

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
TUESDAY – SEPTEMBER 6, 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

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Reed made the motion to approve the agenda as presented and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Agricultural Commission Update

Present – Pat Stewart, Chair and Cindy Rowan, Clerk.

Pat Stewart, Chair of the Agricultural Commission and the Clerk, Cindy Rowan, were invited up to the podium by Ed Vitone. Stewart began by stating that the Town and farmers work together and that the Farmers Market is working very well. She noted that it is held every Monday in Winchester Park from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. and she added that the last one would be held on September 26th. She stated that the farmers are doing well but that she would like to have more people involved.

Stewart stated that they were looking for a place for a winter market. She stated that Heidi Bercovici will be holding a presentation on canning and freezing on September 12, 2011. She also noted that a National Spin-off Day would be held on September 10th in front of the Historical Building.

Stan Herriott stated that it should be noted if a farm is certified, they are eligible for a 10% discount on electricity.

Reed asked if they could have the Farmers Market for more than one day and Stewart responded that it would be difficult to coordinate.

Stewart stated that the North County Sustainability does have various programs and 41 members. She stated that the sustainability definition is “what it takes to keep living here”.

The Board thanked Stewart and Rowan for the update.

B. Investar Redevelopment – Proposed Solar Project

Present – Dave Dunham, CEO, Stan Herriott, Municipal Light Manager, Mark Carlisle, Light Board member.

Dave Dunham stated that he has been working with the Ashburnham Municipal Light on two solar facilities, one on Richardson Road and the other on Winchendon Road. He stated that the Richardson Road site is near the Bresnahan Community Center and they would work closely with them.

He stated that they were looking to donate excess land to the Bresnahan project and they would install equipment on the roof and provide an educational process.

He also noted that they were seeking to work out PILOT payments of \$.0022 and to pay building permit fees of around \$150,000. He stated that they were looking for a construction easement to their facility via the Bresnahan project.

It was noted by Vitone that the Board was still uncertain as to the mechanics on how it's treated by the Department of Revenue as there is a possibility that the Town could lose state aid as a result. He stated that they would need a few weeks to look into this further to get the full picture on any repercussions going forward.

Briggs asked about the .0022 per kw hour and Dunham noted that this would be based on generation of power but that it could be converted to a fixed number. He stated that they should look at the Green Communities Act which does make this type of project tax exempt. Vitone stated that they would pursue this vigorously and get input from the DOR.

Dunham stated that time is of the essence as this needs to be completed by the end of the year. He also noted that they would need the easement before they spent any money on this project. Reed noted that a town meeting would not be needed to give a construction easement on this project. Vitone stated that a maintenance easement would need a town meeting vote and that Stan Herriott should meet with the Bresnahan Committee and get the agreement on easements in writing.

Briggs stated that he would have an answer on this by the middle of the following week and that he would check with Town Counsel as well.

Dunham stated that he would work with the Bresnahan Committee on this. He also noted that they would purchase about 15 to 20 acres from the current owner and would not lease the land.

Herriott stated that they would need a firm PILOT in order to go forward with this project and Vitone stated that it has to be good for everyone including the Town.

Herriott stated that 2.5m mega-watts would be generated with this project and that 34m were used annually in Ashburnham. He noted that they want to protect the rate payers.

Vitone thanked Mr. Dunham and stated that they would have answers in about a week and a half.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of BOS Initiatives and Task List

Vitone stated that on August 29th they signed the agreement with the Town of Ashby for a three-month trial with Doug Briggs serving both towns. He stated that after the

three month period, if everyone is happy it would continue on a long-term basis. He noted that sharing costs is the first step on how it plays out.

Briggs stated that it was exciting and that he really enjoys it. He noted that they are all happy to do this. Reed noted that “many eyes” are watching this and how it is working. Briggs stated that both Jen and Sylvia are doing a good job.

Vitone stated that the Board of Selectmen has no input on Ashby and vice versa but that Doug Briggs is always available when needed in either town.

Briggs stated that he sat with Peter MacMurray, the Ashby Chair and set up a punchlist.

Vitone noted that there would be an article on Doug Briggs in the Beacon on his new opportunity with serving two towns.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval and vote on the Rural Development Department of Agriculture Loan Resolution for the Water Tank Project

Briggs stated that he was asking the Board to vote and sign on the borrowing for the Water Tank through USDA. He noted that this paperwork was overlooked and needed to be signed and returned to them.

Reed made the motion to approve the Town Administrator’s recommendation to sign the loan paperwork and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried and was unanimous.

B. United Nations Day Proclamation

Vitone stated that this was an annual proclamation in observance of the anniversary of the day on which the UN Charter came into force. ***Reed motioned to accept the proclamation as submitted 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 noted the current openings on Town Committees and Boards.

He thanked everyone for their preparedness regarding Hurricane Irene and in particular, Battalion Chief Bob Salo, our Emergency Management Coordinator, for all his efforts in the plans to get everyone ready in the case of a major impact from the storm.

Briggs gave an update on the Water Tank project noting that they were doing the final windings right now and they would be finishing up the landscaping and set up the tower very soon. He noted that it will look even better than before. He added that Nat Gun and Five Oaks Construction are very professional and are doing a great job.

He touched on the road paving noting that Corey Hill Road was completed but that due to the inclement weather, High Street was delayed but should be completed by the end of the week along with the Center Street overlay. He did note that overlays only last for 3 to 5 years. He noted that a road analysis is being done by Weston & Sampson which once complete would be a good asset for the Town and from which a schedule for repairs would be generated. Fagan inquired about what could be done with the roads that don’t

make the list and Briggs stated that if it is an emergency situation they would need to assess it as it occurs. He also noted that there was a possibility of a CDBG Grant to do this but it would need to be regionalized.

He noted that we had joined a consortium bid for heating oil with Gardner, Winchendon, and Fitchburg and that the date for the opening of bids was pushed back to September 13th due to Irene and the oil price jump. He also wanted to acknowledge Roy Bros. for their call offering to bring oil in for the water pumps with the potential of interruption of power due to Irene. He thanked them for their initiative and concern.

Briggs stated that as of this date he did not have any official prints for the Briggs project but that he would be meeting with Dr. Hicks for a project update.

He noted that the application for the FY12 CDBG Grant will hopefully include both Ashby and Westminster. He stated that we will be looking at sidewalk repairs and applying with the other towns, makes our chances better to get the grant.

Briggs noted that he attended a regionalization seminar at Holy Cross College and stated that he was disillusioned with the experience. He noted that Maggie Whitney, as the interim Director of the COA has reached out to Laila Michaud in Westminster and they are very interested in regionalizing Senior Centers with us.

He stated that they were still in negotiations on the indemnification issue with United Water for the maintenance operation of the Water Treatment Plant and that he was hopeful that this would be resolved this week.

He stated that Maggie Whitney has done a phenomenal job as Interim Director of the Council on Aging. He stated that she has organized their files and organized trips to other towns, as well as regionalization opportunities. He stated that the second floor at Town Hall is being readied for the Senior Center move from the VMS Building and Ed Schlott is working to secure bids for the mothballing of the VMS.

Briggs stated that things are going well so far in sharing his time between Ashby and Ashburnham. He stated that both assistants, Sylvia and Jennifer, are doing a good job to keep his schedule accurate.

He asked the Board to schedule a Special Town Meeting for Wednesday, October 19th with a warrant article submission deadline of September 21st. He noted that we had confirmed the availability of the Oakmont Auditorium for this date. Vitone asked that we also check with the Superintendent's office on any other conflicts with this date in the school district. Briggs noted that free cash would be certified by the October 19th date. The Board unanimously agreed to set the Special Town Meeting date for October 19th.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. August 8, 2011 Minutes – Regular Meeting

Reed motioned to approve the minutes for the August 8, 2011 Board of Selectmen meeting and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

Vitone stated that he wanted to ask permission from the Board to send a letter of thanks to Nancy Haines for all she did to help out the new accountant during the past months. The members both agreed that this was a good idea.

Vitone then stated that he had received an email from Dave Christiansen regarding the possibility of waiving permit fees for Briggs. He stated that no fees had been charged for the Public Safety Building or the Town Hall but that two years ago they made it a “practice” to assess fees and not to waive them with the example of the water tank project where all fees were charged.

Fagan stated that he understood waiving fees but that the debt exclusion already factored in the fees and if we waived them would this reduce the debt exclusion. Vitone stated that it would not.

Reed stated that he wanted to see the bids first before he made any decisions and Fagan agreed, adding that they didn’t have enough information. Vitone also was in agreement with this statement.

Reed questioned why it is taking so long to go out to bid on this project as it was voted and approved almost a year ago. Vitone stated that it is premature and that he would ask that the Briggs Committee take this process a little further.

X. SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

Vitone asked Fagan to read the list of meetings and he read as follows:

- **Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing** - Wednesday, September 7, 2011, 7:30 p.m. – Lower Level Meeting Room at Town Hall
- **Planning Board** – Thursday, September 8, 2011, 6:30 p.m. – Lower Level Meeting Room at Town Hall
- **Council on Aging** –Monday, September 12, 2011, 10:00 a.m. – VMS Building – Senior Center
- **Board of Health** – Monday, September 12, 2011, 6:30 p.m. – Upstairs at Town Hall.
- **Conservation Commission** - Monday, September 12, 2011, 6:30 p.m. – Lower Level Meeting Room at Town Hall
- **Water-Sewer Commission** –Tuesday, September 13, 2011, 6:00 p.m. – Lower Level Meeting Room at Town Hall
- **Board of Assessors** – Wednesday, September 14, 2011, 6:00 p.m. – Assessors Office at Town Hall
- **Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing** – Wednesday, September 14, 2011, 7:30 p.m. Upstairs at Town Hall.
- **Conservation Commission** –Monday, September 26, 2011, 7:00 p.m. – Lower Level Meeting Room at Town Hall.
- **Historical Commission** – Monday, September 26, 2011, 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 be aware that a \$25 fine will be issued by the Animal Control Officer within the month.

On Sunday, September 11, 2011, the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, there will be a ceremony of remembrance commencing at 7:00 p.m. on the Town Hall lawn. All are welcome to attend/participate.

On Tuesday, September 13, 2011, the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health and the Ashburnham Board of Health, will be holding a Free Eye Screening with D'Ambrosio's Eye Care for adults and children, as well as eye care education. Hours are from 3:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

On Saturday, September 24th – Brian's Gift Road Race – will be held from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This is an annual event for a good cause.

The annual Flu Clinic (flu vaccine only) sponsored by the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health will be held on Tuesday, October 11th, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Lower Level Meeting Room at Town Hall. It is being held at this location because the Senior Center at the VMS Building will be moved to Town Hall by this date.

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 next meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on Monday, September 19, 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 8:14 p.m. Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator