

TOWN OF ASHFORD
PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING/SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2023, 7:00 P.M.
ASHFORD TOWN OFFICES, LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM
5 TOWN HALL ROAD, ASHFORD, CT 06278

MINUTES

Non-Voters Present: Sherri Mutch (Town Clerk), John Gustowski (IT), Jessica Miller (Ashford Housing Authority).

Present & Qualified to Vote: William Falletti (First Selectman), Cathryn Silver-Smith (Selectman), Roger Phillips (Selectman), Christine Abikoff (Selectmen's Admin. Asst.), and eight other residents. One resident was also present virtually. The Town Clerk verified voters with the voter registration list.

Hearing

Call to Order: The hearing was called to order at 7:02pm by W. Falletti.

The legal notice was read by W. Falletti.

An overview was given by W. Falletti of the agenda items:

1. To receive information on proposed expenditures utilizing American Rescue Plan Funds totaling \$188,370 as follows:
 - a) Installation of split-units at the Ashford Senior Center in an amount not to exceed \$70,000
There were 2 bids received and now on file (Stafford and Nutmeg). The current heating and AC systems at the Senior Center are not able to keep up and they are looking to replace them with a split-unit.
 - b) Lost pay, including benefits, in an amount not to exceed \$12,370
A department head's salary was cut as a result of COVID and due to a decline in function of that department. Litigation was potential, so this is a settlement with that employee.
 - c) KMH – ADA access – front doors in an amount not to exceed \$20,000
The ADA doors are outdated. Only one door opens now and both need to open.
 - d) KMH – roof gutters - \$10,000
The gutters are failing and this could be a liability issue. They hope to fix them by winter.
 - e) Ashford Housing Authority – “to preserve and create new affordable housing opportunities and raise funds to support programs that will enhance the lives of Ashford residents” in the amount of \$21,000

J. Miller spoke to this item: The Ashford Housing Authority and the Development Corporation are asking for this additional funding to kick off non-profit fundraising, market their program, reach donors, and hold their first annual fundraising kick-off event. The Development Corporation just obtained 501(c)(3) status, and they hope to be in full fundraising mode by next fall. Their target audience is seniors and the disabled. Their plan is to expand services already available in town, transportation is an example. There was discussion about the difference between the terms “low-income” and “affordable” housing.

f) AVFD – automatic defibrillators - 6 units and supplies = 15,000

P. Varga spoke as the AVFD fire chief. They are asking for these because the current auto defibrillators are at end of life and need to be replaced.

g) AVFD – PPE – bunker gear (8 sets) @ \$5,000 = \$40,000

There is a 10-year life span on interior gear and they need to make a substantial purchase all at once. The old gear can be used in certain outdoor situations for a little while longer. C. Silver-Smith spoke re: importance of this life-saving equipment to us all and wants the public to understand its importance at budget time. She asked that the AVFD not cut it from their budget in the future, or they can ask for it as a capital improvement. V. Lamonica spoke on behalf of his mother who is an emergency room nurse and a resident. She would have urged for support of the auto defibrillators as being vital equipment. He stated that in his opinion, “These are two rational requests.”

2. To receive information on proposed revision to Ashford Ordinance “Tax Abatement for Dairy Farms and Orchards, Including Vineyards,” adopted at Town Meeting on April 26, 2006.

This request initiated with our previous assessor, and has been continued by our current assessor. This change brings our ordinance in line with the application so that both documents are consistent. C. Silver-Smith stated that she hoped that the BOS could collaborate in the future with the Agriculture Commission about any changes in town agricultural policies.

The Hearing was declared over at 7:26pm by W. Falletti.

Meeting

The Special Meeting was called to order at 7:26pm by W. Falletti.

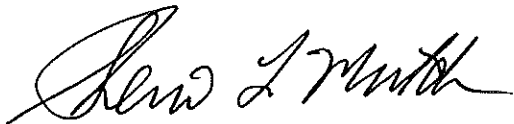
Paul Varga made a motion that W. Falletti act as moderator. Motion seconded by Dennis Poitras and passed unanimously.

- a) D. Poitras made a motion to approve the expenditure of ARPA funds for the Installation of split-units at the Ashford Senior Center in an amount not to exceed \$70,000. The motion was seconded by C. Silver-Smith and passed unanimously.

- b) C. Silver-Smith made a motion to approve the expenditure of ARPA funds for Lost pay, including benefits, in an amount not to exceed \$12,370. The motion was seconded by R. Phillips and passed unanimously.
- c) P. Varga made a motion to approve the expenditure of ARPA funds for KMH – ADA access – front doors in an amount not to exceed \$20,000. The motion was seconded by Luther Brauch and passed unanimously.
- d) D. Poitras made a motion to approve the expenditure of ARPA funds for the KMH – roof gutters - in an amount not to exceed \$10,000. The motion was seconded by P. Varga and passed unanimously.
- e) D. Poitras made a motion to approve the expenditure of ARPA funds for the Ashford Housing Authority – “to preserve and create new affordable housing opportunities and raise funds to support programs that will enhance the lives of Ashford residents” in the amount of \$21,000. The motion was seconded by Frances Horila and passed unanimously.
- f) D. Poitras made a motion to approve the expenditure of ARPA funds for the AVFD – automatic defibrillators - 6 units and supplies = 15,000. The motion was seconded by Vinny Lamonica and passed unanimously.
- g) D. Poitras made a motion to approve the expenditure of ARPA funds for the AVFD – PPE – bunker gear (8 sets) @ \$5,000 = \$40,000. The motion was seconded by P. Varga and passed unanimously.

P. Varga moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:32pm. The motion was seconded by D. Poitras and passed unanimously.

Minutes submitted by:



Sherri L. Mutch
Ashford Town Clerk