

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
MAY 12, 2008
VON DECK LECTURE HALL - OAKMONT REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL**

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

PRESENT: Chris Gagnon, Chair, Jonathan Dennehy, Member and Maggie Whitney, Clerk, and Paul Boushell, Town Administrator. Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator was not in attendance but viewed the minutes that were taped.

- I. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** At 7:12 p.m., Gagnon read the agenda noting that the Board had met previously in Executive Session at 6:40 p.m. He also noted that they would move up the Ballot Questions and Approval which is listed under Old Business in order to accommodate Town Counsel. Dennehy motioned to approve the agenda with the before mentioned exceptions and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

IV. **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. **Ballot Questions and Approval:** Deb Phillips, Town Counsel was present to go over the ballot questions for the June 17, 2008 Election. Gagnon read each question and a short discussion followed. Town Counsel noted that on Questions 3 and 4 the amounts could be less but would not exceed the amount voted on at Town Meeting. Dennehy motioned to approve the questions as printed with the exception of adding the same wording at the end of Question 2 as was listed in Question 1. Whitney seconded and the motion carried.

III. **PRESENTATIONS, REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE**

- A. **Town Hall Renovation Committee Update:** Dave Sargent was present to give an update on the progress at Town Hall. Sargent noted that the Contractor is wrapping up in the next three weeks. He did note that there would be one more item that would have to be dealt with in June and that this would be covered by the Contractor. He added that they didn't want to hold up the move just for this one item.

Sargent reported that on the financial side, the Committee has had word from Don Bucchianeri as well as Jim Shanahan that it looks like there would be a small surplus on the project, not to exceed \$10,000. He noted that the Committee has recommended that this surplus be used for exterior lighting and a pass-card system to open the doors, which were items requested by the Town Administrator. He added that the Committee would find out how to close the project from both the Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen.

Sargent stated that the paving and the landscaping work needed to be done, but that it would be minimal. He also noted that a dedication ceremony would be scheduled to give the building back to the Town. Sargent added that the Contractor has been good and continues to do a great job.

Boushell noted that the move back is being planned for mid-June. Dennehy stated that he went on the tour with the Town Hall employees a few weeks ago and that it was absolutely beautiful and had great office space. He added that the Committee has done a great job in modernizing it while still keeping the historical flavor.

Whitney inquired as to when the decision needed to be made by the Board on the lighting and Sargent responded by the end of June.

Boushell thanked everyone for their hard work and added that the Committee deserves the credit. Dennehy added that the Light Department deserved thanks as well.

Gagnon inquired as to the celebration and if the Committee had any thoughts on this. Sargent stated that it should be up to the Board of Selectmen. Gagnon stated that they would coordinate something to have the Committee give back the building. Don Ouellette noted that they should be sure to get the as-built drawings submitted.

Sargent noted that the 1904 plans for Town Hall were very helpful and that the Architect did use them. Gagnon noted that they should be preserved and scanned for safe keeping.

Sargent added that the paving involved wouldn't cost more than a few hundred dollars and that this was backed out of the project by the Town Administrator, Kevin Paicos. He also noted that the Project Manager was great and watched for any change orders and credits during the project.

Bill Johnson, the Advisory Board Chair, stated that they would like to know how much additional costs were incurred by other departments during this project. He noted that the original cost was \$2.7m and that they would like to know the true cost total. Boushell stated that once the project is completed this would be done.

It was noted by Gagnon that the moving costs had already been discussed and he thanked Dave Sargent for the update.

B. Town Administrator's Update:

Boushell stated that the furniture had been ordered for the Town Hall. He also noted that he had been in negotiations on the Town's property and liability insurance carrier for the past 4 or 5 months and he was able to lock in the present rate for the next two years.

Whitney inquired about the DOR letter. Boushell stated that a letter went out to the DOR on May 7, 2008 on the Financial Management review that was voted on at the Annual Town Meeting. He added that there were at least 25 or 30 cities and towns on the list. Gagnon inquired about the letter to DOR on the review of past practices and Boushell noted that the Town Accountant's recommendation would be to wait until the present audit is complete and then pursue this meeting and the Board unanimously agreed with this recommendation.

The Board noted that they were pleased with the calendar that was compiled by Sylvia Turcotte, the Assistant to the Town Administrator. Whitney motioned to accept the calendar and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

- C. **Public Safety Building Committee update:** Gagnon stated that the Committee had two meetings recently and that one of these was held in the building, in Zibby's future office as the trailers were gone from the site. He went into detail on what would be done within the next few weeks, such as the ceilings, locker and shower painting, wiring, and the siding. He also noted that they started making adjustments in the funding and added that they were working on the use of the funds remaining in the contingency fund. Gagnon did note that the Project Manager may need to work an additional two months, so funds would need to be set aside for this expense at a cost of \$10,000. A short discussion followed on the hydrant line as well as the sewer hook-up and the great idea that Don Ouellette, the DPW Director, had to get these done. He ended by stating that the project is in very good shape.

IV. OLD BUSINESS (continued)

- B. **Oil Bid with School Department:** Gagnon stated that he may have presented this issue poorly and inadvertently pointed fingers and apologized. He then read an email from Sherry Kersey on the oil bid process for this fiscal year which explained the actual happenings. He stated that oil is a huge part of the Town's expenses and may need more discussion.

Dennehy stated that he felt that they wasted more time than this topic deserved and that they basically needed to direct the Town employees to follow the law and get the lowest price. Bill Johnson stated that it's a question of how many gallons would be used and that there was really no need to have the Town go out to bid on its own.

Dennehy stated that this is between the Town Administrator and the School. He motioned to request the Town Administrator and his staff to work with Dr. Zapantis and his staff to make sure all procurement laws are followed and that we get the best price for oil. This was seconded by Whitney and the motion carried. Dennehy added that this is a 30B procurement and needs to be filed within a certain period of time in the state of Massachusetts.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Victorian House horse trough loan return to the Town of Ashburnham:** Gagnon discussed the history of the water trough and noted that the Saccone's of the Victorian House have taken good care of this since 1997. He did note that at this time the Victorian House Restaurant was only open part time for private events and that he wants to bring the water trough back to display on Town property on Main Street. He noted that his thought would be to not renew the contract with them and to instead place the water trough on the front right hand corner in front of Town Hall which would be decorative. He also stated that it would be incredibly expensive to replace this piece of history and that it would need to be moved by forklift due to the weight.

He added that maybe a small committee could be set up to get this done. A few other areas for the water trough location were also discussed.

Dennehy noted that the intent of placing the water trough at the Victorian House was to encourage business there at the time but that the intent is being defeated right now. He added that if it's closed, the Town should be able to take it back. He also questioned the liquor license issue and Boushell stated that a letter had already gone out to the Saccone's on their license. Dennehy motioned to have the Town Administrator send out a letter to the Saccone's on the water trough issue and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried. Gagnon also expressed his thanks to Robert Phelps for the historical document on the water trough.

IV. OLD BUSINESS (continued)

- C. Review of additional invoices/expenses for Temporary Town Hall improvements:** Gagnon discussed the invoices from Guardian on the move to the temporary offices and stated that they totaled approximately \$36,900. He stated that a lot of cabling was done and that they needed to discuss if it should be left behind. He noted that they would need to go over the expenses and pare down the \$36,900 amount. Boushell stated that this would take some time to calculate from the work orders. He noted that phones had to be purchased because the original ones wouldn't work at the school and he recommended to keep these phones when we move back. Gagnon noted that the Board would work with Boushell on this issue.

Whitney noted that she would like to see a copy of the spreadsheets on costs on both the Temporary Town Hall and the new Town Hall project. Gagnon stated that they would get these and then share them with the Advisory Board as well.

Boushell stated that the costs should be categorized and broken out into "stay" and "go" expenses and Gagnon agreed that they would work on two lists. He added that they would make the proposal to the school when we leave that improvements were made and now we're leaving them behind and see what kind of trade-off would be possible. He also noted that the door was a permanent improvement and in turn makes better use of their space. Gagnon stated that he would ask the School to make us an offer. Whitney inquired when the close-out plan would be and Boushell stated that it would be at the end of the project once the inspector deals with a few issues.

A short discussion followed on the lease with the School and other expenses incurred.

V. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

- B. Outline for reverse budget review:** Gagnon noted that at the Annual Town Meeting, the Board had amended the budget in 4 or 5 areas and now there is a need to review the budget with the Town Accountant in these areas and individual Department total levels.

At this time Pixie Brennan brought up some discrepancies in figures published in the Town Report and the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting that had been mailed out

to residents. It was noted by the Board that this would be reviewed and corrected and published in the next Town Report.

Gagnon stated that the Town Accountant would look into this and would make any necessary corrections. Dennehy agreed and stated that we should have an accurate report historically.

A discussion followed on when this meeting should be held. Gagnon noted that it could be done in two meetings with the Town Administrator, the Town Accountant and the Advisory Board in order to get a good grasp on the finances as everyone needs a clear understanding in this regard. Johnson agreed and added that they should also look at the potential Free Cash figures as well. Johnson also noted that fuel is a big issue as this is significantly under-budgeted for FY09.

Gagnon inquired if a meeting with Jim Shanahan and the Advisory Board for one hour on June 2nd and again on June 16th at the end of the meetings would be sufficient. Johnson stated that he feels one hour is not enough time and suggested one meeting to get this done and make it the only thing on the agenda.

Dennehy stated that they should plan this meeting for June 2nd as a solid budget meeting and Boushell stated that he would check with the Town Accountant and get back to them.

- C. Liaisons to other committees:** Gagnon noted that Whitney has asked to be the liaison to the School Committee and that Dennehy is the liaison for the Village Center District Committee. He added that he would like to see more representatives from different committees to report to the Board and Dennehy stated that they need to hear from the Focus Committee more often.
- D. Employee Smart Plan topic:** Gagnon explained how the MA Deferred Comp Plan works for Town employees. Boushell noted that this is a state statute and everyone must contribute. He added that at any time funds can be taken out but that a penalty would be incurred. He also noted that a representative for the Deferred Comp Plan would be in Ashburnham at the Library on May 14th to answer any questions regarding this issue.
- E. Proposed walk-through of land on Lake Watatic:** Gagnon stated that he is issuing a proposal to everyone to take a walk-thru on Lake Watatic. He added that he is hoping to have ConCom, the Parks & Rec. Dept. and the DPW Director share their ideas on potential use of this property. He asked that they pick a date for this walk-thru, on a Saturday for an hour and a half or so with a rain date as well.

It was decided that the date would be Saturday, June 14th at 10:00 a.m. with a rain date of Saturday, June 21st at 10:00 a.m. Gagnon noted that the property is on Lakeshore Drive on the west side of Lake Watatic and he added that he hoped all interested parties would attend.

VII. OTHER MATTERS

Don Ouellette, the DPW Director was present per the request of the Board and he went over the “pay as you go” program. He did note that the stickers would be obtained at the Town Hall and that he would have someone at the gate of the transfer station one Saturday to pass out stickers and explain how it would work.

Ouellette then announced that they would be starting to flush the watermains on Monday and that it would be announced in the papers as well. He also announced that the last Road Presentation before the election would be on Wednesday, May 14th at 7:00 p.m. at the Senior Center.

Ouellette announced that the DPW would have an auction on May 29th to sell about 12 items and that striping would also be done next week as well as the crosswalks. He stated that he is in the process of trying to get easements for the Lake Road Bridge Project on some properties. He added that the easement on Proctor Road is going before the Water/Sewer Commissioners at their next meeting and that Town Counsel has been given information on all the easements. Dennehy thanked Ouellette for the signage near his home.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 1, 2008 – Emergency Joint Meeting w/Advisory Board

B. May 3, 2008 – Joint Meeting w/Advisory Board

Dennehy noted that he was not present at these meetings and would abstain. Whitney motioned to approve the minutes for the May 1, 2008 Emergency Joint Meeting w/Advisory Board and the May 3, 2008 Joint Meeting w/Advisory Board and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

C. May 5, 2008 – Regular Meeting

Dennehy motioned to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2008 Regular Meeting and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Dennehy reminded Gagnon to announce the Memorial Day Services which were scheduled for Sunday May 25th at 10:30 a.m. and Monday, May 26th beginning at 7:00 a.m. ending with ceremonies at the Town Hall.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, at 9:21 p.m. Dennehy motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator