

TOWN OF ASHFORD

ANNUAL REPORT



Ashford Municipal Offices

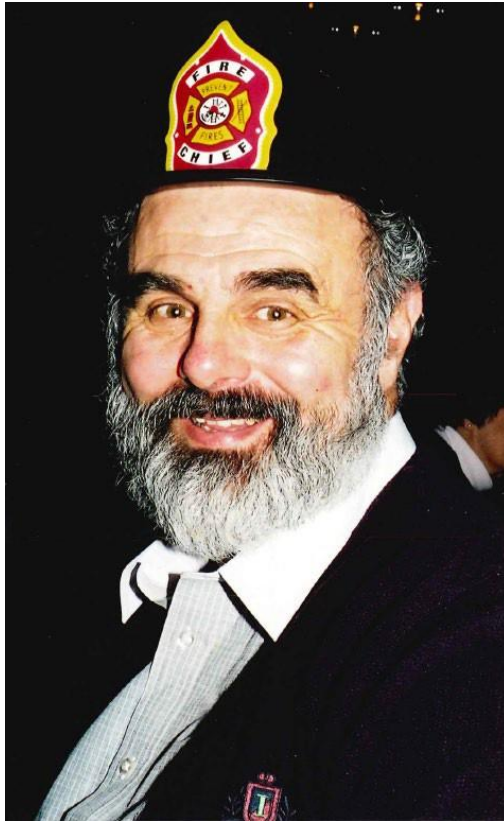
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	1
Dedication .....	2
Office of Selectmen.....	3
Town Clerk.....	4
Board of Assessment Appeals.....	5
Zoning Board of Appeals .....	6
Board of Finance .....	7
Assessor.....	8
Tax Collector.....	10
Finance Department .....	11
Conservation Commission .....	12
Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission .....	13
Transfer Station.....	14
Economic Development Commission.....	15
Babcock Library Board of Trustees .....	17
Parks and Recreation Commission.....	18
Municipal Agent for the Elderly .....	20
Senior Center.....	21
Housing Authority.....	22
Planning and Zoning Commission .....	23
Youth & Social Services .....	24
Sexton.....	25
Department of Public Works.....	26
Fire Marshal .....	27
Volunteer Fire Department.....	28
Animal Control .....	29
Information Technology Department.....	29
Board of Education and Superintendent's Annual Report .....	30
Independent Auditor's Report .....	35
Management's Discussion & Analysis .....	38
Directory .....	45
Ashford Town Map.....	46

## Dedication

*in Honor of  
Merrill "Butch" Simpson*



Merrill Simpson, or Butch as he is well known, is a longtime resident of Ashford who has given back to this community in countless ways.

His volunteer efforts include serving on the Ashford Board of Finance for 29 years.

He was also a member of the Ashford Fire Department for 25 years, the Ashford Republican Town Committee for 40 years, and served as a Town Constable for 10 years. He was a longtime supporter of Little League in town.

Butch continues to reside in Ashford, the town where he was born. He raised a family here along with his wife MaryAnn Simpson, who served as Ashford Tax Collector for many years. MaryAnn passed away in 2019.

The Town of Ashford and its residents salute Butch and the work he has provided to make our community better and stronger.

## Office of Selectmen

**Board of Selectmen (pre-Nov. 7, 2021 election):** Cathryn Silver-Smith, First Selectman; William Falletti, Selectman; and Roger Phillips, Selectman

**Board of Selectmen (post-Nov. 7, 2021 election):** William Falletti, First Selectman; Cathryn Silver-Smith, Selectman; and Roger Phillips, Selectman

**Staff:** Christine Abikoff, Executive Administrative Assistant

### Meeting Schedule

The Board of Selectmen meet the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month and the 2nd and 4th Mondays.

### Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022

With the announcement of the award of \$1,259,270 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery funding, the Board of Selectmen initiated a town-wide survey to begin the process of formulating a list of ARPA funded projects meeting the grant award criteria that would require town meeting approval. Responses to the survey request and input from various town departments enabled the Board of Selectmen to put together a preliminary list to take to town meeting for spending approval early in the fiscal year. COVID test kits, masks and gloves were supplied to the towns through the State of Connecticut and Eastern Highlands Health District. Vaccination clinics, organized by Martha Sibley-Jett, Ashford School nurse, have been held at Knowlton Hall for most segments of our population.

Capital projects recommended by the Capital Projects Committee, budgeted and completed during the 2021-2022 fiscal year, included the purchase of a 71-passenger school bus, the preparation and submission of solar power applications to Eversource relating to the future Ashford School roof replacement, the purchase and installation of a generator to service Knowlton Memorial Hall, and replacement and implementation of the Town/School accounting system remains in process.

As the result of a tax sale, the town recorded quit claim deeds transferring 12 land parcels previously owned by various Cadlerock holding companies to the Town of Ashford and two parcels to the town of Willington. Once the deeds were filed with the Town Clerks, the property boundaries were posted, and a gate was installed to prohibit access to the property. The Phase I, Phase II and remedial action plan prepared by our environmental engineers provided us with the information needed to apply for a brownfield remediation grant. The Boards of Selectmen of the towns of Ashford and Willington have adopted “No Hunting” resolutions relating to the property. We intend to continue to further investigate possible uses of the property that will benefit our residents.

Limited reopening of town offices and associated masking recommendations have generally been accepted by our residents. Our dependence on ZOOM and TEAMS meetings that enabled the public to have input in the decision-making process have become standard operating procedure for our Boards and Commissions. We are still trying to identify the most practical method of holding hybrid meetings and have reached out to IT consultants and various other towns to provide us with options.

The Town entered into a contract with Architect Robert Hurd to prepare a phasing plan for rehabilitation of the Tremko House. Funding for this was included in the 2021-2022 Capital Projects budget with \$2,500 of the \$5,000 total cost being contributed by the Ashford Historical Society.

Solar powered speed enforcement signs received from the State of Connecticut Transportation Institute have been installed on Turnpike Road and North Road.

During the 2020-2021 State of Connecticut legislative session, the legislature enacted legislation directing liquor wholesalers to contribute a portion of the revenue derived from the sale of NIPS to towns specifically for the use of controlling litter. Ashford's first installment was received in the spring of 2022. The Board of Selectmen will consider uses for these revenues relating to improvements at the Transfer Station.

## **Town Clerk**

### **Town Clerk**

Sherry L. Mutch, MMC, MCTC

### **Assistant Town Clerk**

Karen M. Zulick, CCTC, CMC

### **Public Office Hours:**

Monday, Tuesday, Friday 8:30am–3:00pm

Wednesday 10:00am–6:00pm

### **Purpose & 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. The office issues marriage licenses, burial and cremation permits, and certified copies of birth, marriage and death certificates. The office issues dog licenses, sports licenses and permits, and liquor licenses and other permits. 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 maintains the Town's permanent records by utilizing the best management systems and preservation and restoration programs available. We attend conferences and educational sessions to keep informed of changes in election laws and other legislation and to keep up to date on management and preservation techniques for public records.

### **Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022**

- **July 2021:** Certain COVID-19 protocols continued: town, board and committee meetings continued to be virtual or hybrid; Town buildings opened up to the public without appointments; masks were still mandatory.

- **August:** Service began with new Land Records vendor IQS.
- **November:** Municipal election held and resulted in new First Selectman, William Falletti.
- **December:** New electronic death registry began with CT Dept. of Public Health.
- **February:** New Ricoh copier arrived and department copier leases were synced.
- **March:** Masks became optional in Town buildings. Town Clerk received MMC (Master Municipal Clerk) designation from IIMC (International Institute of Municipal Clerks).
- **April:** Submitted for and approved for State Library Grant 2023.
- **May:** Region #19 Referendum passed. Town Budget Referendum passed.
- **June 2022:** New online dog licensing was very successful. CT State Library Grant 2022 land records projects completed (re-indexed 1953-1957 indices; IQS created new “use” copies and new microfilm of 13 oldest volumes.) Our office continued to produce *The Ashford Citizen* monthly. Our office was closed for 4 days due to COVID.

**Plans/Programs/Initiatives for FY 2022-2023**

- Plan to hold a Freedom of Information workshop for the members of town boards and commissions.
- Continue document retention work: sort documents and get required permission to destroy them from CT State Library (Shred Day).
- 2023 Grant from CT State Library will be used to make available online the oldest land record index books (IQS).
- The budget referendum will be on May 2, 2023. If COVID conditions improve, we will attend conferences again.
- Updates to the Code (PZC revisions) will be made with General Code. Security cameras will be upgraded.

**Board of Assessment Appeals**

**Members**

Joseph F. Peters, Chair                      Elizabeth Little                      Thomas Martin

**Alternate Members**

Robert A. Trotta                                  Nyaunu Wi Stevens

**Staff**

Kara J. Fishman, Assessor

**Purpose and Responsibilities**

The Board of Assessment Appeals is the appeal board for taxpayers who disagree with the actions of the assessor regarding the valuation of real estate, personal property and motor vehicles and the administration of exemptions. Appeals heard are for property on the most recent Grand List closed by January 31<sup>st</sup>. It is an elected board with 3 members and 2 alternates.

### **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 in the Assessor's Office on or before February 20<sup>th</sup>. 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, on the town's website and outside the Town Clerk's office in Town Hall.

### **Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022**

- A meeting was held in September 2021 for an appeal of a Motor Vehicle assessment on the 2020 Grand List.
- At two BAA meetings held in March 2022, fifteen real estate appeals, five personal property appeals, and one motor vehicle appeal was heard. 2021 was a revaluation year and the number of real estate appeals was higher than in non-revaluation years. The fifteen appeals represent an appeal rate of less than one-half of a percent of all real estate parcels in Ashford.

## **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 Katrina Connolly, Land Use Clerk.

### **Prior to 2021 election**

Keith Lipker, Chair	Michael Peppin, Vice Chair	Susan Eastwood, Secretary
Harry Bagley	Bob Brisard	Jean McCarthy
Bill Kerensky	Deborah Maccarone, Alternate	

### **Post 2021 election**

Keith Lipker, Chair	Michael Peppin, Vice Chair	Susan Eastwood, Secretary
Jean McCarthy	Tom Hastings	John Lippert, Alternate
Deborah Maccarone, Alternate		

### **Meeting Schedule**

The ZBA meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. if there is new business. The meeting schedule is published separately. All meetings in FY 2021-2022 complied with COVID restrictions i.e., held virtually. Links to the meetings were included in the meeting agendas published on 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 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.

Two applications were heard in 2021 with a Board meeting following the 2021 elections. No new application received in January – June 2022.

**Plans for FY 2021-2022**

- Participate in training as available as it relates to ZBA. The state requires 4 hours of continuing education for members of Land Use boards and commissions beginning 2022.
- Monitor Planning and Zoning Commission regulations for changes.

**Board of Finance**

**Members**

Judith Austin, Chair  
Jesse Burnham

Paul Varga, Clerk (1<sup>st</sup> half year)  
Angela C. Desanto

Garth Bean  
John C. Kopec

**Alternate Members**

Esther Jagodzinski

Christina Davis

Hugh Mackenzie

**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, approve 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 2021-2022**

The Board of Finance was presented with the challenge of holding the referendum on the same date as Region 19. This shortened the time for departments to get their budgets in and for the Board of Finance to agree on a budget on the people’s behalf. The BOF passed unanimously the FY 21-22 budget, indicating the public trusted the hard work putting forth a responsible



proposal. The FY 21-22 mill rate was set at 36.369, 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 challenges of their own with Ashford being short on staff. Laura Andert, as well as all the staff, did an amazing job maintaining stability throughout the financial accounting cycle, sending reports and updates to both the Auditors and the Board of Finance. Ashford continues to maintain an “Aa3” rating with Moody’s which will be beneficial with the upcoming Bonding process in 2022-2023, for the Ashford School Roofing project.

**Plans/Programs/Initiatives for FY 2022-2023**

The town will be facing new bonding for the school roofing project etc. The Board will have to stay mindful of any fluctuation that is occurring throughout this year looking at the future budget along with economy stability.

The town receives intergovernmental revenues from the State of Connecticut. Connecticut’s economy moves in the same general cycle as the national economy, which will affect from time to time 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.

**Assessor**

**Assessor**

Kara J. Fishman, CCMA II, MAI

**Office hours**

8:30am–3:00pm, Monday, Tuesday, & 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 publish the grand list by January 31, listing the assessed value and exemptions for each property. The Grand List is comprised of the assessed values of Real Estate, Personal Property and Motor Vehicles. The assessment ratio is 70%. The 70% assessed values are listed in the Grand List and form the basis for property tax bills due the following July.

Personal Property and Motor Vehicles are revalued annually. Real Estate is revalued once every 5 years. The 2021 Grand List was a revaluation year for real estate. During revaluation, a mass appraisal model is developed using recent sales, cost and income data. State standards for revaluation ensures that the Assessor equalizes values for accuracy and consistency for properties within the same class and between property classes. The intent of the standards is for all property owners to have a similar tax burden, as a percentage of value. The three classes are Residential, Commercial and Vacant Land. The Assessor takes

an oath that the assessments have been perfected, subject to changes made by the Board of Assessment Appeals.

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. For the FY 7/1/2021 – 6/30/2022, the gross assessment of all property in Ashford was \$416,873,141. The net assessment, after removing tax exempt real property of \$47,202,190, and applying owner exemptions of \$4,519,744, was \$365,151,207.

Gross Assessment	\$ 416,873,141
Less Tax-Exempt Real Estate	(47,202,190)
Less Owner & Property Exemptions	<u>(4,519,744)</u>
Equals Net Taxable Assessment	\$ 365,151,207

Eighty-four percent (84%) of the net Grand List was Real Estate, 12% 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 people with disabilities and non-profit quadrennial filings every 4 years.

The major exemption programs for residents are for veterans and people with disabilities. The number of veterans and surviving spouses receiving exemptions in 2021 was 241. Twenty percent (20%) of Ashford veterans had a VA rated disability for the 2021 Grand List. One-third of this total had a 100% VA rated disability. Eleven veterans received higher exemptions based on their low-income. The number of non-veteran residents who were totally disabled was thirty.

The major personal property exemption programs for businesses are for farm machinery and manufacturing equipment. Eighteen 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 2021-2022**

- Three new homes were completed during the 2021-22 fiscal years, and four were under construction. Three of the four under construction were rebuilds of homes due to a fire or demolition, using the same foundation.
- Twenty-seven properties remained on the Grand List with reductions in value for affected foundations, the same number that was on the 2019 Grand List. Three pyrrhotite-affected foundations were replaced, and four others had open permits for replacement. In total, eighteen properties have had their foundations replaced since
- Crumbling Concrete Foundations: Public Act 21-120 was passed by the State Legislature and effective for the 10/1/2021 Grand List. It provides relief to affected property owners by removing the five-year renewal requirement.

## **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, and Friday 8:30am–3:00pm, and Wednesday 10:00am– 6:00pm. These hours became a reality during the COVID-19 crisis and have remained as our available to the public posted hours.

### **Purpose & Responsibilities**

The 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, 2021, with a collection total of \$11,420,836.72 an amount of \$258,638.72 more than the budget called for, of which \$180,262 represented back tax payments. Our charge was to collect at least 98% of the current taxes. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the building opened to the public during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of July 2021.

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. 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 \$1,832,379.43 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 and has been recertified thru Dec. 2026. The Office is constantly looking at processes in order to improve efficiencies to the public.

## **Finance Department**

### **Treasurer/Administrative Assistant**

Cheryl A. Baker

### **Deputy Treasurer**

Laura Scandalito Andert

### **Purpose & Responsibilities**

The Ashford Finance Department is a multi-faceted 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 Revenue 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 Towns 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 assisting auditors in the creation of the town's financial statements and the annual audit of those statements.

## **Conservation Commission**

### **Members**

Loretta Wrobel, Chair  
Bill Dubinsky  
Steve Morytko

Christine Acebo  
Stephanie Dubinsky  
Pamm Summers

Janet Bellamy  
Gwen Haaland

### **Meeting Schedule**

Meets 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month

### **Purpose & Responsibilities**

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.

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 & Changes during FY 2021-2022**

The Conservation Commission met on Zoom in 2021. CC cancelled scheduled programming in the spring and didn't have our annual clean up your streets spring event.

Ashford Farmers Market completed its 15<sup>th</sup> year in 2021. The market ran from May to November 21. Julie and Todd Barton continued as market masters. The market had nine vendors as more space was allocated between vendors respecting COVID guidelines. This season we had fewer customers as people felt safer this season to buy food inside supermarkets as compared to 2020. The market will begin its 16<sup>th</sup> season in May 2022. Julie Barton will again be the market master.

Tremko Trail Link marking is completed. We are building a kiosk. We collaborated with Joshua's Trust on upkeep and safety for the Ashford Oak property. We purchased fence supplies with Joshua's Trust for Ashford Oak and installed it. The site looks improved. In 2022 we plan to share the cost of a plaque for Ashford Oak with Joshua's Trust.

Our annual plant give-away was postponed due to COVID. We hope to continue educational programs in 2022. We are creating more pollinator pathway gardens. We now have a coordinator for the pollinators' pathways program. Our coordinator, Jennifer Sterling-Folker, is also part of the Regional Program. We hope to have educational programs in 2022 to discuss pollinator gardens and showcase gardens plus have a seed bank. Jean Pillo attended a CC meeting to explain The Natchaug Healthy Watershed Protection Plan and we can use the information to maintain Ashford's waterways. We hope to obtain recertification for Sustainable CT and are working on affordable housing and identifying homelessness along with including other sustainable issues.

**July 2022-June 2023 Budget Requests Explanations/Changes**

The Farmers Market budget is included in program section of CC budget. We will retain our \$75 market registration fee and plan for 9 vendors which will generate \$675 revenue. Included in Program section is \$400 allocated for educational programs.

Budget is same as last year. Supplies section includes \$250 for plaque at Ashford Oak and \$100 for plant give away.

**Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission**

**Members**

Leonard Liguore, Chair

Robert Brisard

Cheryl Chase

Michael Dietz

V. Peter Piecyk, III

Richard Zulick

Elaine Corey-Zincavage (Alternate)

**Staff**

Bruce Fitzback (Wetlands Enforcement Officer)

Michael D'Amato (Land Use Administrator)

Valerie Oliver (Recording Secretary)

**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 one alternate. The Board of Selectmen appoints all members and alternate members. All commissioners and alternates are volunteers.

**Purpose & 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 had been declared a pandemic and a national state of emergency was put into place. As a result of this situation, some of the commission's regularly scheduled in-person meetings at the town hall were canceled and conducted via Zoom (online audio and web conferencing). As the threat of COVID-19 diminished toward the end of the year, regular in-person meetings were resumed.

### **Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022**

- The Commission accepted eleven (11) new applications and issued eleven (11) permits.
- There was a variety of applications which included a greenhouse project, septic system repairs/installations, road drainage projects, the construction of a retaining wall, the construction of a pond, several residential construction projects, and various driveway improvements, among others.
- The wetlands agent fielded numerous questions from the public and conducted site visits as needed.
- The Town of Ashford's Public Works Department has continued to complete various projects under the blanket permit issued by the Commission for the purpose of completing emergency work and maintaining the roads and storm drainage facilities, and for the ongoing maintenance of other lands owned or maintained by the town.
- During the year, four of our members completed the DEEP Inland Wetlands Training. The members were Michael Dietz, Robert Brisard, Cheryl Chase and Elaine Corey-Zincavage.

## **Transfer Station**

### **Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022**

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

- 1,227 tons of bulky waste (which now includes wood) compared to 1,479 tons during fiscal year 2020-2021 (which did not include wood)
- 909 tons of household trash compared to 1,187 tons during fiscal year 2020-2021
- 128 tons of light iron compared to 216 tons during fiscal year 2020-2021. The town no longer receives a billing credit against this tonnage but is now paid, based on the scrap metal market price, on a monthly basis. These payments are credited to the Transfer Station revenue account.

- 421 tons of recyclables compared to 530 tons during fiscal year 2020-2021

Other materials that pass through the Transfer Station that we receive some revenue for include textiles and covered electronics. Unfortunately, we experienced price increases for the disposal 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 of their vehicle windshield.

Commercial contractors who wish to dispose of building 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**

### **Members**

Richard S. Williams, Chair	Margaret J. Chatey, Vice Chair	John Calarese
Raymond L Fenn	Robert Ignatowicz	Gary H. Lawrence
John Rettenmeier	Terry Wakeman	

### **Alternate Members**

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. In 2021-22, all meetings were held virtually. Normally, meetings are held in the Board and Commissions Room of the Town Hall.

### **Purpose & 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 2021-2022**

The EDC struggled this year with attendance due to the challenges presented by the pandemic and health challenges of members. Only two meetings during this year gained a full quorum of members, therefore, we fell short of engaging with businesses and other activities in line with our mission. However, progress was made on a few key fronts.

- The redesigned EDC website was launched in May 2021, and through the talents of consultant Christina Davis, it was updated, and Ashford businesses are featured regularly. When Ms. Davis was required to step away from assisting EDC as a newly elected official in Ashford, the EDC contracted with Ashford resident Chonte Fields to interview



businesses and generate content for the website, starting in winter 2022. In total, ten businesses have been featured so far through the website, plus the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp and the Ashford Farmers Market. To drive traffic to the EDC website and these stories, the stories are linked through the Ashford Our Town Our Future Facebook page. The story about the Ashford Farmers Market garnered 2,000 views.

- EDC engaged in ongoing conversation with the Board of Selectmen about the Cadlerock property, and how the Town can plan to optimize its economic value to the community.
- EDC resumed placement of an article in *The Citizen* each month. The article features a local business and drives readers to the website for more details. The goal of including these stories is to elevate awareness of the commission, and the local business community we serve and support.
- EDC made a concerted effort to “claim” a Town of Ashford page on the CTVisits.com website hosted by the State of Connecticut to promote tourism. Our hiking trails and several events were listed there (<https://www.ctvisit.com/listings/town-ashford>). Currently only eleven businesses have created free listings. There is genuine opportunity to expand Ashford’s presence on this page, and efforts were made to help tourism-related businesses establish free pages on this site. Town-sponsored events, such as the summer concert series, can also be promoted there.
- EDC leaders responded to requests for information from prospective businesses and continues to try to work with businesses or property owners to market properties.
- EDC Chair Williams participated in the regional EDC meeting organized virtually by NECCOG
- The EDC advocated with the Board of Selectmen about promoting a pedestrian/bike link between West Ashford (greater Rte. 74/44 junction) and Warrenville, and a bike link on Rte. 89 as a way to cultivate recreational visitors and local residents. EDC also followed up with the Road Safety Audit for Rte. 74/44 with the Board of Selectmen to determine how Ashford can press State transportation authorities to recognize that the intersection needs to slow traffic and implement safety improvements in this business center for our community. Customers trading at businesses here should be able to access them safely and easily.
- The EDC’s tri-fold brochure was revised and reprinted for distribution to local businesses.

### **Plans/Programs/Initiatives for FY 2022-2023**

- Solidify membership on EDC that has the capacity to engage in meetings and carry through on projects. Make an effort to recruit business owners with long-term commitment to this community to consider serving.
- Ensure that the Town and EDC identifies active businesses in the community and create a system to initiate regular communication with business owners.
- Identify a few key, strategic initiatives that we can be achieved, and build on this work, such as: 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; work with the BOS to sell/develop the Moore property and bring it back on the tax rolls.

- Promote awareness of Ashford businesses to our community and optimize CTvisits.com Ashford page to local businesses and organizations.
- Work with the BOS and other Town organizations to develop a marketing plan for the Cadlerock property.
- Provide input to the Planning & Zoning Commission in preparation for the revision to the Plan of Conservation and Development
- Support the Town’s efforts to invest American Rescue Plan Act funding, including supporting businesses who were impacted by the pandemic.
- Continue to build awareness that Ashford is “open to business,” and support prospects who are considering Ashford.

**With Gratitude**

The Ashford Economic Development Commission wishes to acknowledge the years of service that Chair Richard Williams has given to this group, and our community. Richard has brought his deep experience in engineering and process to our deliberations and has invested unending hours of research in many projects for the Town. We will miss his vision and experience. Thank you, Dick.

We are also saddened by the passing of long-time member Gary Lawrence. Gary brought deep expertise in agriculture and real estate and devoted many hours with the Commission proactively pursuing potential businesses. He was also instrumental in launching and participating with the Ashford Business Association (ABA). Gary’s wry humor and pragmatic approach made him a true asset to our community and our commission.

**Babcock Library Board of Trustees**

**Director**

Carolann MacMaster

**Members**

Catherine Sampson, Chair	Pamm Summers, Treasurer	Ann Loizim, Secretary
Beth Fitzroy, Vice Chair	Ann Harper, Director	Sally DeMars
Jean McCarthy		

**Meeting Schedule**

The Babcock Library Board of Trustees meets monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 10:00am in the meeting room at the library.

**Mission**

To provide an open, welcoming, and accessible environment for all members of the Ashford community.

### **Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022**

- The number of patrons has dramatically increased with the lifting of the mask requirement.
- Having a working elevator has resulted in increasing patronage.
- Participation in adult and children's programs has grown significantly:
  - Over 150 children and families participated in the Halloween Trunk or Treat program. We thank the Ashford Fire Department for their assistance.
  - Story Time and the Summer reading program have been and are well attended.
  - Patrons also enjoyed and supported the Paws Cat Shelter program and The Quiet Corner Reads Project.
  - Patrons are expressing interest in resumption of programs offered regularly before the pandemic, such as Game Night, and are actively making suggestions for other types of programs that are of interest to all groups.
- The staff - Chonte' Fields, Diane Mayer, John Phillips, Chris Knorr and Stacey Frank - stepped up to provide excellent customer service and help with outreach to the community during the absence of the former director. The staff are now led by an experienced library professional, Director Ann Harper.
- The installation of the Mini Splits to the heating system has created a welcoming warm (or in summer cool) space to explore and use the various Library resources.

### **Plans/Programs/Initiatives for FY 2022-2023**

- Increased library promotion utilizing the library's social media presence, such as with Facebook.
- Utilization of the welcoming, natural outdoor space around the library building as an extension of the library and as an alternative area for library programs.
- Expansion and reconfiguration of the reading areas to provide ease of access to resources and enhanced comfort for all library users.
- Increasing partnership with the Ashford Elementary School, The Senior Center, and Senior Housing to allow these groups to access and enjoy the various Library resources.

## **Parks and Recreation Commission**

### **Director**

Sherry York

### **Commissioners**

Garth Bean  
Neil Gordon

Leslie Bizilj  
Dan Kehoe

Andrew Doering

We welcome Dave Roston and Amanda Holden as alternates and thank Sandi Moquin for her service.

## Meeting Schedule

We meet monthly on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:00pm.

## Office Hours

Monday and Wednesday 9:00am–12:00pm and Fridays 12:00-3:00pm. Programs, meetings 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 2021-2022

The past year saw a good comeback in Parks and Recreation program participation. Little by little, things began to open, and our publics comfort level increased, and people began to ease back into the activities through the summer and fall of 2021. By winter they were excited and eager to be involved again and our signups for youth basketball were some of our best. This continued through the spring with our gymnastics, swimming and preschool programs. Participation and program income returned to average. We recovered nicely from the inactivity of the pandemic and got back to business as usual in many regards. We:

- Returned to Camp Connri for our outdoor Halloween Party
- Held our Turkey Trot at Ashford Memorial Park in Nov.
- Decorated the Gazebo at Pompey Hollow Park
- Offered a successful outdoor summer Basketball Program with Willington. Took the momentum from that into the Winter season and sponsored 8 youth basketball teams in the Lakes League (Grades 3-8) and 5 High School teams (Grades 9-12), ran 2 sessions of Instructional Basketball for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2nd Graders
- **Pickleball Program:** Got approval and ARPA funding for our tennis court to be resurfaced. Hired contractors and eagerly anticipated the work to be done in Aug. of 2022. Interest in outdoor pickleball has been sustained through the pandemic. We average 4 to 8 players at most sessions with about 15 people that play regularly in Ashford. We also had over 40 different people check out our program this past year and introduced 9 new players to the game in our Spring Pickleball 101 Class.
- **Ran a Bus Trip in May to the Bronx Zoo (first trip for local Rec. Dept. in 2 ½ years)**
- **Offered Yoga, Swim Lessons, Swim Club, Bike Camp, Tiny Tumblers and Pint-Sized Picasso** and expanded our **Gymnastics** program to 2 days because of so much interest.

### **Plans/Programs/Initiatives for FY 2022-2023**

A major challenge and goal for this year will be to respond to our towns' need and request for an After School Program. This is a big undertaking as it will involve childcare for 15 hours a week for each week that Ashford School is in session. We will research other programs, policies, and protocols, and survey our community to assess the interest. We will establish a budget, collaborate with the school and the selectmen. The plan is for the program to be self-sufficient. APRC wants to develop a stronger, updated online presence and implement a program so that people can pay for our programs online. In 2023, one primary objective will be to reassess our programs, our customers, and our income and expenses to assure that we are meeting our mission and delivering services in a cost effective and efficient way. As always, we strive to develop community, through people, parks, and programs.

## **Municipal Agent for the Elderly**

### **Municipal Agent**

Kit Eves

The Office of the Municipal Agent for the Elderly serves as a resource center providing information and referrals to local services as Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP (Food Stamps), Social Security, protective services, legal services, housing, transportation, energy assistance, Alzheimer's disease, hospice, respite care/caregiver information and local senior and community groups. The agent also helps seniors fill out application forms for benefits eligibility.

Its mission is to empower older adults and their families to remain as independent and engaged as possible within their communities through advocacy, information, and services.

The Agent for the Elderly also puts on educational/wellness programs several times throughout the year and works in conjunction with The Commission on Aging and Senior Centers in Ashford and the surrounding areas.

This year my duties as agent for the elderly were extensive. I wrote my monthly column for The Citizen which included information on fall prevention, accessing food, legal services, and elder home care. I help many persons with applications for Medicare throughout the year but especially during open enrollment. The Area Agency on Aging recommends that all seniors review their health coverage yearly as things change and seniors may be able to access a better deal for their situation.

The Agent for the Elderly works in conjunction with several volunteers to provide transportation in Ashford and surrounding locations for residents 55 and older and/or disabled persons for medical appointments and shopping. I have been particularly busy this past year arranging rides as several seniors required rides every week and in one case every day for treatments. Thanks to all our volunteers who help drive and transported several individuals to various appointments.

We finally were able to provide the community with a health fair. Over 100 citizens came to meet with the twenty vendors to learn about available services and access information about resources available. This event was so successful that my office will be organizing this again in conjunction with the Commission on Aging.

## **Senior Center**

### **Director**

Kit Eves

### **Office Hours**

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

### **Purpose**

It is the responsibility of the senior center staff and volunteers to plan, organize, develop, implement, and evaluate programs that will enrich the quality of life for the elderly population of the community.

### **Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022**

It has been an eventful year. The number of participants is returning to the recorded numbers of 2019, and it is expected that they will be at that level soon. COVID has put a damper on many of the regular participants, but they are returning. However, there has been an influx of new faces at the Center since we fully reopened to the public. This is exciting news that other seniors are feeling comfortable in using the Center. This increase is mostly due to the Food Distribution program we offer every Wednesday. We had a congregate site in 2019 and fed 5 or 6 people at these meals three times a week. Since COVID we have frozen meals that participants can pick up and take home instead. The Center is serving 25 to 30 seniors a week now. This program is not based on income, only on age 60 or over.

There were many day trips in the van, and not just to the monthly casino or lunch bunch trips. We attended plays and musicals, we had shopping trips, and filled several requests for specific venues from seniors such as van trips to enjoy the Christmas lights and attending different ethnic festivals.

Our bi-weekly exercise programs include Tai Chi, and Walking Tape. A Hairdresser comes every six weeks as well as a footcare Dr. There was Spa Day and Game Day as well as a Holiday cookie swap. We made Valentines for our veterans. We offered events with entertainment such as a Picnic, Halloween costume party, Thanksgiving and Holiday Dinners. Our St Patrick's Day Dinner was a takeout event as COVID was still a concern. We sponsored a Shred It Day and an AARP Driving Class. There was a monthly craft project to bring out the creativity of our seniors. The Probate Judge came several times for outreach and to meet with seniors one to one. Our regular weekly programs include Mah Jong, Dime Bingo and Dominoes

There have been requests to have a birthday party each month to honor the seniors who are having a birthday. We will have cake and a little something for them to open. This will be a new offering this year to add to all the other wonderful variety of programs we offer at the Earl Smith Senior Center.

## **Housing Authority**

### **Members**

Dennis Poitras, Chair

Sandy Fletcher, Treasurer

Sandra Labrecque, Resident Commissioner

Vacant, Assistant Chair

Ann Philips, Assistant Treasurer

### **Staff**

Jessica Miller, Executive Director

Justin Duval, Adam Brassard, Maintenance Staff

Paulina Tuy-Umsted, 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 7:00 pm in the Community Room at 49 Tremko Lane. The AHA office is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9-12 pm.

### **Purpose & Responsibilities**

The mission of the Ashford Housing Authority is to enhance the Ashford community by creating and sustaining safe, decent, affordable housing that fosters stability and increases self-sufficiency for elderly and disabled individuals with low to 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.

Ashford Housing Authority operates and maintains Pompey Hollow Senior Housing. The apartment complex has thirty-two (32), one-bedroom apartments; all apartments are handicap accessible. There are currently no vacancies and AHA has a sufficient wait list.

Ashford Housing Authority receives funding through the Elderly Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) administered by the Department of Housing. In addition, AHA receives funding for the Resident Services Coordinator (RSC) program, also administered by the Department of Housing. The RSC works five hours per week.

### **Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022**

- Approved a five-year Strategic Plan
- Completed installation of 124 windows

- Received Small Cities Grant to repair the fire suppression water tank, replace hallway carpet and insulate ceiling in garage.

**Plans/Programs/Initiatives for FY 2022-2023**

- Implement rent stratification for new applicants
- Create a 501c3 affiliate, Ashford Housing Development Corporation, to create new funding opportunities
- Create 5-year maintenance plan

**Planning and Zoning Commission**

**Officers**

Jeffrey Silver-Smith, Chair                      Janet Bellamy, Vice Chair                      Alex Hastillo, Secretary

**Members**

Gerald Dufresne	Catherine Sampson	Jeffrey Schillinger
Mark Schnubel	Richard Williams	Nord Yakovleff
Luther Brauch (Alternate)	John Calarese (Alternate)	Douglas Jenne
Valerie Oliver, Recording Secretary		

**Ashford Land Use Office**

Michael D’Amato, Zoning Officer  
 Katrina Connolly, Land Use Office Administrative Assistant

**Meeting Schedule**

The Commission meets on the second Monday of each month.

**Land Use Office**

The Land Use Office, including Building, Zoning, Wetlands and Health, is located at the Town Hall and open during normal Town Hall hours. Applications, regulations, and resources can be found on the Town’s website under the Planning & Zoning department.

**Purpose & Responsibilities**

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 municipal 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 2021-2022**

- Development zoning regulations specific to the Lake area districts to allow for controlled and consistent zoning in areas that have different and unique requirements than that of the current Residential/Agricultural (RA) zone. These regulations also allow for Planning and Zoning Commission oversight without immediate referral to Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).
- On-going review of current zoning regulations for modernization and application to current needs. This includes an addition of regulations specific to short-term rentals in residential zones.
- Started review and development of a Plan of Affordable Housing for the town of Ashford as required by state statute 8-30j.
- Following adoption of Public Act 21-1, adopted regulations pertaining to Cannabis Establishments as required.

### **Plans/Programs/Initiatives for FY 2022-2023**

- 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.
- Review of Zoning Map to better reflect mix of zones and concentration of identified zoned areas.
- Continue review and implement appropriate Plan of Affordable Housing as stipulated by State of Connecticut statutes.
- Adoption of revised/updated Regulations pertaining to Accessory Dwelling Units in conjunction with Public Act 21-29.

## **Youth & Social Services**

### **Director**

Melissa McDonough

### **Purpose & 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 2021-2022**

- Approximately 200 households applied for heating assistance
- 30 households applied for Renters Rebate
- 23 applied for SNAP benefits
- 24 applied for HUSKY Health
- 10 seniors meet regarding insurance needs during open enrollment
- \$369.71 was saved through the Town Prescription Card program bringing our total since program inception to \$ 24,417.68.

- 9 children received diapers monthly through the CT ISHP-Diaper Bank of NECT
- 30 children received back to school supplies including a \$30 Target gift card.
- Over 100 families receive food from the food pantry hosted by Living Proof Church
- 35 families received holiday assistance
- Coordinated the WINGS program at Ashford School
- Hosted Kids Night Out for Junior high students- an afterschool field trip
- Youth Services co-sponsored Family Day, and The Great Pumpkin Halloween Party with Ashford Parks & Rec.
- Provided weekly mindfulness and yoga lessons for all students in grades Pre-k to grade 2 at Ashford School
- Establish a regional Juvenile Review Board with E.O. Smith High School and the Youth Service Bureaus of Willington & Mansfield. Have diverted 3 Ashford high schoolers from the court system.
- Assisted families facing financial crisis due to COVID-19 with rent, utility and food support totaling \$16,287.98
- Provided weekly vouchers to Ashford Farmers market to low-income families affected by the pandemic.
- As well as many other case-specific assistance given to town residents throughout the year, ranging from assisting with families whose children were removed by DCF, working with several homeless families to relocate and assisting families find home support for aging seniors.

#### **Plans/Programs/Initiatives for FY 2022-2023**

- Request that salary is raised to match that of all other department heads at the Town office building as the work that is done in this office is just as important as other departments
- Continue to provide services that have been offered in the past
- Continue taking cases for Regional Juvenile Review Board
- Re-evaluate summer programming
- Continue to create new youth services activities

## **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 & Responsibilities**

The Sexton is on call to respond to families, clergy, funeral homes, and other parties interested in cemeteries maintained by the Town of Ashford.

**Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022**

- Gravestones were repaired, cleaned, and reset in South Cemetery on Pumpkin Hill Road. This work was done by Beyond the Gravestone, a company located in Mansfield, Connecticut. Work in this cemetery started on the north end where the oldest gravestones are located. Work will continue to the south until the remaining stones are addressed. As costs have risen it is necessary to request additional funds for repairs in order to continue the pace of making repairs.
- Woodward Cemetery, located on Route 44, one mile east of the intersection with Route 89, abuts what was once the Hungarian Reformed Church. The public has expressed an interest in planting a tree and/or shrub buffer along the property line to create a visual screen. It is proposed to use “Green Giant” arborvitae as these trees have a dense growth habit and are less likely to suffer damage from browsing deer. In FY 2023-2024, as well as following years, gravestones will be repaired and reset in Ashford’s historic cemeteries.

**Department of Public Works**

**Supervisor**

Joseph Kalinowski

**Staff**

Nick Bacon

Robert Swanek

Jordan Lamarre

David Thibault

Casey McCue

**Meeting Schedule**

Safety meetings 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month

**Purpose & Responsibilities**

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 2021-2022**

- Road Resurfacing and Storm Drainage Improvement
  - Westford Hill Road 2.65 miles
- Repair and Grade
  - All dirt roads
- Winter snow/ice removal
  - There were 21 Snow/ice events
- Brush and Tree removal
  - Ongoing

- Thunderstorm #1, northern part of town
  - Washed out two pipes on Supina Road
  - Washed out edges of many roads
  - Unexpected expense
- Thunderstorm #2, southern part of town
  - Severe washouts along road edges on several paved and dirt roads
  - All dirt roads needed regrading
  - Large culvert washed out on Cushman Road
  - Large pipe washed out on Karosi Road
  - This again was an unexpected expense and took weeks to complete repairs

**Plans for FY 2022-2023**

- Rebuild Southworth Drive
- Storm drain rebuild and chipseal of Chatey Road

**Fire Marshal**

Charles M. Sweetland, Fire Marshal

**Purpose & Responsibilities**

The duties of the Fire Marshal are to investigate any fire within his jurisdiction which destroys or damages property and to report such fires to the State Fire Marshal. He inspects all buildings and facilities of public service and all occupancies regulated by the fire Safety Code. All new building construction plans must be reviewed for compliance to State codes. The Fire Marshal oversees all underground storage facilities and dispensing equipment for gasoline, fuel oil, etc.

The enforcement of regulations pertaining to propane tanks and related equipment falls within the jurisdiction of the Fire Marshal. The establishment of fire lanes, issuance of blasting and fireworks permits, safety inspections related to large gatherings (fairs, circuses, concerts, etc.) are also the responsibility of the Fire Marshal.

In compliance with State mandates, the Fire Marshal must maintain up-to-date records of any hazardous materials involved in manufacturing that may be stored within the Town. The Fire Marshal must successfully complete a course given by the State Fire Marshal’s Office. He is appointed by the Board of Selectmen and sworn in by the Town Clerk. Ninety hours of training are required during each appointment period to maintain certification as a Fire Marshal.

**Incidents for FY 2021-2022**

- 4 structure fires
- 2 motor vehicle fires
- 23 false alarms/detector malfunctions

### **Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022**

- Upgrade to new reporting software in conjunction with Ashford Volunteer Fire Department
- Improve inspection and data tracking utilizing new software is in progress
- Improve fire prevention programs

## **Ashford Volunteer Fire Department**

### **Corporate Officers**

Charles Sweetland, President  
Paul Varga, Vice President  
Shannon Mercier, Secretary  
Wayne Fletcher, Treasurer  
Brian Damble, Member-At-Large

### **Command Officers**

Thomas Borgman, Chief  
David Thibault, Deputy Chief  
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

### **Purpose & Responsibilities**

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 2021-2022**

- Responded to 224 fire/rescue calls in Ashford, Mansfield, Eastford, Union, Chaplin and Woodstock
- Responded to 334 Emergency Medical Calls in the same communities
- Maintained a response time average of under 11 minutes
- Conducted over 300 person-hours of training and recertification
- Secured and transported Federally supplied PPE and COVID-19-related equipment
- Continued deployment of fire preplans and mapping on digital tablets in apparatus
- Maintained a fleet of six vehicles and two stations
- Placed new ET-220 in service
- Replaced/Upgraded HVAC systems at Station 20, using COVID-19 federal funding
- Modified paid staff schedule to provide 18/day coverage

### **Plans/Programs/Initiatives for FY 2022-2023**

- Purchase and place in service new Fire/EMS Service Truck, to replace 1984 model year vehicle

- Continue to modernize and integrate data systems for better performance
- Modify and/or increase paid staffing levels to stabilize personnel availability
- Begin planning phase for replacement of Ambulance 520 and Engine Tank 420

## **Animal Control**

### **Municipal Animal Control Officer**

Denis Day

### **Assistant Municipal Animal Control Officer**

Christine Abikoff

### **Purpose & Responsibilities**

Animal Control personnel are responsible for enforcing the laws and regulation of the State of 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.

The Ashford Animal Control Facebook page allows us to get out descriptions and photos of impounded or lost dogs and cats. This social media outlet has proved to make reuniting a pet with 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

### **Purpose & Responsibilities**

The Ashford IT Department is responsible for the Town Office building, Babcock Library/Knowlton Memorial Hall, Senior Center, and Public Works 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, Webmaster email responses, and Ashford social media sites.

Virtual Meeting hosts are scheduled by this department. We add virtual meeting information to agendas and post agendas and minutes to the website. All changes to the calendar are completed in real time, allowing for orderly execution of emergency and special meetings.

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.

**Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022**

- New server installed
- Upgraded email security to include stronger email protection and ability to send “secure” messages in outgoing email
- Upgraded website security to include ability to block traffic from specific countries and/or IP addresses
- Upgraded internet service and wireless availability at Public Works and Senior Center
- Acquired and set up equipment necessary to conduct hybrid meetings

**Board of Education and Superintendent’s Annual Report**

**Interim Superintendent**

Cynthia Ford

**Board of Education**

The Ashford Board of Education has seven elected members. The members seated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022 are:

Jane M. Urban, Chair	Marian K. Matthews, Vice-Chair	Kim Kouatly, Secretary
Tess Grous	Jon Laughlin	Jennifer Leszczynski
Alfred Maccarone, Jr.		

**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.

**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. Additionally, several initiatives have been implemented to ensure an optimal learning experience for our students. The focus for the school year was response and recovery and returning to in-person learning. 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.

### **Accomplishments during FY 2021-2022**

- We have presented the following initiatives to our staff over the past few years, and devoted this year to integrating their impact, and refining their use in the classroom. These initiatives are:
  - Response and Recovery to the COVID-19 Pandemic. We returned to full in-person learning with no option to receive instruction through distance learning. Staff focused on the social emotional wellbeing of the students.
  - The administration team created mitigating strategies to ensure we were keeping the school open and the students safe while learning.
  - Interventions and classroom instruction was adjusted to meet the needs of the students post distance learning.
  - The mental health team met on a weekly basis to review students at risk and to discuss different interventions that were working or may need to be changed.
  - Implemented the DESSA (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment) which is an evidence based SEL assessment to identify students at risk.
  - Social Emotional Learning Curriculum and focus to assist in working with students.
  - 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 discipline and consequences
  - Chosen to be a HOT school- Higher Order Thinking is promoted through teaching content through many different perspectives using art. Students connect multiple subjects through authentic projects while developing their knowledge, skills, habits of mind in order to satisfy their curiosity about the world.
  - Outdoor learning areas were utilized throughout the year.
- As a student-centered school, the school schedule was revised to accommodate more choices and electives for students and all teachers focused on the updated Social Emotional Learning curriculum.
- Ashford School has been the implementation to a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) based curriculum/instruction model. This means that 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 that we present integrated, multi-disciplinary lessons that are



reflective of the need for the citizens and problem-solvers of the future to think holistically. This approach provides that our graduates have the capacity to fully and naturally integrate science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics into their problem-solving and daily thinking.

- In addition to our STEAM based curriculum, we have introduced Project-Based Learning as a key instructional technique. This integrates real-life applications to subject content and allows students increases opportunities to be creative and utilize hands-on activities.
- Robotics and the After-School Program. These special programs separate Ashford School from many others in the region. Our students enjoy a full menu of programs that enrich and expand upon their educational experience.
- Offered after school opportunities for learning loss along with Saturday school for those students needing additional assistance.
- In response to the pandemic COVID-19 we have enhanced our Student Intervention Team (SIT) to assist teachers with instruction in the classrooms where there are students not only online but in-person. A data suite was added for teachers to be able to track and maintain student performance with ease.
- A math interventionist was added to the supports for grades 5-8.
- An early intervention special education teacher was added to assist with the students needing additional supports along with a Speech Pathologist added hours to support language development and social skills.
- German students stayed with host families and learned about American language, traditions, and foods, and attended classes. We are comparing curriculum and instruction and adjusting practicing to improve both our schools. We were unable to go to Germany in the fall by they came here in the spring.
- Participated in the TCLP (Teachers of Critical Languages Program) which facilitated a teacher from Egypt to teacher Arabic in our school for the year.
- Our Social Emotional Curriculum is a focus to make it a priority to make connections with those students.
- We have implemented major crisis intervention training through the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). All certified and non-certified staff received training in crisis prevention and de-escalation techniques. This training has already made a noticeable impact, 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.
- Home-School communications increased through expanded use of K-12 Alerts electronic communications, more flyers were sent home, and more articles appeared in the local news media. The Board of Education does a hybrid model for all meetings to support more public input and community involvement. They utilize ZOOM. The Board has had more public participation, and it welcomes and appreciates hearing from members of the community. This change in the level of communication has had the desired impact and there has been a noticeable increase in public involvement in planning and school activities.

- We have made many changes to the operation of and to the facility itself to support a safer and more secure environment for our school community.
- Implemented a new phonics-based instructional program in grades K-3 as an additional resource for teachers.

### **Plans/Programs/Initiatives for FY 2022-2023**

- Focus on implementing our new math program in grades K-8. This is in the hopes to assist with improving our math state standard scores.
- Teachers in grades 4-8 are piloting a couple different reading programs.
- 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. As a school we recognize that due to COVID-19 there are gaps in instruction for many of our students. It is a focus for all staff to meet our students where they are and support them.
- Remain dedicated to our students' emotional well-being in ensuring teachers have all the right tools to assist students in returning to in-person instruction.
- Develop and implement a behavior matrix for grades prek-8 to assist with consistent behavior expectations throughout our school community.
- Attract, support, and retain motivated, qualified faculty and staff through top quality curriculum and inclusive administrative leadership.
- Sustain the districts drive to improve student safety and security through improvement to the facility and staff training.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Board of Education.
- Continue to monitor student progress to ensure growth by adding data team time to faculty schedules.
- Address student performance on standardized testing through teacher training and instructional improvements targeting areas of deficiency
- Expand utilization of student data to guide individualized and differentiated instruction
- Continue to update school wide curriculum to fully implement our STEAM initiative (a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics based curriculum)
- Review, evaluate, and improve our school schedule to better serve our students
- Build time into the school schedule for faculty to analyze student performance data to better inform instruction
- Continue our professional development program to prepare all staff to better serve our students both academically and in safety and security protocols
- Participating in a collaboration with the District 19 sending schools to enhance and better prepare for their high school experiences.
- Continue facility, safety and security improvements
- Improved communications with the community by publishing articles the Ashford Citizen and in the media.
- Continue to monitor and keep the school and district website up to date
- Increase opportunities for public involvement in planning and decision making through our annual Board of Education retreat
- Study and develop effective strategies for responding to declining enrollment
- Continue to refine a fiscally responsible budgeting process

## District and School Staff

<b><i>Administration</i></b>			
Craig Creller	Sarah El-Gammal	Marcia LoRocco	Amy Vasington
Cynthia Ford	Marianne Eddy	Samantha Makuch	Scott Waddell
Troy C. Hopkins	Eileen Elidridge	Christine Marinelli	Allison Welz
Polly Borysevicz	Jeffrey Ference	Tiffany Marrara	Sara Wilson
Deana Chrzan	Michele Fesenmeyer	Melissa McDonough	Jennifer Wood
<b><i>Faculty and Staff</i></b>			
Karin Anderson	Lynn Fontaine	Michael Mellady	Michael Young
Deborah Atkinson	Nancy Freeman	Kaitlyn Bryant	Jennifer Zotti
Deborah Atkinson	Beth Galvin	Elizabeth Messenger	
Jessica Bernardi	Andrea Garrison	Beata Metsack	
Bailey Blanshard	Kellie Gauvin	Kathleen Metsack	
Mychelle Bora	Megan Gendron	Donna Molnar	
Danielle Brodoff	Eileen Geriak	Colleen Mortenson	
Gina Burnham	Lori Goodale	Lynn Nicholls	
Christopher Busse	Jason Horn	Joel Ocasio	
Stephen Caldwell	Gail Ignatowicz	Bonnie Ognan	
Tracey Campbell	Carly Imhoff	Miguel Parrilla	
Jillian Cannon	Lina Janosi	Jacqueline Renaud	
Josh Carpentier	Kim Johnston	Virginia Reviczky	
Amy Capozziello	Karen Jung	Julia Rhubin	
Joan Celotti	Pamela King	Briana Ross	
Jack Champagne	Catherine Klessner	Karen Samperi	
Darcy Compton	Samantha Knight	Suzanne Schillinger	
Maureen Connolly	Kelly Knotts	Martha Sibley-Jett	
Mandi Courtois	Christine Knowlton	Christina Siggins	
Debra Courtright	Josie Lamarre	Stacie Simko	
Luke Croxton	Hillary Lemos	Wayne Squier	
Thomas Dell	Jennifer Lindsay	Alissa Tatro	
Shawn Dimmock	Jadey Longo	Jennifer Truax	
Sara Dingler	Virginia Lusa	Jennifer Turner	
Patricia Donahue	Jacob Lyman	Elissa Turcotte	
	Seth Lyman	Ashley Tullock	
	Kristina Lyons	Sean Vanzant	

## Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Finance  
Town of Ashford, Connecticut

### Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

#### *Opinions*

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, 2022, 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.

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, 2022, 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.

#### *Basis for Opinions*

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. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Town of Ashford, CT and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

#### *Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; and for 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.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Town of Ashford, CT's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

#### *Auditor's Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Statements*

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an

auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgement made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- Exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit 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 Town of Ashford's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgement, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, which raise substantial doubt about the Town of Ashford, CT's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

#### *Required Supplementary Information*

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis, budgetary comparison information, and the pension and OPEB schedules on pages 4-10, 44-54, and 55-57 be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, 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

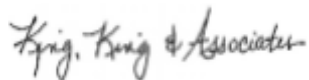
opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

*Supplementary 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 accompanying combining and individual nonmajor fund financial statements, and other supplemental schedules are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. The 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 nonmajor fund financial statements, and other 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 October 22, 2022, on our consideration of the Town of Ashford, CT's internal control over financial reporting and on our test of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely 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 the effectiveness of the Town of Ashford, CT's 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.



King, King & Associates, P.C., CPAs  
Winsted, CT  
October 22, 2022

# TOWN OF ASHFORD, CONNECTICUT

## Management's Discussion & Analysis

June 30, 2022

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, 2022.

### 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 \$18,368,334 (*net position*). Of this amount, \$2,803,252 (*unrestricted net position*) may be used to meet the Town's ongoing obligations to citizens and creditors.
- The Town's total net position increased by \$764,727.
- As of the close of the current fiscal year, the Town of Ashford, CT's governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of \$4,707,641, an increase of \$125,610 in comparison with the prior year. Of this amount, \$2,064,038 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 \$2,071,758 or 14.3 percent of total General Fund budgeted 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.

The government-wide financial statements can be found on pages 11-12 of the report.

**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, Small Cities Grant Program Fund, and the ARPA Grant 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.

The basic governmental fund financial statements can be found on pages 13-16 of the report.

**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.

The basic fiduciary fund financial statements can be found on pages 17-18 of the report.

**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. The notes to the financial statements can be found on pages 19-43 of the report.

**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 \$18,368,334 at the close of the most recent fiscal year.

	<u>2022</u>	<u>Restated 2021</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Current and Other Assets	\$ 6,582,827	\$ 6,836,716	\$ (253,889)
Capital Assets	<u>15,109,545</u>	<u>14,234,318</u>	<u>875,227</u>
Total Assets	\$ 21,692,372	21,071,034	621,338
Deferred Outflows of Resources	12,617	13,888	(1,271)
Other Liabilities	1,247,242	1,609,105	(361,863)
Long-Term Liabilities	<u>2,089,413</u>	<u>1,872,210</u>	<u>217,203</u>
Total Liabilities	3,336,655	3,481,315	(144,660)
Deferred Inflows of Resources			
Net Position:			
Net Investment in Capital Assets	14,035,532	13,321,440	714,092
Restricted	1,529,550	1,554,377	(24,827)
Unrestricted	<u>2,803,252</u>	<u>2,727,790</u>	<u>75,462</u>
Total Net Position	\$ 18,368,334	\$ 17,603,607	\$ 764,727

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 increased by \$714,092 primarily due to current year capital additions being greater than current year depreciation by \$887,227, less the current year issuance of equipment financing notes and leases payable of \$486,548, plus the paydown of related debt in the amount of \$319,021, along with the amortization of the deferred charges on refunding and amortization of the bond premium.

The Town's restricted net position of \$1,529,550 decreased by \$24,827 compared to last years restricted net position of \$1,554,377.

The Town's unrestricted net position of \$2,803,252 increased by \$75,462 compared to last years unrestricted net position of \$2,727,790.

**Statement of Changes in Net Position**

<b>REVENUES</b>	<u>2022</u>	Restated <u>2021</u>	<u>Variance</u>
<i>Program:</i>			
Charges for services	\$ 613,184	\$ 479,863	\$ 133,321
Operating grants and contributions	5,562,313	6,722,419	(1,160,106)
Capital grants and contributions	66,785	11,323	55,462
<i>General:</i>			
Property taxes	12,047,493	11,441,958	605,535
Grants and contributions, not restricted to specific programs	122,122	80,096	42,026
Unrestricted investment earnings	17,318	10,259	7,059
Total Revenues	18,429,215	18,745,918	(316,703)
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<i>Governmental Activities:</i>			
General Government	1,472,936	1,186,017	286,919
Public Safety	446,829	445,231	1,598
Public Works	1,546,822	1,540,953	5,869
Health and Welfare	146,696	142,031	4,665
Planning and Development	225,610	258,695	(33,085)
Education	13,456,899	14,901,013	(1,444,114)
Library	176,646	199,255	(22,609)
Recreation	168,522	141,979	26,543
Interest on long-term debt	23,528	23,210	318
Total Expenses	17,664,488	18,838,384	(1,173,896)
Change in Net Position	764,727	(92,466)	\$ 857,193
Beginning Net Position, Restated	17,603,607	17,683,685	
Ending Net Position	\$ 18,368,334	\$ 17,591,219	

**Governmental activities:** Governmental activities increased the Town of Ashford, CT's net position by \$764,727.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of the revenues of the Town were derived from property taxes, followed by thirty-one percent (31%) 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.

Seventy-six percent (76%) of the expenses of the Town were related to education, followed by eight percent (8%) related to general government, nine percent (9%) related to public works and seven percent (7%) related to the remainder of the government's expenses.

There was a decrease in both the operating grants and contributions revenues and the education expenses due to a decrease in the on-behalf pension and OPES benefits recognized by the Town in connection with its participation in the State Teachers Retirement System.

### **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 \$4,707,641, an increase of \$125,610 in comparison with the prior year. Forty-four percent (44%) 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 \$2,071,758. 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 13.6 percent of total General Fund budget basis expenditures and transfers out.

The fund balance of the Town of Ashford, CT's General Fund increased by \$210,014 during the current fiscal year. Key factors of this increase are as follows:

- Tax collections, grants, and charges for services coming in higher than anticipated.
- Expenditures coming in less than budgeted, mainly in Education.

**Capital Nonrecurring Fund:** The fund balance of the Capital Nonrecurring Fund decreased by \$131,794 during the current fiscal year. This decrease is primarily related to an authorized transfer from unassigned fund balance of the General Fund in the amount of \$204,468 to fund future capital projects and purchases along with a transfer from the Board of Education Nonlapsing Fund of \$62,000. These transfers were offset by current year capital outlays and related debt service payments. There were also grants used to help offset the costs of road repairs and maintenance and the Pompey Hollow Park project.

**Small Cities Grant Program Fund:** The fund balance of the Small Cities Grant Program Fund decreased by \$44,252 during the current fiscal year.

**ARPA Grant Fund:** There was no change in the fund balance of the ARPA Grant Fund as the money is held as an asset and unearned revenue until it is used for qualified expenditures. During the year qualified expenditures totaled \$135,682 and a corresponding amount was recognized as revenue.

**General Fund Budgetary Highlights**

The final budget for the General Fund included an additional appropriation from fund balance in the amount of \$204,468 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 \$288,419. Budgetary revenues were \$412,278 greater than expected due primarily to higher than anticipated tax collections, state aid, and charges for services. Budgetary expenditures were \$80,609 less than expected, mainly due to savings in the Education line.

**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, 2022, amounts to \$15,109,545 (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 increase in the Town's investment in capital assets for the current fiscal year was \$875,227, which consisted of capital additions of \$1,409,676, offset by current year depreciation of \$522,449 and loss on disposal of \$12,000.

	<u>2022</u>	<u>Restated 2021</u>
Land and Land Development Rights	\$ 1,612,327	\$ 968,756
Buildings and Improvements	9,749,624	9,919,458
Machinery, Equipment and Vehicles	2,191,602	1,740,757
Infrastructure	1,499,878	1,572,041
Right of Use Equipment	<u>56,114</u>	<u>33,306</u>
Total	\$ 15,109,545	\$ 14,234,318

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

- Purchase of a new fire truck.
- Purchase of a new school bus.
- Purchase of a new excavator.
- Seizure of 10 parcels of land as payment for back taxes owed.

Additional information on the Town of Ashford, CT's capital assets can be found in Note 5 on page 29 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 \$2,089,413.

	<u>2022</u>	<u>Restated 2021</u>
G.O. Bonds	\$ 560,000	\$ 780,000

Unamortized Premium	77,644	85,307
Equipment Financing Notes	390,747	26,064
Leases Payable	58,239	35,395
Compensated Absences	54,911	50,467
OPEB Liability	<u>947,872</u>	<u>894,977</u>
Total	\$ 2,089,413	\$ 1,872,210

The Town of Ashford, CT's total long-term debt and other long-term liabilities increased by \$217,203 (11.6 percent) during the current fiscal year primarily due to the issuance of new equipment financing notes of \$454,325, less the current year paydown of the G.O. Bonds in the amount of \$220,000, the current year paydown of the equipment financing notes in the amount of \$89,642, and the increase in the OPEB liability in the amount of \$52,895. Additional information on the Town of Ashford, CT's long-term debt can be found in Note 6 on pages 30-32 of this report.

The Town currently maintains a bond rating of Aa3 by Moody's.

### **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.

All of these factors were considered in preparing the Town of Ashford, CT's budget for the 2023 fiscal year. The Town's fiscal year 2023 budget was approved by the Board of Finance on April 5, 2022, and adopted at Town referendum on May 3, 2022. The Town's fiscal year 2023 budgeted expenditures for the General Fund totaled \$15,681,681, an increase of \$644,813 or 4.29% over the fiscal year 2022 original approved budgeted expenditures.

The Town has not assigned any use of fund balance of the General Fund for spending in the 2023 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

<b>In an EMERGENCY .....</b>	<b>Dial 911</b>
Fire Department Routine Number.....	860-429-9862
State Police Troop C (Tolland) Routine Number.....	860-896-3200
Agent for the Elderly.....	860-487-5122
Animal Control Officer.....	860-933-2287
Assessor.....	860-487-4403
Babcock Library.....	860-487-4420
Building Department.....	860-487-4404
Eastern Highlands Health District.....	860-429-3325
Emergency Management Director .....	860-428-0870
Finance Office.....	860-487-4405
Fire Marshal .....	860-208-0113
Health Department .....	860-429-3325
Historian.....	860-487-4400
Homelessness Prevention Liaison.....	860-487-4417
Housing Authority.....	860-429-8556
Housing Rehabilitation.....	860-456-0782
Inland Wetlands & Watercourses.....	860-487-4414
Land Use Administrator .....	860-487-4415
Parks & Recreation Department.....	860-487-4409
Planning & Zoning Commission .....	860-487-4415
Probate Court.....	860-928-4844
Public Works Department.....	860-429-6812
Registrar of Voters .....	860-487-4410
Selectman's Office .....	860-487-4400
Senior Center Coordinator .....	860-487-5122
Sexton.....	860-487-4400
Social/Youth Services .....	860-487-4417
Tax Collector.....	860-487-4411
Town Clerk.....	860-487-4401
Transfer Station.....	860-429-3409
Tree Warden.....	860-429-8547
Wetlands Officer .....	860-376-6842
Zoning Enforcement Officer .....	860-487-4415
Ashford School Principal's Office.....	860-429-6419
Ashford School Superintendent's Office.....	860-429-1927
E.O. Smith High School.....	860-487-0877
Congressman Joe Courtney - 2nd District .....	202-225-2076
Senator Jeff Gordon - 35th District.....	800-842-1421
Representative Patrick Boyd - 50th District.....	800-842-8267

# Ashford Town Map

