

**ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, January 10, 2019  
7:00 p.m.  
Ashford Municipal Office Building  
Lower Level Meeting Room  
5 Town Hall Road  
Ashford, CT 06278**

**Present:**

Charles Funk (Chairman,), Judith Austin (Clerk), Garth Bean, Jesse Burnham, Angela De Santo, (Alt.), Esther Jagodzinski, (Alt.) and Carl Pfalzgraf, (Alt.).

**Guests:**

Wayne C. Fletcher, Ashford Fire Dept., John Kopec and Paul Varga.

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Charles Funk called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Seating of Alternates:**

Carl Pfalzgraf was seated for Merrill Simpson and Angela De Santo was seated for Gail Zaicek.

**Vote an Alternate to Full Member to Replace a Resigning Member:**

Since Gail Zaicek has formally resigned, a special meeting of the Board of Finance is required in order to seat Carl Pfalzgraf as a full member of the Board. Once this is done then the Selectman will schedule a special town meeting to fill the vacancy. The BOF special meeting will be January 15th at 7:00 p.m. at the Ashford Town Hall. A room will be confirmed by the Chair.

**Communications:**

The members noted Gail Zaicek's valuable membership over six years on the BOF. Carl sent a card around for members to sign thanking her and recognizing her service. She formally resigned on Jan. 9, 2019.

**Approve Minutes of Regular Meeting December 13, 2018:**

**CARL PFALZGRAF MOVED AND JUDITH AUSTIN SECONDED A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE ASHFORD BOARD OF FINANCE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 13, 2018, WITH THE FOLLOWING CORRECTIONS. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITH JESSE BURNHAM ABSTAINING.**

- Correction: Paul Varga's letter from the 12-10-18 meeting will be attached to this set of minutes
- Correction: Pg1; Selectman's Update; should read: Linda Gagne, Tax Collector, has submitted a letter of retirement, not "resignation".
- Correction: Pg. 2; Accept Auditors Report; the motion should name Esther Jagodzinski as the member who abstained

**Hear from Public:** No comments.

**New Business:**

a. **Selectman's Update.** None for this meeting.

b. **Review FY 2019-2010 Management Goals to Determine Viability as Policy.**

There was a discussion about the differences between something being called a policy rather than a goal. Generally the use of the word "policy" was considered as more serious, and policies are considered "political methods to achieve societal goals". The Treasurer requested the change because she felt it was something that would give her more leverage in dealing with our town rating agency, Moody's. The Chair emphasized that the BOF policy is to keep the undesignated fund balance between 10-15% of the general

fund operating budget. Interest rates matter especially if, as an example, Ashford School needs any major renovation in the future requiring bonding.

**CARL PFALZGRAF MOVED AND ANGIE DE SANTO SECONDED A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE TOWN OF ASHFORD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**c. General Fund July 1 to December 31 Expenditure and Revenue Reports.**

Members reviewed the document. Sexton duties were described as Ashford owns several cemeteries that fall under his purview. Concern was expressed about funds when a new tax collector is hired. Since the current tax collector does not leave until next November the current budget is not effected. Any follow up questions concerning these monthly reports should be directed to the Treasurer or to the BOF Chairman.

**Agenda Items for the Next Meeting:**

To be determined.

*Next Special Meeting is Tuesday, January 15, 2019, 7 p.m.*

*Next Regular Meeting is Thursday, January 24, 2019, 7 p.m.*

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

Carl and others noted that they will miss Gail Zaicek and her valuable contributions to the BOF and to the town.

Before adjournment a discussion centered on the possible and/or eventual regionalization of the smaller school districts here in Connecticut. Carl mentioned a Hartford Courant article stating that schools with less than 2000 students may be candidates for future consolidation. Mr. Fletcher noted that Eastford has a committee studying closing their school.

**CARL PFALZGRAF MOVED AND JUDITH AUSTIN SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Meeting ended at 7:55 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by,  
Valerie B. Oliver, Recording Secretary  
1/10/2019*

December 13, 2018

Ashford Board of Finance

Good evening,

I would like to express a concern I have regarding a request, the ensuing discussion, and ultimately an approval for funds vote, which occurred at the last meeting, held on November 8, 2018.

My concern is regarding the discussion and approval vote for item 6c of the meeting agenda: Review Funding in CNR to Cover DPW Increased Pickup Truck Cost

As reflected in the meeting minutes, a board member requested an explanation for the addition funds. That same member asked why none of the parties involved with the request were present at the meeting to answer any questions. A healthy discussion followed.

The end result was unsatisfactory. Any entity that is requesting a funding increase or reallocation, should be present, and prepared to answer questions. A failure to appear before the board to answer all questions regarding the request should result in a tabling of the matter, *regardless* of the amount.

This same discussion occurred at the October 11, 2018, Board of Finance meeting, regarding a request by the Board of Education. Again, board members asked why no one from the Board of Education was present to answer questions. The matter should have been tabled until a representative from the Board of Education was in attendance to answer questions.

While it may be time consuming and seem bureaucratic at times for both parties, if a department must come to the Board of Finance to request funding changes, then the event is significant enough for a representative of the requesting department to appear at the meeting.

In closing, I do not necessarily disapprove of the additional funding for the Department of Public Works, or the re-allocation for the Board of Education. My concern here is for the process. The current method is ripe for abuse. No behind the scenes deals should be done with taxpayer money. I as a taxpayer have a right to know where the money goes, who is using it, and why. No excuses, no unexplained purpose, no unanswered questions.

Thank you,

Paul Varga