

**ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE  
REGULAR MEETING  
December 10, 2015**

**Members Present:** Cathryn Silver-Smith (Chairperson), Susan Eastwood (Clerk), Judy Austin, Chuck Funk, Merrill Simpson, Gail Zaicek, Angie DeSanto (alt.), Francine Hodovan (Recording Secretary)

**Guests:**

Ashford School: Don Neel (Business Manager)

Ashford Volunteer Fire Department: Wayne Fletcher (Fire Chief)

1. **Call to Order:** Chairperson Cathryn Silver-Smith called the Regular Meeting of the Ashford Board of Finance to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. **Seating of Alternates:** None.
3. **Approve Minutes of Special Meeting of November 19, 2015:**  
**MR. FUNK MOVED AND MS. ZAICEK SECONDED A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 19, 2015 BOF SPECIAL MEETING WITH THE FOLLOWING CORRECTIONS. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY.**  
Corrections: Correct the spelling of Board Alternate Angie DeSanto's name throughout.  
Under "Seating of Alternates," Ms. DeSanto was seated for Ms. Eastwood.  
Under heading "Election of Officers the Board": insert "to" in order to read "Election of Officers to the Board."  
Under Item 9, change the word "filling" to "filing."
4. **Hear from Public:** None.
5. **Communications:**  
Ms. Silver-Smith stated that communications have started with Mr. Neel concerning the replacement of the Ashford School accounting system.

**MS. EASTWOOD MOVED AND MR. FUNK SECONDED A MOTION TO ADD AGENDA ITEM 7D. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE TOWN'S ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS UNDER NEW BUSINESS. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY.**

**MS. EASTWOOD MOVED AND MS. ZAICEK SECONDED A MOTION TO ADD AGENDA ITEM 7E. TRANSFER OF FYE 2015 UNEXPENDED BOE EDUCATION FUNDS UNDER NEW BUSINESS. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY.**

6. **Unfinished Business:**
  - a. **FYE 2015 Ashford Town Audit – Final Status Update:**  
**MS. EASTWOOD MOVED AND MS. AUSTIN SECONDED A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE ASHFORD TOWN AUDIT AS WRITTEN. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY.**
  - b. **FYE 2015 Audit – Corrective Action Plans:**  
The Board needs to review audit corrective action plans resulting from the FYE 2015 Audit. The deadline for Board receipt of these plans is February 24, 2016. Mr. Neel stated that the school is working on theirs and he will be ready to present them at the February 24, 2016 BOF meeting. Implementation of the auditor recommendation to replace the school accounting system will require a School-Town strategy and well-thought out execution plan in order to minimize disruption of School and Town business activities.
  - c. **Open BOF Alternate Position (resulting from J. Austin's election to full Board Member):**  
Ms. Eastwood stated that she will follow-up with the Democratic Town Committee to identify candidates.
7. **New Business:**
  - a. **Selectman's Update:** None.

**b. FY 2015-2016 Budget Planning:**

Per Ms. Silver-Smith, proposed updates to the Board's *Financial Goals and Management Procedures* and *Budget Policies and Procedures* for the FY 2016-2017 budget should be ready for review during the first Board meeting in January.

The 3-Board pre-budget discussion should be held before the end of January. Ms. Silver-Smith indicated that the BOE Chair is polling BOE members for potential meeting dates. She will follow-up with the Selectmen.

**c. Discussion of Town Accounting Systems:**

Board members agreed that it would best if School and Town were working from the same system. Ms. Silver-Smith will speak with Mike Zambo about combining replacement of the Town accounting system with the replacement of the School's new system.

**d. Transfer of FYE 2015 Unexpended BOE Education Funds:**

**MS. ZAICEK MOVED AND MS. EASTWOOD SECONDED A MOTION TO TRANSFER THE \$48,391.00 UNSPENT BALANCE FROM THE BOE FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015 ALLOCATED BUDGET INTO THE UNEXPENDED EDUCATION FUNDS ACCOUNT. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY.**

The resulting balance of the Unexpended Education Funds Account is \$80,578.

**8. Committee Reports:**

**Annual Report:**

Ms. Silver-Smith stated that the software is working well again, but due to Board and professional demands on her time she has not yet finished all of the edits she expected to complete by this evening.

**9. Agenda Items for Next Meeting:**

- Alternate Position due to Ms. Austin's Election to Full Member Status
- School-Town Accounting Systems
- 3-Board Meeting Date
- Annual Report

**10. Remarks for the Good of the Board:**

Ms. Silver-Smith stated that when a member of the public presents a concern or idea to this Board, the Board listens without interruption, prejudice or criticism. Also, if a concern is raised about the accuracy of the resulting Board meeting minutes, every attempt is made to ensure that the minutes are made correct when they are approved, including a follow-up with the requestor. Concerns Ms. Silver-Smith presented to the Ashford BOE on October 1, 2015 about Ashford School's miscommunication of FYE 2015 audit corrective actions to CSDE internal audit and inconsistent BOE review of school financial activity reports were not captured correctly in BOE meeting minutes. None of the requested corrections from Ms. Silver-Smith were made when the minutes were approved and no explanation was provided. She suggested that the Town consider taping all board meetings, as is currently done by the Ashford P&Z and Inland Wetland commissions, and by many other Connecticut municipalities.

It was noted that the new Director of the Ashford Senior Center has been in her position for 6 months and has not yet used any of the \$5,000.00 budget she was given for programs for the seniors.

Board members requested that monthly Town's Revenue and Expense Account reports be distributed to them electronically before scheduled meetings so that there is adequate time for review prior to their presentation at meetings.

Ms. Silver-Smith encouraged Board members to take advantage of training/events offered by the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM), as there is some budget available for this. Board members should let Ms. Silver-Smith know in advance if they wish to attend so that they can be reimbursed as appropriate.

Ms. Eastwood and the others present wished everyone Happy Holidays, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**11. Adjournment:**

**MR. FUNK MOVED AND MS. AUSTIN SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 10, 2015 REGULAR MEETING OF THE ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE. THE MOTION PASSED WITH EVERYONE VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY.**

The Ashford Board of Finance Regular Meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathryn Silver-Smith (for BOF Clerk)

*attachments:*

Excerpts from Ashford BOE 10/1/15 Draft Meeting Minutes filed 10/6/15

Requested Corrections to Ashford BOE 10/1/15 Meeting Minutes sent to BOE Chair 10/7/15

Excerpts from 11/5/15 and 11/19/15 BOE Meeting Minutes Concerning Approval of 10/1/15 BOE Meeting Minutes

**Persons to be Heard**

S. Morytko commented about a communication in the board packet from D. Neel to Dr. Longo concerning the FY 14 audit response to the CSDE. He felt the content was rather defensive in its tone. C. Silver-Smith arrived and also stated that she was “disconcerted” by the response. She was not pleased that neither she, nor the auditor, had received a copy of the communication that was sent to the CSDE. She went on to speak of past audit matters and stated that she would have expected to be copied on such a communication. She reviewed past discussions and actions by the BOE and her feeling that this letter changes what she believed the Board of Education’s practices were concerning the approval of purchases initiated by and for the Superintendent. She also reported that she has not received financial reports since the new fiscal year began. It was explained that the Superintendent had a deadline of 9/18 and was required to file a corrective action response concerning FY 14 audit recommendations. J. Rupert informed Ms. Silver-Smith that the Board had also just read this communication for the first time. K. Rourke spoke to Ms. Silver-Smith and stated that she takes exception to the tone and manner in which Ms. Silver-Smith addresses the Board of Education. She went on to state that financial reports are available and they can certainly be sent to her and if she does not receive them, then she should request them. Dr. Longo and Mr. Neel will review past and present corrective action plans and all other related correspondence. No changes to the purchasing policy or regulations have occurred since March 19, 2015.

Ms. Silver –Smith left the meeting.

K. Warren made a motion to add discussion of the memo from Don Neel dated 9/16/15 to the Superintendent and a letter from Dr. Longo to Selectman Zambo dated 9/16/15 to the agenda under “New Business”. Both were included in the meeting agenda packet. Motion seconded by J. Lippert and carried unanimously.

**d. Discussion of FY 14 Corrective Action Memo and Letter to Selectman Zambo dated 9/16/15**

There was discussion of the purchasing policy segment of memo from D. Neel concerning corrective action. After brief discussion, Dr. Longo said he took responsibility if there was any confusion about its content. J. Mozeiko stated she did not see any derogatory or negative comments in the memo. L. Donegan and K. Rourke agreed.

## Requested Corrections to Ashford BOE 10/1/15 Meeting Minutes sent to BOE Chair 10/7/15 (noted in red)

### Persons to be Heard

S. Morytko commented about a communication in the board packet from D. Neel to Dr. Longo concerning the FY 14 audit response to the CSDE. He felt the content was rather defensive in its tone. C. Silver-Smith arrived and also stated that she was "disconcerted" by the **tone and content in the** response. She ~~was not pleased~~ **expressed concern** that ~~neither she~~ **neither she** the BOF, nor the auditor, ~~had~~ **had** received a copy of the communication that was sent to the CSDE's **Internal Audit Division and that it conflicted with the BOE's previous communications of corrective actions undertaken to address BOE internal control issues documented in the FY 2014 audit.** She ~~went on to speak of past audit matters~~ **noted that some of the same BOE financial control issues were documented in both 2013 and 2014 Town audits.** She also asked what, if any corrective action plan had been filed with the state in response to the FY 2014 audit and stated that ~~she~~ **she** the BOF, BOS and auditor would have expected to be copied on such a communication. She also reviewed ~~past discussions and~~ **the action taken by the BOE on 4/16/15 to review purchases initiated by, or for the benefit of the Superintendent each month as a part of a regular review of all BOE A/P, expenditure and reconciliation reports.** Ms. Silver-Smith conveyed her concern that the only times that the **BOE members** received the monthly reports in their agenda packets was for 6/17/15 and 7/16/15 BOE meetings, and that no A/P reports were produced or reviewed after that. BOE members responded that some BOE meetings were canceled and that the reports have not been needed as **"no purchases have been made"** since the 7/16 review. ~~and her feeling~~ **Ms. Silver-Smith reiterated that statements in Mr. Neel's 9/16 this letter changes what she believed the directly conflict with the independent auditor firm's concerns and recommendations for the last two fiscal years and indicate that the BOE has not yet taken corrective action to address Board of Education's practices were concerning the approval of purchases initiated by and for the Superintendent purchase order control gap.** She also reported that she has not received financial reports since the new fiscal year began. It was explained that the Superintendent had a deadline of 9/18 and was required to file a corrective action response concerning FY 14 audit recommendations. J. Rupert informed Ms. Silver-Smith that the Board had also just read this communication for the first time. **Dr. Longo indicated that he did not know who was on copy for Mr. Neel's letter or if a BOE correction action plan had been sent to the state previous to 9/17.** K. Rourke spoke to Ms. Silver-Smith and stated that she takes exception to the tone and manner in which Ms. Silver-Smith addresses the Board of Education. She went on to state that financial reports are available and they can certainly be sent to her and if she does not receive them, then she should request them. **Ms. Silver-Smith reiterated that she was not requesting the reports, as they are supposed to be included in the BOE meeting packets, which are available to the public. Her concern was that the BOE is not receiving and reviewing the reports each month as they should.** Dr. Longo and Mr. Neel will review past and present corrective action plans and all other related correspondence. No changes to the purchasing policy or regulations have occurred since March 19, 2015. **Note, this statement disregards the motion approved by the BOE on 4/16/15.**

### **Excerpts from 11/5/15 BOE Meeting Minutes Concerning Approval of 10/1/2015 BOE Minutes Approval of Minutes: 10/01/2015; 10/15/15**

Motion to table approval of the regular meeting minutes of 10/01/2015 and 10/15/15 made by K. Rourke, seconded by J. Lippert and carried unanimously.

### **Excerpts from 11/19/15 BOE Meeting Minutes Concerning Approval of 10/1/2015 BOE Minutes Approval of Minutes: 10/01/2015; 10/15/2015; 11/05/2015**

Motion by K. Warren to approve the regular meeting minutes of 10/01/2015 as presented, seconded by J. Lippert and carried unanimously.