TOWN OF ASHFORD
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT GOALS
For Fiscal Year 2015-2016

The Board of Finance has developed the following to aid current and future board members in planning, monitoring and communicating to the community the Town's approach to financial management. These goals are revisited every year to keep them current.

FINANCIAL REPORTING PERFORMANCE GOALS

- The Town will adhere to full and open disclosure of all financial activity.
- Records will be maintained on a basis consistent with accepted municipal accounting standards.
- The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report will be prepared in conformity with generally accepted governmental accounting principles and financial reporting practices.
- An independent public accounting firm will be employed to perform an annual audit of all Funds, Authorities, Agencies and Grant Programs, And the annual audited report will be made available to the general public, bond and financial consultants, and other interested citizens and organizations. The audit will be completed and submitted to the Board of Finance within one hundred seventy-five (175) days of the close of the Town's fiscal year.
- 501(c)3 organizations that use funds provided by the Town must report how those funds were used to the Board of Finance on an annual basis.

FUND BALANCE GOALS

- The goal is to preserve the Town of Ashford's financial stability and maintain the Town's credit worthiness while ensuring a positive cash flow in the event of temporary revenue shortfalls and/or unanticipated major expenditures.
- The goal is to not use the undesignated fund balance for operating expenses, as this practice has an inherently destabilizing impact on current and future operating budgets.
- A year-to-year carryover fund balance will be maintained in an amount necessary for adequate cash flow and to prevent the demand for short-term borrowing. The undesignated fund balance should be approximately eight to ten (8-10) percent of the general fund operating budget.
- Fund balance in excess of the goal shall be transferred to the CNR Fund and used for one-time expenditures.
- Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) fund classifications and hierarchies will be used for fund balance reporting.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PERFORMANCE GOALS

- Capital improvements will be based on long-range projected needs in order to minimize future maintenance, replacement and capital costs.
- All capital improvements should be made in accordance with the Town's five-year capital improvement program. The capital improvement program shall be revisited annually.

- The development of the capital improvement program will be coordinated with the operating budget in order to maintain a reasonably stable total tax levy.

- Unanticipated capital improvements will be funded from CNR to the extent available.

- Before submission to the Board of Finance, the Board of Selectmen will identify the estimated cost and potential funding sources for each capital project proposed. Future operating costs associated with a proposed capital improvement will be evaluated before a decision is made to implement a project.

- Federal, State and other intergovernmental and private funding sources will be sought out and used as available to assist in financing capital improvements.

INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE GOALS

- A cash flow analysis of all funds will be developed on a regular basis. Collections, deposits and disbursement of all funds will be scheduled in a way as to ensure maximum case availability.

- Where permitted by law, cash from separate funds and sources will be pooled to maximize investment yields. Interest will be credited to the General Fund except where prohibited by law or where the source of the cash is from an individual or corporation to insure performance.

- Investment policy will be consistent with State law and will provide for security of principal as well as needed liquidity.

DEBT PERFORMANCE GOALS

- Long-term debt will be limited to those capital improvements that should not be financed from current revenues.

- The maturity date for any debt will not exceed the reasonably expected useful life of the project so financed.

- The total direct general obligation debt will not exceed statutory limits.

- The issuance of Bond, Tax and revenue Anticipation Notes will be avoided.

- An official statement will be prepared to be used in connection with all sales of bonds and notes.

- Good relations will maintained with financial and bond rating agencies and a policy of full and open disclosure on every financial report and bond prospectus will be followed.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES PERFORMANCE GOALS

- The Board of Finance will propose and the Town Meeting will adopt and maintain a balanced budget in which expenditures will not be allowed to exceed reasonable estimated resources and revenues.

- All current operation and maintenance expenses will be paid from the current revenue sources.

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- The operating budget will provide for the adequate maintenance of capital assets and equipment.

- The budget will provide for adequate funding of all employee benefit programs and retirement systems.

- A budgetary control system will be maintained to enable adherence to the adopted budget. This will include a record keeping system to be adhered to by all programs and activities receiving annual town budget appropriations.

- A system of regular monthly financial reports comparing actual revenues and expenditures to be budgeted amounts will be prepared and maintained.

- An effective risk management program to minimize loss and reduce costs will be developed and implemented. The Board of Selectmen will ensure that adequate insurance programs are in place, including unemployment and worker's compensation insurance.

- Delivery of services by other public and private organizations will be encouraged whenever and wherever greater efficiency and effectiveness can be expected. Technology and productivity advancements that will help reduce or avoid increasing personnel costs as a proportion of the total budget, to use available resources more productively and creatively, and to avoid duplication of effort and resources.

- A Reserve Fund for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures will be maintained and will be adequately funded each year by a transfer from the General Fund Budget and by unanticipated one-time revenues.

REVENUE PERFORMANCE GOALS

- A diversified and stable revenue system will be maintained as protection from short-run fluctuations.

- Annual revenues will be estimated based on an objective and reasonable basis. The Board of Finance will project revenues on a multi-year basis.

- Special Revenue Fund are used to account and report the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are restricted or committed to expenditure for specific purposes other than debt service or capital projects.

    - One-time or special purpose revenues will only be used for capital expenditures or for expenditures required by the revenue (grants) and not to subsidize recurring personnel, operation or maintenance costs.
    - The creation of any new special revenue fund must be approved by the Board of Finance.
    - The purpose of the special revenue fund, and which revenues and other sources for the fund must be formally documented.

- All user charges and fees will be annually re-evaluated at a level related to the cost of providing the services.

- Appropriate expansion and diversification of the tax base will be encouraged and additional Federal and State revenues will be sought in order to reduce the reliance on the property tax due to its effect on individual homeowners.