

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2013 – 6:30 P.M.**  
**PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX – TRAINING ROOM**

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This meeting was aired live on local cable television.

PRESENT: Leo Janssens II, Chair, Duncan Phyfe, Member, Nick Davis, Clerk, Doug Briggs, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

I. SALUTE THE FLAG

Leo Janssens called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT (5 minute limit)                                 None

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Nick Davis motioned to approve the agenda as presented and Duncan Phyfe seconded. Motion carried.*

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORT

A. Planning Board – Associate Member appointment

Skip Nolan, Chair of the Planning Board, was present. He stated that an associate member was needed due to the illness of Joe Daigle. He noted that the Planning Board has a Special Permit hearing coming up on January 9, 2014 for the Wright Place Pub and they need a majority vote and right now they are missing a member. He stated that this was a joint appointment by the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board and that normally this was a three year appointment. He stated that George Cornwall was willing to serve as the associate member until July 1<sup>st</sup> and that he was recommending this appointment. *Nick Davis made the motion to appoint George Cornwall until July 1<sup>st</sup> as the associate member. Duncan Phyfe seconded and the motion carried.* Mr. Nolan noted that the Planning Board voted to appoint Mr. Cornwall at their last meeting.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Tree Lighting and Santa Parade held on December 6th

Leo Janssens stated that he was really impressed with the turnout even with the pouring rain. He stated that everyone outdid themselves and the Oakmont band was great. Doug Briggs expressed his thanks to the DPW, the Police, the Fire, the Firefighters Association, Parks & Rec and also Ed Schlott for all the work they did to make this event such a great success.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Announcement – Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) consideration of acquisition of land in Ashburnham

Leo Janssens stated the following: “In accordance with the provisions of 301 CMR 51.00, we would like to inform you that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acting through its Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), has under consideration the acquisition of approximately 42 (+/-) acres of land in the Town of Ashburnham. This land was formerly used as open space, and currently used for the same purpose. If acquired by the Commonwealth the land will be used as open space for conservation and recreation purposes and shall be incorporated into the state system of parks, reservation and forests. The property abuts the Ashburnham State Forest and is shown on the enclosed locus map marked “Exhibit A.”

Mr. Janssens also noted that this property was located on East Rindge Road, five or six miles from Ashburnham Center.

B. Approval of License Renewals

Nick Davis read the list of license renewals which is attached to the agenda. *Leo Janssens made the motion to approve the list of license renewals as read and was seconded by Nick Davis. Motion carried.*

C. Discussion – Evening with the Selectmen

Leo Janssens stated that he would like to hold a question and answer period where residents can come and discuss issues of concern. He stated there would be no votes, no debates, just talk. He stated that they need to be public and they would meet in the Training Room or at Town Hall, it would not be on camera and anyone can come. Nick Davis suggested they meet individually with local businesses. Mr. Janssens stated they would take the formality out and have no cameras. Duncan Phyfe asked about the not so simple questions and he suggested that they open for questions ahead of time. Leo Janssens stated that people just don't understand the system and he would like to meet on an off-night from the Selectmen's meetings. He stated that he wanted to meet in January and see the response. He stated that he would like to meet at 6:30 p.m. and if no one shows up after 15 minutes, then we leave. Duncan Phyfe suggested holding this at the start of regular meetings but this was not up for discussion. Nick Davis stated that they can try and suggested a Thursday night, January 16<sup>th</sup>, at the Public Safety Building, and to call it "Pitch to the Board of Selectmen". It was noted that they would work with Sylvia Turcotte to schedule this meeting in January.

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Doug Briggs stated that we still need members on many Boards and Committees but especially the Cable Advisory Board. He noted that there is only a year until our cable contract is done, so we need more members.

Mr. Briggs stated that he was working on the new union contract for the DPW and he would review the preliminary contract tonight in Executive Session with the Board of Selectmen.

He noted that the Executive Insurance Group, which includes himself, as well as Karen Murphy and Ralph Hicks, will meet to review the recommendations submitted by the Joint Insurance Groups. He stated that health insurance will be a big impact on the Town's budget this year.

Mr. Briggs stated that he has received all the FY15 budgets from his Department Heads and that he was pleased with them as they have submitted budgets that are very responsible. He also noted that he was working on the Capital Plan.

Doug Briggs stated that we were just notified, that for the second year in a row, Ashburnham's Town Report has won second place in the MMA Town Report contest. He stated that Topsfield, who won first place again, had a budget of \$23,500 for their Town Report while we only had \$1,600. He added that the Departments are now getting in to submitting photos and reports with more detail, which is a good thing. He stated that Sylvia Turcotte puts a lot of effort into this report.

He stated that we were notified on December 12<sup>th</sup> that our tax rate was certified at \$19.83. He stated that the Departments are now working to get the bills out.

He also noted that the Solar Project should be on line either this week or next week.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 2, 2013 Minutes – Regular Meeting

***Duncan Phyfe made the motion to approve the minutes of December 2, 2013 and was seconded by Nick Davis. Motion carried.***

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE      None

X. DECEMBER MEETINGS and EVENTS – Nick Davis read the meetings and events as follows:

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Wednesday, December 25 - Christmas Holiday

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Thursday, December 26 - Town Hall Closed

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XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nick Davis read the announcements as follows.

Town Clerk Reminders:

- January 1<sup>st</sup> and on – Open registration of voters at the Town Hall, Town Clerk’s Office, 32 Main Street, from 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Mondays and 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday thru Thursday.

The next scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Monday, January 6, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

He also noted that the Board of Selectmen extends their wishes to all for a Happy Holiday season.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT (5 minute limit)      None

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:03 p.m. Leo Janssens motioned 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 pending collective bargaining and to convene in open meeting only to adjourn. Nick Davis seconded and the motion carried. Roll call was taken.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

*At 7:35 p. m. Nick Davis motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Sylvia Turcotte  
Assistant to the Town Administrator