

Ashford, Connecticut
ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday January 25, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Hybrid Meeting / In-Person - Ashford Town Hall, and Zoom

The agenda included several automatic links to documents: previous Minutes / Capital Projects Comm. meeting / FY24-25 Budget Calendar / CT Nips Report. This was convenient for members and the public.

1. Call to Order was at 7:03 p.m. by Chairman Christina Davis; other members present were: Keith Lipker, Pamm Summers, Paul Varga. Tim Rhodes
Guest: Cathryn Silver Smith, 1st Selectman and Ex-Officio Member

2. Roll Call and Seating of Alternates The roll call was taken, and Mr. Rhodes was seated for Ms. DeSanto.

3. Communications Any questions regarding the email sent to members should be sent to the Chairman. The Audit is not completed yet. The Chairman completed a questionnaire from the Auditor. A report on tax revenue will be provided listing the top ten tax payers. A revaluation will be conducted in 2025.

4. Public Comments none

5. Approve Minutes of

a. Regular Meeting Thursday, Jan. 11, 2024

Ms. Summers moved and Mr. Varga seconded a motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular BOF Meeting Jan. 11, 2024 as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.

Corrections: p.1, 5. a. remove bracketed text from motion. / p..1, 6b, .3d paragraph 1st sentence should read: Mr. Lipker noted that he had not received any budget notifications re the ZBA / p.2, 6g. 1. Financial Management Policy, sentence under this should read: The Undesignated Fund, as a percentage of the General Fund, might be changed to 16% in the future per the First Selectman.

6. New Business

a. Selectman's Update

Ms. Silver-Smith has met with both Ashford's state Senator Gordon and Representative Boyd and will be having quarterly meetings with them in the future. Trash pickup policies and costs will be changing. Payments will be due monthly and different methods of recycling will take place in May, e.g. cardboard will be separated and recycled. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are ready to be sent out for both Clerk of Works and Architect for the school roof project. A 20% increase might be possible for the cost of health insurance in the school budget. Clarification was provided regarding salary data; however, for better understanding, a written explanation will be prepared and supplied to BOF members so they understand that contracted salaries will not be going up 6%.

Mr. Lipker asked if office hours for our state representatives will be reported to the public? Yes, dates and times will be reported on the website and in the *Ashford Citizen* where the deadline for the next month's issue is the 15th of the previous month. This is the reason no dates appeared in the January *Ashford Citizen*. Mr. Lipker also asked about a contract with the trash company. A three-year contract is being prepared, but nothing has been signed yet. The 1st Selectman explained what happens to the trash.

b. Update from Chair on the Capital Projects Committee, which had its first meeting on Jan. 16

A link to this meeting was provided in the agenda. Ms. Davis attended as the BOF representative. She explained the purpose of the Committee Ms. Silver-Smith reported that eight proposed projects were received, but not all had estimated costs from vendors. This information is required for serious consideration of a department's project. Notifications went out to departments back on Dec. 4th, giving them enough time to prepare requests. Reminders will be sent to departments so that all requests (prioritized) are in to the Committee for deliberations and to the BOF by March 7th. The 1st Selectman then mentioned requests received. It was stated that without the audit report it is not known exactly what dollar amount can be used to replenish the CNR (that funds these projects).

c. Review FY 24-25 Budget Calendar and discuss what town departments we would like to present their budgets and when

The Budget Calendar lists the BOE budget presented on Feb. 22 and the BOS General Government Budget and Capital Improvement Plan presented on March 7. It was decided that after the March 7th presentations the BOF would decide which departments they wish to request individual presentations from and will ask for answers to specific questions be provided at the presentations.

d. Discuss process for submitting questions to Board of Education regarding their budget estimate

Mr. Varga thought submitting questions to the BOE prior to their formal presentation was a good idea (as well as questions for other departments).

Ms. Silver-Smith said that the BOS' General Government Budget will be provided to the BOF prior to their formal presentation on March 7th. She reminded the BOF that there is to be no speaking outside of the BOF meetings about budget matters.

e. Update on the Audit for FY 2022-2023

A records issue of \$41,000 between the BOE and the town has prevented the audit's completion. Once this is resolved the audit will be finished. Monthly reconciliations are recommended per Ms. Silver-Smith; she will discuss with the Treasurer. Ms. Davis noted she has talked with the Auditor.

f. FY 21-22 Annual Report update

This report has been completed; print copies will be at the town hall, and it will be on the town website. Ms. Robinson has agreed to work on editing and final preparations for the FY 22-23 annual report.

g. Status on budget submittals and annual reports (FY 22-23) from town departments (due to Treasurer on Jan. 12)

The 1st Selectman reported, per the Treasurer, that all are coming in.

h. Update on Special Town Meeting to fill the Board of Finance Alternate vacancy

The date is February 5, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.; a BOS meeting will follow.

i. Share report on Nips Funding to CT towns

A link to this report was provided in the meeting agenda. It reported data from Oct. 1, 2021 – Sept. 30, 2023. Ashford received \$21,764.20 revenue generated from a reported 435,284 nips sold in town.

7. Agenda items for next meeting

Audit report and presentation (if not at the Feb 8th meeting then at the next Feb. 15th)

8. Remarks for the good of the Board

Chairman Davis thanked all for their time.

9. Adjournment

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

*Respectfully submitted by
Valerie B. Oliver, Recording Secretary
1/25/2024*

