

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
JULY 14, 2008 – 6:00 PM – SPECIAL MEETING
AUDITORIUM – FAIRBANKS MEMORIAL TOWN HALL**

This meeting was taped for local cable television Channel 8.

PRESENT: Chris Gagnon, Chair, Jonathan Dennehy, Member and Maggie Whitney, Clerk, Paul Boushell, Interim Town Administrator, and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator. Advisory Board members in attendance were as follows: Dottie Munroe, Bill Johnson, Marie Zbikowski, Leo Janssens and Jamie Piedrafite.

Gagnon stated that the reason for this special meeting was to review and approve the FY08 Budget transfers (copy attached).

Whitney noted that she did not approve of the amount of transfer on this report for the Town Administrator's account. Boushell stated that this would come out of Free Cash automatically.

Johnson stated that he is requesting to see a final report that shows everything that was spent and what was done regarding the move to the school and back to Town Hall.

Whitney also requested a 2008 detail report for Guardian showing a breakout of hardware, licenses, etc.

Gagnon asked if the next Town Hall Committee meeting would take care of the minor lists of items still open and Boushell stated that they would. Boushell then proceeded to explain the shortfall in the Highway account and also noted that he would be discussing how to handle the shortfall in Snow & Ice with Kevin Paicos and Jim Shanahan.

Leo Janssens stated that a few departments did really well and gave it back and that they should get the other departments to tow the line to avoid overages. Bill Johnson noted that FY09 would be a very difficult year for the Town financially.

Dennehy asked about the bottom line and Boushell stated that receipts haven't all been received as of this date but that the economy has been reflected in the permits.

Johnson stated that he would like to have all the Department Heads calculate potential deficit for FY09.

A short discussion followed on an article that was printed in the Community Journal where Paicos discussed the bleak outlook for FY09.

Gagnon asked for a motion from the Advisory Board on approval of the Budget Transfers submitted by the Town Accountant. Marie Zbikowski motioned to approve and was seconded by Janssens. All were in favor.

Dennehy motioned to approve the Budget Transfers and was seconded by Whitney. Vote was unanimous. Whitney did want it noted that she would sign off on this document because the services had been rendered but in the future she would not approve an amount over what was budgeted. Dennehy added that the Town Administrator issue was approved before Paicos was deployed and that this course of action was taken because it was in the best interest of the Town.

Janssens stated that both Boards needed to begin discussing the 2½ plus growth for the school and to come to an agreement. He added that a letter should be sent to the school notifying them of the change. Gagnon agreed that a letter of intent should be sent to the school and Dennehy added that it should be done in no uncertain terms. Gagnon stated that any growth would have to be negotiated.

Dennehy noted that he didn't see any new growth in the near future and that State aid is "iffy". He added that there "will be no new money" and that both Boards have to be very public and straight-forward making it very, very clear. He noted there can be no assumptions.

Whitney noted that they may have to go to a 4-day work week and that they "need to be proactive, not reactive". Janssens stated that they need to set a deadline and Dennehy added that they need to say to the school "don't make any revenue assumptions".

Johnson asked that they wait for the other Advisory Board members to take their final vote on this issue. Whitney stated that she would like to see a draft letter first and Dottie Munroe agreed that everyone present wanted that as well. Dennehy suggested that this issue be placed on the August 4th agenda and that they should have either Boushell or Paicos put the draft letter together and email it to both boards for review. He also noted that they should agree as joint Boards to sign the same letter. Gagnon stated that the letter to the school would be an agenda item for the August 4th Selectmen's meeting. Johnson stated that the Advisory Board would meet before August 4th to get the letter drafted.

Dennehy noted that they really have to have this discussion and hopefully both Boards can have this discussion with the School District and come up with a compromise to face reality.

With no further business to discuss, at 6:54 p.m. Dennehy motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator