

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
APRIL 7, 2008 – APRIL 8, 2008
VON DECK LECTURE HALL, OAKMONT REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL**

This meeting was taped for local cable television Channel 8. This was a Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Board and is a continuance of the Monday, April 7, 2008.

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

Also in attendance: Jim Shanahan, Town Accountant, and Advisory Board members, Bill Johnson, Jamie Piedrafite, Frank Lombardo, Dottie Munroe, Leo Janssens and Maggie Whitney.

Carlisle reconvened the meeting at 7:46 p.m. Dennehy stated that everyone present had received a report from the Town Accountant, Jim Shanahan which listed the money articles as well as available funds. (Copy is attached to these minutes.)

Bill Johnson, Advisory Board Chair questioned if the water tank articles would be put back on the warrant and Carlisle noted that the Town Administrator said that the reason he pulled them off was due to the Water/Sewer problems and the DOR issue. Dennehy noted that a meeting of the Water/Sewer Commissioners was at this moment being held to try and resolve this issue by raising the rates as the Water Enterprise Fund is in deficit and they are discussing trying to remedy this situation. He added that there is a possibility they may raise the rates enough tonight but this may not be possible as they would have to raise the rates by 45% to accomplish this.

Carlisle stated that the issue isn't the current deficit but that where we are right now will cause it. He noted that the DOR looked at this and stated that this wasn't good and Dennehy added that the Town was written up on this by the DOR.

Carlisle stated that the Water/Sewer Commissioners and the independent consultant, Mark Abraham would be meeting with the Board of Selectmen on April 22nd to discuss this issue. He added that they would get this under control.

The discussion continued on the report from the Accountant. Dennehy noted that Article 13, the Assessors annual article to fund their revaluation, could easily be passed over at Town Meeting. Carlisle noted that Article 14, the Treasurer's Legal Services, could be funded by \$10,000 for now and maybe another \$10,000 in the fall.

At this time Bill Johnson stated that the 2½ plus growth number for the school shouldn't be upfront; Carlisle agreed and stated that they should deal with this now.

Gagnon noted that the school requests this by law and this is their certified number and that they are talking about an amount that we annually give to them. He noted that Ashburnham's contribution right now is \$2,164,389 over the minimum by state law. He added that if we pull money back then Westminster would feel they should do the same.

Dennehy noted that we also have to think about the agreement both towns have with the School District. Johnson stated that his suggestion was to not give them as much.

Carlisle stated that the Prop. 2½ amount is \$144,738 and the growth number is \$105,050. He noted that both the Town Accountant and the Town Administrator's opinion is to drop the new growth amount of \$105,050 and that this would enable us to hire an EMT, buy a new cruiser, etc.

Dennehy noted that this amount along with the \$115k from state aid, which is not reflected in the budget, but was approved and is now on the table per the joint resolution of the House, would give the town the funds to proceed on these issues.

There was some discussion on the availability of the \$92k returned to the Town from the School and Carlisle noted that these funds have to be recertified as free cash and are not available at this time.

Dennehy inquired of Chief Barrett if funds were built in to his current budget for a new officer in FY09 and he confirmed that they were. Dennehy stated that they wanted to be fair to both the Police and Fire departments and hire an EMT as well, which would cost the Town about \$51,000.

Carlisle noted that any money Ashburnham takes from the 2 and ½ plus growth would possibly mean that Westminster would have to do the same.

Johnson voice his concerns about rising fuel costs which haven't been budgeted for in the FY09 budgets and suggested that they could boost the reserve fund to cover any shortfalls that may occur. Dennehy noted that it could be put on as a line item in the reserve fund budget. He added that it was obvious that the Library's budget was grossly under-funded.

Carlisle noted that it was the opinion of the Advisory Board to take the funds mentioned previously out of the growth from the school.

There was much discussion on the funding of the articles listed in the Accountant's report. Jamie Piedrafite recommended the following: \$10k for the Town Hall move; \$34k for the cruiser; \$51k for an EMT; \$10k for the Treasurer; \$28k towards the Briggs Study article, to cover the difference after the \$160k; and an additional \$50k to the Reserve Fund to defray fuel costs; with \$70k from the school and the additional local aid of \$115k as the funding source. Both the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Board were in agreement on this recommendation.

Dennehy noted that a report was also submitted showing the impact on the budget for FY09 by a COLA for all the non-union employees, with a 2%, 3% or 3.5% increase. He also stated that a 3% COLA was reflected in the FY09 Budget at this time.

The discussion on the School funds continued with Gagnon stating that if the Town takes the \$70k from the schools, this would add to their override and bring the amount to \$650k. Dennehy stated that these items are very important to the Town and they have to cover both sides.

Johnson noted that they have the option to use the \$160k for the Briggs study and Carlisle stated that he would prefer to do this, as if this gets pushed back, at least they would have the study.

Dennehy stated that they need to be sure that we have an adequate police force and an EMT for ALS.

Both Dennehy and Carlisle voiced their disagreement on only \$10k for the Town Hall move and stated that they wanted to hold off on a recommendation until more information was available, such as a surplus on the project.

Dennehy motioned to reduce the AWRSD line item in Article 2, which is \$6,039,248, by \$70,000 to be appropriated elsewhere and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion was unanimous.

Janssens motioned to approve the reduction to the AWRSD line item in Article 2, which is \$6,039,248, by \$70,000 to be appropriated elsewhere, as previously voted by the Board of Selectmen and was seconded by Whitney. Motion was unanimous.

Johnson inquired about the COLA amount and Dennehy stated that the 3% should be left in the budget and Carlisle agreed.

Dennehy stated that the Selectmen needed to call a meeting with the Water/Sewer Commissioners and have a quorum present. Carlisle stated that they would have them attend the next meeting on April 22nd.

The votes on Article 2 were: BOS recommend and ADV. BD. recommend.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Town Election Ballot Warrant

The Town Election Warrant was signed by all three Selectmen. Dennehy motioned to approve the posting of the warrant and Gagnon seconded. Motion carried.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes were approved.

VI. OTHER MATTERS

Carlisle made the following announcements:

- Habitat groundbreaking at 203 Sherbert Road on Tuesday, April 15, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.
- RCAP Solutions – application for Affordable Housing Grant funding. He noted that the Board would send a letter of support. Gagnon motioned to draft the letter to RCAP and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.
- Final Voter Registration for the Town Election will be held on Wednesday, April 9th from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Town Clerk's office at 15 Oakmont Drive.
- Final Voter Registration for the Annual Town Meeting would be held on Monday, April 14th from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Town Clerk's office.

- Town Election, April 29th – polls open 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at J.R. Briggs Elementary School Gym at 96 Williams Road. Absentee ballots are in.
- Annual Town Meeting, Saturday, May 3rd at 10:00 a.m. at Oakmont Regional High School Auditorium.
- Dog Licenses are now available at the Town Clerk's office.

Carlisle also stated that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen would be held on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, due to the Patriots Day holiday on Monday, April 21st.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board had Executive Session on the previous night.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:30 p.m. Dennehy motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Gagnon.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
FY09 BUDGET PROJECTION

<u>ARTICLE</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>FUNDING SOURCE</u>
Reconstruction Roads	9	7,000,000	Loan Prop. 2 ½
Reconstruction Rds. & Sidewalks	10	170,000	Prop. 2 ½
Revaluation R/E	13	10,000	
Treasurer Legal Services	14	20,000	
VMS Building	16	90,000	
Police New Cruiser	21	34,000	
Moving Back to Town Hall	26	35,500	
Replacement Ashby State Rd. Bridge	28	250,000	Loan Prop 2 ½
Briggs School Feasibility Study	33	400,000	\$160k STM 10/20/07 Balance Prop. 2 ½
Total		8,014,500	

AVAILABLE FUNDS

FREE CASH	7,087.00
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	121,914.81
STABILIZATION FUND	71,467.87
LOCAL AID FY09	115,000.00

VOTED BY BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND ADVISORY BOARD – APRIL 8, 2008

ARTICLE 14	\$ 10,000 - (TREASURER)
ARTICLE 21	34,000 – (NEW CRUISER)
ARTICLE 26	10,000 – (TOWN HALL MOVE)
ARTICLE 33	28,000 – (BRIGGS STUDY – ASHBURNHAM SHARE)
ADDITIONAL EMT	51,000
RESERVE FUND	50,000 – (TO DEFRAY FUEL COSTS)

TOTAL \$183,000

ADDITIONAL LOCAL AID	\$115,000
FROM 2 ½ PLUS GROWTH	70,000

TOTAL \$185,000 (FUNDS AVAILABLE TO COVER ABOVE)