

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY – MARCH 5, 2012 – 6:30 p.m.
TRAINING ROOM – PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX

This meeting was taped for local cable television.

PRESENT: Ed Vitone, Chair, Ron Reed, Member, Gregory Fagan, Clerk, 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

Vitone stated that they would add two items to the agenda, under Old Business, Item B – a short meeting of the Caucus Committee would be held to discuss two open nominations. Those present for this meeting would be Bill Webber, Linda Ramsdell and the Board of Selectmen. Vitone also stated that they would add Item C – Discussion on signing letter to express the Town’s intention for dispatch regionalization with Ashby. ***Reed motioned to approve the agenda as amended and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.***

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. 250th Celebration Committee - Update

Present – Steve Coswell, Co-Chair; Patty Johnson, Treasurer; Barbara Divito, Member. Steve Coswell, Co-Chair of the 250th Celebration Committee distributed a list of potential events being planned as well as a final outline to the Board of Selectmen and began by giving them an update on the Committee’s progress. He noted that they had tentatively planned the following events:

February 2015	Historical Exposition
June or July 2015	Time Capsule/Family Fun Fest/Fireworks
August 2015	Swim Meet
September 2015	Parade
October 2015	Bonfire
December 2015	Christmas Parade with Fire Department
December 31, 2015	Dance or New Year’s Eve Party

He noted they planned the following fundraisers:

Blueberry Breakfast	Streetlight Banners
Equinox Bonfire	Casino Night
Novelties	

He added that they are asking businesses to purchase a banner and that the Ashburnham Municipal Light was helping with this. In addition, he stated that they were looking for group sponsorship and donor letters “Circle of Giving”.

Coswell also briefly went over the final outline (copy attached) set by the Committee pointing out that they planned a contest for all school age children and any townspeople wishing to submit artwork for a seal depicting Ashburnham’s 250th. He stated the purpose of this Committee and the timeline, noting that a major inaugural event would be held in December 2014 followed by a series of programs and events throughout the commemorative year culminating with a big event in November or December of 2015.

Coswell commented on the method and schedule in relation to the Committee's work. He noted the special events organized by the Committee such as:

1. Kick-off ceremony close to date of incorporation or parade
2. Culminating weekend event in November – December 2015
3. Small celebrations throughout the year 2015. To focus and re-energize interest throughout the year.
4. The logo/banner contest
5. Opening of the time capsule and the creation of a new time capsule.

He also stated that their intention was to hold costs to an absolute minimum by relying on volunteer time and donated services.

At this time Patty Johnson, Treasurer of the Committee presented the Board with a Treasurer's report (attached) showing a balance as of 3/5/12 of \$1,493.75.

Vitone asked about their progress to date and Coswell stated it has gone great so far and Patty Johnson added that people have been very receptive. Coswell noted the March 24th Equinox Bonfire at the Turnpike Rod and Gun Club where they would have live music, chili, soft drinks, hot chocolate and cookies to generate interest and money towards the big celebration events planned for 2015. Reed asked how they would advertise their events and Coswell responded by advertising in the papers, the website, on Facebook, posters and cable TV. Fagan stated that the series of events being planned is good and the new time capsule was a great idea. Coswell noted that they would try to set up an event for next February at the Turnpike and work with the Lions Club and Parks & Rec Committee. He added that they are working to create a "circle of giving" throughout the year.

Briggs asked the Board to approve a One-Day Special "Beer Only" Liquor License to be held outside on the Turnpike Rod and Gun Club grounds to benefit the 250th Celebration for their planned Equinox Bonfire on March 24th. ***Reed motioned to approve the request for a One-Day Liquor License as noted above and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.*** Vitone thanked the Committee for their efforts.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of Winterfest Event Held on February 10th and 11th

Vitone stated the Winterfest Event was a great success even though the weather didn't cooperate. He stated that they used shavings from the ice rink at Cushing to make a slide for the kids with efforts by the Committee and the Town's DPW. Reed stated that he cooked many hamburgers. Fagan stated that if you have the passion, this is the results. He added that it was great and it was wonderful to see the volunteers. Reed added that people in the neighborhood came which was great and the event went over extremely well and showed people's interests. Vitone stated it was a good job by all and thanked them for their efforts.

B. Review of Town Caucus Results and Meeting of the Caucus Committee

Vitone read the Caucus results as follows:

Moderator	Donald "Jeff" Lawrence
BOS (3 yr)	Leo J. Janssens II
BOS (1 yr)	Ed Vitone
Bd. of Health (3 yr)	Thomas Flanagan
Bd. of Health (3 yr)	John McLaughlin
Library Trustee (2 yr)	Mary Kate Romano
Municipal Light Board	Kevin Lashua

He noted that there were no nominees for the Planning Board (5 yr) or the Library Trustee (3 yr) openings. At this time a meeting of the Caucus Committee was opened which included Bill Webber, Chair, Linda Ramsdell, Secretary and the Board of Selectmen. Bill Webber stated that he had a nominee for the Library Trustee (3 yr) open position, and her name was Debra Mercier of 37 Hillandale Road. He also noted that he did not have anyone for the open Planning Board position. Vitone stated that serving on the Planning Board is a tough job and is a 5-year appointment where you learn a lot about the Town. Linda Ramsdell noted that the deadline for the nominations was Tuesday, March 6th at 5:00 p.m. Vitone asked anyone interested to please contact the Town Clerk or the Board before 5:00 p.m. the next day. Bill Webber noted that John MacMillan was completing 30 years of service to the Town as a Planning Board member.

Reed made the motion to accept Debra Mercier as the nominee for the 3 year term as Library Trustee and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried. Vitone then closed the Caucus Committee meeting.

- C. Discussion on signing letter to express the Town's intention – Dispatch Regionalization
Ed Vitone gave some history on the reasoning for the Dispatch Regionalization. He stated that the Board of Selectmen recognized the need to find more funding and they were looking for cost-effective ways to remedy shortfalls in the future. He stated that they analyzed the workload of both towns and surmised that one dispatcher per shift could cover both towns. He stated that the grant is available to fund this for approximately \$400k and the deadline was March 16th to submit the application. He added that along with the application they will need a letter of attestation from both towns to express their commitment to study, plan or form the regional dispatch. He then read the letter which is attached to these minutes. Vitone asked the Board members if they were okay to go forward with this letter. ***Reed motioned to go forward with the attestation letter for grant and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.*** Vitone also stated that a word in the second line of this letter needed to be chosen, “studying the feasibility or planning or forming”. ***Reed motioned to authorize the Chair to choose the right wording after the meeting with Ashby tomorrow. Fagan seconded and the motion carried.***

Vitone also noted that more information on the Dispatch Regionalization discussions can be found on the Town's website, on the red banner on the home page and also on the Police page.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

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

Briggs began by noting the openings on Boards and Committees. He stated there were (2) openings on the Conservation Commission, (2) on the Historical Commission and one opening on the Parks & Recreation Committee.

He gave an update on the Water Tank Project stating that the new tank ran most of the day today and that after fixing a few small issues, it would be back up and running tomorrow. He noted kudos to all.

He stated that the COA Board appointed their new COA Director, Michelle Johnson who would be starting on Monday, March 12th. He stated that Michelle was a very nice lady and should work out well for the seniors.

Briggs briefly touched on the letter recently received from the Bresnahan Scouting & Community Center group regarding the possibility of the Senior Center being located in their facility. The letter stated that this would not be possible as their plans were not flexible at this point. He also noted that they stated the following: "We appreciate the support your Board has shown us through the years, but our basis of funding has been that no tax dollars are to be used for the construction of our facility." Vitone did add that the center had reached out to the seniors before the building was designed and at that time the seniors refused their offer. He thanked the Bresnahan group for their consideration.

Briggs also noted that he was recently contacted by the Governor's office regarding a grant that was earmarked for the Scouting Center here in Ashburnham, which according to Reed, Senator Brewer had put in for them. Briggs noted that he sent the Bresnahan group a letter inquiring if they wanted these funds as they did express that no tax dollars would be used for the Center.

Briggs also advised the Board that the COA received a MArtap Grant in the amount of \$321.28 which would go toward an office jet all-in-one printer and combo ink pack for the seniors. He stated that Maggie Whitney did a great job in procuring this grant for the COA.

He gave an update on the solar PILOT project stating that he sent the verbiage to Investar today. He noted that this project would have no affect on the Town's levy capacity but if the State laws changed, we could pull out of the deal. Vitone explained a little about the contingency language. Briggs also noted that the PPO that was signed includes the solar panels on the Bresnahan Center roof.

Briggs stated that he met with the Capital Planning Committee on Wednesday, February 29th to review the FY13 Capital items. He stated that right after this meeting he met with the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Board in a Joint Meeting to review the FY13 Budget.

He went over a few items that needed some clarification from the Capital Planning Committee meeting. He stated that the requested replacement vehicles for the fire and police departments needed more clarification and data.

Fagan questioned the Town Hall Repairs line in the Capital Plan for FY13 and Briggs stated that the roof leaks needed to be fixed. He stated that last year some roof repair was done. Briggs stated that they did repair the chimney and valleys on the roof which was a Reserve Fund transfer of up to \$30,000 and Bill Johnson noted that it was around \$25,000. Briggs added that part of that repair was also fixing the front of the roof with slate. Reed, who was on the renovation committee stated that it was a 100 year old slate roof that was done using non-galvanized nails and this is what's letting go and causing the slate to fall off. He stated that at the time of the renovation they just couldn't include the roof repair in the project. He suggested that the repairs are done a portion at a time each year and Vitone added that they should use stainless steel nails for any future repairs. Briggs noted that Ed Schlott, the Town Hall Custodian, has gone out for estimates on the repair.

Briggs stated that at the Joint Meeting the review of the FY13 proposed budget also created a list of open items.

Item 1. Quantify payment schedule from Cushing for the Police Officer. *Briggs stated that they would negotiate with them on this.*

Item 2. Should item for project management be added to budget? *Briggs stated that he suggests that they level fund the Accountant's position to have these funds available.*

Item 3. Advisory Board prefers Reserve Fund at current level to cover unanticipated expenses. Briggs stated that he would level fund and supports this as gas and diesel prices are going up.

Item 4. Develop an understanding of how Fire Department IMC software investment is justified through productivity and service. Briggs stated that he met with the Fire Chief and that there was a need to follow up and clarify this further. He added that on 4/1 they would switch over and would be more automated.

Item 5. Get better understanding of Lieutenant position and how we will cover changes in shift schedule to maintain two employees per shift. Chief Barrett spoke on this. He stated that since his employment in Ashburnham as Chief he has always advocated for two officers on every shift and had developed a five-year plan. He stated that Cushing was concerned with only one officer on third shift also and came forward with the plan and financing for an officer. He stated that the majority of the cost for this officer would be picked up by Cushing and their generosity. He then noted that in regard to the Lieutenant position, he would be promoting from within the department. He submitted a shift schedule to the Selectmen which showed that with the extra officer financed by Cushing they would reach their goal of two officers on each shift. He explained that with a Lieutenant it would help with the part-time issues, and also free the detective to do more. He also noted that the Lieutenant would be a working position responding to calls, etc.

Reed questioned if the Lieutenant would be working only Monday thru Friday and what the logic was as it would add overhead. He also asked about creating another Sergeant position. Barrett stated that they would add a sergeant to continue to have two. He stated that the Lieutenant would be assigned court duty and that this was the best scenario for the Town as it is an opportunity to address the real deficiencies especially as the call volume has increased in the past few years. Vitone stated that the budget was presented with the Lieutenant position by Briggs and that the BOS needs to make the call on this. Reed stated that he sees this as adding more overhead and needs to understand more. Briggs stated that the Lieutenant position allows a supervisory/sergeant on the third shift and would allow us to bring in part time as well.

Barrett stated that his responsibility was to mold a successor as Chief. He noted that if he was gone for any length of time or decided to retire they need someone to take over with a smooth transition.

Vitone asked if the Board was prepared to vote now and Reed responded that he needed more information. Fagan stated that he felt it was a no brainer to promote a Lieutenant as it would unburden the detective and would pay for itself. He stated it makes sense.

Bill Johnson inquired on the use of part time officers and what the impact might be on the overtime and Barrett stated that only a small impact initially and would bring it down eventually. Vitone stated that they would need more data on this issue before they vote.

Item 6. Get schedule for shift coverage from Larry. This was discussed under the previous item.

Item 7. Greg wants more creative solutions for Animal Control to lower budget. Briggs stated that they are still working on this.

Item 8. Advisory Board asked if there were alternatives to Nashoba Board of Health. Advisory Board may ask our Board of Health if they would be willing to explore alternatives. Briggs stated that he reached out to Glenn Hathaway and that he was willing to discuss this with Westminster and that he also contacted Karen Murphy.

Item 9. Review pros and cons of changing the decentralized budget line item of Professional Development & Travel accounts. Briggs compiled a report which is attached to these minutes. He explained that many expenses were contractual and dues for different

groups and organizations provided opportunities to get information which is valuable. He also noted that some were re-certifications and some were mileage stipends for ConCom and the Inspectors. He stated that the report basically shows that only \$5,000 was not contractual or required.

Item 10. Contact Historical Commission for details and supporting information on request for an increase in their FY13 budget. Briggs stated that they did receive this information and it has been noted in the budget.

Item 11. Better understanding of the supplies accounts for some departments and the thousands of dollars budgeted and what drives these costs. Briggs noted that he hadn't worked on this yet.

Item 12. If ambulance billing rates are increased, quantify who pays the differential and how it's done. Briggs stated that currently it's at 50% and we are looking at 150%. He noted that he is still working with the Chief on this item. He also stated that he made a few changes in the fire budget such as adding raises for the on-call personnel.

Item 13. Board decision on 3% COLA increase for non-union employees. Vitone stated that this is a delicate matter, as last year they did not receive an increase and the year before it was only for half the year. He stated that he would personally tilt for the non-union as they have been under-rewarded compared to the union personnel. Reed agreed and stated he was in favor. Fagan stated that he was always on board to reward employees but he just wanted to pay for it within our budget. He stated that he does support this but wants to know how it's funded. Vitone stated that they would have closure on this at their next meeting which should be scheduled no later than the next meeting. Johnson stated that the Advisory Board would wait to meet until they receive the budget from the Selectmen with their approval. It was also noted that a Capital Planning Committee meeting would need to be scheduled quickly as well.

Briggs then noted that the Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 5, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. at Oakmont in the Auditorium and that the deadline to submit warrant articles is Thursday, March 15th at 5:00 p.m.

He also noted that he would be starting union negotiations for both Dispatch and Police soon as their contracts expire June 30, 2012.

Briggs then stated that the Town has been looking to relocate the DPW and he found out through Steve Nims that a parcel of land that they had looked at a while ago as a suitable location has now come up for sale and he has reached out to the realtor. The parcel is located on the corner of Williams and Platts Roads. Briggs stated that he has also reached out to Bob Fichtel to discuss this further as Fichtel was the Chair of the DPW Relocation Committee a few years back and would have some important input. He stated that this was basically two pieces of property, a 7 acre lot on Williams and 34 acres behind it and that it will need to be purchased together. He also noted that it is on town water and sewer which makes the location ideal. Reed noted that the 7 acre lot was ideal but they should check into the 34 acre lot as it may have a lot of wetlands. Briggs noted this and stated that it was an opportunity with promise.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 21, 2012 Minutes – Regular Meeting

Reed motioned to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2012 Board of Selectmen meeting and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

Vitone stated that the Board was in receipt of a letter from a resident suggesting that they bring back Saturday night dances at Town Hall. Vitone stated that Briggs should respond

and maybe suggest some other locations as the upstairs at Town Hall is now the Town's Senior Center.

X. MARCH MEETINGS

Fagan read the list of meetings for March as follows:

Committee/Board	Day/Date/Time	Location
Council on Aging	Monday, 3/12/12, 10:00 a.m.	Lower Level, Town Hall
Water/Sewer Commission	Tuesday, 3/13/12, 6:00 p.m.	Lower Level, Town Hall
Board of Assessors	Wednesday, 3/14/12, 6:00 p.m.	Assessors Office – Town Hall
250 th Celebration Committee	Thursday, 3/15/12, 6:30 p.m.	Webber Room - Oakmont
Conservation Commission	Monday, 3/19/12, 6:30 p.m.	Lower Level – Town Hall

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.)
- State Primary – Tuesday, March 6, 2012 – polls open 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. – J.R. Briggs Elementary School Gym, 96 Williams Road.
- Tuesday, March 6th – 5:00 p.m. – Last day for filing nomination papers for the Town Election with the Board of Registrars.
- Thursday, March 22nd – 5:00 p.m. – Last day to file objections or withdrawals of nomination papers to the Town Clerk.
- Tuesday, April 3rd – 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. – Final Registration for the Town Election – Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall.
- Tuesday, April 17th – 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. – Final Registration for the Annual Town Meeting – Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall.
- Monday, April 23rd – 12:00 noon – Last day for filing applications for absentee ballots for voters who will be out of town for the Town Election.
- Tuesday, April 24th – Town Election – polls open at 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the J.R. Briggs Elementary School Gym, 96 Williams Road.
- Saturday, May 5th – Annual Town Meeting – 10:00 a.m. – Oakmont Regional High School Auditorium, 9 Oakmont Drive.
- Dog licenses are now available at the Town Clerk's Office. Fees are \$10.00 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$15.00 for unsprayed/unneutered dogs. Please bring current rabies certificate. If licensing by mail please include check, rabies certificate, and a self-addressed stamped envelope and mail to Town Clerk, 32 Main Street, Ashburnham.

A Rabies Clinic will be held on Saturday, March 17th from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Municipal Grounds Building, 8 Williams Road. The cost is \$10.00 for each and you must bring the current rabies certificate.

Don't forget to vote – State Primary – Tomorrow – Tuesday, March 6, 2012 – polls open at 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. – J.R. Briggs Elementary School Gym, 96 Williams Road.

Representative Rich Bastien Office Hours at 6:00 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building on the third Monday of every month. To schedule time, call 978-630-1776.

Note: The next meeting of the Ashburnham/Ashby Dispatch Regionalization Group will be held on Tuesday, March 6th at 4:30 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at the

Ashby Town Hall. Also, results of these meetings have been posted on the Town's website and will be updated for informational purposes to keep the public informed on the process.

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on Monday, March 19th at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building. A Liquor License Transfer Hearing for Mr. Mike's will be held at 6:45 p.m.

Briggs wanted to advise the Board that he had sent a letter to the Briggs Building Committee regarding a Selectman serving on their Executive Committee. He also noted that he sent a letter to both Atty. Graves and Rep. Bastien with the needs and concerns of the Town and also sent a letter to Supt. Hicks on the Briggs Maintenance Fund regarding getting more information.

Larry Barrett advised the Board about an incident that occurred the previous week in Dispatch involving a resident, Ed Tree, who was suffering from a heart attack but sadly passed away despite the many efforts to save him. The Chief praised Stephanie Asbury who was on duty at the time of the call and did an excellent job. He noted he was pleasantly surprised to see how she instructed persons there on CPR until the paramedics arrived. He stated that she did an exceptional job and was very professional. He asked that the Board of Selectmen send her a letter of commendation.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:24 p.m. Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator