



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Dec. 19, 2011

Report covers from December 3, 2011 to December 16, 2011

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

---

### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Second Summer Camp Changing Facility (\*)

As the Board may recall, the YMCA had been asked to estimate the cost of materials for the construction of a second changing facility at the Centennial Grove. YMCA staff would be available to construct the facility and the Town would pay for the materials. According to the Associate Executive Director, the cost will be between \$2,500 and \$3,000.

**Recommendation: Board discussion relative to potential funding for the necessary materials in the spring.**

(2) Long Term Planning Committee Review of Downtown Planning Rpt. (\*)

The LTPC has indicated that it will have no substantive comments concerning the Pocket Park and Downtown Planning report that was recently issued by our planning consultant. The Selectmen had indicated that the question of standard sponsorship signage would be revisited after the LTPC review was completed.

**Recommendation: Board discussion regarding the sign standardization and assignment protocol for sponsorship of downtown streetscape areas.**

### B. Computer Systems

(1) Librarian's Computer System

The Librarian had been using a system that was purchased for the Merrimac Valley Library Consortium system back in 2005. The Librarian reported trouble and, after investigating the system and reviewing the problem on line, the motherboard appeared to be the issue. Since the system is so old, it made more sense just to purchase a new computer (Library Department has funds for this). I had one new system on hand that will be going into the new police modular unit and I provided that to the Library for MVLC staff to install. I then ordered a suitable replacement that will arrive in time for use by the police department.

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

## C. Personnel

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

At this time every year, the Board arranges to review my performance and to 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 calendar year for use at this time.

Also, it is necessary to work with the Board to develop goals for the upcoming calendar 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:

- Assist the Board, its consultants, and other Town boards and committees with continued planning and implementation of activities at Conomo Point, all in accordance with the Conomo Point Consolidated Calendar (which includes DEP compliance milestones) and Board guidance. Activities may include the development of the northern subdivision; evictions and legal actions; renewal of bridge leases; and work associated with property sales, should Town Meeting approve.
- Continue to test and advance the planned transition of the Town's information/technology infrastructure from in-Town resources to the datacenter in the City of Melrose that we will utilize via our new intermunicipal agreement. Work will involve a step-wise migration process in accordance with pre-defined elements in our existing agreement with testing and the ability to roll back actions at each new juncture.
- 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 analysis and application of the Town Building Feasibility Study.
- Coordinate the bidding, design, and implementation of a number of primarily interior improvements to Town Hall that involve health and safety, subject to funding.
- Assist the Board, Town consultants, and other Town boards and committees with the coordination, implementation, and analysis of the downtown boardwalk feasibility study that will be undertaken by Salem State University. Work may also involve the application to the Seaport Advisory Council for phase 2 funding associated with design and permitting.

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

#### **D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

##### (1) Route 133 Shoulder Configuration

Selectman O’Donnell and I met with MassDOT employees and representatives of the project contractor on December 6, 2011 to discuss how the contractor did not provide the “as-designed” shoulder width between Martin Street and the causeway bridge on the Village Restaurant side of the highway. Selectman O’Donnell presented the Board’s position, which is to require the grinding and repainting of various lines and the resetting of curbing as necessary to provide a wide shoulder along the entire area. We learned that curbing changes will not be necessary since striping can be ground out and re-painted to provide the necessary shoulders. A final review of the curbing installation found that its placement only differed from the plan by inches. A final grinding and striping plan will be drafted and Selectman O’Donnell will approve the plan before any work is begun.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

##### (2) Meeting Regarding Runoff and Drainage at Martin and Main

I met with DOT officials and abutters to the Route 133 Reconstruction Project on December 14, 2011 to discuss how changes associated with the project have affected drainage and runoff along the beginning of Martin Street and on abutting private property. DOT officials were already planning to correct an issue along Martin Street where runoff is following a new wall as opposed to sheeting over the sidewalk to reach the street gutter. Also, regarding a small drain that one abutter asked the contractor to install with a discharge onto the property of another abutter, the affected abutter will discuss the matter with the requestor’s engineer before any additional work is deemed necessary. Further, the transition from the grade of the new, elevated sidewalk is fairly steep. However, lessening the pitch would require infringement on an adjacent parking lot.

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

##### (3) Northern Conomo Point Subdivision and Zoning Project (\*)

The Board signed a contract for the subject project at the last meeting and the Conomo Point Planning Committee met the following evening to help provide input regarding the various tasks that will follow the existing conditions survey (task 1, which is currently underway). Selectmen O’Donnell and Coviello were both present at the CPPC meeting.

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

(4) S. Conomo Point Defin. Subdivision Plan Approval Modification (\*)

The Planning Board voted to approve the subject Plan on December 7, 2011. However, the approval contained errors in the lot numbers listed relative to requiring the eventual extinguishment of year-round privileges for certain lots in the Seasonal Cottage Sub-District. As such, I have worked with Town Counsel to draft a letter to the Planning Board seeking modification of the December 7 approval to correct the errant listing. The process will require a new public hearing.

*Recommendation:* **Board signature of the letter requesting modification of the original decision.**

**E. Insurance**

(1) Monthly Pothole Log

I have received from the DPW the monthly pothole log for the month of November. The log shows only one pothole reported, which was repaired rapidly. I forwarded the log to our insurer as part of the MIIA Rewards Program.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(2) Monthly Freeze-up Prevention Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for various Town buildings during the week of December 12, 2011 and have submitted them to our insurer. The checklists are intended to detect any conditions that could lead to frozen pipes.

*Recommendation:* I will continue the monthly completion of these checklists throughout the winter.

(3) Results of Annual Insurance Inspection

Our insurer provided us recently with the results of its annual insurance inspection. Minor items were noted at the Senior Center, the DPW Barn, and the Town Hall that have been or will soon be corrected. For example, I installed new light bulbs in the Town Hall basement since most bulbs were either missing or burnt out. Also at the Town Hall, the inspector commented that the persistent water problem in the Town Hall basement should be remedied. He further recommended that any old, stained ceiling tiles in Town Hall be replaced. I responded that the Town will consider funding for those types of interior repairs for FY13.

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

## **F. Facilities**

### (1) Conomo Point Parking Signs

The Board approved the production of new non-resident and resident parking signs for Conomo Point at the last meeting. I subsequently asked the Superintendent of Public Works to place the order based upon proofs provided to the Board. He has placed the order.

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

### (2) Snow and Ice Removal for Downtown Public Buildings

I have explored the potential to utilize a private contractor for downtown snow and ice removal at our public buildings with the Superintendent of Public Works. Generally, that cost will be much higher than the cost of utilizing spot help (as we have been doing) or even utilizing Town DPW forces working on overtime. For the time being, we have arranged for temporary spot help and we will determine the next best course of action once that arrangement expires if we cannot find additional temporary workers.

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

### (3) Town Hall Steam Boiler Failure

(\*)

The steam boiler in Town Hall has developed a major leak and may soon not have adequate pressure to provide steam for heat within the distribution system. Our heating contractor used additives to try to seal the leak but the leak is too large and it appears to be getting worse. End plates for the model of steam boiler that Town Hall has are no longer available. As such, if our contractor attempts a teardown to determine if the issue is a seal versus a cracked or corroded plate and the problems ends up being a plate that is no longer made, the system will not have been repaired and may not be able to restart.

It is entirely possible that the problem will rapidly worsen to the point that the boiler is rendered useless, without warning. As such, given that the steam distribution system in Town Hall is antiquated and controlled by a single thermostat on the first floor; and given that the existing steam boiler may develop other problems soon even if the present problem can be fixed, I recommend that the Town retain the services of an engineer to review possible options. The Finance Committee's Reserve Fund will need to be tapped for this work. The engineer could be tasked to review the prospect of repair, but also to review and recommend other options such as a forced hot water or hot air distribution system installation that could be fed from a new furnace, potentially using natural gas. It is entirely possible that the Town Hall's oil consumption could be reduced dramatically as a result of whatever solution is chosen.

*Recommendation:* **Board authorization for me to retain the services of a mechanical engineer specializing in heating systems and well-versed in municipal procurement to make a recommendation. Thereafter, we will need to utilize the same engineer to specify and bid the chosen solution, even if that is a repair or replacement of the steam boiler.**

## **G. Fiscal/Budget**

(1) Draft Fiscal Year 2013 Selectmen's Budget Request Package (\*)

I have developed a preliminary draft of the subject budget request package, which is due to the Town Accountant by January 10, 2012.

*Recommendation:* **Board review and guidance relative to finalizing the package.**

(2) Revised Draft of Selectmen's Fiscal Year 2013 Capital Plan Update (\*)

I have revised the subject plan in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting.

*Recommendation:* **Board review and additional guidance relative to finalizing the plan for the January 10, 2012 deadline.**

(3) Regional School District Tentative Budget (\*)

The Manchester Essex Regional School Committee voted to release a tentative budget for fiscal year 2013 on December 6, 2011. Chairman Jones, Finance Committee Chairman Soulard, Town Accountant Roxanne Tieri and I attended the public hearing at which the District presented that tentative budget on December 14, 2011. Various comments were made and the School Committee stressed that the budget was only tentative and subject to revision and reduction. The School Committee will undertake the revision of the budget over the next 6-8 weeks.

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

## **H. Complaints**

No items.

## **I. Meetings Attended**

No items.

## **J. Final Judgment**

### (1) Quarterly Report

(\*)

I have developed the Quarterly Report due January 1, 2012. The report highlights progress made concerning the bridge leases.

*Recommendation:* **Board vote to approve the transmittal of the report.**

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

### (1) Modification of Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Regulations

(\*)

At the last meeting, the Board conducted a preliminary review of proposed changes to the Town of Essex Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Regulations with respect to annual training. The Board agreed that the draft changes should be finalized for a vote at the present meeting. If the Board does vote to adopt the changes, we can provide copies to all licensees in the near future, which will provide an entire year for licensees to understand and comply with the changes.

*Recommendation:* **Board vote to approve the changes to the regulations.**

### (2) Draft List of Topics for Annual Town Meeting Warrant

(\*)

I have developed a very preliminary list of topics that could be covered in articles on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant for the Board's initial review and discussion.

*Recommendation:* **Board review of the topics.**

## **L. Legal Issues**

### (1) Signature of Bridge Leases

Town Counsel will be present at the meeting to review the various bridge leases and associated materials that have been submitted to the Board by leaseholders. After discussion, it is likely that Counsel will recommend countersignature of the bridge leases by the Board, which may include the Board's own letters that may be transmitted back to leaseholders with the countersigned leases. I expect a total of 112 leaseholders or more to execute bridge leases (out of the 121 bridge leases that were offered).

*Recommendation:* Board discussion with Town Counsel and subsequent signature of bridge leases as recommended by Counsel.

## M. Grants

### (1) Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Grant

I have investigated the status of a grant application for infrastructure improvements adjacent to the Essex Elementary School which the Board last endorsed in August of 2010. I have learned that funding and prioritization has not yet moved our project to the top of the list and that it could be some time before that happens. However, the grant application is still active. I expect to receive an official application update from the grantmaker in the near future.

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

## N. Emergency Planning

No items.

## O. Other Items

### (1) Conomo Point Informational Flyer and Forum

(\*)

The Selectmen and the Conomo Point Planning Committee collaborated on a one-page flyer that will be included with all tax bills when they are mailed soon. The flyer carried a printing deadline of December 13, 2011. The flyer covers several major important issues at Conomo Point and invites the public to a public forum. The reverse side of the flyer contains an abridge version of the Consolidated Calendar for the Point.

The public forum will occur on January 17, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at the Essex Elementary School and both the Finance Committee and the Conomo Point Planning Committee will also attend. Major topics of that forum will include: a review of the Selectmen's recommendations for Conomo Point via the Board's comprehensive statement from April of 2011 (since ratified by new Board member Coviello), the Conomo Point Consolidated Calendar, public access planning, and a question and answer period. The Town Moderator has agreed to run the forum, if desired.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary, including the possibility of getting together with the Finance Committee in advance of the forum.**

### (2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave for a portion of the afternoon of December 12, 2011.

*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.*