

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
AND ADVISORY BOARD – MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2009 – 7:02 PM
LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM – TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Chris Gagnon, Chair, Maggie Whitney, Clerk, Norm Thidemann, Interim Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator. Advisory Board members in attendance were Dottie Munroe, Bill Johnson, and Leo Janssens II, Jaime Piedrafite and Belden Divito.

Scheduled for discussion at this meeting were the DPW, Water and Sewer FY10 Budgets. Don Ouellette, DPW Director, and Dave Berger and Debra Bickford of the Water/Sewer Commission were present for this discussion.

Ouellette stated for the record that the DPW Department had taken cuts in their budget for the past two years which basically left them with no purchasing power.

There was some discussion on the potential Farmer's Market and the location.

Janssens questioned the number of cell phones that the DPW and Water/Sewer Department employees had and Ouellette stated that the number was about 9. Johnson stated that all cell phones in the Town should be on the same plan. It was noted by Ouellette that there were 16 employees total in these departments and that on occasion he would interchange them when needed.

The Water Department Budget was the next subject up for discussion. Ouellette noted that this budget had been cut down by eliminating one Water operator and by reducing the hours for one clerk to 10. He gave an overview of the new water meters and readers and the status of this project, also a short discussion on hydrant maintenance.

A lengthy discussion followed on the Indirect Costs as well as the enterprise funds. Assessments charged to the town on town buildings were also discussed and Thidemann stated that he would work on this to try and resolve the issue.

There was some discussion on Ouellette's salary and how it was paid and also on the clerk's salary.

The Sewer Budget was noted by Ouellette to be similar to the Water Budget as far as being level funded. He also discussed the pump stations and the possible addition of another. He noted that he would have new Water/Sewer Specs in the near future.

Johnson inquired about the Snow and Ice budget and Ouellette stated that it was overspent by \$170k. Thidemann stated that he was working on the exact figures with Haines to identify what was spent on the Ice Storm. He added that the total right now is around \$100k and if it's more than that they would deal with that issue later when it is known for sure. He did state that a

meeting was scheduled for the next week with the finance board on the borrowing with the cost in FY10 to be about \$26k.

Thidemann wanted it known that Steve Nims and his crew had done a great job recently of cleaning up Town property and Ouellette added that this was the best crew he'd ever worked with.

Belden Divito inquired about the brush pick-up in town and Ouellette stated that he would be purchasing a flail mower in the next week or so and had also placed a warrant article for a chipper at a cost of \$30k and this should take care of the brush issue. He also reiterated that the transfer station would be open for two weeks. He did state that there was no timetable on if and when the brush would be picked up by the town and that residents should probably not expect it to be done. He also added that they can't do private roads but would need a legal opinion to be sure. Thidemann stated that there are a lot of private roads in Ashburnham that are not owned or maintained by the Town but he would try to get a legal opinion as well.

Jaime Piedrafite stated that everyone had the brush piled in front of their homes and there would be a problem now if it's not picked up. Ouellette stated that they would do the best they could. Thidemann added that the sides of the roads need to be cleaned up as its dangerous the way it is and the Municipal Light Department has a lot of work left to do.

There was some discussion on the Transfer Station and the revenue of the trash stickers as well as an issue with illegal dumping at the site recently. Also the Snow & Ice budgeted amount was discussed.

Johnson stated that the Advisory Board had five Reserve Fund Transfers to review.

1. Town Hall repairs account – inspection of fire alarm system and elevator for \$2,572
The motion was made by Janssens to approve this transfer and was seconded by Munroe. Unanimous vote.
2. Accountant Salary account – to cover fees from separation of former Town Accountant as well as Haines new contract. \$8,406
The motion was made by Munroe to approve this transfer and was seconded by Janssens. Unanimous vote.
3. Town Hall repairs account – sewer line inspection problem for \$347
Janssens motioned to approve this transfer and was seconded by Munroe. Unanimous vote.
4. Town Hall repairs account – Worcester County Refrigeration wire repair - \$200
Janssens stated that this should be a punch list item for the Town Hall Renovation and he moved to not do anything with this request.
5. Town Hall repairs account – fire extinguisher inspections and purchase of 6 new extinguishers for \$562
Janssens motioned to approve and was seconded by Munroe. Johnson moved to rescind the motion and Munroe seconded noting that this was determined to be an item for the punch list for the Town Hall Renovation as it should have been in the plan.

Janssens made the motion to send the requests for \$562 and \$200 back to the Town Hall renovation committee and was seconded by Munroe. Unanimous vote.

Thidemann noted that there may not be enough money in the account to cover these two invoices but that he would check with Haines as she is presently trying to reconcile the account.

With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.