

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
AND THE ADVISORY BOARD - MINUTES
DECEMBER 1, 2008
FAIRBANKS MEMORIAL TOWN HALL - UPSTAIRS**

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

PRESENT: Chris Gagnon, Chair, Jonathan Dennehy, Member and Maggie Whitney, Clerk, Kevin Paicos, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator. Members of the Advisory Board who were present: Bill Johnson, Dottie Munroe, James Piedrafite and Belden DiVito.

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

At 7:00 p.m. Gagnon read the agenda with a motion by Whitney to approve and a second by Dennehy. Motion carried.

II. PRESENTATIONS, REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

A. Tax Classification Hearing

Dennehy motioned to enter into the Tax Classification Hearing and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Assessors Dick Coswell and Donna Burton were present. Gagnon gave the floor to Coswell who proceeded to explain the various forms that needed to be completed that are involved in the process. He noted that so far this year they had approved abatements between \$40k and \$45k. He also noted that the Town has experienced \$120k in new growth but that land values had decreased. He added that Mayflower Valuations Ltd. did a great job for them.

Paicos stated that it should be noted that Donna and Dick did a lot of work to get this done behind the scenes.

Coswell also stated that for the first time in his memory, there was no excess levy capacity to present to the Board. The Board thanked Coswell for this presentation.

Whitney made the motion that the Town remains with a single tax implementation and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

Whitney then motioned to close the Tax Classification Hearing and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

B. Correspondence

Whitney stated that she received a packet of letters from Girl Scout Troop 30126 asking that the Library not be closed.

Gagnon stated that the Town Clerk would call the Town Administrator with the results of the Override Election right after 8:00 this evening and it would be announced.

There was some discussion on a missing part on the water trough at the Victorian House Restaurant and it was noted that Paicos should find out about this from the DPW.

Whitney also stated that she would like the Town Administrator to clarify how much the Town pays for an employee to do the plowing versus private plowing costs and to also find out what this covers.

C. Town Administrator's Update

Paicos stated that there were two more resumes for the Town Accountant position that were received recently in addition to what they had so far. He also stated that the Board needed to formally vote on their contract with Shanahan and Gagnon agreed stating that they also hadn't voted to accept his resignation.

Dennehy motioned to accept the Town Accountant's resignation letter and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Dennehy motioned to accept the letter of agreement dated November 19, 2008 and to appoint Shanahan as Interim Town Accountant per the agreement. Whitney seconded and the motion carried.

D. Public Safety Building Committee Update

Gagnon noted that there was nothing to report and that the Committee was meeting the next day. He added that there was a freeze on spending until the balance remaining is known.

E. Chairman's Report (attached)

Gagnon noted that the Board will meet in Executive Session to discuss the first round choices for the Town Accountant position.

He mentioned an email he received from Dwight Horan of BAE in Ashby regarding free laptops that were available to municipalities and non-profits. Paicos stated that he would advise the Department Heads of this opportunity.

Gagnon then responded to correspondence from a resident, Charlie Packard, who inquired about the most recent ambulance collection report, the brush that needs to be tended to on the east side of Lashua Road and the stop area at Williams Road and Center/Central Street. He responded to these inquiries per his attached Chairman's Report.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Vote on budget articles – December 3, 2008 Special Town Meeting

Gagnon noted that Article 1 had been supported by both boards and Article 2 as well, but not Articles 3 and 4.

Paicos stated that on Article 3 the Board of Selectmen would rescind and pass a new budget which would be the same except that the cuts would be made. He noted that Article 4 has two scenarios. The first is if the override passes then there would be no cuts but if it fails then they would need to cut the department budgets and give the \$155,887 to the School. He stated that he needed the official vote by the Board on the articles in the STM warrant.

Dennehy motioned to recommend Article 1 and was seconded by Whitney.
Dennehy motioned to recommend Article 2 and was seconded by Whitney.
Dennehy motioned to recommend Article 3 and was seconded by Whitney.
Motions carried.

Whitney stated that they would wait on Article 4 and Gagnon agreed that they would table their vote on Article 4.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Request for funds to be expended from the Gordon E. Erickson Memorial Fire/Rescue Fund

Whitney motioned to approve that the funds be expended as presented for nozzles and bunker gear for a total of \$5,637 and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried. It was noted that a copy of this paperwork would be attached to these minutes.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 20, 2008 – Joint Meeting w/Advisory Board

Whitney asked that the minutes be amended to change the \$155k amount to \$155,887 throughout. Dennehy motioned to approve the minutes as amended and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

B. October 27, 2008 – Special Joint Meeting w/Advisory Board

Whitney asked that on page 6 of the minutes, that the words “Public Safety Building Event” be inserted. Whitney motioned to approve the minutes as amended and Dennehy seconded. Motion carried.

C. November 3, 2008 – Joint Meeting w/Advisory Board

Whitney asked that the \$155k be changed to \$155,887 throughout the minutes and to also add that Janice Roy made the comment on the last page of these minutes regarding the salt and sand at the DPW. Whitney motioned to approve the minutes as amended and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

VI. SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

VII. OTHER MATTERS

A discussion followed on the oil bid issue after which Dennehy stated that they needed to get an opinion from Town Counsel on how they should proceed.

Paicos then announced that he had just received a call from the Town Clerk with the results of the override vote. He stated that it was 979 “yes” votes and 520 “no” votes, so it passed unanimously. All Town officials breathed a sigh of relief and thanked the voters.

Paicos noted that Deb Phillips stated that she could have a written opinion for the Board on this by Wednesday night at 6:00 p.m. just before the Special Town Meeting. Dennehy stated that they would wait until Wednesday at the meeting with Town Counsel to make a decision on this.

Whitney stated that she would make the motion that any expenses for the annual MMA meeting should come out of the individual Board members pockets and to not ask the Town to pay for this. Dennehy stated that the MMA meeting is a valuable place to get information and networking with other towns and is an avenue for professional development which would benefit the Town. Gagnon stated that no vote was needed and that they could just volunteer to pay themselves. Paicos noted that in this environment right now it is the most valuable time to go or at least to send a representative as the Board needs the information and the community could suffer as a result of not taking advantage of this opportunity. Gagnon stated that they should look at the course offerings and then decide.

Whitney stated that she expected to receive the revenue reports for this meeting and Dennehy responded that they would be received in time to discuss at the December 15th meeting. Paicos stated that the journal entries were the number one priority for the Accountant with the tax recap a close second. He stated that the monthly reports are third on the priority list right now but that they would get these reports no later than the Thursday before the meeting on the 15th and that this report would reflect thru the end of November, fiscal year to date.

Some discussion followed on a vote to transfer the \$155,887 to the school. Johnson noted that the Advisory Board voted to approve the transfer of \$155,887 to the school. Dennehy motioned that the Board of Selectmen direct the Town Administrator to draft a motion for the STM that funds the School District an additional \$155,887 for a total budget amount of \$6,483,185. Whitney seconded and the motion carried.

Gagnon noted the following reminder from the Town Clerk. Special Town Meeting on Wednesday, December 3, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at Oakmont Regional High School Auditorium, 9 Oakmont Drive. He also noted a reminder that a spaghetti supper would be served from 5:00 to 7:00 in the Oakmont cafeteria and that babysitting services would be available as well. Whitney also announced that the COA van would be available for rides to the meeting and that they should call 978-827-5000.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:44 p.m. Whitney motioned to enter into Executive Session regarding strategy with respect to collective bargaining, initial screening of candidates for employment and strategy of pending litigation and to not reconvene into regular session. Dennehy seconded and the motion carried.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, at 9:35 p.m. Dennehy motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator