

**AVON TOWN COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
October 5, 2023**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Avon Town Hall, in the Selectmen's Chamber as well as via GoToMeeting by Chairman Polhamus. Members present: Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Ausiello, Maguire, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber. A quorum was present.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Polhamus.

**III. PUBLIC HEARING:**

**23/24-20 Proposed Tax Assessment Agreement with Beacon Communities for Property  
Located at 20 Security Drive**

The Town Manager noted that there are two changes to the agreement from what was shared last month: we added the property owner Mark Greenberg as a signatory as he owns the property that the development will be built on and we broke out there will be a Phase I (PILOT remains \$700 for income restricted units and \$1,000 for market rate units and a 1% escalator for every year after this phase is complete) and when Phase II is done whatever the first phase is paying at that point is what the second phase will pay. Harry DerAsadourian, Town Assessor, noted that these modifications clarify things that are already in the original contract; each phase has a twenty-year life so overall contract is twenty-four years. Chairman Polhamus clarified that Phase I is the new construction of 100 units and Phase II is the reconstruction of 70 units with the existing building.

On a motion made by Mrs. Maguire, seconded by Ms. Ausiello, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council open the public hearing.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

Chairman Polhamus waived the reading of the following notice:

"TOWN OF AVON  
LEGAL NOTICE  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of Avon, Connecticut will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 5, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the Avon Town Hall, Selectmen's Chamber, 60 West Main Street, Avon, CT and virtually to consider the following:

To consider and permit all interested persons to speak on the plan of the Town Council to enter into an Agreement between Beacon Communities and the Town of Avon at 20 Security Drive for a Pilot Payment in lieu of property taxes for a twenty-year period to encourage and participate in the development of affordable housing.

A copy of the proposed Agreement is on file in the Avon Town Clerk's Office and open to the public for inspection during normal business hours.

Dated at Avon, Connecticut this 8<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023.

Brandon L. Robertson, Town Manager"

Drew Bloom, 163 Juniper Drive, inquired how much potential loss to the Town the tax abatement is versus what the PILOT payment is and how long does a PILOT payment last for. Harry DerAsadourian, Town Assessor, responded that the PILOT payment is an annual payment that the developer would make to the Town and based on how many units are income restricted and how many are unrestricted (or market); at the start of the PILOT period it would be \$700 for income restricted, \$1,000 for unrestricted, those payments would be made for twenty years and each year the payment amount would increase by 1%; at the end of the twenty years the agreement goes away; it is still an affordable project and we would look at the market value at that time. In response to a question from Mr. Bloom, Mr. DerAsadourian responded that the PILOT payment runs for twenty years and in the twenty-first year the regular taxes go into effect. In response to a question from Mr. Bloom, Mr. DerAsadourian responded that the property is vacant, 100,000 square foot office building with no real market at this point, for the 2022 Grand List when it was considered occupied it generated approximately \$109,000 per year; as a vacant property we generate approximately \$74,000 per year, assuming no appeal by the property owner. He added that under the PILOT program we would have 80 units paying \$700 per unit and 20 units paying \$1,000 per unit for a total of \$76,000; as a vacant property versus the PILOT is nearly even. If it was market, the per unit tax would be approximately \$1,500; under the PILOT program the per unit tax would be approximately \$760, an approximate 50% loss. He noted that he used Old Farms Crossing as a comparable which has no PILOT, not vacant with a mixed occupancy complex and their taxes are approximately \$1,500 per unit.

Margaret Bratton, 15 Old Mill Road, inquired about the requirements for who will be offered the chance to live in this development. Jaye Fox, Vice President-Development, Beacon Communities, responded that the State of Connecticut has specific guidelines; it would ultimately be a lottery basis. Dara Kovel, CEO, Beacon Communities, added that a lot of it comes down to how they market the property and will be working closely with local organizations. Ms. Fox noted that they would have to be US citizens.

Mr. Bloom inquired what percentage of units will be accessible for disabled people. Ms. Fox responded that 5% of the total units will be fully accessible, which is a state requirement, and there may be additional units that are considered adaptable. She noted that there would be a preference for people who need those accessible units and then whatever income band they fit into is what that unit will be.

On a motion made by Mrs. Maguire, seconded by Dr. Barthel, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council close the public hearing.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

Mrs. Maguire supports the project; Beacon Communities is an excellent organization overseeing it; it is well thought out, likes that it comes before Council for every different case, it is an expense to the Town, but this project will be a tremendous benefit to the Town. Mr. Weber agreed; hopes this is a good decision moving forward, the process has been fully vetted, and this property will go to hands that will make it what it can be and us concentrating density along that area of Route 44 will contribute to our local businesses, will expand use of the trail, and ultimately make Avon a more vibrant place to be. Ms. Ausiello agreed; Beacon is an amazing group that is doing it right; hopeful it will turn out how we are envisioning it; the location is great; there is a housing shortage in Connecticut and being able to supply this type of housing is important for our community and

for people who want to live here; it fills a need in a very appropriate way; and she expressed thanks to all for their work on it. Chairman Polhamus noted that it attracts affordable housing in a location that is desirable to the Town; redevelopment of existing property; we will hear later on about all of the activity going on right now on Route 44, a lot of exciting things happening, and this is another piece of the puzzle. Dr. Barthel noted that this is needed for our senior population as well as young families; it is state mandated with a 10% requirement for affordable housing in Town and we are currently at 4.11%; and Beacon Communities has a great reputation. In response to a question from Chairman Polhamus, Ms. Fox responded that the goal for Phase I is for 70 units to fall under this agreement; their aim and intent is to do 80 units which is currently in the State of Connecticut's qualified allocation plan. Dr. Barthel noted that she has heard from the seniors who are worried about being able to afford to live in Avon, a lot of young families coming back to where their family is to raise children in Avon; affordable housing is important for that; it is also mandated by the State to reach 10% and we are currently 4.11%; this is a great use for this vacant spot; Beacon Communities has a great reputation, has done this before, and they are unable to do this without the PILOT; no PILOT, no agreement, and the building remains vacant which does not provide a source of income to the Town and no affordable housing for our residents; she is 100% in favor.

On a motion made by Mr. Weber, seconded by Ms. Ausiello, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council authorize the Town Manager to enter into a Tax Assessment Agreement between 20 Security Drive, LLC, Beacon Communities, LLC, and the Town of Avon regarding property located at 20 Security Drive for a Pilot Payment in lieu of property taxes for a 20-year period to encourage and participate in the development of affordable housing.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

Dara Kovel, CEO, Beacon Communities, noted that they work in dozens of communities across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic and go to meetings like this once a week; it has been a pleasure working with the Town, your team, and the way you conduct your business here; we could not say more about the support you have expressed; we appreciate it, we hope to live up to your expectations, and we look forward to breaking ground with you in the next year or year and a half; the State is supporting as well; thank you for your leadership and guidance on this. Council thanked Ms. Kovel and Ms. Fox. Chairman Polhamus thanked Mr. DerAsadourian for his work on this. Ms. Fox also noted that Town staff has been amazing.

#### **IV. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS:** September 7, 2023 September 19, 2023 Special Meeting

On a motion made by Dr. Barthel, seconded by Mr. Weber, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council accept the minutes of the September 7, 2023 Meeting as drafted.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

On a motion made by Mrs. Maguire, seconded by Mr. Weber, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council accept the minutes of the September 19, 2023 Special Meeting as drafted.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

## **V. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE**

Chairman Polhamus noted that the political season is upon us, and we have received some tensely worded e-mails; whatever you say here will become part of the public record so please be thoughtful in what you say.

Michelle Traub, 44 Avonwood Road, shared that she has been a resident in Avon for eight years, is an elementary school teacher here in the local district, and has loved her experience here. She lives in Avon Place because it is the only place in Avon she can afford on a teacher's salary; the first seven years have been a great experience, but not the last year; this past year Avon Place was bought by a new management company, Empire Realty, who owns multiple properties in Connecticut and is currently involved in many lawsuits with their tenants across the country due to poor housing conditions; she has read and seen movies where slum lords existed; where people rented out apartments but only cared about the bottom dollar and didn't give a crap about the people that lived there; she thought it would never happen in a town like Avon until it happened to her and us (other tenants in attendance); since this new management company has taken over, we have lost hot water for 29 days in the past few months; maintenance requests have gone unanswered; our pool was closed during the hottest week of the summer due to no chlorine and never re-opened; elevators have been out of commission for months; building doors remain unlocked and broken while others do not open at all; and that is only the beginning; this frustration came to a peak for her personally when we kept losing hot water and frustrating not to hear any updates from the apartment complex and only knew our hot water was back when we got home to try it; every morning was a gamble to see if she would sleep at her parent's house, an hour away or her house so she could have a hot shower to teach her students in the morning; the Farmington Valley Health Department was involved in communications but they had no way of holding the apartment complex accountable; they kept saying to touch base with the Town and the Town kept saying to touch base with the Health Department; it was a circle of frustration and one that should have never happened; due to their experience with the hot water crisis or the many other things that were going wrong with the apartment complex, she decided to form a tenant union; she put up signs around the apartment complex and asked her neighbors to join her in making Avon Place the positive space they once knew; at her first meeting she had 32 families in her apartment; she learned stories of a father who needed to carry his son up three flights of stairs in 100 degree weather because the elevator had been broken for weeks and go back down to pick up his wheelchair and bring it back up; one neighbor had raw sewage pouring into her apartment for twenty-one hours before maintenance came and even after living in a hotel for two weeks, when she returned it was still not cleaned; through their work with the tenant union, we have met with management and tried to share our issues; some things were resolved; our potholes were filled in, our hot water was restored, some maintenance requests were fixed, and this is an ongoing process, however during this experience we have realized that we as renters are not protected by the Town of Avon at all; there is no one to hold the apartment complex accountable to fulfilling our requests because no one is following the state housing code. For example, in our main hallway there were so many ants that looked like a black moving carpet; the apartment complex was unresponsive in fixing the problem; she called the Town and was told to call the Health Department; she called the Health Department and was told "we don't do ants, call the Town." This leaves no higher entity holding our landlord accountable to these kinds of problems; this can be a dangerous position for the renters to be in; in fact, the day after she caught her apartment complex in a lie about why the pool was closed and called them out on it she received a letter on her door that day stating that she

needed to vacate her apartment; even though she had a six month lease, not due until January; she has been living there for seven years and they have no other reason to evict me other than for opening her mouth about the issues we are having; she is currently paying for her own lawyer in order to fight that eviction; we are currently working the state tenant union that includes thirteen other unions around the state on creating positive so they are protected as renters and so landlords are held accountable for maintaining livable space for tenants; in their first step with this, we ask you, the Town, to create an Avon housing code for specifically the Town so entities know who is responsible for overseeing what, as right now Avon is not fulfilling all of the oversight needed to abide by the state housing code; we ask Avon to join the twenty-five other small towns in Connecticut that have decided to protect their renters and create a fair rent commission so we are protected in the future; we are working with management right now to create change, but this is not our job; it is our Town's responsibility to oversee them, not the tenants; the state housing code is not currently being followed. For example, she has a window on the third floor of her building that is open with no screen; in the state housing code that is illegal, but no one is doing anything about it; please re-evaluate this and help create positive change for future renters of this wonderful town of Avon. Ms. Ausiello noted that fire safety issues would need to be addressed to issue a certificate of occupancy. The Town Manager responded this is a complex issue; there has been a lot of activity with this complex; this morning the Health Department and Building Official met with management to address some of these issues and not the first time we've had this meeting; there is only so far that we can go; if there aren't violations of fire code, building code, or health code, there is not much jurisdiction. He will follow up and find out what happened at the meeting this morning; there are orders that are in effect. Ms. Traub commented that regarding the open window and the ants, there is no Avon code or entity holding the management accountable and neither the Town nor the Health Department look at the state housing code. The Town Manager commented that he is not sure the municipal code can address those issues. Ms. Traub responded that it can; the twenty-five other towns they are working with, they all had their towns create one; Bloomfield just developed its own housing code that has been shared by their lawyer. She noted that their management company is sleazy and will tell you anything you want to hear and it is not the truth; our management company just wants money and doesn't even care if you live there; if you fine them every time the window is still broken on the third floor, then they would do something about it but right now none of that is happening; we hope that you can create that so when this new complex happens and all other people renting who would love to stay here but won't be able to afford it. Ms. Ausiello asked Ms. Traub to send the Town information she has on for the other town housing codes so we can offline talk to you some more and get more information so we can get the ball rolling; this is something we do know has been happening, the Town has been working within the parameters it can, but a good point has been brought up. Chairman Polhamus noted that he doesn't remember it being a problem of this magnitude before. Ms. Traub commented that she does not know if she will be able to own a house in this market and will need to rent but is very petrified of what that looks like and for her neighbors, the 32 other families that aren't here that full families in Avon and in the school system and it is really difficult for them; she is currently being evicted because she spoke up and it is a very scary scenario. Chairman Polhamus stated that they want to help and will look into it. Ms. Traub asked them to look into the Fair Rent Commission; there are tenants who were given a 30% increase in their rent in one year and makes it unaffordable for us to live; she pays \$1,700 per month and you heard the affordable housing going in is \$1,000; that is almost all of her salary that goes to rent because that is not available right now. Council thanked Ms. Traub for sharing. Dr. Barthel commented that Ms. Traub has done a great job, rallying your neighbors, bringing it to our attention and not backing

down from the management as well. Ms. Traub responded that people don't speak up because of this fear of losing our housing for speaking up. Ms. Ausiello noted that it is very fortunate; it was a wonderful place that filled a need. She thanked Ms. Traub for standing up and being brave enough to do it.

Maria Mozzicato, 51 Fox Hollow, commented that this is first time in her 21 years living in Avon that she is speaking to the Council. She noted that our Planning and Zoning Commission despite requests of some Commission members has not had an in-person meeting since they were seated in January 2022; she is not sure if the Council is supervisory to that Commission but thinks it is something to entertain as we have all found through the years, for example, with the dog issue at Fisher Meadows and Save Nod Road, when there is a packed room of people who feel passionately about an issue, they feel heard; if you go back through the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting minutes you will find that it is the Chair and Town Planner who want to keep the meetings virtual; there are members who have not never met each other despite serving almost two full years together; that is sad commentary on how that Commission is being run; there is an impact; you had the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan meetings in-person, they weren't virtual; members of the Planning and Zoning Commission want the public in front of them, the leadership of the Commission does not as discussed at their meetings and in e-mail correspondence. She commented that Town Council approved at one point, even though the roads had not been turned over to the Town by William Ferrigno, Town spending for maintenance, plowing, etc. She asked Council if the Town has sufficient bonding if a developer is not able to ever those roads appropriately over to the Town to make the Town whole for what the taxpayer have been paying on their behalf all this time and if there is, how can the public access that type of agreement; what kind of cost been to the public to float this development all this time and what disclosures were made on the part of the Town to prospective buyers in that development to tell them that there was a financial difficulty and that the Town was propping up the developer in lieu of his ability to perform. She knows people that have lost a lot of money even in calendar years 2022 and 2023 because of that faith on the part of this developer; as a citizen of Avon she wants to make sure there is proper insurance, bonding, and how much it is costing the taxpayers to continue to do this if the roads have not been appropriately turned over to the Town by the developer; why wasn't all of this communicated a little more clearly that maybe some of these people would have been able to pick up on and decide not to buy a house there because there are these issues. She noted that long before there was a huge issue in Simsbury, there was a brewing issue in Avon; she is unaware of communication toward that end. She added that Marketplace Park was turned over to the Town as part of a development where CVS and the Marketplace restaurant is; a few years ago when she inquired why that park was abandoned, she was told that the Town really should not enforce something that was agreed to with a prior developer and prior owner on a new owner; two and a half years ago when 20 Security Drive was proposed, it was a fantastic proposal but now it is costing us a tax abatement which was not in the picture when the original development was proposed; we do all of these things but they become unused, not followed up on, like the park at 51 East Main Street. She noted that Marketplace Park would be a great spot for a dog park; we have all of these resources that have been abandoned by the Town. Ms. Ausiello clarified the statement about how the Town should have warned buyers of what was going on as it is only very recently that action has been taken regarding William Ferrigno. She noted that she is a realtor; it is the responsibility of the realtor who is listing it and also the seller to disclose any issues that they are aware of the HOA or anything going on in the development or in the community; it is the buyer's responsibility to do due diligence as best as they can; she understands the frustration and

this has been going on for a long time and slowly brewing in terms of Sunlight Construction developments; she does not want to place blame on the Town for expecting us to go to every buyer who is going to look at a house in those developments and somehow warn them within the Town's legal rights. Chairman Polhamus noted that we have been trying to get Mr. Ferrigno to wrap up these properties and we will be having discussions about what happens with the outstanding properties now, what bond money is out there when the developments were approved. Ms. Mozzicato clarified by asking why the Town didn't notify the taxpayers that we were paying for roads to be plowed and maintenance to be done. Ms. Ausiello responded that it has been discussed. The Town Manager noted that as a general matter, the Town retains security on any unaccepted improvements, so we have up-to-date bonding for any work that we have not accepted yet and that applies to any developer; the Town has bonds to call on if it becomes necessary to do so; there is a law that gives developers a lot of time to comply with conditions that go along with land use approvals and the developer that you are referring to has time under that law to do so; the Town has no stand at this point to call bonds when the developer has time to do what they need to do; 14 years, retroactive to the date of the approval; Stratford Crossing was approved around 2014.

Drew Bloom, 163 Juniper Drive, commented on Marketplace Park and he took a field trip to see it as it was brought to his attention, that the Town had a little gem sitting there; the wooden staircase is in extreme disrepair, rotting, unsafe for people to walk on, it should be condemned and rebuilt and in the meantime it should be blocked off as it is a public safety hazard at the moment; having teenagers that went through Avon High School when he spoke to them about this, it is a known place that the teenagers go to smoke or do drugs and hang out in that area; the Town should step in and do something with that property, either develop it or block it off and make it non-accessible because it is accessible to nefarious actions if anything and it is a danger to the public and going unnoticed. He reported that he and Mrs. Bratton went to a symposium at the Avon Congregational Church this past Monday talking about human trafficking and the safety issues going on in the world right now and in the country and in the state and what has also happened in this Town as he knows of people who have experiences with this; the presentation was given by the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families who reportedly came to the Town of Avon and requested to present it and were denied. He asked the presenter to provide him with a proposal to bring to the Town so it can be brought to the Board of Education but also wanted to present it to the Town Council and make you aware because it is a public safety issue; this is something we have dropped the ball on since it's been going, and we should do something about it. Mrs. Bratton clarified that the state has two different presentations; we saw the adult one; there is a different one for 12-18 year olds; she recommended adults view the presentation for the younger age group beforehand to make sure it is something you are interested in.

Venkat Anupoju, 62 Fox Hollow, asked how often the Town reviews its codes. The Town Manager clarified that the Town reviews its ordinances constantly; we were just discussing the peddling ordinance because of something that recently happened. Mr. Anupoju inquired about building inspections and violations. The Town Manager responded that the Building Official handles inspections and violations. He noted that regarding Avon Place, the Building Department, other Town departments as well as the Health Department have been involved; there are violation orders that are in effect; there is not a Townwide housing code which is what Ms. Traub is asking for and is very unusual for a Town our size; it has been brought before the Town Council and they have asked him to look into it. Mr. Anupoju asked the Town Council to look into the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding Bill Ferrigno and all of the approvals given for his projects.

He referenced the Bailey Road subdivision and asked what rights the residents have; they are paying taxes in Town. Chairman Polhamus responded that we will go through the process of looking at these properties. Mr. Anupoju asked if the Planning and Zoning Commission can block approvals to Bill Ferrigno. The Town Manager invited Mr. Anupoju to come in and talk with him.

## **VI. COMMUNICATION FROM COUNCIL**

Ms. Ausiello shared that a third Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Planning public information meeting was held, it was well attended, and clarified that this was a study, a great road map and way to prioritize several possibilities, and there were no suggestions made that the Town would be doing all of it at the taxpayers' expense; a Library Courtyard ribbon cutting ceremony was held this afternoon; and she expressed condolences to Representative Tammy Exum following the sudden passing of her husband.

Mr. Weber shared that he recently helped with the Farmington River Watershed Association at Fisher Meadows cleaning up the area and he thanked Board member Brian Freeman, FRWA Board member and Avon resident, for spearheading the event. He noted that last Thursday the Town Council Bike Ride was held, and we spoke to some business owners; owner of Ridgeline Bikes shared how Route 44 impacts his business and people he observes trying to make their way along Route 44 and would be in favor of trying to connect the lower half of Town with the upper half business district along Route 44. He noted that a special meeting was held regarding the Route 44 Pump Station Project; it saddens him to think there is a perception out there that what we are doing is somehow hidden from people or done with nefarious means in mind and that is never the case; during his two cycles on the Town Council, everything that has happened in Town has been on the up and up and on the record; the AWPCA has been financially savvy and able to fund this project with no additional tax levy to the Town; when the State gives us grants to improve infrastructure, they do not have to be paid back. He noted that regarding Ms. Traub's comments, it is heartbreaking to hear what is happening at Avon Place. He added that property rights in this country are very strong; we as the Town hold some of the power, not all of it; same with the State; you as a resident have a ton of power to come here and speak, to make improvements to your property with the oversight of the Town, but if you want to make a mess of your home, it is challenging for the Town to step in because property owners are very strong in this country as they should be as individual rights are of the utmost importance. He understands that human trafficking is a very serious issue; as a public educator he is constantly aware of that and attend training every year; if you look into any municipality of the 169 towns in Connecticut you would find some things that are not up to snuff; we as the Town work very hard; the professionals in these Town buildings work very hard to make sure this Town functions properly and professionally; he could not be prouder to sit here and approve, by and large, unanimously over the past four years he has sat on the Council, republicans and democrats, unanimously have passed almost every single thing that has come before us with a very small exception of the professionals that we have in Town; he thanked them for what they do; if there are developers who are doing nasty things, the Town is pulling all the levers they can; if new levers are available to us or need to take action such as what we heard here tonight, he is pretty confident that action will be done; while the wheels of government may not move as fast as a formula one race car, they do move forward; the Town Manager has heard everything here tonight and will be eager to hear those responses in a public setting like we always do.



Mrs. Maguire agreed with Mr. Weber's statements; this is an eye-opening meeting; and thanked him for sharing his thoughts and passion.

Chairman Polhamus noted that the first night at the Lions Club Carnival was fun, but unfortunately rained out the rest of the weekend; it was supported by the Town through the Community Events Grant Program. He added that Prince Thomas of Savoy La Festa Italiana was held and very well attended. He shared that Sub Edge Farm have experienced additional flooding and encouraged residents to support their business however possible; it appears they do not qualify for federal funding relief and the Town may consider looking into options for relief for them. He extended congratulations to Sergeant Arbogast on his recent promotion and recognized the addition of two new officers and a third being sent to the Police Academy. Dr. Barthel noted that Sub Edge Farm also accepts SNAP benefits.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **21/22-46 American Rescue Plan Act: Discussion re: Projects List**

The Town Manager noted that for Council's November meeting, he will likely have a request for a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$25,000 for the Avon Fuel Bank. He added that to date \$4.1 million of the Town's ARPA funding has been appropriated. Chairman Polhamus noted that \$1.2 million is still available; a large amount was used on roads and positive feedback has been received as a result and may be the most equitable way to use some of the balance, along with some potential uses for Recreation and Parks. In response to a question from Mr. Weber, the Town Manager responded that regarding the Deepwood Drive/New Road Drainage Project, the project should not be held up due to the coordination now needed with MDC.

### **23/24-11 Appointment: CRCOG Regional Planning Commission (D – 12/31/2023)**

On a motion made by Ms. Ausiello, seconded by Mrs. Maguire, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council table agenda item 23/24-11 Appointment: CRCOG Regional Planning Commission (D – 12/31/2023) to their November 2, 2023 meeting.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **23/24-24 Resignation: Board of Finance (D – 12/31/2023)**

On a motion made by Mr. Weber, seconded by Dr. Barthel, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council accept with regret the resignation of Ellen Retelle from the Board of Finance.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

### **23/24-25 Appointment: Board of Finance (D – 12/31/2023)**

On a motion made by Mrs. Maguire, seconded by Ms. Ausiello, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council appoint Micah Rousey to the Board of Finance, to fill a vacancy with a term to expire on December 31, 2023.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

On a motion made by Ms. Ausiello, seconded by Mr. Weber, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council move agenda item 23/24-29 Support for Community Events Grant Program Award, \$4,350 up before agenda item 23/24-26.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

**23/24-26      Presentation: Avon Free Public Library – Strategic Plan 2023-2027**

Glenn Grube, Library, provided a presentation (which is attached and made part of these minutes). He also thanked members of the Town Council that attended the Library Courtyard ribbon cutting ceremony today. He recognized Nicole Nunziata, Library Board President, and Paula Schwartz, Board member/Chair Strategic Planning Committee, who were in the audience. Chairman Polhamus inquired about the farmer's market. Mr. Grube responded that it stopped during the pandemic and it requires a huge amount of staff time. He noted that the Library is hoping to hold other new events where it can be a hub, a place where people are excited to come; perhaps some music and use of the new courtyard. Dr. Barthel commented that the Library is the core of our Town; any idea that she has had, the Library has always had open arms in terms of using the community room or being a grant partner; she appreciates everything the Library does. Mrs. Maguire commented that this is a great and very comprehensive strategic plan; the Library is a center of our community; she uses the Library every day listening to e-books. Council expressed thanks to Mr. Grube and the entire Library team.

**23/24-27      Contract Recommendation: Construction Inspection Services For Realignment of Old Farms Road & Roundabout Construction (LOTICIP Project No. L004-0001; CCGP Project No. 0170-3513)**

The Town Manager noted that Wengell, McDonnell & Costello (WMC) is the same firm that we are working with to do the design for the East/West section of Old Farms Road; we have had great experience with them in the past; they did the design work for the new bridge on Old Farms Road. Mr. Weber referenced WMC's web site that illustrates an extensive amount of experience in bridge work all around the state and nicely done. In response to a question from Dr. Barthel, the Assistant Town Manager responded that Fuss & O'Neill designed the North/South section and will be used during the construction submittal process.

On a motion made by Dr. Barthel, seconded by Mr. Weber, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council award a contract to Wengell, McDonnell & Costello, Inc. (WMC) of Newington, CT, to provide construction inspection services for Realignment of Old Farms Road & Roundabout Construction (LOTICIP Project No. L004-0001; CCGP Project No. 0170-3513), in an amount not to exceed \$250,000.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

**23/24-28      Supplemental Appropriation: VW EVSE ZEV Grant for EV Charging Station, \$11,772**

The Assistant Town Manager reported that the grant will be offset by \$20,000 in utility incentives from Eversource, \$7,500 from the Town through an encumbrance of FY 23 operating budget funds, and the Library Board is contributing approximately \$5,000. In response to a question from

Dr. Barthel, the Assistant Town Manager responded that we have a rebate reservation for the Eversource incentive portion but we need to apply for it.

On a motion made by Mrs. Maguire, seconded by Dr. Barthel, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council hereby recommends that the Board of Finance amend the FY 23/24 Budget by increasing:

**REVENUES**

Capital & Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund, Intergovernmental, Clean Energy Incentives, Account #03-0330-43309, in the amount of \$11,772.00 and increasing:

**APPROPRIATIONS**

Capital & Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund, CNREF: Town, Clean Energy Projects, Account #03-4930-53478, in the amount of \$11,772.00, for funds awarded through the Volkswagen (VW) EVSE ZEV Infrastructure Program grant to fund the installation of an electric vehicle (EV) charging station.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

**23/24-29     Support for Community Events Grant Program Award, \$4,350**

The Town Manager noted that if approved, this will be the second year that this event is funded through this grant program. Kathy Platt, AHS Booster Club, shared that there will be an expo at 8:00 a.m. and the race starts at 9:00 a.m.; there were almost 400 participants last year.

On a motion made by Mrs. Maguire, seconded by Ms. Ausiello, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council award the Avon High School Booster Club a grant through the Community Events Grant Program in the amount of \$4,350 to support the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual 5K Turkey Trot and Health & Fitness Expo.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

**23/24-30     Contract Recommendation: Snow Removal & Ice Control Services**

The Assistant Town Manager noted that we asked contractors to submit line item pricing for each of the facilities and to bring the best value to the Town we proceeded more a la carte. In response to a question from Chairman Polhamus, the Assistant Town Manager responded that last year we renewed with CRS Landscape and Excavation, LLC for another year and Public Works looked at taking some of the properties in-house and with this scenario those properties remain in-house. The Town Manager recognized the Director of Public Works, the Public Works Operations Manager, and the Assistant Town Manager for their due diligence with reviewing the bids by line item and realizing a cost savings of approximately \$24,000 and the Town is well served. In response to a question from Ms. Ausiello, the Town Manager responded that the Town plows the roads in Secret Lake and Lakeview.

On a motion made by Ms. Ausiello, seconded by Mrs. Maguire, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council award two contracts for snow removal and ice control services for the 2023-24 winter season as follows: 1) to CRS Landscape and Excavation, LLC of Avon, CT in an amount not to exceed \$192,522 for Secret Lake Association, Fire Company #2, Lakeview Association, Route 44 Pump Station, New Road Pump Station, and the sidewalk along Simsbury Road, and 2) to Safeside Chimney & Duct Cleaning of Hartford, CT in an amount not

to exceed \$299,400 for Town Hall Campus, Senior Center, Avon Free Public Library, the Living Museum, sidewalks located at the Town Green and Ensign Drive, and sidewalks located on Country Club Road, Scoville Road, and West Avon Road.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

**23/24-31      Review, Discuss, and Possible Amendment Approval: Town Council Policy No. 3, Recognition of Officials and Town Employees**

The Town Manager noted that the proposed change to the policy removes any gifts previously issued with a personalized proclamation in recognition of an official's or employee's years of service.

On a motion made by Mrs. Maguire, seconded by Dr. Barthel, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve revisions to Town Council Policy No. 3, Recognition of Officials and Town Employees as presented.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

**23/24-32      FY 24/25 Budget: Approve Capital Budget Review Schedule**

On a motion made by Mr. Weber, seconded by Dr. Barthel, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve the following FY 24/25 Capital Improvement Program Budget Review Schedule as follows:

**Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Regular Town Council Meeting (7:00 p.m.)**

Board of Education

Recreation and Parks

Public Works

**Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Regular Town Council Meeting (7:00 p.m.)**

Engineering Department

Police Department

Fire Department

General Government

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

**23/24-33      Approve 2024 Meeting Schedule**

Council discussed a few potential conflicts but decided to adopt the schedule as presented and the next Town Council can make any adjustments as needed.

On a motion made by Mr. Polhamus, seconded by Mr. Weber, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council adopt, in accordance with P.A. 723 of the 1967 Session of the Connecticut General Assembly, the following schedule of meetings for the Year 2024 and January of 2025: January 4, 2024, February 1, 2024, March 7, 2024, April 4, 2024, May 2, 2024, June 6, 2024, July 25, 2024, September 5, 2024, October 10, 2024, November 7, 2024, December 5, 2024, and January 2, 2025.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

**23/24-34      Approval of Motor Vehicle Tax Refund, \$1,455.83**

On a motion made by Mr. Weber, seconded by Ms. Ausiello, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve a motor vehicle tax refund to VW Credit Leasing LTD in the amount of \$1,455.83.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

**23/24-35      Approval of Real Estate Tax Refund, \$9,977.86**

On a motion made by Mr. Weber, seconded by Mrs. Maguire, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve a real estate tax refund to Leonard James P Est Of in the amount of \$9,977.86.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

**IX.      TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT/MISCELLANEOUS**

**Misc. A: Purchasing Update:** The Town Manager noted that with regards to the RFQ-Architectural & Engineering Services for the Renovation, Expansion & New Construction of Fire Facilities, interviews with firms are scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Misc. B: Construction Update:** The Town Manager noted that we had a pre-construction meeting earlier this week for the North/South Section of the Old Farms Road Project; we will keep the existing road open while the new road is being constructed. He added that Sycamore Hills Tennis Courts should be open by early November. He noted that Countryside Park Renovations are on schedule and should be able to start taking reservations towards the end of December; he suggested a special meeting with Council to tour the facility soon. Road Improvements are wrapping up for the year; we will talk more about roads during the capital budget and will request BETA to provide an overview to Council next month. Chairman Polhamus noted that we spent an unprecedented amount of money over the last two years on roads and it would be good to see where we landed as a result. The Town Manager noted that the Board of Education Central Office building has issues; we had significant flooding in the basement with the recent rain events; an architect has done an initial assessment of the building and will develop a budget for what it would take the building rehabilitated which would likely require an addition. In response to a question from Ms. Ausiello, the Town Manager responded that we can certainly look at all options including building, leasing, or buying.

**Misc. C: Land Use Activity Update:** The Town Manager reviewed recent commercial land use activity in Town. Dr. Barthel inquired about the Avon Village Center and why businesses do not want to move into there. The Town Manager responded that the development is owned and managed by the Carpiionato Group and the gorilla on the property is Whole Foods of which there is an agreement with them that is very restricted in terms of other tenants that can be in that complex. He noted that we continue to make progress on land swaps that need to be completed with Carpiionato Group with their property. Dr. Barthel inquired with the businesses coming in on Route 44, can we require them to install a sidewalk as part of their development. The Town Manager responded that the Planning and Zoning Commission can consider that as part of the condition of approval; we have a sidewalk connectivity plan and over the years trying to assemble it piece by piece. In response to a question from Ms. Ausiello, the Town Manager responded that

regarding the Avon Village Center, the Town would be interested in the intended mix of businesses and physical infrastructure and aesthetics; there is a residential portion that should make a big difference in the Avon Village Center. He noted that he will provide land use activity updates on a quarterly basis.

**Misc. D: Emergency Medical Service:** The Town Manager noted that Paul Melanson, Chief of Police, will attend Council's November meeting and provide an overview of Emergency Medical Services.

**X. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Pending Claim/Litigation: Khosro Pourkavoos, ET AL.,  
V. Town of Avon, ET AL

On a motion made by Mrs. Maguire, seconded by Mr. Weber, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council enter into Executive Session at 9:17 p.m.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

The Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney Al Smith, Attorney Andrew Glass, Attorney Jim Tallberg, and the Clerk attended the session.

On a motion made by Mrs. Maguire, seconded by Mr. Polhamus, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council come out of Executive Session at 9:40 p.m.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

**23/24-36 Possible Action on Item Discussed in Executive Session**

On a motion made by Mr. Weber, seconded by Dr. Barthel, it was voted:

**BE IT RESOLVED,** the Town Council accepts the recommendation of litigation counsel to fully and finally settle the pending Federal Court action known as Khosro Pourkavoos, et al. v. Town of Avon, et al., Docket No. 3:17-cv-00073 (SVN) through the execution of a complete release of claims by the Pourkavoos plaintiffs and a payment by CIRMA on behalf of the Town. The Council authorizes the Town Manager to take all actions necessary and appropriate to finalize the settlement.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

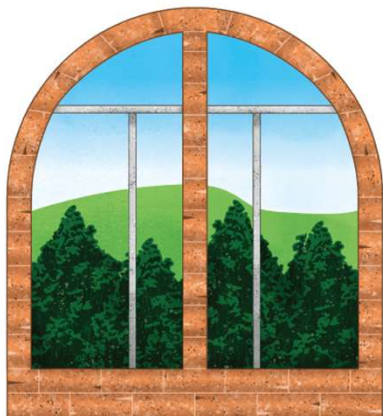
**XII. ADJOURN**

On a motion made by Mr. Weber, seconded by Ms. Ausiello, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council adjourn the meeting at 9:42 p.m.

Dr. Barthel, Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus and Weber voted in favor.

Attest: Jennifer Worsman, Clerk



# AVON

## FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

### Strategic Plan 2023-2027

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#### Agenda

- Planning Process
- Survey Data
- Mission, Vision, and Values
- Goals for 2023-2027
- Achieving Our Goals

2

## Strategic Planning Process – Research & Assessment

1. Research strategic planning best practices and library examples
2. Review 2018-2022 Strategic Plan
3. Update Mission, Vision, Values
4. Conduct survey of staff and community
5. Analyze survey responses

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## Community and Staff Survey

Community Survey: 380 responses

Staff Survey: 13 responses

### Top five community responses

➤ *Where do you feel a sense of community in Avon and how does it affect your life?*

30%	Avon Library
11%	Schools
10%	No sense of community
6%	Town events
4%	Church/House of worship

Top staff response: Avon Library

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## Community Survey - User Library Assessment

➤ *Do you use the Avon Free Public Library?* 368 “Yes” responses (95%):

➤ *What do we do well at Avon Library?*

- 25% Programs, events
- 24% Friendly, helpful staff
- 15% Book selection
- 12% Children's room
- 8% Everything

➤ *How could we improve Avon Library?*

- 11% Doing fine
- 10% More (in-person) adult programs
- 6% More (in-person) children's programs
- 4% More hours
- 4% More digital reading content

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## Community Survey - User “What If?”

➤ *Do you use the Avon Free Public Library?* 368 “Yes” responses (95%):

➤ *If we didn't have Avon Library, what would patrons miss the most?*

- 37% Books, reference
- 12% Programs, events
- 10% All resources
- 9% Children's room
- 6% Media

Top staff survey answer: [the staff!](#)

➤ *What have you seen, done or borrowed from another library that you wish were available at Avon Library?*

- 25% Avon (with ILL/online) has it all
- 8% More books
- 4% More in-person events, activities
- 3% Coffee, café
- 2% More DVDs

Top staff survey answer: [Library of Things](#) (board games, musical instruments, binoculars, etc.)

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## Community Survey - Non-users

- *Do you use the Avon Free Public Library?* 20 “No” responses (5%):
  - *Why do you choose not to use Avon Library?*
    - 1.3% Use digital resources instead
    - 0.8% Covid 19
    - 0.5% Too busy, too far
    - 0.3% Buy books instead
    - 0.3% Offensive books for children
  - *What services or resources would entice you to use Avon Library?*
    - 1.3% Children’s area, programs, classes, events
    - 0.3% Current library card and ability to borrow books for download
    - 0.3% More sci-fi/fantasy books
    - 0.3% Voting location
    - 0.3% Remove offensive books

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## Mission

Welcoming our community to learn, create, gather, share, and enjoy



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## Vision

We aspire to deliver outstanding services to benefit all residents of Avon and the surrounding region. Community feedback will help guide our efforts to provide responsive collections, programs, technology, and services, enhancing our role as the center of our community.



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## Values

**A**ccess: Welcome all to an inclusive environment that promotes safe, free, and convenient access to library services

**S**ervice: Respect the traditional role of the library in addressing the diverse needs of our users

**P**ersonal Growth: Promote the joy of reading and lifelong learning; enrich our community by connecting people with the world of ideas and information

**I**nnovation: Embrace the challenge of change and apply creative new ways to serve our community

**R**esponsibility: Better our community by providing resources and facilities that meet the needs of its individuals and organizations

**E**xcellence: Hire and cultivate staff who are knowledgeable, passionate, and committed to the role libraries play in individual lives and the community

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## Strategic Planning Process – Design & Execution

1. Define goals and metrics
2. Summarize 2023-2027 Strategic Plan in brochure
3. Prepare presentation slides and first quarter actions
4. Present to Library Board, staff and Town Council
5. Initiate quarterly actions, metrics and management

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AVON  
FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

2023-2027 Goals

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## Reach our community

Communicate clearly, openly, and effectively

Spread the word about our offerings

### ➤ Better awareness

1. Establish marketing and communication plans that include the utilization of emerging technologies.
2. Increase public awareness of our library's broad and diverse collection and service offerings beyond the traditional library collection.
3. Reestablish brand recognition with the new library logo in all communications materials.

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## Nurture our community

Improve access to free, curated collections, programs, and services

Expand resources for in-person and online experiences

### ➤ Better resources

1. Enhance access and discoverability of our collection.
2. Add innovative and diverse formats and topics relevant to our local population.
3. Actively listen to user feedback to provide a robust and relevant roster of programs and services.

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## Embrace our community

Welcome all to enjoy resources that address their needs and interests

Promote community awareness and celebration of diversity, equity, and inclusion

### ➤ Better community

1. Take an active role in celebrating the diversity of our world through programming, collections and services.
2. Advocate for equity within and beyond our community.
3. Identify strategies to promote the positive impacts of inclusion.

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## Strengthen our community

Build meaningful connections among patrons, partners, and underserved populations

Create beneficial programs and events that address community needs

### ➤ Better connections

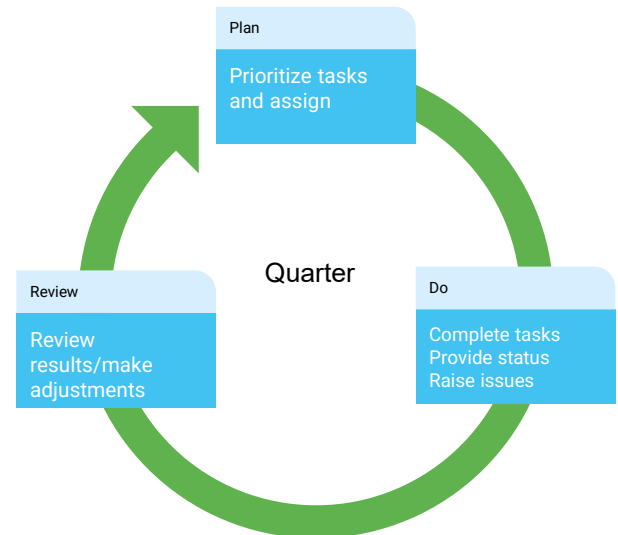
1. Cultivate community connections through outreach and partnerships.
2. Integrate these relationships into library services.
3. Champion deeper connections among patrons through tools, programs and resources.

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# Achieving our Goals

## How we will execute and monitor:

- Tasks will be defined to accomplish the goals and stored in a backlog
- Tasks will be sized to be completed within a given quarter
- The Strategic Planning committee will meet quarterly, along with representatives from the library staff, to review and prioritize tasks
- Tasks will be assigned to a quarter for completion and assigned to library staff or BOD committees
- Tasks can be added, removed, or adjusted at any time based on the current circumstances



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# Metrics

## Measures

- Library visits
- Program attendance
  - 0-5 age group
  - 6-11 age group
  - 12-18 age group
  - 19+ age group
  - General audience (all ages)
- Circulation
  - Physical collection
  - Digital collection
- Card holders

## 2023/24 Targets

- 100,000+ library visits annually (+25%)
- 30,000+ program attendance annually
  - 15,000+ combined child/teen (+2%)
  - 15,000+ adult/general audience (+15%)
- 285,000+ annual circulation
  - 250,000+ physical circulation (+5%)
  - 35,000+ digital circulation (+7%)
- 6,500+ cardholders (+5%)

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# Metrics

## Patron satisfaction

- The Strategic Planning Committee intends to survey patron satisfaction regularly
  - Surveys can be general or focus on specific audiences/services. Examples include:
    - How satisfied are you with Avon Library's programs?
    - How satisfied are you with Avon Library's children's services?
- Increased satisfaction scores over time will be illustrative of a successful plan
- Decreased satisfaction scores will indicate areas of focus for future initiatives

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## Strategic planning committee members

David Howe, Board Member and Committee Chair

Nicole Nunziata, Board President

Amee Mody, Board Vice President

Colette Slover, Board Secretary

Glenn Grube, Library Director

Rob Berman, Board Member

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