

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MONDAY – APRIL 4, 2011 – 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. ABSENT: Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator due to illness.

I. SALUTE THE FLAG

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

II. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Per Briggs, the “Vote for the Town to remain ‘one precinct’ was moved under PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS in order for Town Clerk Linda Ramsdell to certify the document to submit to the State. ***Reed motioned to approve the agenda as amended and was seconded by Whitney. Motion was unanimous.***

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

Representative from Greater Gardner Relay for Life requesting Voluntary Toll Booth in Ashburnham

- A. Representatives Stanley and Mary M. Hasselmann from Rindge, NH were representing Charlie’s Angels/Greater Gardner Area Relay of Life and asked for permission to allow a voluntary tollbooth on Saturday, May 14, 2011 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Main Street in front of the Town Hall and GFA Credit Union.

They provided a map that outlined where colored signs would be placed in advance of the toll booth advising motorists. Safety cones would be placed in close proximity to the team members collecting to alert the motorists and to avoid any injuries. All team members would be wearing bright orange or yellow vests as well as their Relay for Life tee-shirts. In the event that the emergency vehicles need to pass, team members are instructed to stop collecting and wave vehicles through.

The Hasselmanns stated that they have done this in Gardner and Winchendon for many years with no issues. They also explained that their chapter ranks #5 within 5,000 organizations.

Reed stated that he appreciated their hard work and asked if there were any Ashburnham residents involved in their group and they stated there were two. Reed was concerned about two many events happening in a small town. There already is the Little League, Lions Club and the Ashburnham Fire Department. He continued to mention that another team could come in next year asking for the same permission. Also, Reed was concerned that it was not an Ashburnham direct function.

Briggs stated that he spoke with Police Chief Larry Barrett and the chief had great concerns and would not support the activity. Chief Barrett stated that if the BOS supported the event that there would need to be police presence. (See Doug Briggs email dated Monday, April 4, 2011 at 3:35 p.m.)

Vitone echoed Reed’s comments stating that it is a tough call and would defer to the Police Chief. Vitone was concerned about overburdening the residents. He continued to state that it was definitely a great cause but safety was a concern; not a direct Ashburnham event.

Whitney agreed with both Reed and Vitone and was also concerned how it would affect the town's business community. She also stated that it is another distraction for the driver and there are other safer ways to donate to this cause.

The Board of Selectmen asked Town Administrator Doug Briggs to draft a new policy on Ashburnham events.

Vitone asked the board who was in favor of giving permission for the event and there was not response from the BOS. He then asked who was opposed, all Board members were opposed and the request was denied with a unanimous vote.

B. Vote for the Town to remain "one precinct."

Whitney read the vote of the Board of Selectmen as follows: "Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 54, § 6, our Town wishes to stay one precinct and hereby request the Secretary of the Commonwealth to prepare a single precinct map on our behalf. Massachusetts General Laws require towns to divide into convenient voting precincts after each federal census." ***Reed made the motion to approve the 'one precinct' and was seconded by Whitney and the motion unanimous. The document was signed by the BOS and stamped by Town Clerk Linda Ramsdell.***

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of BOS Initiatives and Task List

Vitone stated that regionalization is still the Board's goal.

B. School Budget

a. Assessment Methodology

Vitone gave a brief overview of the recent BOS meetings and the Tri-Board meetings stating that Ashburnham put forth a gesture to pay an additional \$63,000 for Budget FY12 if Westminster would agree to the Statutory Method from this day forward. Because this proposal was declined by Westminster BOS at the March 22, 2011 Tri-Board meeting it was agreed by the Ashburnham BOS that a letter be sent to the Westminster BOS, Ashburnham Advisory Board, Westminster Advisory Board and the Ashburnham-Westminster School Committee.

b. Letter to Westminster regarding alternative funding options.

The letter is as follows:

April 4, 2011
11 South Street
Westminster, MA 01473

Dear Members – Board of Selectmen

At the Tri-Board Meeting of March 8, 2011, Ashburnham offered a one time \$63,000 payment to facilitate the transition to the statutory allocation method beginning in FY12. At the following Tri-Board Meeting on March 22, 2011, the Westminster Board of Selectmen rejected that offer and elected not to place any alternative position on the table. Lacking the possibility of compromise, by vote of the Ashburnham Board of Selectmen on April 4, 2011, the offer to make the one time \$63,000 payment was rescinded.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward T. Vitone, Jr.
Chairman, Ashburnham Board of Selectmen

Maggie motioned to approve the letter and was seconded by Reed. Motion was unanimous.

C. Review, finalize and vote on May 7, 2011 Annual Town Meeting Articles:

In Article 2 it was noted by Vitone and Reed that we presented the AWRSD Operating expenses as “School Operations” broken down to Net Minimum and Excess; “Transportation;” Debt Service” and “Communication Services.” Vitone was amazed during his Town Report research on the School Assessment the way that the AWRSD information has been changed in the Town Report. He noted that there is less information and only the base budget after 1983. Before 1983 all the information is in the Town Report. Vitone stated that if someone 30 years from now wanted to research and create an assessment from the Town Report they would not be able to do so.

Briggs noted on Article 9 – “Funds for the collection of delinquent taxes” was successful last year. The Town spent \$20,000 but collected \$160,000.

On Article 15 – “Money to fund the Quinn bill for FY10 and FY11” Whitney asked if the letter was sent to Senator Brewer regarding the “Evergreen” clause and Briggs stated that the letter had been sent.

Briggs informed the BOS that the IT “Public Input Session” was attended by 10 to 15 people. He commended IT Advisory Board members and noted that members Duncan Phyfe and Kyle Johnson presented a power point presentation that was very informative. Briggs stated that the meeting went very well and this is Phase I of the plan for the IT infrastructure. He noted that the Ashburnham Fire Department IT folks were in attendance as well. Reed stated that there are very smart people on the committee. At first he was not in favor of the plan but after attending the “Public Input Session” he is more comfortable about the plan. Briggs stated that he and the committee are trying to piggyback the fiber installation with possibly Verizon and the Town is willing to pay and does not expect to receive it at no cost. He is also working the AMLP as well. He noted that he has not contacted Cushing Academy as yet but knows they are interest in the fiber as well. Briggs also stated that he has reached out to Senator Brewer regarding this issue. Reed noted that it is important to have an outside company be responsible for the fiber maintenance and not the Town of Ashburnham. Briggs also stated that he received a letter from the Town of Melrose stating they are interested in regionalizing their IT. Unfortunately the letter had no contact information. Briggs has giving the information to Duncan Phyfe and he will follow up. Briggs stated that the IT Advisory Board is open to everything that is cost effective. Briggs informed the BOS that the line items total might fluctuate from today’s total but the total amount would not change. Vitone stated that if the Steven Memorial Library needs the \$5,000 for painting and \$5,000 for lighting then give them the money because the Library has wanted to paint for more than three years. Reed and Whitney agreed. ***Reed motioned to accept Lines 1-10 in Article 16 and was seconded by Whitney. Motion was unanimous.***

Briggs recommended that Article 19 – “Establish a “Briggs School Facility Maintenance Trust Fund” be removed from the warrant because it is not clear whether the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) will match funds. Advisory Board Chairman Bill Johnson asked the Board if and when this article passes in the future, who will have the authority to dispense the monies? Reed had the same concern and stated to wait for the correct language. ***Reed motioned to remove Article 19 from the warrant and was seconded by Whitney. Motion was unanimous.***

Briggs recommended that the Board of Selectmen leave Article 22 – “Offset receipt account for Waterways Improvement Fund” on the warrant. Briggs stated that a representative approached him at his office to discuss the account. The individual did not realize that there was \$5,300 in the account. The money carries over each year unless the Town rescinds the money. The money is from excise taxes and the money must be used for boating activities. Briggs stated that the individual was planning to het back to him but he has not heard from him as yet. ***Reed***

motioned to remove Article 19 from the warrant and was seconded by Whitney. Motion was unanimous.

Briggs recommended that Article 23 – “Authorization to sell excess town vehicles/assets” be removed from the warrant because it will be addressed within Article 17. *Reed motioned to remove Article 23 from the warrant and was seconded by Whitney. Motion was unanimous.*

Regarding Article 24, resident Greg Fagan asked the BOS if the Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant (AMLPL) would be accountable to the Town because that is a concern to him. Vitone stated “No.” Vitone stated to Fagan that he would explain the article to him off line.

The Board of Selectmen voted on the warrant articles for the May 7, 2011 Annual Town Meeting as follows:

		Selectmen Recomm.	Advisory Recomm.	Cost
Art. 1	Accept reports of Town Officers and Committees	YES		
Art. 2	Vote to accept the State Statutory assessment methodology	YES		
Art. 3	FY12 Budget	YES		
Art. 4	FY12 Water Enterprise Budget	YES		
Art. 5	FY12 Sewer Enterprise Budget	YES		
Art. 6	AWRSD Operating Budget Override	NO		Up to \$1.72
Art. 7	Light Department PILOT payment	YES		
Art. 8	Tax Anticipation Note Authority for Treasurer	YES		
Art. 9	Funds for the collection of delinquent taxes.	YES		\$20,000
Art. 10	Authority for Town Administrator to Contract with Mass. Highway	YES		
Art. 11	Authority to Expend Ch. 90 Road Repair Money	YES		
Art. 12	Transfer of Cushing Academy Trust Fund Income	YES		
Art. 13	Transfer Title V receipts to pay principal and interest on septic loans	YES		
Art. 14	Payment of prior year invoices	YES		\$1,805.04
Art. 15	Money to fund the Quinn Bill for FY10 and FY11	YES		\$45,000
Art. 16	Vote for Capital Planning Committee recommended expenditures	YES		\$420,500
Art. 17	Purchase/Lease dump truck for Water and Sewer with authorization to dispose or trade-in two current vehicles.	YES		\$46,000
Art. 18	Capital items for AWRSD (Grade 8 lockers, turf field fence and backstops, and roof repair (all both towns))	YES		\$31,694
Art. 19	Development rate limitation bylaw amendment	YES		
Art. 20	Open Space Residential Development bylaw amendment	YES		
Art. 21	Offset receipt account for Waterways Improvement Fund	YES		\$3,500
Art. 22	Transfer the landfill to the Light Dept	YES		
Art. 23	Funds for planning of 250 th Celebration	YES		\$5,000
	Total increase for tax rate if all passes:			Up to \$1.72

Current Tax Rate for FY11 is \$ 17.15

Briggs stated that he spoke with Westminster Town Administrator Karen M. Murphy and they will have a similar school assessment article at their May 7, 2011 Annual Town Meeting.

Advisory Board Chairman Bill Johnson stated that the Advisory Board will hand out an “Informational Brochure” like they have done in the past.

Briggs gave the BOS a handout labeled “Statutory Method vs. Regional Agreement Method Fiscal Year 2012” to the Board of Selectmen for their review and stated that AWRSD Business Manager Sherry Kersey has concurred on the handout figures.

See below:

“Statutory Method vs. Regional Agreement Method Fiscal Year 2012”	
Proposed	Proposed

	Fiscal Year 2012 (Statutory)		Fiscal Year 2012 (Regional)
NET SCHOOL SPENDING			
Ashburnham Minimum Requirement	\$4,509,390		\$4,874,935
Westminster Minimum Requirement	\$6,167,209		\$5,801,664
	SUBTOTAL		\$10,676,599
Chapter 70 Aid	\$ 9,935,704		\$ 9,935,704
State defined Net School Spending Requirement	\$20,612,303		\$20,612,303
Other Revenue Sources	\$ 1,036,817		\$1,036,817
	SUBTOTAL		\$21,649,120
Ashburnham Assessment-Above Minimum	\$ 801,752		\$ 801,752
Westminster Assessment-Above Minimum	\$ 954,165		\$ 954,165
	SUBTOTAL		\$1,755,917
TOTAL NET SCHOOL SPENDING	\$23,405,037		\$23,405,037
Transportation Budget			
Ashburnham Assessment	\$590,893	\$1,294,115	\$590,893
Westminster Assessment	\$703,222		\$703,222
State Transportation Aid-Reg Ed	\$590,260		\$590,260
TOTAL	\$1,884,375		\$1,884,375
Fixed Asset Budget			
Ashburnham Assessment	\$0		\$0
Westminster Assessment	\$0		\$0
TOTAL	\$0		\$0
Debt Service Budget			
Ashburnham Assessment	\$433,717		\$433,717
Westminster Assessment	\$897,014		\$897,014
SBA Reimbursement	\$899,147		\$899,147
TOTAL	\$2,219,878		\$2,219,878
Community Service Budget			
Ashburnham Assessment	\$3,653		\$3,653
Westminster Assessment	\$4,347		\$4,347
TOTAL	\$8,000		\$8,000
Total Proposed Budget	\$27,517,290		\$27,517,290
	Statutory Method	Regional Agreement	FY 2012 Difference
Total Ashburnham Assessment	\$6,339,405	\$6,704,950	\$ (365,545)
Total Westminster Assessment	\$8,725,957	\$8,360,412	\$ 365,545
Highlighted amounts total \$13,734,631 same as Ed Vitone's sheet.			

Advisory Board Chairman Bill Johnson stated that in the *Telegram & Gazette* Sunday, April 3, 2011 issue there was an extensive list of properties for sale. Briggs stated that Town Treasurer has been researching that issue and as yet has been unable to define who gave the newspaper the information because it did not come from the Town Hall.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Vote to sign Acceptance of Grant Awards for Fire Department

There were two awards – Photo ID System and AFG Grant. Briggs stated that there are no Town funds involved. The grants will be matched by the Gordon Erickson Fund and the computer software was reviewed by the IT Committee and is compatible with Article 16 Capital Planning recommended software expenditures. *Reed motioned to accept the two grants and was seconded by Whitney. Motion was unanimous.*

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

TOWN COMMITTEES

Currently there are openings on the Conservation Commission (2), Council on Aging (2), Historical Commission (1), and Advisory Board (1). These are all listed on the Town's website under Volunteer Opportunities.

A-W ROTARY'S EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Briggs stated that he has circulated a memo asking for award recipients. The winners will be announced some time in May 2011.

WATER TANK

Schedule is on track:

High Street

Start of Construction – May 30th

On line – September 30th

Gardner Hill

Design - May 1st

Bid – June 1st

Repairs Complete – November 30th

FY12 BUDGETS

Warrant to be finalized at tonight's BOS meeting. Continue to review ways to present information at the Annual Town Meeting.

CAPITAL PLANNING

Finalizing capital requests for Annual Town Meeting, and put together backup information and strategies. Open forum was held on Monday March 28th to review the IT Advisory Board's requests for capital improvements. Meeting was attended by members of the Fire Department, Capital Planning, Advisory Board, and Board of Selectmen. Duncan Phyfe Chair of the IT Advisory Board started with a short presentation followed by a period of questions and answers.

Governor's budget has set the Ch90 monies at \$368,000. This will make available over \$600K for street repair in FY12. Steve Nims and I met to develop a priority on how monies are to be spent. On April 1st the legislature is scheduled to vote on the Governor's number after which a listing of streets and level of repair will be reviewed and made available on the Town's website.

SENIOR CENTER

The grant awards are due in mid April for the final designs. I will be putting together a building committee which will consist of me plus members from the Advisory Board, Board of Selectmen, COA, and three members of the community. With the retirement of Shelley Hatch from the MRPC our new rep is Kevin Flynn. I am setting up a meeting to meet Kevin and to review our project.

MEMA

The Town has applied for reimbursement for the "Snow and Ice" monies from the State. Although Worcester County was not included in the State's snow emergency area we submitted for \$20,000 for reimbursement. We have asked our legislatures to request Worcester County be added to the Governor's list. Ashburnham received more snow than most of the communities in the snow emergency areas, but because it was based on the percent over average we did not qualify under the federal guidelines.

Briggs was notified that indeed the Town is now eligible for approximately \$17,000 to \$18,000 from the state. Reed asked Briggs if he was comfortable giving the BOS the final total of the Snow & Ice Fund and Briggs stated that he was not comfortable because he is waiting for the cost of Friday, April 1, 2011

snow storm before he reports the final figure. But Briggs did note that it will be less than last year and he has incorporated a figure into this year's budget.

TOWN REPORT

The town report for 2010 has been sent to the printers. I realized the historical importance of this document when I spent hours going through past reports to develop a time line of events for the school funding issue. Once again I want to thank Sylvia Turcotte for doing such a great job collecting, reviewing, editing, and assembling this vital piece of Ashburnham's history. This was also done under budget!!

Briggs commended Assistant to the Town Administrator Sylvia Turcotte for her endless time she spends working on the Town Report. He stated that she spends countless hours compiling and completing the report and he appreciates her time and dedication to the project.

WATER TREATMENT

I have met with the Water Commissioners and Jim Kreidler- Town Manager from Winchendon about putting the water plant operation out to bid. I have generated the RFP which was sent to Mr. Kreidler for review. The current contract will expire in August 2011, and RFP will be sent out by the end of April.

TOWN AUCTION – SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2011 AT TOWN HALL

Briggs reminded the public of the upcoming Auction and stated that there are 25 parcels. He noted that it will be low key, no money up front but the money is due in ten days. He complimented Town Treasurer Anne Cervantes who has done a great job preparing for the Auction.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Briggs stated that he will be sending the draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant (ATM) to Town Counsel Deborah Phillips for her review and will send a copy to Town Moderator Jeff Lawrence to keep him in the loop.

On Monday, April 11, 2011 there will be an Advisory Board meeting to review the ATM Warrant and vote their recommendations of the 23 Articles.

Briggs stated that at the next BOS meeting on April 19, 2011 will be a joint meeting with the Advisory Board and that he will invite the Town Moderator Jeff Lawrence; Town Clerk Linda Ramsdell and the Capital Planning Committee to review the logistics for the upcoming ATM. The BOS asked that the "Agenda" be dedicated to the ATM unless there was an extremely important item that needed to be added to the agenda.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. March 21, 2011 – Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Advisory Board
Reed motioned to approve the joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Advisory Board minutes of March 21, 2011 and it was seconded by Whitney. Motion was unanimous.

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

There was no BOS correspondence.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Whitney 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 thru Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Town Hall is closed on Friday)*
- *Wednesday, April 6, 2011 – Final registration for the Town Election at Town Clerk's office from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.*

- *Tuesday, April 19, 2011- Final registration for the Annual Town Meeting at Town Clerk's office from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.*
- *Monday, April 25, 2011 – 12:00 noon last day to file applications for absentee ballots for voters who will be out of town for town election.*
- *Tuesday, April 26, 2011- Town Election – Polls open at 9:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. at the J.R. Briggs Elementary School Gym, 96 Williams Road.*
- *Saturday, May 7, 2011 – Annual Town Meeting at 10:00 a.m.*
- *Dog licenses are available at the Town Clerk's office during regular business hours of Town Hall. The fees are \$10.00 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$15.00 for unsprayed/unneutered dogs. Please bring the dog's current rabies certificate. You may register by mail by sending in the paperwork along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Town Clerk's office, 32 Main Street.*

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on Tuesday, April 19, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Complex. Monday, April 18th is Patriots Day Holiday and Town Hall will be closed.

XI. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:00 p.m. Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Whitney. Motion was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret L. Whitney

Margaret L. Whitney, Clerk for Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator