

**AVON TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
February 20, 2020**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

A Special Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Chamber by Chairperson Maguire. Members present: Mrs. Maguire and Messrs: Speich, Weber, Polhamus, and Bernetich. A quorum was present.

**II. OLD BUSINESS**

**18/19-09 Avon Free Public Library-HVAC System**

The Town Manager recognized Diane Hornaday in the audience, a former Town Council member and was the Chair for the Library Renovations/Additions Building Committee. He provided a brief summary regarding the current geothermal system and its status; the copper piping between the wells to the building were springing leaks and corroding prematurely; we have lost a number of wells thus the system does not function optimally; this situation will continue until we experience a series of failures and would affect the Library and its programs. We brought Fuss & O'Neill onboard and proceeded through a mediation process regarding the current system and were able to get a settlement.

Glenn Grube, Library Director, and Larry Baril, Town Engineer are in attendance. Mike Callahan, Fuss & O'Neill, and Ken Hipsky, RZ Design Associates, Inc., are also in attendance to provide background/design specifications on the geothermal system that was installed, the issues encountered with the current system, and to review options on how to remedy the heating/cooling system at the Library. Mr. Callahan noted that Fuss & O'Neill was hired to do a detailed assessment of the original design and identify the root cause of the problems which included corroded copper piping from aggressive soil, design inefficiencies, and the lack of cathodic protection; the design was poorly executed and ill conceived.

Mr. Callahan noted that of the four options put together by RZ Design, the recommended option is an improved geothermal system without copper pipes. In response to a question from Mr. Polhamus, Mr. Hipsky responded that the current system is highly unusual; the traditional closed well geothermal system being recommended has been used since the 1950s. Mr. Callahan noted that the driving factor for the geothermal system was the need and desire for energy efficiency; overall you will maintain long term efficiency by continuing with a geothermal system by utilizing existing equipment, lower energy costs, and reasonable operating maintenance costs. In response to a question from Mr. Weber, Mr. Hipsky responded that approximately thirty-four wells will be installed on the property. Mr. Hipsky shared the bid process scenario. He noted that are twenty air handlers in the building that will remain and a box will run to each coil to a large water loop.

The estimate for the new geothermal system is \$1.3 million. The Town Manager suggested a budget of \$1.5 million to include contingency and commissioning. He noted that commissioning provides for a review of the system by an independent firm to make sure everything is good to go and what we paid for before final acceptance. Mr. Hipsky added that a commissioning agent will run test every piece of equipment; it wasn't a common practice in 2012, but is today; there is a

value to that. Chairperson Maguire questioned how long before completion of the project. Mr. Hipsky responded it would take approximately four to five months for design, one month for bidding, one month to select a contractor, and four to five months for construction; in total, up to one year. In response to a question from Mr. Weber, Mr. Hipsky responded that the idea is to keep the existing system in operation while this is happening to allow the Library to operate their normal hours. The Town Engineer commented that sewer is about eight hundred feet up the street; the septic system is adequately sized for the building and the expense wasn't worth it. The Town Manager noted that there is gas available at the street. Mr. Hipsky commented that the first three options are gas-based but would have a much higher electrical demand; the geothermal option is a non-fossil fuel based solution. Mr. Callahan noted that operating cost, maintenance and energy would be about \$100,000 per year with gas versus \$55,000 per year with geothermal.

The Town Manager reported that in the FY 21 budget we assumed \$580,000 in capital for Library HVAC system which will not be enough. Chairperson Maguire noted that we have no choice but to do something; the Library is a cooling center in the summer, warming center in the winter, it serves our entire community; having it come offline for this is not acceptable; the cost is staggering; we all have to be comfortable with the solution that we choose. Mr. Polhamus commented that a neighbor in the business was shocked that our geothermal system failed so quickly; it is the right thing to do for many reasons; the savings will last longer than twenty years. Mr. Callahan clarified that with the current system the copper piping was not coated and thus corroded, uniform backfill material, cathodic protection or dielectric isolation were not used. He added that in terms of risk, the risk is not moving forward; the equipment being replaced will address any ownership risks; one guarantee is that you will have maintenance costs associated with the recommended solution; with life expectancy, twenty years down the road interior equipment may need replacement which is normal; routine maintenance is key.

There was general consensus from four out of five members to move forward with next steps related to the recommended geothermal system for the Library. Council thanked Mr. Callahan and Mr. Hipsky for their time and information. The Town Manager reported that the team will continue with design work. Glenn Grube, Library Director, commented that he will continue to work with Public Works to supplement heating/cooling as needed throughout the Library.

#### **19/20-15    FY 20/21 Budget: Review, Discussion and Adjustments**

The Town Manager reported that since Council's last budget work session, a list of proposed cuts was generated and if Council agrees with them the General Fund increase will go from 5.27% to 4.71% with the mill rate increase going from 3.65% to 3.47%.

Chairperson Maguire noted that there are several departments that sustain our Town so it is challenging to lean their budgets any further.

As a result of the recommended geothermal system for the Library, adjustments will need to be made to the list of proposed capital projects for FY 21.

With regard to road improvements, Mr. Weber requested a road ranking report. The Town Manager responded that he will have the Director of Public Works and our consultant attend a future Council meeting to discuss this item.

**III. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Pending Claim/Litigation

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council go into Executive Session at 7:02 p.m.  
Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, Speich, and Bernetich voted in favor.

**IV. ADJOURN**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m.  
Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Polhamus, Speich, Weber, and Bernetich voted in favor.

Attest: Jennifer Worsman, Clerk