

**AVON TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
January 19, 2021**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. via GoToMeeting by Chairperson Maguire. Members present: Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Speich, Polhamus, and Weber. A quorum was present.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Maguire.

III. NEW BUSINESS

**20/21-48 Board of Education Request for Special Revenue Fund:
Technology Protection Plan**

Chairperson Maguire welcomed Susan Russo, Business Manager, Avon Public Schools.

The Town Manager noted that we have a number of special revenue funds that can be found in Tab N in the budget book; the commonality is that they have a specific source of revenue and a specific expenditure object. He discussed this concept with Dr. Carnemolla, as well as the auditors and outside legal counsel who agree it should be setup as a special revenue fund. He noted that what the Council is being asked to approve tonight has been approved by all outside professionals, staff agrees with it; if Council approves, it will then go to the Board of Finance for final approval.

Dr. Bridget Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools, thanked the Town Manager and Town Council for scheduling this special meeting and for Town staff's assistance regarding this request. She noted that they are looking for a means by which to allow their families an opportunity to purchase insurance at a low cost versus the cost of either replacing an entire chromebook or for multiple repairs on a chromebook; they have had a one-to-one initiative with chromebooks, particularly when they put the lease purchase through last year; they had a five-year rollout plan that became a nine-month rollout plan due to the COVID-19 restrictions; and looking for a way to protect our interest as a district and Town and the money we have invested in this equipment and also to have our parents understand and know the costs associated with the various repairs done or to replace a chromebook. She noted that this is not much different than any other equipment we provide to students; we have an expectation that is taken care of property by students and families and this will help achieve that and offset potential costs for families. She added that the Board passed a policy at their last meeting and they will continue to discuss how to implement it; depending on how this process turns out they may not start collecting the funds until the fall but regardless we need the fund setup before we can continue to develop the programmatic and procedural end. She added that they have a truckload of new chromebooks at Central Office and they are excited about being able to continue to rollout this initiative.

Chairperson Maguire inquired what happens now if something gets damaged. Dr. Carnemolla responded that at present we are replacing and repairing when necessary and they have refrained from billing anyone related to the chromebooks; they have been tracking, to the best of their ability, the types of repairs and replacements that have been done; moving forward they will implement a more universal sign out process.

Chairperson Maguire inquired about a preliminary cost per family. Dr. Carnemolla responded that they have done research around the establishment of similar chromebook/technology device policies throughout other districts; the average for this premium in Farmington Valley is \$30.10 per year, the maximum in the area was \$35.00 per year, and the lowest statewide was \$22.00 per year; they were thinking about the \$30 price point based on repair costs versus the dollar amount that can be accounted for in this fund as well as other districts' experiences; it is a good price point.

Mr. Speich inquired what was used to establish the insurance premium. Dr. Carnemolla responded that they collected data in their own district; in tracking from the first day of school through November 24, 2020 they had about \$2,400 in losses not including how often they are repairing them with spare parts; it is hard to quantify what it will look like in the long run so there is not much of a claims experience. Mr. Speich noted that \$30 per year would be worth the money. He inquired how many students have a chromebook. Dr. Carnemolla responded that almost every student has a chromebook; we needed another delivery to come in. She noted that we were allowing students to use their own device which is challenging as they need to be "managed devices" which are safer on their network. Mr. Speich inquired if this will be more of the norm with students taking a chromebook home at the beginning of a school year. Dr. Carnemolla responded yes, not necessarily for the pandemic but more from an educational standpoint; so many resources are web based which requires students to have access at school and at home.

Mr. Polhamus inquired about the operability of the device and the family's potential responsibility to repair or replace it. Dr. Carnemolla responded that part of their discussion has been whether or not it is offered to everyone whether or not they have a new or old chromebook. She noted that there is a manufacturer warranty of which a fair number have been fixed under. Mr. Polhamus noted that his bigger concern would be equipment that is out of warranty and fails after serving its life span and to have some process in place to determine what qualifies as the family's responsibility. He commented on any decisions regarding the determination of economic hardship and allowing a fee waiver and asked that the judgement of who makes it into that category be determined by someone else besides us in Avon. He supports the program.

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

RESOLVED: That the Town Council approve the establishment of Special Revenue Fund – Technology Protection Plan.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Weber, Speich, and Polhamus voted in favor.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pending Claim/Litigation

The Town Manager reported that an update was provided to Council in their background memo which did not require any further discussion in Executive Session at this time.

V. ADJOURN

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

RESOLVED: That the Town Council adjourn the meeting at 5:54 p.m.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Speich, Polhamus, and Weber voted in favor.

Attest: Jennifer Worsman, Clerk