
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 – 6:30 P.M.
TRAINING ROOM – PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

This meeting was aired live and taped for local television.

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

I. SALUTE THE FLAG

Duncan Phyfe 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 Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS None

A. Propane License Hearing

In attendance were Mike O'Brien and Jesse Beauchesne from Osterman and Fire Chief Paul Rekos. ***Leo Janssens made the motion to open the hearing and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.*** Mike O'Brien stated that Osterman was asking for a permit to allow them to increase the amount of gallons for storage from 100,000 to 200,000 in order to fill their three tanks.

Kyle Johnson inquired if this was a scavenger system and Mr. O'Brien stated that it was not and stated that it was a gas power compressor. Mr. Johnson noted that the probability is that it won't be 200,000 gallons and Mr. O'Brien stated that he was correct and it was a housekeeping thing for them. Duncan Phyfe asked if there would be any additional bulk and Mr. O'Brien responded that there would be 60 tanks on each truck, with 15,000 gallons to go out. He added that after this hearing it would be back to where it should be. Leo Janssens asked if the Fire Department had any issue with this and Chief Rekos stated that they did not and that they have been working with the inspectors and building commissioner to make the procedure safer. He also noted that it would be a lot safer and that they would make sure that the scavenger system is put in correctly, which is going very well.

It was noted by Duncan Phyfe that there was no one present against this permit and that there were no closing remarks. ***Leo Janssens motioned to close the hearing and was seconded by Kyle Johnson and the motion carried. Leo Janssens then motioned to grant the permit/license and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.***

B. Cushing Academy – Discuss opportunity to discontinue Pleasant Street from Academy to Central Street

Joe McPeak, CFO of Cushing Academy was present and stated that they started the process over a year ago to request that the Town vacate from 101/Central to Pleasant. He noted that a few years ago a student was hit by a vehicle and the speeds were reduced but that everyone still speeds. He noted that Pleasant Street would be used as the entrance way to the campus which would be more central. He stated that he has reached out to both chiefs and that they are all in agreement that it won't be gated. He noted that they would make it one-way northbound from 101 to Pleasant Street and the entrance would be smaller. He also added that speed bumps would be placed on the road to control speeding and it would be paved. He did note that the 4 or 5 residents on Pleasant Street would still have access to 101 by Academy which would be one way northbound. Mr. McPeak stated that Cushing would reimburse the Town for the paving of Pleasant Street to 101 and the southern portion would be redone to their design.

Kyle Johnson asked if anything would be in the way and Mr. McPeak stated no. Greg Fagan, a resident of Chapel Street, stated that although their points are correct, their perspective was brought up before. He noted that his perspective is that Pleasant Street is a valuable and strategic road for the Town. He stated that Pleasant Street is the safest way for his two sons to ride their bikes to the Rail Trail as they can't go by School Street and Route 12 is unsafe. He noted that the intersection of Routes 12 and 101 gets very congested and he is strongly opposed to closing Pleasant Street. Noel McGonigle stated that for safety they should put a sign with a lower speed limit and that if an emergency occurs, this could be an issue. Mr. McPeak responded that it is up to the Board of Selectmen on the speed limit and that Cushing is not a closed campus. He stated that it would still be a public way and that both Pleasant and Academy Streets would still be public ways for emergencies.

Kyle Johnson noted that they would check to see if it can be made public once it belongs to Cushing. Joe McPeak did note that Cushing owns both sides of the street and that they are asking for an article to be placed on the Special Town Meeting warrant.

Ron Putnam asked if they needed a majority vote to pass this and Doug Briggs responded that they do. Mr. Putnam stated that this is a critical issue and should be discussed at a Town-wide public hearing. Greg Fagan inquired as to who has complete jurisdiction and Leo Janssens stated that Town Counsel has been involved.

A resident inquired if Cushing would be willing to give some funds toward the Town's new DPW facility and Mr. McPeak stated that they would be willing to pave the road and maybe replace the pipes underneath but that would be all. He added that they do make annual contributions to the Town already.

Leo Janssens stated that people drive from Gardner, Westminster and South Ashburnham through the center of Town and that this traffic would all move to the intersection and increase the congestion. He added that they shouldn't cut off access to the center of Town and his view as a Selectman would be that he recommends to not place this on the warrant.

Kyle Johnson stated that there is value on both sides. He agreed that the 12 and 101 intersection is busy and the Pleasant Street traffic is not that heavy. He stated that they should

put this on the warrant and let the citizens decide. Joe McPeak stated that Cushing would have one or two public forums and Mr. Johnson noted that it's the way to go to provide opportunities to learn more and that he would support to place this on the warrant.

Duncan Phyfe stated that his recommendation is to go through with the signatures on the citizens' petition and allow the citizens to speak. He suggested that a motion be made to make it official.

Mr. McPeak stated that discussions would be held next month on this but that the citizens' petition needs to be submitted by Thursday of this week.

Greg Fagan inquired if a traffic study had been done and Leo Janssens noted that there was a study done and that they should have Doug Briggs make it available for the public.

Duncan Phyfe stated that Mr. McPeak should get the 100 signatures needed by Thursday for the citizens' petition. ***Leo Janssens made the motion for Cushing to get the 100 signatures for the citizens' petition to place on the Special Town Meeting warrant and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. All in favor.*** Mr. McPeak noted that it's unfortunate that it's such a short notice to get this done and it would be easier to do the paving now while the contractor is there.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Approval of One-Day Special Liquor License for 250th Oktoberfest on October 17th sponsored by Sean McNally of Tavern on Central

Duncan Phyfe stated that the 250th Committee has requested a one-day liquor license for October 17th Oktoberfest event. He stated that he heard from the Police Chief that they would need a designated area and a police presence. He stated that he was concerned about the legal aspect if someone leaves this event and kills someone. Kyle Johnson stated that it lies with the licensee. Doug Briggs stated that if that would happen they could go after anyone and we are the property owner. He also noted that he asked Deb Phillips, Town Counsel and she didn't see an issue. Bill Johnson stated that there's always exposure but Mr. McNally has TIP certified employees and the proper insurance coverage. ***Leo Janssens motioned to approve the license and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. Duncan Phyfe voted "no".***

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Common Victualler and Coin Operated Machines Licenses for Tavern on Central

Kyle Johnson motioned to approve the Common Victualler and Coin Operated Machines Licenses for Tavern on Central and was seconded by Leo Janssens. Motion carried.

B. Discussion on goals for the Downtown Focus Committee

Duncan Phyfe stated that Doug Briggs submitted a mission statement for the Downtown Focus Committee which was just what he asked for. Doug Briggs stated that it was a footprint to start with for this Committee. Kyle Johnson stated that the intersection is an issue that the Committee needs to address as well as the market and liquor store. He stated that they should investigate the traffic flow at the intersection and parking to make it more user-friendly. Leo Janssens agreed adding that they should look at the traffic pattern again.

Bill Johnson stated that a study was done regarding Puffer Street a while ago and he recommends that we look for this historical information. Doug Briggs stated that the Planning Board may have this information. Kyle Johnson read the following:

"Ashburnham Downtown Focus Committee Mission Statement

Committee Structure

The Committee shall consist of nine members who are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The term shall be for the completion of the project.

The membership initial makeup consists of the following:

- *A present member of the Board of Selectmen (BOS)*
- *Former members of the prior Downtown Focus Committee*
- *Citizens of the general public.*

Mission Statement

For many years the Town has been looking to revitalize the center of Ashburnham to the days when Route 12 was a major transportation connector. This is now more important than ever that we move forward with the DPW facility vacating the 4 plus acres of land off Central Street. Several years ago the Town decided to adopt a Village Center District and a major project will be to review and update this by-law as they put together plans for the eventual vast opportunities that lie ahead.

The mission of the Ashburnham Downtown Focus Committee is to promote Downtown Ashburnham as a vibrant commercial and cultural destination. This is achieved through strategic capital improvements, enhanced maintenance and security, effective marketing and promotions, historic preservation education, and effective administration. This includes:

- 1) A clean, safe, well-lit, and inviting appearance, both day and night;*
- 2) Appealing storefronts occupied with a variety of inviting and interesting retail and service businesses;*
- 3) Activities that will attract and benefit area residents, businesses and visitors;*
- 4) Historic architecture preservation and adaptive reuse that offers visual unity and quality experiences;*
- 5) A healthy mix of retail, restaurant, entertainment and service businesses and to be known as having a reputation for welcoming and supporting new businesses, and;*
- 6) Creative and lively places where people will shop, enjoy, remember and return.*
- 7) Conduct a comprehensive analysis of traffic flow patterns, parking, and pedestrian accessibility in the center of Town."*

C. Business Roundtable with Special Guest

Duncan Phyfe read the notice on the Business Roundtable panel discussion with Special Guest State Representative Jon Zlotnik to be held on Thursday, October 1, 2015 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. in the Team Room at Overlook Middle School, 10 Oakmont Drive. He stated it is open to the public with a panel discussion and audience questions. He also noted that the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Ashburnham Business Council are pleased to facilitate this public forum focusing on the economic and business development vision for the Town of Ashburnham.

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Doug Briggs stated that the River Styx and Russell Hill roads paving is complete and a schedule will be set up to complete Holden, Turnpike and South Maple in the next few weeks. He also noted that we are still looking for alternative uses for the remaining grant funds from USDA. He noted that Russell Hill and River Styx are gorgeous but now speed is an issue. He added that the striping will be done shortly.

He stated that the IT project is planned to be completed by early December 2015 which will finally make the Public Safety Building the hub of the Town's entire IT infrastructure. He stated that we have entered into an agreement with Guardian which will also include a Shoretel phone system.

Mr. Briggs stated that Weston and Sampson is installing the automated feed system and deodorant at the Westminster pump station as part of the maintenance program as well as getting the aerators working which should help resolve the smell problem in Gardner. He added that once this is done they will invite the Gardner reps to review.

He stated that the Energy Committee is moving forward with the Library portion of the project. He stated that they have received two quotes and are looking to finalize on Wednesday as there is no heat now at the Library so there is an urgency.

Mr. Briggs stated that the warrant for the October 27th Special Town Meeting will close on September 24th and that there are 14 articles submitted currently.

He stated that with the Town Clerk, Linda Ramsdell, is retiring at the end of October, we advertised and received 5 applications. He noted that it was narrowed down to two and he interviewed both and would make his decision by the end of tomorrow, October 22nd.

Doug Briggs stated that the 250th Parade will be held on Sunday, October 27th at 1:00 p.m. and it will begin at the bottom of High Street and continue to Landry Field. He added that it should be great.

He stated that North Country Sustainability has an outstanding debt to the Town for the time when they rented the VMS building and they are no longer in existence and have not been able to pay the debt with no expectation that they will. He stated that we have been carrying the debt for the last 3 years and it is time to close the books on this chapter. He stated he would like to see the Selectmen vote to eradicate the debt on the same idea as when they abate any ambulance receipts. Bill Johnson stated that an ambulance ride is not planned but in this case the organization chose not to pay. Kyle Johnson stated that we want to involve the public more and ambulance bills won't generate public debate like this one will. He noted that it behooves us to put this on the Town Meeting warrant as it is a hot button issue and should be put to the people. Leo Janssens stated that he would like to see proof that they are no longer in existence. Bill Johnson asked why not go to Town Meeting as the Town assumed the heating bills and a lot of bad press was out there against the Town by this group. He stated that we should clear the record and put this before the residents at the Special Town Meeting. Duncan Phyfe stated that they will continue to discuss this at the next meeting when they review the warrant.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 8, 2015 Minutes – Regular Meeting

Leo Janssens motioned to approve the minutes of September 8, 2015 and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. All in favor.

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE None

X. SEPTEMBER MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Johnson read the following scheduled meetings:

- September 22 – 7:00 p.m. – DPW Building Committee – Training Room at PSB
- September 24 – 6:30 p.m. – Planning Board – Lower Level Room at Town Hall

Kyle Johnson then began the announcements by noting the many openings on Boards and Committees as follows:

- (1) Conservation Commission
- (1) Council on Aging
- (2) Historical Commission
- (1) Parks and Recreation Committee

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.
- October 16, 2015 – Friday – Final registration for the Special Town Meeting at the Public Safety Building, Dispatch Center, 99 Central Street – 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- October 27, 2015 – Tuesday – Special Town Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Oakmont Regional High School Auditorium, 9 Oakmont Drive.
- Reminders were sent recently to all residents who have not yet licensed their dogs including a deadline of September 3rd to do so. Those still unlicensed will be receiving a \$50.00 fine per dog. Those fines will be issued by the Animal Control Officer this month.

The next scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Monday, October 5, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building.

XI. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT (5 minute limit) None

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION Not required.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:50 p.m. Leo Janssens motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Executive Assistant