

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MONDAY – APRIL 1, 2013 – 6:30 p.m.
TRAINING ROOM – PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX

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 they did not have an update on the Briggs Project under Presentations & Reports and that it would be moved to the next meeting. *Leo Janssens motioned to approve the agenda as amended and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.*

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

V. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Vitone asked Leo Janssens to read an email that was received by the Board. Mr. Janssens read as follows: “When you first said that you were going to run again for selectmen, I was excited at the prospect of creating a Capital Plan and you did. What came after not only surprised and disappointed me. I feel that you and Doug have started the systematic and calculated dismantling of the Ashburnham Fire Department, prompted by the Zibby haters who hid in the shadows and fuel this process. The way Jamie Roger and I were completely censored and pushed aside. As Anne said referring to the two Joe as Joe Financial and Joe Electrical made me look like I couldn’t possibly understand what you and your hand picked committee were saying. Also after meeting with the committee which was cordial, but totally obvious to us that they may have listened but their minds were already made up, much like yours. You had the opportunity to slow down this process and allow for open and constructive dialogue, instead you fueled the anger I believe you are already feeling. As for regionalization, you and Doug with your actions in Ashby have all but eliminated any chance of that ever happening, another case where you put money ahead of people.”

Mr. Vitone stated that he had responded to the email. He then gave a brief history on how the Capital Plan was established. He stated that each year \$450,000 was set aside for Capital items in the Town’s budget plan. He noted that \$125,000 was always allocated for road repairs which left \$325,000 for all other capital needs. He added that the “wish list” for the Town is \$5.2 million dollars which includes \$2.5m for the Fire Department, \$2m for the DPW and the all other departments make up the balance. He added that the “wish list” exceeds the Town’s available funds and all department heads understand this.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Continued discussion on Ambulance Study Committee Report

At this time Mr. Vitone asked Leo Janssens for his input on the survey data and how he would like to proceed with this issue. Mr. Janssens gave a brief statement (copy attached) noting that the surveys produced a lot of data but that there was no absolutes as each town is different. He noted that Woods takes between 14 and 15 minutes to get to the center of Ashburnham on average. He added that the money is available to hire one paramedic which would replace and return the Department to the 2008 staffing level.

Duncan Phyfe gave a statement noting that in his opinion, the data in the survey shows that ALS is affordable and that adding one paramedic/per diem and having 24/7 coverage was desired. He noted that it all comes down to what's best for the community. He noted that budget-wise, we just can't hire two this year. He did add that the per diems haven't fulfilled the requirements and that we can't be rewarding this behavior.

Mr. Vitone stated that he took the data and spent many hours on the report and was comfortable with his analysis. He did note that reviewing these statistics, no town was the same and that the data showed that Ashburnham was on the highest end of the cost per call numbers. He stated that we should use Woods between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 6:00 a.m. as well as weekends. He noted that there are about 37 calls all year in the evening hours and right now Woods has been covering about 1/3 of these calls. He stated that they should find a way to have Woods cover the midnight to 6:00 a.m. hours and then all other times could be covered by EMT/Paramedics.

Mr. Vitone noted the fact that the DPW is also down a staff person and they make do with paid snow plowers during their busy winter hours. He stated that he would support Option 4 for the Fire.

Mr. Janssens stated that if they hired someone then with the two vacancies coming up in two years or so, this would be a benefit. He stated that he suggests that they go forward and hire someone and study this for the two years. He added that if we had someone it would increase response time.

Mr. Phyfe stated that they should make sure that our department is in a good place and not hurt them with the Chief retiring soon. He added that we're here because of failure and we don't want to put the Department in the hole. He noted that he agrees with hiring one person.

Duncan Phyfe made the motion to go with Option 3, to increase the staff by one paramedic and to now go to the Advisory Board for their input. Leo Janssens seconded. Two votes for and one vote against (Mr. Vitone).

Mr. Vitone asked if the Board would approve adding his analysis report to the Ambulance Study Report and Mr. Janssens noted that the voters have a right to see all the information but that it should be a separate document. Mr. Phyfe stated that the documents need to be tied together as both documents will be informative as citizens need the background. ***Duncan Phyfe made the motion to accept the Committee's report with a reference to review the statistical analysis and was seconded by Leo Janssens. All in favor. Motion carried.***

B. Final discussion and review May 4, 2013 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles and FY14 Budget

Doug Briggs began the review of the Annual Town Meeting articles by stating that the first eight articles were under the Consent Agenda as in the past. He stated that these include articles that are constant each year. ***Duncan Phyfe motioned to accept and recommend Articles 1 through 8 and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.***

He noted that Article 9 was the FY14 budget and he added that all monies for the Fire Department budget line were currently in the Advisory Board budget and would be moved. He then explained about the School line and that it was level funded. Mr. Vitone noted that if the school certifies their budget at a higher amount than what we have budgeted, there may be the need for an override. Mr. Briggs noted that Article 10 was for the override if it's needed.

Mr. Briggs stated that Article 11 was the Water budget which went up due to the new truck and also the water tank project. He stated that Article 12 was the Sewer budget which went down

due to sewer charges with Gardner being lower and that they were going into the last three years of the sewer loan.

He stated that Article 13 was payment of a prior year bill and that this was for a 2009 abatement for Verizon who recently won their suit against the State. He stated that the amount was \$34,000 plus interest which brings it to about \$44,000 and that they would use excess overlay funds from 2010 and 2011 to pay this amount which would be put into 2009 and that part of the actual interest, approximately \$5,000, would be requested as a Reserve Fund transfer which would take care of the balance due.

He went on to Article 14 which he noted was the Capital items and Article 15 which was the capital item for the AWRSD.

Mr. Briggs stated that Article 16 was for the replacement of weapons for the Police Department adding that their current weapons are 18 years old and they just don't have enough for all personnel. He added that it was cheaper to replace them. Bill Johnson inquired why this wasn't included in their budget and Mr. Vitone stated that it was but he wanted it as a separate article as it should be separate.

Mr. Briggs stated that Article 17 was for the purchase of a new truck for the Water/Sewer Department and Article 18 was to raze the VMS building. He noted that it was found that there was no value to the building so it should be demolished.

He stated that Article 19 was the citizen's petition for the Retiree Health Care benefits and that Article 20 was to set up a stabilization fund for Monty Tech. Article 21 was to set up a Veterans Memorial behind the Town Hall building at the site of the VMS. Mr. Janssens asked that they move this article to right after Article 18 and Mr. Briggs said that they would do that.

Mr. Briggs stated that Article 22 was a Wetlands Bylaw change to note a meeting place change and the Board members all thought that this may not be necessary and asked Mr. Briggs to talk to them about it. He stated that Article 23 was the solar project agreement with tenK Energy and he noted that the Light Department was still working on the PPA with a start-up date by July.

He stated that Article 24 was the donation of land for conservation, Article 25 would rescind the vote on the Investar PILOT agreement and Article 26 was another citizen's petition on "corporations not being natural people".

Ed Vitone stated that they should add one more article for \$20,000 for pension liability not covered by the Worcester County Retirement System. He stated that this would be funds to cover any category 4 employees that come on board for their pension liability.

It was noted by Mr. Vitone that they would accept the two citizen's petitions but that Town Counsel would need to approve the wording.

Mr. Vitone asked for a motion to accept articles 9 thru 26 as well as the new article. ***Duncan Phyfe motioned to recommend Articles 9 thru 26 and the new article. Leo Janssens seconded and the motion carried.***

Duncan Phyfe motioned to recommend articles 9 thru 25 excluding 19 and 25 and Leo Janssens seconded. Motion carried. Leo Janssens motioned to approve the new article for the unfunded pension and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.

Leo Janssens made the motion that he was not in favor of Article 19 and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.

There was a consensus by all members of the Board that Town Counsel would review the verbiage in Article 26 and that they didn't really support it.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of State Primary Warrant

Leo Janssens read the following: *"In the name of the Commonwealth, you are hereby required to notify and warn the inhabitants of said (City or Town) who are qualified to vote in the Special State Primaries to vote at Precinct #1 J.R. Briggs Elementary School, 96 Williams Road, on Tuesday, the Thirtieth of April, 2013, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. for the following purpose:*

To cast their votes in the Special State Primaries for the candidates of political parties for the following office:

SENATOR IN CONGRESS... FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

Hereof fail not and make return of this warrant with your doings thereon at the time and place of said voting.

Given under our hands this 1st day of April, 2013."

Leo Janssens motioned to approve the warrant for posting and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.

B. Approval of Town Election Warrant

Leo Janssens read the following: *"In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of said Town who are qualified to vote in elections and in Town affairs to meet in the J.R. Briggs Elementary School Gym, 96 Williams Road, Ashburnham.*

WARRANT 2013-2014

Tuesday the 30th day of April, 2013

at 7:00 o'clock in the morning

to bring in their ballots for:

Moderator – For one year term

One Board of Selectmen – For three year term

Two Board of Health – For three year term

One Planning Board – For five year term

One Planning Board – For four year term

Two Library Trustees – For three year term

One Library Trustee – For two year term

One Municipal Light Board – For three year term

Two Ashburnham School Committee – For three year term

Two Westminster School Committee – For three year term

Hereof fail not and make return of this warrant with your doings thereon at the time and place of said meeting. Given under our hands this 1st day of April, 2013."

Duncan Phyfe motioned to approve the warrant as read and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.

VIII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Mr. Briggs began by stating that there were still openings on a number of boards and committees. He stated that he had sent out a letter to residents on Route 119 to see if there was any interest to serve on the Cable Advisory Board but hadn't received any responses as of this date.

He gave an update on the Water Tank Project noting that they had received the final approval on the \$100,000 camera system which would be housed at the Public Safety Building. He also noted that the \$5,000 grant through MIIA would be used for surveillance cameras at the parks. He added that we may tie in with the Briggs School project as well. He noted that they want to install heat sensors to protect the communications equipment at the Water Tank and that approval was also given for an agitator and variable speed motor for the tank.

He asked for the Board’s support to place notices for the Town Election and Town Meeting on the “Code Red” system. The Board unanimously supported this.

He stated that the Easter Egg Hunt held on Saturday, March 30th was a great success. He stated that they had 1,000 eggs and it wasn’t enough. He also noted that the DPW helped with this event which proved to be very well attended.

He also wanted to make note that the Parks & Rec Committee is planning a “15th Birthday Party” for Winchester Park. He noted that this event will take place sometime in June. Mr. Vitone stated that the Parks & Rec group is worthy of significant mention as they have done a phenomenal job.

Mr. Briggs noted that he had several nominations for the Rotary Club Employee of the Year and would announce the recipient soon.

IX. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 18, 2013 – Regular Meeting

Duncan Phyfe motioned to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2013 Regular Meeting and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.

X. APRIL MEETINGS and EVENTS

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

Mon., April 8	10:00 a.m.	Council on Aging	Lower Level – Town Hall
	6:30 p.m.	Conservation Commission	Lower Level – Town Hall
Tues., April 9	6:00 p.m.	Water/Sewer Commission	Lower Level – Town Hall
Wed., April 10	5:00 p.m.	Board of Assessors	Assessor’s Office– Town Hall
Mon., April 15	PATRIOTS DAY HOLIDAY		

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Janssens read the announcements as follows:

Town Clerk Reminders:

- **Wednesday, April 10th** – Final Registration for the Town Election and Special State Primary – Town Clerk’s office – 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **Tuesday, April 16th** – Final Registration for the Annual Town Meeting – Town Clerk’s office – 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- **Monday, April 29th** – At 12:00 noon – last day for filing applications for absentee ballots for voters who will be out of town for the Town Election and Special State Primary.
- **Tuesday, April 30th** – Town Election and Special State Primary. Polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. at the J.R. Briggs Elementary School Gym.
- **Saturday, May 4th** – Annual Town Meeting at 10:00 a.m. Oakmont Regional High School Auditorium.
- **Dog Licenses** are now available at the Town Clerk’s office. Fees are \$10 for altered dogs and \$15 for unaltered dogs. Please bring in current rabies certificate. If licensing by mail, please include check, rabies certificate, and a self-addressed envelope and mail to Town Clerk’s Office, 32 Main Street, Ashburnham, 01430. **NEW THIS YEAR-** online payments can be made for dog licenses **RENEWALS ONLY**. Please call Town Clerk’s office first at 978-827-4100 ext. 114 to verify that a current rabies certificate is on file. Complete the information online and the dog license will be mailed.
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day – Saturday, April 6th from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Highway Barn – 17 Central Street. You should pre-register at the Fire Department located at 99 Central Street with Captain Rekos. First 20 residents from

Ashburnham who are pre-registered will be free of charge. All others will be subject to ½ car charge of \$28.00 and a full car charge of \$49.00.

- The 12th Annual Ashburnham/Westminster Benefit Hockey Game will be held on Saturday, April 6th at 4:30 p.m. at the Iorio Arena at Cushing Academy. Doors will open at 4:00 p.m. Please consider making a donation to this worthy cause as 100% of the money earned will go directly to the Charlie Johnson family.

Because of the Patriots Day Holiday on Monday, April 15th, the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2013, at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT (5 minute limit) None

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:52 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