

2013 TOWN ADMINISTRATOR ANNUAL REPORT

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen and the Citizens of the Town of Ashburnham, I submit my fourth annual report as Town Administrator.

While 2013 continued to see tough economic times, our goal stayed steady; “to operate within budget, remain committed to a high level of customer service, with high ethical conduct.”

This year marks the second year in a row that Ashburnham was awarded second place in the MMA Town Report contest, for communities with a population of 5,000 to 12,499. Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator has done a remarkable job developing the Town report into an historical document that serves to communicate important information to Town residents, and promote an understanding of and involvement in local government. Great job!!

The Veterans Memorial School Building (VMS) ended its many years of serving the community. Monies to remediate the asbestos, and demolish the building were voted at town meeting along with a vote to tear it down, but as of this report an RFP is being generated to remediate the asbestos as a first step.

The fire station on South Main Street also found itself transitioning to a new use. The Town sold the property which, prior to the Public Safety Building was used as our fire station. It has now been totally renovated into new apartments and also houses the 1927 fire truck in a part of the building used to showcase fire memorabilia.

Technology enhancements continued to make access to Town residents more user-friendly. For the first time, the ability to pay on-line was fully operational and 24-hour access to dog licenses, marriage licenses, birth and death certificates, as well as on the Assessor’s side, all field card information and GIS data sources. The need for many residents to physically come to Town Hall has diminished.

Monies were also voted (\$50,000) to erect an appropriate veteran’s memorial behind Town Hall on the grassland between the VMS and Town Hall. The Board of Selectmen appointed a committee consisting of veterans and non-veterans to design and erect such a memorial. The final fate of the project is currently

undefined as agreement cannot be reached as to the make-up and proper location.

Ashburnham voted at Town Meeting to offer retirees a health insurance benefit. We were one of the last seventeen communities that had not made that benefit available to its retirees.

Unfortunately, vandalism was a source of damage to our playgrounds this past year and due to the availability of the surveillance system that was put up at the Water Tank new cameras were installed at Winchester Park. This interactive system will allow the dispatch center to monitor activities at the park in real time. There are also plans to install a similar system at Sweeney Playground.

With the support of the Board of Selectmen, I engaged our engineering firm of Weston and Sampson to work on design and cost alternatives to ultimately bring a warrant article for the Annual Town Meeting in May 2014 to appropriate monies to erect a DPW, Water and Sewer facility on Town-owned land at the corner of Platts and Williams Roads.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has again teamed with us on another project. The project is to replace the water lines of Williams Road, Holden Street, Westminster Road and South Maple Avenue. This project's funding was approved at town meeting and, with a possible 30% grant from the USDA, should start in the spring of 2014 with work to be done at the close of school and be completed prior to the start of the new school year.

Town Hall saw some improvements as the front steps were removed and the old brick and sand replaced with cement under-layments. All cellar windows that were rotting were replaced with vinyl replacement windows. Railings were also installed up the center of the steps to comply with current building code. A new shed was built for the Town by the students at Monty Tech and is both functional and

We also had two big road projects, consisting of the full length of Dunn Road and Lake Road starting from Sherbert Road to the beginning of East Rindge Road. The Town remains committed to improving the roadways throughout Town. Chapter 90 road monies increased to \$520,000 but due to a transportation bill

disagreement at the legislative level, the monies were not fully released. It is hoped that the \$173,000 will be released in early spring so we can complete the South Main Street sidewalk project.

Our goal continues to be to look for opportunities to improve the quality of life in Ashburnham each and every day. We are here every day to work for you. My office is always open to each and every one of you. I want to thank the employees of the Town of Ashburnham, their dedication and commitment to the residents of Ashburnham inspires me and working with them makes coming to work a pleasure every day.

Respectively submitted,
Doug Briggs
Town Administrator