TOWN OF ASHLAND
TRUSTEES OF THE TRUST FUNDS
MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2020
ASHLAND TOWN OFFICE
7:00 PM

Note: this meeting was conducted over zoom video and teleconference, per the exception provided by the Governor’s Emergency Order #12 (in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic). Emergency Order #12 waived the physical presence of trustee members (RSA 91-A2, III (b)).

I. CALL TO ORDER – Trustee Amanda Loud called the meeting to order at 8:17 PM with a roll call; Amanda Loud and Walter Durack signified they were present via the video and teleconference. Members of the public present: Kathlene DeWolfe. Note: the meeting started later than the posted 7 PM time, as Walter Durack was working at the Campton-Thornton Fire Department and had been dispatched at 6:17 PM for an emergency call.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - As this was the first meeting of the current slate of trustees, there were no minutes of prior meetings to review.

III. NEW BUSINESS

a. Oath of Office – Trustee Amanda Loud requested that Trustee Walter Durack furnish a signed copy of his oath of office to her at his earliest convenience in order to begin signatory authority processes. Trustee Walter Durack was appointed to fill a vacancy for the Trustees of the Trust Funds for a term expiring at the March 2022 town election. Wells Fargo, the investment firm, requires this documentation as proof of his appointment.

b. Meeting Schedule – Trustee Amanda Loud suggested that a meeting schedule be established separate from the Scribner Memorial Trustee meetings. [The Trustees of the Trust Funds (town trustees) are ex officio members of the Scribner Memorial Trustees.] The Scribner Memorial Trustees meet on the second Monday of the month. Trustee Walter Durack suggested the fourth Monday of the month. Trustee Amanda Loud concurred. Trustees of the Trust Funds will meet on the fourth Monday of the month. Trustee Amanda Loud has been in conversation with the town manager to have PBTV record meetings.

c. Trustee Training – Trustee Amanda Loud will be attending the New Hampshire Municipal Association’s (NHMA) webinar for trustee training on June 10th and 11th. Trustee Walter Durack is unable to attend the webinar due to his work schedule. He will accessing the recordings from the 2019 training that have been saved on the NHMA’s website.
d. Election of Officers - Trustee Amanda Loud explained that the Scribner Memorial Trustees elected officers (chair and secretary) at a previous meeting. They chose to leave the treasurer’s position unfilled with the anticipation that a member of the Trustees of the Trust Funds would be elected to the same position for both bodies, as there is similar responsibility. Trustee Walter Durack suggested that Trustee Amanda Loud act as chair of the Trustees of the Trust Funds and suggested he act as secretary until a third trustee can be appointed by the board of selectmen. There was quorum agreement for both positions.

e. Signatory Authority – Trustee Amanda Loud stated that the current slate of trustees are required to vote to grant themselves signatory authority over all capital reserve funds (CRFs) belonging to the town of Ashland, trust funds held by the town of Ashland, and the Scribner Memorial checking account at Meredith Village Savings Bank.

MOTION: Trustee Amanda Loud
Grant Trustee Amanda Loud and Trustee Walter Durack signatory authority over all CRFs belonging to the town of Ashland as well as all trust funds held by the town of Ashland.
SECOND: Trustee Walter Durack
DISCUSSION: None
VOTE: 2 – 0 (via roll call)
MOTION PASSED

f. Discussion of Blake Memorial and Memorial Park Trust Funds – Trustee Amanda Loud shared the current balances of the funds invested with Wells Fargo. At the close of markets on June 5, trust fund balances were as follows: Blake Memorial - $63,241.89 and Memorial Park - $60,811.32. Trustee Amanda Loud commented that both funds are showing signs of recovery since the market’s overall sharp downturn in March of this year. Trustee Amanda Loud further commented on the performance of either fund respective to how funds are invested. The Blake Memorial Fund has gained more than the Memorial Park Fund, but it is invested 100% in equities (stocks). Trustee Amanda Loud pointed out that annual fund advisory fees are approximately 1% of the fund balance and the expense ratios of the various mutual funds the Memorial Park and Blake trust funds are invested in vary, with some exceeding 1% annually.

Trustee Walter Durack commented on his research of the two funds as they are currently invested. He pointed out two conclusions from his research. First, the annual advisory fees charged by Wells Fargo, while in line with industry standards, he did not see the “value added” of active management of the investments by the investment firm. Walter pointed out low little “active” activity took place over the preceding six months. Second, the investment strategy for either fund is not apparent from how the funds are invested. Walter questioned
that if there are investment strategies for either fund, were the beneficiaries aware
of the investment strategies and were they in agreement with those strategies?

Trustee Amanda Loud commented that the Trustees of the Trust Funds needed to
complete two items immediately: first, review paperwork that accompanies the
Blake Memorial Fund and the Memorial Park Fund (currently, that paperwork is
not accounted for) to learn the parameters of the investments (spending
restrictions, etc.) and, second, meet with the fund beneficiaries (Ashland
Firefighters Association for the Blake Memorial fund and Memorial Park Trustees
for the Memorial Park fund) during a scheduled Trustees of the Trust Funds
meeting to review the documentation for the funds with them and learn their
needs for funds that have been invested.

Trustee Amanda Loud questioned the timeline from which investments held at
Wells Fargo should be moved to another investment firm. Trustee Walter Durack
stated that investments can be easily transferred as-is to a new investment firm.
He expressed his discomfort with leaving the investments with Wells Fargo for
much longer, suggesting that investments should be moved sooner rather than
later. For the fees paid to Wells Fargo, Walter did not feel that they were working
in the best interest of the trust funds and could be performing better with another
investment firm.

Trustee Amanda Loud clarified that the town’s investment policy, which must be
reviewed annually, covers only investments owned by the town (CRFs). Private
(charitable) trusts are not subject to the provisions of the town’s investment
policy.

IV. OLD BUSINESS – As this was the first meeting of the current slate of trustees, there
was no old business to discuss.

V. GENERAL DISCUSSION – the meeting was unexpectedly adjourned before
general discussion could be held.

VI. ADJOURNED – the trustees adjourned their meeting at 8:41 PM. Trustee Walter
Durack was called to another emergency. The Trustees of the Trust Funds will
reconvene at their next meeting on June 22, 2020.

Meeting minutes prepared by Secretary Walter Durack on June 7, 2020