

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
JULY 6, 2009 – 7:00 P.M.
FAIRBANKS MEMORIAL TOWN HALL – UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM**

This meeting was aired live on local cable television.

PRESENT: Ed Vitone, Chair, Jonathan Dennehy, Member, Maggie Whitney, Clerk, Doug Briggs, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

I. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Maggie Whitney. Vitone called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vitone noted a few changes to the agenda with the Planning Board first up and the closing of the books for the Public Safety Complex directly following. Whitney motioned to approve the agenda as amended and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

1. Planning Board Appointments – Vitone stated that the Planning Board is asking for the Selectmen’s approval to appoint Joe Daigle to Tom Ruble’s slot to serve until the next Election date. Dennehy voiced his concern that Daigle was also a member of the ZBA and Daigle stated that he would continue to serve until someone came forward to fill the open ZBA slot. Dennehy motioned to appoint Joe Daigle to the Planning Board to serve until the next election in April 2010. Whitney seconded and the motion carried.

Dennehy motioned to appoint Town Ruble to a 3 year term as an Associate Planning Board member and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

2. Closing of the books for the Public Safety Building – (In attendance from the Building Committee were Chris Gagnon, Gail Dumont, Larry Barrett and Al Rickheit) Chris Gagnon, the Chair of the Public Safety Building Committee stated that they were awarded the Municipal Improvement Award by the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce. He gave a brief history of the project. He stated that the project began in May of 2004 and they occupied the building in October of 2008. He extended Kudos to the voters and taxpayers, Cushing Academy and the Committee. He also thanked the architect, the project manager and the clerk of the works as well as B&W Construction. He stated that they didn’t go over their budget of \$7.3m.

Gagnon presented the plaque from the Chamber of Commerce to Dennehy as well as a proclamation from the House of Representatives and also from the Senate. He also acknowledged Chief Barrett for all his hard work.

Vitone praised Gagnon as Chair of the Committee stating that “good results come with good leadership”.

Barrett spoke about the warranty and the balance of between \$15k and \$20k remaining in additional money which he stated should be held until the warranty is up in October. He noted that this was the Committee's request.

Gagnon stated that the Committee would like to compose a letter of reference and recommendation for Netco and B&W Construction and they were asking for the Board's approval to use the Town letterhead. Vitone stated that they should give the Board of Selectmen a note to recommend by the Committee.

III. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

V. OLD BUSINESS

- Review of BOS strategic

Whitney gave the status of her research on the Short-Term disability insurance for Town employees, noting that she would have more information for the next meeting.

Vitone stated that the Special Act Study Committee would be meeting at the end of the month and that it's going well.

Dennehy gave his update on the IT Study Committee stating that they would get back with an expanded charge and that they would review this after their meeting the following night.

Vitone stated that he would have an update on the status of the Tax Base Study Committee during the next month.

- Review BOS Task List

Whitney stated that many items were completed on this list. She stated that they would schedule a discussion on changing the voting place and the possibility of providing babysitting at Town Meeting. Vitone stated that they need input from the residents on these two issues. He noted that the Town Hall is the backup site right now and that they should have residents give them their input. He stated that they would discuss this at the next meeting on July 20th.

Whitney also brought up having the Department Heads and Board and Committee Chairs at their meetings for an update. Briggs stated that he would set up a schedule and get any information in advance with a department overview and then after that get reports routinely.

Whitney noted that the Village Center Report/Survey is on the webpage so it could be crossed off the list.

Whitney brought up the status of the water trough and Briggs stated that they had one recommendation to place it on the lawn in back of Town Hall but that the Historical Commission may have other ideas. He stated that once this was determined they would send out a letter to the owners to advise them of the move.

Whitney noted that they had taken care of several items on their list. A short discussion followed on the Bresnahan project with Vitone stating that they are making progress.

- Review of DPW Relocation Committee Charge and vote on appointment
Vitone read the drafted charge for this Committee and it was unanimously accepted by the Board. Whitney motioned to appoint Meredith Fagan to the DPW Relocation Committee and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried. Vitone also asked for volunteers to serve on this committee. Vitone stated that they should have this Committee start at a slow pace as right now there were many needs in the Town.
- Follow up discussion on participation of Oakmont students serving on Town Boards and Committees
Bill Johnson of the Advisory Board stated that they were in favor of students from Oakmont serving on Boards and Committees. He stated that it was good to start young to be involved in municipal government.

Vitone noted that they should reenergize the other Committees and Boards for their comments on this.

- Results of bylaws of Advisory Board member volunteering for sub-committees – AB Chairman Bill Johnson to research
Johnson stated that the language is somewhat vague. He stated that a member of the Advisory Board cannot serve on the Board of Selectmen or any major committees or major financial committees. He noted that the Advisory Board is not opposed to any appointments as long as it doesn't conflict with these bylaws. He noted that if a situation arises where there is a conflict then they would deal with it at that time.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- Discussion and vote on Tax Base Study Committee
Vitone stated that Joe Olivari has asked to be appointed to this Committee as well as John MacMillan from the Planning Board. He added that now there are three members including him. Dennehy stated that they should ask for an Advisory Board member to serve as well and Johnson stated that he would ask at their next meeting.

Vitone discussed the wind turbine power possibilities as a big opportunity for the Town.

Whitney made the motion to appoint Joe Olivari and John MacMillan to the Tax Base Study Committee and Dennehy seconded. Motion carried.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Vitone noted that he would abstain from voting on the approval of minutes from the April 13, 2009 meeting and the April 21, 2009 meeting as he was not on the Board at that time.

Dennehy motioned to approve the Consent Agenda and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Whitney inquired about the approval of Executive Session minutes and Dennehy explained the process. He stated that they could take care of most minutes back to April 2008 but that they could get guidance from the State on any others.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dennehy read the Town Clerk's reminders which included the following:

- Dog licenses are available at the Town Clerk's office with a \$10 late fee added to each dog registration at this time.

Dennehy noted that the next Board of Selectmen meeting would be held on Monday, July 20th at 7:00 p.m.

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

Vitone noted that they had the Public Forum last Monday evening where they reviewed and discussed potential uses of the J.R. Briggs Building Project. He added that it was a good session.

Dennehy motioned to approve the minutes taken by Vitone at the June 29th Public Forum and Whitney seconded. Motion carried.

Dennehy stated that it was a good meeting and that he was going to Boston the next day to the MSBA to go before the architect designer panel. He stated that it is possible that they could hire one right away if they agree and then they would be under contract in the next couple of weeks. He added that once the architect designer is on board, they would be wired with the State officials and would get answers for us. Whitney stated that the session on Monday night was very informative. Vitone stated that he would post the steps involved in this process on the webpage.

Vitone stated that Downtown Day went very well. Whitney stated that it was a great event and Dennehy added that it was the most successful event ever held to date. He stated kudos to Sallie Thoma and the Business Council for all their efforts. Vitone stated that the Police and Fire also did a good job and that they all should be commended.

Whitney stated that they had a nice goodbye for Kevin Ahearn last Friday night on his retirement.

X. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Briggs gave an update on the Town Hall flood damage and Vitone stated that they should be sure to check for mold as this was a serious concern.

Briggs also discussed the Water Department issues with DOR and stated that he would try to soften them on their requirement for getting the audit done before they would allow us to set the tax rate. He stated that he thought this could be resolved with them.

Briggs then discussed the Munis possibilities for the Town and training the staff. He stated that once this would be set up it would allow them to compare revenue and expenses by month and that the payback would be worth the cost. Vitone stated that this is the way to go as productivity would be great. Johnson stated that the Advisory Board would approve a reserve fund transfer for this training.

Briggs discussed the status of the Assessors cyclical inspections and noted that the goal for completion is September 1, 2009.

Vitone stated that the budget cycle all starts with setting the tax rate and they should do whatever it takes to get this done. Dennehy discussed last year's schedule and how it was completed in a timely manner. Johnson stated that this needs to be an annual routine, not just for this year and added that it "should be a way of life".

Dennehy stated that they should request a schedule as a document with a flowchart or calendar. Johnson suggested that they look on the DOR website or the MMA website for examples.

Briggs touched briefly on the dam inspection issue noting that the study needed to be refreshed.

It was noted by the Board that the hours for the transfer station should be listed on the website as well as the new Land Use office schedule. Briggs also noted that for right now they would not replace the DPW Director and he added that Mark Petersen and Steve Nims have done a great job. Vitone stated that they discussed the budget implications by not filling this position and added that it may create a budget problem. He noted that they needed to analyze this further because it could impact the budget.

Dennehy stated that they needed to look at if they were taking a step back by not filling this position. Vitone stated that in the end they need to look at all aspects in the realm of reorganization as this would give the Selectmen a good picture. He noted that this may have a negative impact on Water and Sewer reimbursements. The Board asked Briggs to give them a chart or reorganization recommendation. Johnson stated that he believed that shared services environment was the way to go and that they should keep this option in mind. Dennehy agreed that they need a broader discussion on this subject.

Briggs noted that the Water/Sewer Commission charge was in question. He noted that he had spoken with Senator Brewer on funding. He stated that they should meet with the Water/Sewer Commissioners at their meeting on July 14th to work with them.

Briggs also noted that the hours for Elaine Cormier and the Land Use office should be posted on the webpage. He also noted that the ConCom Agent's hours would be on Monday and Tuesday and that he was checking with the ConCom Chair to be sure if these hours would work for them.

Briggs then noted his list of goals and objectives as follows:

1. FY09 closeout
2. FY10 Budget
 - a. Get free cash set by mid-September
 - b. Submit for tax rate by November 1st
3. Employee Evaluation Program
 - a. Goals and objectives
4. Closeout Building Repair
5. Dams Project before winter
 - a. Inspection and Emergency Plan
6. Munis Software

- a. Budgeting Tool
 - b. Upgrade User Training
- 7. Water and Sewer
 - a. Reorganization
 - b. Contractual Stability
- 8. Finalize ice storm damage
- 9. Review Alternative Insurance Programs
 - a. Health
 - b. General
- 10. Implement accepted IT Committee recommendations
- 11. Reviews Assessors office operation
- 12. Negotiate Fire Department Union Contract
- 13. Paving of Rt. 12 from River Styx Rd. to Old Nims Rd.

He stated that he would add the following to the list: Discussion with the Assessors on setting the tax rate; what to do about the roads and advising the public on a plan as well as what other monies are available for road repairs.

Vitone noted that once Item 6 is completed after 6 months or so, they would need a report on the specifics as to what was done and the benefits.

Whitney inquired about Item 13 on his list and whether it would happen in July and Briggs responded that it should. Gail Dumont noted that Don Ouellette had stated that the paving was to be from Boutwell's Garage to Old Nims Road. Briggs stated that he would look into this further.

Whitney suggested that the Board of Selectmen hold their meetings at the Public Safety Complex in the Training Room during the winter months. She added that cable could be set up there as they do have the money to do this. Briggs stated that they need a timeline on this.

XI. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:15 p.m. Dennehy made the motion to enter into Executive Session to deliberate upon matters which, if done in open meeting could detrimentally affect the position of the Town regarding strategy with respect to collective bargaining, collective bargaining pending, and the purchase, exchange lease or value of real property and to not reconvene into open session but only to adjourn. Vitone seconded and the motion carried.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:25 p.m. Vitone motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator