

## ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES FOR JANUARY 14, 2008

In attendance, Bill Johnson, Maggie Whitney, Dottie Munroe, Leo Janssens, Frank Lombardo, and Jamie Piedrafite.

### **1. RESERVE FUND**

We received two requests for transfers from the Reserve Fund.

The first was a \$2500 request for valve and coolant repairs on the Stevens Memorial Library boiler (furnace). On a motion by Maggie to transfer this money and with a second by Leo it passed unanimously. The second request for transfer was in the amount of \$80,000, which included \$30,000 for water main service work at the Town Hall Renovation project. Also, \$6500 for a wood chipper at the Land Fill, \$17,000 for a steel plate replacement on Ashby Road, \$20,000 for repairs on the Westminster Street bridge and \$12,000 for paving at Page's Beach.

The Advisory Board has issues and questions on the \$80,000 transfer request from the Reserve Fund. First on the \$30,000, why the "Contractor" should receive a \$30,000 credit for work they did not do? Second should the money be paid to the DPW from the contractor for doing the work? Third, did not the town do this work during regular working hours of the DPW? Fourth, what exactly does this \$30,000 amount include, labor, material costs, the contractor's profit on this money?

Questions on the \$6500 for wood chipper for the Land Fill and the \$12,000 for paving road at Page's Beach.

Lastly the items totaled \$5,500 more than the request. Maggie motioned to table the Reserve Fund transfer of \$80,000 pending additional detailed information. A second by Frank and the motion passed unanimously.

### **2. REPORTS**

#### **A. Capital Sub Committee**

Leo reported this committee is waiting to hear from the Stevens Memorial Library as to whether they have a capital improvement request. Also the CSC will be getting a copy of DPW Capital Improvement Plan for the Town soon. Maggie to make disk copy for each AB member.

#### **B. ATFC NOVEMBER MEETING**

Jamie gave his account of the workshop he attended, "Saving on Your Energy Bill" and the importance of energy conservation having a plan in municipal budgets for energy conservation and implementing this on a town wide basis.

Dottie reported on her attendance at the "New Member Seminar" which gave a good review as to the responsibilities for being member of a finance committee. Also, she attended the "Regionalizing Services" workshop with Maggie, which dealt with working in consortium with

neighboring towns and review practical steps to deal with such items as town services, health insurance costs, office supplies and equipment, etc. and hopefully would reduce costs.

Leo attended the "School Building Authority Update" learned about SBA's new programs and what is required in regards to a towns major projects of new construction and/or renovations. When the time comes SBA makes the money available and indicates what percentage the town will receive, from 40% to 80%, based on point system.

Maggie was present at "Crystal Ball Finances: Revenue Forecasting" session which spoke to multi-year financial planning and its value to the town. Maggie reported she address the issue of "lack of communication" regarding receiving financial information in a timely fashion, from our Town Administration, which we need to do our job. Maggie said if necessary we could go to the state in written format on this issue.

She also discussed at this session the rules and regulation the "opening meeting law"

"Collective Bargaining and the GIC: What are you options?" This session was attended by Bill. The GIC (Group Insurance Commission) is the state's Health Insurance Provider. The session addresses an overview of the collective bargaining process and ways to cut costs. Right now the Town of Ashburnham has better health insurance rates then what we could get from the GIC. The GIC dictates the rates, and the rates are not negotiable, but they can be bargained.

### **C. TOWN MEETING INFORMATIONAL MAILER**

Maggie prepared a draft report and "recommendations of the Advisory Board" to be included in the distribution of the Town Warrant for Annual Town Meeting scheduled for May 3, 2008. With this informational document hopefully this will be a way to get people to attend the town meeting.

Discussed as to whether school budget information should be included in this draft report, will look into this.

Advisory Board members to review this document and if we have any questions one could contact the Town Administrator.

## **3. DISCUSSIONS**

### **A. Monthly revenue/expense report**

We have receive this report through December 31, 2007

### **B. 2008 Budget meeting calendar**

Bill to get with the Town Administrator to fill in the blanks days on the calendar. Also, we would prefer to have our meetings televised, Bill to see if we can get something going on that.

### **C. VMA Heating Cost Information**

Frank raised a question on the Wood Pellet Grant study for alternative heating the VMS building and the reason why the study did not include the Library, schools, new Police station, Town Hall etc. as energy heating alternative. Bill to purse additional information from the Town Administrator.

#### **D. Police Department Staffing Request**

Board of Selectmen has already voted on this. This is not an additional employee but this is to replace Kevin Ahearn position that was injured in a fall, and will be in rehab for a period of approximately of 9 months.

### **4. OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **A. Public Safety Building Underground Storage Tank**

Briefly discussed the PSB placing the tank above ground rather than underground as is the present plan. Also, why a 10,000 gallon tank.

#### **B. Police and Fire Vehicle Inventory**

Long discussion on department vehicles, and it would be a good idea to see what the fleets consist of in all departments. Are we going to start eliminating some of vehicles? It was stated we are getting rid of the 1968 jeep pickup. Bill to find out what is the status of the brush truck that voted at the Annual Town Meeting.

The question was asked, how many vehicles are taken home? The Police Chief, Fire Chief, DPW head and Steve Nims are legally allowed to take their vehicles home because each are on duty 24/7.

Leo to ask why Bob Salo is taking Fire Chief's the former car (the red one) home.

#### **C. New Van for Senior Center**

A grant awarded two years for new 6 passenger van for the Senior Center. However there is an ad in the paper for a driver for 15 hours. The only person to who can hire a town employee is the TA. Questions arose, where is the money coming from for salary, benefits, gas, insurance, supplies, maintenance, etc.? Is there another Grant to cover this stuff? Another question concerning bringing people on in mid budget, and we like to be shown where these expenses are in the budget. We have questions and need information on this!

#### **D. Paper Ballots**

Suggested it is a great idea to have paper ballots at our Town Meetings, because it would make voters feel less intimidated on their vote.

### **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Minutes of the September 10, 2007 approved as presented.**

**B. Minutes of the September 26, 2007 approved with the deletion of "Debt exclusion" on line #18.**

**C. October 9, 2007 minutes approved as submitted.**

**D. November 8, 2007 minutes approved as presented.**

Next meeting to be announced.

Meeting adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dorothy J. Munroe, secretary

