

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
FEBRUARY 5, 2007
SELECTMEN'S OFFICE, TOWN HALL**

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

PRESENT: Jonathan Dennehy, Chair, Mark Carlisle, Member, Chris Gagnon, Clerk, Kevin Paicos, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

Dennehy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and began the meeting by stating that there was a change in the agenda in regards to the item under Old Business, the Town Hall Staff Relocation. He stated that they remain very open to new options and he noted that the good news is that they have discovered a new option with the bad news being that they won't make a decision at this meeting. He stated that this item would be moved to Executive Session adding that the idea is not fully formed yet but that they need to discuss it further in Executive Session as sale or lease of real property. Dennehy added that the option is incredibly promising, would be less costly and wouldn't inconvenience any parties. He stated that the Board has heard all opinions and they need the next two days to work it out. He added that a meeting would be posted for Wednesday, February 7, 2007 at 11:30 a.m. but that until then they can't disclose the full details.

Dennehy thanked everyone for their patience and understanding and added that the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Board were working very hard on this issue.

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Dennehy read the amended agenda. Carlisle moved to accept the amended agenda and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

II. PRESENTATIONS, REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

A. **Public Hearing CDBG Program - Continued:** Shelly Hatch and Ann Carraba were present from MRPC.

At 7:10 p.m., Shelly Hatch continued the Public Hearing by going over the development strategy for Ashburnham and the goals which were updated and in a different format.

At this point, it was moved by Gagnon and seconded by Carlisle that the Board of Selectmen approves the Ashburnham Community Development Strategy, the list of priority projects, and the proposed Target Area for Ashburnham (Census Block Group #25027700100-5). Motion passed unanimously.

Gagnon stated that he wished to thank Eric Smith, the Planning Board, the Affordable Housing Committee and MRPC for all their diligent work on this. Hatch noted that she would like to continue meeting with Eric and the Committees on a quarterly basis to keep up to date on grants, etc.

It was moved by Gagnon and seconded by Carlisle that the Ashburnham Board of Selectmen approves the submission of a grant application with Lancaster acting as the Lead Community, on behalf of and with the Towns of Lancaster, Lunenburg and Townsend to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and authorizes the chairman to sign the joint application, letters, and documents on behalf of the Town. Motion passed unanimously.

Dennehy thanked Shelly Hatch for all that she has done on behalf of the Town.

At 7:25 p.m. Carlisle motioned to conclude the Public Hearing and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

Hatch noted that they also needed to award the bid for paving at Page Beach adding that the low bidder was P.J. Albert at \$117,120. Carlisle motioned to award the bid to P.J. Albert and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

B. Correspondence

Dennehy stated that the Board had received a vast volume of correspondence on the Town Hall relocation including a petition from the seniors.

Dennehy stated that they received a letter from the State Auditor on dam safety inspections which was a non-funded mandate. He noted that Paicos responded to this request stating the financial impact that this would have on the Town. Gagnon commended Paicos for his letter. Paicos noted that it was a good effort but that we would most likely lose.

Dennehy noted a letter was received from Rep. Rice asking for the Town's priorities and proposals by February 6th. Dennehy stated that two issues come to mind: 1) "stop sending us unfunded mandates"; and 2) send us more money back. He noted that a letter would go out to Rep. Rice.

C. Town Administrator's update: Dennehy stated that Kevin was on vacation the previous week so he didn't have an official update for this meeting. Dennehy also stated that they need the status of the issues with Gardner as Mark Dymek was asking because this is important to his 40B project. Paicos stated that this would be on the next agenda.

D. Public Safety Building Committee update: Gagnon stated that at this time they are in a holding pattern waiting for sub-bids which should be turned in by February 20th and that the Committee's next meeting would be on February 22nd.

III. OLD BUSINESS

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and vote in support of MMA Resolution on Revenue Sharing between State and Local Governments: Dennehy stated that he received the numbers on the reports for this discussion from Dr. Zapantis. He noted that there would be a Tri-Board Meeting the next day to discuss the school budget. Dennehy added that there is a need to start looking at the School Budget differently.

Dennehy went over the handouts and stated that they show an alarming trend. He stated that the State is giving us a 1% increase while the towns will have to give 7 or 8% more. He added that we will be faced with a choice to either pass an override or cut programming at the school district. He noted that this is unacceptable as the State is drastically underperforming and that this is a systematic decline.

Dennehy stated that its time to take action as a community and that we need to demand more of our money, as our interests are not being met.

Dennehy also noted that this is not just an Ashburnham issue, it's a state issue.

Dennehy then mentioned the proposed MMA Resolution on Renewing and Revitalizing a Strong State-Local Fiscal Partnership (attached). He noted that the State should remember that it is "revenue sharing" not "aid". He stated that if this resolution was passed then this would increase the total dollars that would come to our town and it would set a benchmark and would give us the budget numbers sooner.

Dennehy then asked for a vote of the Board on this resolution. Carlisle motioned to accept the proposed MMA Resolution on Renewing and Revitalizing a strong State-Local Fiscal Partnership and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

- B. Discussion on Selectmen's Annual Calendar:** Paicos noted that this is still a draft and that we need to go through the Board of Selectmen minutes to see what we've missed and then at that point we would put this in a weekly format.

Dennehy inquired if this would establish a timeframe for the Town Meeting and the budget and Paicos noted that he would have that for the next meeting and that it would be from now through July 1. He also stated that the budgets should be ready in a couple of weeks and that the deadline for articles for the ATM should be set early. Dennehy suggested that they work backwards from May 5th to set a calendar.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. January 8, 2007 – Joint Meeting with Advisory Board**
Carlisle motioned to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2007 Joint Meeting with Advisory Board and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.
- B. January 16, 2007 – Joint Meeting with Advisory Board**
Gagnon noted two changes he wanted made to these minutes. Paicos stated that any changes to the minutes should be done in the form of an amendment. Gagnon motioned to amend these minutes as follows: Page 2 under B paragraph 5 – the word "not" be stricken and "not offensive" be inserted. Page 3 under IV - A paragraph 2 – strike out the word "doesn't" and insert "may have" after the word "Fitchburg". Carlisle motioned to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2007 Joint Meeting with Advisory Board as amended and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.
- C. January 24, 2007 – Special Joint Meeting with Advisory Board**
Carlisle motioned to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2007 Special Joint Meeting with Advisory Board and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

VI. OTHER MATTERS

Dennehy noted that a Special One-Day Liquor License was requested by St. Denis Church for an Italian Dinner on Saturday, February 10, 2007 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Carlisle motioned to approve the One Day liquor license and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

Dennehy stated that a Tri-Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 6, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. at the Overlook Library.

Dennehy also noted that the next Public Safety Building Committee meeting would be held on

February 22, 2007 and the Town Hall Renovation Committee would be holding a public information meeting upstairs at the Town Hall on Monday, February 12, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. He added that anyone with questions or an interest in seeing the plans for Town Hall should attend.

Dennehy stated that the Town Caucus would be on Monday, February 26, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. and the Town Election is set for Tuesday, April 24, 2007.

He stated that the next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 20, 2007 due to the Presidents Day holiday on Monday.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:14 p.m., Carlisle motioned to enter into Executive Session to deliberate upon matters which, if done in open meeting could detrimentally affect the position of the Town regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, contract negotiations with non-union personnel and not to reconvene into open session. Gagnon seconded and the motion carried.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:45 p.m., Carlisle motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator