

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DECEMBER 7, 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.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Maggie Whitney. Vitone called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. PUBLIC INPUT

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Tax Classification Hearing

Whitney read the following hearing notice.

“The Board of Selectmen will hold a tax classification hearing on Monday, December 7, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the upstairs meeting room at Town Hall, 32 Main Street. The purpose of the hearing is to inform taxpayers and interested persons of the choices open to the Selectmen in setting a single tax rate for all real estate and personal property, or two tax rates, one for residential and open space and one for commercial, industrial and personal property. Members of the Board of Assessors will be present to explain the options available in choosing the classification. Taxpayers and interested persons may submit oral or written material at the hearing.”

Dennehy motioned to enter into the Tax Classification Hearing and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried. In attendance for this hearing were members of the Board of Assessors: Dick Coswell, Paul Chute and Donna Burton.

Coswell gave a short synopsis as well as the Assessors recommendation to go with the single tier rate, noting that this was the obvious choice.

Whitney motioned to maintain the single tax rate and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

Dennehy motioned to close the Tax Classification Hearing and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried. Vitone thanked the Assessors.

V. UPDATE – STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE FROM OAKMONT

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of BOS Initiatives and Task List

Whitney gave an overview of the task list noting that they had completed 90%, completing 138 of 154 tasks on their list.

Vitone stated that the Special Act Study Committee had a draft of their recommendations both for the Special Act and the Bylaws. He stated that he has asked both Briggs and the Selectmen to review the draft. He did add that the Committee was also looking at the structure of fines. Vitone stated that they are hoping for input as soon as possible as this would need to be reviewed by Town Counsel as well before it can go before the voters at the Annual Town Meeting.

Whitney stated that she would be meeting within the next week or so with Rick Shaw and Briggs on the Short and Long Term Disability Insurance in order to get this completed and in effect by January 1, 2010.

Vitone stated that the Tax Rate Study Committee has had discussions on wind power in Ashburnham and that he has been approached by a developer who he will be meeting with in the next week or so along with Doug Briggs.

Dennehy noted that the IT Committee had opened the bids for IT service for the Town. He stated that they have had some discussion but that they still had questions.

Dennehy also noted that the Briggs Building Committee had not met recently but that with his departure they would need to appoint someone to take his place on this committee to represent the Selectmen.

Whitney stated that they still needed members for the South Station Study Committee as at this time they only had two members, Bill Johnson and her.

Vitone stated that at their next meeting they should look for another initiative to add to their list.

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE (Report attached)

Briggs proceeded to go over the highlights of his report to the Selectmen, which is attached to these minutes.

Briggs noted that now that the Tax Classification Hearing was held they would send the information on the tax rate to be certified.

He stated that in regards to the FY11 budget, he asked the Department Heads to re-look at things now and to re-think how things are done. Vitone agreed stating that they should look at their budget and will need to make some tough decisions, looking at a different philosophy.

Briggs touched on the EECBG Grant that he along with Stan Herriott had applied for which would generate some significant savings now as well as in the future.

Briggs noted that the winter meetings of the Selectmen, beginning on December 21st would be held at the Public Safety Building in the Training Room. He stated that he went over security concerns with both the Fire and Police Chief.

He discussed the good things happening at the Council on Aging noting that Claude Daigle has done a fantastic job along with the COA Board. He noted that Donna Burton would be starting there in the near future and she would be a support type assistant and that they would be looking for an Outreach person as well.

Briggs touched on the town owned land auction to be held on December 12th and noted that the biggest thing the Town would derive from this would be to get these properties on the tax role once again.

He advised the Board that to help with safety concerns of the Town Hall employees, a panic switch was installed in the downstairs Land Use office and also in the general office area. He thanked Paul Rekos and the fire department personnel for arranging this.

He stated that he was scheduling a meeting with Guardian and Paul Rekos on the following Wednesday to discuss the IT transition.

VIII NEW BUSINESS

A. Vote on posting of the Warrant for the Special State Election of January 19, 2010
Dennehy motioned to approve the posting of the Special State Election Warrant and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried. Dennehy noted that the Primary was the next day.

B. DCR potential acquisition of a conservation restriction on portion of parcel on Depot Road

Whitney stated that she took some time to do a little research on this issue by calling Donna Burton in the Assessors office as well as Christine Berry at the DCR. She stated that the law states that this needs to be announced at a Selectmen's meeting. She also noted that this particular parcel included Lot 4, Map 8 and Lot 6, Map 7 and that both were in Chapter 61, which means that taxes were paid but at a decreased rate. Whitney also stated that this is in forestry and is connected with the Bush Hill property.

She stated the other request is for a parcel, Map 4, Lot 30, which is also in forestry. She noted that both these parcels are not ready to purchase yet. She suggested that they get an inventory of all land in Ashburnham that is in conservation restriction.

Dennehy noted that he thought going forward with these conservation restrictions was a good thing and that there was no need to stand in their way.

Vitone stated that Briggs should contact Gary Howland to get a map which designates what is under conservation restriction at this time in Ashburnham. More discussion followed on this subject. Vitone stated that the Board had two actions before them at this meeting and they should either approve these tonight or look into it further.

Whitney read the notice of announcement as follows: "In accordance with 301 CMR 51.00, et seq., the Town of Ashburnham hereby certifies that on December 7, 2009, a public announcement was made at a regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen's meeting of the Commonwealth's interest in acquiring 154 ± acres of land, or other property interest, in the Town of Ashburnham. A locus map marked "Exhibit A" showing the proposed acquisition is appended hereto." ***Dennehy motioned to approve this announcement and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.***

Whitney read the 120 Day Waiver notice as follows: "I Margaret Whitney, Secretary for the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Ashburnham, hereby certify, at a regularly scheduled Selectboard meeting held on December 7, 2009, that, in connection with the Commonwealth's interest in acquiring for conservation and recreation purposes a conservation restriction on all or a portion of an approximately 120 acre parcel of land located on Depot Street in the Town of Ashburnham, shown on a locus map marked "Exhibit A," appended hereto, the Board of Selectmen approved the request of the Department of Conservation and Recreation to proceed with the acquisition in less than 120 days from the date of Board's receipt of notice." She also proceeded to read the Certificate of Announcement as follows: "I, Margaret Whitney, Secretary for the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Ashburnham, hereby certify that, at a regularly scheduled Selectboard meeting held on December 7, 2009, an announcement was made regarding the Commonwealth's interest in acquiring for conservation and recreation purposes, a conservation restriction on all or a portion of an approximately 120 acre parcel of land located on Depot Street in the Town of Ashburnham, shown on a locus map marked "Exhibit A," appended hereto." ***Dennehy motioned to approve this announcement and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.***

IX. CONSENT AGENDA

Dennehy motioned to approve the consent agenda items and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Briggs questioned one of the items on the Consent Agenda, the One-Day Special Liquor License at the Library, and its possible liability issue. ***After some discussion Whitney motioned to rescind the blanket vote of the Consent Agenda and to consider each one separately. Dennehy seconded and the motion carried.***

Dennehy motioned to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2009 Joint Meeting with the Advisory Board and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

A discussion followed on the proposed Special Liquor License for the Friends of the Library Irish Night event of March 16th. It was decided that they would look into this further before any approval was given.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Whitney read the following announcements:

- 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.

Whitney also reminded everyone of the Town Owned Property Auction to be held on Saturday, December 12th at the Town Hall in the Auditorium. She stated that registration would begin at 10:00 a.m. and the auction would be at 11:00 a.m. She noted that there were 30 properties for sale and information on these properties was listed on the Town’s website as well as the auctioneer’s site, Daniel J. Flynn and Company, Inc.

She also announced that Santa Claus was coming to Ashburnham on Saturday, December 12th at 10:00 a.m. and that he would be arriving at the Public Safety Building by fire truck accompanied by the Oakmont Spartan Marching Band and Colorguard. The Parade would start at Cushing Academy on School Street and would arrive at the Public Safety Complex at approximately 10:15 a.m. The Ashburnham Firefighters’ Association would be providing free candy canes and free pictures with Santa and coffee and baked goods would be sold to benefit the William J. Bresnahan Scouting and Community Center.

Whitney noted that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen would be held at the Public Safety Complex on Monday December 21, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Whitney also proceeded to announce the H1N1 Flu Clinic which would be held on December 8th from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Oakmont Regional High School for residents as follows:

- All children 6 months to 18 years of age
- Pregnant women, up to 2 weeks post partum (including after pregnancy loss);
- Household contacts and caregivers of infants younger than 6 months of age;
- Household contacts of pregnant women in their first trimester to ensure their newborns go home to a safe environment; and
- Healthcare personnel with direct patient contact.

Adults 19-64 years of age with high risk conditions, high risk conditions include:

- Pulmonary (including asthma)
- Cardiovascular (except hypertension)
- Renal, hepatic, cognitive, hematologic, neurologic/neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders (incl. diabetes mellitus)
- Immunosuppression (incl. that caused by medications or by HIV)

Whitney stated that the “quorum” question was an issue to discuss. She noted that they could place sandwich type signs up to remind residents of elections, meetings, etc.

She also noted that this was Pearl Harbor Day and she thanked all those who fought on this day.

X. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

Vitone noted that he composed two letters in response to student inquiries recently and asked the members if it was okay to go ahead and sign these on behalf of the Board of Selectmen. It was unanimous to sign.

XI. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:02 p.m. Dennehy motioned to enter into Executive Session to deliberate upon matters which, if done in open meeting could detrimentally affect the position of the Town regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and contract negotiations with non-union personnel and to not reconvene into open session except to adjourn. Whitney seconded and the motion carried.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:27 p.m. Vitone motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator