

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY – DECEMBER 6, 2010 – 6:00 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.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION (6:00 p.m.)

At 6:00 p.m. Vitone opened the meeting and 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 collective bargaining (pending or ongoing) and to reconvene into open session.

I. Vitone reconvened the meeting at 6:45 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Maggie Whitney.

III. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

V. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust request

Present from the Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust were: David Graham Wolf and Lisa Cormier, Notary Public. Also present Phil Hagar, land owner in Ashburnham. Wolf gave some history on their request for a conservation restriction donation by Hagar of 73 Old County Road in Ashburnham. He stated that this requires the approval of the Board of Selectmen, the owner of the property and the Conservation Commission. He stated that all they required was the Board's approval.

Whitney noted that the value of this property is \$15,900 and the taxes are \$260 annually so the Town really isn't losing much revenue on the tax role.

Reed motioned to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign the Conservation Restriction as requested by the Mt. Grace Conservation Trust and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

B. Planning Board – DLTA Grant Application Approval

Present from the Planning Board were: John MacMillan, Joe Daigle and Joe Kalagher. MacMillan stated that they were before the Board of Selectmen to ask for their approval to apply for another DLTA Grant through MRPC. He stated that this DLTA request was for research and development of a "Planned Unit Development" Zoning Bylaw for the Town of Ashburnham. He stated that they have identified at least one parcel in South Ashburnham that would benefit from a Planned Unit Development.

Whitney motioned to sign the request for a DLTA Grant application and was seconded by Reed. Motion carried. The Board thanked the Planning Board for all their work for the Town.

C. EMS Response

Vitone stated that four or five weeks ago a concern was voiced on EMS response which resulted in this review of services. He stated that they did a lot of research on statistical data from the findings stage to an action stage and that Briggs would present the results of this research.

Briggs stated that while gathering the data they learned a lot. He stated that he met with both Chiefs and learned how to use the data found in the research. He noted that there were a number of issues including difficulties in collecting the data and trying to develop the number of shifts required. He stated that they found they needed the commitment and dedication of the paramedics and EMT's in order to effectively cover the shifts from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

Briggs asked Chief Barrett to speak on the process on the Emergency Dispatch and Police side of this issue. Barrett stated that Police response and the software utilized were important factors. He noted that the Police are the first responders in most cases and that they are all trained in CPR and defib certified, although they are trained in a lower level of EMS.

He stated that there were Dispatch log concerns, which included some inconsistencies that are not uncommon. He stated that he met with the dispatchers as well as Chief Zbikowski on this issue and that it has been resolved. He noted that all the dispatchers are being trained now as they are the lifeline and that at this time, Ashburnham was the only community in the area that has trained dispatchers.

Barrett explained how the IMC system works as a management tool and logs all calls, assigns numbers and logs information, going over to the Police records side. He stated that the Fire side module of Dispatch is missing, which would enable them to review the data, adding that this would cost \$6,000. He noted that if the Fire Department had this module it would save them a lot of time.

Barrett noted that the Fire and Police departments work very closely to serve the community.

Chief Zbikowski was asked to speak on this issue. He reiterated that the Police and Fire departments work well together. He stated that his people work very hard and are dedicated and that more training is required today as things are different.

He noted that he was working with the staff on their availability to cover 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. shifts. He stated that the survey pointed out that the pay is low and there should be stipends for overnight hours. He also noted that the on-call want pay training to be reinstated with more indoctrination after EMT Class such as ride-alongs, etc.

He stated that the IMC report writing goes to the Police side only and that the Fire reports need to be entered by hand. He added that ambulance reports are also done by hand right now. He noted that it would cost about \$21,000 for this module.

Chief Zbikowski then explained how he could use the funding available to cover these shifts adding that he would monitor things closely.

Briggs stated that the bottom-line was that the concerns have been identified and corrected. He stated that the commitment is a plan to cover the heaviest loads, and they are looking to concentrate on this commitment.

Briggs noted that they are asking the 8 paramedics and 10 EMT's to sign up and commit to cover the schedule. He added that they would monitor this closely. He also stated that mutual aid is very important and that they would keep this more in line. He stated that they wanted to make sure that we can cover the schedule right now and be consistent.

Reed inquired when this would start and Zbikowski stated that they were working towards starting this program January 1st.

Whitney noted that the Fire Department seems to be driven by money and asked if there were any set rules and regulations for answering calls. Zbikowski stated that they evaluate the personnel every year on July 1st. Briggs stated that there would be a mechanism set up.

Vitone noted that this new schedule/program should have been implemented 5 weeks ago.

Some discussion followed on the IMC software and if there was a way to get reports for the Fire side. Chief Barrett was asked to check with the IMC provider to see if information could be transferred electronically.

There was a short discussion on the 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. shifts and who would cover and if it might be feasible for Woods to cover these shifts. Briggs stated that he would look into this and the cost to implement. Zbikowski noted that during the last three months there were no Woods calls and that Dispatch always has the EMT/Paramedic schedules, adding that two crews work best.

Vitone stated that they should look at the data on a daily basis to look for trends and make changes accordingly. He added that they should work with feedback both ways in order to get better and improve performance.

Bill Johnson, Advisory Board Chair stated that the review had been thorough and that they found room for improvement. He added that if the incident hadn't happened and with no review, would this have been resolved?

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of BOS Initiatives and Task List

Whitney noted that the only task is regionalizing and that there has been no interest from either Ashby or Westminster. Vitone stated that they could go to other towns. Briggs stated that it seems like something has to happen for things to come into focus and that they need to ensure that Dispatch keeps improving and they have to continue the regionalization efforts.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION – EMS RESPONSE

Vitone instructed Briggs to put together a matrix showing symptoms to solutions with responsibility.

Johnson inquired if the IMC software for the Fire Department had been brought up in the Capital Budget and Briggs stated that it had not.

Johnson noted that they might look into fewer on-call people and pay them more money as right now there were 30 on-calls, noting that less may be more. Briggs stated that they need commitment first in order to generate the schedule and that he would prioritize this.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Vote to approve John Catlin & Associates Architects, Inc. out of Quincy, MA for architectural services for the Senior Center Design Project for the Veterans Memorial Building

Briggs read the vote as follows:

“The Town of Ashburnham votes to hire the architectural firm of John Carlin and Associates Architect, Inc. to conduct the Senior Center Design Project for a project cost of \$125,000 contingent upon the following:

1. The Town of Ashburnham is awarded funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) FY2011 grant program, and
2. The Town successfully executes the contract agreement with the State of Massachusetts, and
3. The Town receives the Environmental Review Clearance from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)”

Reed motioned to vote as stated by Briggs and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

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

Briggs reviewed his report noting that he went to Rutland with Mark Petersen, Jim Whitney, and Leo Collette to their Water Filtration Plant for a tour. He stated that Ashburnham’s contract was coming up for renewal in August and this tour was helpful as Rutland’s plant was identical to ours.

Briggs noted that he met with his financial team recently and that these meetings were very helpful. He noted that the tax rate was submitted to the DOR and approved on the same day and that the tax bills would probably be going out at the end of December. Vitone stated Briggs did a good job and that we, as a Town have come a long way under his leadership.

Briggs noted that they had to remove the road project portion of the CDBG Grant application because after receiving all the income surveys from that target area, it was determined that the average income was too high.

Briggs also touched on the Town’s health insurance benefits stating that there were four bids and Blue Cross Blue Shield was the lowest bidder which would reflect a 5% increase.

Briggs also noted that Mike Gallant, the Town's Building Commissioner was leaving the Town's employ. He noted that we had three applicants for Gallant's position and once interviewed and the person is chosen, Gallant has stated that he would help train his replacement.

Briggs touched on the Ferin Road culvert issue stating that Weston & Sampson inspected it and noted that the walls of the pipes were bending and is a concern and that something should be done now. He stated that Chapter 90 funds would be used for this project.

He also responded to Whitney's request regarding illuminating the flags. He stated that they should be illuminated, but it was more of a recommendation.

IX. CONSENT AGENDA

A. November 15, 2010 Minutes – Regular Meeting

B. November 17, 2010 Minutes – Special Joint Meeting with Advisory Board

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

X. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Whitney read the announcements as follows:

Town Clerk Reminders:

- Last day to file for application for absentee ballot for voters who will be out of Town the day of the election is Wednesday, December 15th at noon.
- Special Election Date – December 16th at Briggs Elementary School

The Santa Parade will be held on Saturday, December 11, 2010 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. It will start from School Street and will proceed to the Public Safety Building for pictures with Santa.

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 Monday, December 20, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:10 p.m. Vitone motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator