



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Dec. 18, 2017

Report covers from December 9 to December 15, 2017

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Tree Work, off Robbins Island Road (*)

At the last meeting, the Board reviewed a request from some Robbins Island property owners to cut down and trim trees along a public extension of Robbins Island Road. This work will allow septic system contractors to access private lots with heavy equipment for septic system upgrades. I visited the site with DPW Superintendent / Tree Warden Paul Goodwin during the week of December 11, 2017. I also spoke to the tenant and he has agreed to speak with his contractor again to understand what the absolute minimum clearance will be. Mr. Goodwin is reviewing the matter with National Grid, since some of the trees may impact electrical wires. It is possible that trimming will be sufficient, but more study is needed.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

(1) Network Penetration and User Testing (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that new external penetration testing on the Town Hall interface should occur this year, along with additional user testing (phishing and phone calls). Our contractor is in the process of quoting that work, and a quote may be available by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Board approval of the contract for the testing work, if available by meeting time.**

C. Personnel

(1) Discussion of Town Administrator's Goals for Calendar Year 2018 (*)

I provided the Board with a draft set of calendar year 2018 goals at the last meeting for review. The goals were included in my report for the last meeting.

Recommendation: **Discussion relative to my draft calendar year 2018 goals.**

(2) Advertising for Town Clerk and Town Accountant Vacancies

At the last meeting, the Board determined that both of the subject vacancies should be advertised in the MMA publication, *the Beacon* for the January issue (and in the on-line job posting area). The advertising has been accomplished and

interested candidates for either position must submit a cover letter and resume to the Selectmen's office by January 16, 2018. Full details relative to each opening can be found at the Town's website at www.essexma.org.

Recommendation: I will update the board as necessary.

(3) Appointment of Town Hall/Library Custodian (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should review applications for the subject position and make a recommendation back to the Board at the present meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to making an official appointment of the recommended candidate.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Alternative Mechanism for Conversion and Maintenance of Street Lights (*)

At the November 27 meeting, the Board met with Mr. Keith Schollard of PowerSecure to discuss how the Town's street lights might be converted to LED lamps using a long-term subscription service. This would save the Town more money than if the utility converted and continued to own the lights but less money than the Town managing the entire conversion and owning the lights. Several potential options were discussed at the meeting:

a) The Town could purchase the street lights and make the conversion to LED; PowerSecure would then maintain the lights. b) The Town could purchase the lights and PowerSecure would convert and maintain them. c) PowerSecure could purchase the lights, make the conversion, and maintain them. Mr. Schollard was still researching each of the potential options at the time of the last meeting, on December 11, but will have more information to share for the present meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion regarding the various options, as necessary.**

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Rehabilitation of Route 133 Bridge Over Essex River (*)

At the last meeting, I provided the Board with a copy of a recent letter from Mass DOT relative to the rehabilitation of the subject bridge. This work is in the design stage but still may involve exploratory work and closures. The Board asked that I impress upon DOT the need for advanced notice when closures are planned, in the

interest of public safety. Also, I asked whether the Town will have an opportunity to comment on the final design, to ensure that the look of the bridge and the view from it are not going change in unwanted ways. I have learned that DOT does plan to coordinate anticipated closures in a much more organized fashion in the future and that the Board will be given an opportunity to comment on the design, once the design process advances to that stage.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Repairs to Large Stone Pier, Conomo Point (*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the fact that some of the large stones that form the base to the large stone pier at Conomo Point have become dislodged and need to be re-set, using some type of resilient adhesive. I contacted a masonry contractor and he will be visiting the pier at low tide to assess the situation. He noted that some stones could potentially be re-set since that particular type of pier is held together primarily by gravity, with mortar being secondary. It is possible that I may have more information by meeting time.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion if additional information is available by meeting time.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) School District FY19 Tentative Operating Budget Hearing

I attended the subject hearing along with members of the Board and the Finance Committee on December 13, 2017. The subject hearing is held each year, pursuant to the Regional Agreement, to give town officials and the general public a chance to comment on the initial plan of the School Committee. After the tentative hearing, the budget usually gets pared down in accordance with comments and is presented in a revised form at a final hearing in January. At this year's tentative hearing, the Committee and its staff responded to various questions and indicated that the present budget gap will be closed by the final hearing, in an effort to keep increases to the towns within reasonable limits.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Further Review of Draft FY19 Capital and Operating Budget Requests (*)

I provided the Board with drafts of the subject budget requests at the last meeting. Now that the Board has had time to digest those materials, further discussion can be undertaken at the present meeting. The Board's final proposal is due to the Finance Committee on January 10, 2018, so final drafts can be approved for submission at the Board's next meeting, on January 8, 2018.

Recommendation: **Further Board review and discussion of the draft budget request packages.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Public Forum Concerning Potential Mixed-Use Zoning in Downtown Area

I attended the subject forum along with members of the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board, and the Town Planner on December 14, 2017. The forum was part of a Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Grant exploring how establishing mixed-use zoning in the downtown area, by right, may assist with economic development and affordable housing simultaneously. Much input was gathered from the public, which will ultimately translate into a recommendation for a new zoning bylaw for mixed-use that could be considered by a future Town Meeting.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Promulgation of Revised Harbor Regulations

Now that the Board and the Harbormaster have agreed on revised Harbor Regulations, the Harbormaster and I are working through the necessary public notice process to make the revisions effective. A summary of the Regulations will be advertised in the newspaper and will explain that the new version will be on file with the Town Clerk and available on the Town's website, with a certain effective date.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Preliminary List of Potential Article Topics for Annual Town Meeting (*)

I distributed a preliminary list of potential Annual Town Meeting article topics for the Board's review at the last meeting. The next Annual Town Meeting will be held on May 7, 2018.

Recommendation: **Preliminary discussion relative to the subject list.**

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

(1) Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Update

Now that the Ipswich River Watershed Association (IRWA) is under contract to provide the technical management of the subject grant, Ms. Kristen Grubbs of IRWA met with me during the week of December 11, 2017 to kick off the process. The MVP process essentially requires the gathering of technical information regarding a host of potential threats from future climate change (not just coastal threats) and a coordinated meeting of stakeholders to review, comment on, and prioritize how the Town will deal with these factors in the future. I have begun to assemble the stakeholder list and IRWA has begun to assemble and organize existing data. The actual workshop session will likely occur in early April, 2018.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) MIIA Loss Control Grant Program Award

As the Board may recall, we had applied to our insurer for financial assistance with a sewer manhole inspection and recommendation study that the Wastewater Department needs to conduct anyway. Since so many insured members applied to the grant program (over \$1.6M in requests for \$900K in available funds), all grant awards were pared down by our insurer this year. As such, while we did not receive the requested \$10,000, we will be provided \$6,500 in grant funding. The Wastewater Department does have enough available municipal funding to bridge that gap and the study will occur as planned.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team Monthly Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on December 13, 2017. The meeting featured a discussion regarding how our present Coastal Resiliency Grant from the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management could assist with a coastal resiliency section to be included in each community's revised Hazard Mitigation Plan. The group also reviewed the outline for planned public workshops, that will be held in April of 2018.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

O. Other Items

No items.

This report is available at www.essexma.org on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.