

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM AT TOWN HALL  
TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2013

---

Advisory Board members in attendance – Bill Johnson, Chair, Joe Oliveira, Gail Dumont, Jaime Piedrafite, Belden Divito, Bruce Whitney and Nick Davis. Also in attendance; Doug Briggs, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

At 6:34 p.m. Bill Johnson called the meeting to order and stated that this meeting was called to review the FY14 Budget with Doug Briggs, to approve a Reserve Fund Transfer request and to review and recommend articles for the Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Johnson stated that they would review the FY14 Budget as the first order of business. He went through each line item as follows:

- Moderator Okay
- Board of Selectmen Okay
- Town Administrator Okay
- Advisory Board Mr. Johnson stated that this budget includes the funds for the additional paramedic.
- Town Accountant Mr. Briggs noted that the new Accountant is going to training seminars so they left the \$10,000 in from last year.
- Board of Assessors Okay
- Treasurer Mr. Briggs stated that the \$20,000 was added to the budget and that this amount was to fund going after delinquent taxpayers. He did state that it was usually an article but that the Treasurer was good at what he does and uses this amount each year. As an example – Flo Chemical will be paying the Town \$185,000 which includes water, sewer and back taxes that they owe. He added that most of this money will go to the Water Fund and whatever remains will be used to fix Holden Street.
- Tax Collector Okay
- IT Expenses Mr. Briggs stated that they will link the Town Hall, Library, Public Safety Building and the DPW and all will be on the server, use the same email system, same Shoretel phone system and all maintenance will be under Guardian. He also noted that the Code Red system and a new finger print scanner were purchased and the IT Advisory Board is working with the Schools. He added that this Board has done a great job. He noted that right now all the Fire, Police and Town Hall computers are all set and we have a 5-year turnover period. Joe Oliveira inquired if we were buying or leasing our computers and asked Mr. Briggs to look into what would be more cost effective.
- Town Clerk Doug Briggs stated that the Clerk has informed him that she would probably have enough in her budget to cover the elections but that she would need money for postage to send out cards for the change in the polling place.
- Land Use Okay
- Town Hall Okay
- Town Buildings Doug Briggs noted that the increase was in heating oil. He also noted that the Public Safety Building and the Library may have extra oil from this year's allotment to start off the next winter season.
- Non-Departmental Okay
- Police Bill Johnson had some questions on the overtime expenses and asked if some shifts could be filled. Doug Briggs stated that they just lost a part-time officer and they just can't fill all the slots. He also noted that they wouldn't be getting a \$5,000 grant that they applied for. Mr. Briggs also stated

that the budget includes the \$12,000 for the Cushing officer and a contractual wage increase of 2%. He also noted that with the additional officer it will cut down on the overtime. Belden Divito inquired about the coverage for the 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. shift. Doug Briggs stated that if the Lieutenant is gone to court, they need coverage. He added that they look at certain circumstances and that Chief Barrett manages his department well. Joe Oliveira noted that their sick time was above the national average and that they should probably look at this for the next negotiations.

There was some discussion regarding the short term/long term coverage for non-union employees. Mr. Briggs noted that officers were not covered by this due to the cost involved.

- Dispatch Doug Briggs noted that the increase is there because they lost a training grant and the contractual wage increases. He also noted that Dispatch personnel are not covered under the short term/long term coverage.
- Fire Bill Johnson explained the Board of Selectmen vote for Option 3 to hire one Paramedic and the shift change. He stated that he personally was not in favor of this option as he didn't see this as the solution to the problem. Bruce Whitney questioned the cost of the new paramedic under Option 3. Doug Briggs explained Option 3. A lengthy discussion followed on this subject with the response time as the key point. Bill Johnson made the motion to go back to the Town Administrator and Ambulance Study Committee recommendation of Option 5 and to leave the budget as is. Bruce Whitney seconded the motion. In favor – 3; opposed -3; abstain – 1. Mr. Johnson noted that they would have to come to a decision/recommendation but that Town Meeting will ultimately decide. After some additional discussion Mr. Johnson asked if they should keep the budget as is and with no response, he stated that they would leave it as Option 3.
- Inspections Okay
- Animal Control Mr. Briggs stated that we are no longer with Westminster and we went out for bid with Wachusett Animal Hospital as the successful bidder who would serve as Animal Control and Animal Inspector.
- Monty Tech Okay
- AWRSD Mr. Johnson noted that we have an \$18,000 budget reduction but the school wants level funding from last year and they are still looking for 2 ½ plus growth on top of it. He stated that we put the \$18,000 back in but that won't be enough for them.
- DPW Mr. Briggs stated that the increase is due to wages, repair and maintenance and the Transfer Station which is offset with revenues.
- Board of Health Doug Briggs stated that the decrease in this budget was due to the fact that the \$750 for the Animal Inspector was moved to the Animal Control budget.
- Conservation Commission Okay
- Council on Aging Okay
- Veterans Services Doug Briggs stated that we have more veterans now and there are more benefits given to them. He also noted that we do get reimbursed for these expenses a year behind at about 75 or 80%.
- Parks & Recreation Okay
- Library Doug Briggs noted that this budget went up due to repairs that are needed on their boiler.
- Historical Commission Okay
- Debt Service Okay
- Employee Insurance Benefits Doug Briggs stated that this went up because we are catching up on the Worcester County Retirement benefits. He also noted that we found out that the Light Department employees are considered Category 4 which will increase the deficit but that we will back-charge the Light Department for the difference.

- Snow & Ice Mr. Briggs noted that at this time we have over-spent this budget by \$65,000 and that this will be covered either by Free Cash or on the Recap sheet. He also noted that he has increased this budget line by \$20,000 for FY14.

At this time Bill Johnson asked for a motion to approve/accept the total FY14 budget of \$13,293,555. Jaime Piedrafite made the motion and was seconded by Gail Dumont. All in favor.

Bill Johnson asked the Board for a vote to approve/authorize to over expend in the Snow & Ice Budget. Nick Davis made the motion and was seconded by Joe Oliveira. All in favor.

Mr. Johnson then advised the Board that they had a Reserve Fund Transfer Request. Mr. Briggs explained that back in 2009 Verizon was charged for poles and for personal property taxes and they fought it and recently won the case in court. So, the amount was \$34,000 plus \$10,000 interest. He stated that we paid the bill using excess overlay amounts from 2008, 2009 and 2010 but there was only \$40,000 available so we need an additional \$4,840.30 which is the amount in the Reserve Fund request. Belden Divito motioned to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer Request and was seconded by Bruce Whitney. All in favor.

At 8:33 p.m. both Doug Briggs and Sylvia Turcotte left the meeting.