

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
TRAINING ROOM – PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2013

Advisory Board members in attendance – Bill Johnson, Chair, Joe Oliveira, Gail Dumont, Nick Davis and newest member Bruce Whitney. Also in attendance; Doug Briggs, Town Administrator, Fire Chief Paul Zbikowski and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

At 6:30 p.m. Bill Johnson called the meeting to order and stated that this meeting was called to review the FY14 Budget and revenues with Doug Briggs as well as to review the ATM Warrant articles.

The meeting began with a discussion on the Ambulance Study Report submitted by the Committee to the Board of Selectmen.

Bill Johnson began a discussion on the School budget. Doug Briggs discussed the foundation budget, the transportation dollars which is mandated but does fluctuate, as well as the debt service and community development numbers. He noted that this year the State increased the foundation budget by \$258k so Ashburnham's share would be less by \$15k while Westminster would see a decrease of \$100k in the minimum contribution. He stated that Chapter 70 funds also were taken into account as well as the fact that both the Transportation and Debt Service numbers went down. He noted that taking all this into consideration, Ashburnham should see a decrease in their contribution to the School.

Mr. Briggs also touched on the School's Stabilization Fund and the \$1m currently in their E&D Account. Some discussion followed on this topic.

He then stated that the Town of Westminster has some concerns about the pending loss of revenue from the landfill in town. He stated that even though this is pending, they are willing to give back all the savings (level service budget) to the school. He added that because we are giving less that this could prove to be an issue. He noted that a "draft" letter was sent on how we would fund the school and a meeting is scheduled to discuss this further. Bill Johnson added that they can't take any more dollars from the Town side as we are already giving 55%. Mr. Johnson asked the members present if they were all in agreement with the proposal on funding for the school and it was unanimous in favor.

A discussion followed on the teacher's benefits with Mr. Briggs noting that it's just not sustainable.

Doug Briggs discussed the items currently in the Capital Plan article. He stated that we were not successful in getting the grant for the Fire tanker truck so this lowered the total capital to \$399,500. He stated that he has prioritized the VMS Building razing at a cost of \$60k. He also noted that a truck for the Water/Sewer Department and a mower for the

school were also Capital items but listed in separate articles. He noted that the Town Hall maintenance has been put off for this year because a lot was done in the past year.

Bill Johnson inquired about the IT six figure number and how much longer this would be needed. Mr. Briggs stated that this would tie it all together and after this we should be good for at least three years and once we identify the computers and servers we would budget accordingly in a replacement schedule.

Joe Oliveira noted that the budget was up by 3.37% and Mr. Briggs noted that there were still questions on the Fire Department portion of the budget and the revenues would play a big part in the budget numbers.

Bill Johnson stated that at the last Town Meeting there was a request to show revenues and he wanted to have that as part of their handout. Mr. Briggs stated that they could use the Revenue sheets that he has prepared.

Doug Briggs noted that they should meet again to review Water and Sewer budgets as well as any remaining questions or concerns.

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Briggs and Ms. Turcotte left the meeting which continued with the members of the Board.