

**ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday November 17, 2022 / Held Virtually via Zoom / Ashford, Connecticut
7:00 P.M.**

Present:

Judith Austin, Chairman, Garth Bean, Christina Davis, Angela DeSanto, Hugh MacKenzie, Paul Varga

Guest: John Guskowski, Facilitator

Document supplied to members prior to the meeting:

Ashford Town Budget Calendar, Fiscal Year July 2023-June 2024

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. Kopec.

3. Communications

The Chair mentioned a draft report from the auditors. They recommended that when there is turnover in staff (e.g. at the Library) a transition should be made with a person taking responsibility for seeing that necessary, especially financial, work is completed. The Babcock Library has agreed with this recommendation for the future.

Region 19 's draft budget was received but several pages were not clear. The Chair will get a clear report and send it to BOF members.

It was noted that the town meeting about the ARPA fund expenses was positive in that all requests and reported expenditures were approved.

4. Public Comments - none

5. Approve Minutes of Meeting Thursday, October 27, 2022

MS. DESANTO MOVED AND MS. AUSTIN SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF FINANCE ON OCTOBER 27, 2022. MOTION PASSED WITH 4 YES AND 2 ABSTENTIONS FROM MR. VARGA AND MR. BURNHAM.

Mr. Varga stated that the minutes get sent first to the town for the website.

6. New Business

a. Selectman's Update - none for this meeting

7. New Business

a. Review of Current Expenses and Revenue Reports

Mr. Varga noted that a review was not really possible as the data for the actual or budgeted amounts were not yet included in the reports. Only the expenditures to date for departments were available, no encumbrances were included as yet either. The data on budgeted amount compared with expenditures is needed for BOF deliberations, to know what is left in a given budgeted item.

Ms. Austin reported that the school budget will be in a different format this year. The numbers of teaches and numbers of pupils will be listed. Three audited years will be included.

Ms. Davis noted that The Parks and Recreation Dept. expenses were not included in the Exp. & Rev. Report. Other missing departments could be noted by comparing the list with one of last year's Exp. & Rev. Reports. Ms. Davis also questioned, on last page, a debt payment - GOB Refund 2013 Principle. She asked what this was? The Treasurer will have to be asked to find out. It was felt it was a consolidation payment.

b. Discussion Regarding 2023 Meeting Schedule

A concern was expressed about having September meetings on thursdays that would conflict with those of the BOE. However, it was thought that one could read their minutes or listen to the tape of their meetings if necessary.

MR. VARGA MOVED AND MS. DESANTO SECONDED A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE BOF 2023 MEETING SCHEDULE AS WRITTEN. MOTION PASSED WITH 6 YES AND ONE NO.

c. Discussion Regarding FY 2023-2024 Budget Calendar

MR. VARGA MOVED AND MR. BURNHAM SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ASHFORD TOWN BUDGET CALENDAR AS PRESENTED. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

d. FY 2021-2022 Annual Report Update

Mr. Burnham reported that a draft has been completed. However, several details about selectmen's names and dates of service need to be fixed. Board members should let him know if they have other concerns about the report. Once corrections are made it will be finalized.

The conclusion stated was that in future a department's budget will not be approved without completion of their annual report for the past year.

e. FY 2021-2022 Audit Update - noted above under Communications

f. Discussion and Action on In Person Meetings

Several members stated that they will not always be able to attend in-person due to work or possibly health issues. Therefore, any board meetings held in-person will need to be accessible to those members unable to attend. Members were also concerned about the added costs of hybrid meetings; technical complications with the hybrid system can cause disruptions to meetings. It was determined that by law a board or commission member has to be allowed a way to attend, if unable to in-person. It was determined by the Facilitator, John Guskowski that allowing phone access would be a simple solution.

The Chairman stated that she would investigate the capability for phone, conference calls and also setting up zoom meetings in the Town Hall lower-level meeting room. In the meantime, a vote was taken.

MR. VARGA MOVED AND MR. BURNHAM SECONDED A MOTION TO HOLD IN-PERSON BOF MEETINGS BEGINNING DECEMBER 8, 2022 WITH REGARD TO COMPLYING WITH THE CONNECTICUT STATUTE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. Agenda Items for the Next Meeting

Review of updated Expense and Revenue Reports
Ashford Annual Report 2021 presentation
Ashford School Roof Project report, a possible topic

9. Remarks for the Good of the Board

Ms. DeSanto thanked the Board for their considerations of her meeting attendance concerns. Mr. Varga thought that we could be thankful that the legislature allowed the accommodations for attendance at in-person board or commission meetings by their members. A Happy Thanksgiving to all!

10. Adjournment

MS. DESANTO MOVED AND MR. VARGA SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 8:13 P.M.

*Respectfully submitted by,
Valerie B. Oliver, Recording Secretary
11/21/2022*