

TOWN OF ASHLAND
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
WORK SESSION MINUTES
DECEMBER 12, 2012

Call to Order

Chairman Stewart called the Ashland Board of Selectmen [Board] meeting to order at 8:33 AM.

Roll Call

Present - Daniel Golden, Jeanette I. Stewart, Philip Preston (8:36 AM)

Others present - TA Branscombe, Clerk Tucker, members of the public

Business

- Reviewed and motion to approve abatement of \$3100 value for Eugene and Susan St. Godard - Stewart; second Golden; vote 3-0; *Board signed abatement paperwork*
- Reviewed and signed manifests - Payroll \$17, 167.55; Accounts Payable \$252,606.15; Welfare \$1063.34

Old Business

- Update on 7 Smith Hill Road - this issue is in the hands the town attorney
- 35 Highland Street - Code Enforcement Office Robert Hicks was present to discuss the property at 35 Highland Street; he is working with the owners and the violation notices that have been sent; no hard compliant dates have been given; need to tape off cellar hole area and board up windows; building is not in a shape that is condemnable; Board is concerned about the length of time this issue has been going on; **Action - Mr. Hicks will review compliance issues with the owners again and report back to the Board in two weeks.**
- Update - Union Contract and Police Salaries - received attorney opinion that warrant article for cost items not needed
- New Phone System - **Action - TA will be having a conference call with BayRing and CCS [our IT company] regarding the wiring for the phones**

New Business

- TA Contract Extension - **Board will have non public review on 12/17/12 for evaluation**
- Town Hall Roof - discussed the need for repair of the town hall roof near the chimney; **action- consensus of the Board was to have repairs done as soon as possible [cost item \$1300]**
- Signed purchase order to encumber the 2012 budgeted item of \$10,000 for Master Plan
- Signed Assessment Data Review sheet to send to the DRA-Equalization Bureau
- Reviewed written questions from Public
 1. How much money will the town have left one the bills for 2012 are paid from the current tax receipts? Will this leave us enough money to pay our bills until July? If not, what is the reason that the town does not have enough cash on hand to meet its obligations? Please be specific and provide adequate financial detail to support your explanation. I would like to hear the select board explain this, no the town administrator or Anita. - David Toth
At this time it is too early to have this information.
 2. What will the exact unassigned balance be at the end of 2012? Exactly how much of this is cash? Please have the select board answer this question. - David Toth
This amount will be known some time after its annual audit
 3. Please contact Primex and ask them what the liability is of having members of the fire department sweep snow off a roof that is in serious need of repair. I would like a member of the Board to read their written response at the meeting. - David Toth
They will be covered under workers compensation.
 4. Please have Mr. Hicks come and review the actions he has taken at 35 Highland Street to resolve the problem. Mr. Hicks should explain the current status, the actions he has requested the owner to take, the time table for the completion of those actions, and the actions the town will take if the owner does not comply. -David Toth
Mr. Hicks came to the work session on December 12 and the Board gave his two weeks to get back to the Board.
 5. Why has the Select Board allowed the situation at 35 Highland Street to continue for such an extended period of time? Will the board review Mr. Hick's performance in regard to 35 Highland Street and take appropriate action if they find he has not dealt with this case properly or in a timely fashion? - David Toth
The Board discussed this with Mr. Hicks on December 12.

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6. What is the current status of the economic development committee Jeanette Stewart promised voters? What has the board failed to establish the committee in the 9 months since the election? - David Toth
Stewart-it is very difficult to find volunteers for the committees that we have
Preston - stated that the chairman does not speak for the entire board about having an economic development committee
7. Will the Select Board consider outsourcing the public works department considering the serious financial situation the town is in? - David Toth
Preston - no; Golden - no; Stewart - no
8. The board has chosen to place the money for the replacement of the fire department roof in the town's operating budget. Large capital expenses like the repair of the roof are meant to be placed in warrant articles and approved by voters. Why has the board tried to circumvent voter approval? - David Toth
Stewart - the Board has not tried to circumvent voter approval, warrant article could be defeated
9. Please have each member of the board provide a detailed explanation their reasons for banning public comments at the Select board Meetings. Please have them present the facts upon which they based their decision. - David Toth
Stewart - There weren't any facts that we based our decisions. It was just that Paul had recommended that we discontinue public comments at the meeting, and after careful consideration, we decided that that is what we were going to do.
10. The board is submitting another warrant article for the repair of the town clock. Meanwhile, the town is facing paying millions for capital expenses that are critical over the next 5 to 10 years. Why put money away for non-critical item, when we could put money into funds for public works, the police department, the fire department, or other areas where we will need to make major purchases? Is this an example of how the prioritizes the town's needs? - David Toth
Stewart - continue to have funds to repair if needed
Golden - the clock belongs to the Town
11. What is the town's backup plan for conducting emergency operations in the event that the fire department roof collapses during a major snow storm making the EOC, fire equipment, and the ambulance in operable? - David Toth
Stewart - we would talk to surrounding towns to take care of our equipment

Other Business

- Board discussed the Budget Committee's action to cut \$200,000 from the proposed 2013 budget; items were reviewed showing that budget is where it needs to be to run the town; ***Consensus of the Board was that they will stay with the proposed budget as presented.***

Non Public

Motion to enter non public at 9:38 AM - Stewart; second - Preston; roll call vote - Golden - yes; Preston - yes; Stewart - yes

Others present Paul Branscombe and Tax Collector Patricia Tucker

Board reviewed payment proposal presented by current taxpayer; consensus of the Board was to continue with the agreement.

Motion to exit non public at 9:47 AM - Stewart; second - Preston; Vote 3-0

Chairman announced that Board approved a proposed payment agreement.

Motion to adjourn at 9:48 AM - Stewart; second - Preston; vote 3-0