

Ashford, Connecticut
ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday December 7, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Hybrid Meeting / In-Person - Ashford Town Hall and Zoom

1. Call to Order: 7:04 p.m. by Christina Davis, acting as temporary Chair by consensus of members present.

2. Roll Call and Seating of Alternates:

Regular Members: Judith Austin, Christina Davis, Angie DeSanto, Pamela Summers, Paul Varga. Alternates: Timothy Rhodes (arrived 7:10 p.m.). Cathryn Silver-Smith (ex officio)
Guests: William Falletti (Selectman), Sherri Soucy (Treasurer), Keith Lipker

3. Election of Officers

Ms. Davis asked for nominations for BOF Chair.

Ms. Summers moved and Ms. DeSanto seconded the nomination of Ms. Davis for Chair.

Mr. Varga expressed concerns about the process for electing officers at this time.

Ms. Davis moved and Ms. Summers seconded a motion to close nominations. Motion passed unanimously.

A vote was then taken on the nomination of Ms. Davis to be the BOF Chairman.

Motion passed: 3 Yes (Davis, DeSanto, Summers), 2 Abstentions (Austin, Varga).

Ms. Davis asked for nominations for BOF Clerk.

Ms. Davis moved and Ms. DeSanto seconded the nomination of Ms. Summers for BOF Clerk.

Ms. Davis moved and Mr. Varga seconded a motion to close nominations. Motion passed unanimously.

A vote was then taken on the nomination of Ms. Summers to be the BOF Clerk.

Motion passed unanimously.

4. Communications:

An e-mail was received from the PZC requesting BOF input for the public survey PZC is putting together regarding the IID Zone. An Annual Report status update was received from former BOF member Jesse Burnham.

5. Public Comments: None

6. Approve Minutes of Regular Meeting of Thursday October 26, 2023

Ms. Austin moved and Ms. Davis seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular BOF Meeting of October 26, 2023 with the following corrections. Motion passed with 2 Abstentions (DeSanto, Summers).

Under Item 6.e:

Paragraph 1, 3rd Sentence: "She uses the Contingency Fund to cover these dollar amounts..." should read "She uses the Contingency budget line item to cover these dollar amounts..."

Paragraph 4, 3rd Sentence: "The Contingency Fund..." should read "The Contingency budget line item..."

Paragraph 5, 1st Sentence: "Mr. Varga explained that the Contingency Fund..." should read "Mr. Varga explained that the Contingency budget line item..."

Motion:

"Mr. Varga moved and Mr. Bean seconded a motion to accept the noted Year End Transfers list compiled by Treasurer Soucy, and that the total amount be covered by the Contingency Fund" should read

"Mr. Varga moved and Mr. Bean seconded a motion to accept the noted Year End Transfers list compiled by Treasurer Soucy, and that the total amount be covered by the Contingency budget line item."

7. New Business

a. Selectman's Update:

- The BOS is in talks with financial advisors regarding cost management for the school roof's reconstruction phase.
- A BOF representative is needed for the Capital Improvement Committee (CIP). The first meeting of CIP will be held within the next two weeks.

Mr. Varga moved and Ms. Austin seconded a motion to add this request to the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

- Ms. Silver-Smith asked the BOF for the status of the Annual Town Audit. The Treasurer responded that the school is almost finished. The “fixed asset” report is being worked on however it has been difficult to capture the information from the antiquated system that resides only on the First Selectman’s PC. Tracy Chase from the audit firm is working with the town on this. Ms. Silver-Smith noted that the auditors need to present the draft audit to the BOF, respond to any questions, then finalize the audit for formal BOF acceptance before filing with the required entities by the end of the year.

7.b. Annual Report Update: Mr. Jesse Burnham, although no longer on the BOF, is continuing to get this document completed. Reports from the BOS, Transfer Station, DPW and Fire Marshall have not been received yet. Ms. Davis will follow up.

7.d. Discussion and Possible Approval of 2024 Meeting Dates:

Ms. Summers moved and Mr. Varga seconded a motion to accept the 2024 BOF meeting dates as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

7.e. Discussion and possible approval of 2024-2025 Budget Calendar:

Ms. Austin moved and Ms. Summers seconded a motion to accept the calendar as presented.

Mr. Varga noted that the date for budgets to be due should be included in the calendar. That date is January 12. He also stated that the budget calendar is a fluid document as dates are influenced by the state and other factors. The above motion was amended as follows:

Ms. Austin moved and Ms. Summers seconded a motion to accept the budget calendar with the addition of January 12, Friday as a date when all town budgets are due in the town Treasurer’s Office. Motion passed unanimously.

7.f. Discuss process for filling vacancies (full seat and alternate):

The BOF needs 3 Alternates. As Ms. Davis now a full member there is one opening. The current 2 Alternates are Tim Rhodes and Hugh MacKenzie. A special town meeting will need to be held to elect a third Alternate.

7.g. Discuss having a Tri-Board Meeting between Boards of Finance, Education and Selectmen on the Budget:

Jane Urban has asked about having such a meeting to learn exactly what type of budget presentation is expected. Mr. Falletti noted that last year there was a successful meeting of the chairs from the 3 boards. He stated that the meeting might be held with chairs and each including a designated person. Ms. Davis expressed concern about the legality of such a meeting and possible violation of open meeting laws. She would prefer something in writing about it. Ms. Silver-Smith will consult with Town Counsel.

7.h. BOF Member for Capital Improvement Committee:

Mr. Varga moved and Ms. Austin seconded a motion to appoint Ms. Davis as the BOF representative on the Capital Improvement Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Agenda Items for next meeting:

Audit / Annual Report / check on budget submittals / Financial Management Policy – review and revise as necessary.

9. Remarks for the Good of the Board:

Christina Davis thanked all for their cooperation and anticipates a smooth and professional budget process.

10. Adjournment:

Mr. Varga moved and Ms. DeSanto seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously at 7:55 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by,
Pamela Summers, BOF Clerk
12/11/2023*