

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY – DECEMBER 20, 2010 – 6:30 p.m.
TRAINING ROOM – PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX

This meeting was aired live on local cable television.

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

I. SALUTE THE FLAG

Vitone called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Maggie Whitney.

II. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Reed motioned to approve the agenda as presented and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Authorization for Treasurer to borrow from Stabilization Account

Anne Cervantes, Town Treasurer was present. She stated her concern that there wouldn't be enough cash available to meet the December 30th warrant. She stated that the amount she would be borrowing was \$297,000 which includes \$262,000 to cover the Chapter 90 funds and \$35,000 spent on the water tank. She stated that she does have the authority to borrow in this manner from the Stabilization Fund with the approval of the Board of Selectmen. She added that in February the Town would receive the Chapter 90 funds as well as tax money and the loan would be paid back in full.

Whitney motioned to approve the borrowing from the Stabilization Fund and was seconded by Reed. Motion carried.

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of BOS Initiatives and Task List

Vitone noted that they were still pursuing regionalization. Briggs stated that it would probably take something urgent to get some participation from other towns. Vitone noted that he again contacted John Fairbanks, the Chair of the Westminster Board of Selectmen on regionalizing. Briggs stated that right now the Town of Rutland was adding the Town of Barre to their region for Dispatch and he noted that their entire budget combined for all four towns is the same as our dispatch budget alone.

More discussion followed on regionalizing. Whitney stated that we need to do business a different way and Reed added that towns have to overcome their fear of regionalizing.

VIII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (His report is attached to these minutes.)

He began by stating that the Town's Committees and Boards had some great news, noting that there was a new member on the Advisory Board, Joseph Oliveira. He stated that Oliveira has worked in financial services for over 15 years and earned his master's degree from the University of Rochester.

He stated that Ronald Lewis was hired as the new Outreach Worker for the COA adding that Lewis recently retired and currently works for Meals on Wheels in Gardner. He noted that it was good to see someone volunteering to serve in this capacity.

Briggs noted that with Mike Gallant leaving at the end of December, he has hired Richard Reynolds as the Town's new Building Commissioner starting January 1st. He stated that Reynolds has worked with Gallant as his assistant for several years so this would be a naturally smooth transition.

Vitone took this opportunity to remind residents that there would be an open position on the Board of Selectmen with Maggie Whitney choosing not to run again in April. He stated that the Town Caucus takes place at the end of February and that papers could be filed before the caucus as well.

Briggs suggested to the Board that they skip the meeting on January 3rd as there wouldn't be much to discuss. He noted that the next meeting would be on Tuesday, January 18th. Vitone stated that they were all in agreement to cancel the scheduled meeting on January 3rd.

Briggs noted that the Council on Aging had their holiday gathering on Wednesday, December 15th and that it was put on by the Friends of the Council. He stated that it was a great success and they fed over forty with a feast of ham, turkey and all the fixings and also had an exchange of gifts. Whitney stated the event was very upbeat and people really enjoyed themselves. She stated that they had door prizes and a Yankee-swap and it was run very well.

Briggs touched on the FY10 Audit stating that he met with Bill Fraher along with Nancy and Anne to go over the draft of the audit for FY10. He noted that he scheduled Fraher to be at the January 18th Board of Selectmen meeting along with the Advisory Board at 6:45 p.m., to review his findings. He stated that it was a very good audit and that a lot of the old problems were gone and Fraher was very pleased with this. He stated that one concern was the Light Department and how funds were handled. He added that he had met with the Light Department and their accountants regarding this issue and he feels that the handling of funds would be more in line.

Briggs stated that there was a heating radiator leak at the Library and that a water main break occurred on Chapel Street simultaneously. He stated that he was very impressed with the Fire Department, the DPW crew and with MIIA Insurance as they all did a good job handling this quickly.

He stated that he was contacted by Jim Kreidler on an RFP for the Water Treatment Plant and the water breaks in Winchendon that ultimately affect our residents. He noted that he has asked Mark Petersen to see if the valves do work in a temporary situation and that he would also look into this as being a permanent solution.

He stated that Blue Cross Blue Shield was the successful bidder on the health insurance RFP beginning January 1, 2011 and that it would be a 5.3% increase over last year.

Reed stated that they would need to discuss with the employees that their co-pay could increase and Vitone added that the Town has many unfunded liabilities and that they should address health insurance with the School Committee and Westminster Board of Selectmen as we are not on par with the public sector.

Briggs stated that in the FY12 budget the union wage increases accounted for the increases in the Police, Dispatch and Fire Departments and that he was asking the Board of Selectmen for their permission to approach the unions to open negotiations. *Whitney motioned to allow Briggs to approach the unions to open negotiations and Reed seconded. Motion carried.*

There was some discussion on the Regional Agreement with the School District and Reed stated that the agreement says that the School District needs to give the Town their budget numbers by the end of January but that it just won't be possible because of the State's fiscal situation. Vitone stated that they should start their budget discussions at a level budget or less, as we are doing. He stated that the letter they just received does acknowledge the change in the allocation method. Briggs stated that the School's concern was the statutory method and Westminster paying their share. He noted that they need to meet with Westminster and the Advisory Board to discuss this. Vitone stated that this year Westminster would hold the key and that Briggs should contact Karen Murphy on what their baseline is. He noted that Westminster will have to pay \$335,000 plus growth. Briggs stated that the municipal rate growth factor was discussed and that it was already built into the net minimum contribution.

Whitney stated that the Town is asking the Department Heads to cut their budgets by 5% and why isn't the school doing the same? Vitone stated that they should have a budget strategy not a spending strategy. Reed noted that the Chapter 70 funds could be cut.

Whitney asked if the Town Administrator's report could be placed on the Town's website and Briggs stated that they would get this done.

IX. CONSENT AGENDA

A. License Renewals for 2011

Briggs described how he met with the owners on the renewal of Class II licenses.

Whitney read the list of licenses to be renewed for 2011 as follows:

Liquor Licenses

Firehouse Pub of Ashburnham
American Legion Post 142
Turnpike Rod & Gun Club
Tweedo's Variety & Pizza Inc.
Ashburnham Marketplace
Mr. Mike's
Ashburnham Wine & Spirits

Coin-Operated Machines

American Legion Post 142
Turnpike Rod & Gun Club
Firehouse Pub of Ashburnham

Class IV Repairman's

Ashburnham Marine & Power
Roy's Auto Repair
Bob's Precision Automotive
Rick's Auto Repair & Service
Ashburnham Collision Center

Common Victualler's
Tweedo's Variety & Pizza Inc.
Main Street Pizzeria & Grill
The Village Coffee Shoppe
American Legion Post 142
Dunkin Donuts
Village Pizza
Turnpike Rod & Gun Club
Cumberland Farms
Firehouse Pub of Ashburnham
Mr. Mike's
Lucky Dragon II
The Daily Grind & Bagel
Ashburnham Marketplace

Class II Used Car
Ashburnham Marine & Power
DJ's Classic Cars
John Spuria & Sons

Reed motioned to approve the license renewals as read and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

B. December 6, 2010 Minutes – Regular Meeting

Reed motioned to approve the December 6, 2010 Minutes and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

X. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

Reed stated that they wanted to thank the voters for coming out to vote for Briggs.

Vitone noted that at the end of last year they did an ambulance study which showed the net cost to the Town. He noted that they had asked for monthly reports on this but that they have never seen one. He added that he expected to see a report for the end of December the following day and then every month thereafter.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Whitney read the announcements as follows:

The Transfer Station will be closed on Saturday, December 25th but will be open on Sunday, December 26th. It will also be closed on Saturday, January 1st but will be open on Sunday, January 2nd. The hours on both Sundays will be 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen would be held on Tuesday, January 18, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. The actual location of this meeting would be confirmed.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

A resident, Dan Bubrule inquired about the fees at the Transfer Station, noting that they were very steep and that maybe they should look at lowering them. Briggs stated that \$5.00 a bag is the general cost and that they have been looking at different ways to reduce the cost. He added that they don't make money on single items as it's the cost to the Town to dispose of these items. Vitone stated that the majority of the residents have private pick-up but that maybe they could look at increasing the cost of the bags and decreasing the recycled items costs.

Whitney conveyed her wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

*At 7:28 p.m. Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Whitney.
Motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator