

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
TRAINING ROOM AT PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING  
MONDAY, MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2014

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:13 p.m. Bill Johnson noted that the first item for discussion on the agenda was the Library's request to add a part-time person. He noted that no one was in attendance representing the Library. Doug Briggs noted that in the last three years, they haven't spent all their book budget line. Mr. Johnson asked the members if they wanted to take any action on their request for a part-time person. ***Bruce Whitney motioned to not support an additional part-time person and was seconded by Jamie Piedrafite. Motion carried and the vote was unanimous.***

Mr. Johnson then stated that the next topic up for discussion was the additional patrol officer for the Police Department. He stated that he requested to have Chief Barrett at the meeting to answer questions.

Chief Barrett distributed handouts and explained the history behind his request for an additional officer. He stated that the detective position has been an issue for the past seven years and he stressed that crimes have increased. He stated that the detective is also a patrolman. He noted that the new position would work the day shift.

Joe Oliveira inquired about when they would utilize the State Police and Chief Barrett responded that only for fatalities or unattended deaths, not regular calls. Mr. Oliveira inquired about how many total officers they have and Chief Barrett responded six full-time officers, 10 total not counting the Chief, which is sufficient. Bill Johnson asked Mr. Briggs if this would be sustainable and he responded that it would.

A discussion followed on the Police vehicle replacements.

Chief Barrett stated that the most significant issues they would correct with the new patrol officer would be to address investigations and coverage. The Board thanked Chief Barrett and he left the meeting.

Bill Johnson asked each member if they had any more questions. Joe Oliveira stated that his questions were all answered. Bruce Whitney stated that the cut in overtime would cover the new officer. Belden Divito, Jamie Piedrafite and Gail Dumont all stated they were satisfied and okay with the request. ***Joe Oliveira made the motion to approve the request for a new patrol officer and was seconded by Gail Dumont. Motion carried and the vote was unanimous.***

Mr. Johnson stated that they third topic up for discussion was Monty Tech. Doug Briggs stated that he met with Diane Swenson and discussed the \$15,000 increase in their assessment to the Town. He stated that they have always charged the minimum required but last year they found out about the additional \$15,000 to be assessed to Ashburnham after the Annual Town Meeting. He stated that he asked Ms. Swenson for something in writing on the direction from the State. He also noted that this would be a one-time charge.

Mr. Johnson noted the fourth topic was the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District budget. Doug Briggs stated that they have received the AWRSD new certification which is a \$144,000 increase from last year.

He noted that the school is using E&D to cover the hole in their budget and there is a question of sustainability. He stated that this year they will have \$350,000 left over in wages and \$250,000 in insurance. He did add that their assessment came in close to what we asked for so it would work for us, but he did note that they used all their free cash. He stated that he did advise them to decrease the use of their E&D to balance their budget.

Doug Briggs asked for approval of a Reserve Fund Transfer to cover the printing and mailing of the flyer with the DPW facility information and the polling place change back to Briggs information. Bill Johnson explained the mailers. Doug Briggs noted that there would also be an open house at the DPW on Saturday April 19<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to noon. He also noted that if the DPW fails at the ballot it could still be voted at Town Meeting and then on a ballot again. Jamie Piedrafite stated that we have to build this facility before the state eventually shuts us down. ***Belden Divito motioned to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer and was seconded by Jamie Piedrafite. Motion carried and the vote was unanimous.***

Doug Briggs stated that he gave the members the proposed FY15 budget and also the Water and Sewer budgets. He did state that the Sewer Enterprise is in trouble while the Water has good revenue sources. He also noted that the Sewer rate was \$13.68 five years ago and now is set at \$11.50. There was a short discussion on the Sewer issues.

Mr. Briggs asked for a vote on the bottom line number for the FY15 budget - \$15,018,083. ***Bruce Whitney motioned to approve the FY15 budget of \$15,018,083 and was seconded by Joe Oliveira. Motion carried and the vote was unanimous.***

Bill Johnson stated that the Board of Selectmen is meeting on Monday, March 31<sup>st</sup> to go over the warrant articles for the Annual Town Meeting. He stated that they should schedule a meeting to review the warrant articles and the Water and Sewer budgets. It was noted that the meeting would be held on Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at a place to be determined. Doug Briggs also noted that Jeff Lawrence wants everyone to be more prepared and informed so that the meeting will go smoothly.

***At 9:27 p.m. Jamie Piedrafite made the motion to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Gail Dumont. Motion carried.***

Respectfully submitted,  
Sylvia Turcotte  
Assistant to the Town Administrator