

## **SELECT BOARD MEETING – Minutes March 23, 2011**

**Present:** Selectmen - Dave DeHerdt, Doug Field, Norm Russell  
Assistant Administrator – Mary Fitz-Gibbon

**Minutes:** none

**Appointments:** none

**Police Department:** Present- Diane Wilder

Possible move - Although the arrangement was found unworkable in the past, Chief Droney is taking another look at the possibility of moving the Police Department back into the basement.

[A bit of history – before renovations to replace front sills in town hall, the Police Department was located in the basement, taking up the entire excavated area, including where the bathrooms are now. Entry was by way of the east outside door used now and straight down some rickety steps. There was no second egress. After renovations, the department moved back into just the single room downstairs (as there were now bathrooms taking up the rest of the space). The current storage room contained a furnace used along with the remaining furnace to heat the first and second floor halls. The one room was too small, lacked privacy, and the chief at the time refused to stay there. Also moisture problems resulted in destruction of police records.]

If a plan/design can be prepared that appears to be workable, some of the current issues created by the current department location could be eliminated or at least reduced. Ideas for reuse of the current station space are being voiced. A suggestion that has been made includes creating a new entry directly from the outside by excavating and replacing the one existing window in the basement with a doorway. Russell pointed out that the wall on that side of the building has a drainage problem that could be addressed at the same time.

Vehicles – Chief Droney reports that the Taurus is not safe to drive. It's a 2005 with a lot of miles. He has been looking into the cost of a new cruiser. A 2011 Crown Vic, used by many departments, is \$32,330. He is also investigating used cruisers. He has found some with low mileage and drivetrain warranties that could be purchased for half the price. Field said he has heard that Ford is discontinuing the Crown Vic and will begin producing a vehicle specifically for police use. This new vehicle is expected to be available next year. Before making any decisions the Board would like to have an assessment made of the department vehicles.

**FRCOG: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Program** – The FRCOG is looking for sustainable projects that will create jobs. DeHerdt said this should probably be looked into. Field and Russell thought he (DeHerdt) would have plenty of time to work on this soon (since he's not running for re-election).

**Mohawk Warrant Articles:** At a previous meeting School Committee representative Emily Robertson reported on a district effort to find funding to make some major repairs to some school buildings, one of which is replacement of the roof on the Shelburne-Buckland school.

A preliminary article has been prepared and presented for inclusion on the Town's Annual Warrant for authorization for this purpose. Russell explained that previous state building programs were only for new construction. In the 90's the only way to get funding to make repairs at the high school was to

incorporate them in a project to build a new middle school. The program has since been changed to include major repairs. The state will fund up to 63% of the project. Russell said he thought it was a “green “ project, as the current thrust is toward energy saving measures. A second article is the debt exclusion for the monies that would be raised for the purposes set forth in the first article.

**Inspector of Animals:** Fitz-Gibbon reported that Kim Reardon has agreed to continue as Inspector of Animals. A motion was made, seconded, and voted to nominate her as Inspector of Animals. Kim now needs to sign that she accepts the nomination.

**Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative (HRMC)** – The Director, Eric Weiss recently attended a meeting regarding an incentive program for towns to get into to the energy production business. He reported that Ashfield is eligible to receive solarvolic systems supplied and installed at no cost to the town by DCS. The program involves a 5 year lease with the town. DCS pays the initial deposit and the 60 monthly fees. At the end of the lease, the town may purchase the system for one dollar or have it removed at no cost to the town. DCS would install and maintain the system during the lease period.

What’s the catch? More needs to be known, but it is thought that the electricity generated would power town buildings, with any surplus being returned to the power grid. The incentive behind this is that there are green energy credits available to power companies for generation of energy using “green” methods. Eric Weiss needs to be contacted to learn more.

**FRCOG: Procurement program-** Andrea Woods has provided the Board with information about participating in the bid process for items purchased in bulk: #2 fuel oil, gasoline, and diesel. This year there is a fee of \$145.00 for each product the town wishes to participate in. This appears to be a new fee. To participate forms must be completed and returned by April 1<sup>st</sup>. A motion was made, seconded to participate in the bid process for #2 fuel oil, gasoline, and diesel fuel and to allow FRCOG to administer the resulting contracts. The vote was in favor.

**Sustainable Development Planning** - An opportunity to become a member of the steering committee for county sustainable development is available, should the Town wish to participate. There is a meeting on April 5<sup>th</sup>. As part of the discussion regarding the many efforts out there DeHerdt said there was a value of participating, even if only to listen. He gave, as an example, the FRTA plan to assess member towns, even if there was no bus service to them. Ashfield is a member and could be assessed, what he called, a substantial amount (possibly \$1,500). He also said the Town’s representative to the FRCOG doesn’t have to be a Select Board member. Ms. Fitz-Gibbon will be the contact person for the Town.

**Library news:** An invitation from the Library to an open house to introduce the CWMARS program was noted.

**An Anonymous Donation** of \$5,000 has been made to the Town Hall building/renovation committee. This is wonderful news. Since it is anonymous a thank you will have to be made publicly through the *Ashfield News*.

**Budget: Scheduling** - A change of date for a joint meeting with the Finance Committee currently scheduled for 3/31 is needed, as DeHerdt will not be available. The Finance Committee will be asked if it can join the Board on 3/30, or if it would prefer to meet on Friday, 4/1. The Select Board will meet on 3/30 to review and sign warrants.

Items discussed – Review of the complete budget began with a review of debt exclusion items. It then moved on to incorporate changes by DeHerdt, adding such things as funding for a new /different cruiser. Discussion of the transfer station, whether to add attendant hours, revise them, purchase bags, etc. was held. Russell was very interested in adding time on a weekday.

The need for setting aside money for unemployment benefits was visited as this year there is no anticipated reduction in town employees. Some funds must be kept in the account, as the town can be assessed for unemployment benefits for up to two years. There was discussion of possibly increasing some office staffing hours, where it appears additional time is needed. There could be some changes in the accrued sick and vacation time accounts as well. A 2% increase for town workers is included.

Although some numbers remain uncertain, the proposed numbers will be plugged into the worksheet to see what the resulting budget looks like. It will then be passed by the Finance committee before becoming final enough for preparation of a warrant.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Priscilla Phelps