

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MONDAY – MARCH 4, 2013 – 6:30 p.m.  
TRAINING ROOM – PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX

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This meeting was aired live on local cable television.

PRESENT – Board of Selectmen: Ed Vitone, Chair, Leo Janssens, Clerk, and Duncan Phyfe, Member.  
Also in attendance: Doug Briggs, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

I. SALUTE THE FLAG

Ed Vitone 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

Mr. Vitone stated that he wanted to move the Briggs School Update to the next meeting which would be after the meeting on Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup> of the Briggs School Committee. Also Doug Briggs asked to add, under Old Business, the signing of the 39 South Main Street Release Deed by the Board. It was noted by Mr. Vitone that they would move this up to accommodate the Town Clerk who was present to notarize the signatures on the release deed. ***Leo Janssens motioned to approve the agenda as amended and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.***

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Release Deed – 39 So. Main Street

Mr. Briggs stated that the delay with this paperwork was because Town Counsel had to be sure that the book and page were accurate for the prospective owner who will have the property surveyed at his expense and bring in a deposit. He added that once the survey is complete the owner will bring in the balance of the purchase price. Leo Janssens made the motion to sign the Release Deed and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried. The Town Clerk notarized the signatures of the Board of Selectmen and affixed the Town Seal.

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Review of FY12 Audit with Bill Fraher

Mr. Vitone asked Bill Fraher to give his report. Mr. Fraher began by stating that the audit went well with no major adjustments with only minor manners. He stated that a lot of comments are the same due to the turnover in the accountant's office. Mr. Fraher distributed handouts and explained each graph and table. He noted that Ashburnham's Employee Benefits number was lower than other towns due to the Regional School and the lack of the retiree health insurance benefits. He also noted that although Ashburnham was within the 5% to 15% range for Percent of Budget re: Town Reserves, at 5.6%, most towns had adopted a 10% of budget policy.

Mr. Vitone asked what Mr. Fraher saw as the Town's #1 comment to fix and he responded that probably comments 1 and 5 which would help the audit process but that there wasn't anything significant. He did add that comment #2 regarding miscellaneous cash receipts might want to be looked at as the Town still had many departments collecting money.

B. Briggs School Update

Mr. Vitone stated that this update would be moved to the next scheduled meeting on 3/18/13.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Briggs stated that Bruce Whitney had been appointed by the Moderator to the Advisory Board. And he also noted that we were looking for interested persons to serve on the Cable Advisory Board. Mr. Janssens stated that the Cable Advisory Board appointments were temporary just until a contract is set. Mr. Vitone added that this Board will have to be sure to serve all the Town's needs in every area of the Town.

Mr. Briggs stated that on February 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. a bid from the Wachusett Animal Hospital for the Animal Control and Animal Inspector RFP was received and opened as the only qualified bidder. He stated that the total cost for year one was \$30,000 which is a weighted increase of about 4% over FY13. He stated that Wachusett served last year as interim and did a fine job for the Town. He noted that he would recommend the appointment and asked the Board to support this recommendation. ***Leo Janssens motioned to accept the Town Administrator's recommendation to award to Wachusett Animal Hospital and was seconded by Mr. Phyfe. Motion carried.*** Mr. Briggs added that this was the second time that we went out to bid for this appointment.

He stated that the Committee assigned to do the Ambulance Review would be presenting their report to the Board at their next meeting.

Mr. Briggs stated that the Capital Planning Committee had met and reviewed the proposed FY14 Capital Plan and that there was general support.

He noted that he was working with Ed Schlott and Dick Reynolds on an RFP for the front steps repairs and that Ed Schlott was working with Monty Tech on the new shed for Town Hall.

Mr. Briggs then noted that he received some news today regarding the Upper Naukeag Dam status which had been reclassified from high hazard to significant hazard, meaning it might happen but that it wasn't imminent or dangerous at this time. He noted that this was determined after an analysis by GCZ and Tighe & Bond along with their recommendation. He stated that now this will allow us to focus on the Watatic Dam which is classified as high hazard.

Mr. Briggs stated that he was asking the Board of Selectmen to authorize the over-expenditure in Snow & Ice. Vitone inquired about any possible reimbursement from the February blizzard and Mr. Briggs stated that Chief Zbikowski was submitting for reimbursement which would cover overtime and private plow drivers as well as any police and fire costs associated with the blizzard. ***Leo Janssens motioned to approve the overspending in the Snow & Ice account and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.***

Mr. Briggs stated that the Ashburnham-Westminster Rotary was again sponsoring the Employee of the Year Awards Dinner to be held on Thursday May 9<sup>th</sup>. He stated that each year they award one employee from Ashburnham, Westminster and the School District. He added that he was looking for recommendations for Ashburnham's recipient this year and noted that this is a great event.

He questioned the Board on what they wanted the Ambulance Study Committee to present to them at the next meeting, whether they wanted their recommendation or to prioritize the top 3. He stated that they need to know how to proceed. Mr. Janssens stated that he would like three options listing the pros and cons. Mr. Vitone stated that they should present all data but give them the top with a clear Committee view, their first option/recommendation with all the pros and cons on all other options.

Mr. Briggs then asked what the status was on the VMS Building. Mr. Vitone stated that the Capital Planning Committee discussed this at their meeting and after some debate, it was decided that the VMS Building was a surplus building and that there was no need to sustain it. They also noted that if the building came down it would have to be replaced with a suitable memorial. Mr. Briggs stated that he had verbally discussed the possibility of taking down the building with Christina Sargent, the Chair of the Historical Commission and that she personally didn't have an issue with it but that she would go to her Commission members for an official response. Mr. Vitone stated that the Board of Selectmen would defer their recommendation until they received a response from the Historical Commission. Mr. Janssens stated that once the Historical Commission came in with their decision then the Board would go forward and Mr. Phyfe agreed. Mr. Vitone stated that the next step would be to go to the voters for funds to demolish.

Mr. Briggs then noted that there was a young man in the audience and asked him why he was present at this meeting. He responded that his name was RJ Dimacale and he was in attendance to work on his Citizens badge and to earn his Webelos badge. The Board congratulated him.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 19, 2013 – Joint Meeting with Advisory Board

*Mr. Phyfe motioned to approve the minutes, as presented, from the February 19, 2013 Joint Meeting with the Advisory Board and was seconded by Mr. Janssens. Motion carried.*

XI. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

X. MARCH MEETINGS and EVENTS

Mr. Janssens read the list of meetings and events as follows:

Mon.,	March 11	10:00 a.m. 6:30 p.m.	Council on Aging Conservation Commission	Lower Level – Town Hall Lower Level – Town Hall
Tues.,	March 12	6:00 p.m.	Water/Sewer Commission	Lower Level – Town Hall
Wed.,	March 13	5:00 p.m.	Board of Assessors	Assessor’s Office– Town Hall

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Janssens read the announcements as follows:

Town Clerk Reminders:

- **Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>** – Last day for filing nomination papers for Town Election with the Board of Registrars – until 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall.
- **Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>** – at 5:00 p.m. – Last day to file objections or withdrawals of nomination papers to the Town Clerk.
- Rabies Clinic to be held on Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Municipal Grounds Building, 8 Williams Road. The cost will be \$15.00 and owners should bring the current rabies certificate.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on Monday, March 18, 2013, at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT (5 minute limit) Bill Johnson asked when the FY14 budget would be ratified by the Board of Selectmen and Mr. Briggs stated that they would do this at their next meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

*At 7:15 p.m. Mr. Janssens motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Mr. Phyfe. Motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Sylvia Turcotte  
Assistant to the Town Administrator