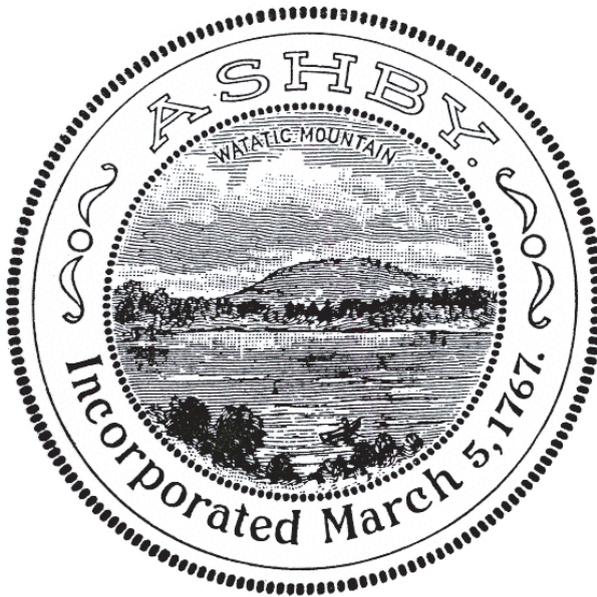


**ANNUAL
REPORTS**

**For the year
2013**



**TOWN OF ASHBY
MASSACHUSETTS**

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**The Town of Ashby web site:
www.ashbyma.gov**

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

The Board of Selectmen wishes to thank:

Peter McMurray for his 13 years of service as a member of the Board of Selectmen as well as his many continuing years as a member of the Ashby Fire Dept. and numerous terms as Parks Commissioner. Dan Meunier for his 5 years of service as a Selectman, his 5 years of service as a member of the Earth Removal Board and 3 years of service as a member of the Finance Committee. Police Chief Drew for his dedicated service to this Town over the past four and a half years.

The Board is pleased to report that we have made it through FY2013 with all of its challenges and have been able to keep our heads above water. Our financial situation is tight but we are holding our own. We must be diligent with our spending while being conscious of the things that the Town needs (ex: Police Station), versus the things that we want. The Board of Selectmen is open to meeting with department heads to discuss and address any problems and concerns that they may have.

2013 was a year of transition at Town Hall.

- On Jan 7, 2013 we welcomed Mr. Robert Hanson as Ashby's new Town Administrator.
- Steve Ingerson won the annual election for the seat of Selectman for three years.
- At a special election Janet Flinkstrom won the seat of Selectman for the final year of the three year term that was vacated by Dan Meunier.
- Chief of Police Ed Drew resigned and Lt. Fred Alden was appointed as Acting Chief of Police with a three year contract to be reviewed at the end of each year.
- Contract negotiations began with dispatch personnel.
- Selectmen have attended several of the NMRHS Building Committee meetings to listen and gather information.

The Town applied for and was approved as a Green Community in 2013. With this designation, the Town was awarded a grant to pay for certain projects that are considered to be Green projects such as storm windows, upgrades to heating systems in Town Hall and refurbishing Town owned buildings etc. Thank you to the Energy Efficiency Committee for successfully applying for this grant on behalf of the Town.

The Board of Selectmen wishes to thank all of the Town Departments and numerous volunteers on Boards and Committees that keep this Town functioning and progressing forward.

I am looking forward to serving the Town and working on the challenges and rewards 2014 may bring.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet L. Flinkstrom,
Chairman of the Board of Selectmen

FINANCE COMMITTEE

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

This year the finance committee has two new members bringing our committee to six representatives. Members took time to attend the new officials finance forum that was held in Worcester.

The Finance Committee has updated the Reserve Fund Transfer Policy. The update focuses on accountability of department expenses, requiring documentation and receipts for over expenditures. The new policy states that a department can only request a RFT once any of their non-payroll budget lines reach 30 percent or less. This updated policy can be found on the town website.

I am pleased to report that the Finance Committee, the Board of Selectman and the Town Administrator have held many productive working sessions on the town budget.

The town finances are in good condition with little debt and a well-funded stabilization plan. Although the stabilization fund is in good condition, in order to maintain this fund the town needs to be frugal in spending free cash. In looking towards the future, the Finance Committee is looking to create a formal capital expense plan to help us better anticipate large expenditures.

The town does face challenges in the next few years that require us to pay attention to our financial planning. As you may know, ALL of the town buildings are in need of repair. We need to be diligent and begin to fund building maintenance projects to prevent more costly repairs in the future.

The Ashby Elementary 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. This upcoming budget we will be working hard to manage this debt.

There are several large projects in the very near future; the potential of a new high school and/or the repair of the current high school and a new septic system for the Hawthorne Brook Middle School. Both of which are larger costs than the AES roof/window project. It is critical that we plan now in order to minimize the impact to our tax rate.

As always we encourage residents to participate in any and all meetings held by the town and school district. These meeting will keep you better informed about the upcoming projects and give you the opportunity to provide input as the projects come to fruition.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kevin Stetson
FinCom Chair

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 preceding 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 4:30 PM.

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

Fiscal 2013 Assessments and Revenues by Major Property Class

Property Class	Levy Percent	Valuation by Class	Tax Rate	Tax Levy
Residential	93.6826	265,047,200	17.47	4,630,374.58
Open Space	-0-	-0-	17.47	-0-
Commercial	3.0593	8,655,200	17.47	151,206.34
Industrial	0.2480	701,700	17.47	12,258.70
Personal Property	3.0101	8,516,277	17.47	148,779.36
TOTALS	100.0000	282,920,377	17.47	4,942,618.98

Valuation and Tax History

Fiscal Year	Tax Rate	Total Valuation	Accounts	Tax Levy	Change %
2013	17.47	282,920,377	1,741	4,942,619	6.5904
2012	16.42	282,400,824	1,752	4,637,022	2.9398
2011	14.90	302,321,755	1,752	4,504,594	3.4634
2010	13.64	319,193,905	1,826	4,353,805	3.5710
2009	11.96	351,803,275	1,836	4,203,690	4.0528
2008	11.53	350,386,764	1,831	4,039,959	-1.3450
2007	11.70	350,003,100	1,813	4,095,036	13.5356

Assessor's Account for Exemptions and Abatements

Description	FY2013	FY2012	FY2011	FY2010
Assessor's Overlay	123,339.89	63,902.05	125,570.42	65,163.76
Overlay Deficits	16,820.54	-0-	-0-	-0-
Charges to 6/30/10	64,053.04	37,749.91	33,819.56	42,152.74
Amount Released	76,107.39	26,153.14	91,750.86	13,011.02

New Growth Revenue

Fiscal Year	Added Valuation	Tax Rate	New Revenues
2013	1,849,016.00	17.47	30,361.00
2012	1,232,817.00	16.42	18,369.00
2011	5,025,493.00	14.90	68,548.00
2010	1,796,600.00	13.64	21,487.00

TREASURER

As of December 31, 2013 available cash was equal to \$740,599.01 and a total of \$2,004.26 was earned in interest from the general fund accounts.

The sum of \$49,580.39 was collected in tax title receipts and foreclosure redemptions.

The following trust fund balances as of December 31, 2013 are:

John Forbes Memorial Clock Fund	\$ 1,300.73
School Funds	
Jesse Foster	\$ 1,080.77
Samuel P. Gates	\$ 21,576.92
Sumner Taylor	\$ 2,853.20
Cemetery Funds	
Sale of Lots	\$ 37,001.25
Perpetual Care	\$ 99,005.76
Rosanna Robbins	\$ 92,783.26
Open Space Acquisition Fund	\$ 19,332.37
Federal Forfeiture Fund	\$ 1,943.49
Stabilization Fund	\$723,271.28
Police-Law Enforcement Trust	\$ 822.36
Library Trust Funds	\$316,677.67
Memorial Trusts	\$ 6,423.71

The Town currently has no long-term borrowing.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate E. Stacy, *Treasurer*

REPORT OF THE COLLECTOR

These three charts expand the scope of the financial reporting to be included in the annual report. The tax billing, abatement, and policy information typically shown here can be found at the town website. Answers to commonly asked tax questions, a discussion of payment options, and other informative links are also available within the updated Tax Collector pages at: www.ci.ashby.ma.us.

Respectfully submitted,
 Beth Ann Scheid, CMMC
(Certified Massachusetts Municipal Collector)

COLLECTION ACTIVITY as Turn-Over Deposits to Treasurer		
January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013		
2014	Real Estate	\$ 2,353,975.91
2013	Real Estate	\$ 2,509,903.19
2013	Personal Property	\$ 10.32
2013	Personal Property	\$ 147,568.17
2011	Personal Property	\$ 105.43
2009	Personal Property	\$ 62.19
2004	Personal Property	\$ 13.48
2013	Motor Vehicle	\$ 355,857.40
2012	Motor Vehicle	\$ 11,966.86
2011	Motor Vehicle	\$ 1,490.43
2010	Motor Vehicle	\$ 212.08
2009	Motor Vehicle	\$ 101.25
2008	Motor Vehicle	\$ 235.41
2007	Motor Vehicle	\$ 292.50
2006	Motor Vehicle	\$ 347.50
2005	Motor Vehicle	\$ 109.58
2004	Motor Vehicle	\$ 140.01
2003	Motor Vehicle	\$ 9.17
	In Lieu Of Tax - City of Fitchburg	\$ 6,159.97
	Title V Liens (amortized pymnts)	\$ 2,251.97
	Title V Liens (payoffs)	\$ 21,148.00
	CDBG Liens (payoffs)	\$ 15,922.50
	Past Due Interest on Taxes	\$ 17,899.23
	Municipal Lien Certificate Fees	\$ 2,750.00
	Demand & Warrant Fees	\$ 8,230.10
	Deputy Notice & Service Fees	\$ 8,680.00
	RMV Non-renewal Marks Fees	\$ 3,720.00
	Tax Service Billing File Fees	\$ 1,525.00
	Registry Recording Fees	\$ 150.00
	NSF Returned Check Fees	\$ 25.00
	Vendor Refund Check	\$ 215.00
		\$ 5,471,077.65

COLLECTION ACTIVITY by Tax Year and Levy						
January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013						
REAL ESTATE TAX BILLINGS						
	Balance on	Commitments	Payments (-)	Exemptions(-)	Transfer to	Balance on
	<u>12/31/2012</u>	<u>during 2013</u>	<u>Refunds (+)</u>	<u>Abatements(-)</u>	<u>Tax Title (-)</u>	<u>12/31/2013</u>
FY 2014	0.00	4,928,250.76	2,353,975.61 280.00	29,259.73 0.00		2,545,295.41
FY 2013	2,541,291.23	2,932.17	2,505,306.50 7,509.59	3,558.00 15,284.50	25,199.58	2,384.41
PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX BILLINGS						
		<u>Commitments</u>	<u>Payments</u>	<u>Abatements</u>	<u>Refunds</u>	
FY 2013	148,779.36		147,509.81		10.82	1,280.37
FY 2012	705.77					705.77
FY 2011	505.56		105.43			400.13
FY 2010	471.39					471.39
FY 2009	264.31		62.19			202.12
FY 2008	144.12					144.12
FY 2007	87.74					87.74
FY 2006	58.50					58.50
FY 2005	64.96					64.96
FY 2004	40.44		13.48			26.96
MOTOR VEHICLE EXCISE TAX BILLINGS						
		<u>Commitments</u>	<u>Payments</u>	<u>Abatements</u>	<u>Refunds</u>	
FY 2013	0.00	374,990.41	354,840.80	10,483.89	4,830.52	14,496.24
FY 2012	10,006.41	3,906.39	11,955.61	495.12	520.24	1,982.31
FY 2011	3,106.58		1,490.43	280.21	260.42	1,596.36
FY 2010	1,901.03		212.08	125.00	125.00	1,688.95
FY 2009	1,358.23		101.25	125.00		1,256.98
FY 2008	2,226.24		235.41			1,990.83
FY 2007	2,382.97		292.50			2,090.47
FY 2006	1,052.71		347.50			705.21
FY 2005	1,195.52		109.58			1,085.94
FY 2004	1,117.30		140.01			977.29
FY 2003	800.11		9.17			790.94

UNCOLLECTED RECEIVABLES - % by Levy Year						
Excise	PersProperty		Unpaid Real Estate taxes transferred to Tax Title			
as of December 31, 2013			add to existing (#) vs. new accounts (Totals	%
3.88%	0.86%	FY 2013	14,070.34 (7)	11,129.24 (7)	25,200	0.53%
0.58%	0.53%	FY 2012	16,169 (10)	24,012 (12)	40,182	0.89%
0.46%	0.32%	FY 2011	5,170 (4)	19,124 (14)	22,564	0.55%
0.50%	0.56%	FY 2010	20,280 (7)	7,786 (5)	28,066	0.66%
0.37%	0.29%	FY 2009	1,422 (1)	29,311 (14)	30,733	0.74%
0.56%	0.30%	FY 2008	6,416 (7)	22,620 (10)	29,035	0.72%
0.57%	0.19%	FY 2007	5,905 (9)	17,322 (13)	23,227	0.57%
0.19%	0.13%	FY 2006	18,026 (17)	4,055 (2)	22,081	0.62%
0.29%	0.14%	FY 2005	11,921 (16)	39,581 (16)	51,502	1.50%
0.28%	0.06%	FY 2004	24,401 (41)	9,828 (10)	32,230	1.04%