

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY – JULY 16, 2012 – 6:30 p.m.
TRAINING ROOM – PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX

This meeting was aired live on local cable television.

PRESENT: Ed Vitone, Chair, Greg Fagan, Clerk, Leo Janssens, 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

Gary Howland advised the Board of Selectmen that the Willard Road sale of 80 acres of protected land, went through and that legal fees would be submitted for reimbursement.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Approval of Bond for Briggs Project – Paul Pollastri

Paul Pollastri, Treasurer, stated that he went out to bid on a bond for the Briggs project in the amount of \$12,487,000 and received a rate of 1¼% with a premium of \$102,000. He noted that the Town had already borrowed \$3,000,000 for Briggs for engineering. He stated that for the Water Tank project he received a rate of 2% with a premium of \$4,580 and that this was an interim loan until the grant money is received. He also noted that the Briggs borrowing was only until we get the permanent borrowing.

B. Update on Briggs School Project – Gail Dumont

Gail Dumont gave an update to the Board of Selectmen as follows:

- The Ashburnham Municipal Light has finished placing the underground electric connections.
- The blasting is almost done.
- There was a credit of \$44,000 – the ledge work cost \$41,600 – balance is \$3,000
- The project is on budget and ahead of schedule by one day.
- A meeting is scheduled next week to pick colors
- A walk through is scheduled for Thursday, July 26th and Thursday August 9th both at 5:30 p.m.

C. Bush Hill Forestry Project

Gary Howland was present representing the Conservation Trust and Conservation Commission. He stated that the ConCom members had a meeting the same night and time so were not able to attend tonight. He stated that he was looking for the Board of Selectmen's blessing to forest the Bush Hill area. He noted that it would go out to three foresters and it would be a low impact cut near Tuckerman Road but they would keep the fields and apple orchard. He stated that the funding from this would go to the conservation fund towards stewardship. He also noted that there would be signage placed along the boundary and that these signs would be made out of small recycled plastic which would last for a long time. He noted that they also want a stewardship plan for the Russell Hill Forest. Howland also noted that they were looking at a forestry plan for the 41 acres on Willard Road.

Vitone inquired if this was town owned property and it was noted that it was. Briggs stated that they will need to look at the value of the cutting because if it is between \$5,000 and \$25,000

they would require three quotes and if over \$25,000 they would have to go out with an RFP. Howland stated that there was a significant value in forestry on Bush Hill. Vitone noted that harvesting is a good idea but before this property was purchased the Town did get some tax revenue and with the land generating monies, some should go to the Town. Howland stated that Article 97 regulations mandate that funds go to the conservation fund. Vitone stated that both the Bush Hill and Russell Hill properties were purchased through short-term borrowing which the voters approved and that they should decide this as well. Howland noted that the Town paid nothing as they were reimbursed and Vitone asked if there was any way to share the bounty with the Town.

Fagan noted that there should be a policy and Janssens stated that if this is self-supporting then leave it alone. Bill Johnson asked what the mechanism was to account for these monies and Briggs stated that the funds go into the conservation fund which is controlled by the Conservation Commission. Vitone asked Doug Briggs to look into this further and report back to the Board at the next meeting on August 20th.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Discussion – 5 year Strategic Plan for the Town

Doug Briggs stated that he updated the 5 year strategic plan to include FY13 through FY19 and that he used assumptions on new growth, lottery monies, etc. He noted that any surplus funds in the next few years would go into the capital fund to pay off a fire truck in FY18. He also noted that he guesstimated on a 2% increase in the budget each year.

Briggs noted that they needed to work with other groups such as the DLTA grant with Fitchburg on cultural district centers. He stated that many groups are working on different plans and that they need to bring them together to interact. Vitone stated that Fagan and Briggs should work together on this and report back at the first meeting in September, on the 4th. Briggs added that Eric Smith, the former Ashburnham Town Planner, is working on the cultural district center project and that he knows a lot and will be a great asset to the Town on this project as he is familiar with the Town.

B. Discussion – Dispatch Regionalization and Town Administrator sharing with Ashby

Vitone gave some background on what has transpired to date with the grant. He stated that the Ashby Board of Selectmen voted 2 to 1 against dispatch regionalization, but that the State felt with the concerns raised by Ashby on the need for more data, we should give it more time, so the Ashby Selectmen will meet and discuss whether they want to pursue getting more data from the experts or not. Fagan noted that this is a great opportunity for Ashby to keep up with telecommunications and Janssens added that 10 years from now the state will want regionalization so it's time to act now.

Vitone then discussed Doug's contract with Ashby and whether to extend it until August 31st as they are asking for a transition period. Vitone stated that he would like to wait until the next meeting to see how regional dispatch goes and he suggested to table this until then as they have always stated throughout that the two would be linked. Janssens stated that this was two separate decisions and that he would tilt to give them a 4-6 week transition extension. Fagan stated that they always saw this as an experiment and that many residents want Briggs here in Ashburnham full time. Briggs stated that he liked the extension to August 31st in order to clean things up and that he was leaning towards the extension. He added that he felt bad that he just left and he wanted to complete things there.

Fagan stated that they all did their due diligence and that two months would be fine. He stated he was okay to vote on it now as we have invested a lot of time already. ***Janssens made the motion to sign the extension until August 31st and Fagan seconded. The motion was unanimous.*** Vitone advised Briggs to contact Ashby regarding this decision.

Bill Johnson asked what message was being sent to Ashby by this extension. He noted that this is a one-way street and is unfair. He added that he didn't think Briggs should go back.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of Downtown Days events

Fagan stated that he loved Downtown Days and that there was a huge turnout with a lot of excitement. He added that there was great organization for this event. Vitone noted that the Chicken BBQ after was great. Fagan added that Joe Von Deck did an outstanding job of narrating the trolley tours and that the event promotes businesses and is very positive for the Town.

B. Discussion and Approval of Confirmatory Deed – 3-7 Central Street

Briggs explained that when the sale of this property was executed it had a typo and that this will correct the error. He stated that this was sent to him from Town Counsel.

Fagan motioned to sign the Confirmatory Deed for 3-7 Central Street as presented and was seconded by Janssens. Motion carried.

C. Update on recent MJTC Meeting (Greg Fagan)

Fagan stated that he was pleased with the organization of this group and he found the meeting to be very educational in regards to the TIP Program. He stated that he now has an understanding of how this works and added that there wasn't much on the list for Ashburnham. He noted that it would be beneficial to work with other Town Committees and the DPW on this as we need consistent advocacy. He added that they are now drafting a unified working program list which would help with GIS, trail-mapping, etc. and that it was a great opportunity. He also noted that he wanted to trade off with Vitone and continue to be the representative on this Committee with Vitone taking over on the Briggs Committee in his spot. Fagan added that he would like to place a discussion on these meetings as a regular topic on the agenda.

Janssens stated that we should have our DPW Superintendent attend the MJTC meetings. Briggs stated that the Route 101S paving was pushed back because of a lack of advocacy and that we needed a consistent presence at these meetings and also to be more involved.

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

Briggs listed the openings on Town Boards and Committees as follows: (2) Conservation Commission; (1) Capital Planning Committee; (1) Advisory Board; (1) Board of Assessors; and (2) Historical Commission.

He gave an update on the Water Tank Project. Some discussion followed on the pressure issues and Briggs stated that the Water/Sewer Commissioners needed to make a decision on how to fix the issues this week. He also noted that they have started setting up staging for the repairs on the Gardner Hill tank and that he forwarded the paperwork on this to USDA.

Briggs stated that the FY12 Budget has been closed out and that all departments did a great job with their budgets. He stated that they are now waiting for the free cash number. He also thanked the Advisory Board for their assistance.

He stated that they received information from Deb Phillips, Town Counsel, which clearly states that the Parks & Recreation Committee does have the ability to set the rules and regulations for the parks.

Briggs stated that he was also working with Town Counsel to generate the RFP for the sale of the South Station Building and it should be out in the next few weeks.

He stated that he has requested an estimate to demolish the VMS Building per the request of the VMS Building Use Committee and that someone was coming in the next day to do so. Vitone suggested that Briggs look into the bricks on the building as they may be worth some money which would help with the cost of the demolition.

Briggs noted that the purchase of the land on the corner of Platts and Williams Roads for the DPW relocation should be completed within the next few weeks.

He gave the Board some background on the Town's bond rating. He noted that the Town received the highest rating on short term loans and an A1 rating on long term loans. He stated that they were pleased with this rating.

He noted that the fiber project would be started this week beginning at the Public Safety Building, then to the DPW, Town Hall and the Library. He stated that it should take about two weeks and he praised the IT Advisory Board, Todd Parsons and Paul Rekos for their hard work to get this accomplished. He noted that once this is complete Munis will be available at each site, all email addresses would be uniform and also everyone would be under the Shoretel phone system.

Briggs then reported on the Sex Offender Bylaw proposal. He stated that both Hubbardston and Barre had forwarded their bylaw which they have set as policy. Hubbardston's was brought by a citizens' petition while Barre's was initiated by the Police Chief. He stated that he would recommend that they wait to see how things work out for these towns before we move forward. Vitone stated that he would like to see this tested in court first and that we should modify one and put it on the shelf for now. Janssens stated that he would like to see this in place to protect children. Fagan stated that they needed to explore more and then move forward when we feel more confident. Vitone stated that Briggs should ask Chief Barrett to look for other communities who have this bylaw and then report back with the results at their first meeting in September. Fagan stated that this was a great first step and that we have to tread cautiously.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 18, 2012 – Regular Meeting

Fagan motioned to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2012 Meeting and was seconded by Janssens. Motion carried.

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

X. JULY/AUGUST MEETINGS

Fagan read the list of meetings as follows:

Committee/Board	Day/Date/Time	Location
Conservation Commission	Monday, July 30, 6:30 p.m.	Lower Level – Town Hall
Board of Assessors	Wednesday, August 8, 6:00 p.m.	Assessors' Office – Town Hall
Council on Aging Board	Monday, August 13, 10:00 a.m.	Lower Level – Town Hall
Water/Sewer Commission	Tuesday, August 14, 6:00 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.)
- Dog registration is ongoing with the additional late fee of \$10.00 added to each license. The fee for spayed/neutered dogs is \$20.00 and the fee for unsprayed/unneutered dogs is \$25.00. If you have any questions please call the Town Clerk's office at 978-827-4100 ext. 114.
- Friday, August 17 – Final registration for the State Primary. Registration of voters, Town Clerk's office from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

- Wednesday, September 5, 2012 Noon – Last day for filing applications for absentee ballots for voters who will be out of town for the State Primary.
- Thursday, September 6 – State Primary – Polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. at the 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.

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on Monday, August 20, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building. In September the Board will return to their regular meeting schedule on the first and third Mondays of the month. However, due to the Labor Day holiday on Monday, September 3rd, the Board will meet on Tuesday, September 4th.

Bill Johnson announced that the VMS Building Use Committee would be holding a public input forum on Monday, August 13th at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building. He stated that they sent out notices to all Town Boards and Committees as well as all the abutters of the VMS Building. He added that the public is invited to attend this meeting and give their input on what should be done with this building.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

Greg Fagan asked if we could somehow provide some information to residents on lyme disease prevention. He stated that Briggs could check with the Board of Health or Nashoba on ticks in the area. Briggs stated that he would get something on the website.

Briggs noted that the Board needed to vote on signing the bonds that were presented to them by Paul Pollastri earlier in the meeting. *Fagan made the motion to accept the Treasurer's recommendation for bonds for the Briggs School and the Water Tank projects. Janssens seconded and the motion carried.*

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:15 p.m. Fagan motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Janssens. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator