

# Town of Ashford

*Established 1714*

## REGULAR SELECTMEN'S MEETING MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.

### ASHFORD TOWN OFFICES

**Held in person and via ZOOM**

#### MINUTES

1. Call to order: 7:02 PM
2. Members present: Silver-Smith, Phillips, Falletti  
Guests: Jeffrey Silver-Smith, Paul Varga
3. Hear from the public: Paul Varga voiced concern about holding the scheduled Tuesday, December 19 virtual Special Town Meeting considering current power outages in town from the January 17-18 storm.
4. First Selectman's briefing:
  - Silver-Smith reported that immediate focus is on public safety and damage issues caused by the storm. 1632 homes (72%) lost power due to downed lines and a number of residents were trapped in their homes by fallen wires. Several town roads had to be closed due to downed trees, wires, and flooding. A tractor trailer veered off Rt 84 at Exit 72 and into Morey Pond. As of this meeting all but 334 homes had their power restored, but considerable road damage will need to be addressed.
  - The December 19 Special Town Meeting will be cancelled and rescheduled for another date.
5. Acceptance of the minutes of Regular Meeting of 12/11/2023: Waived until next Regular BOS meeting.
6. Hear from Boards, Commissions, Committees: None.
7. Old Business
  - A. Ashford School Roof Replacement projects update: A meeting was held 12/11 to discuss short-term and long-term financial aspects of the project. Attendees were Mark Chapman (Finance Consultant, Munistat Services, Inc.), Glenn Rybacki (Finance Counsel, Pullman & Comley, LLC), Jim Rupert (Chair, Ashford School Roof Construction Committee), Sherri Soucy (Ashford Town Treasurer), Christine Abikoff (Selectmen's Office), Cathryn Silver-Smith (Selectmen's Office) to discuss short-term and long-term financial aspects of the project.

Construction plan approval and an initial payment of \$23K to architecture firm Hibberd & Rosa is due by 12/31/23. A subsequent meeting with Jim Rupert has been scheduled for 12/20/2023 to draft a general timeline for the project.

8. New Business
  - A. Board and Commission Appointments
    - Conservation Commission: Phillips moved reappointment of Loretta Wrobel, Steve Morytko, Gwen Haaland, Christine Acebo, Janet Bellamy and Bill Dubinsky to serve as regular members to 11/2025. Seconded by Falletti and approved unanimously. Phillips moved to reappoint Stephanie Dubinsky to an Alternate member seat to serve to 11/2025. Seconded by Falletti and approved unanimously. One Alternate Member vacancy term of which expires 11/2025 remains.
    - Ashford Housing Authority: 1 vacancy to expire 1/1/2024 and 1 vacancy to expire 1/1/2028. Phillips moved the appointment of Bill Kerensky to serve to 1/1/2028. Seconded by Falletti and approved unanimously.
    - Economic Development Commission: 1 Regular Member vacancy that expires in February of 2025

- Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission - 1 Regular Member vacant seat the term of which expires 6/01/2025: 1 vacant Alternate Member seats terms of which expire 6/01/2027.
- Zoning Board of Appeals – 1 Alternate Member seat term of which expires 11/05/2025.

B. Tax refunds: None.

Falletti moved to add Fees for Use of Town Buildings to the agenda. Seconded by Phillips and approved unanimously.

Fees for Use of Town Buildings: During the 11/28/2023 Regular BOS meeting the board approved a \$50 rental fee for use of Knowlton Memorial Hall for privately sponsored events held by Ashford residents, along with a \$50 refundable cleaning fee. This new discussion centered around applying that same fee structure for use of the Ashford Senior Center and the Old Post Office.

Falletti moved charging a \$50 rental fee and refundable \$50 cleaning fee to Ashford residents for use of the Ashford Senior Center and Old Post Office in addition to Knowlton Memorial Hall for private events held by Ashford residents. Ashford-based community groups and 501 (c) (3) groups listed in the *Ashford Citizen* Policies and Procedures as exempt from paying for *Ashford Citizen* ads will not be charged a rental fee for meetings held in these buildings. Seconded by Phillips and approved unanimously.

C. Agenda items for upcoming BOS meetings:

- Set date for Special Town Meeting to fill Board of Finance Alternate vacancy

D. Adjournment: Falletti motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Phillips and unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Submitted by Cathryn E. Silver-Smith, acting Recording Secretary