

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
NOVEMBER 19, 2007
VON DECK LECTURE HALL, OAKMONT REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL**

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

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

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: At 7:03 p.m., Carlisle read the agenda. Dennehy motioned to accept the agenda and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

II. PRESENTATIONS, REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

A. **Correspondence:** No significant correspondence to report.

B. **Town Administrator's Update:** Paul Boushell touched on a few issues. He noted that the water meter replacements would be starting on Tuesday of next week. He stated that the School would be reducing the Town's assessment by \$82k and also would be returning another \$97k that is due the Town. He noted that with \$80k in the Stabilization Account now he isn't as nervous about the financial outlook for the Town as he was previously.

Boushell noted that the following will determine how the next year will look financially. 1) receiving the aforementioned money from the school; 2) State aid is looking bleak at this point, cause for concern; 3) new growth is down, not buying or leasing cars and no new construction; 4) concern over fuel and gas costs; and 5) VMS building, COA use and whether to heat the entire building or not.

Boushell stated that the Town Hall Renovations are very close to schedule and that he is looking at moving back after Town Meeting in May. Carlisle noted that Dave Sargent was scheduled to be on the agenda for the next meeting to give an update on this project.

Boushell continued with his update by noting that the DPW is in decent shape after the Special Town Meeting approved the transfer of funds to their operating budget. He also noted that a meeting would be held including the two chiefs on which roads to prioritize. He stated that they are aware that the roads in Town are in bad shape and that they would have to patch the roads for now.

Carlisle noted that Russell Hill Road has been patched and that the DPW is doing something about the road conditions and for right now this is the next best thing.

Dennehy stated that he has seen the proposal put together by Don Ouellette, the DPW Director and that it will be a "big bill" to be brought before the residents. He also noted that he has touched base with Senator Brewer every chance he gets on any grant possibilities as they owe the Town to literally exhaust all grant possibilities.

Dennehy stated that Ouellette explained his proposal and that he is doing a great thorough job. Carlisle noted that we need to be more aggressive than just two roads a year as has been the norm in past years. Gagnon noted that Stowell Road had been on the list for the past two years and hasn't been done yet so it should be on the list this year.

Carlisle noted that Ouellette would be giving a presentation on this the second meeting in December at the Selectmen's meeting. Dennehy added that Ouellette is being very thorough and will give a very detailed presentation with answers to all concerns. He noted that it will be a major proposal and that they will have to make it more palatable by working with him to get to what voters would support. He added that it would be discussed often until the May Town Meeting. Carlisle added that it would be a very comprehensive plan.

Boushell also showed the Board the new Permitting Guide which was developed by Lori Capone, the Conservation Agent and Denee Howard, the Land Use Administrator. He noted that it was very detailed on costs for permits and procedures. The Board all agreed it was a great job.

Boushell also noted that the website is virtually up and that the Town has designated Ken Dolder as the gatekeeper. He added that once Dolder is trained to manipulate the Virtual Town Hall site it should be up and running at 100%. Denee Howard was also training as his backup.

Public Safety Building Committee Update: Gagnon stated that all the concrete floors as well as the plumbing and heating is done. He added that a lot will be put up during the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas and that everything is right on schedule.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Follow up on So. Maple Avenue Gate and Oakmont Traffic Congestion:** Carlisle noted that Chief Barrett did a study on the problem and that he sent a memo on his findings and recommendations. Carlisle then proceeded to read the memo, which is attached. Carlisle added that the memo says it clearly. Gagnon noted that a copy of this memo should be sent to the Superintendent as well as the School Committee. Dennehy noted that aside from placing an officer there the only other solutions sits with the school system. He also noted that opening the gate is the wrong way to resolve this issue as they had already determined. He added that the next step is to see if the school committee wants to take this up. Carlisle noted that the Selectmen have done all they could at this point.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Senior Tax Work-off Program hourly rate increase: Boushell stated that there was a small issue with the Council on Aging and the Assessors but that it has been resolved. He stated that the Board needs to vote to approve the minimum state wage of \$7.50 as the statute requires and that it would take affect in July 1, 2008 for Fiscal 09.

Dennehy motioned to reestablish the state minimum wage pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 5K for the Senior Tax Work-off Program and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

- B. Discussion on new Ambulance Procedure:** Gagnon stated that he met with the Fire Chief regarding a list of uncollected ambulance bills in the amount of \$27k. He noted that Coastal Medical does handle our billing but these were still outstanding. He went on to state that he wanted to remind people to pay these invoices or make arrangements to pay. He stated that once the letter is sent there will be a 30-day grace period and then they will take further action, such as liens on property. He added that they are offering many opportunities to take care of this. Carlisle noted that the Board would review the letter submitted by Chief Zbikowski and that they would review their comments on this at the next meeting.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 16, 2007 – Regular Meeting

Dennehy motioned to approve the minutes of October 16, 2007 and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

B. October 23, 2007 – Joint Meeting with Advisory Board

Dennehy motioned to approve the minutes of October 23, 2007 and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

VI. OTHER MATTERS

Carlisle noted that there would be a Flu Clinic at the Senior Center and Ashley Court on Tuesday, December 11 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Carlisle also noted that the Town Hall offices would be closing for the Thanksgiving holiday on Wednesday, November 21st at 1:00 p.m. and would reopen on Monday, November 26th at 8:00 a.m.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Carlisle noted that the Board would be entering into Executive Session to deliberate upon matters regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and would not reconvene into regular session.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:15 p.m. Dennehy motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Gagnon.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator