

**Ashford, Connecticut**  
**ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**Thursday March 30, 2023**

Hybrid Meeting / In-Person - Ashford Town Hall, and Zoom

**1. Call to Order** was at 7:03 p.m. by Chairman Judith Austin. Members present were: Christina Davis, Angie DeSanto, John Kopec, Hugh McKenzie, Paul Varga.

Guests: Selectmen, Mr. William Falletti; Treasurer, Sherri Soucy; Ashford School Superintendent, Cynthia Ford and others via Zoom

**2. Roll Call and Seating of Alternates:** The roll call was taken, and Ms. Davis was seated for Mr. Bean and Mr. McKenzie seated for Mr. Burnham.

**3. Communications:** none

**4. Public Comments** (3 minute time limit per speaker): none

**5. Approve Minutes of the Meeting Thursday, March 9, 2023**

**MR. VARGA MOVED AND MS. DESTANTO SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE BOF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2023 AS CORRECTED. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

corrections: p.2, at top line 6 ...Mr. Kalowski... and p.3, 8. Old Bsns: line last line should be .11% not 11%

**6. Approve Minutes of the Meeting March 23, 2023**

**MS. DESANTO MOVED AND MR. VARGA SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE BOF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 23, 2023 AS CORRECTED. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

corrections: p.1 at bottom 8 and 2 lines up should be ECS (Educational Cost Sharing) not DCS; p.2, at top line 4 ... 33.37... not 33,37; and line 10 ... 65% ... not 55%

**7. New Business**

**a. Selectman's Update:** Mr. Falletti stated that the Southworth Dr. road repairs have started and a notice placed in the *Ashford Citizen*. The upcoming BOF Public Hearing has been advertised as required and will be a hybrid meeting. Ms. Davis noted that people attending via Zoom often cannot hear all the comments, especially when many are attending virtually. If the meeting were all virtual it might be better/fairer. Mr. Falletti noted that ARPA funds were to be used to upgrade the technology (recording devices, viewing screen, etc.) here in the town hall meeting room, but that work will not be finished in time for the Public Hearing. The date for the Public Hearing is April 4, 2023 at 7 p.m. The Zoom link was provided in the announcements.

He then reviewed the \$20,000 cuts made in the General Govt. Budget by the BOS. The following areas saw reductions: contingency fund (- \$4,000), stipend for *Ashford Citizen* editor (who is resigning the position) (-5,200), Rec. Dept. (-3,000), road saline (-5,500) and DPW sand and gravel accounts (each -1,000 = 2,000), AFD (-3000). Total - \$20,000.

A question about Animal Control activity was answered; the very busy time is after UCONN graduation, but most normal activity involves one or two dogs monthly.

He is anticipating that the budget package will be online and hard copies at the town clerk's office and copy sent to Ms. Austin very soon. To review, he stated budget: minus .06% compared to last year / 2.89% increase in the BOE's and 5.08% expected for the R19's budget / or a 7.91% average budget increase for the town = a mil rate increase of .82%.

Asked about the grand list he noted an increase of 1% = in tax dollars, \$115,950.00. The mil rate now is 32.265 He noted area towns and their percent of taxes received from residents: Ashford 91%, Eastford 93%, Chaplin 92.5% and Willington 81%.

He also reviewed the figures for different percentages of the Undesignated Fund Balance if transferred to the CNR. Currently the CNR has \$275,000. The BOS is requesting \$355,945 be added to the CNR.

Undesignated Fund Balance should be between 10 and 15% of total general fund operating town budget.

if reduced to 12% of budget = \$189,956 available to move to CNR  
if reduced to 11.5% = \$268,365 "  
if reduced to 11% = \$346,773.98 "

## 7. New Business

**b. Transferring Funds from 1% Fund \$85,000 or new request \$85,492.00:** Ms. Davis asked for clarification of this 1% Fund transferral. She noted for FY 2021-22, 1% of the Unassigned (Undesignated?) Fund Balance was transferred to the Nonlapsing Fund [Capital Nonrecurring Fund?].

Ms. Austin read the related financial policy text. Ms. Austin noted that the policy was changed last year because of increased needed funding, but that it would cost legal fees if we were to change the policy this year. The school generator is funded half by the town and half by the BOE, total cost \$270,000. Mr. Kopec thought transparency was better by transferring \$5000 toward next years program cost without rewriting an ordinance. Mr. Varga thought with \$5000 added to the \$80,000, it was not enough to warrant changing the policy. The cost to change the policy [ordinance?] would be extra expense. [The notation for b. is confusing as it states a request increase of only \$492]

**MR. VARGA MOVED AND MS. DESANTO SECONDED A MOTION TO MOVE \$80,006.02 FROM THE UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE TO THE BOE'S NONLAPSING FUND. MOTION PASSED WITH 4 YES VOTES (VARGA, DESANTO, AUSTIN, MCKENZIE) AND ONE NO VOTE (DAVIS).**

Ms. Soucy noted that the BOF's procedure states up to 1% can be given [ from the unassigned fund balance?] to the BOE's nonlapsing account. Last year the policy was changed so that 2% could be transferred, but normally the percentage has been 1%. Ms. Soucy reminded members it is a procedure not an ordinance. She also noted CT Statute 10.248A where the related law is stated that up to 2% can be transferred. The BOE has the right to spend funds in that account. Mr. Falletti also noted that the state set the limit of up to 2% in this new legislation.

**c. Capital Improvements request BOS to BOF for Approval:** Mr. Falletti stated again \$355,945 needed for the Capital Nonrecurring Fund (CNR). If the difference of the BOE 1 %, \$5,485.98 is added, the total needed is \$361,430.98, per the Chairman. Mr. Falletti noted that the Capital Improvement Committee is advisory to the BOS. He advised that the adjustments [for capital project support] be made after the public hearing and look to support the requested \$355,945.

**MR. KOPEC MOVED AND MS. AUSTIN SECONDED A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE REQUEST BY THE BOS TO PROVIDE \$355,945.10 TO THE CNR FOR THE CAPITAL PROJECTS IN FY 2023-2024. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**d. Unassigned Fund Balance amount to move to CNR (10-15%):** Discussion included what percentage was transferred last year to the CNR. It was determined that 10.5% was transferred. Mr. Kopec was concerned that we leave enough in the Unassigned Fund so that our future bond rate would not be increased

**MR. KOPEC MOVED AND MS. AUSTIN SECONDED A MOTION TO MOVE 11%, \$346,773.98, FROM THE UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE TO THE CNR. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## 8. Old Business

**a. FY 2023-2024 Budget Discussion:** The revised BOE Budget was passed out to members in the Town Hall. \$60,000 has been removed. ESSER Funds were noted as helping to fund some of the cuts. Cost reduction areas mentioned by Ms. Ford were unemployment compensation, instructional supplies, text books for middle schoolers, art equipment, equipment for technology in middle school, fire alarm system and cyber insurance costs.

Ms. Austin said she would be at the town hall the next day to help, and Ms. Ford said she would deliver hard BOE Budget copies to her for the other BOF members that were attending via Zoom.

Mr. Falletti left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

**9. Agenda items for Next meeting:**

The Public Hearing April 4, 2023, a Tuesday beginning at 7 p.m.

A special BOF meeting will follow; hopefully the BOF members can meet together at the town hall for that discussion after the Public Hearing ends to make final adjustments.

The Public Hearing will be a hybrid meeting.

The next regular BOF meeting will be on April 6, 2023.

Results of Public Hearing will be discussed.

**10. Remarks for the Good of the Board:**

Judith thanked all for dealing with struggles.

**11. Adjournment:**

**MS. DESANTO MOVED AND MR. KOPEC SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AT 8:40 P.M.**

*Respectfully submitted by,  
Valerie B. Oliver, Recording Secretary  
3/31/2023*