

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 8, 2009 – 7:00 P.M.
FAIRBANKS MEMORIAL TOWN HALL – UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM**

This meeting was aired live on local cable television.

PRESENT: Ed Vitone, Chair, Jonathan Dennehy, Member, Maggie Whitney, Clerk, Doug Briggs, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Maggie Whitney. Vitone called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Whitney noted that she had additional announcements and correspondence to add to the agenda. *Dennehy motioned to approve the agenda as amended and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.*

IV. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

A. Wayne and Terri Adams

At 7:05 p.m., Adams was given the floor and was informed by Vitone that he had 15 minutes to present his case. Vitone stated that Adams should stick with the documents and the facts only. Terri Adams proceeded to review all the paperwork and facts that they brought with them regarding the ten-acre town owned property on Fitchburg Road, used by Kevin Lashua. Vitone thanked the Adams noting that they gave the Board a lot of information. He noted that they have been actively working to substantiate ownership of the property and that they would take this under advisement. Adams noted that the Assessors map clearly shows that this property is town owned and Vitone again stated that they would take this under advisement. Adams requested to be on the next meeting agenda and Vitone stated that he couldn't give him a definite answer.

B. Steve Nims, DPW Superintendent – Goals & Objectives

Nims stated that his first goal was to establish work request log sheets with their goal to resolve any issues within a week's time. Vitone stated that they should always call back once the issue is resolved and Nims said that they would be doing that.

Nims stated that his second goal is to keep the same level of service even with the loss of four employees. He mentioned that they had started to use an answering service to replace hours lost in office help.

The third goal and objective on his list was to get professional services support and it was noted that they were going out to bid for two engineering firms per the Town Administrator's request which would enable them to get the best price on services.

Nims stated the fourth goal was the Roads Program for 2009.

Dennehy thanked both Nims and Whitney for their efforts in getting Route 12 paved. Whitney added that Nims did a great job.

Nims noted that Route 101 paving was on the TIP list for 2013. Dennehy questioned why only 1,500 feet would be done on Stowell Road and Nims stated that the intent was in phase 2 to pave from the Boy Scouts camp to Hastings Road the next year.

Charlie Packard asked if they could paint the crosswalks on Rt. 12 after the paving is done and Nims stated that they planned to do this in the spring along with all the other crosswalks in Town. Packard also noted his concern with the crosswalk on Water St. and Vitone stated that they would take this under advisement.

Nims stated that their fifth goal and objective would be to implement a signage program which would include identifying and reviewing roads without signage. He noted that Chief Barrett stated that there may be grant money available to get this done. He also noted that they were working on street signs so that they would meet the Federal/State requirements (911) which would be visible at night. He stated that they would re-do all non-compliant signs and hoped to get this done in the next three to five years.

C. Mark Petersen, Water/Sewer Superintendent – Goals and Objectives

Mark Petersen and Dave Berger came forward to present the goals and objectives.

Petersen stated that his first goal and objective under Water was a new water tank on High St. and to rehab the South tank. Vitone noted that the Town just doesn't have the funds to do this right now and Petersen stated that they would have to go to Town Meeting for this. He added that their goal was to cover the roof for now at the least cost. Vitone stated that Petersen should rewrite this to state to protect the roof for winter and the spring thaw system and then to apply for grants. Briggs did state that if the tank failed there would be no backup. Vitone noted that this goal should be reworded.

Petersen stated that the second goal and objective would be to update the telemetry on the water tanks as the current system is outdated. He added that this would be done in this fiscal year. Vitone stated that they should get this done in two parts, go to the Board and then if allowed then do it.

Petersen noted that the third goal was a hydrant replacement schedule. He stated that 32 hydrants were installed without a gate which makes it difficult to shut them down. He stated that realistically he would get five of these done this year.

The fourth and fifth were to install a water main up Ashby Rd. to Holt Rd. and to start doing all backflow testing in-house. He stated that they would need to qualify two employees to do this in-house and that this would save money.

On the Sewer side Petersen stated that his first goal would be to explore all options in redirecting the sewer to another town or city and the second was of they renegotiated with Gardner to install a pump station at the bottom of Gardner Hill. He stated that this would generate an energy savings. Vitone stated that Petersen should give them an analysis and then they would revisit both studies to see what makes sense.

D. Discussion on Municipal Light in lieu of taxes amount

Stan Herriott and Richard Ahlin, Municipal Light Board member, were present. Briggs stated that they were looking at revenues and looked at in lieu of taxes and how it was generated. He stated that the Assessors generated a Vision report with the values of the Municipal Light department property. It was noted by Vitone that the Water/Sewer in lieu amount was also being calculated.

Ahlin stated that if they were assessed more for the in lieu of taxes amount by the town it would tie their hands as to what's been done for the Town. He stated that under Chapter 164 they were not taxable. He added that the bottom line was that the taxpayers would pay as at this time they had a cash flow issue right now.

Vitone stated that they would look at this more closely. Herriott distributed a list of what the Light Department had done in the past 10 years for the Town which he stated was valued at over \$1m dollars. He stated that the savings were over \$7m to the Town.

Vitone stated that the Town would see revenues if the wind towers were set up and they would get a tax benefit from this. Herriott stated that their goal is to keep rates low for the residents.

Dennehy stated that it was great to have all the data and that it was a good start to more discussions in the future. Whitney stated that after seeing the list she didn't feel they should ask for more money and that she was impressed at what they've done.

Vitone stated that in December the Light Department stood pretty tall and that this information was very compelling. He stated that this was step one and they would come back and have another discussion. Charlie Packard noted that step 2 should be to leave things as they are because the rate payer would pay for it if it's raised. He added that they have done a great job.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of BOS Initiatives

Whitney gave an update on the Short and Long Term Disability Insurance study by stating that they were moving forward and that it looked fair for both the taxpayers and the employees.

Dennehy stated that the Briggs Committee met the past week on Monday and developed a possible construction timeline. He noted that they also discussed the funding aspect and the architect and what would get paid while keeping within the budget.

Dennehy asked if the Town Clerk and the Moderator were okay with this date and Briggs stated that the Town Clerk was okay and he would check with the Moderator.

Whitney motioned to approve the Special Town Meeting date of Thursday, November 19, 2009, pending the availability of the Moderator and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

D. Continued discussion of Selectmen's Meeting Agenda Policy

A short discussion followed on the amended policy and Dennehy suggested that a version number should be on the policy. *Dennehy motioned to approve the Selectmen's Meeting Agenda Policy as amended and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.*

E. Update on Scouting Center Location

Vitone stated that he discussed the possibility of the Caouette property as the location for the Bresnahan Community Center with the Committee and they were willing to consider it. He asked about any 21E requirements on this property. Dennehy stated that there were different rules for commercial construction. Briggs stated that he would check into this.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion on Lease Agreement with School District

Briggs stated that the agreement was sent to Town Counsel for review. He noted that they should go back to Mike Zapantis with these changes. Dennehy noted that he was pleased that Town Counsel reviewed this and added that her comments were self explanatory. He asked how this agreement tied in with the borrowing and Briggs responded that there was no impact, it just ties it all together.

B. Discussion and signing of contract for "Asphalt Products" with P.J. Keating

It was noted by Briggs that the cost associated with this contract was \$118,200 from Chapter 90 money. He stated that it would go towards the grinding and paving of Lashua Road, to level Williams Road to Cashman Hill Road and the grinding and paving of 1,500 feet of Stowell Road, from Route 101 to the Boy Scout camp.

Dennehy motioned to approve the signing of the contract for asphalt products with P.J. Keating and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.

C. Review of properties taken for non-payment of taxes

Vitone stated that the Board needed to review all the properties on the list from Anne Cervantes, Town Treasurer and that they needed to decide to sell or not to sell these properties. Whitney stated that many of these lots were not developable. She also noted that Anne Cervantes and Lori Capone did a great job compiling this list.

Whitney stated that before she makes a decision on whether to sell these properties she wanted to see them first. She also noted that some properties were

quite small but that the abutters might be interested in purchasing them. Dennehy stated that they could put all the properties up for auction and in that way the abutters would be notified. He added that they needed to get these properties back on the tax role. He stated that they should review the list again to feel more comfortable with the choice of properties to be sold.

Vitone stated that they should take off the following parcels for the Boy Scout park and the Rail Trail: Map 17, Parcels 10 & 12, Map 58, Parcels 12 & 13, Map 58, Parcels 25 & 118.

Vitone stated that at their first meeting in October, they would continue this discussion.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Whitney motioned to approve the consent agenda and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Whitney read the following announcements:

- Special State Election for Senator in Congress to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Senator Edward M. Kennedy will be on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 and the Special State Primary will be on Tuesday, December 8, 2009.
- Dog licenses are available at the Town Clerk's office. A \$10.00 late fee will be added to each dog registration. In addition the Animal Control Officer is calling and sending letters regarding unlicensed dogs. Licenses must be renewed by September 22 to prevent dog fines with the first offense at \$25 which is in addition to the actual licensing fee.
- Can now pay Water/Sewer bills on line and she added that if a credit card is used there would be a fee.
- Farmer's Market – every Monday from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. in Winchester Park

Whitney also noted that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen would be held on Monday, September 21, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Whitney announced that September is Library Card Sign-up Month. She also stated that Banned Book Week is September 26 thru October 3rd.

Whitney noted that she worked with Dave Uminski and there were four students that had signed up to serve on Town Boards and Committees and they were as follows: Christian Robichaud on the Rail Trail Committee; Sean Flynn on the Planning Board; Rob Dearborn on the Board of Health; and Michael Cefole on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

IX. BOS CORRESPONDENCE

Vitone stated they had received three letters in support of the Piano Museum Lease.

X. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Briggs reviewed his report. A copy is attached to these minutes.

He noted that he had presented the Board with a report from the Department Heads activities.

Briggs gave a brief overview of the status of the Town Hall Flood Damage noting that the HVAC work would be completed the following day.

Briggs also noted that the Board needed to approve the Policy for Use of Town Property. It was noted that they would add that “if there were any exceptions the Board of Selectmen would have the final determination”. ***Dennehy motioned to approve the policy subject to the one addition and was seconded by Whitney. Motion carried.***

There was some discussion on the Selectmen’s winter meetings and where they should be held. It was noted that the Board unanimously agreed that the best place for these meetings to be held is at the Public Safety Complex.

Briggs stated that the Special Town Meeting would be held on Thursday, November 19th here at Town Hall.

Briggs touched on the Munis Training, stating that it went very well. And he thanked the Advisory Board for their approval of the financing which made it possible.

He also noted that Karen Kucala is working out well, helping Nancy with her backlog.

Briggs stated that all they are waiting for on the borrowing is a note from the Capital Planning Committee and Dennehy stated that he would write the letter. Briggs stated that they would get a little better rate with this letter.

He noted that the Assessors did a great job on the RFP and he thanked them. He did add that the cost of this change may need to be through a reserve fund transfer. He also noted that once this is started, the Board of Assessors would be paid a stipend and would no longer be paid hourly.

XI. SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:28 p.m. Whitney motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Dennehy. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator