

TOWN OF ASHFORD

ANNUAL REPORT



Ashford Municipal Offices

July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

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Dedicated in Memory of Beverly Ference

One of Ashford's finest, Beverly Ference, passed away on September 14, 2020. Beverly was one of those "helping" people whose life touched so many. She seemed to know everyone and was the person to whom we turned for just about any event (good or bad). Beverly was the "go-to" for so many things, connecting us to resources and each other.

Bev started working for the Town Clerk/Building Department in 1980. She exemplified what town office employees do best, that is, to help the public navigate the myriad forms and requirements needed to conduct business in the Town. She was patient, kind, helpful, and made everyone feel welcome to conduct business. She was always gracious and never left a taxpayer feeling that their skills were lacking or inadequate.



The *Ashford Citizen* will also miss the hard work and dedication of Bev, who helped produce the town's monthly newsletter for decades. Information was gathered, articles and ads were written, and "cutting" and "pasting" were literal terms back when she began. Beverly put together vital records, trivia, education news, transfer report on property sales, building permit report, and special memorials. For the old *Citizen*, she also collected interesting little tidbits and stories we loved to read.

Besides Beverly's invaluable professional contributions, she will be remembered fondly for her many little kindnesses that made our days lighter. Bev was practical, kind, and generous. Beverly shared her recipes, plants, stories, time, energy, and so much more. We are grateful for her life. Beverly will be missed terribly by anyone who knew her, and the people who didn't know her will never know what they missed.

Office of Selectmen

Board of Selectmen

Ralph H. Fletcher, First Selectman

William A. Falletti, Selectman

Cathryn Silver-Smith, Selectman

Staff

Christine Abikoff, Executive Administrative Assistant

Meeting Schedule

The Board of Selectmen meet the first and third Monday of each month

Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the Board of Selectmen is to superintend the concerns of the town (CGS, Sec 7-12). The Selectmen have certain legislative powers: they convene the town meeting; they draft ordinances that the meeting adopts; they make certain appointments which in consolidated towns and cities are made by legislative body. As the principal administrative officials of the town: they build and maintain roads; they keep the town's financial records; they administer the town's welfare services; they appoint administrative boards, commissions, and committees. The First Selectman acts as Chief Executive Officer for the town.

Ashford, like other U.S. towns and cities. was impacted during 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, 2020 all Town offices and buildings were closed to the public and building mask mandates were put into effect to minimize the spread of the virus to Town employees and the public. Employees continued to work normal hours within the buildings and provided services to the public outside/car-side and via specially installed windows. In-person meetings of all town boards, commissions and committees were replaced with virtual meetings conducted using online (Zoom, GoToMeeting) technology and support. At this writing pandemic protocols established by the CDC and State of CT agencies remain in effect.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- Conducted Special Town Meeting to authorize purchase of Niftylift SD50 for Department of Public Works.
- Appointed Michael Gardner to position of Emergency Management Director.
- Appointed Cathryn Silver-Smith to represent Board of Selectmen on a Joint Financial Office Advisory Committee whose membership is comprised of 2 members of the Board of Finance, 2 members of the Ashford Board of Education and 1 member of the Board of Selectmen.
- Conducted Public Information Meeting, where BL Companies, who were contracted using \$200,000 in Department of Economic and Community Grant funding awarded to Ashford and Willington in 2017, presented their Phase II environmental site assessment of Cadlerock properties.
- Conducted Special Town Meeting to enact an ordinance entitling the Registrars of Voters to serve 4-year terms.

- Issued a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Ashford and the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Safety relating to the State’s Land Mobile Radio Network.
- Coordinated with Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz for award ceremony held at Hole-in-the-Wall Camp that recognized the service and sacrifices of Ashford and Union Vietnam Era veterans.
- Conducted a Special Town Meeting to establish the Advisory Ashford School Building Committee.
- Unanimously voted to authorize the Board of Finance to adopt the 2020-2021 budget and set the mill rate in accordance with Executive Order 7I issued by Governor Lamont 3/21/2020.
- Adopted resolution in accordance with Executive Orders 7S and 7W authorizing the Tax Collector to institute a tax deferment program beginning July 1, 2020 – the Town of Ashford shall participate in the deferral program and will offer to all taxpayers, businesses, non-profits and residents a deferment of three months for any taxes on real estate, personal property, or motor vehicle from the time such taxes first become due and payable.
- Approved to apply, with the Town of Willington, for Department of Economic and Community Development brownfield remediation funding for Cadlerock properties.

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

- Continue to monitor COVID-19 pandemic and adjust health/safety protocols as appropriate,
- Continue to monitor the Cadlerock Environmental Assessment projects, formulate future plans, and provide public updates.
- Multiple road resurfacing projects
- Continue to monitor the Ashford Transfer Station as usage and hauling fees continue to rise.
- Plan and administer environmentally proactive projects funded through grant awards received from Eversource or other sources.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk

Sherri L. Mutch, MCTC, CMC

Assistant Town Clerks

Karen Zulick, CCTC, CMC

Beverly Ference, CCTC

Public Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 8:30am–3:00pm;

Wednesday evening 7:00–9:00pm

Responsibilities

The Town Clerk's Office must meet statutory requirements for recording land documents, and for filing vital records, military discharges, maps, and minutes of town meetings, boards and commissions. Documents are recorded or filed, security filmed, and the microfilm safely stored off-site. The office issues marriage licenses, burial and cremation permits, and certified copies of birth, marriage and death certificates. The office issues dog licenses, liquor licenses, and various permits. (Sports licenses are now primarily done online by the purchaser.) The Town Clerk prepares and records deeds for the sale of cemetery plots in Ashford's active cemeteries. We are required to carry out a multitude of specified duties for local referenda, and local, state and federal elections. We serve the public and support other town departments.

The Town Clerk's Office has the responsibility to maintain the best possible records management systems and preservation and restoration programs for our permanent public records. We attend conferences and educational sessions to keep informed of changes in election laws and other legislation, and management and preservation of public records.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- CT State Library Grant 2020 (\$5,500, July) was used to start Codification (first year of two-year project).
- Continued in-house digital indexing/scanning of records (DD-214s).
- Municipal Election was held (November), followed by a re-canvas.
- Region-19 Solar referendum was held (December).
- Oldest Tax Abstracts (1862-1892) were rebound by Kofile (March).
- COVID-19 Pandemic shut down the Town Offices March 17th (one person staffing office for months, repeated quarantines of staff, no public access to building, meeting public outside or at window).
- To adapt our office for COVID-19, plexiglass barriers were installed between 3 desks; 2 new monitors and a laptop were purchased for the Town Clerk to have ability to work from home (June).
- VPNs were also set up for both Town Clerk and Assistant.
- No Region 19 referendum was held (May); per Governor's Executive Order 7I.
- No town budget/education referendum was held (May), per same executive order.
- Dog licensing was conducted by mail and was extended one month by executive order (June-July).
- Office continued to produce *The Ashford Citizen* monthly.

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

- Initiate migration of land records software to new vendor (from Cott to IQS).
- Consequences of COVID-19 include hiring of temporary staff to prepare for the increased volume of absentee ballots and for coverage of staff absent due to quarantining/illness.
- Postage costs will also reflect increase in absentee ballot volume.

Board of Assessment Appeals

Chairperson

Joseph F. Peters

Members

Thomas Martin, Elizabeth Little

Staff

Kara J. Fishman, Assessor

Meeting Schedule

The BAA meets two times per year, in March and September. Meetings are held in the lower level of the town hall. Written applications for the March meeting are due by February 20th. The taxpayer is mailed an assigned time and date to present their appeal. The taxpayer is informed of the Board's decision by mail.

The September meeting is only to hear motor vehicle appeals. A written application must be brought with the taxpayer to the meeting. No appointments are necessary. The taxpayer is informed of the Board's decision by mail.

Notice of all meetings is published in The Ashford Citizen and a local newspaper such as *The Chronicle* or *The Hartford Courant*. Notice is also posted on the town's website and outside the Town Clerk's office in the Town Hall.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- With two vacancies imminent, two alternates were appointed as regular members by the Board of Selectmen.
- In March 2020 the Board heard one real estate appeal, one personal property appeal and one motor vehicle appeal. In September there were no appeals.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Ashford Land Use Office

The ZBA is supported by the Ashford Land Use Office; Michael D'Amato, Zoning Enforcement Officer and a Land Use Clerk.

Officers

Keith Lipker, Chairperson

Michael Peppin, Vice Chair

Susan Eastwood, Secretary

Regular Members

Jean McCarthy

Harry Bagley, Jr.

Alternates

William Kerensky

Sandra Moquin

Robert Brisard

Meeting Schedule

The ZBA meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7:00pm if there is new business. The schedule has been published separately. All meetings from May 2020 forward were conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue as necessary. Links to the meeting were included in the Town website.

Purpose

The purpose of the Ashford Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is to hear and act on variance appeals of Zoning Commission regulations that prohibit Ashford property owners from developing or amending existing features. The ZBA also reviews requests for automobile dealers or repairers’ licenses with applications pending before the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles. This is in keeping with Connecticut DMV procedure. The ZBA hears and acts on petitions from property owners who believe that the Zoning Enforcement Officer erred in a decision that was averse to the property owner.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- Two residential variance applications were received in the fiscal year 2019-2020. Public hearings were held regarding the applications, which were approved.

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

- No training was available as it relates to ZBA.
- Planning and Zoning Commission regulations were monitored for changes.

Board of Finance

Chairperson

Charles E Funk, IV

Members

Judith A. Austin, Clerk

Angela C. Desanto

Garth Bean

Carl Pfalzgraf

Jesse Burnham

Alternate Members

Esther Jagodzinski

John Kopec

Merrill Simpson

Meeting Schedule

The Board of Finance generally meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month. However, during budget season we meet more often. Our schedule can be found on the Ashford Town website calendar of events. Be sure to check the calendar on a regular basis. The entire Board encourages you to participate in our meetings as your input helps us act on every citizen’s behalf.

Purpose & Responsibilities

The function of the 9 member (6 regular, 3 alternate) Board of Finance in our Selectman-Town Meeting form of government is to manage the financial activities of the town government. The Board is charged with budget construction and specifically a goal of setting town priorities utilizing town taxes efficiently. The Board of Finance is responsible for setting property tax rates, ap-prove special appropriations, oversee how town financial records are maintained, and arrange for an annual audit of financial accounts, as well as produce an Ashford Town Annual Report.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

The Board of Finance was presented with the challenge of holding meetings virtually due to the global pandemic as well as by executive order from the governor's office with the sole responsibility of passing the budget on people's behalf. The BoF passed unanimously the FY 20-21 budget, indicating the public trusted the hard work putting forth a responsible proposal.

The FY 19-20 mill rate was set at 35.461 mils. equalizing motor vehicle and real-estate/personal property tax rates. The BOF was pleased with the performance of auditing firm, King, King, & Associates, which had an easier time with the Town and Ashford School overall audit process. The Ashford Board of Education has worked to rectify recording and reporting issues that were exposed during the 18-19 audit process.

Ashford continues to maintain an "Aa3" rating with Moody's.

Challenges for FY 2020-2021

Crumbling foundations continue to be a concern for both the welfare of those affected directly as well as citizens collectively. Together with various programs being offered to assist residents with remediating their crumbling foundations, the tax relief provided by the Town of Ashford is a small contribution to the process of making these households whole again. The Town and Ashford School business offices have been training and are close to active implementation of the new financial management system, this will aid in clarity between the two finance offices for reporting purposes.

Assessor

Assessor

Kara J. Fishman, CCMA II, MAI

Office hours

8:30am–3:00pm, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday and Wednesday 7:00–9:00pm

Planned office closings are posted on the town website. The nature of the Assessor's job involves field work outside of the office. If you must see the Assessor, call first (860-487-4403) or make an appointment before making the trip to town hall.

Purpose & Responsibilities

The primary function of the Assessor's Office is to prepare the annual Grand List of Taxable Properties as of October 1st, complying with Connecticut General Statute (CGS) Sec. 12-55. These values form the basis for property tax bills that are due the following July. The Grand List is comprised of Real Estate, Personal Property and Motor Vehicles. Real Estate is revalued once every 5 years. Personal Property and Motor Vehicles are revalued annually.

The Assessor's Office discovers, lists and values all taxable and nontaxable property located within the Town of Ashford in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes. During the FY 2019-2020, the office compiled the Grand List of October 1, 2019. Various exemptions are applied to the Gross Grand List, resulting in the net taxable Grand List. After changes made by the Board of Assessment Appeals, the net Grand List was 305,594,167, a 0.59% increase from the October 1, 2018 Grand List. Eighty-six percent (86%) of the net Grand List was Real Estate, 10% was Motor Vehicles and 4% was Personal Property.

This office also administers exemption and assessment reduction programs for veterans, the elderly, disabled persons, farm machinery, farm buildings, manufacturing equipment, new heavy commercial vehicles, solar power, motor vehicles of Active-Duty military, specially equipped motor vehicles for the handicapped and non-profit quadrennial filings every 4 years.

The major exemption programs for residents are for veterans and the disabled. The number of veterans and surviving spouses receiving exemptions increased approximately 7% to 241. Sixteen percent of these veterans are disabled. The number of non-veteran, 100% disabled persons receiving an assessment reduction stayed in the 30–35 range. The number of disabled and elderly persons receiving tax reduction through the Homeowner's program was stayed in the mid-30s.

The major personal property exemption programs for businesses are for farm machinery and manufacturing equipment. Nineteen farms and seven manufacturers received these exemptions.

Other duties include:

- Administering the PA 490 Farm, Forest and Open Space programs
- Updating tax maps and real estate records with all transfers, building permit issuance and completions, surveys filed in Town Clerk's office and boundary line adjustments.
- Processing Personal Property Declarations
- Responding to the public's data requests
- Staff person to the Board of Assessment Appeals
- Pro-rating motor vehicles disposed of during the Grand List year
- Sending out Income and Expense forms to all owners of rental real estate.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- Six new homes were completed and seven were under construction. Permits for replacement foundations were issued for 7 properties.

- Crumbling Concrete Foundations: Public Act 16-45 was passed by the State Legislature and effective for the 10/1/2016 Grand List. It provides relief to affected property owners by reducing the building assessment. For the 2019 GL, there were 27 properties receiving a lowered assessment, an increase from 21 for the 2018 GL. The assessed value of taxable properties was lowered by 2,435,895, a 30% increase from the 2018 GL. The tax loss was almost \$90,000.
- For the FYE 6/30/2020, the CAMA program was converted from Vision Government Solutions Inc. to eQuality Valuation Services LLC. CAMA stands for Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal system used to value real estate and maintain the property record cards.

Tax Collector

Tax Collector

Linda G. Gagne CCMC

Office Hours

The Tax Collector's Office operates on a minimum of 35 hours a week, but has posted public hours of: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, 8:30am–3:00pm, and Wednesday 7:00–9:00pm. These hours became a reality during the COVID-19 crisis and have remained as our available to the public posted hours.

Purpose & Responsibilities

The Office is responsible for collecting the municipal taxes on real estate, personal property, and motor vehicles as a revenue source for the programs deemed necessary and /or desirable to operate the Town. These taxes become due and payable on July 1 and Jan. 1. Interest is calculated and collected on all accounts past due. Liens are filed on all unpaid current real estate taxes in the spring.

The Objective of the Tax Collector's Office is to collect taxes in a uniform & efficient way, in accordance with the Connecticut State Statutes, to provide revenues for the Town as quickly as possible, and to accommodate requests for information in a professional manner.

The Ashford Tax Collector's Office closed the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 with a collection total of \$10,841,022.98 an amount of \$106,466.98 more than the budget called for. Our charge was to collect at least 98% of the current taxes. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the office did not send out as many delinquent notices during the Spring, being sensitive to the issue of layoffs and furloughs.

The Office is continually analyzing all accounts to assess the course of action for collection of delinquent accounts according to the remedies provided by Connecticut State Statutes. A list of properties has been identified for sale for taxes and will be scheduled once the executive orders are lifted by the Governor. The Tax Collector's Office continues to work with the Assessor's Office to improve information sharing and communications. We all continue to strive to serve

the public efficiently while holding the costs level. Monthly trial balances are run to ensure accuracy in all transactions, and monthly revenue updates are available to assist the Boards and other offices with revenue projections. The Tax Collector's Office carefully listened to taxpayers requesting an online payment venue. We implemented an online payment system, ready for transactions on July 1, 2015. This venue provided the Town with \$1,060,670.01 in payments made online during the past fiscal year, even though there is a fee associated with the payment.

The Tax Collector continues to participate in continuing education workshops, when available. All meetings became virtual meetings at the onset of the virus. The Collector is certified by the State of Connecticut as a Certified Connecticut Municipal Collector. The Office is constantly looking at processes to improve efficiencies to the public.

Finance Department

Treasurer/Administrative Assistant

Cheryl A. Baker

Deputy Treasurer

Laura Scandalito Andert

Responsibilities

The Ashford Finance Department is a multifaceted department. This department's responsibilities encompass responsibilities in both finance and IT (see IT Department report). Financial responsibilities include purchasing and leasing, bi-weekly payroll processing, federal and state tax payments, quarterly and annual payroll reporting, bi-weekly expenditure and revenue reporting to departments, and defined contribution pension management.

The Finance Office assists all departments with their annual budget requests and prepares budget reports for the Boards of Finance and Selectmen to provide to the public.

This department is also responsible for processing accounts payable and reimbursements, including debt service payments. We record all revenues and expenditures in the Town's general ledger and report all recorded expenditures to each department on a bi-weekly basis. Revenues from the Tax Collector and liabilities of the Town Clerk and Land Use offices are reconciled on a monthly basis.

The Finance Office has a role in developing and monitoring the general fund, Capital Projects, Animal Control, Youth/Social Services, and Parks & Recreation budgets. We also monitor an additional nineteen funds within the Town's financial system.

Town Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer responsibilities include reconciliation of all Town bank accounts, bonding and refunding of bonds, negotiating interest rates, and acquiring loans for capital projects. The Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer are responsible for investments of tax and other revenues, and the appropriate disbursement of Town funds, and financial record keeping

for all Small Cities and other grants. The Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer hold their respective roles for the Town and the Ashford Board of Education.

The Treasurer is also responsible for Animal Control financial reporting to the State. Reporting and associated payments are completed quarterly, with an additional report completed annually which includes a joint reconciliation of Animal Control revenues with the Town Clerk.

Finance Office personnel play key roles assist auditors in the creation of the town's Financial Statements and the annual audit of those Statements.

Conservation Commission

Chairperson

Loretta Wrobel

Members

Christine Acebo

Stephanie Dubinsky

Pamm Summers

Janet Bellamy

Gwen Haaland

Bill Dubinsky

Steve Morytko

Meeting Schedule

Meets 3rd Monday of the month

Purpose

The Conservation Commission is an advisory group that provides an inventory of natural resources to promote environmental protection and stewardship of the land. The Commission collaborates with land use commissions to help develop best management practices to maintain Ashford's rural character.

Objectives

The objectives of this Commission are to develop guidelines for conserving open space, to educate landowners of ongoing options for their land, to provide ongoing education to residents and to work with other Conservation Commissions, Land Trusts and other environmental groups to promote environmental protection and stewardship of CT.

Summary and Changes

The Conservation Commission met infrequently in 2020 due to COVID-19. We had to cancel scheduled programming in the spring and were unable to have our annual clean up your streets spring event.

Ashford Farmers Market completed its 14th year in 2020. The market ran from May to November 22. Julie and Todd Barton continued as market masters. The market followed strict COVID-19 guidelines, social distancing, masks and no lingering. This season we had more customers and sales increased. The market will begin its 15th season in May 2021.

We are working with Joshua's Trust (JT) on the Tremko Trail Link to connect to the Rankin Property which is nearly completed. We need signage for the trail and a kiosk. Also collaborating with JT on upkeep and safety for the Ashford Oak property. We will be sharing the cost of a plaque for Ashford Oak with JT.

Our annual plant give-away in April was changed to giving away native trees for Ashford School students to plant and nurture. We hope to continue such educational programs in the future. We began an educational program on pollinators pathways gardens in collaboration with JT. We plan to have an educational program in 2021 to teach how to create a pollinators garden.

Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission

Chairperson

Leonard Liguore

Commission Members

Robert Michel (Honorary Secretary)
Gary Lipstreu

John Barclay
V. Peter Piecyk, III

Raymond Fenn
Richard Zulick

Alternates

Cheryl Chase

Kenneth Garee

Staff

Joseph Theroux (Wetlands Enforcement Officer)
Michael D'Amato (Land Use Administrator)

Meeting Schedule and Office Hours

The Commission meets on the first Tuesday of each month in regular session, and holds concurrent public hearings as needed. Office hours for consultation on Wetlands matters are the same as the Land Use Department.

The Commission Authority

The ordinance to create this Ashford Commission was passed at a Special Town Meeting held on June 5, 2006. The Commission is comprised of seven commissioners and two alternates. The Board of Selectmen appoints all members and alternate members. All commissioners and alternates are volunteers.

Responsibilities

In 1972, the State legislature enacted the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act (Act), see sections 22a-36 through 22a-45 of the CT General Statutes. The Act as amended in 1987 provided for municipalities to implement the regulatory process. Under the authority of the Statute the Ashford Commission is charged with the task of protection, preservation, and maintenance of the inland wetlands and watercourses by minimizing their disturbance and

pollution; maintaining and improving water quality in accordance with the highest standards set by federal, state or local authority; preventing damage from erosion, turbidity or siltation; preventing loss of fish and other beneficial aquatic organisms, wildlife and vegetation and the destruction of the natural habitats thereof; deterring and inhibiting the danger of flood and pollution; protecting the quality of wetlands and watercourses for their conservation, economic, aesthetic, recreational and other public and private uses and values.

COVID-19

It should be noted that COVID-19 has been declared a pandemic and a national state of emergency was put into place. As a result of this situation several of the commission's regularly scheduled meetings in the town hall were canceled. Additionally, fewer than normal applications were received by the commission. The commission has recently resumed our business by holding regularly scheduled meetings via Zoom (online audio and web conferencing).

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

During FY20 the following actions were taken:

- The commission issued two (2) permits
- Discussed and voted on three (3) timber harvest projects as: "usage as of right."
- The Wetlands Agent did not issue any "Agent Approvals" on behalf of the Commission; however, two notices of violation were issued by the agent who reported these actions to the Commission as required.

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

Members will continue to seek out and attend training and informational meetings to gain knowledge on current wetland regulations and precedents being set.

Transfer Station

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year we saw an increase in Transfer Station use by our residents. We attribute much of this increase to the fact that, following guidelines circulated by the CDC and the State of Connecticut, people stayed safe at home during the COVID-19 pandemic and cooked more, cleaned out garages and attics and initiated home improvement projects.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

Use by Ashford residents accounted for the collection and hauling of:

- 641.43 tons of bulky compared to 576 tons during fiscal year 2018-2019
- 707.15 tons of household trash compared to 688 tons during fiscal year 2018-2019
- 102.34 tons of light iron compared to 114 tons during fiscal year 2018-2019
- 336.7 tons of recyclables compared to 327 tons during fiscal year 2018-2019
- 338.09 tons of wood compared to 307 tons during fiscal year 2018-2019

Other materials that pass through the Transfer Station and we receive some revenue from include textiles and covered electronics. We do not receive revenues for the collection of waste oil, antifreeze, oil filters and tires.

As a reminder, Ashford residents using the Transfer Station must display a permit sticker on the driver's side windshield of their vehicle.

Commercial contractors who wish to dispose of materials generated within the Town of Ashford must present the Transfer Station Staff with a copy of a valid Town of Ashford Building permit prior to dumping.

Economic Development Commission (EDC)

Chairperson

Richard S. Williams

Commissioners

Michael Gantick (Vice Chair)

John Calarese

Margaret J. Chatey

Raymond L Fenn

Robert Ignatowicz

Gary H. Lawrence

John Rettenmeier

Terry Wakeman

Mark Fontaine (alternate)

Keri Olson (alternate)

Meeting Schedule:

The Commission meets at 7:30pm in the Town Office Building on the fourth Wednesday of each month, except in November and December where the meetings are on the third Wednesday.

Responsibilities:

Our mission is to assist and encourage both existing and potential new businesses. The Commission is guided by the belief that the Business Community should be compatible with our Rural Character. We further seek to expand the tax base and provide residents with needed services and local employment.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- Replaced "Welcome to Ashford" sign at Exit 72 off I-84. The previous sign was vandalized beyond repair.
- The new EDC website was delayed but a prototype still resides on the MadComm server. Plans are to go live with the new website in 2021.
- The new Buy Local brochures were received in July and distributed to local retail business locations.
- Held meetings with State of CT representatives of the CTvisit.com tourist website and began work on an Ashford tourism page.
- Participated in the Leadership Round Table in November.
- Continued to visit with local business to find out how they are doing, what are their concerns, and what can the EDC do to support them. For example, currently are working with the owner of the old Sneakers to find a new tenant.
- COVID-19 and bad weather ended up cancelling 50% of this year's activities. Hence, this year's accomplishments were limited.

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

- Using the UConn Study and the RSA as starting points seek to identify funds for and prepare a proposal for an economic development grant for West Ashford.
- Promote to CTvisit.com Ashford page to local businesses and organizations.
- Work with the BOS to sell/develop the Moore property and bring it back on the tax rolls.
- Work with the BOS and other Town organizations to develop a marketing plan for the Cadlerock property.
- Continue to reach out to town businesses and the public concerning their input to EDC activities. Use the OT-OF Facebook page as means for communication.

Babcock Library Board of Trustees

Chairperson

Beth Fitzroy

Members

Sally Demars

Ann Loizim

Al Maccarone (replaced Barbara Zulick)

Catherine Sampson

Pamm Summers

Barbara Zulick (resigned)

Meeting Schedule

The Babcock Library Board of Trustees meets monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 2:30 in the meeting room at the library. Presently meetings are held in a virtual format and this will continue until further notice.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a welcoming environment for people pursuing lifelong educational, technical and enrichment opportunities

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- Followed state and health department guidelines to ensure library adhered to reopening protocols
- Implemented curbside pick up and drop off of materials
- Encouraged use of online sources for books
- Created packets of materials for home school usage
- Updated and made safe the patron computer area
- Worked at making the library as accessible and helpful as possible
- Prior to pandemic promoted several successful adult and children's programs, including the extremely popular ukulele program
- Reconfigured the library space for more efficient use
- Fiber optics hook up was completed
- Made book deliveries to Senior Housing
- Worked with social services to provide Christmas and holiday gifts

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

- When possible and safe, reopen the library for full service
- Implement outdoor programs utilizing equipment purchased with PPE funds
- Continue to add items to the Maker Space
- Continue to think of ways the library can interact with and help our community
- Reinstigate story time including music and craft activities for young children
- Reinstigate the ukulele lessons
- Reinstigate adult programming and book discussions

Ashford Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC)

Director

Sherry York

Commissioners

Garth Bean
Neil Gordon

Leslie Bizilj
Dan Kehoe

Andrew Doering
Sandi Moquin

Staff

Sandy Reed, Ashley Ault – Swim Instructors

Caylin Balogh Fitzgerald – Gymnastics

Karrie Kirchner, Carol Tyler – Yoga

Joe Pandolfo – Tai Chi

Sharon Puntty – Art Classes

Nate Smith – Gate Keeper

We use many volunteers as coaches during basketball season and program assistants for special events.

Meeting Schedule

The Ashford Parks and Recreation Commission meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 7:00pm in the Parks and Recreation Office. Meetings were cancelled between March and June. Commissioners met once in May to see the new playscape.

Office Hours

Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9:00am–12pm. Programs and events primarily run after school, in the evening, or on weekends.

Purpose / Summary of Responsibilities

The Ashford Parks and Recreation Commission is committed to providing a high-quality program knowing that the “benefits are endless” to the community and its residents. We will provide and maintain attractive, functional recreation facilities and offer a wide variety of programs and activities that will help make Ashford a better place to live, work and play! Over thirty different leisure activities are offered. The programs promote health, develop new skills,

teach teamwork, develop an appreciation for the arts and the outdoors, build community and encourage kids and families to participate in wholesome recreational pursuits. The Recreation Commission and the Director work together to establish policies, programs, and promotions. They oversee the recreation office, evaluate program offerings and manage the maintenance of the parks and fields, with assistance from our Public Works Department.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- Parks Maintenance: Last year new swings were installed at Ashford Memorial Park with funds from the School Readiness Council. This year we were able to secure the funding for the new ages 5-12 Miracle Playscape. John Hollerbach, the owner of the company, was very generous and sympathetic to the difficulties the COVID-19 pandemic presented in terms of installing the equipment. We were unable to open the park to the public to do a community build. The playscape company sent 2 workers and our Public Works Dept. had 2 workers and together they partnered and got the playscape installed professionally in about 8 days, for no additional cost. It was a “Miracle” and a lot of lucky Ashford kids have been climbing, sliding, and enjoying it now for several months. Thank you for the excellent collaborative work between the Selectman, Capital Improvements Committee, APRC, Public Works and Miracle Playgrounds.
- Pickleball Program: Has year-round sustained interest! We were able to play indoors one night a week at Ashford School last winter. We then moved back outside in the Spring but were held back by COVID-19 concerns. By summer people were forming exclusive pods of players, to be socially distanced and safe. We average 6 to 10 players at most sessions but have had as many as 15 and have had over 40 different adults and high schoolers check out our program this past year. Pickleball is very popular among seniors but it is also good for kids. It is easier to learn and be successful than tennis.
- Recruited Instructor for Yoga: Karrie Kirchner continued to teach for us on Tuesday mornings, and in January, Carol Tyler began to instruct our popular Wednesday evening 6:30 slot. Then, in March, COVID-19 had hit, and classes were shut down and program income refunded. No Yoga classes have been offered in Ashford since March 2020. Joe Pandolfo, our Tai Chi Instructor, has continued teaching online through Zoom on his own.

APRC Program Schedule this past year included:

- Bus Trips: 2 Coach (15 pp)
- Swim Lessons: 2 sessions (50 pp)
- Swim Club: (14 pp),
- Basketball: 9 teams, Grades 1 – 12 (100 pp),
- Gymnastics: 1 session (20 pp),
- Preschool Programs: Tiny Tumblers (12 pp) Start Smart Soccer (14 pp)
- Art Classes and Crafts: (40 pp) 1 week
- Bike Camp: (½ day 13 pp) 1 week
- Girl Power Fitness Camp: (full day 12 pp) 2 weeks

- Summer Day Camp: (full day 18 pp)
- Labor Day Fun Run: fundraiser (40 pp)
- Adult Fitness: Tai Chi and Yoga 4 sessions (30 pp)
- Pickleball: (20 pp)

We plan to make 10-20% profit above our costs on these programs. These funds will be used to support the programs we offer free of charge to the community.

Programs that Build Community (Free, or nominally priced)

- Family Day (400 pp)
- 5 Summer Concerts, (900-1000 pp)
- BBQ (110 pp)
- 4 Ice Skating Dates, (250 pp) 2 at UConn Ice Arena and 2 at Bolton Ice Palace,
- Halloween Party (200 pp)
- Carol Sing (120 pp)
- Camp Out (18 pp)

These programs are budgeted expenditures just under \$6,000.

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

- Our biggest hurdle in Parks Maintenance is funding the resurfacing of the tennis court. This is where pickleball is played as well. This has now been requested for several years and cut from the budget each year. It was last resurfaced in 2007 and has some significant cracks and rippling. It is recommended that it be done every 7 years, so we are overdue. We will make the request to the Capital Improvements Committee and work with our Department of Public Works to patch and repair the present court surface.
- In 2021, our primary objectives will be to recover, reassess and reestablish our programs, our customer base and our income, and to develop a stronger, updated online presence.

Municipal Agent for the Elderly

Municipal Agent

Kit Eves

Part of the Municipal Agents job is to arrange rides to medical appointments for seniors who need transportation. I maintain a list of willing volunteers who will drive folks to appointments. The senior van is also available if a person has difficulty getting in and out of a car. Some small stipend is available to volunteers to help defray the cost of the gas. This transportation program could not work without the many volunteers who help their neighbors when needed. I am grateful to these dedicated volunteers.

As Municipal Agent I attend monthly meetings of the Municipal Agents in our district. These meetings are overseen through Senior Resources the Area Agency on Aging out of Norwich. I learn about valuable programs available to seniors and bring these programs back to Ashford and its citizens. It is a great opportunity to network with other professionals who work with seniors.

Especially, during open enrollment for Medicare, I meet with seniors to go over their options to purchase their insurance for the coming year. I maintain my creditability to help with this process by attending training session whether on-line or in person when possible. If you are turning 65 this year, make an appointment with me three months before your birthday and we can go over the options you have.

During the first few months of COVID-19 in 2020, I made many wellness calls to those most vulnerable in our community. I maintain a list of citizens who are called during major snowstorms and other monumental types of events such as COVID-19. If you feel that you need these types of check-ins because your health has you compromised, I can send you a form to get you on this list.

Senior Center

Director

Kit Eves

Office Hours

9:00-3:00 Monday through Friday with the occasional weekend or evening event.

Purpose

The Center is responsible for providing a safe and fun place for senior citizens to come and enjoy social, recreational and educational activities for the older adults in the community. The Center also offers many and varied out trips via the Center's 15 passenger van.

It should also be noted that the Center is often borrowed for the private use of Ashford residents for such things as anniversary, birthday and other parties. The Town's recreation department will also enlist the use of the Center for its weekend activities.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- The seniors have initiated a public Big Money Bingo every Wednesday night.
- A CPR class was provided for staff, volunteers and other interested people.
- The Director obtained her Serve Safe license. The health department inspections of the kitchen and food programs has gone from a 90% rating to a 98% rating.
- Some significant landscaping was accomplished with flowers, bushes and trees planted.
- The number of out trips has increased from two a month to four or five.
- The Center now offers card games weekly and a monthly craft program is scheduled.
- There are special lunches that are catered St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- Since June of 2019 volunteers have been reporting their hours and tasks. The Center operates primarily on volunteers and a recognition luncheon was provided as a thank you.
- We had a celebration luncheon for those seniors in town who are 90 years of age or older.

- The Center hosted Shred Day, two fundraising fairs and a Tag sale for weekend events.
- Choices, a program for Medicare eligible persons was offered weekly during open enrollment.
- COVID-19 put a real screeching halt to the momentum we had with increasing participation and new programs. For our congregate meals program, we had to pivot, and now provide frozen meal as take out each Wednesday. The congregate meals had served five or six people three days a week. We started seeing 25+ people at the door each week to pick up their frozen food.
- The Center also established a lending library of jigsaw puzzles. We lent out our puzzles and many new ones were donated. Donations were quarantined for two weeks and then they went out to seniors who could no longer complete puzzles here at the Center.

Plans and Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

There are many plans for the future when COVID-19 is history. We will have the 90+ birthday celebration again. Volunteer recognition and a Health Fair for all residents of Ashford were on the schedule. Public as well as senior Bingo will be back. We will offer dominoes, cribbage, Mah-Jong, Hair Cuts and Book Club. The Van will run and the big dinner parties for St Patrick's, Thanksgiving and Holidays will return. We will welcome back our non-senior friends for their meetings and get togethers. The Ashford Senior Center will continue to be an integral part of the community.

Housing Authority

Commissioners

Dennis Poitras, Chairperson

Sandy Fletcher, Treasurer

Sandra Labrecque, Resident Commissioner

Ann Phillips, Assistant Chair

Anthony Ianniccheri, Assistant Treasurer

Staff

Jessica Miller, Executive Director

Warrene Haskell, Adam Brassard, Maintenance Staff

Rachel Epstein, Resident Services Coordinator

Katherine Duval, Administrative Assistant

Meeting Schedule and Office Hours

The Ashford Housing Authority Commission meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Community Room at 49 Tremko Lane. The AHA office is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9-12 pm.

Purpose

The mission of the Housing Authority of the Town of Ashford is to provide safe, affordable housing for elderly and disabled individuals with moderate income. Ashford Housing Authority (AHA) is governed by a five (5) member Board of Commissioners appointed by the Town of

Ashford Board of Selectmen. The Executive Director is responsible for day-to day operations. AHA is partially funded by the State of Connecticut Department of Housing.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- Revised and updated the following policies:
 - Tenant Admission Policy
 - The Procurement Policy
 - AHA By-Laws
- Received incentives from Eversource for the following:
 - Replacement of 32 apartment refrigerators
 - Attic insulation
 - Replacement of 117 windows
 - Air sealing, aerators, and LED lighting in 32 units

Initiatives for FY 2020-20201

- Develop a 5-year Strategic Plan
- Update Capital Needs Assessment
- Continuation of installation of windows

Planning and Zoning Commission

Officers

Jeffrey Silver-Smith, Chair Richard Williams, Vice Chair Alex Hastillo, Secretary

Commissioners

Janet Bellamy Gerald Dufresne Catherine Sampson
Jeffrey Schillinger Mark Schnabel Nord Yakovleff,

Alternates

Bruce DePersio Tom Hastings Douglas Jenne

Ashford Land Use Office

Michael D’Amato, Zoning Enforcement
Beverly Ference, Land Use Office Administrative Assistant

Meeting Schedule

The Commission meets on the second Monday of each month.

Purpose

The purpose of the Ashford Planning and Zoning Commission is two-fold. The role of the planning arm of the commission is to provide for and guide the orderly growth and development of the community by advising the legislative leadership, (Board of Selectman, Town Meetings), through the use of current and proposed zoning regulations, the current Plan of Conservation and Development and adherence to state statutes as handed down from the state legislature.

The role of the zoning arm of the commission is to regulate the development and enforce compliance of the zoning regulations. The commission has the authority to establish, amend and enforce the provisions of the zoning regulations taking into account state statutes, petitioning property owners, interested parties and the welfare of the Town of Ashford.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- Implementation of expanded zoning regulations regarding applications for large, complex industrial/manufacturing requests requiring professional/expert review with the intent to protect the town both financial and for appropriate development
- On- going review of current zoning regulations for modernization and application to current needs. Recently updated sections include sections include Article 3 Definitions and Article 4B Residential/ Agricultural.
- Submitted regulations for Codification of regulations for professional review and improved access.

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

- Continued review of current Planning and Zoning regulations to ensure compliance with state statutes, ability to enforce administration and simplify language for use by town residents and general public. Planned review includes Article 4D Interstate Interchange Development Zone (IID) Article 4C, General Commercial Zone.
- Review of Zoning Map to better reflect mix of zones and concentration of identified zoned areas.
- Review, update and apply appropriately affordable housing requirements as stipulated by State of Connecticut statutes.

Youth & Social Services

Director

Melissa McDonough

Purpose/Summary of Responsibilities

The Department of Youth and Social Services works to meet the needs of all children and low-income people and families in order to better individuals' lives.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- 81 residents applied for heating assistance
- 42 residents applied for Renters Rebate
- 26 applied for SNAP benefits
- 18 applied for HUSKY Health
- 16 seniors meet regarding insurance needs during open enrollment
- \$136.22 was saved on average through the Town Prescription Card program bringing our total since program inception to \$23,308.55.

- 9 children received diapers monthly through the CT ISHP-Diaper Bank of NECT
- 30 children received back to school supplies including a \$30 Kohl's gift card.
- over 100 families receive food from the food pantry hosted by Living Proof Church
- 32 families received holiday assistance
- Provided weekly playgroup for children aged 4 and under not attending school Sept – March
- Provided weekly music & motion program for non school aged children July- March
- Coordinated the WINGS program at Ashford School
- Hosted quarterly Kids Night Out for Junior high students- an afterschool field trip
- Youth Services co-sponsored Family Day, The Great Pumpkin Halloween Party, and child care for parent/teacher conferences with Ashford Parks & Rec.
- Provided weekly mindfulness and yoga lessons for all students in grades Pre- k to grade 2 both at Ashford School and through Zoom during quarantine
- Coordinated daily lunch & breakfast delivery for families in need from March till June
- Created and distributed weekly craft/activity packets for children from March through June
- Applied for and received \$5000 grant from Community Foundation of Eastern CT to assist families facing financial crisis due to COVID-19
- Assisted senior w/o family to be placed in convalescent care who was no longer able to care for themselves as well as many other case specific assistance given to town residents throughout the year

Initiatives for FY 2020-20201

- Continue to provide services that have been offered in the past
- Bring back programming that was stopped in March due to social distancing restrictions including Play therapy for K-3, playgroup for children not in school, the WINGS Program and after school programming.
- Re-evaluate summer programming

Sexton

Sexton

James Reviczky

Schedule

The Sexton does not have set hours but meets with family members, monument company personnel, and the excavation contractor as needed.

Purpose

A burial in a Town cemetery requires the coordination of the funeral home, the contractor, and clergy. We perform our duties at a difficult time for families and we strive to ensure that all internments respect the wishes of the family. Mr. Leon Gardner is the assistant Sexton. We consult on cemetery issues and aspects of Ashford history as it relates to the cemeteries. The

Sexton meets with people who seek to purchase gravesites at Woodward Cemetery. This is the first step in the purchase. The section, plot number, and graves(s) number(s) are given to the purchaser to present to the Town Clerk. The Sexton communicates the same information to the Town Clerk as a confirmation. The Town Clerk then prepares a deed for approval by the Board of Selectmen.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- The Sexton continues to remove brush and trees that encroach into Woodward Cemetery. While gravestone repairs continued in FY 2019-2020, this work was disrupted in the first half of FY 2020-2021 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The repair work and maintenance performed by Beyond the Gravestone will resume in the spring of 2021.
- The requested increase in compensation is for an assistant sexton so that there is a trained person to perform the duties if the sexton is unavailable. Prior to being appointed Sexton, I served as assistant to Mr. Gardner without compensation. In turn, Mr. Gardner has served as assistant without compensation. It seems reasonable to compensate a person for learning all the duties and requirements and being on standby to perform the duties on short notice.

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

- The focus of repair work in the spring of 2021 will be South Cemetery on Pumpkin Hill Road.
- Brush and tree removal will continue at Woodward Cemetery.

Department of Public Works

Supervisor

Joseph Kalinowski

Staff

Nick Bacon

Jordan Lamarr

Casey McMue

Robert Swanek

David Thibault

Meeting Schedule

Safety meetings 2nd Wednesday of every month

Purpose

The Department of Public Works is responsible for the general administration of all town roads, drainage systems and maintenance of town properties. Its goals are to maintain all town roads, both improved and unimproved in a condition consistent with high regard for public safety and consistent with state statutory requirements.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- Road resurfacing and storm drainage improvement:
 - North Road storm drain improvement - reclaiming from Floeting to Moon

- Chip sealed:
 - Moon Road 0.78 mi
 - Horsehill Road 1.46 mi
 - North Road 1.28 mi
- Crack sealed:
 - Tremko Lane and parking lots
 - Boston Hollow Road
 - Eastford Road
 - Perry Hill Road
- Replaced 48' pipe on Waterfall Road
- Dead tree removal and overgrowth all roads
- Repaired storm drainage on Fitts Road
- Repair and grade all dirt roads
- Winter snow/ice control

Volunteer Fire Department

Corporate Officers

Thomas Borgman, President
 Charles Sweetland, Vice President
 Heather Graveline, Secretary
 Wayne Fletcher, Treasurer
 Brian Damble, Member-At-Large

Command Officers

Wayne Fletcher, Chief
 Thomas Borgman, Deputy Chief
 David Thibault, Assistant Chief, Fire
 Charles Sweetland, Assistant Chief, EMS

Meeting Schedule

Line Officers Meeting - First Tuesday of each month at 19:30
 Corporate - Second Tuesday of each month at 19:30
 Board of Directors - Quarterly (preceding the Corporate Meeting) 18:30
 Drill/Training - 3rd and 4th Tuesdays at 19:30

All meetings conducted at Ashford Station 20, 46 Westford Road

Mission

To provide fire, rescue and emergency medical protection to the residents of the town of Ashford and to neighboring towns, when needed.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

Responded to 196 fire/rescue calls in Ashford, Mansfield, Eastford, Union, Chaplin and Woodstock

- Responded to 210 Emergency Medical Calls in the same communities
- Maintained a response time average of under 11 minutes
- Conducted 625 person-hours of training and recertification
- Secured and transported Federally supplied PPE and COVID-19-related equipment
- Replaced old marine unit with new one, donated by Hole in the Wall Gang Camp

- Begun deployment of fire preplans and mapping on digital tablets in apparatus
- Maintained a fleet of six vehicles and two stations
- Support acquisition of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), for COVID-19 operations.

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

- Monitor progress of new apparatus construction to replace one engine (ET-220)
- Modernize and integrate data systems for better performance at lower cost

Animal Control

Municipal Animal Control Officer

Christine Abikoff

Assistant Municipal Animal Control Officer

Tina Binheimer

Purpose

Animal Control personnel are responsible for enforcing the laws and regulation of the State on Connecticut concerning domestic animals ranging from the annual canvas for dog licensing to capture of roaming animals, impoundment, redemption and/or adoption of relinquished and abandoned dogs. The department staff is “on call” 24 hours per day, seven days per week to respond to citizen complaints and requests for assistance from neighboring animal control officers, the Ashford Volunteer Fire Department and the Connecticut State Police.

Growing use of the Ashford Animal Control Facebook page we are able to get out descriptions and photos of impounded or lost dogs and cats which has proved to make reuniting a pet to their family much less stressful for everyone concerned – especially the pet. We continue to offer advice on weather related pet care and general information on anything animal-related that our Facebook followers might find informative.

Information Technology Department

Webmaster

Cheryl A. Baker

Responsibilities

The Ashford IT Department is responsible for the Town Office building internet connectivity, telephone system, cell phones, and server and network management. This includes internet/cellular equipment specific to Ashford Emergency Management. We are also responsible for Town of Ashford website management, website role management, and Webmaster email responses.

We work in close contact with the appropriate vendors and all departments to resolve any issues to provide a safe and efficient electronic working environment. We are constantly reassessing and evolving to mitigate cyber security vulnerability.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused us to reassess our spending plan for FY20. Three laptops and peripherals were purchased to allow remote work to be done by the Town Clerk, Tax Collector, and Deputy Treasurer. The Town Clerk and Tax Collector desktops were repurposed to replace public-use PCs that were scheduled to be replaced in FY21.

Accomplishments during FY 2019-2020

- Installed layer 3 switches for enhanced security
- Replaced four desktop computers
- Purchased three laptop computers and peripherals for remote access. This was in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Installed upgraded wireless access points in Town Office Building

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

- Install secure cabinet for servers

Board of Education and Superintendent's Annual Report

Superintendent

James P. Longo, Ed.D.

Board of Education

The Ashford Board of Education has seven elected members. The members seated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 are:

John E. Lippert, Chair

Marian K. Matthews, Vice-Chair

Tess M. Grous, Secretary

Tina A. Fradette

Alfred Maccarone

Shannon L. Gamache

Jane M. Urban

Meeting Schedule

Ashford Board of Education meetings are held on the first and third Thursday of each month during the academic year. One meeting per month is scheduled for the months of July and August. The Board welcomes and encourages the public's participation and attendance at all meetings.

COVID-19 Impact Upon Instruction at Ashford School

During the 2019-2020 academic year Ashford School was open fully for in-person instruction until March 16, 2020. By Executive Order of the Governor of the State of Connecticut, in-person education was stopped in order to best mitigate the transmission of this very contagious disease. Students, parents and staff across the state, and in fact, the country, were facing an unprecedented situation with no known end in sight. The Ashford School community rose to this

never seen before the abrupt end to in-person learning. Administrators and school-wide staff collaborated to meet this challenge as best they could to keep our students as engaged in learning as possible and in keeping our school facility safe. We immediately locked down the campus with no one being allowed to enter except for essential staff. Everyone immediately began working remotely with the help of our technology staff who saw to it that everyone had access to our school electronically. We enforced the importance of wearing masks, six-foot social distancing, traveling in defined cohorts, regular hand washing, implementing a comprehensive contact tracing process, and complying with guidelines provided by the CDC, the Eastern Highlands Health District and the State.

The result of our combined efforts saw an end to a shortened, but as successful a school year as possible with the obvious disruption to academics, peer engagements, daily school life, and activity.

General Introduction

Ashford School is a “student-centered school”, and as such, all decisions made are based upon the best interests of our students. Instruction is differentiated, based upon the needs of the individual student as identified by an assortment of assessments resulting in a data-driven instructional model. Additionally, several initiatives have been implemented to ensure an optimal learning experience for our students. The following report includes some of the major initiatives that we have implemented and our continued plans to improve our school and provide our students with an exemplary educational experience.

The mission and vision statements of Ashford School and the Ashford Board of Education are reviewed annually. The current mission statements are:

Ashford School Mission Statement

Ashford School learners engage in authentic EXPERIENCES to DISCOVER their passions, STRIVE for excellence, CONNECT with their community and the world, and CONTRIBUTE in positive and meaningful ways.

Ashford Board of Education Mission and Vision Statement

To present a school district that supports ALL students in achieving their highest educational and personal potential as productive citizens of the diverse, multicultural, and global 21st century community in which they live.

Major Accomplishments for FY 2019-2020

- We have presented the following initiatives to our staff over the past few years, and devoted time each year to integrating their impact and refining application in the classroom.
 - Interdisciplinary lesson design – STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, mathematics)
 - Whole-Brain Instruction – Project-Based Learning
 - Real-Life Applications – 21st Century Skills, Habits of Mind
 - Differentiated – Individualized - Data-Driven Instruction
 - Restorative Practices – Restorative Justice based on discipline and consequences

- The faculty of Ashford School has transitioned from a traditional school curriculum of the past to the Common Core State Standards-based curriculum as mandated by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).
- The most significant change in curriculum and instruction at Ashford School has been the implementation of a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) based curriculum/instruction model. The instructional program, and the core of all lesson development throughout the school, is created with a focus on the integration of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. It is an essential philosophic and foundational component of our school-wide approach to instruction.
- In addition to our STEAM-based curriculum, we utilize Project-Based Learning as a key instructional technique. This integrates real-life applications to subject content and allows students increased opportunities to be creative and utilize hands-on activities.
- Robotics and the After-School Program. These special programs allow our students to enjoy a full menu of programs that enrich and expand upon their educational experience.
- In response to the performance of our students on the state’s standardized testing, we have begun a systematic professional development and instructional coaching program to improve writing performance.
- We have prepared our facility, purchased the necessary technology, modified our curriculum, and readied our students for the next generation of standardized testing, “Smarter-Balanced Assessments.”
- We have implemented an alternating year exchange program for students and faculty with a partner school in Germany. Students stay with host families while learning about each other’s languages, traditions and culture.
- The PBIS, or Positive Behavior Supports program, has been revisited and we have implemented a “Pawsitive” referral program that gives notice to parents of the child’s good, helpful or kind behavior toward others while at school.
- We have trained in major crisis intervention through the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). All certified and non-certified staff receive training in crisis prevention and de-escalation techniques. This training has been impactful in decreasing the number of crisis situations that disrupt instruction or interfere with learning. Staff will maintain this certification via regular training intervals that are facilitated by faculty members who have obtained CPI training certification.
- Differentiated instruction, common core curriculum, STEAM and project-based models of planning and teaching, school safety and security, data-driven instruction, integrated and multi-disciplinary teaching, and the concept of a student-centered philosophy, along with monthly faculty meetings made up Ashford School’s professional development plans.
- Increased home-school communications through the use of K-12 Alerts, the availability of free meals provided by our food service program, as well as direct staff-parent communications in response to the pandemic were evident. The Ashford Board of Education meeting platform was moved to a virtual format due to the pandemic in April 2020. We have benefited from more public participation as a result.

Initiatives for FY 2020-2021

Plans for the school year will of course be contingent upon directives related to the pandemic for public schools by state, federal and local authorities. The desired outcome will be to be able to

resume in-person learning, student activities, and to get back to the way things were prior to the onset of COVID-19; therefore, we seek to achieve the following next year and in future years:

- Assist every student to achieve an optimal educational experience through the use of data-driven instruction that targets a student's individual needs, strengths and weaknesses.
- Attract, support, and retain motivated, qualified faculty and staff through top-quality curriculum and inclusive administrative leadership.
- Sustain the district's drive to improve student safety and security through improvement to the facility and staff training.
- Monitor student progress to ensure growth by adding data team time to faculty schedules
- Review and address student performance on standardized testing through teacher training and application of instructional improvements
- Expand utilization of student data to guide individualized and differentiated instruction
- Continue to update school-wide curriculum and review, evaluate, and improve our school schedule to better serve our students
- Create time in the school schedule for faculty to analyze student performance data to better inform instruction and plan professional development activities to better serve the needs of each student
- Continued implementation of facility, safety and security improvements
- Improved communications with the community by publishing articles the Ashford Citizen and posting school news and events on the website and through K-12 Alerts
- Study and develop effective strategies for responding to declining enrollment
- Continue to refine a fiscally responsible budgeting process

District and School Staff

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p> Rob Ackerson Karin Anderson Deborah Atkinson Jen Barsaleau Myrna Bassett Jessica Bernardi Bailey Blanshard Mychelle Bora Polly Borysevicz Danielle Brodoff Marilyn Brozyna Jillian Bumgarner Gina Burnham Christopher Busse Stephen Caldwell Kelee Calkins Tracey Campbell Jillian Cannon Amy Capozziello Joan Celotti Darcy Compton Maureen Connolly Mandi Courtois Deb Courtright Kathryn Craven Emily Deliberto Thomas Dell Shawn Dimmock Sara Dinger Patricia Donahue Jeff Ference Lynn Fontaine Cynthia Ford Nancy Freeman </p> | <p> Beth Galvin Andrea Garrison Kellie Gauvin Megan Gendron Eileen Geriak Hector Gonzalez Lori Goodale Karen Holmes Troy Hopkins Barbara Horn Jason Horn S. Gail Ignatowicz Carly Imhoff Lina Janosi Ryan Janosi Kim Johnston Pamela King Catherine Klesser Michelle Klock Kelly Knotts Christine Knowlton Hillary Lemos Jennifer Lindsay Jadey Longo Dr. James Longo Marcia LoRicco Ginger Lusa Seth Lyman Kristina Lyons Samantha Makuch Alicia Marceau Christine Marinelli </p> | <p> Samantha Meduna Michael Mellady Kristine Melo Beata Metsack Kathleen Metsack Steven Mocek Donna Molnar Christopher Moore Dory Moore Colleen Mortenson Karen Munroe Lynn Nicholls Stephanie Noheimer Joel Ocasio Bonnie Ognan Krysta Parisen Miguel Parrilla Hannah Reilly Jacqueline Renaud Virginia Reviczky Julia Rhubin Catherine Robacker Briana Ross Karen Samperi Suzanne Schillinger Martha Sibley-Jett Christina Siggins Wayne Squier Valerie Stickles Elissa Turcotte Scott Waddell Allison Welz Jennifer Wood Michael Young Jennifer Zotti </p> |
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Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Finance
Town of Ashford, Connecticut

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Town of Ashford, CT, as of and for the year ended June 30, 2020, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Town of Ashford, CT's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express opinions on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Opinions

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Town of Ashford, CT, as of June 30, 2020, and the

respective changes in financial position for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Other Matters

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis on pages 3-9, budgetary comparison information on pages 42-52, and Teacher's Retirement and OPES schedules on pages 53-55 be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Other Information

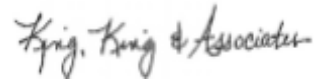
Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise the Town of Ashford, CT's basic financial statements. The combining and individual general and nonmajor fund financial statements and supplemental schedules are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements.

The combining and individual general and nonmajor fund financial statements and supplemental schedules are the responsibility of management and were derived from and relate directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the combining and individual general and nonmajor fund financial statements and supplemental schedules are fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated November 21, 2020, on our consideration of the Town of Ashford, CT's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on internal control over financial reporting or on

compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Town of Ashford, CT's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "King, King & Associates".

King, King & Associates, P.C., CPAs
Winsted, CT
November 21, 2020

TOWN OF ASHFORD, CONNECTICUT
Management's Discussion and Analysis
June 30, 2020

As management of the Town of Ashford, CT, we offer readers of the Town of Ashford, CT's financial statements this narrative overview and analysis of the financial activities of the Town of Ashford, CT for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020.

Financial Highlights

- The assets and deferred outflows of resources of the Town of Ashford, CT exceeded its liabilities and deferred inflows of resources at the close of the most recent fiscal year by \$17,683,685 (*net position*). Of this amount, \$2,721,759 (*unrestricted net position*) may be used to meet the Town's ongoing obligations to citizens and creditors.
- The Town's total net position decreased by \$258,954.
- As of the close of the current fiscal year, the Town of Ashford, CT's governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of \$4,612,314, an increase of \$135,470 in comparison with the prior year. Of this amount, \$1,959,623 is available for spending at the government's discretion. (*unassigned fund balance*).
- At the end of the current fiscal year, unassigned fund balance for the General Fund was \$1,959,623 or 13.99 percent of total General Fund budget basis expenditures.

Overview of the Financial Statements

This discussion and analysis is intended to serve as an introduction to the Town of Ashford, CT's basic financial statements. The Town of Ashford, CT's basic financial statements comprise three components: 1) government-wide financial statements, 2) fund financial statements, and 3) notes to the financial statements. This report also contains other supplementary information in addition to the basic financial statements themselves.

Government-wide financial statements: The *government-wide financial statements* are designed to provide readers with a broad overview of the Town of Ashford, CT's finances, in a manner similar to a private-sector business.

The *statement of net position* presents information on all of the Town of Ashford, CT's assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities, and deferred inflows of resources, with the difference reported as *net position*. Over time, increases or decreases in net position may serve as a useful indicator whether the financial position of the Town of Ashford, CT is improving or deteriorating.

The *statement of activities* presents information showing how the government's net position is changed during the most recent fiscal year. All changes in net position are reported as soon as the underlying event giving rise to the change occurs, *regardless of the timing of related cash flows*. Thus, revenues and expenses are reported in this statement for some items that will only result in cash flows in future periods (e.g., earned but unused vacation leave).

Both of the government-wide financial statements distinguish functions of the Town of Ashford, CT that are principally supported by intergovernmental revenues (*governmental activities*) from other functions that are intended to recover all or a significant portion of their costs through user

fees and charges (*business-type activities*). The Town has no business-type activities. The governmental activities of the Town of Ashford, CT include education, public safety, general government, public works, health and welfare, planning and development, library, and recreation. Property taxes, state and federal grants, and local revenues such as fees and licenses finance most of these activities.

Fund financial statements: A *fund* is a grouping of related accounts that is used to maintain control over resources that have been segregated for specific activities or objectives. The Town of Ashford, CT, like other state and local governments, uses fund accounting to ensure and demonstrate compliance with finance-related legal requirements. All of the funds of the Town of Ashford, CT can be divided into two categories: governmental funds and fiduciary funds.

Governmental Funds: *Governmental funds* are used to account for essentially the same functions reported as *governmental activities* in the government-wide financial statements. However, unlike the government-wide financial statements, governmental fund financial statements focus on *near-term inflows and outflows of spendable resources*, as well as on *balances of spendable resources* available at the end of the fiscal year. Such information may be useful in evaluating a government's near-term financing requirements.

Because the focus of governmental funds is narrower than that of the government-wide financial statements, it is useful to compare the information presented for *governmental funds* with similar information presented for *governmental activities* in the government-wide financial statements. By doing so, readers may better understand the long-term impact of the government's near-term financing decisions. Both the governmental fund balance sheet and the governmental fund statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balances provide a reconciliation to facilitate this comparison.

The Town of Ashford, CT, maintains a number of individual governmental funds. Information is presented separately in the governmental fund balance sheet and in the governmental fund statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balances for the General Fund, Capital Nonrecurring Fund and the Small Cities Grant Program Fund. Data from the other governmental funds are combined into a single, aggregate presentation. Individual fund data for each of these nonmajor governmental funds is provided in the form of combining statements elsewhere in this report.

The Town of Ashford, CT, adopts an annual appropriated budget for its General Fund. A budgetary comparison statement has been provided for the General Fund to demonstrate compliance with this budget.

Fiduciary Funds: Fiduciary funds are used to account for resources held for the benefit of parties outside the government. Fiduciary funds are not reflected in the government-wide financial statements because the resources of those funds are not available to support the Town of Ashford, CT's own programs.

Notes to the financial statements: The notes provide additional information that is essential to a full understanding of the data provided in the government-wide and fund financial statements.

Government-Wide Financial Analysis

As noted earlier, net position may serve over time as a useful indicator of a government's financial position. In the case of the Town of Ashford, CT, assets and deferred outflows of resources exceeded liabilities and deferred inflows of resources by \$17,683,685 at the close of the most recent fiscal year.

| | <u>2020</u> | <u>2019</u> | <u>Variance</u> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Current and Other Assets | \$ 5,802,956 | \$ 5,642,169 | \$ 160,787 |
| Capital Assets | <u>14,482,147</u> | <u>14,717,802</u> | <u>(235,655)</u> |
| Total Assets | 20,285,103 | 20,359,971 | (74,868) |
| | | | |
| Deferred Outflows of Resources | 15,159 | 16,430 | (1,271) |
| | | | |
| Other Liabilities | 627,886 | 648,535 | (20,649) |
| Long-Term Liabilities | <u>1,988,691</u> | <u>1,785,227</u> | <u>203,464</u> |
| Total Liabilities | 2,616,577 | 2,433,762 | 182,815 |
| | | | |
| Deferred Inflows of Resources | | | |
| | | | |
| Net Position: | | | |
| Net Investment in Capital Assets | 13,350,194 | 13,373,460 | (23,266) |
| Restricted | 1,611,732 | 1,670,687 | (58,955) |
| Unrestricted | <u>2,721,759</u> | <u>2,898,492</u> | <u>(176,733)</u> |
| Total Net Position | \$ 17,683,685 | \$ 17,942,639 | \$ (258,954) |

The largest portion of the Town's net position reflects its investment in capital assets (land, buildings, machinery and equipment, and infrastructure assets such as roads and bridges) less any related debt used to acquire those assets that is still outstanding. The Town uses these assets to provide services to its citizens; consequently, these assets are not available for spending. Net investment in capital assets decreased by \$23,266 primarily due to depreciation being greater than current year capital purchases by \$168,254, less the paydown of related debt in the amount of \$284,575, along with the amortization of the deferred charges on refunding, loss on disposal, and amortization of the bond premium.

The Town's restricted net position of \$1,611,732 increased by \$58,955 compared to last years restricted net position of \$1,670,687.

The Town's unrestricted net position of \$2,721,759 increased by \$176,733 compared to last years unrestricted net position of \$2,898,492. This decrease is primarily due to the change in the OPEB liability related to the Board of Education.

| REVENUES | <u>2020</u> | <u>2019</u> | <u>Variance</u> |
|--|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| <i>Program:</i> | | | |
| Charges for services | \$ 492,613 | \$ 509,458 | \$ (16,845) |
| Operating grants and contributions | 5,998,955 | 5,093,502 | 905,453 |
| Capital grants and contributions | 87,025 | 127,175 | (40,150) |
| <i>General:</i> | | | |
| Property taxes | 10,873,043 | 10,623,335 | 249,708 |
| Grants and contributions, not restricted to specific programs | 77,699 | 78,346 | (647) |
| Unrestricted investment earnings | 45,646 | 51,092 | (5,446) |
| Total Revenues | 17,574,981 | 16,482,908 | 1,092,073 |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| <i>Governmental Activities:</i> | | | |
| General Government | 1,096,177 | 1,086,333 | 9,844 |
| Public Safety | 364,014 | 361,775 | 2,239 |
| Public Works | 1,356,334 | 1,394,238 | (37,904) |
| Health and Welfare | 135,426 | 128,026 | 7,400 |
| Planning and Development | 260,240 | 316,209 | (55,969) |
| Education | 14,201,190 | 12,258,707 | 1,942,483 |
| Library | 236,682 | 202,576 | 34,106 |
| Recreation | 159,368 | 156,736 | 2,632 |
| Interest on long-term debt | 24,504 | 43,629 | (19,125) |
| Total Expenses | 17,833,935 | 15,948,229 | 1,885,706 |
| Change in Net Position | (258,954) | 534,679 | (793,633) |
| Beginning Net Position | 17,942,639 | 17,407,960 | |
| Ending Net Position | \$ 17,683,685 | \$ 17,942,639 | |

Governmental activities: Governmental activities increased the Town of Ashford, CT's net position by \$258,954.

Key elements of this increase are as follows:

- Change in the OPEB liability related to the Board of Education which increased the Education expenditure line by \$413,036.

Sixty-two percent (62%) of the revenues of the Town were derived from property taxes, followed by thirty-five percent (35%) from grants and contributions, three percent (3%) from charges for services and less than one percent (1%) of the Town's revenue in the fiscal year was derived from investment income.

Eighty percent (80%) of the expenses of the Town were related to education, followed by six percent (6%) related to general government, eight percent (8%) related to public works and six percent (6%) related to the remainder of the government's expenses.

Financial Analysis of the Government's Funds

As noted earlier, the Town of Ashford, CT uses fund accounting to ensure and demonstrate compliance with finance-related legal requirements.

Governmental Funds: The focus of the Town of Ashford, CT's governmental funds is to provide information on near-term inflows, outflows, and balances of *spendable* resources. Such information is useful in assessing the Town of Ashford, CT's financing requirements. In particular, an *unassigned fund balance* may serve as a useful measure of a government's net resources available for spending at the end of the fiscal year.

As of the end of the current fiscal year, the Town of Ashford, CT's governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of \$4,612,314, an increase of \$135,470 in comparison with the prior year. Forty-two percent (42%) of this total amount constitutes *unassigned fund balance*, which is available for spending at the government's discretion.

General Fund: The General Fund is the chief operating fund of the Town of Ashford, CT. At the end of the current fiscal year, unassigned fund balance of the General Fund was \$1,959,623. As a measure of the General Fund's liquidity, it may be useful to compare unassigned fund balance to total fund expenditures. Unassigned fund balance represents 13.99 percent of total General Fund budget basis expenditures.

The fund balance of the Town of Ashford, CT's General Fund increased by \$130,217 during the current fiscal year. Key factors in this increase are as follows:

- Tax collections, grants, and investment income coming in higher than anticipated.
- Expenditures coming in less than budgeted.

Capital Nonrecurring Fund: The fund balance of the Capital Nonrecurring Fund increased by \$11,562 during the current fiscal year. This increase is primarily related to an authorized transfer from unassigned fund balance of the General Fund in the amount of \$246,559 to fund future capital projects and purchases. This transfer was offset by current year capital outlays and related debt service payments.

Small Cities Grant Program Fund: The fund balance of the Small Cities Grant Program Fund decreased by \$64,664 during the current fiscal year.

General Fund Budgetary Highlights

The original budget for the General Fund included a use of \$28,000 from fund balance. The final budget included an additional appropriation from fund balance in the amount of \$216,559 to transfer funds to the Capital Nonrecurring Fund for future capital purposes. The actual net change in fund balance of the General Fund on a budgetary basis was an increase of \$89,513, resulting in a favorable budgetary surplus of \$334,072. Budgetary revenues were \$210,329 greater than expected due primarily to higher than anticipated tax collections, state aid, and investment income. Budgetary expenditures were \$123,743 less than expected.

Capital Asset and Debt Administration

Capital Assets: The Town of Ashford, CT's reported value in capital assets for its governmental activities as of June 30, 2020, amounts to \$14,482,147 (net of accumulated depreciation). This reported value in capital assets includes land and land development rights, buildings and improvements, machinery, equipment and vehicles, and infrastructure assets such as roads and bridges. The total decrease in the Town's investment in capital assets for the current fiscal year was \$235,655, which consisted of capital additions of \$316,008, offset by current year depreciation of \$484,262 and a loss on disposal of \$67,401.

| | <u>2020</u> | <u>2019</u> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Land and Land Development Rights | \$ 968,756 | \$ 968,756 |
| Buildings and Improvements | 10,105,847 | 10,292,236 |
| Machinery, Equipment and Vehicles | 1,763,340 | 1,740,443 |
| Infrastructure | <u>1,644,204</u> | <u>1,716,367</u> |
| Total | \$ 14,482,147 | \$ 14,717,802 |

Major capital asset events during the current fiscal year included the following:

- Purchase of a new playscape.
- Purchase of an F-350.
- Purchase of a lift.
- Disposal of old school buses.

Additional information on the Town of Ashford, CT's capital assets can be found in Note 5 on page 28 of this report.

Long-term Debt: At the end of the current fiscal year, the Town of Ashford, CT had long-term debt and other long-term liabilities outstanding of \$1,988,691.

| | <u>2020</u> | <u>2019</u> |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| G.O. Bonds | \$ 1,005,000 | \$ 1,230,000 |
| Unamortized Premium | 92,970 | 100,633 |
| Capital Lease Obligation | 49,142 | 30,139 |
| Compensated Absences | 53,370 | 49,282 |
| OPEB Liability | <u>788,209</u> | <u>375,173</u> |
| Total | \$ 1,988,691 | \$ 1,785,227 |

The Town of Ashford, CT's total long-term debt and other long-term liabilities increased by \$203,464 (11.4 percent) during the current fiscal year primarily due to the current year paydown of the G.O. Bonds in the amount of \$225,000, the current year paydown of the capital lease obligations in the amount of \$59,575, a new capital lease for \$78,578, and the increase in the OPEB liability in the amount of \$413,036. Additional information on the Town of Ashford, CT's long-term debt can be found in Note 6 on pages 29-30 of this report.

Economic Factors and Next Year's Budgets and Rates

A summary of key economic factors affecting the Town are as follows:

- The Town receives intergovernmental revenues from the State of Connecticut. Connecticut's economy moves in the same general cycle as the national economy, which from time to time will affect the amount of intergovernmental revenues the Town will receive.
- Increased threat of losing State funding will continue to be a variable in our local budget.
- Inflationary trends in the region compare favorably to national indices.

All of these factors were considered in preparing the Town of Ashford, CT's budget for the 2021 fiscal year. The Town's fiscal year 2021 budget was approved by the Board of Finance on May 28, 2020. The Town's fiscal year 2021 budgeted expenditures for the General Fund totaled \$15,107,007, an increase of \$418,095 or 2.85% over the fiscal year 2020 original approved budgeted expenditures.

The Town has not assigned any use of fund balance of the General Fund for spending in the 2021 fiscal year budget.

Request for Information

This financial report is designed to provide a general overview of the Town of Ashford, CT's finances for all those with an interest in the government's finances. Questions concerning any of the information provided in this report or requests for additional financial information should be addressed to the First Selectman's Office, Town of Ashford, 5 Town Hall Road, Ashford, CT 06278.

Directory

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| In an EMERGENCY | Dial 911 |
| Fire Department Routine Number..... | 860-429-9862 |
| State Police Troop C (Tolland) Routine Number..... | 860-896-3200 |
| Agent for the Elderly | 860-487-4417 |
| Animal Control Officer..... | 860-933-2287 |
| Assessor's Office | 860-487-4403 |
| Babcock Library | 860-487-4420 |
| Building Department | 860-487-4404 |
| Finance Office..... | 860-487-4405 |
| Fire Marshal | 860-429-6222 |
| Health Department..... | 860-429-3325 |
| Housing Authority | 860-429-8556 |
| Housing Rehabilitation | 860-456-0782 |
| Inland Wetlands & Watercourses..... | 860-487-4414 |
| Wetlands Officer | 860-376-6842 |
| Parks & Recreation Department..... | 860-487-4409 |
| Planning & Zoning Commission..... | 860-487-4415 |
| Probate Court | 860-928-4844 |
| Public Works Department..... | 860-429-6812 |
| Registrars of Voters Office | 860-487-4410 |
| Selectmen's Office | 860-487-4400 |
| Senior Center..... | 860-487-5122 |
| Sexton | 860-429-9576 |
| Social/Youth Services..... | 860-487-4417 |
| Tax Collector's Office..... | 860-487-4411 |
| Town Clerk's Office | 860-487-4401 |
| Transfer Station..... | 860-429-3409 |
| Tree Warden..... | 860-429-8547 |
| Ashford School Principal's Office..... | 860-429-6419 |
| Ashford School Superintendent's Office | 860-429-1927 |
| Regional School District 19-E.O. Smith High School | 860-487-0877 |
| Windham Regional Technical High School | 860-456-3879 |
| Congressman Joe Courtney - 2nd District | 860-240-8500 |
| Senator Dan Champagne - 35th District..... | (in CT) 800-842-1421 |
| | (out of state) 860-240-8800 |
| Representative Patricia Wilson Pheanious - 53rd District..... | 860-240-8585 |

Ashford Town Map

