

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 21, 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, Maggie Whitney, Clerk, Doug Briggs, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator. Jonathan Dennehy had a family commitment for this evening.

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

II. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

Lois Somers stated that she wanted to compliment the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator for getting Route 12 paved. Whitney noted that the thanks should go to Steve Nims as he really worked hard towards getting this done.

Wayne and Terri Adams asked to be heard regarding the issue that they brought before the Board at the last meeting on September 8th. Wayne Adams asked what the Board of Selectmen's intent was on the complaint they have filed against Kevin Lashua. Vitone stated that he said they would take it under advisement and would report once it was looked into. Adams also noted that he would add two more concerns, noting that they were the issue of public safety and the issue with their property. He also presented the Board with a video which he stated clearly shows the seriousness of their concerns.

Vitone stated that they would take all this under advisement and would report to them once they had something to report.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Whitney noted that she had two additional announcements as well as the appointment of Bill Johnson to the So. Station Study Committee under the Consent Agenda. *Vitone motioned to approve the agenda as amended and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.*

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Shelly Hatch, MRPC – CDBG Grants

Shelly Hatch from MRPC was in attendance. Briggs stated that he spoke with Hatch regarding grants that are available for the VMS Building and he asked Hatch to please discuss this opportunity as well as the CDBG Grant.

Hatch reviewed her report which she handed out to the Board. She spoke about an upcoming available grant which would be due mid-February. She stated that it would include Lancaster and Ashby. She also stated that the Town could go in for design money for the VMS Building as a stand alone project. She talked about what was involved in applying for CDBG grants and she noted that MRPC doesn't ask for funds to apply only if they are awarded.

Whitney inquired if the grant could also go towards Briggs if they went that way and Hatch stated that they can only apply for one location so they would need to pick one site. She stated that if it was Briggs they would only pay pro-rated such as a part of the roof, part of the heating system, etc. Briggs stated that if it was the VMS Building that they chose for the grant it could be done this year but if it's Briggs it would only be applied the next year.

Vitone stated that they had the support of the Board to pursue the design contract with the VMS. Whitney stated that they would officially decide by the next meeting. Vitone stated that they would meet with the Council on Aging and work with them.

Vitone inquired about the housing grants and if the Town had a need assessment. Hatch stated that they still have people on a waiting list but that they would need a target area. She noted that they check with the Board of Health for the greatest need and that the Selectmen should appoint a group or committee to work on this.

Vitone inquired as to the benefit and Hatch responded that it's to bring homes up to code for low income residents. Both Vitone and Whitney agreed to participate in the grant program and to set up a committee.

Hatch then discussed a case problem which included issues with work done by a contractor through the grant program. She stated that they are asking for a discharge on their lien. Vitone asked if the work that was done was inspected at the time by the Building Inspector and Hatch stated that it was signed off on. She noted that if they did approve the discharge of the lien, then if the owners sold the home, the Town would not see any money.

Vitone asked if the sale was actually being thought of and if they could check to see if the Building Inspector had any records. He noted that once they get a little more information then they would decide quickly on a course of action.

B. Larry Barrett, Police Chief – Goals & Objectives

Barrett noted that his first goal would be to replace the cruisers and set a specific plan for replacement. Vitone stated that they should work on placing one in the Police budget each year.

Whitney inquired if they were planning on changing the make of the cruiser and Barrett stated that the other vehicle available right now was a Dodge Charger and that he didn't have enough information to warrant going with it over the Crown Vic. Bill Johnson stated that for the record, he agrees with the Chief.

Barrett stated that his second is professional training for all Dispatchers. He added that this would provide better service to the community. He noted that two are attending right now and that two more would attend in the spring.

His third goal is the regional dispatch feasibility study. He stated that he applied for a \$75k grant and was awarded \$50k. He added that they had a scheduled meeting the next day to discuss the RFP with the four other communities, Gardner, Templeton, Phillipston, Winchendon and Ashby.

Barrett stated that his fourth goal & objective is to have video and audio cameras in all marked vehicles. He added that they have received this equipment and they are working with them at this time. He noted that they would implement them shortly, in the next few weeks.

His fifth goal was to update area mutual aid agreements. He noted that they have agreements with Ashby and Westminster at this time and he was looking to do all the surrounding towns with a written policy which is important in a case involving any injury.

Barrett stated that the sixth goal & objective was to reduce injuries and illegal activity on the lakes. He noted that the department received a boat from the Lake Association and they have been out and have received positive feedback. He stated that his seventh and final goal was to obtain state accreditation which may not be accomplished in the next 12 months as it was a very time consuming process. He stated that it was checks and balances for the community and would need to be kept up once accredited. He added that it was a good program.

Barrett then proceeded to go over another set of goals that were funding dependent. His first was to have two officers on duty 24/7. His second was to set up a different change of command by creating a lieutenant position which was non-union. His third was to seek additional funding and that he had applied for a \$100k grant to cover overtime cost for as long as it lasted. He stated that his fourth would be to have tasers for his officers. He added that they are a non-lethal tool and that he was presently looking for some funding. His fifth and final was to increase safety on public roads at intersections and to add signs by obtaining a safety grant to fund this goal.

The Board thanked Barrett for his presentation.

C. IT Study Committee Report

In attendance were members, Kyle Johnson, Chair, Donna Burton, Clerk, Duncan Phyfe and Joe Kalagher.

Kyle Johnson handed out their report and proceeded to review each point. He stated that the first step would be to terminate the contract with Guardian. He stated that any contract should be revisited on a yearly basis. He also noted that there was a 60-day termination clause and the current contract is open-ended.

Johnson stated that the Town needs to update their computer policy and be clearer with their expectations. He also noted that they need this committee to be permanent. Vitone stated that the permanent committee could be a bylaw committee but would start as ad hoc.

Vitone stated that they would assign Briggs to design the transition plan. Briggs stated that he would need some help with the RFP and that he was hoping the Committee would step up. Briggs also stated that the Committee could help with the bid evaluations.

Johnson stated that the Committee could work on a five-year plan. Briggs stated that he would address a 60-day plan going forward but would need the Committee's help. Vitone stated that he would also ask the Committee to put the RFP together and to evaluate bids.

The Board thanked the Committee for their report.

V. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Briggs reviewed his report which is attached to these minutes.

Briggs stated that the first item on his report was to close the Special Town Meeting Warrant. ***Whitney motioned to close the November 19, 2009 Special Town Meeting warrant and was seconded by Vitone. Motion carried.***

Briggs noted that he had followed up with Stan Herriott on payment in lieu of taxes and he stated that they would be discussing it at the Light Board's next meeting.

Briggs reviewed what had transpired with the Town owned MART van and the Council on Aging. He stated that on the Town's Cherry Sheet a \$25k fee of back billing by MART appears each year. He stated that the Town van charges were being paid for by MART and they weren't aware of this and said it's not appropriate. He stated that he asked the COA to not use the van and he met with the Chair, Brian Aho, and also met with the COA Board members regarding this issue and explained the situation.

Vitone stated that they should ask the COA for a definitive budget as they need a specific, concrete plan going forward.

Whitney asked if she could get a list of names to go with the shift coverage from the Fire Chief.

Briggs also noted the preliminary new growth figure was \$53k but that it could change after he meets with the Assessors and Mayflower on Wednesday. He noted that this was significantly lower than was proposed.

He stated that he had a meeting set with Coastal Billing on September 28th to discuss the outstanding bills.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of BOS Initiatives

Vitone quickly went over the list stating that the Capital Planning Committee was meeting the following day, the Special Act Study Committee was meeting the next week and the Tax Base Study Committee in two weeks.

Whitney stated that the Short Term/Long Term Disability Insurance issue was still in Executive Session so they couldn't give an update at this time.

B. Whitney reviewed the BOS Task List stating that the task total was 135, at the last meeting they completed 7 which now brings the total completed to 98. She stated

that they had 31 pending and 6 to be announced. She stated that this was now 73% completed.

C. Briggs Feasibility Borrowing

Whitney read the following vote:

“Voted: to approve the sale of a \$400,000 1.85 percent General Obligation Bond Anticipation Note (the “Note”) of the town dated September 24, 2009, and payable September 24, 2010, to Easter Bank at par and accrued interest, if any.

Further Voted: that each member of the Board of Selectmen, the Town Clerk and the Town Treasurer be and hereby are, authorized to take any and all such actions, and execute and deliver such certificates, receipts or other documents as may be determined by them, or any of them, to be necessary or convenient to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing votes.”

Vitone motioned to approve as read and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. United Nations Day Proclamation

Whitney made the motion that the Board will recognize October 24, 2009 as United Nations Day and will sign the proclamation which will be posted on the Town bulletin board. It should be noted that this is the 64th anniversary of the United Nations. It was seconded by Vitone. Motion carried.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

Whitney motioned to approve the Consent Agenda which included an appointment to the Agricultural Commission and one for the So. Station Study Committee and was seconded by Vitone. Motion carried.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Whitney read the following announcements:

- Special State Election for Senator in Congress to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Senator Edward M. Kennedy will be on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 and the Special State Primary will be on Tuesday, December 8, 2009.
- Dog licenses are available at the Town Clerk’s office. A \$10.00 late fee will be added to each dog registration. In addition the Animal Control Officer is calling and sending letters regarding unlicensed dogs. Licenses must be renewed by September 22 to prevent dog fines with the first offense at \$25 which is in addition to the actual licensing fee.

Farmer’s Market – every Monday from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. in Winchester Park

Whitney also noted that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen would be held on Monday, October 5, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Whitney announced that seasonal flue shots were scheduled at the Senior Center on Monday, October 13th between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Information will follow shortly on the schedule for the H1N1 vaccines.

Whitney noted that the Town of Westminster's 250th Parade would be on Sunday September 27th at 1:00 p.m.

She also announced that Brian's Gift Road Race would be held on Saturday, September 26th starting at 10:30 a.m. for the walkers and 11:00 a.m. for the runners. She added that it's a 4.5 mile race and this is the 5th year that they are having this event. She noted that the funds have gone to a lot of good causes through the years and this year the funds would be donated for Christmas food baskets in Ashburnham and Westminster for needy families.

X. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

XI. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

Gail Dumont inquired about the usage of the Public Safety Complex by non profit organizations and if they would be charged any fees. Vitone stated that yes, they would be charged the same fees as the other meeting places in Town.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:55 p.m. Whitney stated that the Board would meet in Executive Session to deliberate upon matters which, if done in open meeting could detrimentally affect the position of the Town regarding strategy of pending litigation and collective bargaining and to not reconvene in open session. Vitone seconded and the motion carried.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:55 p.m. Vitone motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator