

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY – SEPTEMBER 17, 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 None

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. JOINT MEETING WITH PLANNING BOARD

A. Vote on appointment of temporary Planning Board member

Present from the Planning Board were Skip Nolan, Chair, Joe Daigle and Joe Kalagher.

Greg Fagan stated that due to a possible conflict of interest he would leave the room and recuse himself from this agenda discussion.

Vitone stated that with the resignation of John MacMillan, the Planning Board along with the Board of Selectmen needs to temporarily appoint someone to take his place until the next election in April. He noted that they have two candidates, Meredith Fagan and Joseph McPeak.

Skip Nolan stated that they actually have two positions to fill, one is John MacMillan's and the other is an alternate. He stated that the Planning Board would like to meet with both candidates to explain the terms. He added that the alternate appointment is for a three year period and as an alternate, when a member recuses themselves, they can fill in. He stated that their next meeting was on September 27th and that they wanted to meet with the candidates at that time. Vitone stated that they would put this back on the agenda for the Selectmen's next meeting on Monday, October 1st.

Nolan also noted his concern that one of the candidates, Mr. McPeak, could be in conflict as an employee at Cushing Academy.

Vitone stated that there would be no decision now and it would be placed on the October 1st agenda. He thanked the Planning Board members. Greg Fagan came back in the room and Vitone gave him an update on what occurred.

V. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Update on Briggs School Project

Vitone stated he was very impressed with the progress and also with the Clerk of the Works. He noted that so far they had expended 21% of the funds and they were two months ahead of schedule. He stated that so far this is going very well.

B. Update on Strategic Plan for the Town

Fagan stated that so far they had built a great infrastructure. He stated that he had his second meeting with Doug Briggs and they have set their first set of deliverables, the Town's Mission

Statement and to define the Town's Strategic Plan. He stated that he would be presenting to the Department Heads tomorrow "Strategic Plan 101" and that he was excited about this. He added that this is "like a compass". Briggs added that everyone has to buy into it and that this is a good step to meet with Department Heads first. Vitone cautioned that the temptation to say we will do more than is realistic is there and they should remember this. He added that this is a good initiative.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of October 16, 2012 Special Town Meeting Warrant

Briggs stated that he was asking the Board of Selectmen to pare down the articles and added that it needed to be posted by the 1st of October. Vitone stated that there were two objectives – which articles to stay on the warrant and whether the Board is in favor to recommend the articles.

Briggs reviewed each article in turn.

Article 1 – To repair and/or replace the fence at Winchester Park.

He noted that this article was to replace the fence at Winchester Park and gates at Sweeney Park. He stated that they have opted for black coated fencing at an estimated cost of approximately \$6,000. Steve Gallant, a member of Parks & Rec stated that they also wanted to add an additional \$2,500 to cover the cost of the gates at Sweeney as well as to fence in part of the parking area. Briggs noted that there was \$10,000 set aside for this article which would cover the additional cost. He added that he supports this article as it is a safety issue. Fagan noted that at the Annual Town Meeting they voted a Parks & Rec budget of \$8,000 and a Reserve Fund Transfer was also approved for playground equipment last year which brings it up to \$20,000. He asked why they can't use the budgeted funds for the fences. Steve Gallant responded that they wanted to fence it in for safety and that the budget was to be used for activities and programs. Vitone gave a brief explanation as to how the funds in the budget would be used and noted that they want to present this article to the voters to decide. Fagan inquired as to the timeline and Gail Dumont responded that if passed it would be done in the spring. She also noted that regardless of the fate of the VMS Building, the playground being fenced in is a definite safety issue and should be done.

Janssens made the motion to place this article on the warrant and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried. Janssens then motioned to support/recommend the article and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

Article 2 – Enter into a long term lease with the NCSC for the VMS Building.

Briggs stated that the current lease expires on November 30, 2012. He also noted that although there are a lot of good things going on there the agreement hasn't been fulfilled as they are currently in arrears by \$7,500. He also voiced his concern that the NCSC is trying to pull the Council on Aging back there to share the cost of heating the building and there just isn't a budget for this. He also noted that another problem would be the boiler inspection which is costly and there is the concern that they would not be able to sustain the building.

Janssens made the motion to take this article off the warrant and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

Article 3 – Money for delinquent taxes.

Briggs stated that Paul Pollastri, the Treasurer for the Town, is asking for \$13,500 to go forward with collecting delinquent taxes and has submitted a budget for this. Briggs stated that this will allow us to go into auction and get properties back on the tax role. He added that he supports this article.

Fagan made the motion to place this article on the warrant and was seconded by Janssens. Motion carried. Janssens motioned to support/recommend the article and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

Article 4 – Money for the 250th Celebration Committee

Briggs stated the 250th Celebration Committee was looking for funds to plan events and that along with these funds of \$67,000, there was also the Hoffman Fund which might be available in the amount of \$19,000 which would bring this total requested down. Vitone inquired if all these requested funds would be disbursed this next fiscal year and Steve Coswell, Chair of the 250th Committee stated that they would not and that this estimate was not voted on by the Committee yet. He noted that they would at least ask for \$15,000 to be spent in this fiscal year to purchase merchandise such as hats, school boy statues, etc. which would be sold and be a source of additional funding for the events planned in 2015. Coswell also noted that in the spring of 2016 they would return any funds remaining after the activities in 2015 to the Town. He stated that they would be giving a good presentation to the residents at the Special Town Meeting to inform them of the celebration plans. He noted that the fireworks would cost \$20,000 alone and that they would plan a time capsule event to coincide with Downtown Day as well as a block party which would include the cost for tents, security, food, etc. He stated that the bare minimum for this celebration, fireworks and a parade would be \$50,000.

Briggs stated that in his view this article should be for \$10,000 to \$15,000 and that he would be willing to go to Cushing with Coswell to ask for their support as well as the Firefighters Association. He added that they need to reserve bands at least one year in advance and that he does support this article and he agrees with the \$10,000 to \$15,000 for this article. Fagan stated that this is a huge event and he would recommend \$30,000. It was noted by Coswell that the Committee was meeting on Thursday, September 20th and that this would be discussed. Bill Johnson noted that he would like to see a more clearly defined budget and plan and Vitone stated that they would hold off on the number for now until after the Committee meets. He also noted that they would need a multi-year plan to present at the Special Town Meeting and that Coswell should send an email to Briggs as a result of the committee meeting showing funds required by fiscal year. Briggs agreed that it is important to define the costs and Coswell stated that he would bring this back to the Committee for a full review. Janssens agreed with this approach.

Janssens made the motion to accept the article and to have the 250th Committee come back with a plan on expenditures by fiscal year. It was seconded by Fagan and the motion carried.

Article 5 – New storage shed at Town Hall

Briggs stated that Ed Schlott, the Town Hall Custodian, went to Monty Tech and asked if they would build us a shed. The cost of materials would be approximately \$3,100. He also noted that the shed is needed to store the snow blower, lawn mower and tools and that he recommends this article.

Janssens motioned to place this article on the warrant and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried. Janssens then made the motion to approve/recommend this article and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.

Article 6 – Amend the vote from ATM to add \$16,224 to the capital projects for the school

Briggs stated that this would fix an error that was made on the amount on the article at the May 5, 2012 ATM for the school capital projects. He stated that our full share should have been \$29,822.

Janssens motioned to place this article on the warrant and to approve/recommend the article. It was seconded by Fagan and the motion carried.

Article 7 – New steps at front of Town Hall.

Briggs stated that this is a result of the inspection of Town Hall by the Building Inspector and was one of two items of concern. The boiler room was the second issue and has been resolved. He stated that back in the spring Monty Tech students re-did two of the steps as a temporary quick fix but that more extensive repairs are required. He also noted that they went out to bid and the cost of \$25,700 was the result. Briggs stated that we would need to hold off until the spring so it could wait for the ATM as part of the Capital Plan. Vitone stated that he looked at the steps and that they are in need of repair so this has to get done. He suggested that they appropriate the funds now and wait until spring to do the actual repairs.

Janssens motioned to place this article on the warrant and to approve/recommend the article. It was seconded by Fagan and the motion carried.

Article 8 – Vote to have BOS act as Board of Cemetery Commissioners.

Briggs stated that this article should be taken off as Town Counsel stated it is not needed as there is no conflict.

Article 9 – Accept MGL 32B Sec 9A to allow retiree health insurance.

Article 10 – Accept MGL 32B Sec 18 Medigap program

Briggs stated that back in 2008 this was presented but never came forward. He noted that he has asked Edd Byrnes for an analysis and that this could cost the Town up to \$90,000 for each year without including the Medigap section and that it would be a minimal 50/50 split. He also noted that Article 10 will be removed as it is now combined in Article 9. Larry Barrett gave some history on the past request to the Selectmen and noted that at that time they stated it would be put off until the next ATM but that never occurred. He noted that both Westminster and the School District have this benefit and that over 80% of the Commonwealth has this now and we need to bring us to an equal level. He added that we want to have this go before the voters. Janssens stated that they should put this off until the ATM in order to make a good decision and to get more information and Fagan agreed. Vitone stated that the Board of Selectmen is not compelled to place this on the warrant and they do have to be cognizant of town funds and employees. Fagan suggested that at some point in the next 4-5 months they could meet with Department Heads to discuss this and to get more informed. Paul Zbikowski noted that the number of employees who actually retire from the Town is minimal. Vitone stated that they need a thoughtful assessment and to do a comprehensive analysis and make an informed decision. Barrett suggested that they could form a committee to review this. The articles were removed.

Article 11 – Repairs to Fire Department ladder truck.

Briggs stated that this article would be removed and they will wait until next year as a Capital plan item. Vitone stated that Chief Zbikowski did a good job extending the maintenance on the truck. Zbikowski noted that it is tested annually and noted what needs to be done and they take care of things as they come up.

Article 12 – Computer and associated software – PSB

Duncan Phyfe, IT Advisory Board Chair, gave an update stating that the IMC server needs to be backed up as this is the gateway for both Police and Fire to work with Town Hall as the domain controller. He stated that this is a critical aspect “back-up”. He also noted that Guardian Information Technologies is working with the Police Department to get them set up. Briggs stated that software cost will also be included in this amount which could make it more than the \$18,000. Phyfe stated that the software costs could be \$5,000 to \$7,000 additional. Larry Barrett added that the original server was purchased through a grant but that no grant is available now.

Janssens motioned to place this article on the warrant and to approve/recommend the article. It was seconded by Fagan and the motion carried.

Article 13 – Asbestos inspection for the VMS Building.

Briggs stated that he does support this article. Bill Johnson, Chair of the VMS Building Use Committee stated that he wants this done and that this will help to identify potential problems and also the cost to remediate.

Janssens motioned to place this article on the warrant and to approve/recommend the article. It was seconded by Fagan and the motion carried.

Article 14 – Accept donation of property for Rail Trail

Briggs stated that this donation of land would be a benefit for the Rail Trail. Sallie Thoma, Chair of the Rail Trail Committee, stated that this is a small triangle which abuts the Cheshire Line and that it is their hope to create awareness that this could be the origination of a Tri-State Trail which would originate in Ashburnham. She added that this would be huge for the Town. Briggs noted that this property is in foreclosure and that the Town could save money if they take it. Thoma stated that the Rail Trail might even offer to pay the taxes due if need be.

Janssens motioned to place this article on the warrant and to approve/recommend the article. It was seconded by Fagan and the motion carried.

Article 15 – Amend the Sewer budget to reflect change in retained earnings.

Briggs stated that this was an error that needs to be amended to change the funding source.

Janssens motioned to place this article on the warrant and to approve/recommend the article. It was seconded by Fagan and the motion carried.

Article 16 – Transfer money to Capital Fund

Article 17 – Transfer money to Stabilization Fund

Briggs stated that under article 16 they would return the funds to the Capital Plan and article 17 would be the remainder of free cash.

Janssens motioned to place these articles on the warrant and to approve/recommend the articles. It was seconded by Fagan and the motion carried.

Briggs stated that he needed to add one more article per Deb Phillips recommendation. He stated that when the DPW property on Williams and Platts Roads was surveyed one book and page wasn't included on the Williams Road side property and she wants it to be completely accurate.

Janssens motioned to place this additional article on the warrant and to approve/recommend the article. It was seconded by Fagan and the motion carried.

B. Proclamation/Recognition of United Nations Day – October 24, 2012

It was determined by all members that they would not sign this proclamation.

C. Approval – Special One-Day Liquor License Request

Briggs stated that Cushing Academy was planning a Reunion Weekend for June 7, 8 and 9, 2013 and that they are requesting a Special Liquor License for their events to be held on campus. ***Fagan motioned to approve the request and was seconded by Janssens. Motion carried.***

VIII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Briggs gave a brief update on the water tank noting that the tank on Gardner Hill was completed and on-line. He also noted that the overlay of Hastings Road would be done by the end of the week. He stated that the demolition of the High Street tank would begin in the next few weeks and the plaque would then be placed on the site. He also noted that there is \$200,000 remaining in the

grant funding and that they are looking at different alternatives on how to use these funds as they do not want to return any monies.

He also noted that the RFP for the sale of South Station is complete and ready to go and that he set the minimal bid at \$54,500. Fagan noted that he did not agree with this and that the minimal bid should be higher.

Briggs stated that Laura Dinardo our Conservation Agent submitted her resignation effective October 4th. He noted that she has done a great job for the Town and will be missed.

He stated that South Main Street has been fully reclaimed and the paving is scheduled for September 20th. He added that the sidewalks would also be done.

Briggs stated that he has received the letter from the Town of Ashby stating that they will not support the 911 regionalization with Ashburnham. He also noted that he has been asked by Ashby to join with them again in the CDBG grant application process but that the last time he had done all the work so he may not do this with them but would look at other towns.

Briggs stated that the Fire Department received an unsolicited Emergency Municipal Planning Grant in the amount of \$2,500 and if approved by the Selectmen, these funds along with monies voted within the Capital Plan would purchase a multi-band interoperable portable radio. He noted that he was asking the Board of Selectmen for their approval adding that he does recommend that they approve. ***Janssens motioned to support and approve the acceptance of this grant and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried.***

He stated that on Wednesday, September 12th he attended the MPO Meeting held at the MRPC office in Fitchburg. He stated that our route 101 south project was taken off the TIP as they were under the impression that the engineering wasn't done, but in fact it was, so he will be showing them the documentation and hopefully we will be back on the TIP for 2014 or 2015. He did add that sidewalks may be a small problem but that it was moving forward.

He also noted that he talked with USDA today to discuss our need to look at the dams in town, the Watatic Dam in particular, and the availability of any grants. He stated that he was told there were grants available so he would apply for help with the engineering.

Fagan stated that he wanted to discuss the minimal bid on the South Station property as he was not in favor and that it was too low. Briggs noted that if the amount was too high they probably wouldn't get any bids and Fagan stated that the difference is significant. Janssens stated that the Town Administrator has control of real estate and the Board of Selectmen has the ultimate decision to accept the bid.

XI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. August 20, 2012 – Regular Meeting

Fagan motioned to approve the minutes from the August 20, 2012 Regular Meeting and was seconded by Janssens. Motion carried.

B. September 4, 2012 – Regular Meeting

Janssens motioned to approve the minutes from the September 4, 2012 Regular Meeting and was seconded by Fagan. Motion carried. Vitone abstained.

X. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

XI. SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER MEETINGS

Fagan read the list of meetings as follows:

Committee/Board	Day/Date/Time	Location
Conservation Commission	Monday, Sept. 24, 6:30 p.m.	Lower Level – Town Hall
Council on Aging	Monday, Oct. 1, 10:00 a.m.	Lower Level – Town Hall
Water/Sewer Commission	Tuesday, Oct. 9, 6:00 p.m.	Lower Level – Town Hall
Board of Assessors	Wednesday, Oct. 10, 6:00 p.m.	Assessors Office – Town Hall
Conservation Commission	Monday, Oct. 22, 6:30 p.m.	Lower Level – Town Hall

XII. 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 and \$25.00 dog fines will be issued this month. If you have any questions please call the Town Clerk’s office at 978-827-4100 ext. 114.
- Final voter registration for the Special Town Meeting is Thursday, October 4, 2012 from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Town Clerk’s office, Town Hall.
- Special Town Meeting is Tuesday, October 16, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium at Oakmont Regional High School, 9 Oakmont Drive.
- Final registration for the State Election is Wednesday, October 17, 2012 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Town Clerk’s office, Town Hall.
- November 5, 2012, Monday – 12:00 noon – Last day for filing applications for absentee ballots for voters who will be out of town for the State Election.
- November 6, 2012, Tuesday – STATE ELECTION – 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, Ashburnham.

Athol Savings Bank is sponsoring their 4th Annual Pro-Shred Day to be held on Saturday, September 29th from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the parking lot in front of Town Hall. This is free on-site shredding services for the community.

A Community Health Fair is being held on Tuesday, October 9, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the Senior Center, upstairs at Town Hall. This is sponsored in partnership with the Ashburnham Council on Aging and Wachusett Manor with free admission. A light lunch will be served and flu shots will be available.

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 October 1, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

XIII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT – Steve Gallant made note that the flag in the Training Room was in the wrong corner. He stated that it should be on the right side. Vitone thanked Gallant and stated that they would correct this.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XV. ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,
 Sylvia Turcotte
 Assistant to the Town Administrator