

**ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET POLICIES
For Fiscal Year 2015-2016**

1. Formal budgetary integration is employed by the Board of Finance as a management control device during the year for the General Fund and the Capital Projects Fund, which are the only funds with a legally adopted annual budget. The General Fund includes General Government, Debt Service, Ashford Board of Education, Ashford's portion of Region 19 Board of Education, outside financing sources such as the Babcock Library, Recreation and Fire Department. Budgetary comparisons are included in the appropriate financial statements and schedules.
2. Prior to **January 9, 2015**, each department head, office, agency, board or commission of the Town, supported wholly or in part from Town funds, shall submit budget requests in the form required by the Board of Selectmen so as to indicate the program, activities, and work accomplished in the current fiscal year and to be accomplished during the ensuing year. These shall be accompanied by detailed estimates of expenditures to be made and of revenues other than taxes to be collected during the ensuing fiscal year, along with such other information as may be requested by the Board of Selectmen.
3. On **February 19, 2015**, the Board of Selectmen shall present to the Board of Finance:
 - a. A budget message outlining the financial situation of the Town government and describing the important features of the budget plan;
 - b. Statements of the Board of Selectmen's proposed operating program and expenditures for the Town functions and Town-supported functions, other than those of the Boards of Education, along with comparisons of amounts expended in the last completed fiscal year and estimated amounts to be expended in the current fiscal year;
 - c. Information on amounts of revenue, other than property taxes collected, by source, in the last completed fiscal year, estimates for the current and for the ensuing year, along with information and estimates regarding property tax revenues for the same periods;
 - d. Statements of the condition and estimated condition of the Town funds and of the debt service obligations of the Town, proposed capital improvements to be undertaken during the ensuing fiscal year or later years, and the proposed method of financing them;
 - e. And such other information as will assist the Board of Finance and the Town Meeting in deciding on an annual appropriation and a capital improvement program.
4. On **March 5, 2015**, the Ashford Board of Education shall present to the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen:
 - a. Statements of the Board of Educations' proposed operating program and expenditures for Ashford School, along with comparisons of amounts expended in the last completed fiscal year and estimated amounts to be expended in the current fiscal years;
 - b. Information on amounts of revenue in the last completed fiscal year, and estimates for the current and ensuing year;
 - c. And such other information as will assist the Board of Finance and the Town Meeting in deciding on an annual appropriation.
5. On **March 24, 2015**, the Region 19 Board of Education shall hold a Public Hearing to present the Superintendent's proposed budget. On **March 31, 2015** the Region 19 Board of Education shall adopt a finalized budget, which shall be presented at the Region 19 Annual Budget Meeting on May 5, 2015.

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6. The Board of Finance shall hold at least one Public Hearing on the budget. A Public Hearing for the 2015-2016 budget shall be scheduled for **April 7, 2015**. Following the Public Hearing, the Board of Finance shall review the recommendations and adopt a proposed budget, including a recommended appropriation, which shall be published in a newspaper in general circulation in the Town at least five days prior to the annual Town Meeting for budget consideration.
7. The Town Budget Annual Budget Meeting shall be held on **April 21, 2015**. This meeting shall consider the budget presented by the Board of Finance and may approve or lower the general Government, Ashford Board of Education and/or Capital projects budgets. (The Region 19 budget cannot be approved or lowered during this meeting as it is subject to a separate Region 19 referendum.) The Annual Budget meeting will adjourn to referendum to be held **May 5, 2015**. If the budget is not adopted at referendum by July 1, the last budget adopted by referendum shall remain in effect for the new fiscal year until a new budget is approved at referendum.
8. The level of control for all legally adopted budgets (the level at which expenditure may not legally exceed appropriations without Board of Finance and/or Town Meeting approval) is at the department level for the General Government portion of the General Fund. Budgetary transfers from one department to another within the General Government may be made by the Board of Finance. Transfers or new appropriations that exceed \$20,000 must be approved by consecutive actions of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and a Town Meeting. The Ashford Board of Education and Region 19 Board of Education have full authority over transfers within their own budgets.
9. Except for encumbrance accounting in the General Fund, all budgets are prepared on the modified accrual basis of accounting. Encumbrance accounting, under which purchase orders, contracts, and other commitments are recorded in order to reserve that portion of the applicable appropriations, is employed as an extension of formal budgetary integration. Since the Town intends to honor contracts in process at year end, encumbrances outstanding as of June 30 reported as reservations of fund balance, since they do not constitute expenditures or liabilities.
10. Unencumbered appropriations lapse at fiscal year end, except for capital project budgets, which remain in effect until completion.