

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016 – 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

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update – DPW Building Committee

Kyle Johnson, who is the Chair of the DPW Building Committee, stated that the Committee has closed on the fiscal and financial piece and taken the initial proposal, updated and cut the non-essential equipment that is not mandated. He added that the large equipment items will be put in the Capital Plan. He also noted that they are working on the public forum piece and that they would hold one more walkthrough at the present DPW facility this winter with 3 or 4 public forums to be held at the Public Safety Building. He noted that their goal is to project out the actual cost on tax bills, with actual numbers and no guess work. He added that information pamphlets and mailers will be sent to all residents and that the Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 21st at 6:30 p.m.

B. Update – Downtown Focus Committee and Regional Agreement Committee

Duncan Phyfe noted that the Downtown Focus Committee will be meeting on February 8th and that the Regional Agreement Committee is scheduling their meeting soon.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion on proposed donation of small parcel of land to the Town

Doug Briggs stated that we received this proposal in the summer to donate land to the Town. He stated that he checked with Department Heads for their comments and they had none. He noted that this is a very small piece of land at the junction of Sherbert and Heald Roads with no real tax impact. He noted that he spoke with our Assessor, Harald Scheid and was told that his concern was the possible cost of surveys, title research and legal expenses. He asked the Board if they wanted to proceed. Kyle Johnson stated that he had no interest in acquiring this parcel as the tax was so insignificant. He also noted that we might offer the parcel to the abutters but that it wasn't fiscally responsible. Mr. Briggs stated that he would check with the Treasurer on how to go forward with this.

B. Discussion on remote attendance for members

Duncan Phyfe stated that remote access is worth bringing back for discussion and that every Board or Committee would have the capability to do this if the Selectmen vote to go forward with it. Kyle Johnson agreed that being able to call in may come in handy but that it should be allowed on a limited basis. He added that it's important that the Selectmen are present at their meetings every two weeks. Leo Janssens stated that he had no real interest in this. Duncan Phyfe stated that they should ask the other Boards and Committee Chairs what their thoughts were on this subject and a meeting should be convened with them to discuss in the next 30 or 60 days. Doug Briggs agreed that it would be good for some Boards.

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Doug Briggs noted that they have an interested person to serve on the Board of Assessors.

He stated that as a result of a meeting with MassDOT on the intersection of Corey Hill, Williams Roads and Route 101, it was agreed that a letter to MassDOT would be sent informing them that due to the mandated conditions of the project and its associated costs to the Town, that we would be pursuing alternative funding sources. He added that they were looking at spending \$1.2m for two stop signs which would have been expensive for the Town because of the sidewalks that they proposed where we would have had to take land by eminent domain. He stated that the Department Heads met and their solution would cost around \$70k. He stated that at a special town meeting at the annual town meeting we could vote to spend the extra free cash to do something like solar signs, moving wires, rumble strips, etc.

Mr. Briggs stated that he was extremely pleased with the budgets that were submitted by the Department Heads with only a 1% or less increase. He noted that the savings were in part due to the cost of gas, oil and diesel. He added that he will be meeting with the Capital Planning Committee to finalize the FY17 capital requests within the next few weeks.

He noted that for the 4th year in a row, our Annual Town Report has won second place in the MMA Town Report Category II Division. He added that the 2015 report which includes the 250th anniversary of the Town, should lead to a first place with all the Department Heads in gear.

Mr. Briggs stated that at their meeting on January 13th, the Energy Committee reviewed the RFP for foam insulation at the Library under the Green Energy grant. He noted that in the morning, the Committee was going to two locations in New Hampshire to look at heating systems. He also noted that most of the LED lighting has been installed at the Public Safety Building.

He stated that on Tuesday, January 12th he met with the Water/Sewer Commissioners to bring them up to date on the FY16 budget to actuals and to discuss the issue at the Oakmont pumping station where there is an installation of a shut-off valve, metering system, and an odor control device that needs to be installed at a cost of \$15k to \$20k. He added that he asked them to increase the sewer rate by \$.50 per Hcuft which would mean about an \$8.00 a quarter rate increase to homeowners.

He noted that after 3 years, Tanya Gaylord, our accountant has resigned effective January 15th. He added that we thank her for her dedicated service and wish her well. He noted that she did a great job for us and she has offered to continue to do warrants until we get someone to replace her.

He noted that with the renovations coming up at Overlook Middle School, our Building Commissioner, Richard Reynolds has asked which town will be required to pull a building permit and that this needs to be discussed with the Town of Westminster.

Mr. Briggs stated that there was an article in the Boston Globe about increases in taxes. He stated that this does not apply to Ashburnham as we are in the mid-range in the state and the taxpayers need to be educated as to how this works.

Kyle Johnson stated that our town budget has only increased by 1% so it's tight. He stated that people should learn and participate and that the Selectmen's job is doing what's best for the Town, no matter what. He noted that he would be happy to help educate residents and that he would like to see them be a part of the solution, ask questions, and take a greater interest by getting involved. He added that our DPW does a fantastic job of plowing our roads and that people should learn the facts.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 21, 2015 Minutes – Regular Meeting

Leo Janssens motioned to approve the minutes of December 21, 2015 and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. All in favor.

B. January 6, 2016 Minutes – Special Meeting

Kyle Johnson motioned to approve the minutes of January 6, 2016 and was seconded by Leo Janssens. All in favor.

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE None

X. JANUARY MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kyle Johnson read the following scheduled meetings:

- January 20 – 6:30 p.m. – Municipal Light Board – Light Plant
- January 21 – 6:30 p.m. - DPW Building Committee – Lower Level at Town Hall

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

- (1) Trust Fund Commission
- (1) Council on Aging Board
- (1) Parks and Recreation Committee

He encouraged residents to come and be a part of Town government and volunteer to serve.

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, and closed on Friday. Please note: You can now register to vote online in Massachusetts. Go to the Secretary of State website, Online Voter Registration System or registertovote.com. To submit an online application, you must have a valid driver's license, learner's permit or non-driver ID issued by the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV). You must also have a signature on file with the RMV. This system can be used to:
 - Apply to register to vote in Massachusetts
 - Change your name or address for voter registration purposes
 - Enroll in a political party, change your party enrollment, or unenroll from a party.

Please note: the last day to register to vote in the March 1, 2016 Presidential Primary or to make changes to your registration is Wednesday, February 10, 2016.

- February 2nd – Final Registration for Citizens Caucus at Town Clerk’s office – 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- February 10th – Last day to register to vote and change party enrollment for Presidential Primary – Town Clerk’s office – 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- February 22nd – Citizens Caucus – 7:00 p.m. – Stevens Memorial Library, Malcolm Stewart Room.
- Census forms have been mailed out.

The next scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 16, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in the Training Room at the Public Safety Building. Monday, February 15th is the Presidents Day holiday.

XI. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT (5 minute limit) A resident asked about what would be done with the old lights that were replaced here at the Public Safety Building. Doug Briggs stated that he would find out.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION Not required.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:10 p.m. Leo Janssens motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Kyle Johnson. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte, Executive Assistant