
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2015 – 6:30 P.M.
TRAINING ROOM AT PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

This meeting was aired live and taped for local television.

PRESENT: Leo Janssens II, Chair, Duncan Phyfe, Member, Doug Briggs, Town Administrator, and Sylvia Turcotte, Executive Assistant. Nick Davis was not in attendance.

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 minutes limit)

Dottie Munroe who is a member of the 250th Celebration Committee extended an invitation to all artists, of all ages, to participate in the “Paint the Town” event to be held on October 9th and 10th. She stated that all medians may be used and that it must be a scene in Ashburnham. She also noted that a price may be put on the items if they wish to sell them. She stated that anyone with questions or if they are looking for suggestions, can contact her by calling 978-827-4005.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS None

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Recap of meeting on Joint Application between the Meissners and the Town

Doug Briggs explained the joint application request and the history behind it. He stated that the wetlands on the Meissners property are growing and they want to contain the flow. He noted that the Town will fix the sidewalks and the culvert and also put a drain on their property. He added that the Meissners want to put in retaining ponds but they need the Conservation Commission’s approval. He stated that the Notice of Intent for the joint application would be submitted and the Conservation Commission would meet and approve it, then the DEP would review and also the Army of Corps Engineers. He added that they would have to replicate the wetlands and that they are looking at the River Street parcel (the old Boy Scout area) to satisfy the DEP and that it will also require Town Meeting approval. He then stated that this needs a vote by the Board of Selectmen to authorize him to sign the Notice of Intent. ***Leo Janssens made the motion to authorize Doug Briggs to sign the Notice of Intent and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.***

Bill Johnson inquired as to who would be paying for this and what the cost would be. Doug Briggs stated that he didn’t know the cost yet but it would probably be \$100,000 to \$125,000 and would be a capital

expense. He also added that right now they are just looking at a plan and that it would be up to the DEP and the Corps of Engineers. He did state however that the retaining wall needs to be fixed either way.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Vote to accept MGL 32B, Sections 21-23 – Adoption of new health insurance process

Doug Briggs explained the process noting that they are looking for a plan design change that would need to be passed by the unions. He added that the Board needs to vote to accept this so the process can go forward. ***Duncan Phyfe made the motion that the Town elects to engage in the process to change health insurance benefits under M.G.L. c.32B, Sections 21-23.” Leo Janssens seconded and the motion carried.***

B. FY16 Budget Presentation

Doug Briggs gave a presentation on the proposed FY16 Budget which is attached. During the presentation Leo Janssens inquired about how every \$1.00 from the taxes and what we spend and Doug Briggs stated \$600,000. Bill Johnson noted that people should go to the DOR website to check on tax rates in the State. He stated that Ashburnham is ranked at 186 in actual dollars. Joe Oliveira stated that we should give this presentation to explain things at the Annual Town Meeting. Leo Janssens asked Doug Briggs to work with Mayor Hawke in Gardner and his group on unfunded mandates and how to get things changed. There followed a brief discussion on unfunded mandates, school busing and the school transportation budget.

Doug Briggs noted that the timeline for the Board of Selectmen’s review process would depend on when we get the Governor’s budget around March 5th. There was some discussion on the School’s proposed budget.

Leo Janssens noted that the Town gives service and our biggest asset is our employees. Doug Briggs stated that we are only adding one new employee at the Library and a part time position in the Land Use Department where we’re not really adding anyone, just moving them.

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Doug Briggs stated that he needs the Board of Selectmen’s support for his plan for the DPW where he would move one employee from the Water and Sewer Department to the DPW. ***Duncan Phyfe motioned to support the Town Administrator’s plan for the DPW as noted and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.***

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 29, 2014 Minutes – Special Meeting - ***Duncan Phyfe motioned to approve the minutes of the December 29, 2014 Special Meeting and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.***

B. January 20, 2015 Minutes – Regular Meeting—It was noted by Leo Janssens that these minutes would be approved at the next meeting.

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE None

X. FEBRUARY MEETINGS AND EVENTS – Leo Janssens read the following:

- Monday, 2/23 - @7:00 p.m. – Citizens Caucus – Malcolm Stewart Room at Library

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS – Leo Janssens read the following:

Town Clerk Reminders:

- January 1st 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.
- February 23rd, Monday – Citizens Caucus 7:00 p.m. – Stevens Memorial Library, Malcolm Steward Room, 20 Memorial Drive.
- Census forms were mailed out to all residents in January. Please verify the information, make any needed changes, and return to Town Clerk in enclosed envelope. Failure to respond will result in removal from the active voting list. If you did not receive a form or have any questions regarding the form, please call the Town Clerk’s office at 978-827-4100 extension 3.
- Rabies Clinic will be held on Saturday, March 21st at the Municipal Grounds Building, 8 Williams Road from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The cost is \$15.00. Please bring current rabies certificate. Cats must be brought in carriers and brought during the last half hour of the clinic. Dog licenses will be available for Ashburnham residents.

The 250th Birthday Bash will be held on Sunday, February 22nd from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. The Birthday Bash will include performances by the Youth Chorus, the North Country Youth String Orchestra, an historical Video, a raffle, as well as an exhibit of artwork by the J.R. Briggs school children with a theme of “What Ashburnham means to me”. At 4:00 p.m. there will be a Birthday Cake Celebration. Bill Johnson noted that it will be held at Oakmont Regional High School in the Auditorium.

The next scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Monday, March 2, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT (5 minute limit)

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:43 p.m. Leo Janssens stated that the Board will enter into Executive Session to deliberate upon matters, which if done in open meeting could detrimentally affect the position of the Town regarding strategy with respect to ongoing collective bargaining and to only reconvene into open session to adjourn.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:03 p.m. Leo Janssens motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Duncan Phye. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Executive Assistant