

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM SPECIAL
JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
AND THE ADVISORY BOARD - MINUTES
NOVEMBER 24, 2008 – 6:30 PM
FAIRBANKS MEMORIAL TOWN HALL - UPSTAIRS**

This meeting was taped for local cable television Channel 8.

PRESENT: Chris Gagnon, Chair, Jonathan Dennehy, Member and Maggie Whitney, Clerk, Kevin Paicos, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator. Members of the Advisory Board who were present: Bill Johnson, Dottie Munroe, Jamie Piedrafite, Leo Janssens.

At 6:30 p.m. Gagnon convened the meeting and noted that this was being held to inform the voters.

Jeff Lawrence acted as Moderator and stated that this meeting was held to inform the voters of the budget crisis and its effects. He then proceeded to show slides explaining how this budget crisis occurred and what could happen as a result if the override didn't pass. There was a short question and answer period.

Dr. Zapantis wanted it noted that the School Committee was in favor of the override.

Kevin Paicos then gave his presentation and explained the brief history of how the Town got to this point. There was some discussion on new had already been made.

Paicos also noted the DOR had requested that we amend our budget by total replacement due to the many errors that were made in the budget motion at the Annual Town Meeting on May 3, 2008.

There was some discussion on the \$155,887 still owed to the school.

Paicos continued his presentation, explaining the cuts involved and what impact it would have on town services. He noted that the override would be a permanent levy limit override and that it could be changed only by an override vote.

Paicos stated that they are expecting a substantial cut in local aid for 2010 and if the override passes it would help fill the gap. He also explained how the lay-offs had been calculated.

Bill Johnson explained the checks and balances that would be put in place to prevent mistakes like this one from happening again. Both Johnson and Paicos commented on a question about what the extra \$30k of the override would be used for. They both agreed that the funds would not be used without a lot of checks and balances.

At this time Chief Barrett gave a brief presentation on what would occur if the override failed. He noted that many shifts wouldn't be filled. He also noted the problems with animals in town if the Animal Control Officer is cut.

Mary Lee Muessel, the COA Director gave a short presentation on the effects of closing the Senior Center describing how socialization is very important and all the programs that would be eliminated.

Chief Zbikowski gave his presentation and explained the cuts in the fire department personnel. He explained how ALS works and how the certification would be lost and how they would not be able to reapply for five years.

DPW Director Don Ouellette presented his potential cuts noting that right now he had 6½ persons in the Highway Department and that they needed more personnel, not less. He added that this would affect everybody.

Cheryl Paul-Bradley, the Library Director explained what would occur if the Library was closed and added that it would be a big loss to the Town as they would lose their accreditation and for a five year period.

Johnson made some closing remarks, noting that it was really up to the voters now. He stated that they don't want to cut services and that everyone should get the facts. He added that we want this to pass.

With no further business to discuss, at 8:50 p.m. Whitney motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator