

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY – OCTOBER 17, 2011 – 6:30 p.m.
TRAINING ROOM – PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX

This meeting was aired live on local cable television.

PRESENT: Ed Vitone, Chair, Gregory Fagan, 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 led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

Ted Holmes the owner of Café 57 was present and stated that he would be taking over the lease of the Firehouse Pub as of November 1st. He stated that his plan was to close the café and at the new location, hire staff from Ashburnham with the hours of operation from 6:00 a.m. to midnight. He also noted that the staff is scheduled for alcohol training on November 24, 2011. He stated that along with breakfast and lunch on the menu, he would now be serving dinner as well.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vitone noted that the Board of Selectmen received a letter and that he would like to move this item up from BOS Correspondence in order to accommodate Pat Stewart and her request. ***Reed motioned to approve the agenda with this amendment and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.***

Reed proceeded to read the letter as follows:

“Dear Board of Selectmen:

North Country Sustainability Center, Inc. has begun offering classes and programs, and more are in the planning stages. We are eager to increase our offerings, but finding available space has proven to be a problem. We recently heard about the VMS Building potentially being “mothballed”, and would like to request that NCSC use that former Senior Center area for our classes and programs. NCSC has already gotten the attention of people on the national and state level, and having a space to offer programs will help solidify our role as an exciting innovator.

We propose bearing the costs of heat and utilities and will do what we can to make the building more energy efficient, in addition to minimal rent. As a non-profit organization, it is our goal to use our funds as wisely as possible to benefit the most people. Our funds are growing, but we need to balance the upkeep of the building with our long term goal of purchasing a site in Ashburnham to make our permanent home.

We, the NCSC Board of Directors, understand that this would be a short term solution, with the Town having other plans for the building and NCSC have larger scale plans than the VMS would allow. But I think both groups, the town and NCSC, can benefit from this arrangement. I hope you agree.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 978-827-1305. I look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely, Patricia Garland Stewart, President, NCSC, Inc.”

Briggs noted that he had already generated an RFP which he would send out and then select the most advantageous bid and enter into a lease. He stated that he wanted to meet with Stewart to go over the details and to take a tour of the VMS Building itself. He noted that they would meet in his office at 11:00 a.m. the next day.

Stewart asked about the turn-around time and Briggs stated it would be a few weeks.

Stewart noted the many different offerings that they would have available in the facility. They included a farmers market, classes on chicken keeping, winterizing buildings and around the holidays caroling and story telling, just to name a few. She stated that their vision was to be located in the Victorian Stables facility where they would eventually have a creamery, an art center with traditional and fine arts, an agricultural program, community gardening, dog shows, 4H programs and dog training in the stable areas. She added that they need to prove they are serious. She also noted that they would not have any animals while at the VMS Building and that they had already checked on the zoning at the stables and there were no issues.

Reed motioned to support this request and to go forward with the RFP on the lease of the VMS Building and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Discussion – October 19, 2011 Special Town Meeting

Briggs stated that the Advisory Board met and voted on Article 6 to move \$33,000.50 from Free Cash to the Capital Improvement Fund and that he was asking the Board of Selectmen to approve this change. He noted the reason for the change was due to the fact that we didn't get the anticipated new growth of \$100,000, it was only \$19,000 and that funds for the Veterans Benefits (Article 4) would also need to be taken from Free Cash. He added that Article 7 would be passed over as the funds to transfer were now going towards the Veterans Benefit account.

Reed inquired about Article 5 and Briggs stated that the Town would pave Route 101N from Main Street to Chapel Street with the \$125,000 from this article and the State would be doing from Chapel Street to Route 119 and where Rindge Turnpike comes in.

Vitone made the motion to amend the prior vote on Article 6 from \$40,000 to \$33,000.50 and Fagan seconded. Motion carried. Reed abstained.

Vitone made the motion to change the Selectmen's recommendation on Article 7 to pass over and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried. Reed abstained.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE (Report is attached to these minutes and also posted on the Town's website.)

Briggs noted that Brian Aho had resigned from the Council on Aging Board and he thanked him for all his efforts through the years for the seniors of Ashburnham. Vitone stated that a letter should be sent to Aho thanking him for his service. Briggs also noted that Betty Bushee was now the new Chair of the Council on Aging and that they also had a new member, Althea Donahue.

Briggs stated that the Water Tank project was moving along well. He noted that there were some problems with the pressure testing with the line but they were resolved. He also noted that they were under budget so they would be doing additional water line work to include Cushing Street.

He noted that unemployment has been an issue. He thanked Chief Barrett and his Assistant, Kristin Mathieu for the excellent job they did at the first unemployment hearing where the town prevailed. He stated that the second hearing on another claim was held on October 12th and was continued to October 28th.

Briggs stated that the sand bid opening was on Thursday, October 13th and that this was a joint bid with the Town of Westminster. He stated that he would ask the Board to accept the sand bid from Pitcherville Sand and Gravel at \$9.04 per ton, which is a decrease of \$.21 per ton from last year. ***Reed motioned to approve the Town Administrator's recommendation on the sand bid and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.***

Briggs stated that the process of the CDBG joint (with Ashby) grant application is going well. Two events with MRPC are coming up, the first is the Community Development review to be held at the Board of Selectmen meeting on November 7th and the second would be the Public Hearing at the Selectmen's meeting on November 21st. He added that the application is due on December 15th.

He stated that the seniors are all settled in upstairs at Town Hall in their new home. He stated that Maggie Whitney has worked hard to make this happen and there is a lot of interest now and everyone is happy.

Briggs noted that the Capital Planning Committee needs a member at large to be complete. Vitone stated that they had been asking for this for some time. He stated that when the Committee was formed, Jonathan Dennehy served as the at large member and now he was asking if one of the Selectmen would be willing to serve. Reed stated that he would be willing to serve as the at large member. ***Vitone made the motion to appoint Ron Reed as the member at large on the Capital Planning Committee. Fagan seconded and the motion carried.***

Briggs also noted that the Board was being asked to approve another appointment to the IT Advisory Board, Brian Kuehl. He added that the IT Advisory Board was in favor of the appointment. ***Reed motioned to approve the Town Administrator's request to appoint Brian Kuehl to the IT Advisory Board and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.***

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 3, 2011 Minutes – Regular Meeting

Reed motioned to approve the minutes for the October 3, 2011 Board of Selectmen meeting and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

Reed noted a request from the Town Clerk to act on election primary dates in order to accommodate troops overseas to get ballots and return them in time. Representative Bastien who was present noted his support of this request and added that it had not been heard yet in committee hearings. Reed stated that this should be an agenda item for their next meeting and the other members agreed.

X. OCTOBER MEETINGS

Fagan read the list of meetings for October as follows:

- Friends of the COA – Tuesday, 10/18/11 – 6:00 p.m. Lower Level Town Hall
- Joint Mtg. BOS and Adv. Bd. – Wednesday, 10/19/11 – 6:00 p.m. Auditorium – Oakmont Regional High School
- Special Town Meeting – Wednesday, 10/19/11 – 7:00 p.m. Auditorium – Oakmont Regional High School
- Conservation Commission – Monday, 10/24/11 – 6:30 p.m. Lower Level Town Hall
- Historical Commission – Monday, 10/24/11 – 6:30 p.m. Stevens Memorial Library

XI ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fagan read the announcements as follows:

Town Clerk Reminders:

- January 1st and throughout the year – Open registration of voters in the Town Clerk’s office at Town Hall – Monday from 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Tuesday through Thursday – 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Town Hall is closed on Fridays.)
- Dog licenses are available at the Town Clerk’s office during regular business hours of Town Hall. If you have an unregistered dog, please note that a \$50 fine (second notice) has been issued. You have 21 days to register your dog and pay the fine otherwise the matter will be referred to the Winchendon District Court.
- Wednesday, October 19, 2011. Special Town Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Oakmont Regional High School Auditorium.

Beginning tonight Representative Rich Bastien will be holding monthly Ashburnham Office Hours. He will be available to Ashburnham residents at 6:00 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen meetings on the third Monday of every month. Constituents are encouraged to schedule time during these hours by calling 978-630-1776 or emailing Richard.Bastien@MAHouse.gov. All others will be seen on a “first come, first served” basis. (This information has been posted on the Town’s website.)

Athol Savings Bank will be sponsoring the 3rd Annual Pro-Shred Day to be held on Saturday, October 22nd from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. which will be held in the parking lot in front of Town Hall. This is free onsite shredding for anyone.

The Council on Aging Open House is scheduled for Monday, October 24, 2011 from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. This is an exciting time for the seniors of Ashburnham so please come and see their new location.

He noted that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on Monday, November 7, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:13 p.m. Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator