

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
OCTOBER 19, 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, Jonathan Dennehy, Member, Doug Briggs, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

Vitone expressed the Board's thanks once again to Dottie Munroe for her idea of displaying the date of the meeting for the taping.

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

II. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

Vitone asked for any public input and Meredith Fagan stated that she noticed some vandalism in Winchester Park with the dedication plaque down on the ground and some posts on the gazebo that were missing. Briggs said that he would check this out.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Whitney noted that she wanted to add an item under Old Business regarding a discussion on a student attending the Selectmen's meeting. *Dennehy motioned to approve the agenda as amended and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.*

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Anne Cervantes-Treasurer – Goals & Objectives

Dennehy stated that he wanted to recognize Cervantes for her achievement of certification as a Certified Massachusetts Municipal Treasurer. He also stated that Carla Clifford is close to being certified as well and that Nancy Haines is already a Certified Municipal Accountant. He noted that it shows that the Town has a good team.

Cervantes spoke on each of her goals, (see attached) noting that goal number 4 had been completed today. Dennehy commented how the tax title collections had improved since Cervantes' employment with the Town.

B. Carla Clifford-Collector – Goals & Objectives (report attached)

Clifford stated that her first and foremost goal was to be certified. She added that utilizing the Munis system more fully was also a top priority. She stated that she does all the updates now in Munis and Vitone noted that she was basically the Munis Administrator.

There was some discussion on how she was working to receive information and payments electronically from all mortgage companies and tax services. Vitone thanked Clifford stating that she was doing a great job being right on plan for collecting.

Whitney inquired if the Public Safety Building and the Town Hall Renovations were reflected on the tax bills yet and Clifford responded that they would be on the December tax bills. Dennehy noted that the first two quarter bills were estimated from last year.

C. Nancy Haines-Accountant – Goals & Objectives

Haines reviewed her report which is attached. She described what was involved in the close out of FY09 and what remained to be completed.

Vitone noted that he hoped to see the FY11 Budget plugged in to Munis and Haines stated that they would try and that the details could prove to be an issue.

There was some discussion on the indirect charges for Water and Sewer as well as the Light Department.

At the end of Haines presentation, Briggs noted that all three of these employees had done a phenomenal job. He thanked them for their hard work. The Board unanimously agreed.

V. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE (Report attached)

Briggs began by reviewing the Special Town Meeting Warrant for November 19, 2009 (attached). He began by noting that there was an initial adjustment of \$102k and as directed by the Board he was charged to look at another adjustment/deduction to reflect the State's 9c cuts in aid to towns and cities that are being discussed and he added that the deductions totaled \$276k. He also stated that he asked for a 9% deduction in the Department Head's budgets.

Vitone stated that with the State's budget deficit, the best indication is that next year would be worse than this one and they couldn't wait to make these cuts. He added that cuts now may make it better going forward to next year and they are hoping that it would make it less painful.

Article 1 was discussed. Dennehy stated that he a question on line 13 which was the Non-Departmental budget and what was actually cut. Briggs stated that the computer, town report, communications and supplies lines were reduced.

Dennehy questioned line 19 and Briggs stated that the Monty Tech assessment had been amended but that it was too late to change it for the ATM Warrant. Dennehy also inquired about the cuts in line 21 the DPW budget. Briggs responded that the cuts included the DPW Director salary as well as supplies and maintenance fees.

The Library account line 27 was also questioned by Dennehy and Briggs informed him that this cut was in addition to the previous cuts. Dennehy also inquired about line 31, the Water fund, and Briggs stated that there was a negative balance in this budget from two years ago and to cover this, the DPW Director wages were cut.

Briggs also noted that any unemployment benefit amounts were included in the reductions in certain budgets.

It was requested by Bill Johnson that they be provided with a list of specific cuts from the DPW and the Fire Departments.

Briggs then went over Articles 2 thru 5 and the reasoning behind them. He noted that they would pass over Article 4 as it wasn't necessary because it was through a grant.

Dennehy asked if they would know the free cash number for the next meeting and Briggs stated that he should have a number.

Briggs then proceeded to explain Article 6 which was to amend the Non-Union Personnel Bylaws regarding sick leave buyback and to add a new section on Short and Long Term Disability coverage for Town employees. Vitone also explained this article and how it would benefit both the Town and the employees. Briggs noted that he met with all employees to present this to them and they seemed to be fine with it.

He then proceeded to review and explain Articles 7, 8 and 9. Article 7 was to allow the Town to set certain user fees, such as municipal liens, without going before a Town Meeting. He noted that Article 8 was to vote funds to go after delinquent taxes owed and Article 9 was a revolving fund for the Police and Fire which was accepted last November but needed to be voted to bring us up to date until June 30, 2010.

Johnson inquired as to how many revolving funds the Town presently had and Haines responded that she couldn't say for sure, but she could say that it was greater than five but no more than ten.

Briggs noted that Articles 10, 11 and 12 were place holders. He also stated that Town Counsel had already reviewed the warrant and approved the wording.

Dennehy noted that he was not in favor of Article 7 adding that he didn't feel that officials were elected to have the power to raise fees and that it was more appropriate to do this at a Town Meeting. Briggs stated that many communities set fees at the Selectboard level.

Vitone asked if a motion could be made to approve articles 1 thru 12 excluding article 7. ***Dennehy motioned to approve articles 1 thru 12 excluding article 7 and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.***

Vitone stated that they should consider the approval of Article 7 with more data to come and then they could pass over the article at town meeting if they so chose. ***Vitone motioned to keep Article 7 on the warrant and to get data and demographics in the meantime. Whitney seconded. Dennehy voted nay.***

After a short discussion, ***Vitone amended his motion to the following: "approval and recommendation on Articles 1 thru 12 except Article 7." Whitney seconded and the motion carried.***

Briggs noted that he received the recommendation of Steve Nims, DPW Superintendent, for the Rock Salt and Sand bids. He stated that his recommendation for Rock Salt be awarded to Eastern Salt for \$62.50 per ton and the Winter Sand bid be awarded to Pitcherville Sand & Gravel for 10.99 a yard.

Dennehy motioned to approve the recommendation made by DPW Superintendent Steve Nims and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Briggs then reviewed his report which is attached to these minutes.

Vitone brought up the issue with the Girl Scouts and where they could meet, he felt that they could make some arrangements to use the Library as their meeting place in lieu of some type of services and Whitney noted that this could even help with their badges. Briggs stated that he would follow up with them.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Decision on Engineering/Design Grant through MRPC for the VMS Building

Briggs stated that the Council on Aging Board met last week and unanimously recommended that they go with the grant for the VMS Building through MRPC. He also noted that this is a 100% Grant. ***Whitney motioned to go forward with the MRPC Engineering/Design Grant for the VMS Building and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.***

B. Review and vote on recommendation of articles on November 19, 2009 Special Town Meeting Warrant

This was discussed under the Town Administrator's Report.

At this time Vitone stated that they would postpone Items C, D and E until the next meeting due to the cool temperature of the meeting room.

F. Student Representative to serve on Board of Selectmen

Whitney stated that the Principal of Oakmont, Dave Uminski had mentioned to her that there were a few students on the Council interested to serve on the Board of Selectmen and to give updates. She suggested that they try this out at the next meeting and she added that there are 8 or 10 students on the Council and they would rotate. ***Whitney motioned to approve this and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.*** Whitney did state that she would contact Uminski to set this up.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

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

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Whitney read the following announcements:

- November 9, 2009 – Final Registration for the Special Town Meeting – 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall
- November 18, 2009 – Final Registration for the State Primary – 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall
- November 19, 2009 – Special Town Meeting @ 7:00 p.m. Upstairs Meeting Room at Town Hall

- December 7, 2009 – 12:00 noon – last day for filing applications for absentee ballots for voters who will be out of town for the State Primary.
- December 8, 2009 – State Primary – Polls open at 7:00 a.m. close at 8:00 p.m. at J.R. Briggs Elementary School 96 Williams Road.
- December 30, 2009 – Final registration for the State Election – 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Town Clerk’s Office, Town Hall
- January 15, 2010 – 5:00 p.m. – last day for filing applications for absentee ballots for voters who will be out of town for the State Election.
- January 19, 2010 – State Election – Polls open 7:00 a.m. close at 8:00 p.m. at the J.R. Briggs Elementary School 96 Williams Road.

Trick or Treat will be held on Saturday, October 31st from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Whitney also announced that Veterans Day services would be held on Wednesday November 11th. She noted that more details would follow and in case of inclement weather the ceremony would be held in the Auditorium at Town Hall. She also noted that one of the Selectmen would be asked to speak at the ceremony and she inquired if Dennehy could do this. He stated that he would have to check on his availability and would let her know.

Whitney also noted that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen would be held on Monday, November 2, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. and that Senator Brewer and Rep. Rice would be in attendance.

X. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

XI. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:28 p.m. Dennehy motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator