

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
AND ADVISORY BOARD – MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2009 – 7:30 PM
LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM – TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Chris Gagnon, Chair, Jonathan Dennehy, Member, Maggie Whitney, Clerk and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator. Advisory Board members in attendance were Dottie Munroe, Bill Johnson, Belden Divito, Leo Janssens II, Ron Reed and James Piedrafite. Nancy Haines, Town Accountant was also present.

Bill Johnson, Advisory Board Chair, stated that there were two Reserve Fund Transfer Requests that they would need to discuss at their next meeting.

Johnson then inquired of the Town Accountant, what the status was of the FY09 Budget and any changes that would need to be done. Nancy Haines discussed what she had been doing so far, which was basically catching up, trying to reconcile the books starting with July. She noted that this was a daunting task.

Johnson noted his concerns with the FY09 Budget and Haines agreed that she was concerned as well but that Paicos was working on this report and would have it to them in the next two days.

There was some discussion on the monthly reports which showed the possible available funds, as well as the revenue and expense to date. Dennehy suggested Haines also should provide them with a summary noting highlighted areas of concern. Johnson noted that the Advisory Board as well as the Board of Selectmen wanted the Town Accountant to attend their meetings quarterly with the budget concerns.

Gagnon stated that he would like to see the ambulance billing taken out of the Town Administrator's budget account and moved to either Fire or EMS in order to keep track of the account. Both Whitney and Johnson agreed with this. It was noted by Haines that if this was changed, they would lose the continuity in the reports.

Johnson also noted his concerns with food purchases being charged to the Professional Development account by the Council on Aging. He suggested maybe adding more line accounts and charging these purchases more accurately. He added that he wants to know what is being purchased under the miscellaneous accounts as this was too general.

Whitney concurred adding that under the Professional Development accounts they should note what is contractual and what is not as they could see possible savings there.

Gagnon inquired as to what the potential savings was from the positions that were not being filled in regards to the FY09 shortfall. Haines noted that they could use special warrant article funds to help with the shortfall.

Johnson stated that FY09 is a pressing issue and Gagnon added that they should discuss this again at another meeting. Johnson stated that among his concerns were the possible loss of the state portion of the ice storm costs and the Burke Oil possible litigation issue. Dennehy noted

that there were more pressing issues than that at this time. Gagnon stated that they should plan a cushion in 2010 for this potential.

There was a short discussion on the one-line budget versus the line by line budget.

Gagnon noted that there has been some discussion with the school district on level funding and it was also noted that they needed to budget for the \$20k for the Agricultural School student again for 2010.

Johnson reviewed each FY10 Budget line per department.

Moderator – No changes.

Board of Selectmen – Whitney noted that under Professional Development there wasn't enough budgeted for all three of the Selectmen to attend the annual MMA meeting. Gagnon noted that the Books account should be a Town Administrator cost combined with Town Counsel. Johnson voiced his concern with the ambulance billing and Dennehy noted that the Town Administrator salary in this budget could be an issue as they may need more money.

Advisory Board and Reserve Account – Johnson noted that \$25k was too low for the Reserve Fund.

Town Accountant – Haines stated that she made the change to add Elaine Cormier to her salary line. She also stated that the audit cost was incorrect and should be \$16k not \$15k. Turcotte stated that she would correct this.

Board of Assessors – There was some discussion on the hiring of a new Assessor.

Treasurer – There was some question on the tax title amount budgeted and whether it was enough.

Collector – There was some discussion on banking services, what banks and the possible analysis on tax services.

Town Clerk – Concerns on whether there should be more money budgeted for Town Meetings and Elections.

Land Use – The hiring of a part-time planner was questioned.

Town Hall – Piedrafite stated that they should go out with an RFP on the elevator maintenance for Town Hall, Library and Public Safety Building as well as for the fire alarm inspections for these facilities. Gagnon agreed stating that they could make this one account for all town buildings. Johnson also noted that they needed more detail on the Repairs & Maintenance account in the Town Hall budget.

Gagnon stated that they would ask Norm Thidemann to look into combining these costs for the three buildings.

VMS Building – It was noted that nothing was budgeted for fire alarm inspection.

Non-Departmental – There was some discussion on the cost of the copiers and also on the random drug testing under the Professional & Technical account. It was mentioned by Piedrafite that under the Communications account the breakdown for AT&T and Verizon costs were missing. Turcotte stated that she missed those and would get this corrected.

Police – It was noted that there was always concerns with the overtime budget but that these would be discussed at a future meeting.

Fire, Dispatch, Inspections – Also were put off until a future meeting.

DPW – Discussion on adding an employee back into the budget.

Snow & Ice – There was some discussion on whether they should increase this budget.

Board of Health – It was noted that the names listed needed to be updated. Turcotte said that she would take care of this.

ConCom – Gagnon suggested that ConCom pay all the Agents salary out of their fees. It was also suggested that they eliminate the ConCom Agent and have Elaine Cormier do the Land Use Administrator's job part-time and process the warrants for the other 20 hours a week. It was noted that they would talk to Norm Thidemann about this possibility.

COA – There was some discussion on the salary of the Director and cutting her hours.

Library – There was some discussion on where they would get their fuel oil.

Johnson asked that the Department Heads who are scheduled for budget meetings be prepared to discuss the size of their oil tank and the amount of oil in the tanks at the time of their meeting with the Advisory Board and the Board of Selectmen. They also requested information on the free oil deliveries from Burke Oil which resulted from the cancellation of their contract.

Under the Insurance Premiums budget account, they requested a breakout on the premiums.

Johnson had put together a list of his suggestions for the FY10 budget, which included reducing Town Hall hours, reducing the fire training budget line, the review of Professional Development line items and a closer look at the tax revenue projection and transferring some of these funds into the Stabilization Fund.

He also noted that Chapter 90 funds should be used for road repairs only, reduce the number of vehicles at the Fire Department, use the financial management review as a template, close So. Station and look into going with GIC insurance for the Town.

At 10:25 p.m. the meeting was adjourned and it was noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, March 12th.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator