

**ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday June 23, 2022 / Held Virtually via Zoom / Ashford, Connecticut
7:00 P.M.**

Present

Judith Austin, Chairman, Paul Varga, Clerk, Garth Bean, Angela DeSanto, John Kopec, Hugh MacKenzie, William Falletti, First Selectman, Ex-Officio Member

Guests Kara Fishman, Ashford Assessor

1. Call to Order

Ms. Austin called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call and Seating of Alternates

A roll call was carried out. Mr. MacKenzie was seated for Mr. Burnham.

3. Communications - Mr. Varga received correct text for a motion made during the May 26, 2022 meeting.

4. Public Comments – none

5. Approve Minutes of Meeting Thursday June 9, 2022

MS. DESANTO MOVED AND MR. KOPEC SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE BOF REGULAR MEETING JUNE 9, 2022. MOTION PASSED WITH TWO ABSTENTIONS BY MR. MACKENZIE AND MR. BEAN.

6. New Business

a. Selectman's Update

Congratulations are due to Paul Varga on his recent election as Chief of the Ashford Volunteer Fire Dept. Mr. Falletti only reminds him to abstain when the BOF discusses the Fire Department's budget. Ms. Gagne reports \$235,000 above anticipated amount of tax collections. The Treasurer's position has been posted with deadline June 29, 2022; no applications have been received as yet. The Recreation Dir. reports revenues are returning to pre-Covid levels. The South Ashford Cemetery on Pumpkin Hill Rd. has been vandalized; a State Police investigation is ongoing. Possible damage amounts to \$31,000; the town's insurance carrier has been notified.

Upcoming meetings, etc.: July 2 Open Houses at Fire Dept. and Public Works Dept. / July 3d, Parade beginning at Fire House, ending at Tremko Lane, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. / July 5th Public Hearing on ARPA funding priorities with Town Meeting voting. The *Ashford Citizen* will advertise with ARPA priorities, reasoning, etc. See *The Citizen* and web site for more information.

b. Presentation by Assessor regarding Grand List

Ms. Fishman reviewed the document she provided to the members. *Tax Assessment and the Equalized Net Grand List*. 2p. by Kara J. Fishman, CCMA II, Assessor, Town of Ashford. dated 5/27/2022. Additional pages 3-8 were statistical charts showing Ashford's ENGL for 2016-2021 and data for all Connecticut towns.

She proceeded to explain that the Equalized Net Grand List (ENGL) determines the state financial aid to schools in Connecticut. Each property sale is coded; an assessment divided by the sale price equals the sales ratio. Town sales should have a ratio of 70%. She pointed to the graph (p.4) showing for Ashford how the "median sales ratio" had gone from .7 in 2016 (during a revaluation) and that it was brought to that number .7 (70%) again by the revaluation in 2021. The OPM looks at our figures each year. The OPM charts showing total assessments and total equalized assessments are provided for each town for 2020.

The recent 2021 revaluation resulted in a two million dollar increase in the grand list per Ms. Fishman. Between one and one and a half percent (1 - 1.5%) of the sale of parcels are used to determine the ratio. The Equalized Grand List (EGL) per capita is the significant number per Ms. Fishman.

Mr. Varga asked if the EGL is only used for school aid funds? Yes. He then stated that it then has nothing to do with our own tax collection by Ms. Gagne. Yes, it is only used for education cost sharing by the state.

With no further questions Ms. Fishman was thanked for her presentation.

c. Action to Correct Previous Motion regarding Cadlerock Property Tax Account Suspensions / Corrected motion:

MR. VARGA MOVED AND MR. KOPEC SECONDED A MOTION TO TRANSFER TO THE SUSPENSE ACCOUNT THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS, WHICH ARE DEEMED TO BE UNCOLLECTABLE PER CGS SECTION 12-165, AS OF MAY 26, 2022.

**10 PARCELS, TOTALING 20 ACCOUNTS, CONTAMINATED UNDER EPA & DEEP LIENS, TOTALING \$32,858.94 (ACQUIRED BY THE TOWN OF ASHFORD THRU TAX SALE)
1 PERSONAL PROPERTY ACCOUNT WHERE OWNER OF RECORD IS DECEASED \$30.10
54 MV ACCOUNTS-OWNERS OF RECORD ARE DECEASED & NO KNOWN ESTATE EXISTS \$6554.08
3 MOTOR VEHICLE ACCOUNTS DISHCARGED BY BANKRUPTCY \$119.94
TOTAL = \$39,563.06**

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Old Business

a. Discussion and Possible Action regarding Open Space Fund

Since no requested data had been forthcoming and no one was present to represent the Conservation Commission, the item was tabled until the next meeting.

b. FY 20-20-2021 Annual Report Update

Since Mr. Burnham was not present the item was also tabled until the next meeting.

8. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Conservation Commission Open Space Fund Suggestion

FY 2020-2021 Annual Report Update

Update by Chairman on discussion with auditors regarding setting dates for review

9. Remarks for the Good of the Board

Ms. Austin noted that the BOF had been very quiet tonight. She expressed pride in Paul 's new position as Fire Chief.

10. Adjournment

MS DESANTO MOVED AND MR. VARGA SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AT 7:41 P.M.

*Respectfully submitted by,
Valerie B. Oliver, Recording Secretary
6/23/2022*