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*JOINT MEETING  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND  
ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES  
MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2015 – 6:30 P.M.  
TRAINING ROOM AT PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING*

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This meeting was aired live and taped for local television.

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

Advisory Board members present were: Bill Johnson, Chair, Bruce Whitney, Allison Weissensee, Ron Putnam, Jaime Piedrafite and Gail Dumont. Joe Oliveira 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)

Joe Benavidez of the Gardner News advised that he was taping the meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

***Duncan Phyfe made the motion to approve the agenda as presented and was seconded by Nick Davis. Motion carried.***

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of the Easter Egg Hunt held on Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> in the Gym at Oakmont

Leo Janssens read that Steve Coswell, Chair of the 250<sup>th</sup> Committee stated that the event was very well attended with many children enjoying the activities.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of the Town Election Warrant for Posting

Nick Davis read the posting as follows:

*“Greetings.*

*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 John R. Briggs Elementary School Gym, 96 Williams Road, Ashburnham.*

*WARRANT 2015 – 2016  
Tuesday the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2015  
At 9:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.  
To bring in their ballots for:*

*One Moderator – For one year term  
One Board of Selectmen – For three year term  
One Board of Selectmen – For one year term  
Two Board of Health – For three year term  
One Planning Board – For five year term  
Two Library Trustees – For three year term  
One Municipal Light Board – For three year term  
One Ashburnham School Committee – For three year term  
One 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.”*

***Duncan Phyfe motioned to approve the posting and Nick Davis seconded. Motion carried.***

B. “Purple Heart Town” Proclamation

Leo Janssens stated that we received a request on March 17<sup>th</sup> from Leo David Agnew, the Department Commander Massachusetts Military Order of the Purple Heart, Combat Wounded. He is requesting that a proclamation be drafted by the Selectmen honoring all veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice and shed their blood in all wars from Ashburnham. Nick Davis read the proclamation as follows:

*“WHEREAS, the people of the Town of Ashburnham have great admiration and the utmost gratitude for all the men and women who have selflessly served their country and this community in the Armed Forces for the good of all; and*

*WHEREAS, contributions and sacrifices of the men and women from Ashburnham who served in harm’s way in the Armed Forces have been vital in maintaining the freedom and the way of life enjoyed by our citizens; and*

*WHEREAS, citizens of our community have been killed in action while serving in the Armed Forces and have been posthumously awarded the Purple Heart for their ultimate sacrifice; and*

*WHEREAS, citizens of our community have been awarded the Purple Heart for their bodily sacrifice of being wounded in action while engaged in combat; and*

*WHEREAS, the Purple Heart is the oldest American military decoration in present use and was created as the Badge of Military Merit on August 7, 1782 in Newburgh, New York by General George Washington. Initially it was made of purple cloth, shaped as a heart with the word “Merit” sewn upon it; and*

*WHEREAS, the heritage it represents is sacred to those who know the price paid to wear the Purple Heart; and*

*WHEREAS, August 7<sup>th</sup> is nationally recognized as Purple Heart Appreciation Day; and*

***NOW THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED,** We, the Ashburnham Board of Selectmen, on behalf of the Town of Ashburnham, go on record to hereby proclaim Ashburnham Massachusetts a Purple Heart Town, honoring the service and sacrifice of our nation’s men and women in uniform that were wounded or killed by the enemy while serving to protect the freedoms enjoyed by all Americans.*

***ALSO, BE IT PROCLAIMED,** We the Town of Ashburnham will recognize August 7<sup>th</sup> annually as Purple Heart Day, and urge the people and organizations of Ashburnham to display the American Flag as well as other public expressions of recognition of our Purple Heart recipients.*

***IN WITNESS WHEREOF,** we have hereunto set our hands and caused the official seal of the Town of Ashburnham, Massachusetts to be affixed.”*

***Nick Davis made the motion to approve this proclamation and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.***

C. Approval of letter to Rep. Zlotnik regarding Local Veterans Agents.

Leo Janssens read the letter as follows:

“Dear Representative Zlotnik:

We are writing to urge your opposition to HD1590, “An Act relative to Veteran’s Agents”. Currently, Massachusetts Veterans are well served and cared for by Local Veterans’ Agents.

House Docket 1590 will essentially remove the accountable local Veterans Agent; the cornerstone of the Veterans Services Program. Also lost, will be the ability to manage cases in the community, get veterans up to use the VA Healthcare System, get their physical and mental health checked, help get them back to work and reintegrated into the community.

Although on the surface, this proposal appears to financially benefit municipalities, it will not provide benefit without case management at the local level. Local care for Veterans most certainly will decrease, in conjunction with an overall cost increase at the state level, ultimately resulting in decreased local aid. Less service at a higher cost makes no sense.

We respectfully request that you closely read HD1590, considering the unintended consequences before supporting this type of legislation. This proposed bill is not in the best interest of our Veterans, dependents, and Gold Star Families and flies in the face of Massachusetts long-standing tradition of caring for our Veterans locally.”

***Duncan Phyfe motioned to submit the letter as read and was seconded by Nick Davis. Motion carried.***

D. Review and approval of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Leo Janssens stated that he would start with the Consent Agenda which was the first 8 articles on the warrant. He read each one as follows:

Article 1. Accept reports of Town Officers and Committees

Article 2. Light Department PILOT payment

Article 3. Tax Anticipation Note Authority for Treasurer

Article 4. Authority for Town Administrator to Contract with Mass. Highway

Article 5. Authority to expend Ch. 90 Road Repair Money

Article 6. Transfer of Cushing Academy Trust Fund Income

Article 7. Transfer Title V receipts to pay principal and interest on septic loans

Article 8. Offset receipt account for Waterways Improvement Fund

Mr. Janssens then asked for a motion to approve these articles and to support and recommend.

***Duncan Phyfe made the motion and was seconded by Nick Davis. Motion carried.***

Leo Janssens then read Article 9: “To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate by transfer from available funds such sums of money as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2015 and to set the salaries of elected officials.” He read each line in the TA recommended budget for FY16 as follows:

LINE	DEPARTMENT	FY14 SPENT	FY15 BUDGET	FY16 RECOMMEND
1	Moderator	100	100	100
2	Board of Selectmen	4,632	6,816	6,885
3	Town Administrator	184,316	191,615	182,705
4	Advisory Board	200	50,500	50,500
5	Town Accountant	70,491	72,023	69,105
6	Board of Assessors	100,439	101,893	108,500

LINE	DEPARTMENT	FY14 SPENT	FY15 BUDGET	FY16 RECOMMEND
7	Treasurer	99,403	105,252	110,340
8	Tax Collector	67,644	71,222	65,193
9	Information Technology	160,871	183,858	190,575
10	Town Clerk	47,603	57,090	53,083
11	Land Use	27,123	32,402	41,317
12	Town Hall	40,829	42,299	43,103
13	Town Buildings	143,390	146,758	155,921
14	Non-Departmental	98,390	93,853	89,168
15	Police	1,031,884	1,145,394	1,204,286
16	Juvenile Resource Officer	-	-	30,000
17	Emergency Dispatch	238,894	263,168	274,090
18	Fire	624,564	635,975	615,274
19	Inspections	64,015	63,045	89,797
20	Animal Control	30,000	30,600	30,600
21	Monty Tech	444,495	442,182	463,668
22	AWRSD	6,211,574	6,577,007	6,552,760
23	DPW	681,078	721,220	719,872
24	Snow & Ice	304,074	200,000	200,000
25	Board of Health	18,000	18,586	22,868
26	Conservation Commission	22,987	26,837	31,373
27	Council on Aging	16,529	21,529	24,639
28	Veterans' Services	104,857	107,821	77,905
29	Library	192,729	194,495	203,449
30	Agricultural Commission	-	300	300
31	Parks & Recreation Comm.	8,424	20,040	19,900
32	Historical Commission	1,800	2,000	2,000
33	Debt Service	986,185	2,031,310	2,003,241
34	Employee Ins. Benefits	1,170,775	1,342,881	1,169,756
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,198,296</b>	<b>15,000,071</b>	<b>14,902,273</b>

Setting of Elected Salaries under Article 9:

- a. Town Moderator: \$100
- b. Board of Selectmen: Chairman - \$1,300; Clerk - \$1,100; Member - \$1,100
- c. Board of Health: \$140 per member

Mr. Janssens questioned the FY16 budget lines that were lower than the FY15 numbers and Doug Briggs explained that it was due to the recommendation of the auditors to not have "indirect costs" but to have them pay out of their budget directly. He stated that this would impact some budgets such as the Town Administrator, Accountant, Treasurer etc. by a percentage of their work for the Light, Sewer and Water Departments.

Nick Davis asked Bill Johnson if the Advisory Board had a recommendation on the budget and Mr. Johnson stated not at this time. Duncan Phyfe stated that he was not pleased with how we funded the school this year. He added that it looks like we didn't use the spreadsheet that was used back in FY14. Leo Janssens stated that FY14 was the year that the School's E&D went above the limit and they had to return some money back to the towns. Doug Briggs explained how he reached the budget amount for the schools and noted that it was calculated fairly.

There was more discussion on how the numbers were reached. Duncan Phyfe stated that he wanted to give the Schools another \$70,000. He also noted that he doesn't like the budgeted number for the school but that he would support it.

Resident Natalie Nelson, a parent and teacher, thanked all for attending the meetings. She stated that we need to keep the schools strong with classes less than 30 students and added that at present there are only two classes that are not under 30 students. She encouraged everyone to continue meeting to discuss and that they need to eliminate the drama as the schools are a huge asset to the Town.

Dave Christianson stated that they were meeting the next day where they would see the school choice numbers and would hopefully be closer to Doug Briggs' numbers.

Leo Janssens stated that perhaps they could approve the budget except for the School, line #22. Doug Briggs noted that you can't approve just the other lines. He added that the Advisory Board would be the ones to approve this. Bill Johnson stated that they are still waiting for the State and this is subject to change so maybe they should pencil in all the numbers.

***Duncan Phyfe made the motion to post Article 9 as printed and was seconded by Nick Davis. Motion carried.***

Mr. Janssens read Article 10 as follows: "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money for the operating budget of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District, in addition to the sum voted under Article 9 for said operating budget, provided that no funds shall be expended and no bonds shall be issued unless the Town has first voted at an election to exempt this expenditure from the provisions of Proposition 2½, so called, and further provided that the Town of Westminster also votes to approve and fund its proportional share of such additional appropriations." ***Nick Davis made the motion to place this article on the warrant and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.***

Leo Janssens read Article 11 as follows: "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money to operate the Water Department for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015." Doug Briggs stated that this budget went down by \$20k as they eliminated one employee and that it is also reflected in the Sewer budget. ***Duncan Phyfe motioned to place this article on the warrant and to approve... Nick Davis seconded and the motion carried.***

Mr. Janssens read Article 12 as follows: "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money to operate the Sewer Department for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015." ***Nick Davis made the motion to place on the warrant and to approve. Duncan Phyfe seconded and the motion carried.***

Mr. Janssens read Article 13: "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate by transfer from available funds the sum of \$451,990 to fund the recommendation of the Capital Planning Committee to include the following:

Line	Item	Amount
1	Ambulance	\$170,000
2	Fire employee turnout gear	\$12,990
3	Repairs to Ford Dump Truck Sander	\$35,000
4	Road repair	\$125,000
5	Ford F550 Truck	\$67,000
6	Ford Interceptor Cruiser #4	\$42,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$451,990</b>

And to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sell, trade in, or dispose of any equipment being replaced.

***Duncan Phyfe motioned to place this article on the warrant and to recommend. Nick Davis seconded and the motion carried.***

Mr. Janssens read Article 14 as follows: "To see if the Town will vote to use insurance proceeds to purchase an F550 Ford truck and accessories for the DPW." Doug Briggs stated that this was to replace the vehicle that was totaled this past winter. ***Leo Janssens motioned to approve the placement of this article on the warrant and to recommend. Nick Davis seconded and the motion carried.***

Leo Janssens read Article 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer a sum of money to the Capital Fund." Doug Briggs noted that this would be only if we had any extra funds. ***Leo Janssens motioned to place this article on the warrant and to recommend. Nick Davis seconded and the motion carried.***

Mr. Janssens read Article 16 as follows: "To see if the Town will vote to amend the AWRSD Regional Agreement." Doug Briggs asked the Board if they wanted this article on the warrant. Dave Christianson stated that this can be discussed at another meeting and that they also had a presentation which they would be happy to review. He added that the School Committee had voted to accept these changes unanimously. He also noted that the changes could not be modified at town meeting. Doug Briggs noted that the wording is incorrect. He said that "foundation budget" should be "net school spending". ***Duncan Phyfe made the motion to place this article on the warrant and Nick Davis seconded. Motion carried.***

## VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Doug Briggs stated that he would encourage residents to look at the Town's website at the list of openings to serve on Boards and Committees.

He stated that he has placed the proposed FY16 Budget on the Town's website.

Mr. Briggs stated that the health insurance coverage would stay the same for now due to contractual constraints of the AWRSD teachers' agreement and there would be no savings until the teachers' union negotiations.

He stated that he was pleased to announce that they have chosen a new Treasurer. He stated that we received 7 applications and a review team of Paul Pollastri, Sylvia Turcotte, Carla Clifford and Tanya Gaylord unanimously recommended Kate Stacy from Ashby. He noted that Kate Stacy is the elected treasurer in Ashby and appointed Treasurer/Collector in Townsend. He added that Ms. Stacy will be leaving Townsend and will start here on May 4<sup>th</sup> and that she is extremely qualified. He asked the Board for their approval to hire Kate Stacy as the Treasurer. ***Duncan Phyfe motioned to approve the hiring of Kate Stacy as Treasurer and was seconded by Nick Davis. Motion carried.***

Doug Briggs stated that we are still in line to receive our reimbursement for the Briggs School project in June.

He stated that Guardian Information Technologies is overseeing the installation of a T1 line for our phone system and that it will interconnect all town buildings and will allow for enhanced capabilities and eliminate phone lines. He added that the Public Safety Building will be the center of operations, not the Town Hall and that we would receive better service and eliminate Verizon and AT&T invoices.

He reminded everyone that the Annual Town Meeting is May 5, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at Oakmont and the deadline to submit warrant articles was March 18<sup>th</sup>.

Doug Briggs also noted that he will be on vacation the week of April 20<sup>th</sup>. He added that the next 250<sup>th</sup> scheduled event is the Ecumenical Service to be held on Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. at the

Community Church. He also reminded everyone of the cannon firing and that this month it would be fired on Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at approximately 10:00 a.m.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. January 20, 2015 Minutes – Regular Meeting ***Leo Janssens motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Nick Davis. Motion carried.***
- B. February 12, 2015 Minutes – Special Meeting ***Duncan Phyfe motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Nick Davis. Motion carried.***
- C. February 17, 2015 Minutes – Regular Meeting ***Leo Janssens motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.***
- D. March 16, 2015 Minutes – Joint Meeting with Advisory Board ***Leo Janssens motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Duncan Phyfe. Motion carried.***

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE                      None

X. APRIL MEETINGS AND EVENTS – Nick Davis read the following:

- Wednesday, 4/8 - 5:00 p.m. – Board of Assessors – Assessors Office at Town Hall
- Tuesday, 4/14 – 6:00 p.m. – Water/Sewer Commission – Lower Level – Town Hall

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS – Nick Davis read the following:

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.
- April 8<sup>th</sup> Wednesday – Final Registration for the Town Election – at Town Hall, Town Clerk’s Office 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- April 14<sup>th</sup> Tuesday – Final Registration for the Annual Town Meeting – at Town Hall, Town Clerk’s Office 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- April 27<sup>th</sup> Monday – at 12:00 noon – last day to file applications for absentee ballots for voters who will be out of town for the Town Election.
- April 28<sup>th</sup> Tuesday – Town Election – Polls open at 9:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. at the John R. Briggs Elementary School Gym, 96 Williams Road.
- May 5 Tuesday – Annual Town Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Oakmont Regional High School Auditorium, 9 Oakmont Drive.
- Dog Licenses are now available at the Town Clerk’s office. Fees are \$10.00 for altered dogs and \$15.00 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. Also, online payments can be made for dog licenses RENEWALS ONLY. Please call the Town Clerk’s office FIRST at 978-827-4100 ext. 3 to verify that a valid rabies certificate is on file, complete the information online and the dog license will be mailed.

The next scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Monday, May 4, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

Doug Briggs noted that the Town Hall would be open on Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> until 1:00 p.m. to collect taxes.

XII. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT (5 minute limit)

Ed Vitone commented on the school funding issue noting that they should look at the variance of all funds and that the budget proposed is 50/50 and is fair.

Meredith Fagan spoke and stated that she is proposing that the Town give the additional funds to the School. Lindsey Sundberg also stated her support and agreed with Meredith Fagan.

Leo Janssens stated that this was the last meeting for Nick Davis as he has resigned from the Board. He thanked Nick for his service. Mr. Davis explained that he felt it was unfair to stay on the Board if he couldn't dedicate time to the Town. He stated that family and work-related issues made this choice the only option but that he hoped to be back to serve the Town in the future. He thanked the Board members.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

***At 7:40 p.m. Duncan Phyfe motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Nick Davis. Motion carried.***

The Advisory Board members continued their meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sylvia Turcotte, Executive Assistant