

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

This meeting was aired live on local cable television.

PRESENT: Ed Vitone, Chair, Leo Janssens, Clerk, Duncan Phyfe, 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

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

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. VMS Building Use Committee Final Report and Recommendation

Members of the VMS Building Use Committee present were: Bill Johnson, Rebecca Cinclair, Cheryl Goller and Mark Carlisle. Mr. Johnson began by thanking the members of the Committee for their diligence. He also thanked Doug Briggs, Sylvia Turcotte, Ed Schlott and Christina Sargent for their assistance in gathering many of the documents included in their report. He then explained the process that the Committee took to get to this final report. He noted that the sale of the building was discussed at some length but they found it to be not viable due to restrictions regarding the parcel of land that it is situated on, which includes the Town Hall, the Library, and the Stevens Building as well as the VMS Building.

Mr. Johnson noted that the Committee came up with six options, pros and cons, and that they voted unanimously, 4 – 2, to recommend Option 6, which is the Demolition of the Building. He stated that this recommendation was not made lightly but that it is the most feasible as there is no good opportunity to re-serve the building. He added that the Final Report was accepted by all the Committee members before the actual vote was taken.

Ed Vitone thanked the members of the Committee for serving and noted that they were an example of the people that move the Town forward. Leo Janssens stated that they did a good job on the report and Duncan Phyfe concurred noting that it was very thorough. He did inquire about the mothballing of the building and Mr. Johnson stated that they decided to do this because it was the best way to go.

Mr. Vitone stated that all the history of the VMS Building is in this report. He noted that some comments he's heard were that they could do some work to rehab the building but not all, which can't be done as they can't do minimal repairs due to ADA Regulations. He added that in order to rehab the building code deficiencies, things would need to be done just with the basic infrastructure. He did note that the report and data presented by the Committee is valuable.

Mr. Vitone stated that the Board of Selectmen now has options: they could reject both the report and the recommendation; they could accept the report and reject the recommendation; or they could accept the report and accept the recommendation. He also noted that they needed to think about the speed to act on this.

Mr. Phyfe made the motion to accept the report of the VMS Building Use Committee with the Board's thanks and was seconded by Mr. Janssens. Motion carried.

Mr. Phyfe inquired if the Committee had toured the VMS Building and if it was empty at the time. Mr. Johnson stated that they did tour the entire building but that the North Country Sustainability Group was still there at the time. He did add that the Committee relied on the Feasibility Study. He noted that the removal of the oil tank would be the first step. Mr. Phyfe also inquired about any vandalism to the building and Mr. Briggs noted that Ed Schlott, the Custodian, does go and check on the building often.

Mark Carlisle noted that the oil tank is an ongoing liability for the Town and has to be addressed. Mr. Vitone agreed noting that the risk is there with time as well and that he personally feels they should get it out now and the risk would go down. Mr. Johnson also noted that they have to remediate the asbestos either way and Mr. Vitone added that with limited funds they should do something in the short term. Mr. Janssens agreed that the oil tank was the number one priority.

Mr. Vitone stated that they should refer this to the Capital Planning Committee with these two options – 1) \$2.4M to rehab the building or 2) demolish, and then they would have enough data to go forward.

Mr. Phyfe voiced his concern about any contamination from the oil tank and Mr. Briggs stated that the contamination could be under the tank as well. Mr. Vitone stated that he was inclined to recommend placing this on the warrant for the Town Meeting and Mr. Phyfe stated that it seems like the logical thing to do. Mr. Janssens added that they do need to find out if there is any contamination there.

Mr. Vitone inquired if the Capital Plan had the capacity and Mr. Briggs responded yes.

Gail Dumont asked if it is contaminated, how would this affect the playground and for how long. Mr. Vitone responded that it could be as little as a day and Mr. Janssens added that every case is different. Mr. Vitone added that now or later, it's a cost, but it has to be done. He also noted that the voters will need to approve the funds for this.

Mr. Janssens stated that when the VMS Building was built it made sense to have the school there but it has served its purpose. Mr. Vitone stated that the Town has two buildings, the VMS and the Stevens, and there just isn't any good use for the VMS and it has no architectural significance. Mr. Phyfe noted that he would be interested to see what the Capital Planning Committee will recommend and Mr. Janssens agreed.

Mr. Vitone asked Mr. Briggs to check with the Historical Commission regarding the possible demolition and he noted his great appreciation to the Committee for their diligence and hard work and thanked them.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Discussion/vote on permanent meeting place for the Board of Selectmen

Mr. Briggs began by stating that they would not vote on this tonight. He stated that he and Sylvia Turcotte met with Matt Bourgault, the Executive Manager of the Ashburnham-Westminster Cable Access TV to see what was available for us to do to set up the Training Room as the permanent meeting place and to find out what funds would be needed.

Mr. Vitone explained how they needed to make a decision on the venue for their meetings and how these funds, which were specifically set aside for this purpose through Comcast could be used. Mr. Briggs stated that they were trying to determine what they can do for us and that it depends on the set up. Mr. Vitone noted that we're not quite ready yet due to space restraints.

Mr. Briggs stated that Mr. Bourgault would look into this and get back to him with some scenarios that might work.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Briggs began by stating that there are still openings on Boards and Committees. He noted that Andrew Henderson of 285 Ashby Road has sent in a letter of interest to serve on the Conservation Commission and that the Commission has recommended his appointment. Mr. Briggs stated that he was asking the Board for their support of this appointment. ***Mr. Janssens motioned to approve the appointment and was seconded by Mr. Phyfe. Motion carried.***

Mr. Briggs advised the Board that he received one bid for the Property Tax Assessment Service RFP which was due on January 23rd. He stated that the bid was from RRG (Regional Resource Group) who has done a great job for the Town for the past three years. He noted the bid for three years was as follows:

- Fiscal year 1 (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014) \$75,000
- Fiscal year 2 (July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015) \$76,900
- Fiscal year 3 (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016) \$78,800

He noted that it was \$74,500 for their services for FY13. He again stated that RRG has been doing a great job and that abatements were down. He asked the Board for their approval for a three-year contract with RRG and that he does recommend this. ***Mr. Janssens motioned to support the Town Administrator's recommendation to enter into a three-year agreement with RRG and was seconded by Phyfe. Motion carried.***

Mr. Briggs noted that he met with Pat and Edmund Frederick regarding their lease of the Stevens Building which is due for renewal in June. He stated that they are good tenants who keep the building in good stead and also pay their bills on time. He stated that he would need to talk with the Library Trustees in order to move forward on this so he is planning on meeting with them soon.

He stated that this past weekend he attended the MMA Annual Meeting in Boston and he thanked the Board of Selectmen for allowing him to attend. He stated that he was proud to accept the second place award for our 2011 Annual Town Report in Category II (population 5,000 to 12,499). He stated that this award is given out each year by the MMA in consideration of layout and design, quality and depth of information, organization, originality, and overall usefulness of the report to the residents. He stated that Sylvia has worked very hard each year putting this report together and it's good to see recognition for a great job. He also noted that the Town Report is a great tool for historical research with an abundance of data and has proven helpful many times recently. Mr. Vitone added that writing the annual report is a nuisance but it is invaluable for future historical fact finding.

Mr. Briggs also noted that the Town received an award from MIIA for demonstrating excellent employee safety by incurring no losses in Workers' Compensation for three consecutive years. He added that the award also identified that "Ashburnham demonstrates how small communities with limited resources can effectively control the cost of risk". He stated that we also received a \$5,000 grant through MIIA to help streamline emergency communications to necessary departments and we have also earned \$6,257 in credits from MIIA for proactive measures of preventing losses by thoroughly researching options, including consistent consultation with the MIIA risk management team. He added that MIIA recognized that this was a result of proactive teamwork. Mr. Vitone added his thanks to Doug and his management team for doing such a great job.

Mr. Briggs noted that the Town would be holding a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on Saturday, April 6, 2013 at the Highway Barn at 17 Central Street and that the hours of collection would be from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. He added that this would be funded with money voted on at

Town Meeting. Mr. Vitone suggested maybe using CodeRed to let everyone know about this and he noted that there were many complaints last time a collection day was held because residents had to call beforehand and some were turned away. Mr. Briggs stated that he would take care of that.

He stated that there was a water main break at the intersection of Route 101 and Corey Hill Road on Thursday last week. He noted that it was a coupling that broke so it didn't take very long to fix. He stated that they used CodeRed to notify 59 people on Corey Hill Road and Hillandale Road about this water break and that it worked well. Mr. Phyfe noted that there are two levels of notification with the CodeRed system so this was a good way to get information out without using the emergency level.

Mr. Briggs also noted that he was notified by Debbie Phillips that the closing should take place on the Williams Road property on Thursday.

Mr. Briggs notified the Board that the Fire Department had been approved for an unsolicited grant in the amount of \$1,500 from the State for the purchase of new fire prevention videos for grades K through 5 and that these new videos would replace the VHS tapes that are about 15 years old. He added that any funds left over would be used to purchase fire safety handouts and educational items. Mr. Briggs stated that he would like the approval of the Board to accept this grant as this is an excellent opportunity. *Phyfe motioned to endorse the acceptance of this grant and was seconded by Janssens. Motion carried.*

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 22, 2013 – Regular Meeting

Mr. Janssens motioned to approve the minutes, as presented, from the January 22, 2013 Regular Meeting and was seconded by Mr. Phyfe. Motion carried.

XI. BOS CORRESPONDENCE None

X. FEBRUARY MEETINGS and EVENTS

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

Fri.,	February 8	2 nd Annual WinterFest Events – Sweeney Playground	6:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Sat.,	February 9	Continued WinterFest Fun – 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (This event was postponed from Feb. 1 and 2 due to weather conditions.)	
Mon.,	February 11	10:00 a.m. Council on Aging Board 6:30 p.m. Conservation Commission	Lower Level – Town Hall Lower Level – Town Hall
Tues.,	February 12	6:00 p.m. Water/Sewer Commission	Lower Level – Town Hall
Wed.,	February 13	5:00 p.m. Board of Assessors 7:00 p.m. Municipal Light Board	Assessor's Office Town Hall Light Plant – Conference Room
Mon.,	February 19	PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY	
Mon.,	February 25	7:00 p.m. TOWN CAUCUS	Library – upstairs

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Janssens 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)
- **Thursday, February 14th** - Final registration for the Citizens Caucus – hours to register 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall.

- **Monday, February 25th at 7:00 p.m.** – Citizens Caucus – Malcolm Stewart Room at Stevens Memorial Library.
- **Tuesday, March 12th** – Last day for filing nomination papers for Town Election with the Board of Registrars – until 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall.
- **Thursday, March 28th** – Last day to file objections or withdrawals of nomination papers for the Town Election to the Town Clerk – until 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall.
- **Wednesday, April 10th** – Final registration of voters for the Town Election – 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Town Clerk’s office.
- **Monday, April 15th** – Final registration of voters for the Annual Town Meeting – 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Town Clerk’s office.
- **Monday, April 29th** – Last day up until 12:00 noon for filing applications for absentee ballots for voters who will be out of town for the Town Election.
- **Tuesday, April 30th** – TOWN ELECTION – polls open at 9:00 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. – Auditorium at Oakmont Regional High School.
- The 2013 Census Forms have been mailed to each residence. Please update information if necessary, sign the form and return in the enclosed envelope. Failure to respond shall result in removal from the active voting list and may result in removal from voter registration rolls. If you have not received a form or have any questions please call the Town Clerk at 978-827-4100 ext. 114.

Monday, February 18th is the Presidents Day Holiday so the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on Tuesday, February 19, 2013, at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT Gail Dumont asked what the status was on the solar farms. Mr. Briggs stated that Investar was on the Municipal Light Department agenda for their next meeting and Ten-k Energy is excited and wants the same agreement as Investar, looking for a 3 mg watt facility except that they want to lease the land. He added they want to be online some time in July but this needs to go before Town Meeting first for approval.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:36 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