

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
TUESDAY – APRIL 17, 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, Doug Briggs, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator. Greg Fagan, Clerk was absent.

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

Dan Allen of 19 South Maple Avenue expressed a concern regarding the size of classes at Briggs, especially the second grade where they presently have only 3 teachers covering 90 students and they want the school to hire a fourth second grade teacher. He inquired if the Selectmen had discussed this with the School Committee and Vitone explained that as of this date the only assessment received was for the Superintendent's recommended budget and had not yet received the revised assessment for the budget reductions made by the school committee. Allen noted that this was important and could result in learning and behavioral issues. Vitone stressed that they could not begin any dialogue without the school's assessment but that they would consider their request. He also noted that their attendance and vote at the Town Meeting on May 5th was important.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vitone noted that they would be adding an item under IX. - BOS Correspondence. He stated they would add "State Contract-Thoma Land" and that they would move this up in order to accommodate Gary Howland. ***Reed motioned to approve the agenda as amended and was seconded by Vitone. Motion carried.***

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

Briggs stated that the Board of Selectmen needed to approve him as the signatory on the Contract and signature authorization forms related to the acquisition of the Southern Monadnock Plateau II Forest Legacy Project/Tract 17 (Thoma). ***Ron made the motion to authorize Doug Briggs to sign the required paperwork and was seconded by Vitone. Motion carried.***

Vitone also commented on an anonymous phone call received at Town Hall regarding the Parks & Recreation Committee. A copy of his message is attached to these minutes. It was noted that the Board of Selectmen agreed to deliver this message in support of the Parks & Recreation Committee.

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Town Administrator's Evaluation

Vitone noted that because Greg Fagan would not be in attendance at this meeting, he received his evaluation of Briggs beforehand in a special meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Monday, April 9, 2012. He stated that there were eight goals on the

evaluation form. Reed noted that his overall opinion was that this was a very thorough evaluation and that Briggs did a great self-evaluation and he applauded all for their efforts. The evaluation results were as follows:

	Vitone	Fagan	Reed	Voted
1. Accomplishment of Goals	Outstanding	Superior/Above Average	Outstanding	Outstanding
2. Job Knowledge	Outstanding	Superior/Above Average	Outstanding	Outstanding
3. Initiative (Self-Starting)	Outstanding	Superior/Above Average	Outstanding	Outstanding
4. Quality of Work	Superior/Above Average	Average/Satisfactory	Superior/Above Average	Superior/Above Average
5. Dependability	Outstanding	Superior/Above Average	Superior/Above Average	Superior/Above Average
6. Public Interaction	Outstanding	Average/Satisfactory	Outstanding	Outstanding
7. Communications	Superior/Above Average	Average/Satisfactory	Superior/Above Average	Superior/Above Average
8. Cooperation (Working with Co-Workers)	Superior/Above Average	Average/Satisfactory	Superior/Above Average	Superior/Above Average
Overall Performance Rating	Mid between Outstanding and Superior	Superior/Above Average	Outstanding	Outstanding

Vitone stated that he would consolidate the ratings from all Board members and would send it to Briggs. Briggs noted that the self-evaluation was a good thing and he agreed that he would put his best effort forward on the open items.

Vitone noted that Briggs has been operating with two towns since August 16th and he has done an admirable job. He added that he met with Peter McMurray the Chair of the Ashby Board of Selectmen and he agreed that Briggs was doing an outstanding job in Ashby as well.

B. Final Review and recommendations – May 5, 2012 ATM Warrant (the warrant is attached to these minutes)

Briggs began by stating that they presently had 24½ articles. He explained that the first 8 articles would be voted as a Consent Calendar which was recommended by Town Counsel last year and worked very well. He stated that Article 9 was the FY13 budget while Article 10 was the school override and Articles 11 and 12 were the water and sewer budgets. He noted that Article 13 was authorization to pay a prior year bill to Veolia which would be paid from the Water fund. He stated that Articles 14 and 15 covered the capital items for the Town as well as the school. Articles 16 and 17 were planning board articles while Article 18 was a vote to rescind the Quinn Bill.

He stated that the VMS lease article was taken off the warrant because a Committee was being formed to review the use of this building and they would look for their recommendation and then it would be addressed at the fall town meeting. He stated that Article 19 was the proposed amendments to the regional agreement with the school, although he did state that he had not seen the final version yet. Vitone noted that the important change would be that they would incorporate the statutory method. Briggs stated that Article 20 was the lease or sale of the South Fire Station, Article 21 was the solar projects, and Article 22 was the purchase of land for the DPW relocation. He stated he was working on getting the value of the two properties in question. Reed

inquired if he had walked the properties and Briggs stated that he had along with Steve Nims. He also noted that he would check with the Conservation Commission on any wetland issues.

He stated that Article 23 was a clean-up article regarding lot 19A. Briggs stated that Article 24 had two approaches regarding the donated Humvee by the Firefighters Association. The first would be to declare the Humvee as excess property and go out to bid and the second would be to establish special legislation to return the vehicle to the Firefighters Association. Vitone stated that the second option seemed like the right way to go. It was noted by Briggs that because the Town purchased the vehicle, they could not just give it back. Both Reed and Bill Johnson agreed that option 2, listed as Article 24A was the logical way to give the donated vehicle back to the Firefighters Association.

Vitone asked for a motion to approve and recommend the articles as presented for the Annual Town Meeting of May 5, 2012. Reed so moved and Vitone seconded. Motion carried.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Request for One-Day Special Liquor License

Briggs stated that this request was from the Ashburnham Conservation Trust for a one-day beer and wine permit for Saturday, June 9th from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. for a fundraiser at Cushing Academy. Chief Barrett, who was present, noted that he had no issues with this event and this request. ***Vitone asked for a motion to approve this request and it was so moved by Reed. Vitone seconded and the motion carried.***

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

Briggs noted the openings on the Conservation Commission and the Historical Commission and added that they would love to have some volunteers.

He gave an update on the water tank noting that they would be trying pressure relief valves at the top of High Street and that no breaks had been reported while they were on the old tank. He also noted that they were waiting for supplies on Friday to get the communication tower completed.

He stated that the paving on Route 101N would be starting on April 18th.

Briggs noted that with Helen Hulecki now retired from MOC, the seniors have volunteered to help serve the meals and they also have changed the schedule to include brown bag lunch days and pizza days. He stated that they have hired a new long distance medical trip driver, Bernard Conry from Gardner and that the new Director, Michelle Johnson was doing a great job and has brought new energy to the Senior Center.

He stated that the PILOT agreement was very close with Investar ready to sign. He added that the new proposed legislation won't affect the Town.

He gave an update on the Parks & Recreation Committee and the closure of Winchester Park as well as the meeting that both he and Ed Vitone attended. He was very encouraged by their efforts and praised them for their hard work.

Briggs stated that he met with the IT Advisory Board and Guardian regarding the fiber project and it was going well. He touched on the Town Hall steps repair and railings requested by the Building Commissioner, Dick Reynolds, and also on the roof repairs noting that they were waiting for bids on both.

He stated that the Planning Board came forward with concerns regarding an entertainment license for Café 57. They had an issue with taxes due by the owner of the building, Richie Wright. Briggs noted that Wright worked out an agreement to pay his taxes with the Treasurer and that the Planning Board needed a letter stating this. Vitone stated that the letter should include the fact that it is a conditional acceptance and if it's not followed then the license would be revoked. Briggs stated that he would draft the letter. **Reed motioned to send this letter once drafted to the Planning Board and was seconded by Vitone. Motion carried.**

Briggs stated that Tammy Collier, the Town Accountant, has asked if the Board of Selectmen would authorize a special revenue fund for the 250th Celebration Committee in order to accept money from their fundraising efforts. **Reed motioned to approve the Town Accountant's request and was seconded by Vitone. Motion carried.**

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 2, 2012 Minutes – Regular Meeting

Reed motioned to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2012 regular meeting and was seconded by Vitone. Motion carried.

It was noted by Vitone that the approval of the minutes from the April 9, 2012 Special Meeting would be moved to the next meeting when Fagan was in attendance.

X. APRIL MEETINGS

Reed read the list of meetings for April as follows:

Committee/Board	Day/Date/Time	Location
Conservation Commission	Monday, 4/23/12, 6:30 p.m.	Lower Level – Town Hall
Zoning Board of Appeals	Wednesday, 4/25/12, 7:00 p.m.	Lower Level – Town Hall

XI ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reed 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.)
- 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.

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.

The 2011 Annual Town Report has been posted on the Town's website and is presently at the printers. We are anticipating that the actual printed copies will be available for Town Meeting on May 5th.

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on Monday, May 7, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

At this time Vitone wanted to recognize Ron Reed as this was his last meeting as a Selectman. He stated that this is a big loss as his experience and knowledge was so valuable. Reed stated that he was sorry to have to step aside but that he would still be an active member of the Capital Planning Committee and the Trust Fund Commission. Briggs thanked Reed and stated that he enjoyed working with him.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:48 p.m. Reed motioned to recess the meeting and enter into Executive Session and was seconded by Vitone.

Reed stated that the Board of Selectmen would meet in Executive Session to deliberate upon matters which, if done in open meeting could detrimentally affect the position of the Town regarding collective bargaining both pending and ongoing, and to reconvene into open meeting only to adjourn. *Reed motioned to enter into Executive Session and was seconded by Vitone. Motion carried.* Roll call was taken.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:40 p.m. Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Vitone. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator

ATTACHMENT – ITEM IX

We received an anonymous phone call at town hall passing on a rumor:

Apparently a person or persons are spreading malicious comments that our newly reconstituted Parks & Rec committee is heavily staffed with people from South Ashburnham, and independent of need, the committee is focusing the majority of its efforts on the Sweeney Playground in South Ash and neglecting the needs of Winchester Playground in the center of town. The rumor further alleges that the Winchester Playground was maliciously shut down just before school vacation week. I want to set the record straight.

- First of all, there are 7 members of the P&R committee: 4 from south Ash and 3 from central Ashburnham. With a 7 member board, that is as close to a 50/50 split as you can have.
- Second, I have never seen a more hardworking, dedicated committee focused on doing the right thing for the town, without bias and prejudice.
- Improvements are being made where they are needed, and rumors that Sweeney Park is receiving the bulk of the attention are simply not true. In fact, 85% of the funds will be spent at Winchester Park in the center of town
- Third, both parks need work, but when a park professional told the Committee that the ground cushion under the equipment at Winchester Park was non compliant with codes, it could not be ignored. Given our litigious society the Committee recommended to Doug that the park be temporarily closed to make the required upgrades, and Doug appropriately acted immediately.
- Using a trust fund dedicated for use at Sweeny Park, last week, with the help of the DPW, mulch was spread there and the swings were repaired
- While most of us were enjoying this past long holiday weekend, the Committee along with other volunteers worked long hours on Winchester park. 10 people on Saturday and 15 people on Sunday. We asked the committee to serve using their brains, and they went far beyond the call of duty with their brawn.
- The committee is requesting a disbursement from the Reserve Fund to acquire mulch for Winchester Park and the Advisory Board will consider this request tonight. On Thursday, Cushing Academy is having a community service day and they will help spread mulch at Winchester. With a little luck Winchester will be open again next week and it will offer a much safer venue for our children. I really want to say thank you to the Committee.
- Lastly, I want to speak to the rumor mongers themselves, whoever they are. Our town cannot survive without the commitment and dedication of its volunteers. With all of the pressures in life, it is hard enough to donate time under the best of conditions. Nipping at the committee's heels and spreading rumors is enough to drive the most ardent volunteers away, and that will diminish the entire town.
- If you are concerned with something, talk directly to the committee or speak to Doug Briggs. We want your input and will consider it thoughtfully. And before you throw stones, remember what Thumper said in the Disney classic "Bambi" – "If you can't say something nice . . . don't say anything at all."
- And if someone tells you a rumor, don't spread it. Call Doug and I am sure that you will hear the rest of the story.

Thank you