

Ashford, Connecticut
ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday February 28, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Zoom Meeting only

1. Call to order: The Feb. 28, 2024 Special BOF Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by the Chairman, Ms. Christina Davis. Other members present were: Judith Austin, Keith Lipker, Tim Rhodes, Pamela Summers and Paul Varga.

Guests: Mr. Sean O’Grady, King, King & Associates, Sherri Soucy, Ashford Town Treasurer

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

3. Communications: Updated document section received by the Chairman from King, King & Assoc.

4. Public Comments: none

5. New Business:

a. Presentation of the July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 Town of Ashford audit by Sean O’Grady of King, King & Associates

Mr. O’Grady was welcomed. He put a list of the several audit reports on the screen: the main financial statements, 65 pages / The Federal Single Audit / The Connecticut Single Audit. He then proceeded to pull up onto the screen pages of special interest in his review. Some of his comments follow. The first report included a page for discussion and analysis. He noted that \$469,000 of the ARPA funds have been spent (page 15). \$653,987 of ARPA funds remain as unearned revenue (page 13). A chart showed a three-year General Fund Balance trend, a positive. The annual payment on debt (p.30-32) is about \$43,000. The portion of the teacher’s pension liabilities for the town totals \$14,002,451 (page 34). Town is currently responsible for none of this. The on-behalf amount of pension contributions that was contributed by the State for Ashford was \$1,103,995. The Portion of Teachers OPEB Liability associated with the Town is \$1,226,743 (page 40). The town is currently responsible for none. The on-behalf amount of OPEB contributions that was contributed by the State for Ashford was \$16,615.

The tax collection report, p.64, noted outstanding receivables of \$627,550 or 5.3% (between the accepted range of 2-6%).

Several questions were asked about the first report. It was explained that the state grant requested and authorized for land remediation were denied; that project therefore has been removed from the Capital Projects list. The school oil tank was not paid during FY 22-23; but it came in under budget. Ms. Davis was concerned that the unexpended funds as 16% of total expenditures was a normal percentage; she had noted other towns where it was 25-30%. Mr. O’Grady replied that communities are encouraged to have two months of revenue in surplus, so our percentage was fine.

The Federal Single Audit report was put on the screen. Here all federal funds are noted. Ashford received \$1.2 million dollars in federal grants. In the findings section all items indicated Ashford handled these grants appropriately

The Connecticut Single Audit report similarly reported state funding of \$4.8 million for Ashford. The findings section here noted that STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) grants require quarterly reporting. Ashford’s report was only submitted at the end of the project. The Treasurer noted why this happened, and approved the statement in the Management’s Response, recognizing what would be done in the future if there were another STEAP grant. In answer to Mr. Lipker there was no penalty for this action.

A last section titled “Management Letter Recommendations” simply encouraged monthly reconciliation of financial figures between the General Government Budget that that of the Board of Education. It is easier to resolve issues if caught closer to the time they occur.

Ms. Davis expressed her wish that the audit draft could be made available in December rather than in late February. She asked how could Ashford help to improve this situation? It was explained that new staff at King, King & Assoc. has difficulty in scheduling that contributed to the situation. He did note however, that only 57% of Connecticut

towns have completed their audits, so Ashford is in the top 50% of towns that are done. Mr. O'Grady was thanked for his presentation.

New Business;

b. Discussion and possible action to accept the audit report

Ms. Austin moved and Mr. Varga seconded a motion to accept the July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 Town of Ashford audit presented by Mr. Sean O'Grady of King, King & Associates. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. O'Grady was again thanked for his presentation. The draft will become the final audit report and will be sent electronically to the state's OPM (Office of Policy & Management) by King, King & Assoc. Bound copies will be provided by the auditing firm to Ms. Davis via the Town Hall; she will then notify members.

6. Adjournment:

Ms. Austin moved and Mr. Rhodes seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously at 7:43 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by,
Valerie B. Oliver, Recording Secretary
2/28/2024*