

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES  
DECEMBER 5, 2005  
SELECTMEN'S OFFICE, TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Jonathan Dennehy, Chair, Mark Carlisle, Clerk, Ron Reed, Member, Kevin E. Paicos, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Administrative Assistant.

This meeting was aired live on local cable television Channel 8.

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Dennehy called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and read the agenda. Reed moved to accept the agenda, Carlisle seconded and the motion was carried.

II. PRESENTATIONS, REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

A. **Town Administrator's Update:** A copy of the update is attached to these minutes.

Paicos began by stating that the meeting of the Public Safety Building Committee which was being planned for Wednesday has been cancelled. The committee is working to give a good presentation in order to inform the public. He went on to say that they are hiring another architect, a "peer review" to get a second opinion on how to shave off some costs and they should have that within two weeks.

Reed inquired if this would all be ready for the Special Town Meeting and Carlisle stated that it should be available a week before. Reed stated that he is worried that there won't be enough time.

Paicos stated that he has asked the contractor to extend his bid rather than to re-bid with a potential for higher bids. He went on to say that they would get the peer review before Christmas and would put together a presentation with the first meeting being held during the first week of the new year.

Reed stated that he thinks we are really pushing the envelope here and asked what if it comes in at \$1m less, would we re-bid?

Paicos responded that the committee is trying to avoid a whole re-design and they don't want to recommend postponing the STM right now.

Reed again stated that more time is needed and this can't be rushed. Carlisle responded that the Committee should have a really good grasp on this after the second opinion comes in.

Reed asked if the change would be ready by the December 19th meeting and Paicos stated that it's possible that they will know what costs can be reduced without destroying the core program.

Dennehy asked what the drop dead date would be and Paicos stated that January 9th in order to avoid re-bidding. Reed asked if the architect doing the peer opinion would be looking at the existing plans. Paicos responded that the peer opinion would identify what can be cut and saved as well as how much can be cut without re-designing. Dennehy stated that he's hearing that those opposing want to go an entirely different route.

Paicos stated that the peer review is not a re-design and it will cost about \$10K.

Dennehy stated that this project is of monumental importance to the Town and that he's not confident we'll be at that point January 12th.

KP stated that the committee will meet with the Board of Selectmen on the 19th with the status report and will entertain any questions at that time.

Dennehy stated that there are two important issues right now; one is getting the peer review and the other is getting an answer from the low bidder. Paicos stated that an answer from the low bidder will be back on time.

Reed stated that it was a good idea to have the committee meet with the Selectmen because questions need to be heard and answered.

Dennehy stated that the public hearings have to occur way before the STM because people need time to digest this information. Paicos assured the Selectmen that the committee members would be at their meeting on December 19th.

KP then announced that the Town Treasurer, Paul Pollastri, resigned as of December 31, 2005. He went on to say that Pollastri has been with the Town for about a quarter of a century and has done a great job. Paicos added that the Town has grown to the point where we require more from the Treasurer and Paul has a full time job as well right now. Paicos stated that Pollastri has graciously offered to help in the transition and will remain the Town Treasurer until a new person is hired. KP stated that the Town owes him a debt of gratitude for all his years of service.

Paicos stated that he is naming Carla Clifford of the Tax Collectors office as the Town Collector once a new Treasurer is named. He added that she'll do a good job and that she is very talented and skilled. He stated that he is happy to promote from within.

Paicos touched base on the tax bill situation stating that the State has a new person dealing with the Town and this new person has new expectations from us, but Dick Coswell in the Assessors office is optimistic that the tax rate will be set soon despite this setback. Paicos continued by stating that there is a 50-50 chance to get the bills out this year. KP also added that he would wait until the end of the week and if there is no response, then he would personally get involved on Monday to get this resolved.

Paicos advised the Selectmen that more than likely a special BOS meeting would have to be held for the Tax Reclassification.

Dennehy stated his outrage that this has taken so much time and that the Town has had to do short term borrowing because of this. He added that if the DOR has definitive expectations they should put it in writing. He stated that this is extremely unfair to the citizens of Ashburnham as it will affect them if the bills aren't out this year.

Reed stated that he applauds Dick Coswell for his patience in this process. Dennehy stated that the Board is willing to help if needed.

KP went over the landfill closure situation stating that Ron Reed's comments at the last meeting brought this to the attention of the State and he received a call from them stating that they could help to bring the cost down for the testing to around \$10K.

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Paicos also stated that the cost quoted to do the comprehensive study at the Highway Garage was \$20K but that Eric Smith, Town Planner asked MRPC if they could do this and they agreed to do

it at a quoted price of \$10K. He extended “kudos” to both Eric and MRPC for this savings.

Dennehy inquired about whether the State had sent a letter on the repair of Factory Pond Dam and Paicos stated that this is not a priority because it’s not a life-threatening dam and they have many others that are in worst shape. Paicos stated that the repair might take place in the winter some time. He also added that right now MRPC is doing a study on grants available for dam repair funded by FEMA.

### III. OLD BUSINESS

#### A. **Discussion and review of articles for January 12, 2006 Special Town Meeting:** Paicos reviewed each article.

Article #1 – Pages Beach – KP stated that this article is needed to borrow money, debt authorization.

Article #2 – Public Safety Building.

Article #3 – Rail Trail – to fund appropriate for engineering and related costs to purchase a parcel of property.

Article #4 – Rail Trail – for second parcel of land.  
Paicos stated that both these articles are time sensitive and it’s a good investment.

Article #5 – Rezoning of Murray Road  
Paicos began the discussion on this article by stating that the Focus Committee has concerns regarding this while the Planning Board is in favor.

Chris Gagnon, a Focus Committee member, was present and stated that the Focus Committee took a vote at their last meeting not to approve the rezoning. He went on to state that at one point they were in favor but after a lot of discussion they voted against it. He stated that they decided to leave it as is, as there is always the potential for zoning special permits. He stated that once it’s converted to residential you would never get it back as industrial. Reed added that with some many residents moving here, this could be valuable down the road and we should keep it as it is.

Article #6 – 4-wheel drive vehicle for the Police Dept.  
Paicos stated that this is needed and he is in full support.

Article #7 – Relocation of Highway Department

Article #8 – Hazardous waste collection day.  
Reed stated that this could happen in the spring and it’s needed.

Article #9 – Conservation Agent  
Paicos stated that he is in the process of finalizing the wording on this and then he would forward it to Town Counsel.

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Dennehy inquired if the Advisory Board was comfortable with having the STM on January 12th and Paicos responded that this gives them enough time to get their recommendations.

Reed stated that the Board would vote on these articles at their meeting on December 19th once the funding sources are decided.

Paicos wanted to advise the Board that he had a meeting with Jim Zarozinski and Mark Petersen of the Water/Sewer Department and he was told that they are having problems at the sewer station both pumps have burned out because they have been working at 90% capacity for a while now. He stated that he has advised Jim Zarozinski to call Tighe & Bond to get the cost for repair and added that this may be another (emergency) article.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**A. November 21, 2005 – Regular Meeting**

Carlisle motioned to approve these minutes and was seconded by Reed. Motion carried.

**B. November 21, 2005 – Executive Session**

Carlisle motioned to approve these minutes and was seconded by Reed. Motion carried.

VI. OTHER MATTERS

Dennehy announced that the next scheduled Board of Selectmen's meeting would be on Monday, December 19th at 7:00 p.m. He added that it's possible that they may have a Tax Reclassification meeting within the next few weeks and that it would be posted.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:16 p.m., Dennehy stated that the Board needs to go into Executive Session to deliberate upon matters which, if done in open meeting could detrimentally affect the position of the Town regarding collective bargaining and strategy of pending litigation and not to reconvene into regular session except to adjourn.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:04 p.m., Carlisle motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Reed. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Turcotte  
Administrative Assistant