



Town of Avon Newsletter

ISSUE XLV

January 2015

FY 2015/2016 Budget Process

The process is well underway to prepare the FY 2015/2016 budget that takes effect on July 1, 2015. All town departments have submitted their capital and operating budgets, and Town Council will review the Town Manager's proposed budget at a workshop scheduled for February 7th. Residents who are interested in participating in the process are encouraged to attend the following meetings, during which details of the budget will be discussed:

Town Council Budget Workshop: The workshop will be held on Saturday, February 7th in the Selectmen's Chamber at Town Hall beginning at 8:00 a.m. and ending in the early afternoon. The complete budget calendar is available on line at: www.avonct.gov.

Board of Finance Meetings: The public hearing on the budget will be held on Monday, April 13th at 7:00 p.m. at the Avon Senior Center. Residents wishing to provide the Board of Finance with input about the budget are welcomed to attend.

Avonct.gov

In late November, the Town of Avon launched a new municipal website: www.avonct.gov. The new site was developed by Virtual Towns & Schools, our long-time web hosts, in conjunction with a committee of Town of Avon staff who provided input on layout, design and navigation as well as most of the content. In addition to an improved look, the new site also provides simplified navigation and a mobile version that displays well on tablets and smartphones. Another new feature allows Town staff to add and edit content from any internet connected computer, which will make timely updates easier to post. The previous webpage required special software to be licensed and installed before staff could make changes to website content.

All of the old favorite features, such as the community calendar and email subscriptions to Avon news and meeting agendas, are still available. If you have our old site bookmarked, it should redirect you automatically to the corresponding new page, but if you have any trouble finding the information you need, the homepage provides a search box for the entire site as well as indexes for the most common information requested by residents, businesses and visitors.

Although almost a year of planning went into designing www.avonct.gov, any good website is constantly under revision to keep it current and relevant, so don't hesitate to pass your feedback along. There is a CONTACT US button on the homepage and we would love to hear from you.

Solarize Avon

The Town is very pleased to have been selected to participate in the Solarize CT Program. The Solarize CT program links communities with highly-qualified solar installers to help homeowners, non-profits and business owners install solar electricity systems at very low prices. Our Solarize Avon program began in November as we hosted our first workshop for residents with our partner Astrum Solar. We are sponsoring three additional workshops on January 13th, February 10th and March 4th. All workshops will be at the Avon Free Public Library at 7 p.m. Please note the program ends March 27, 2015.

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Avon Chamber of Commerce “Local First” Program

The Avon Chamber of Commerce introduces an exciting new discount program called “**Local First**”. Few realize what riches can be found right in their own backyard. “**Local First**”, an initiative of the Avon Chamber of Commerce, is trying to change that, at least for people who live or work in the Avon area.



The mission of the “**Local First**” initiative is, to “present the Avon Chamber to the community as a way to increase the visibility of its members,” only speaks to half of the benefits available to local residents. Soon, close to 8000 homes in Avon will have access to deals, discounts and perhaps, most importantly, information on local merchants, service providers, restaurants, lodging and more.

As part of the campaign, key tags and cards will be distributed to Avon residents, entitling the holder to dozens of deals at many of the hundreds of local Chamber member businesses. “**Local First**” tags, brochures, signs and participants will be seen throughout the community in store fronts, offices and local shops, alerting card holders that they are “**Local First**” participants. “**Local First**” will be hitting homes and businesses in early 2015.

Forty-nine businesses have already committed to offering special discounts to Avon residents and employees who work in the community. Participating member businesses benefit from a range of free advertising opportunities, while residents gain ways to save money on what they’re already buying (or always wanted but didn’t dare) by supporting local businesses.

For further information on this exciting new program, please contact the Avon Chamber of Commerce at avonchamber@sbcglobal.net or by calling 860.675.4832.

Please go to the Avon Chamber website www.AvonChamber.com and click on the “Local First” button to view participating local businesses for their discounts and promotions. Be sure to check back often as new participants and offers are being added regularly!

The largest local business group

The Avon Chamber of Commerce has approximately 350 members. With the picturesque setting surrounding these local businesses, it makes for a great location for many active and interesting companies to operate close to home.

Member businesses account for over 4000 local jobs while fueling the Farmington Valley with millions of dollars in property taxes and economic impact. Avon Chamber companies are high technology solutions providers, manufacturers of precision components sold around the world, consulting firms, restaurants, lodging, interesting shops and so much more among the diverse business mix.

The group succeeds without any town, local, state or federal funding. All operating costs are shouldered by the membership and donations. The organization serves as an economic development engine, philanthropic provider and an innovative community leader.

Everything from public policy advocacy and educational programs to networking and charitable activities are included in the array of opportunities available for area businesses who choose to participate.

In 2015 the Avon Chamber of Commerce will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. This chamber has a great history of supporting the businesses in the Avon area and looks forward to the next 50 years. A celebration is slated for the fall of 2015, look for more information in the coming year.

Look for your “Local First” Brochure and Key Tags coming to your mailbox soon and we thank you for your participation with the Avon Chamber of Commerce!

Go to the Avon Chamber website www.AvonChamber.com and click on the “Local First” button.

THINK “Local First”



Live Fire Training Facility Update

From Fundraising Co-Chairs Jamie DiPace and Jim Speich

Throughout 2014, the Avon Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD) and Town of Farmington Fire Department (TFFD) worked hard to raise money for a joint live fire training facility to be built in Farmington. The good news is we are more than halfway to the \$1 million needed. Money raised to date totals more than \$600,000.

We are grateful for every penny given to help us get this far. We need a total of \$1 million to make this facility a reality.

About Fire Training

When it comes to fire training, there's no such thing as enough. As volunteers who train to the level of career firefighter, members of the AVFD and TFFD are required to recertify at least annually. Our Departments are partnering to build a new live fire training facility, allowing members to retain the proficiency of their special skills. Firefighters from both towns will be able to practice and improve their skills in a realistic setting with a more reasonable time commitment, learning how to better protect themselves so they can better protect the residents of Avon and Farmington and their property.

Donations may be made via check made out to the Avon Volunteer Fire Department and mailed to the AVFD at 25 Darling Drive in Avon, CT 06001. Online donations may be made through the AVFD website at www.avonvfd.org.

Tax Relief For Elderly and Disabled Homeowners

In November 2014, the Town Council passed a two year extension of the Town's Elderly Property Tax Relief Program. Homeowners who were age 65 or older or totally disabled may be eligible for up to \$2,150 (for a married couple) or \$1,900 (for an unmarried individual) in property tax relief. To be eligible, you must be 65 or older by 12/31/14, your adjusted gross income plus social security has to be \$55,000 or less, and you must have owned your home on October 1, 2014. Applications must be received by May 15, 2015. If you have any questions or feel you might be eligible, please contact the Assessor's Office at (860) 409-4335 for a confidential appointment.

Avon Free Public Library

A special look at the fashion of Downton Abbey, reflecting the change in political and social landscapes over time. Feed your Downton Abbey fever! Saturday, February 7, 2015, 2:00 pm, Avon Library Community Room.

Presented by Susan Jerome, Collections Manager of the Historical Textile and Costume Collection, University of Rhode Island. Free, no registration required.



Downton Abbey: Fashion and Social Change

Presented by Susan Jerome, Collections Manager of the
Historic Textile and Costume Collection, University of Rhode Island



A program that highlights the social, political and technological changes that influence the fashion choices within each season of this popular show.

Saturday, February 7, 2015 2pm Free. No registration required.



From the Avon Volunteer Fire Department

Snow Removal Reminder - As the snow piles up, please make sure to dig out any and all fire hydrants near your home or office. It is imperative that firefighters be able to access the hydrants quickly when needed.

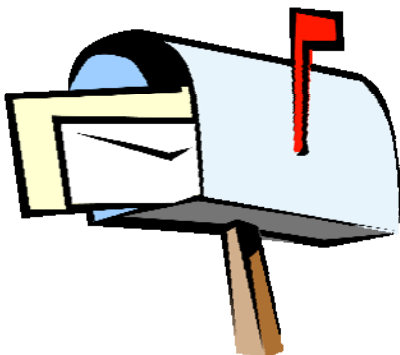
Citizens' Fire Academy - Have you ever wondered what an Avon Volunteer Firefighter does? Would you like to find out? Join the Avon Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD) Citizens' Fire Academy and see for yourself in a fun-filled environment. Students in the Citizens' Fire Academy learn how to put on firefighter's gear, use a fire hose, and rescue a victim during a mock automobile accident.

The Citizens' Fire Academy meets on Thursdays from 6:30-9:00 p.m. Classes begin April 2, 2015, and run through May 21, 2015. The mock automobile accident takes place during a special Saturday morning class which also includes the involvement of other emergency services such as Life Star helicopter, AMR ambulance and Rescue 2, a paramedic unit from UCONN Health Center (unless on medical calls).

Among the many topics to be covered in 2015 are fire behavior, hazardous materials, training of firefighters, tours of all 4 firehouses, fire prevention, hoses and water flow, and the history of the AVFD. Application deadline: March 24, 2015. To request an application for the 2015 Citizens' Fire Academy, please call the AVFD headquarters on Darling Drive at (860) 677-2644 or download one at www.avonvfd.org.

Police Testing Marathon

On Saturday, November 15, 2014, 66 applicants for the position of Avon Police Officer arrived at Avon High School to participate in an all-day testing process administered by the Town's Human Resources Department in conjunction with the Police Department. Testing consisted of four components and each candidate was required to successfully pass each component before being allowed to proceed to the next test. The first test was the written exam designed to assess critical abilities of an entry level police officer candidate such as ability to learn and apply police information, ability to observe and remember details, verbal ability, ability to follow directions and ability to use judgment and logic. Second was the physical ability test, administered by Avon Police Officers certified in this test administration by the State of Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Council. This test measures the ability of candidates to complete physical activity such as pushups, sit-ups, sit and reach, and running 1 ½ miles all within prescribed parameters based on their age and sex. Third was an oral examination conducted at the direction of the Town's Human Resources Department by several panels, each consisting of three sworn police officers from other communities, and fourth and last for the day was the preliminary background investigation conducted by Avon Police Officers under the supervision of the Detective Division. At the end of the day, 27 candidates successfully completed the initial testing process and are potentially eligible to continue on in the background process until all funded vacancies are filled.



The Public Works Department would like to advise residents that, in accordance with Town Policy, the Town of Avon is responsible for mailbox damage only if a plow makes contact with a mailbox. **For a complete description of the Town's Policy, please log onto www.avonct.gov.**

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS
REGARDING INFORMATION PRINTED IN
THIS NEWSLETTER, CALL THE TOWN
MANAGER'S OFFICE, AVON TOWN HALL,
AT (860) 409-4300.



Avon Senior Center Events

Friday, February 13, 2015 at 11:00 a.m. - "Love Your Neighbor" Day

This event is a collaboration between Avon and Canton Senior Centers. Come celebrate good fortune and good neighbors with friends at the Canton Community Center. The Canton Community Nursery School will visit with Valentines and a delicious meal will be served. Older and disabled persons from **ALL** towns are welcome. Please register and pay \$3.00 by Friday, February 6, 2015.

Friday, March 20, 2015 at 12:00 p.m. - "Spring Fling"

Join the Avon and Canton Senior Centers as we enjoy this special event together. We will celebrate the coming of warmer weather by having a Spring Fling. This event will be held at the Avon Senior Center. A delicious meal will be served. Older and disabled persons from **ALL** towns are welcome. Please register and pay \$3.00 by Friday, March 13, 2015.

For more information on these upcoming events and other scheduled programs, call the Avon Senior Center at (860) 675-4355.

News from Social Services

CT Energy Assistance Program: The State of Connecticut can help households pay for primary heating bills (i.e. oil, propane, electric, and gas). To be eligible, household income must be less than 150% of the federal poverty income guidelines and the applicant must meet a certain limit for assets. If you have never applied and/or are interested in receiving more information on this program, please visit our website, under the Social Services link ("Energy Assistance & Renters Rebate"), or call our office at (860) 409-4346 to see if you may qualify and to schedule an appointment.

Operation Fuel: Provides one-time assistance with heating bills for those households who may be slightly over income/asset limits for other government programs. More information is available through Gifts of Love at (860) 676-2323.



Real Estate & Supplemental Motor Vehicle Tax

The second installment of the real estate taxes and supplemental motor vehicle taxes, which came due January 1, 2015, must be paid by February 2nd to avoid State mandated interest charges. The Revenue Office is open Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Town Offices will be closed January 19th in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Payments can also be made online. Go to www.avonct.gov and click the green button, "Pay Taxes Online" in the middle of the home page. Any questions? Please call the Collector of Revenue Office at (860) 409-4306. Thank You!

Annual Town Report & Calendar

Residents are reminded that a limited number of the Town's Annual Report and Calendar are available for pickup in the Town Manager's Office at Town Hall, or at the Avon Free Public Library, Senior Center and Landfill. Please come get one while they last!

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IMPORTANT DATES

Town Council Budget Workshop
Saturday, February 7, 2015
Town Hall - Selectmen's Chamber
8:00 a.m.

FY 2015/2016
Annual Budget Hearing
Monday, April 13, 2015
Avon Senior Center
7:00 p.m.