



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Dec. 13, 2010

Report covers from November 27, 2010 to December 10, 2010

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Summer Program (\*)

As the Board may recall, at the Board's suggestion, I had been working on coordinating the potential for a large organization, such as the YMCA, to take over the Summer Program offered at the Grove. Members of the Centennial Grove Committee had also reached out to the YMCA to gather similar information. In order to consolidate conversations, I met with Rick Doucette of the Cape Ann YMCA and Chris Lovasco, the Chief Operating Officer for the region on December 9, 2010. The meeting gave me a sense of how that industry works and what it has to offer and the next step to further investigate this type of scenario would be to issue a Request for Proposals.

**Recommendation:** Further Board discussion regarding the potential to contract out the Summer Program and the possible development of a Request for Proposals to test the marketplace for this type of service.

#### (2) Next Quarterly Department Heads/Chairs Meeting (\*)

The next quarterly meeting for department heads and chairs will occur during the Selectmen's meeting of January 24, 2011. Potential topics that I had listed include an update from the tennis court development group and a presentation regarding dog regulation from the Dog Officer and the Town Clerk.

**Recommendation:** Board discussion relative to finalizing the agenda.

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Arrival of New Computer Systems

The Town's new client computer systems arrived during the week of November 29, 2010 and I will migrate from old systems to new systems one user at a time, as time permits. The work needs to be done with each user present so that I can fully appreciate their needs and preferences. I undertook this task in 1999 and again in 2005. Eventually, all users will be up and running with a new machine running the latest operating system and software. Thus far I have spent time testing and troubleshooting all aspects of migration and have developed a master protocol that contains all of the proper procedures. Thus far, I have migrated to new desktop PCs the Selectmen's Assistant, the Treasurer/Collector, the Treasurer Collector's Clerk, the Board of Health Clerk, and the Board of Health Administrator, in addition to the migration of my laptop PC.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 12 hours.

(2) Use of Free Mind Computer Software

Chairman Randall introduced the concept of mind mapping and the use of the subject software regarding Conomo Point at the last meeting. He provided me with a link to the program and two example mind maps. I forwarded this information to the other Selectmen, the Chair of the Finance Committee, the Chair of the Conomo Point Planning Committee, two Planning Board members, and two representatives of the Conomo Point tenants. I installed the software on my computer and will be the coordinator for different ideas as they are sent in by various parties. Eventually, the Town could produce periodic output from the software (in pdf format) and post that on-line for the public to review.

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

(3) Accounting Software Update

Our accounting software vendor released an update to our RevenueSense software during the week of November 29, 2010. I downloaded and installed the update and performed the necessary database maintenance procedures.

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

(4) Replacement of Fans in Firewall/Router

One of the fans in our firewall/router device was demonstrating an intermittent buzzing sound. I contacted the hardware vendor and they sent me two new fans to replace the suspect units. I replaced the fans at an opportune time since the task briefly took down the Town's Internet connection. The unit is working well.

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

(5) Hardware and Software Care Renewal, Firewall/Router

Each year at this time I renew the subject care programs for our firewall/router device. I have ordered the new policies and will tender payment at the time of expiration of the old policies.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(6) UPS Battery Replacement

One of the uninterruptible power supply units in the Fire/Police network experienced a battery failure during the week of December 6, 2010. I replaced the failed battery with one I had on hand and I have ordered a new spare.

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

## 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, my evaluation template was updated with five specific goals 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:

- Continue to coordinate the Route 133 Reconstruction Project with MassDOT and continue to serve as a contact for local residents, businesses, and the Chamber's Task Force. Upcoming work will be very disruptive and will require creative solutions.
- Assist the Board, its consultants, and other Town boards and committees with the implementation of a focused plan during this final year of the Conomo Point leases, in accordance with the Conomo Point Planning Calendar and Board guidance as Conomo Point policy may evolve.
- Replace all of the outdated client computers on a Town-wide basis. This will include the migration of the Water Filtration Plant client network to a new server operating in the Town's new, common domain.
- Continue to work with the Selectmen, the Town Building Committee, and the Town's consultant regarding the development of a plan for the future of Town offices, the Library, and the Fire/Police Headquarters. Work will chiefly involve the implementation and analysis of the Town Building Feasibility Study.
- Assist the Board, Town consultants, and other Town boards and committees with the coordination of planning activities as necessary. Work will include the completion and implementation of pocket park planning and the initiation and implementation of the downtown boardwalk feasibility study that will be undertaken by Salem State University.

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

### (2) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Training

The Selectmen adopted an updated package of HIPAA compliance documents at the last meeting and the next step is to offer training to necessary staff regarding

these policies. I have contacted Counsel and Counsel will arrange for training at no cost to the Town in the coming weeks.

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

(3) Shellfish Constable Work Plan (\*)

At the request of the Board, I reviewed the Shellfish Constable's work plan with him to ensure that he fully understands the Board's wishes and the individual components of the plan. He will take care to follow the plan exactly as written and I agreed to present minor proposed changes to the Board for review and approval.

*Recommendation:* **Board review and approval of the minor proposed changes.**

**D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

(1) Monthly MassDOT Construction Project Meeting

I attended the subject meeting along with Selectman O'Donnell and members of the Chamber's Route 133 Task Force on November 30, 2010. The meeting focused on ongoing items. Monthly meetings will likely cease for the winter and will resume in the spring with the potential for special meetings if issues of interest should arise over the winter.

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

(2) Utility Pole Relocation Planning Meeting

I attended the subject meeting along with Selectman O'Donnell on December 2 in the MassDOT field office. Representatives of National Grid were present to discuss their plans to complete the relocation of utility poles within the Route 133 Reconstruction Project area over the coming winter. Since it will be necessary for some of the relocated poles to be positioned where old curbing (slated for removal) now sits, MassDOT has made preparations to move that curbing ahead of schedule to allow the pole work to take place. National Grid is presently in the process of producing a final job package for a subcontractor to undertake.

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

(3) Seventh Biweekly Route 133 Construction Project Update

I issued the subject update to the business community on December 6, 2010. Construction has essentially stopped for the season but some miscellaneous work is still planned. As noted above, utility pole relocation work by National Grid will be taking place over the coming winter.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(4) Code Red Emergency Notification System

At the last meeting, the Board voted to sign the contract for the subject system outside of a meeting after the final version was approved by Town Counsel. I provided Code Red with Counsel's comments during the week of November 29, 2010 and Code Red is presently considering those comments.

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

(5) Pocket Park Planning Update Meeting

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Our pocket park planning consultant provided the Long Term Planning Committee with a preliminary work product for the Committee's meeting of December 8, 2010 (both our prime consultant and her landscape architect were in attendance). The contract scope calls for a review meeting to review preliminary design schemes for the pocket parks and the coordinated design features that will be common to each. However, before that meeting takes place, the LTPC Chairman suggested that a basic review take place (occurred on December 8<sup>th</sup>, as noted above) and feedback will be provided to the consultant for the actual review meeting, to take place in January of 2011, with all stakeholders present.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion regarding this new approach and any adjustments to scope or funding as necessary.**

(6) Remote Parking Opportunities, Southern Conomo Point

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At the last meeting, the Board asked that I inquire to our subdivision consultant whether any lots in the southern section of the Point would lend themselves to good locations for remote parking. The Preliminary Subdivision Plan had consolidated all non-leased land into existing lots but it may be advantageous to keep these areas separate for parking. I asked our consultant about this possibility and he has made some suggestions.

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

(7) Town Hall Clock Winding Automation

I have received an update from the contractor who is working to automate the winding of the Town Hall clock. He had been waiting for components that he had ordered and he plans to arrive on December 16, 2010 to begin the installation of automation equipment.

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

(8) Town Building Feasibility Study, Phase 1

Our Town Building Feasibility Study contractor, Reinhardt Associates, commenced Phase 1 of the study on December 9, 2010 when a designer visited the Town to interview the various departments regarding current and future space needs. The designer spent time with the Chief of Police, the Fire Chief, the

Librarian, and myself (representing the Town Hall administrative offices) and toured and photo-documented each facility. Various members of the Town Building Committee were also in attendance during the various interviews. The police and fire departments will be reviewing historic call volume and staffing trends in an effort to help predict future needs. Our contractor will be meeting with the Town Building Committee in January to present the results of this phase of the project.

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

## **E. Insurance**

### (1) Panel Discussion

I participated on a panel as part of a seminar offered by our insurer on December 2, 2010. As the Board may recall, I had worked alongside workers in two departments to prepare for the panel discussion and I shared my observations with others who had done the same thing in other communities. The discussion was very beneficial and I will likely repeat this practice in the future. Much of the conversation was centered around how the employees who were visited appreciated the interest in their work.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (2) Monthly Pothole Log

I received the subject log for the month of November from the DPW and forwarded it to our insurer as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. No potholes were reported during November.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### (3) Freeze-up Prevention Checklists

I completed and filed the subject checklists for the various Town buildings during the week of December 6, 2010 as part of the MIIA Rewards Program. I will continue to complete the forms during the cold months in an effort to avoid freeze-up issues.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **F. Facilities**

### (1) Centennial Grove Fishing Dock

(\*)

At the last meeting, the Board expressed a preference to purchase a new, maintenance free float to serve as the new Centennial Grove fishing dock as opposed to the construction of a new, wooden dock by volunteers. I thanked the individuals who had offered to assist with a wooden dock. During that process, I

learned that one of the volunteers had in mind the construction of a dock with much more durable materials than the traditional wooden dock and that he may donate the materials and labor necessary to construct it. He visited the Grove and viewed the old dock to get a sense of its size. Later, he indicated that he would work on the issue further for us and will be back to us.

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

(2) Downtown Parking Area

(\*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to determine with the Building Inspector and Planning Board whether the potential lease or sale of a parking lot in the downtown area to the Town would somehow cause a use problem under zoning for business property that the lot has traditionally served. The Building Inspector has indicated that it all depends upon whether the historic use was tied to the lot for fulfillment of parking requirements and how long that use had been discontinued (the building has been vacant for some time now). However, he also noted that it was possible that the proximity of a public lot to the establishment might fulfill any new parking requirements. The Chair of the Planning Board was also very interested in the question and will discuss with the Planning Board to provide us with additional feedback.

*Recommendation:* **Further Board discussion relative to this issue as necessary.**

(3) Stage Lights

The bulbs in the lights on the old Town Hall stage have steadily burnt out and employees that work in the two rear offices need a better lit environment for safety reasons. Recently, when our electrician was present to fix a problem with the Planning Board Office lighting, he replaced the bulbs in the stage lighting fixtures.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(4) Basement Vault Dehumidifier

As noted previously, the old dehumidifier in the basement historic records vault failed recently and was out of warranty. As such, I ordered a new unit, which arrived during the week of November 29, 2010. I set up the unit and it is presently operating in the vault. Now that the environment is again being stabilized, the Town Clerk will resume her daily humidity level checks, which she records for the two historic records preservation workers who continue to organize and stabilize the records.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(5) School Generator Update

The generator has been installed at the Essex Elementary School. Presently, we are awaiting the installation of the transfer switch and a time when the contractor can physically cut the necessary power circuit in. The project should be complete shortly.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

(1) Financial Assistance for Downtown Businesses (\*)

As the Board may recall, Senator Tarr and Representative Ferrante organized a financial summit in the past for downtown businesses impacted by the ongoing construction project. At that time, low-interest loans were offered but no grant or zero-interest loan funding was identified. The Chamber of Commerce, the Essex Merchants' Group, and Representative Ferrante are considering discussing this topic further in January of 2011 and I indicated that I would discuss with the Board at the present meeting in order to collect the Board's input and guidance regarding the Board's potential, future involvement.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to this matter.**

(2) Regional School District Tentative FY12 Budget (\*)

The School District provided the subject tentative budget to the Town during the week of December 6, 2010 and I distributed it to the Board for review. The Board will have an opportunity to discuss the document with the School District and officials from the Town of Manchester on December 15, 2010.

*Recommendation:* Board discussion regarding the tentative budget in preparation for the meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**H. Complaints**

No items.

**I. Meetings Attended**

No items.

**J. Final Judgment**

(1) Updated Conomo Point Procedures Calendar (\*)

I have updated the subject calendar with input that the Board provided at the last meeting. It will be necessary to send the updated calendar, along with a cover letter, to all Conomo Point tenants and to the Department of Environmental

Protection by December 31, 2010, pursuant to the Conomo Point Plan. The cover letter can simply explain that several milestones were added into the calendar but that the overall procedures remain the same and that the calendar denotes items that have already been accomplished since the procedures were first released back in July.

*Recommendation:* **Board review of the draft, updated calendar and cover letter.**

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

### (1) Joint School District/Town Government Meeting

The subject session was canceled for December 1, 2010 has been rescheduled for December 15, 2010. The Selectmen did meet for their own business as planned, however.

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

### (2) Chapter 30B Special Legislation

The Board petitioned the General Court for the subject Special Legislation at the last meeting by sending letters to both Senator Tarr and Representative Ferrante. The petition is now in the hands of the legislators who will begin to negotiate the legislative process.

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

### (3) Centralized Shellfish Landing Requirement

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At the last meeting, the Board discussed the possibility of requiring all shellfish landings to occur at one landing location – in order to check clam harvest weights and clam sizes uniformly.

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

### (4) Special Town Meeting

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The Town's estimated amount of new growth came in much lower than expected and the use of the fiscal year 2010 Assessors' Overlay reserved for tax abatements will exceed the previously-estimate level. As such, in order to balance the budget to set the FY11 tax rate, a Special Town Meeting will be necessary. On December 1, 2010, the Board signed the warrant for a Special Town Meeting to occur on December 20, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. at the Essex Elementary School. The warrant includes two articles but it appears after a recent Finance Committee meeting that only the second article will be necessary (the first article will likely be indefinitely postponed). The recent reconciliation of past year Assessors' Overlay accounts by the Treasurer/Collector, her clerk, and the Assessors' Clerk

has freed up enough overlay funds to satisfy the new growth issue and the FY10 overlay issue (without the need to cut operating budgets or utilize free cash).

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the present status of this issue and the necessary Town Meeting motion.**

(5) Alleged Shellfish Regulation Violations

The Assistant Shellfish Constable has alleged that three shellfishermen were digging on the winter flats while those flats were closed. Each of the shellfishermen will have a hearing before the Selectmen at the present meeting for the Selectmen to review the allegations and determine the best course of action.

*Recommendation:* Holding of hearings at the present meeting.

(6) Preparation for Zoning Bylaw Amendment Article

In May of 2011, it is expected that the Annual Town Meeting will consider a zoning bylaw amendment that would change the underlying zoning in the southern area of Conomo Point. At a recent Planning Board meeting, the topic of seasonal use restrictions came up and the group asked that I put together a frequently asked questions document on the topic that could be circulated well in advance of the Annual Town Meeting. I have begun to plan for that document and I am working with Town Counsel to compile past guidance on the topic.

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

**L. Legal Issues**

No items.

**M. Grants**

(1) Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) Grant Application

The Long Term Planning Committee (LTPC) worked with Ms. Carolyn Britt in the fall of 2009 to apply to the subject grant program. That effort did not result in an award but the LTPC used the feedback concerning that process to prepare an application for this year's MDI funding round. The application focuses on the revitalization of the Essex Town Landing.

At the last meeting, the Board approved a letter of support for this year's round and authorized me to file the completed application. After receiving the LTPC's application information, I forwarded it via e-mail along with the Board's letter of support and other letters of support from other entities. The filing was made in advance of the December 3, 2010 deadline. Also, the Chairman was required to sign a project cover sheet which was hand-delivered to the grantmaker by a member of the LTPC.

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

## **N. Emergency Planning**

### (1) Emergency Management Performance Grant

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has informed the Town that we are eligible for \$3,000 in matching grant funds for emergency preparedness. A 100% match is required and the match may be via “in-kind” services. The funds could be pooled with funds from the other Cape Ann communities to benefit the efforts of the Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team (a possibility that will be discussed at the Planning Team’s January, 2011 meeting).

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

## **O. Other Items**

### (1) Committee on the Status of Women

The Board reviewed an appeal from the Director of the subject Commission at the last meeting asking if they had suggestions for an Essex resident who desired to serve on the Commission. I reached out to an individual suggested by the Board and asked her if she or someone she knows is interested in serving.

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

### (2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave for the afternoon of November 29, 2010 and for a portion of the afternoon of December 8, 2010.

*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.*