

**ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
December 12, 2013
7:00 p.m.**

Members Present: Cathryn Silver-Smith (Chairperson), Susan Eastwood (Clerk), Charles Funk, Tony Horn, Merrill Simpson, Gail Zaicek, Judith Austin (alt.), Marian Matthews (alt.), Carl Pfalzgraf (alt.), Mike Zambo (First Selectman, Ex-Officio).

Guests: Cheryl Bowen (Town Treasurer), Wayne Fletcher (Chief, AVFD)

1. **Call to Order:** Ms. Silver-Smith called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
2. **Seating of Alternates:** All members and alternates were present. No alternates were seated.
3. **Election of Officers:**

MS. EASTWOOD MOVED AND MR. FUNK SECONDED A MOTION TO NOMINATE MS. SILVER-SMITH AS CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF FINANCE. MR. SIMPSON MOVED AND MR. HORN SECONDED A MOTION TO CLOSE THE NOMINATIONS. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY. THE CHAIR CAST ONE VOTE FOR MS. SILVER-SMITH.

MR. HORN MOVED AND MR. FUNK SECONDED A MOTION TO NOMINATE MS. EASTWOOD AS CLERK OF THE BOARD OF FINANCE. MR. SIMPSON MOVED AND MR. HORN SECONDED A MOTION TO CLOSE THE NOMINATIONS. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY. THE CHAIR CAST ONE VOTE FOR MS. EASTWOOD.

The Chair thanked Ms. Eastwood for her previous and continuing service as Board Clerk.

4. **Approve Minutes of:**
 - a. **Special Meeting of September 19, 2013**

MR. SIMPSON MOVED AND MR. HORN SECONDED A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2013 AS WRITTEN. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY, EXCEPT MS. EASTWOOD AND MS. ZAICHEK WHO ABSTAINED.
 - b. **Regular Meeting of November 14, 2013**

MS. MATTHEWS MOVED AND MR. FUNK SECONDED A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 14, 2013 WITH THE FOLLOWING CORRECTIONS. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY, EXCEPT MS. EASTWOOD AND MS. ZAICHEK WHO ABSTAINED.

Item 7a. "Ending Fund Balance totaled \$4,08,494, an increase of \$230,33 from prior year" should read "Ending Fund Balance totaled \$4,068,494, an increase of \$230,330 from prior year."

5. **Hear from Public:** None.

6. **Communications:**

- Ms. Silver-Smith thanked Ms. Bowen for the assistance that she is giving Ashford School to address the issue with the school's reporting for MBR compliance.
- Mr. Funk stated that the Capital Expenditures Committee (CEC) met on December 11. They will bring a proposal to the next BOF meeting. The next CEC meeting is on January 8, 2014.
- The school applied for and won a DEHMS school safety grant of \$95,377. Ms. Silver-Smith shared (attached) email correspondence between her, Dr. Longo and Ms. Bowen regarding the use and administration of the grant, noting that the clarifications in her email to Dr. Longo were provided after a detail review of the grant application by her and Ms. Bowen, and confirmed by the state the next day. Concerns regarding the Superintendent's understanding of the roles of Town Officials, and responses to this and other financial-related issues were discussed. Board members who participated in School Security & Safety Committee meetings noted that they did not receive minutes from any of the meetings and heard about the grant from the newspaper. After receipt of Dr. Longo's response Ms. Silver-Smith located minutes from the 6/25/13

Committee meeting on the school website which indicated that the grant application would be reviewed prior to submission. There were no other Committee minutes available. Chief Fletcher added that the recommended review/approval by Town officials named in the application did not occur.

- Ms. Silver-Smith met with Selectman Zambo on December 4 to propose documentation of Town-wide documentation of financial procedures and best practices.
- Ms. Bowen stated that she received reconciliation information for July to October 2013 from the school today and has not yet had a chance to review.
- Ms. Silver-Smith noted that the Board secretary expects to return to her duties in January.

7. Old Business: None.

8. New Business:

- a. Selectman Zambo expressed thanks from the BOS to the members of the BOF for their service on the Board. The BOS have started work on the budget for FY 2014-2015. There are no requests from the BOS at this time.

b. FYE 2013 Audit Recommendations:

The audit recommendations were discussed. Action will need to be taken regarding the transfer of over \$20K to the Cafeteria fund. Board members agreed that Town and School financial procedures should be clearly outlined and that the BOE be invited to partner in the effort. It was also suggested that Maureen Barber be engaged to lead the effort.

MR. SIMPSON MOTIONED AND MR. FUNK SECONDED A MOTION TO DRAFT A LETTER TO THE BOE INVITING THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN OUTLINING TOWN-WIDE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS PART OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FOR THE AUDIT AND CONTINUED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY.

Ms. Silver-Smith will meet with the BOS to discuss general scope, approach and anticipated cost prior to sending a letter to the BOE.

c. FYE 2013 Annual Report:

Ms. Eastwood volunteered to help Ms. Silver-Smith with the Annual Report. Requests for information required from the two schools will be sent to Ashford School and Region 19 school superintendents.

d. Transfer FYE 2013 Undesignated Fund Amount to Capital Non-Recurring Fund:

Mr. Zambo recommended that the BOF transfer \$492, 277 from the Undesignated Fund Balance to the Capitol Non-Recurring Fund. A decision was deferred until the next BOF meeting.

Mr. Horn left the meeting at 9:01 p.m..

e. Transfer FYE 2013 BOE Expense Budget Amount to BOE Non-Lapsing Fund:

It was noted the BOE did not use \$4,695.55 of the funds transferred from FY 2011-2012 during FY 2012-2013 and that amount should be deducted from the amount to be transferred to the fund from FY 2012-2013.

MR. SIMPSON MOTIONED AND MR. FUNK SECONDED A MOTION TO TRANSFER \$60,272.45 FROM THE 2012-2013 BOE EXPENSE BUDGET TO THE BOE NON-LAPSING FUND WITH THE EXPECTATION THAT IT BE SPENT WITHIN THE 2013-2014 FISCAL YEAR. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY.

f. FY 2014-2015 Budget Planning:

The BOF's proposed 2014-2015 Budget will be discussed at the next BOF meeting.

Mr. Pfalzgraf left the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

9. Review of 2013-2014 Expense and Revenue Reports:

Ms. Bowen reviewed expense and revenue actuals. The auditors noted during their FYE Audit Report presentation that we haven't changed revenue projections significantly for many years.

10. Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

- Transfer FYE 2013 Undesignated Fund Amount to Capital Non-Recurring Fund
- Action on unapproved transfer to cafeteria fund from 2013-2014 budget

11. Remarks for the Good of the Board:

Mr. Simpson wished everyone a Happy Holiday and Happy New Year. All reciprocated. Mr. Funk thanked Mr. Zambo for attending the meeting and reiterated the Board's support of the Chair. Ms. Zaicek offered to attend BOE meetings with Ms. Silver-Smith. Mr. Simpson requested that the 5 year plan be presented with rough estimates of costs at the next meeting. Mr. Zambo said he would bring more information to the next meeting.

12. Adjournment:

MR. FUNK MOVED AND MR. SIMPSON SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 12, 2013 REGULAR MEETING OF THE ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathryn Silver-Smith (Chair) for BOF Clerk

Attachments:

12/2/13 and 2/3/13 Emails concerning DEHMS School Safety Grant

From: James P. Longo
Sent: Monday, December 02, 2013 6:30 PM
To: Silver-Smith,Cathryn E
Cc: James Longo; Don Wesson; Christine Abikoff; Cheryl Bowen
Subject: Re: 2013 School security grant

Cathryn, please wait for Cheryl to discuss this grant with the state prior to drawing conclusions. I spoke with him, it is to be administered by the BOE. Carl did mention it but we had received notice of the grant from the state as well. Once the grant was posted I applied.

In response to your points.

1. None of the money that the town spent can be applied. The grant specifically excludes town capital money. The BOE is prepared to fund our portion and prepay the portion that will be reimbursed once we know the schedule that we can rely upon. We based our request upon the amount that we felt we could fund. In a state meeting we were told to form a committee or reconvene our original one. Perhaps you should join us once a meeting is scheduled and we can explain the process.
2. We are aware of the funding structure and will schedule projects to be done once we have our final letter from the state, and the state bonding has been done in January. Cheryl will be invited to participate, but not until the facts have been made clear.
3. Since the town has paid for no projects that we can apply for reimbursement for, I will invite Cheryl and other officials to participate at the appropriate time, and perhaps the town will be willing to fund some work. If not the BOE is prepared to handle it independently.
4. Even though little surprises me these days, I am surprised by you saying you were unaware of the grant and the application. You should have been aware of the application for the grant. It was discussed repeatedly, you even mention an early suggestion from the BOF that I pursue it, and you, Ralph and many others were invited to serve on the steering committee that helped inform our application. I am surprised that you don't remember, and now even people who chose not to participate wish to share in the BOE success.

Feel free to discuss this, or anything on your mind by giving me a call. We do what we do in service to Ashford, and should be able to avoid negative and destructive attitudes driving the dialogue.

Most of what you say in your email is incorrect and misinformed due to your lack of interest in direct communication prior to forming your opinion.

I find your tone inappropriate and distressing. Perhaps we should discuss whatever has made you so angry.

I remain available, and look forward to Cheryl getting the information that you need from the state.

I hope that this response helps clarify things for you and look forward to improving the school safety infrastructure this year using the grant.

Jim

On Dec 2, 2013, at 12:59 PM, Cathryn Silver-Smith wrote:

Jim,

If I understand correctly, this is the grant that Carl Pfalzgraf made you aware of and suggested that you apply for during the 3/28/13 BOF meeting (when we finalized the 2013-2014 budget for the Public Hearing).

Please note:

1. This is a reimbursement-only grant (see page 14) for 70.36% of monies already spent by the Town and BOE for school safety improvements. It is not for new money, so I do not understand why you are considering setting up a "community committee" or what you expect that committee to do.
2. Cheryl will clarify/confirm how the grant should be administered with Robert Drozybski. He may not have been aware that the Town paid for a large portion of the safety improvements listed on the application.
3. Cheryl Bowen has the information about what the Town paid for, but does not have complete information about what the BOE paid for. Please see that she receives the supporting documentation for the monies spent by the school. (Cheryl will provide you with her information needs.)
4. The next time you send a request to the state with my name and contact information on, please discuss with me beforehand. In this case, I received the email from the state without knowing when/what was submitted. Also, the phone numbers you entered on the form for me are incorrect.

Thanks,
Cathryn

From: James Longo
Sent: Tuesday, November 26, 2013 4:45 PM
To: Cathryn Silver-Smith,Cathryn E; Cheryl Bowen
Cc: Cathryn Silver-Smith.net; Don Weson; Christine Abikoff
Subject: Re: FW: 2013 School security grant

Hello Cathryn and Cheryl;

I appreciate your concern in regards to this grant. I have attached all of the documents as you have requested. And you will see that this is a BOE grant that I am responsible for execution and oversight.

However, I am going to form a community committee to advise on the grant, and will certainly invite the First Selectman and other community leaders to participate.

Your emails today prompted me to check again to be sure that my understanding of this grant was correct. (You will note in the grant conditions page it is quite clear that it is the BOE that must manage the grant). I also called the state grant program manager to seek confirmation.

After speaking with the program manager, Robert Drozynski, about the 2013 School Security Competitive Grant Program, he clarified that the authorized official who completed and signed the original application must be the same authorized official to sign the grant award documents. He also confirmed that although the grant award names the Town of Ashford as the grantee, it is for the sole purpose of making payments with the expectation that the security grant funds are transferred over to the Board of Education just as other grants are.

I assume that Cheryl will also be calling the grant program manager as well. And once we have all of this cleared up, I will proceed with the final steps necessary to execute the grant. Once this is completed, we will forward you copies to you for your records. As requested by Cheryl Bowen in the email you forwarded, Christine Abikoff will be copied on all communications concerning this grant.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact grant Manager Robert Drozynski directly at (860) 685-8134, or via email at Robert.drozynski@ct.gov.

Thank you.

On Tue, Nov 26, 2013 at 10:27 AM, Cathryn Silver-Smith wrote:

Jim,

Would you please ensure that the information Cheryl has requested is provided today ?

Thanks,
Cathryn

From: Cheryl Bowen
Sent: Tuesday, November 26, 2013 10:06 AM
To: Jennifer Barsaleau
Cc: Silver-Smith,Cathryn E; First Selectman; Christine Abikoff
Subject: 2013 School security grant

Hi Jen!

To recap our call so we're on the same page, please send me a copy of the application for this grant, backup sent with it, and documentation used to determine the grant amount.

I will verify with DEMHS that the grant was awarded to the Town of Ashford using the Town's FEIN, so the First Selectman would be the person with the authority to execute.

Please copy Christine and me on all communications regarding this grant.

Thank you!

Cheryl

Cheryl A. Baker Bowen
Treasurer/Administrative Assistant/Webmaster
Town of Ashford
5 Town Hall Road
Ashford, CT 06278
860.487.4405
cbowen@ashfordtownhall.org

Subject: Re: 2013 School Security Grant

Date: 12/3/13 5:48:25 PM

From: James P. Longo

To: Cheryl Bowen

Cc: James P Longo, Cathryn Silver-Smith, Don Wesson, Christine Abikoff , Mike Zambo , Jennifer Barsaleau

Cheryl, thanks for the information. I will give you a call tomorrow to go over what you were told.

Jim Longo

On Dec 3, 2013, at 5:34 PM, Cheryl Bowen wrote:

Hello,

After speaking with Robert Drozynski, Program Manager for the 2013 School Security Competitive Grant Program, I would like to clarify some of the grant parameters.

This is a reimbursement grant for work delineated by Jim in the grant application. Most of this work has been completed or is in the process of being completed. No committee is necessary.

The work delineated in the grant application was primarily funded by Capital Project funds approved at referendum for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. The Town Capital Project funds and BOE funds used to pay for this work are what are to be reimbursed at 70.36%. Town Capital Project funds are not the same as Local Capital Improvements Program funds (LoCIP). If you need clarification please let me know.

There are very specific items necessary for the reimbursement process, some of which include the involvement and approval of the First Selectman, Emergency Management Director, Fire Chief, and Fire Marshal. Jim is listed as the Project Director and will ensure the correct steps are taken for the reimbursement as well. The Reimbursement Request Package and related forms can be accessed at www.ct.gov/demhs. Reimbursements can be expected within 60 days of the request being accepted and approved. The reimbursement will be deposited into the Town General Fund by the State and appropriate adjustments to BOE expenditures will be made at that time.

The First Selectman is the Official Authorized by the Town to enter into agreements. The Town FEIN is used on the grant for the purpose of depositing the funds. We are awaiting a form from Mr. Drozynski to change the 'Official Authorized to Sign for the Applicant' to Michael Zambo, as Chief elected Official, and Michael Zambo will sign the Award as the Authorized Official.

If anyone requires additional information or clarification on any of these points please contact me directly.

Please let me know what information is needed from this office for the reimbursement, or if you need assistance with the reimbursement process.

Thank you,
Cheryl~

Cheryl A. Baker Bowen
Treasurer/Administrative Assistant/Webmaster
Town of Ashford
5 Town Hall Road
Ashford, CT 06278
860.487.4405

cbowen@ashfordtownhall.org