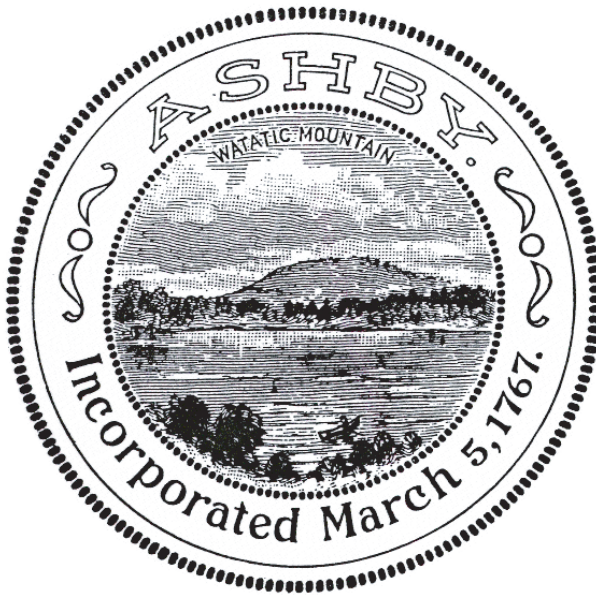


**ANNUAL
REPORTS**

**For the year
2012**



**TOWN OF ASHBY
MASSACHUSETTS**

Accountant	9
Animal Enforcement Agent/Dog Officer	47
Assessors	3
Boards of Health	
Ashby Board of Health	56
Nashoba Associated Boards of Health	51
Building Inspector	56
Cemetery Commission	50
Conservation Commission	49
Council on Aging	58
Cultural Council	59
Definitions	iii
Electrical Inspector	57
Emergency Medical Services	41
Finance Committee	2
Fire Department	40
Fire Department Roster	42
Gas & Plumbing Inspector	57
Highway Department	43
Library	
Library Trustees	60
Library Director	61
Parks Department	62
Planning Board	48
Police Department	39
Police Fire Signal Operators	39
Registrar's Report	30
Schools	
NMRSD Superintendent	63
Ashby Elementary School	69
Hawthorne Brook Middle School	71
North Middlesex Regional High School	72
Squannacook Early Childhood Center	74
Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical	76
Selectmen	1
Tax Collector	6
Town Clerk Financial Report	30
Town Officials	
Appointed	33
Elected	31
Treasurer	5

Tree Warden	46
Town Elections & Meetings	
Presidential Primary Warrant March 6, 2012	98
Results of Presidential Primary March 6, 2012	99
Annual Town Election Warrant April 23, 2012	102
Results Annual Town Election April 23, 2012	103
Special Town Meeting Warrant May 5, 2012	105
Results Special Town Meeting May 5, 2012	108
Annual Town Meeting Warrant May 5, 2012	110
Results Annual Town Meeting May 5, 2012	125
Special Town Election Warrant June 21, 2012	131
Results Special Town Election June 21, 2012	132
Special Town Meeting Warrant August 14, 2012	133
Results Special Town Meeting August 14, 2012	135
Special Town Election Warrant August 28, 2012	136
Results of Special Town Election August 28, 2012	138
State Primary Election Warrant September 6, 2012	139
Results of State Primary Election September 6, 2012	140
State Election Warrant November 6, 2012	143
Results of State Election November 6, 2012	149
Ballot for Annual Town Election April 30, 2013	151

**The Town of Ashby web site:
www.ci.ashby.ma.us**

Available Funds	Free cash, reserves, and unexpected balances available for appropriation.
Chapter 90	General Law which provides for contributions by the State for construction and maintenance of certain town road; usually roads leading from one town to another.
Cherry Sheet	Details of State and County charges and reimbursements used in determining the tax rate; known as “Cherry Sheet” due to color of the paper originally used.
Estimated Receipts	Estimate of miscellaneous receipts based on previous year’s receipts deducted by the Assessors from gross amount to be raised by taxation.
Free Cash	Amount certified by the Department of Revenue determined by any excess revenue and unexpended appropriations of the prior year.
Matching Funds	Amount made available by special State and Federal acts to supplement local appropriations for specific types of projects.
Provision for Abatements & Exemptions (formerly OVERLAY)	Amount raised by Assessors for purpose of creating a fund to cover abatements granted.
Provision for Abatements & Exemptions Surplus (formerly Overlay Surplus)	Excess determined by the Assessors (exceeding tax balance for that year) which may be voted for extra-ordinary or unforeseen purposes.
Reserve Fund	Amount appropriated for unforeseen or emergency purposes, controlled exclusively by the Finance Committee.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

It has been a year that we thought things would get better. The problem is the cost to run the Town continues to go up and the amount of money that is available seems to get smaller, as it has to run our own households.

The Board wants to thank Joe Casey for his years of service to the Town. His dedication and his knowledge on issues helped us all get a better understanding of certain situations that came before the Board.

We all remember the Ice Storm of 2008 and the costs that we all incurred! Well the good news is that we received the final money that the state had promised us. That money will be put to good use.

The Ashby Elementary School project was finished during the summer of 2012. The students were able to return back home to Ashby after one year in Townsend. The children came back to a refurbished building. Now we will be working out the details for paying for the roof, windows and doors moving forward for the next 5 years. Many thanks to Oscar and his crew that clean and maintain the school buildings everyday! They spruced up the classrooms with paint, new floors and a lot of hard work so the students came back to great looking classrooms.

Doug Briggs, Town Administrator for Ashby and Ashburnham, worked through most of 2012. Doug brought great ideas and a wealth of knowledge to the job. Doug decided to continue his work only in Ashburnham. We want to thank him for his time in Ashby and all the help that he gave us. We wish him the best.

Budgets once again will be tight. The Department Heads continue to work their magic to stay within their budgets. The Board would like to thank the Police Department, Fire Department and Highway Department that work hard to protect each and every one of us every day.

The Board would also like to recognize all the volunteers, elected officials and employees of the town who work every day to solve the smallest or the largest issues the Town faces. To those that have retired from positions on town boards and committees, we want to thank you for your hard work; your service to the community of Ashby is greatly appreciated. We are always looking for people to fill positions in town and are always hoping for people to volunteer or run for office to help move the town forward.

A special thanks to Jennifer Collins who keeps everything together and moving forward in the Selectman's office.

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter McMurray, *Chairman*
Dan Meunier
Mike McCallum

FINANCE COMMITTEE

To the Townsfolk of Ashby:

The finance committee held regular meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. During the summer months, we switched to a once per month schedule and during budget season we have met more often. Public notices with the agenda items are posted on the bulletin board in front of the town hall. The atmosphere informal to encourage participation by all in attendance. We welcome members of the public to attend and join in our discussion.

The finance committee is the official financial guardian of the town. Because it is difficult for all taxpayers to be completely informed about every aspect of town finances, finance committees are established so a representative group of taxpayers conducts a thorough review of municipal finance questions on behalf of all citizens.

This year the finance committee is now staffed with 2 new members with 4 original members from the previous year.

I am pleased to report that the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen have held productive working sessions on the town budget. We look forward to working closely with the Board of Selectmen and our new part time Town Administrator this budget season.

The town finances are in good condition with little debt and a well-funded stabilization account. Moving forward, the town can expect to see a formal capital plan implemented to help better anticipate large expenditures.

The town does face challenges in the next few years that require us to pay attention to our financial planning. Town buildings are in need of repair and some are in the process of being repaired. We need to be diligent about funding building maintenance projects to prevent more costly repairs in the future.

The school roof/window project is the largest expense our town has faced in many years. Even with state funding, the money needed to service this debt will consume a significant part of our 2.5% tax increase. For this upcoming budget we will work to be able to manage this debt without major disruption to our taxpayers budget.

As we look to the future, several large school projects in the district (septic, high school) that are the same size and larger than our current school roof/window project. It is critical that we plan now in order to minimize the impact to our tax rate, although it is likely that some impact to the tax rate will be needed to fund these projects. The replacement of the police station looms large in the near future. We encourage residents to participate in meetings held by the town and school district to provide input as these projects are planned.

The goal of the Finance Committee is to work to ensure the credibility and transparency of all town fiscal procedures, continuing to raise the public trust. The minutes and agenda of this committee are posted on the town web site. We hope to keep the citizenry informed and involved in the issues and challenges facing this community.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Kevin Stetson, *Chair*
 Joseph Armstrong-Champ
 Suzanne Caron
 Lyric Donald
 Kathleen Panagiotes
 Lillian Whitney

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

The Board of Assessors is responsible for the valuation of real estate and personal property subject to taxation. The Registry of Motor Vehicles is responsible for motor vehicle valuations and supplies the data for excise bills. Assessed values for Real and Personal Property are based on “full and fair cash value” as of the January 1st proceeding each fiscal year.

As always, if you have any questions regarding any assessing issues, please feel free to contact Lois Raymond, Administrative Assessor, at 978-386-2427 x15 or by email at assess@ashbyma.gov. Office hours are from Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Friday 9 AM to 12 PM. Wednesday evenings 4:00 PM to 8:00. Tuesdays closed. The Board of Assessors normally meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by the Board of Assessors
 Oliver Mutch, *Chairman*
 Melissa Coyle, *Member*
 Charles Perna, *Member*
 Harald M. Scheid – *Regional Tax Assessor*
 Lois Raymond – *Administrative Assistant*
 Linda Couture – *Associate Assessor*

Fiscal 2012 Assessments and Revenues by Major Property Class

<i>Property Class</i>	<i>Levy Percent</i>	<i>Valuation by Class</i>	<i>Tax Rate</i>	<i>Tax Levy</i>
Residential	94.0712	265,657,772	16.42	4,362,100.62
Open Space	0.0000	-0-	16.42	-0-
Commercial	2.8149	7,949,167	16.42	130,525.32
Industrial	0.25	714,600	16.42	11,733.73
Personal Prop	2.8609	8,079,285	16.42	132,661.86
TOTALS	100.0000	282,411,824	16.42	4,637,021.53

Prior Valuation and Tax History

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Tax Rate</i>	<i>Total Valuation</i>	<i>Accounts</i>	<i>Tax Levy</i>
2012	16.42	282,400,824	1,752	4,637,022
2011	14.90	302,321,755	1,752	4,504,594
2010	13.64	319,193,905	1,826	4,353,805
2009	11.96	351,803,275	1,836	4,203,690
2008	11.53	350,386,764	1,831	4,039,959
2007	11.70	350,003,100	1,813	4,095,036
2006	10.64	338,987,900	1,769	3,606,831
2005	11.81	294,241,300	1,757	3,474,990
2004	13.49	253,655,200	1,759	3,419,272

Fiscal Year 2012 Abstract of Assessments

<i>Prop Class Code/Description</i>	<i>Accts</i>	<i>Class Valuation</i>	<i>Average Value</i>
012 - 043 Mixed Use Properties	16	18,825,388	1,176,587
101 Residential Single Family	1077	228,627,100	212,281
102 Residential Condominiums	0	-0-	-0-
104 Residential Two Family	12	2,665,500	222,125
105 Residential Three Family	2	673,000	336,500
Miscellaneous Residential	14	1,889,200	134,943
111 - 125 Apartments	1	228,900	228,900
130 - 132, 106 Vacant Land	361	15,570,600	43,132
200 - 231 Open Space	0	-0-	-0-
300 - 393 Commercial	21	4,019,900	191,424
400 - 442 Industrial	4	714,600	178,650
501 - 508 Personal Property	130	8,079,285	62,148
600-821 Chapter 61, 61A, 61B	114	1,107,351	9,714
TOTALS	1752	282,400,824	

Assessors' Account for Exemptions and Abatements

<i>Description</i>	<i>FY2012</i>	<i>FY2011</i>	<i>FY2010</i>	<i>FY2009</i>	<i>FY2008</i>
Assessors' Overlay	63,902.05	125,570.42	65,163.76	66,403.52	56,359.69
Charges to 6/30/12	37,748.91	33,819.56	52,152.74	54,642.18	37,504.20
Balance	26,153.14	91,750.86	13,011.02	11,761.34	18,855.49

New Growth Revenue

Fiscal Year	New Revenues
2012	18,369
2011	68,548
2010	21,487
2009	49,051
2008	39,192
2007	61,399
2006	71,272
2005	127,888

TREASURER

As of December 31, 2012 available cash was equal to \$550,776.27 and a total of \$2,254.97 was earned in interest from the general fund accounts.

The sum of \$15,135.56 was collected in tax title receipts and foreclosure redemptions.

The following trust fund balances as of December 31, 2012 are:

John Forbes Memorial Clock Fund	\$ 1,291.63
School Funds	
Jesse Foster	\$ 1,073.21
Samuel P. Gates	\$ 21,426.13
Sumner Taylor	\$ 2,833.23
Cemetery Funds	
Sale of Lots	\$ 35,185.91
Perpetual Care	\$ 97,119.57
Rosanna Robbins	\$ 92,134.82
Open Space Acquisition Fund	\$ 19,197.27
Federal Forfeiture Fund	\$ 1,929.87
Stabilization Fund	\$698,275.86
Police-Law Enforcement Trust	\$ 482.78
Library Trust Funds	\$313,865.55
Memorial Trusts	\$ 9,674.70

The Town currently has no long-term borrowing.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate E. Stacy, *Treasurer*

REPORT OF THE COLLECTOR

Thank you for your votes of support and the opportunity to serve a third term! This year's focus has been cleaning house, with an emphasis on inventories of attic records and identifying which documents must be kept permanently vs. when each of the remaining documents are eligible to be destroyed. Nothing can be shredded without advance approval based on the retention requirements from the Secretary of State, Municipal Records Retention Manual. I appreciate the many hours of shredding help from our Senior Tax Work-off Program!

TAX BILLING

Tax bills are mailed to addresses provided by the Assessors and the Registry of Motor Vehicles. By law, a taxpayer is responsible for payment even if the bill is not received. Payments post effective the date of payment receipt, not the postmark date. Information regarding abatements and important deadlines are printed on each tax bill. If you require further assistance, please call me at 978-386-2427, ext13; we can visit during my walk-in hours or arrange a special appointment time. In the event of my absence, the Town Clerk staff is fully bonded to accept tax payments and provide stamped receipts on my behalf.

ABATEMENTS & DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

My charge to collect a tax continues until the tax is either paid in full or abated. All valuation questions and abatement/exemption applications are handled by the Assessor's Office. The deadline for filing real estate and personal property abatements is by February 1st each year. Delinquent real estate taxes eventually become subject to the tax taking process: a public notice of taking is posted in a local newspaper and two public places, a lien is recorded to secure the town's interest, and the unpaid balances transfer to the Treasurer where payment is made or foreclosure proceedings commence at the earliest date allowed by law. Ignoring an Excise bill will eventually prohibit your vehicle registration and license renewal at the registry. If you transfer or sell your vehicle, or if you receive a bill for a vehicle you no longer own, please contact the Assessor's Office to discuss the required paperwork and your eligibility for an abatement.

Unpaid Real Estate tax recorded as TAX TITLE as of December 31st. Unpaid taxes, interest and fees transfer to the Treasurer's books for further collection.

Unpaid Real Estate tax recorded as TAX TITLE as of December 31st. Unpaid taxes, interest and fees transfer to the Treasurer's books for further collection.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Added to Existing (#)</i>	<i>New TT Accts (#)</i>	<i>Total Transfer</i>	<i>Rate</i>
2004	25,401 (41)	9,828 (10)	35,230	1.04%
2005- multiple years taken/acct		20,689 (4)	20,689	n/a
2005	11,921 (16)	18,892 (12)	30,813	0.89%
2006	18,026 (17)	4,055 (2)	22,081	0.62%
2007	5,905 (9)	17,322 (13)	23,227	0.57%
2008- lien	86,615 (1)		86,615	n/a
2008	6,416 (7)	22,620 (10)	29,035	0.72%
2009	1,422 (1)	29,311 (14)	30,733	0.74%
2010	20,280 (7)	7,786 (5)	28,066	0.66%
2011	5,170 (4)	19,124 (14)	22,564	0.55%
2012	16,169 (10)	24,012 (12)	40,182	0.89%

OUTSTANDING RECEIVABLES as of December 31st., 2012

<i>Year</i>	<i>Personal Property</i>	<i>Motor Vehicle Excise</i>
2003	13	800
2004	40	1,117
2005	65	1,196
2006	59	1,052
2007	88	2,383
2008	144	2,226
2009	264	1,348
2010	471	1,901
2011	506	3,107
2012	706	10,006

COMMITMENT COMPARISONS as of December 31st., 2012

<i>Year</i>	<i>Real Estate</i>		<i>Personal Property</i>		<i>Motor Vehicle</i>	
FY2002	2,872,843	+151,788	48,919	- 1,861	319,262	+33,342
FY2003	3,019,179	+146,336	44,006	- 4,913	342,219	+22,957
FY2004	3,391,473	+372,294	48,518	+4,512	352,905	+10,686
FY2005	3,432,802	+41,329	46,260	- 2,258	371,114	+18,436
FY2006	3,568,252	+135,450	43,613	- 2,647	364,434	-6,680
FY2007	4,048,330	+480,078	46,699	+3,086	369,800	+5,366
FY2008	3,992,068	-56,262	47,876	+1,177	357,346	-12,454
FY2009	4,138,011	+145,943	69,639	+21,763	336,348	-20,998
FY2010	4,269,305	+131,294	84,499	+14,861	332,827	-3,481
FY2011	4,381,324	+112,019	123,277	+38,778	344,809	+11,982
FY2012	4,506,528	+125,204	132,662	+9,385	340,185	-4,624
FY2013	4,793,840	+287,312	148,779	+16,117	report next year	

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Ann Scheid