

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
MONDAY – DECEMBER 5, 2011 – 6:30 p.m.  
TRAINING ROOM – PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX

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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 No input.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Tax Classification Hearing

Harald Scheid, the main Assessor from RRG was present for this agenda item.

Fagan read the notice as follows:

“The Board of Selectmen will hold a tax classification hearing on Monday, December 5, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building. 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.”

*Reed made the motion to open the Tax Classification Hearing and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.*

Harald Scheid, of RRG, stated that he recommends postponing the Tax Classification Hearing for two weeks. He stated that the reason for this delay is that the DOR (Department of Revenue) was behind in getting the certification on values. The DOR does not want towns to hold the tax classification hearings until the values are certified. He indicated that the DOR was very far behind due to the cuts in personnel and other issues. He noted that they did receive word late Friday that they had permission to go forward with the public disclosure period which would begin on Thursday of this week until mid week next week.

Scheid also noted that he would make an urgent request to the DOR to get this done in two weeks but the timeframe is unavoidable. He stated that the towns of Ashby and Ashburnham were assigned to the DOR Springfield office and the normal turnaround is about seven weeks from the beginning of the process.

Briggs stated that his recommendation would be to postpone the Tax Classification Hearing to December 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. ***Reed motioned to postpone the Tax Classification Hearing to December 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.*** The Board thanked Mr. Scheid for attending their meeting and explaining the situation.

B. Liquor License Transfer Public Hearing

Ted Holmes was present for this hearing. ***Reed made the motion to open the Public Hearing for the liquor license transfer from the Firehouse Pub to Café 57. Fagan seconded and the motion carried.***

Fagan read the legal ad as follows:

“The Ashburnham Board of Selectmen, acting as the Local Licensing Authority, will conduct a Public Hearing on Monday, December 5, 2011 at 6:45 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building, 99 Central Street, Ashburnham, Massachusetts, at the request of Ted Holmes of Café 57 for the transfer of a Common Victualer Liquor License, from the Firehouse Pub of Ashburnham, to Café 57, Ted Holmes, Manager. Publication – Wednesday, November 23, 2011.”

Vitone asked Mr. Holmes to explain the license request. Holmes stated that he was the manager and owner and that he was leasing the establishment at 3 Central Street, formerly the Firehouse Pub.

Reed noted that he was happy to see that all the Café 57 employees were TIP trained and certified. Holmes stated that he would continue with what was set forth by the Board of Selectmen for the previous establishment. It was noted by Holmes that the hours for beverages sold would stay the same.

Holmes noted that he had to schedule a safety inspection with the Building Inspector and that there was an issue with the handicapped toilet, which would cost approximately \$700 to fix that he just couldn't do right now and that the Inspector stated it could be rectified later. Vitone noted that he would suggest that Holmes go back to the landlord about this issue. Holmes stated that he wants to work with everyone on this and that he was happy with his move.

***Reed made the motion to close the Liquor License Transfer Hearing and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.***

***Fagan motioned to approve the liquor license transfer and was seconded by Reed. Motion carried.***

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Vote on appointment to Capital Planning Committee

Vitone stated that as the new Treasurer, Paul Pollastri is an automatic ex officio member of the Capital Planning Committee and the Board needed to approve this appointment. ***Reed motioned to approve the appointment of Paul Pollastri as ex officio member of the Capital Planning Committee and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.***

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

Briggs stated that there are currently two openings on the Conservation Commission, one at-large member opening on the Capital Planning Committee and two openings on the Historical Commission.

He gave an update on the Water Tank Project stating that all the testing passed and that they were almost finished filling the tank and they may be on the new tank by the end of the week. He also noted that the project was under budget and that they did an excellent job. Vitone added that this was an amazing project. Briggs stated that the work on the Gardner Hill tank would start in the spring.

He gave an update on the unemployment hearing, noting that the December 8<sup>th</sup> hearing was tentatively postponed until Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>.

Briggs noted that So. Main Street was removed as the focus for the CDBG grant due to a lack of resident participation and that now they were looking at New Street and Cross Street for funding as they met the criteria for revenue. He did add that So. Main Street was still in the running for the housing rehab portion of the grant and that there were several other projects that the Town was looking at which would include So. Main Street as well. Reed again thanked the volunteers for their efforts in distributing the surveys. Briggs also stated that he asked Weston & Sampson, our engineering firm to do a report to be submitted with the application on both Ashby and Ashburnham which would add two points to the total towards the grant application.

***Briggs stated that he was asking the Board of Selectmen to make a motion to authorize the Chair to sign all the paperwork for the grant application. Reed made the motion to approve the Town Administrator's request and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.***

He stated that Paul Pollastri has been in the office at Town Hall several times to get acclimated to the new position and would officially start on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Briggs stated that Tim Kelly from Comcast would be at the Board of Selectmen meeting on Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> to answer questions regarding service for the north part of Ashburnham. Reed noted that the residents of the area in question should be notified of this meeting. He also asked Briggs to check into the Comcast franchise fees to see what might be available and Briggs stated that it may be flexible but that there wasn't much there. Vitone stated that the present agreement with Comcast expires in 2014 and that they should look into other services that may be available. Fagan agreed that they should look at other carriers. Vitone mentioned contacting Verizon and Briggs stated that Stan Herriott informed him that Sprint was experimenting in our area right now and that he would pass on any information on their progress.

He gave a quick update on the Investar issue and the PILOT agreement stating that he had received a call from the owner of the proposed site on Richardson Street who basically stated that he was not selling his property to them and that at this time he did not know what the status was on this project. Vitone stated that they should suggest to Stan Herriott to hold off on signing the purchase agreement.

Briggs stated that they had a land auction bid submittal due today at noon but that no bids were submitted. He did say that he will work with Paul Pollastri on some different ways to do this in the future.

He stated that he needed to work on a policy per the Charter regarding winter storm closure for Town Hall. He noted that if there was a state of emergency then he would look at it but otherwise if an employee was not comfortable to drive in, then they could take personal time and stay home. He also noted that he would look at people who might want to volunteer if there was an emergency situation such as the 2008 ice storm. The Board unanimously agreed that this was a good idea.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 21, 2011 Minutes – Regular Meeting

*Reed motioned to approve the minutes for the November 21, 2011 Board of Selectmen meeting and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.*

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE – No correspondence.

X. DECEMBER MEETINGS

Fagan read the list of meetings for December as follows:

Committee/Board	Day/Date/Time	Location
Planning Board	Thursday, December 9, 6:30 p.m.	Lower Level Town Hall
Parks & Rec. Comm.	Thursday, December 9, 7:00 p.m.	Fire Conf. Rm. at Public Safety Bldg.
Council on Aging Board	Monday, December 12, 10:00 a.m.	Lower Level Town Hall
Conservation Commission	Monday, December 12, 6:30 p.m.	Lower Level Town Hall
Joint BOS and Adv. Bd.	Monday, December 12, 7:00 p.m.	Training Rm. at Public Safety Bldg.

XI ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fagan read the announcements as follows:

Town Clerk Reminders:

- January 1<sup>st</sup> 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.)

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](mailto: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.)

Fagan added that he encouraged residents to please license their dogs.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

Gail Dumont noted a correction in the meeting dates for the Planning Board and the Parks and Recreation Committee stating that they should be listed as December 8<sup>th</sup> not the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Dumont also stated that she recently attended the Thanksgiving craft event at the North Country Sustainability Center located at the VMS Building and there was a traffic issue in front of the building that she felt should be addressed as they were planning another event on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Briggs stated that he would check with Chief Barrett to get this rectified.

She also noted that the next Briggs Building Committee meeting would be on Wednesday December 7<sup>th</sup>.

### XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

### XIV. ADJOURNMENT

*At 7:27 p.m. Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator