

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
JOINT MEETING
BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND ADVISORY BOARD
MAY 25, 2010 – 7:00 P.M.
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM – TOWN HALL**

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. (Ron Reed had another commitment.) Advisory Board members included: Bill Johnson, Leo Janssens, Duncan Phyfe and Belden Divito.

I. DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON THREE RESERVE FUND TRANSFERS BY THE ADVISORY BOARD

Briggs noted that the first Reserve Fund Transfer Request was to the Police account to pay Robbie Brennan's sick leave in the amount of \$14,558.40. He stated that they had an agreement with him that they would pay him at the end of the fiscal year if the funds were available.

He did note to the Advisory Board that the balance at this time of the Reserve Fund account was \$53,795.

Divito motioned to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer Request for the Police in the amount of \$14,558.40. Phyfe seconded and it was unanimous.

Briggs then stated the second transfer request was for the Town Clerk in the amount of \$2,900 to cover the June 15th Special Election costs which was not anticipated.

Janssens motioned to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer Request for the Town Clerk in the amount of \$2,900. Divito seconded and it was unanimous.

Briggs stated that the third request was for the Non-Departmental account in the amount of \$10,000 for three AC systems for the main floor of Town Hall. He stated that this request would include a 30,000 btu system for the large office, a 12,000 btu system for the Administrator's two offices and a 9,000 btu system for the Assessors office area. He added that the Accountant would move into the large office in the Assessors area. He also noted that the units would be similar to the one for the computer room.

Janssens asked if he had gone out to bid for the proper wiring to use with the old units and Briggs stated that he would get an estimate. Johnson stated that his personal opinion was to take no action at this time and to revisit once they have had some time to discuss further. He added that they would like more time.

Janssens also noted that they should get an addendum on the bid to do the Accountant's office as well. Divito inquired if they would see a utility budget request later if these systems were to be installed and Briggs responded that they would not.

Janssens inquired if they would qualify for any rebates. Vitone noted that there were two action items from this discussion, the first is to get a quote on the wiring for the old units and the second was to see if we qualify for any rebate programs.

Johnson noted that the Advisory Board would be meeting in the next few weeks and would discuss this further.

II. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE TOWN'S FIVE-YEAR REVENUE PLAN

Briggs began this discussion by stating that this presentation was to show the Advisory Board what we can do in subsequent years. He noted that before he goes through the 5-year plan he wanted to give an update on where we stood in FY10. He noted that revenues were all above 100% and that they were at about 97.2% in property tax collections adding that there were a lot of arrears coming in. He did however note that motor vehicle taxes were coming in at a little less than anticipated.

Briggs stated that building permits were picking up and that dog fees were well over what was projected. He noted that every department was within their budget except for the Board of Health and the Library which were a little over. He stated that he would look into why the Board of Health went over their budget.

He went over the deficits noting that the DOR allowed the Town to deficit spend on the Town Hall Flood and also on the dam inspection cost. He noted that the Snow and Ice deficit wasn't as bad as previous years but that they should work on this in order to not have a deficit in the account. He added that all these deficits needed to be taken care of before the Town can set their tax rate. He stated that he was confident the free cash amount would cover these expenses.

Vitone then began the discussion on the Financial Forecast for the Town. He noted that the Capital Planning Committee was a good step forward in this process. He reviewed the spreadsheet showing Borrowing vs Cash. He stated that they would review this at this meeting and then would forward each member a copy electronically to get their feedback. He added that Capital needs are forever and it makes no sense to borrow so they needed to get the Capital needs right.

Both Vitone and Briggs went over reports and spreadsheets on their Five-Year Plan strategy. (Copies are attached to these minutes.)

It was noted by Vitone that the roads in Ashburnham were deplorable and that the Chapter 90 funds would not be enough to take care of this so some money should be put towards road repairs. Briggs noted that they should go after more grants, like the STRAP Grant for Rindge Turnpike Road.

Briggs went over the Assets list noting that those highlighted items would not be replaced. Johnson asked if the Town would have fewer vehicles after this plan was in place and Vitone responded that it probably would.

Briggs then noted that after this meeting he would go to the Department Heads and get their feedback as well. He also stated that this was a model plan to work from and Vitone added that the plan would give a good long range view and make it easier for the Department Heads.

Vitone stated that this would be a vehicle for dialogue and that they would sit with the Department Heads and also with the School.

Briggs stated that he has scheduled Department Head evaluations in the first few weeks of June and that he would go over this plan with the Department Heads at a meeting later in the month. He added that he has a team-oriented approach. Vitone stated that they would meet with the school on this in July.

Johnson stated that this was an excellent plan and it should be placed on the Town's website. Phyfe suggested that they also do a scenario taking in the population as well. Vitone stated that he would work on that aspect and that it was a good idea.

Vitone went over a graph on Land Use in Ashburnham showing the percentage of the land area. He noted after reviewing this graph they could count on about 50% maximum growth in Ashburnham.

Vitone stated that he would look at the people side of this analysis and would get it to the Advisory Board next Tuesday.

Whitney stated that this was an excellent tool.

III. OTHER MATTERS

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:12 p.m. Whitney motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Vitone. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator