### (4) Selection of Engineering Firm for Federal Flood Map Appeal (\*)

Now that the Fall Town Meeting has approved funding to retain the services of an engineering firm to appeal the present FEMA coastal flood maps, the Board should consider which firm to hire. Several firms conduct this type of work within the Commonwealth and, since engineering is exempt from Chapter 30B, the Board may wish to solicit written proposals or conduct interviews.

**Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the process for selecting a firm.**

(5) Preparation for Federal Channel Public Meeting

As part of the present Selectmen's meeting, consulting engineer David Smith will provide the Board, project stakeholders, and any other interested parties with a report relative to the potential realignment of the Federal Channel. He has recently discussed various options from his preliminary report with the Army Corps of Engineers and it appears that keeping the channel at 60 feet wide and realigning it will be the best option. We have learned that this option can potentially be completed by the Corps administratively, without the need for an act of the Federal legislature. Mr. Smith and I recently reviewed all aspects of the project in preparation for tonight's meeting.

**Recommendation:** Board discussion with our engineer and the public at tonight's meeting.

(6) Contract for Continued Promotion of Town Resources (\*)

As requested by the Board (with Selectman Coviello abstaining), the Essex Merchants' Group (EMG) has provided a proposal for the continued promotion of Town resources. The Group was under contract for a special, \$5,000 appropriation for this purpose recently and is interested in a contract for \$10,000 in fiscal year 2015 continuing funding. The present proposal speaks to the Board's desire to ensure that the non-profit and natural resources sector of the Town is promoted more thoroughly, in addition to the general promotion techniques employed in the first contract.

**Recommendation: Board discussion relative to EMG's proposal and authorization of a new contract.**

**E. Insurance**

No items.

**F. Facilities**

(1) Town Hall East End Wall Project Update

At the last meeting, the Board approved Classic Construction's change order proposal for the placement of steel in the building, along with associated work (pending funding of the work by the Fall Town Meeting). After the Fall Town Meeting did vote to approve the funding, I notified our project architect, our consulting engineer, and our contractor about the approval and issued a Notice to Proceed. Our contractor has already begun work (plaster demolition has been completed) and will coordinate with our consulting engineer as necessary,

throughout the project. Plastic sheeting is being used to separate the work zone from the space that we are still using (keeping dust and cold air contained in the work zone). I assisted the Treasurer/Collector with a temporary move into the Treasurer/Collector Clerk's Office, since work in the Treasurer's Office cannot be conducted with the office occupied.

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

(2) Tour of Town Hall Basement, Topsfield Library Staff

Several representatives of the Topsfield Library toured the Town Hall basement to view our recently-installed dewatering system. The Topsfield Library has a wet basement, like Essex Town Hall once had, and the staff is looking at other projects to better understand various strategies that might be used for their own building.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

(1) School Budget Planning Discussion

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I attended the subject meeting along with Selectman Coviello and Finance Committee Chairman Soulard on November 24, 2014. The meeting featured a discussion regarding various levels of potential school funding for fiscal year 2016 and requires further discussion by the Selectmen.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the various potential funding levels.**

(2) Department of Revenue Financial Management Review

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should contact the Department of Revenue to request a Financial Management Review on a March, 2015 timeframe. I have since made contact with the Department and we have been placed on their schedule. We will be contacted by appropriate staff as the timeframe approaches.

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

(3) Future Electricity Pricing for Budget Purposes

In December of 2015, our fixed-rate electricity supply contract rates will increase due to the expiration of our current contract (which carries very favorable rates from four years ago) and due to the commencement of our repayment for our recent energy efficiency retrofit. As such, I will notify all departments about what to expect, since these new rates will affect planning for one half of fiscal year 2016.

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

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

### (1) Meeting of Area Town Administrators/Managers

I met with a group of area Town Administrators and Managers on November 19, 2014. As usual, we discussed projects and initiatives of common concern and individuals provided insight from past experiences. The meeting is a very helpful way to learn about how similar challenges are addressed in neighboring communities.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Informal Department Heads' Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting in my office on November 20, 2014. Each department head discussed the status of ongoing projects and initiatives within their respective departments. This periodic discussion helps to coordinate efforts among departments.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

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

No items.

## **L. Legal Issues**

No items.

## **M. Grants**

### (1) District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Grant Application

At the last meeting, the Board authorized the submittal of a grant application for the subject grant program. Town Planner Matthew Coogan attended a briefing regarding the grant program and learned that the program would probably not fund the development of a strategic plan (due to the focus of the program this year). If some other topic that would be helpful to the Town and that is also within the program's focus can be identified, it is possible that the Planner will submit an application along those lines.

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

## **N. Emergency Planning**

### (1) Regional Dispatch Center Finance Advisory Board Meeting

I attended the subject meeting as a member of the Board on November 21, 2014. The meeting featured a discussion regarding changes in various revenue sources and assessments associated with the fiscal year 2015 budget. It is likely that the budget will need to be amended, once the final mix of revenue and assessments is settled. The matter of whether the Center should have to pay State fringe benefits, given that other similar centers do not, was also discussed. The Board has invited Senator Tarr to the December meeting to hear his report on legislative assistance that his office has been working on in this area.

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

## **O. Other Items**

### (1) Thanksgiving Day Holiday

The office was closed on November 27 and 28, 2014 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.*