

**ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday May 26, 2022 / Held Virtually via Zoom / Ashford, Connecticut
7:00 P.M.**

Present

Judith Austin, Chairman, Paul Varga, Clerk, Garth Bean, Christina Davis, Angela DeSanto, John Kopec, William Falletti, First Selectman, Ex-Officio Member

Guests

Chery; Baker, Treasurer / Linda Gagne, Tax Collector

1. Call to Order

Ms. Austin called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call and Seating of Alternates

A roll call was carried out. Ms. Davis was seated for Mr. Burnham.

3. Communications

Ms. Austin noted the earlier letter from the Ashford Conservation Commission, reported at the March 3, 2022 BOF meeting, requesting that monies in lieu of taxes received from Yale Univ. School of the Environment (\$8000) be transferred to the Open Space Land Acquisition Fund. Further background and explanation were supplied by Ms. Baker. Currently we have received the \$8000, and it is in the General Fund. Their payment to the town used to be a tax but now is still paid by Yale, but as a donation to the town. Yale's land holdings in Ashford are no longer taxable. This discussion is listed as agenda 7b and should be discussed there per Mr. Varga.

4. Public Comments – none

5. Approve Minutes of Meeting Thursday May 12, 2022

MS. DESANTO MOVED AND MR. KOPEC SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE BOF REGULAR MEETING MAY 12, 2022. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. New Business

a. Selectman's Update

Mr. Falletti spoke of the upcoming loss to the town of Treasurer, Cheryl Baker who has served so well for over 25 years. She will be retiring effective June 1st. He thanked her for her dedicated service and acknowledged appreciation for her highly valued expertise.

[It was noted that there was no recording of the meeting. The recording began and the motion and the Selectman's Update were repeated for the recording.]

He noted the Memorial Day Service, Monday May 30th at 11:00 a.m. at the town Veteran's Memorial and hopes many will attend. The Ashford Chorale and Babcock Band will perform. A parade and several town department open houses are being planned for the July 4th celebration to be held on July 3d.

New speed limit signs are being posted on several Ashford roads, with more roads to be covered in the future. He thanked Ms. Gagne for her work in collecting taxes, a 98.75% tax collection success rate.

b. Summary of current year Expenditures by First Selectman

Mr. Falletti noted that as of this time last year \$80,000 of funding had not been expended. This year the amount is about \$70,000. The Highway Dept. is over budget due to floods and the loss of the bridge on Cushman Rd.

Ms. Davis asked if more state funds would be coming? Mr. Falletti answered, no.

c. Presentation by Ashford Tax Collector re: account suspension

Ms. Gagne had supplied all members with her report "Tax Collector's Accounts to be transferred to Suspense" dated May 26, 2022. On the initial page she suggested the motion she wished passed as well

as a summary of the individual accounts included in her full report. The motion is needed in order for her to conclude the “suspension” business and clear her records. She explained the documentation and noted that the accounts are “suspended” not abated (as taxes still might be received).

MS. AUSTIN MOVED AND MS. DAVIS SECONDED A MOTION TO TRANSFER TO THE SUSPENSE ACCOUNT THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS, WHICH ARE DEEMED TO BE UNCOLLECTABLE PER CGS SECTION 12-165, AS OF MAY 26, 2022.

**20 PARCELS, CONTAMINATED UNDER EPA & DEEP LIENS, TOTALING \$32,858.94
(ACQUIRED BY THE TOWN OF ASHFORD THRU TAX SALE)
1 PERSONAL PROPERTY ACCOUNT WHERE OWNER OF RECORD IS DECEASED
\$30.10
54 MV ACCOUNTS-OWNERS OF RECORD ARE DECEASED & NO KNOWN ESTATE
EXISTS \$6554.08
3 MOTOR VEHICLE ACCOUNTS DISCHARGED BY BANKRUPTCY \$119.94
TOTAL = \$39,563.06**

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

[Mr. Burnham joined meeting at 7:36 p.m.]

7. Old Business

a. FY 2020-2021 Annual Report Update

Mr. Burnham is still working, with Mr. Falletti, to get all town department reports finished and submitted.

b. Discussion and possible action on Open Space Letter previously received from Conservation Commission

Ms. Baker was asked to provide background information, and the former Crooke Orchard property and the Knowlton Farm property were provided as earlier examples of Ashford helping to secure the development rights to these properties. They remain today as orchard and farm properties. It was explained also that any funds in Ashford town accounts can not be spent without the BOS, BOF and other related boards, commissions, etc. being involved as well as, in land open space preservation or development rights’ restrictions, also the state. Expenditures require town referendums.

It was decided by the Chairman to table this discussion until the next meeting; the Conservation Commission will be invited to present their own background and reasons for this request.

8. HR presentation by First Selectman (executive session anticipated) – not required at this time

9. Agenda items for the Next Meeting

Land Acquisition Fund and Conservation Commission presentation
Ashford town annual report update
Further summary of Expenditures
Possible Grand List presentation by Kara Fishman, Assessor

10. Remarks for the Good of the Board

Chairman, Judith Austin, stated that appreciation and thanks are not provided often enough. She specifically thanked both Cheryl Baker and Linda Gagne for their important and valued service to the BOF and to the town. Ms. Baker will be missed. She expressed her appreciation for all they have done to help the Board of Finance.

11. Adjournment

**MS. DESANTO MOVED AND MR. KOPEC SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN.
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AT 8:01 P.M.**

*Respectfully submitted by
Valerie B. Oliver, Recording Secretary, 5/26/2022*