



TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM

MASTER PLAN

Services & Facilities CHAPTER 4



Prepared by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)

Funded by 2022 EEA Planning Assistance Grant

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7.1 Introduction

Public services represent what the local government does to meet the needs of its residents and businesses. Public facilities are municipally owned improved properties that provide space for the administration of local government and the delivery of municipal programs and services. These concepts are fundamentally inseparable and best examined together.

Public services and facilities are essential to any community but can be costly. The planning process is vital to prioritizing needs and determining the allocation of municipal funds.

Ashburnham, being a rural community, does not always have the resources to fund a range of services and facilities. Because of this participation in the planning process from all community stakeholders is greatly important. This portion of the master plan aims to highlight current conditions and identify immediate needs, inform budgeting, and help plan for sustainable growth.

Boards, Committees & Departments

Departments

- Animal Control
- Assessors
- Building/Land Use Department –
Inspectional Services
- Council on Aging
- Fire Department
- Municipal Light Department
- Police Department
- Public Works
 - Highway Department
 - Municipal Grounds/Cemetery
Department
 - Water & Sewer Department
- Schools
 - John R. Briggs Elementary
 - Overlook Middle School
 - Oakmont Regional High School
- Stevens Memorial Library
- Tax Collector
- Town Accountant
- Town Administrator
- Town Clerk
- Treasurer

Boards & Committees

- Accessibility Committee
- Advisory Board
- Affordable Housing Trust Fund
Committee
- Agricultural Commission
- Board of Health
- Bylaw Review Committee
- Capital Planning Committee
- Community Events and Playground
Committee
- Complete Streets Committee
- Conservation Commission
- Cultural Council
- Economic Development
Commission
- Energy Committee
- Historical Commission
- Municipal Light Board
- Open Space and Recreation
Committee
- Planning Board
- Select Board
- Trust Fund Committee
- Water-Sewer Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals

7.2 Revenue Resources and Tax Implications

Table 7.1. FY22 Local Tax Rates

Community	FY2022 Tax Rate/\$1,000
Ashburnham	18.88
Ashby	17.69
Athol	16.05
Groton	17.19
Lancaster	19.45
Lunenburg	17.19
Sterling	15.25
Westminster	15.8
Winchendon	15.11

As shown in **Table 7.1**, Ashburnham's FY22 tax rate (\$18.88) is higher than all surrounding communities other than Lancaster. Ashburnham's tax rate had steadily increased until it hit a high in 2018 of \$23.40 but has since decreased over 19% to the current rate of \$18.88.

Table 7.2. Year 2022 Average Single Family Tax Bill

Community	Average Single-Family Value - 2012	Average Single-Family Value - 2022	Percent Change	Average Single-Family Tax Bill - 2012	Average Single-Family Tax Bill -2022	Percent Change
Ashburnham	204,859	292,769	42.91%	3,757	5,527	47.11%
Ashby	212,281	295,634	39.27%	3,486	5,230	50.03%
Athol	140,505	206,771	47.16%	2,161	3,319	53.59%
Groton	399,146	535,063	34.05%	6,418	9,198	43.32%
Lancaster	291,603	389,188	33.47%	5,231	7,570	44.71%
Lunenburg	248,038	374,392	50.94%	4,174	6,436	54.19%
Sterling	290,398	410,430	41.33%	4,545	6,259	37.71%
Westminster	231,402	341,704	47.67%	3,989	5,399	35.35%
Winchendon	174,894	242,405	38.60%	2,643	3,663	38.59%
STATE	358,687	525,781	46.58%	4,711	6,724	42.73%

Table 7.2 shows that Ashburnham's average single family tax bill for the year 2022 was below the state average and lower than four surrounding towns. Despite Ashburnham's average single family tax bill being below the state average, it is still higher than four surrounding towns, Ashby (\$5,230), Athol (\$3,319), Westminster (\$5,399), and Winchendon (\$3,663). Since 2012 the average single family tax bill in Ashburnham has increased 47%, slightly higher than the state average of 43% over the same time period.

Table 7.3. Year 2022 Average Assessed Valuation Per Household

Municipality	Average Single Family Value
Ashburnham	292,769
Ashby	295,634
Fitchburg	252,369
Gardner	237,944
Westminster	341,704
Winchendon	242,405

As shown in Table 7.3 Ashburnham's 2022 average assessed valuation per household (\$292,769) is higher than Fitchburg (\$252,369), Gardner (\$237,944), and Winchendon (\$242,405). According to the 2020 ACS 5-year estimates, the median home value in Ashburnham is \$276,600.

Table 7.4 below shows that residential property taxes accounted for 96.08% of the town's tax base which is higher than all compared surrounding towns. The Personal Property Levy is very low in the percentage of total levy in comparison with adjacent communities and the amount is extremely low compared to communities of similar size and total tax levy. There appears to be great potential for obtaining much needed revenue from this much under tapped resource.

Table 7.4. Year 2022 Local Tax Levies

Municipality	Residential Levy	Commercial Levy	Industrial Levy	Personal Property Levy	Total Levy	RO Levy as a % of Total	CIP Levy as a % of Total
Ashburnham	15,127,091	306,459	96,194	213,946	15,743,689	96.08	3.92%
Ashby	6,626,056	199,081	21,805	246,489	7,093,430	93.41	6.59%
Fitchburg	47,546,894	5,396,236	3,215,084	4,100,021	60,258,235	78.91	21.09%
Gardner	24,505,879	2,434,803	1,188,768	1,918,886	30,048,336	81.55	18.45%
Westminster	17,227,511	949,813	654,506	833,417	19,665,247	87.60	12.40%
Winchendon	12,476,553	603,701	217,436	468,018	13,765,708	90.64	9.36%

All tax data retrieved from the Massachusetts Dept. of Revenue <https://www.mass.gov/municipal-databank-data-analytics>

7.3 Baseline Conditions Analyses

Local Government

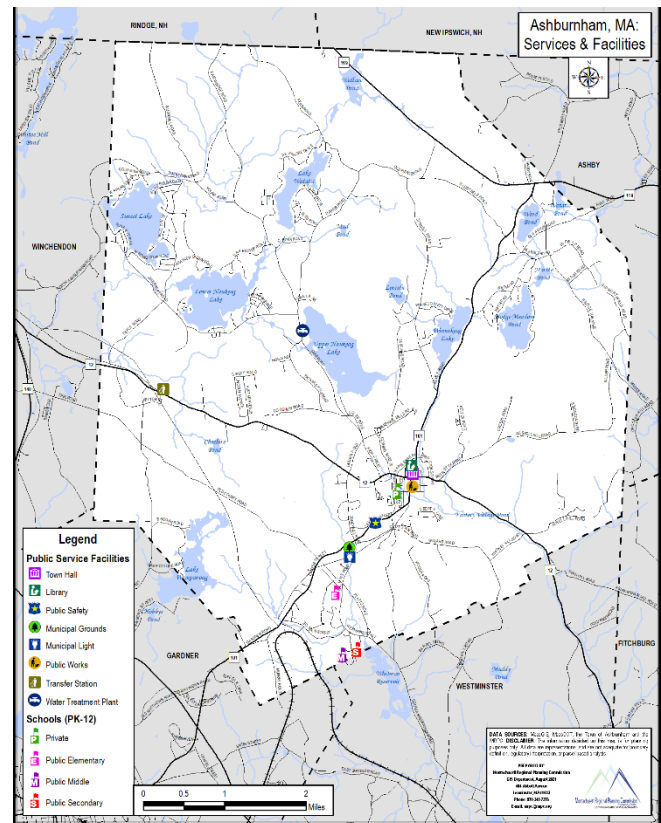
Under the general direction of the Select Board, the Town Administrator, as Chief Fiscal Officer and Chief Procurement Officer, is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Select Board. The Town Administrator prepares and manages an annual fiscal plan; plans for initiatives pertaining to the community and the economic growth of the Town; prepares long term projections for capital acquisition; acts as an advisor to various Town boards and commissions, administers collective bargaining agreements; implements directives from the Select Board. The Town Administrator supervises Public Safety and directs the Police and Fire Departments; directs Public Works, municipal inspections and other assigned municipal departments, boards and commissions and ensures that all applicable laws, rules and regulations are enforced.

Public Facilities

Table 7.5. Public Facilities

Building	Location
Town Hall	32 Main Street
Stevens Memorial Library	20 Memorial Drive
Public Safety Building	99 Central Street
Municipal Grounds	8 Williams Road
Municipal Light	24 Williams Rd
Public Works (Highway & Water)	17 Central St
Transfer Station	356 Winchendon Rd
Ashburnham-Winchendon Water Filtration Plant	204 Lake Road

Map 7.1 Public Facilities Locations



Ashburnham Town Hall



Address: 32 Main Street

Year Built: 1905 remodeled: 1981¹

The Town Administration operates out of the Ashburnham Town Hall located at 32 Main Street and is open Monday-Thursday from 7am-5pm. The following departments and boards, included but not limited to, are located within this town facility:

- Board of Assessors
- Council on Aging
- Tax Collector
- Town Accountant
- Town Administrator
- Town Clerk
- Treasurer

Stevens Memorial Library



Address: 20 Memorial Drive

Built: 1906

Effective Year Built: 1988

In 1988, the Stevens Memorial Library moved to its current location in the building that was previously home to the Dolly Whitney Adams School. The building is still often referred to as the Dolly Whitney Adams Building.

AMLP Headquarters



Address: 24 Williams Road

Built: 2003

Effective Year Built: 2016

The Municipal Light Department has been operating out of their headquarters at 24 Williams Road, Ashburnham since 2002 which contains offices and an equipment storage facility. They have three solar arrays located at Oakmont Regional High School, the Ashburnham Public Safety Complex and adjacent to the AMLP Headquarters.



Ashburnham Public Safety Complex

Address: 99 Central Street

Year Built: 2008

Effective Year Built: 2019

The Ashburnham Public Safety Complex is home to the town's fire department, police department and emergency dispatch departments.

Department of Public Works Facilities Main Garage



Address: 17 Central Street

Year Built: 1960

Effective Year Built: 1995

Prior to 1871 the site at 17 Central Street was undeveloped. In the mid-1870s a railroad depot and roundhouse were constructed in this location and stood until 1925 when Ashburnham Station was dismantled. In 1938 the Ashburnham Highway Department facility was constructed at this location where it remains to this day (TRC,

2003). As of 2023, both the Highway and Water and Sewer Departments operate out of the facilities at 17 Central Street. The facilities at 17 Central Street are sometimes referred to as the "Highway Barn Site".

In March of 2016 the Ashburnham DPW released a flyer explaining the importance of relocating the DPW main facility. According to the flyer the current DPW main facility was built in 1960 for a 1960's era DPW workforce and fleet. The space is undersized and inefficient, employee support systems (lockers, bathrooms, showers) are undersized and "quite frankly unacceptable". The DPW also has a multimillion-dollar equipment and vehicle fleet which is inefficiently stored. The current state of the DPW main facility poses safety concerns for employees and the town.



Side Garage and Salt Shed

Address: 17 Central Street

Year Built: 1998

Effective Year Built: 2011



Municipal Grounds/Cemetery Building

Address: 8 Williams Road

Year Built: 2003

Effective Year Built: 2016

The Municipal Grounds Department also has a building for cold storage located on Meetinghouse Hill.

Stevens Municipal Building



Address: 30 Main Street

Built: 1890

Effective Year Built: 1954

This building is the former home to the Stevens Memorial Library but is now home to the Frederick Historical Piano Collection.

Cemetery Garage at Meetinghouse Hill



Location: Cushing Street

Water Towers

Locations: Cushing Street, Hosley Rd



Transfer Station

Address: 356 Winchendon Road

Also known as the Town Dump. This location has multiple outbuildings but there is no building data available.



Ashburnham-Winchendon Water Filtration Plant

Address: 204 Lake Road

Year Built: 2000

Effective Year Built: 2011

The water filtration plant is located in Ashburnham and serves both Ashburnham and Winchendon. It is jointly owned by the two towns but managed and operated by Veolia Water North America LLC.

Schools**Table 7.6 Public Schools**

Name	Address	Year Built, Renovated
John R. Briggs Elementary	96 Williams Road	2013
Overlook Middle	10 Oakmont Drive	1995
Oakmont Regional High	9 Oakmont Drive	1960, 2004

John R. Briggs Elementary School

Address: 96 Williams Road

Year Built: 2013

Effective Year Built: 2014

Overlook Middle School

Address: 9 Oakmont Drive

Year Built: 1995

Effective Year Built: 1996

**Oakmont Regional High School**

Address: 10 Oakmont Drive

Year Built: 1960

Effective Year Built: 1988

Oakmont Regional High School is located in both Ashburnham and Westminister.

Departments**Animal Control**

The Regionalized Animal Control Division of Gardner, Hubbardston, Westminister, and Ashburnham consists of three full time officers and are available to respond to domestic animal-related calls seven days a week from 7am-5pm and emergency calls 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. The Regional Animal Control Facility is located at 899 West Broadway, Gardner, MA and is committed to providing shelter, medical attention, food for the stray, homeless and surrendered animals in Gardner, Hubbardston, Westminister, and Ashburnham.

Duties include enforcement of state and local laws regarding animals, including enforcement of the leash law, lost/found dogs, and loose livestock. Complaints regarding animals and animal cruelty are investigated by the Animal Control Department. Dead animals on public ways are also handled by the Animal Control Department.

The Animal Control Department also offers an array of services including but are not limited to pet adoptions, lost and found, rabies education, animal sheltering (at the animal control facility), cruelty investigations, low-cost vaccination clinics, pet licensing, volunteer and foster opportunities and emergency disaster response.

Assessors

The Board of Assessors is required to assess all Real and Personal Property within the confines of the Town of Ashburnham, at full, fair cash value, this includes cyclical as well as Recertification (every 5 years) which are required by the Department of Revenue. In addition, the Assessing Department must administer the processing of motor vehicle and boat excise tax bills, which are generated from the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles. The Assessor's Office is the prime source of information regarding title and valuation of all Real and Personal Property accounts for the Town.

The main programs which the Board of Assessors is engaged in yearly are as follows:

Valuation

- Residential
- Personal Property
- Sales Ratio Study
- Commercial/Industrial
- I & E Study
- Abatements
- Permit Evaluation

Special Taxation

- Chapter Land
- Senior Work-Off
- Senior Exemptions (70 years or older)
- Veteran Exemptions

Motor Vehicle / Boat

- Excise Tax
- Abatements

Building/Land Use Department

The Land Use Department is responsible for providing a full range of services to the citizens of Ashburnham for the Building Department, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Planning Board and Board of Health. Services include the issuance of permits, review of plans, and field inspection of projects. The individual inspectors are responsible for ensuring work sites are inspected and that all work being performed follows Massachusetts State Codes, Federal Guidelines, and the Town of Ashburnham's Bylaws

Council on Aging

The mission of the Council on Aging is to identify the needs of the elderly in the community and provide appropriate programs and services to meet those needs. The Council is dedicated to this by offering health and nutrition programs and socialization, referral services and transportation. The Council on Aging works in conjunction with state and local organizations to enhance the quality of life for elders through available resources. Many seniors see the Senior Center as a "home away from home."

The Council on Aging currently has one staff member and six board members. The Council on Aging currently owns a van intended for shuttle services but lacks sufficient staffing to utilize it effectively.

Fire Department

The Ashburnham fire department headquarters is located within the Ashburnham public safety complex at 99 Central Street, Ashburnham. The fire department has 3 full time members and 45 volunteer

members and is led by their Fire Chief Robert Plant. Currently, their vehicle fleet consists of two engines, two forestry vehicles, one tanker, one ambulance, one medic vehicle and one boat.

Municipal Light Department

For over a century, Ashburnham Electric Light Plant has been providing electrical power to the residents, businesses, and institutions of Ashburnham. AMPL is owned by its customers and their goal is to provide low rates and dependable service provided by people that are invested in the community they serve. The AMPL has nine employees, management consists of a general manager and assistant general manager, office staff consists of an accountant and customer service/billing, and the line workers consist of a working foreman, two lead linemen, one lineman first class and an apprentice.

In 2021 the AMLP received a grant to install a new public electric vehicle charging station with four ports at Main Street and River Street. This brings the town's total number of charging ports to six with the other two being located at the Stevens Memorial Library.

Police Department

The Ashburnham police department is headed by the Chief of Police, Chris W. Conrad. The Police department's personnel are comprised of an admin assistant, one lieutenant, three sergeants, two detectives, nine patrol officers, three civilian traffic control staff, one head dispatcher and five dispatchers. The cruiser fleet consists of five fully marked units, and three unmarked units. The department houses traffic and crowd support trailers/equipment.

Public Works

The Department of Public Works provides a myriad of professional services to the public. The Department of Public Works comprises three departments which are the Highway Department, Municipal Grounds Department, and the Water & Sewer Department. The DPW is on call twenty-four hours a day to protect the community during emergencies.

Highway Division

Ashburnham's Highway Dept. provides essential services to the public that include road maintenance, snow plowing, road salting/sanding, pothole repair and other essential services. In addition, they provide support to all other municipal departments in the town including the Transfer Station.

Municipal Grounds/Cemetery Department

The Municipal Grounds Department are responsible for the care and maintenance of all Public Grounds and Cemeteries throughout the Town of Ashburnham. Ashburnham's Municipal Grounds Dept. provides beautiful, safe, and clean places for residents, businesses, and visitors to enjoy.

Water & Sewer Department

The Water & Sewer Dept. is responsible for monitoring the drinking and wastewater systems within the town. The Water & Sewer Department operates out of the DPW main facility at 17 Central Street. Ashburnham's drinking water comes straight from the spring fed Upper Naukeag Lake. Ashburnham has a water filtration treatment plant located at 204 Lake Road on Upper

Naukeag Lake but the Water & Sewer Department does not manage or operate out of the water filtration plant. The water filtration treatment plant is owned jointly by Ashburnham and Winchendon and is managed by Veolia Water North America LLC.

Related Goal: Relocate the DPW main facility.

Tax Collector

The Collector's office is responsible for the collection of all assessed taxes in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws. Issues and collects real estate tax, personal property tax, motor vehicle & boat excise tax. They have two staff members, one Treasurer/Collector, and one Assistant Treasurer/Collector.

Town Accountant

The Town Accountant is responsible for keeping a complete set of records of all Town appropriations, receipts, and expenditures in accordance with Mass. General Laws. The Town Accountant prepares all accounts payable, and payroll warrants for the Town Departments, as well as all monthly and annual reports for local, state, and federal purposes.

Town Administrator

The Town Administrator prepares and manages an annual fiscal plan; plans for initiatives pertaining to the community and the economic growth of the Town; prepares long term projections for capital acquisition; acts as an advisor to various Town boards and commissions, administers collective bargaining agreements; implements directives from the Select Board. The Town Administrator supervises Public Safety and directs the Police and Fire Departments; directs Public Works, municipal inspections and other assigned municipal departments, boards and commissions and ensures that all applicable laws, rules and regulations are enforced.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is the chief election official and conducts voter registration and absentee balloting, oversees polling places, election officers, and the general conduct of all elections. The Clerk directs the preparation of ballots, polling places, voting equipment, voting lists, administers campaign finance laws, certifies nomination papers and initiative petitions, and serves on the Board of Registrars. The Clerk conducts the annual town census and prepares the street list of residents.

The Clerk records and certifies all official actions of the Town, including town meeting legislation, and appropriations. The Clerk provides certified copies of vital records (births, deaths & marriages), issues marriage licenses, dog licenses and business certificates and assists in genealogical research for the public. The Town Clerk is the official keeper of town records and the Town Seal.

The Clerk administers the oath of office to all elected and appointed members of local boards and committees and informs them of the State's Open Meeting and Conflict of Interest Laws, maintains records of adopted municipal codes, local bylaws, oaths of office, resignations and appointments and submits general bylaw and zoning changes to the Attorney General for approval.

Town Planner

The town planner provides professional management, support, and coordination to the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, and the Zoning Board of Appeals. The town planner performs technical reviews and evaluations of applications and submissions to the Boards and the Commission.

Schools

Ashburnham is home to three public schools, John R. Briggs Elementary (grades PK-5), Overlook Middle School (grades 6-8) and Oakmont Regional High School (grades 9-12). The John R. Briggs Elementary serves the town of Ashburnham and Overlook Middle School and Oakmont Regional serve the towns of Ashburnham and Westminster.

Ashburnham students are also eligible to attend the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School Located in Fitchburg. The school is a four-year technical high school that prepares students for higher education as well as entering the workforce. There are 1,452 students with 66 coming from Ashburnham, grades 9-12.

Table 7.7. School Enrollment

School Name	Total Enrollment	Teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio
Briggs Elementary	524	38	13.8
Overlook Middle School	549	37	14.8
Oakmont Regional High School	665	48	13.7

Data Retrieved from Massachusetts Dept. of Education Website January 30, 2023, <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>

John R. Briggs Elementary School

The John R. Briggs Elementary School is a public school located at 96 Williams Road in Ashburnham serving children from Pre-K to grade 5. Although it is a part of the Ashburnham/Westminster Regional School District it only serves students from the town of Ashburnham. Briggs Elementary has 524 students and 38 teachers giving the school a 13.8 student/teacher ratio, higher than the state average of 11.9.

Overlook Middle School

The Overlook Middle School is located at 10 Oakmont Drive in Ashburnham next to the Oakmont Regional High School serving children from grade 6 to grade 8. Both Overlook and Oakmont serve children from Ashburnham and Westminster. Overlook has 549 students and 37 teachers giving the school a 14.8 student/teacher ratio, higher than the state average of 11.9.

Oakmont Regional High School

Oakmont Regional High School is located at 9 Oakmont Drive Ashburnham serving students from grade 9 to grade 12. Oakmont has 658 students and 48 teachers giving the school a 13.7 student/teacher ratio, higher than the state average of 11.9. Oakmont offers Honors and College Preparatory classes as well as several Advanced Placement courses that provide a college level challenge as established by national guidelines. Most of Oakmont's students from the most recent graduating class went on to college with 64% of students going on to four-year colleges or universities after graduation, and another 17% of students going on to two-year colleges. 19% of

students from the most recent graduating class went into the workforce, military service, or specialized training.

Stevens Memorial Library

A six-person elected Board of Library trustees oversees the library's operations and meets on the third Tuesday of every month. The library has five staff members, Library Director, Youth Services Librarian, Circulation Manager, Senior Library Assistant, and Circulation Assistant. The library is open five days a week, Monday, Tuesday Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday and is closed on Thursday and Sunday.

The library is a town-wide resource for educational, cultural, historical, and recreational print and electronic information for citizens, businesses and residents of Ashburnham, MA and neighboring communities. The in-library resources include an extensive collection of books for all ages, newspapers and periodicals, online resources for reading and learning, a large print collection of both fiction and non-fiction books, historical and genealogical collections, DVDs and other video and audio media, and takeout technology. Ashburnham's Stevens Memorial Library also offers many additional benefits such as Meeting Rooms for events & exhibits, Museum & Attraction Passes and more. The library offers a level 2 Electric Vehicle charging station.

Boards and Committees

Accessibility Committee

The Ashburnham Accessibility Committee promotes the inclusion of persons with diverse disabilities in the activities, programs, and services within the Town of Ashburnham. It aims to ensure that Town Residents with disabilities have an Equal Opportunity in accessing municipal buildings, programs, services, telecommunication, accommodations, and recreational opportunities.

The Ashburnham Accessibility Committee will collaborate and advise Town Officials, Town Committees, and the Ashburnham Community to:

- Raise awareness of Town Residents and Officials about the Town's needs including but not limited to physical accessibility, communications, and community programs.
- Coordinate the completion of Ashburnham's ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan.
- Consult with Town Officers and Departments to identify community needs under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Assist municipal officials in ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations that affect people with disabilities.
- Provide a referral database of area resources and services for Residents with diverse disabilities.
- Advocate for accessible community access for all Residents.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is made up of seven members, all volunteers, who are appointed by the Town Moderator for a term of three years. The Town's General Bylaws direct the Advisory Board to give recommendations that it deems best for the interests of the Town and its citizens on all department budgets, transfer requests, warrant articles, zoning articles and by law articles. The Advisory Board's goal

is to give Town residents an objective viewpoint on all matters to be considered at Annual and Special Town Meetings. Their recommendations are intended to ensure the residents of Ashburnham are receiving the best mix of services for the amount of taxes being collected. Since the members of the Advisory Board are appointed by the Town Moderator, they act as a check and balance to the Town's elected boards and committees as well as those individuals, boards and committees appointed by the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator.

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee

The purpose of the Trust shall be to provide for preservation and creation of affordable housing in the Town of Ashburnham for the benefit of low and moderate-income households.

The Trustees are authorized to acquire by gift, purchase, or otherwise, real estate and personal property with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting and/or Town Counsel as directed. All property held by the Trust and the net earnings shall be used exclusively for the preservation and creation of affordable housing.

Agricultural Commission

The Agricultural Commission shall serve as facilitators for encouraging the pursuit of agriculture in Ashburnham; shall promote agricultural-based economic opportunities in Town; act as mediators, advocates, educators, and/or negotiators on farming and forestry issues; shall work for preservation of prime agricultural and forestry lands; and shall pursue all initiatives appropriate to creating a sustainable agricultural community.

Board of Health

The Board of Health (BOH) is a five-member, elected Board who enforces the state and local health and environmental codes. Ashburnham is also serviced by the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health who assists the Ashburnham BOH with community health threats. The BOH is currently working on opening an Emergency Dispensing Site.

Bylaw Review Committee

The purpose of the Bylaw Review Committee is to review and make recommendations to re-codify, amend, eliminate, or add to the Town of Ashburnham bylaws. The goals, objectives and priorities of the committee are listed below.

- Update and clarify the definitions found in both the Zoning By-Laws and the Municipal By-laws.
- Clean up grammar, punctuation, numbering, syntax, etc. throughout the document.
- Work on ways to improve consistent enforcement of the By-laws and support the efforts to manage enforcement effectively.
- Clarify and tighten the language in the By-laws to help make them easier to understand and to enforce.
- Work towards making certain that the By-laws reflect current generally accepted practices utilized by similar Massachusetts towns, are in alignment with state regulations, and reflect the preferences of most Ashburnham residents.

- Make recommendations to the Board of Selectman to add, modify, and/or eliminate specific By-laws. After their review the Board of Selectman will request input from Town Counsel as appropriate.
- Once Town Counsel has given their legal opinion a public hearing will be held by the By-Law Review Committee to obtain feedback from residents prior to town meeting.
- Proposals that appear to have public support will be added to a town meeting warrant to be voted on.

Capital Planning Committee

The Capital Planning Committee is appointed by the Board of Selectmen and is composed of one member of the Board of Selectmen, two members of the Advisory Board, the Town Treasurer, and two citizens-at-large. The Town Accountant, Treasurer and Town Administrator are ex officio, non-voting members of this Committee. The Capital Planning Committee is charged with studying proposed capital projects and improvements that involve tangible assets and projects that have a useful life of at least three years and have a dollar value of \$15,000 or greater. This Committee also develops policies and procedures as necessary, to establish and maintain a Capital Improvement Program.

Community Events and Playground Committee

The Community Events and Playground Committee is made up of seven members, all volunteers, appointed by the Town Administrator annually. The Community Events and Playground oversees policies and procedures of the Town's playgrounds and parks. The Committee also plans different events in the Town such as Summer Concerts, Easter Egg Hunt, and Holiday Tree Lighting, just to name a few.

Complete Streets Committee

The Complete Streets Committee is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Complete Streets Policy and identifying existing practices, if any, that may act as impediments to implementation.

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission is a five-member Commission charged with the responsibility of administering and enforcing the State Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Chap. 131, Section 40) and its applicable State Regulations (310 CMR 10.00). They also administer the Ashburnham Wetlands Protection Bylaw and its respective Rules and Regulations. In general, the Commission has jurisdiction over all activities within lands subject to flooding, vegetated wetlands, lands that are within 100 feet of vegetated wetlands, and lands within 200 feet of perennial streams. This means that any activity that takes place on lands under the Commission's jurisdiction is subject to its review and approval before the proposed activity can legally commence.

Cultural Council

The Ashburnham Cultural Council (ACC) is a local nonprofit organization that provides financial support, services or other programs for arts organizations and individual artists in the community or region. ACC runs under the auspices of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. During ACC's grant cycle, they aim to give support to local public programs that encourage education, diversity, and excellence in the arts.

The Cultural Council is made up of volunteers who are appointed by the Board of Selectmen for a term of three years. The Cultural Council functions under guidelines established by the MA Cultural Council (MCC) which allocates funding to each community. The purpose of the Cultural Council is to support public projects that promote access, education, diversity and excellence in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences in the community. The Council re-grants the state funds to individuals and organizations in Town as part of a two-tiered process in which the Council acts on applications, which are then reviewed by the MCC for adherence to guidelines set forth in the state law and regulations.

For FY23 the Cultural Council received \$7300 from the MCC, funding is based on the town census.

Economic Development Commission

The Ashburnham Economic Development Commission (AEDC) is an advisory commission to the Ashburnham Select Board to assist, counsel, and advise the residents of Ashburnham, the Select Board, other Town Boards and Departments, and Ashburnham businesses, both existing and proposed, on the merits of Economic Development.

The AEDC is committed to promoting balanced, long term economic development by helping to attract, retain, and grow businesses through the implementation of an action plan of policy changes, infrastructure investment and programmatic activities while maintaining the social, cultural, historical, and environmental attributes of our community.

The AEDC is made up of five members with representatives from the Advisory Board, the Historic Commission, Cushing Academy, the Select Board, and Planning Board.

Energy Committee

Ashburnham's Energy Committee has been in existence since 2013 and is comprised of three members. Through FY20 the Energy Committee has received \$479,612 in grants used to reduce the town's energy consumption by over 20%. In 2021, Ashburnham was recognized as one of 29 communities in the state to have achieved energy reductions at or above 15% for three consecutive years.

Historical Commission

The Historical Commission is a five-member volunteer board appointed by the Board of Selectmen for a term of three years. Under state law, the Historical Commission is responsible for developing an inventory for the identification and protection of the historic properties in the Town, including areas, buildings, monuments, sites, burial grounds, and structures.

Open Space & Recreation Committee

The Open Space & Recreation Committee (OSRC) is an advisory group that promotes land/water conservation and recreation in support of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) approved by the MA Division of Conservation Services on 7 August 2017.

OSRC members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen for three-year terms. The OSRC works with Town Departments, Boards and Commissions, as well as State/Federal government agencies, private organizations, other land trusts and landowners to develop opportunities for land and water conservation, and public recreation.

The goals of the Open Space & Recreation Committee are as follows:

1. Implement the multi-year open space and recreation goals of the Town's OSRP, track progress in the achievement of these goals, and document/record updates and changes to these goals to be included in the next OSRP, scheduled to be prepared in 2023.
2. Protect and conserve the rural, historic character and natural heritage of the Town.
3. Identify opportunities for and assist the Town and private landowners in protecting, conserving, and managing natural landscapes and resources.
4. Maintain/increase existing and create new recreation opportunities on conserved land and water resources, such as multi-use trails and access for water-based recreation.
5. Provide information, assistance and advice to Town Departments, Boards and Commissions, regarding active/ongoing and potential future land conservation/management activities, as well as opportunities for public recreation.
6. Provide and enhance opportunities for eco-tourism and assist the Town in its promotion.
7. Identify and promote opportunities to work with neighboring communities to connect conserved lands and to create trail systems and other recreation-based activities that cross Town borders.

The OSRC's primary goal in 2021 was updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan, last completed in 2017. With the help of the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission an update of the OSRP will be completed in 2023. An approved OSRP allows the community to be eligible for Department of Conservation Services grant programs.

Planning Board

The Ashburnham Planning Board operates under the authority of the Subdivision Control Law enacted under Chapter 41, Section 81A-81GG of the Massachusetts General Laws.

The Board is comprised of five elected members and one appointed associate member, who are empowered to regulate the subdivision of land under the provisions of the Subdivision Control Law for the purposes of protecting the safety, convenience, and welfare of the inhabitants of the Town of Ashburnham.

The Board also issues Special Permits for Common Driveways, Open Space Residential Developments, Administers the Scenic Road regulations and Low Impact Development (LIP) Bylaw/Regulations.

The Board is also responsible for preparing careful studies pertaining to planning issues in the Town and recommending zoning amendments for Town Meeting approval.

Select Board

The Select Board serves as Chief Executive of the Town and members are elected for a three-year term. As Ashburnham's principal elective officers, and in addition to their responsibilities under state and local law, the Select Board has general supervision over all matters that are not specifically delegated by law or by vote of the Town to some other officer or board. The Select Board has the authority and responsibility

to provide general policy direction; issue administrative orders; appoint and serve as hiring authority for Town Boards, Committees and officials who administer Town Government; engage and supervise Town Legal Counsel and approve actions in litigation; act as Town licensing authority issuing alcohol, used car and repairman licenses as well as common victualler licenses.

The Select Board meet on the first and third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Public Safety Building in the Training Room and their meetings are broadcasted live on the local cable network AWCATV.

Water Sewer Commission

The Water/Sewer Commission is made up of five members, all volunteers, who are appointed by the Board of Selectmen for a term of three years. The Water/Sewer Commission oversees the Ashburnham Water/Sewer Department. Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners oversees approximately 53 miles of water lines with 1,200 service connections.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Ashburnham Zoning Board of Appeals is a five member, appointed Board. It is responsible for reviewing Variance Requests, Special Permits and Appeals under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A in order to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the inhabitants of the Town of Ashburnham.

7.4 Goals and Actions

Goal 1: Identify ways to better utilize and improve municipal facilities and services.

Action 1: *Create and maintain an inventory of all current town-owned buildings and facilities to monitor conditions and prioritize necessary improvements.*

Action 2: *Update and maintain ADA Self-Inventory and Transition Plan to ensure that public buildings and facilities are accessible to all people.*

Action 3: *Digitize existing maps and any additional information that would be used by the town in any current and future work.*

Goal 2: Identify sites for the location and relocation of new and existing facilities and services.

Action 1: *Identify locations for a new fire station serving North Ashburnham.*

Action 2: *Develop a plan for the relocation of the senior center which emphasizes increased convenience and accessibility and provides better accommodations for activities and programs.*

Action 3: *Identify site and develop an action plan for the relocation of the DPW facility to provide for facility improvements, increased functionality, and enhanced capabilities and allow for more appropriate land use of the current location.*

Goal 3: Implement ways to improve recreation in town, meeting the goals and desires identified in public surveys for the Master Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Action 1: *Continue with the Planning Process for the redevelopment and revitalization of Winchester Park and a public Riverfront Park along River Street and Maple Avenue.*

Action 2: *Conduct a feasibility analysis and conceptual plan for the development and operation of a public waterfront recreation facility.*

Goal 4: Improve inter- and intra-committee communication to better serve residents of the town.

Action 1: *Identify strategies to implement mediation between committees.*

Action 2: *Identify possible changes to the town bylaws to make the committees' roles, responsibilities, and powers more explicit.*

ⁱ Effective year built is listed when a building is completely gutted and rebuilt. In general, the effective year built takes precedence over the year built in the determination of assessed value. (<https://icare.fairfaxcounty.gov/ffxcare/content/desc.htm>)