

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
AUGUST 6, 2007
CABLE STUDIO, OAKMONT REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL**

This meeting was aired live on local cable television Channel 8.

PRESENT: Mark Carlisle, Chair, Jonathan Dennehy, Member, Chris Gagnon, Clerk, Paul Boushell, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator. Also present was Anne Cervantes, Town Treasurer.

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: At 7:00 p.m., Carlisle read the agenda. Dennehy motioned to accept the agenda and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

II. PRESENTATIONS, REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

A. **Correspondence:** Carlisle stated there was no significant correspondence to report.

B. **Recognition:** Carlisle read the letter from Chief Zbikowski regarding a recent emergency incident involving the quick response by Ashburnham ambulance personnel. (copy attached) He then asked Battalion Chief Robert Salo to read his report of the incident. (copy attached) Carlisle stated that he was extremely proud of this department and that this is another example to add manpower in this department. He added that we take a lot of things for granted. He then presented a certificate of appreciation to the following personnel: Battalion Chief Robert Salo, Engineer/Paramedic Paul Rekos, Auxiliary EMT Denise Salo, Firefighter Tyson David, Dispatcher Christine Pierce and Recruit Firefighter Rebekah Williams.

The Board, in unison, thanked all the above personnel for their service to the Town.

C. **Town Administrator's Update:** Paul Boushell, Town Administrator stated that the transition period is now over. He stated that he has hired Denee Howard as the new Land Use Administrator for the Town. He noted that the Building Commissioner search is back to square one and that it is still in a rolling application process. He added that during this period Mike Gallant is doing a great job for the Town.

Boushell noted that the Town Hall Renovation Project is going along on schedule. He added that the three trees in the back of the Town Hall were saved and that the Highway Department has run the water main.

Boushell also noted that he has scheduled an Ethics Commission Seminar for October 17th with two sessions, one at 3:00 p.m. for the employees and one at 6:00 p.m. for Boards and Committees.

He noted that he had two policies to place before the Board for their review and approval. One was the Cellar and/or Basement Pumping Policy, which was submitted by Chief Zbikowski and the Telecommunications Systems Policy. He noted that the software policy was made up of three basic issues; 1) its taxpayers' equipment; 2) to be used for Town business only; and 3) the right to monitor their use. Dennehy stated that it is a good idea to have a technology policy. Carlisle noted that they would review both policies and probably be approved at the next meeting.

- D. Public Safety Building Committee update:** Gagnon stated that they are looking at a possible occupancy date in October 2008. He noted that everything is on schedule and on budget. He added that the Committee is meeting on Tuesday, August 7, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. at the VMS building.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Further discussion on Foreclosed Properties List:** It was noted that the Town Treasurer, Anne Cervantes was present for this discussion. Dennehy noted that there were two separate lists, one ready to auction or retain and the other was a list of properties that are delinquent and where they have just begun foreclosure proceedings.

Carlisle noted that one of the priorities is anything for use as a Town beach. Discussion followed on the properties that should be taken off the list for various reasons. They included Map 56 Parcel 48 and 61, Map 4 Parcel 23A and 23B, Map 99 Parcel 164, Map 17 Parcel 12, Map 58 Parcel 25, and Map 61 Parcel 48.

Dennehy noted that they need to have further discussion and analysis on the parcels that ConCom is interested in, to better judge the conservation value.

Dennehy inquired of Cervantes if these properties were foreclosed on properly and she assured him that they were. Boushell recommended that the Board meet with ConCom to discuss this and to let them prioritize. He noted that they now have the software to use to identify each parcel.

Dennehy stated that they should take the properties that have been identified, 8 parcels, off the list and then with the new list, go forward. He noted that this is great work by Anne Cervantes and Donna Burton. Boushell added that Cervantes has done an amazing amount of work.

- B. Russell Hill:** Gary Howland was present and he explained his letter to the Board, which is attached. Carlisle requested that Howland get an itemized bill from Mt. Grace for the \$18,000. He also noted that if this is a prior year bill, it will need a Town Meeting vote.

Howland noted that he would get an itemized account for the Board and he also stated that Mt. Grace has stated that they will pay \$6,000, the Conservation Trust will pay \$6,000 and the Town's portion would only be \$6,000.

Carlisle stated that they would need to take this into consideration and work thru this as to how to achieve the goal of legalities and how it should be worked out. He suggested that Howland work with Boushell to achieve this goal.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Discussion – underground electrical wiring for Town Hall by Municipal Light:** Stan Herriott was present and gave the Board a status report on this project. He noted that next year would be the 100th anniversary of the Light Department and that it was an appropriate time to finish the underground of downtown starting with the Town Hall. Herriott went over some plans with the Board noting that the telephone work would need a vault to be placed from Main St. to Water St. to accommodate the telephone lines to Town Hall.

Herriott noted that they would require a Verizon contractor to do this and that it would be a year long project.

He stated that there would be ornamental poles and lights installed and that they were working with the Historical Commission on selecting these. He added that wiring will be underground behind Town Hall and that they would place a transformer so that the grocery store would be on it as well. He noted that with the fate of the VMS building still unknown, no wiring would be set up yet.

Herriott noted that in the spring they would set up lines on Maple Avenue to extend to the new community center being built and also to Water Street.

Carlisle inquired on the expense and Herriott stated that the materials for the underground conduit and wire would cost \$20k while the transformers were \$16k. He added that the specialized vault would run \$3,500. Herriott noted that it would be about \$300k when it was completed. He added that he has talked to the DPW Director, Don Ouellette about working with them regarding the paving and also about keeping the road passable.

Carlisle stated that this would do so much for the aesthetics of the Town as well as making it safer. He noted their thanks to the Municipal Light with kudos, adding that he often brags about the Town's light plant.

Herriott added that he is hopeful to get the Historical Commission involved in selecting the light fixtures, etc. He noted that "dark sky" rated fixtures are being looked into.

Herriott stated that he wanted to bring the plans to this meeting to introduce it to the Board and to note that this would coincide with the Light Plant's 100th anniversary. The Board, in unison, thanked Herriott for his status report.

- B. Request to donate equipment by Police Department:** Boushell explained this request by noting that this equipment is old and out-dated but still usable. He added that they need the Board's permission to donate this equipment. Dennehy motioned to approve this donation and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.
- C. Thanks to Cushing Academy:** Carlisle noted the Town's thanks to Cushing for their first check in the amount of \$54k which was just recently received. He added that this will go towards the new Public Safety Building project.
- D. Ambulance Billing Abatement requests:** Boushell stated that it doesn't look like we can collect this money as many on the list have passed away. Carlisle noted that he had spoken with Chief Zbikowski and that currently he is working with other chiefs in the area to go after this as a communal effort to collect. Carlisle stated that he wanted to hold on and look at other ways to collect this. Gagnon stated that he would talk to the chiefs as he does something similar in his job.
- E. Discharge of Mortgage Approval:** Carlisle noted that this Discharge of Mortgage was for property at 3 Banks Avenue. Dennehy motioned to approve and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 4, 2007 – Regular Meeting

Gagnon noted a change in these minutes on page 3 and they were corrected by Sylvia Turcotte. Dennehy moved to approve the minutes as amended and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

B. June 11, 2007 – Special Meeting

Gagnon motioned to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2007 Special Meeting and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

C. June 19, 2007 – Regular Meeting

Gagnon motioned to approve the minutes of the June 19, 2007 Regular Meeting and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

D. July 2, 2007 – Regular Meeting

Gagnon motioned to approve the minutes of the July 2, 2007 Regular Meeting and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

VI. OTHER MATTERS

Carlisle noted that Dottie Munroe has asked to be appointed as a member of the Historical Commission to replace Elizabeth Marble, who will be resigning. He stated that Dottie has always been active in the community and is presently on the Advisory Board as well. Dennehy motioned to approve the appointment and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

Carlisle noted a few reminders from the Town Clerk's office; Absentee ballots were now available for the Special Election, Monday, August 13th is the deadline for the absentee ballots and the Special Election will be held on Tuesday, August 14th from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Briggs Elementary School.

Dennehy noted that he was just informed by Ellen Holmes that the capital outlay exclusion bill was enacted today by the House and the Senate and that it is now on the Governor's desk.

He stated that credit and thanks should go to Jay from Senator Brewer's office and the Senator himself for pushing this forward. He added that they went above and beyond.

Boushell also announced that the first meeting was held on the VMS Building Feasibility Study and included Shelly Hatch, from MRPC, Ken Jodrie, of Caolo & Bieniek Associates and Mary Lee Muessel, Director COA. Gagnon noted that this was great and that it could also coincide with the Briggs study.

Carlisle stated that Labor Day is Monday, September 3rd and that he was looking at Tuesday, September 4th for the next Board of Selectmen meeting. He also touched on where the meeting would be held and it was determined that it would be in the Von Deck Lecture Hall, if available, with the Studio as back-up. It was also determined that a second meeting in August was not necessary at this time.

Bill Johnson, Advisory Board Chair was present and advised the Board that they want to meet with the Selectmen at some time soon on long-term issues, the personnel plan and capital planning. Carlisle suggested that they could probably meet with them towards the second meeting in September. He also suggested that if needed, they could call a meeting after the election.

Dennehy noted that the Board could attend or post simultaneously a meeting on the 15th of August with the school, if needed.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:20 p.m. Dennehy motioned to enter into Executive Session and was seconded by Gagnon. Carlisle stated that they would enter into executive session to deliberate upon matters which, if done in open meeting could detrimentally affect the position of the Town regarding collective bargaining and not to reconvene into regular session.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:15 p.m. Dennehy motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Gagnon.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator