

## Board of Selectmen 2011 Annual Report



Ron Reed, Ed Vitone, Greg Fagan

To the Citizens of Ashburnham:

Following the April Town Election, the Board welcomed its newest member, Gregory Fagan, to the Board. At its first meeting, the Board organized, electing Edward Vitone, Chairman, Gregory Fagan, Clerk and Ronald Reed, Member.

During the past year the Board:

- Received approval from the Attorney General on March 21, 2011, for the major revision to the Town's By-Laws which was recommended by the Special Act Sub-Committee and approved by the voters on November 17, 2010.
- Received approval from the Legislature and Governor on October 27, 2011 for the major revision to the Town's Charter recommended by the Special Act Sub-Committee and approved by the voters on November 17, 2010.
- Investigated regionalization opportunities with neighboring towns culminating with a six-month trial work-share arrangement with the Town of Ashby for the Town Administrator's position. At the mid-point of the trial, the Boards of Selectmen of both towns were pleased with the results and optimistic of forging a longer-term relationship.
- Recognized Frances L. Godfrey as the oldest living resident of Ashburnham and awarded her the Boston Post Cane.
- Received a grant of \$1,185,000 from the Department of Agriculture for the construction of a new water tank for the Town's water supply district.
- The Town added \$141,000 to the Stabilization Fund and \$133,000 to the Capital Fund last year. In the words of the Town's independent outside auditor, "the Town has worked hard over the past several years to maintain a positive financial position... The Town is now in a stronger position in that it has approximately \$850,000 in combined free cash, capital improvement and stabilization fund balances. This represents approximately 6% of the annual budget of the Town which is on the lower range but still in the desired 5% to 15% range."

- Worked with the Municipal Light Department on affordable and cost-effective “Green” power generation options. Although not guaranteed, it is likely that two solar projects will be implemented within the next year.
- Worked with the Council on Aging to relocate the Senior Center from the Veterans Memorial School (VMS) to the second floor of the Town Hall saving in excess of \$30,000 in heating costs while providing the seniors with a more comfortable and welcoming environment. Rather than leaving the VMS vacant and inviting vandalism, negotiated a lease with the North Country Sustainability Center, a non-profit organization headquartered in Ashburnham, to use the facility at no net cost to the Town.
- Secured a commitment from the State to repave Route 101 North in the spring of 2012. Work on rebuilding the culverts has already been completed.

In the words of our independent outside auditor, “...the economy will continue to make the budget process challenging for the next few years.” As such, we are expecting continued financial pressure in FY13 with corresponding pressure on all department budgets. The Board hopes to expand its regionalization initiatives in the next year to help mitigate some of this pressure.

We are fortunate to have outstanding employees who remain committed to delivering exemplary service in the face of these financial difficulties. The Board also expresses its gratitude to the Town Boards, Committees and Commissions for

their accomplishments during the year. Please take the time to read their individual reports. It should be remembered that these Boards, Committees and Commissions are composed of volunteers who give many long hours of their free time to work on issues and projects that benefit the Town of Ashburnham. The Board acknowledges the cooperation we have received from our Town Officials, Town Employees and the Townspeople. We also want to give a special thanks to Margaret “Maggie” Whitney, the outgoing member of the Board, for her past and current service to the Town. To all of these people we say: **THANKS!**

Respectfully submitted,  
Gregory Fagan  
Ronald Reed  
Edward Vitone