



Town of Avon Newsletter

ISSUE LXIX

January 2023

Save the Dates! FY 2023/2024 Budget Process

The process to prepare the FY 2023/2024 budget that takes effect on July 1, 2023 is well underway. All town departments have submitted their capital and operating budgets and **Town Council** will review the Town Manager's proposed budget at a hybrid (virtual and in-person) **Budget Workshop** scheduled for Saturday, February 4th beginning at 8:00 a.m. and ending around 1:00 p.m. Details of the proposed budget will be presented and discussed with the Council at this time and the public is encouraged to attend.

The **Board of Finance** will hold a **Public Hearing** on the budget on **Monday, April 3rd** at 7:00 p.m., in a hybrid format (via GoToMeeting and in-person, location TBD). Residents wishing to provide the Board of Finance with input about the budget are welcome to attend and offer comments. Information regarding the process for making comments will be provided via the Town's website prior to the public hearing. The **Board of Finance Budget Workshop** will be held on **Tuesday, April 4th** at 7:00 p.m., in a hybrid format (via GoToMeeting and in-person, location TBD). During the workshop, the Board will consider the comments from the public hearing and determine the budget that will be presented at the Annual Town Meeting and appear on the ballot at the Budget Referendum in May. Following this determination, changes cannot be made to the budget before the Referendum. Please note there is no opportunity for public comment at the Board of Finance Budget Workshop, but residents are welcome to attend.

Please visit the Town's website, www.avonct.gov, to access documents related to the budget process. We expect that the budget document will be posted in late January, and will be updated in March and again in May as the budget process progresses. We also recommend that you "**Subscribe to Town News**" on the Town's website under **Citizen Action Center** to receive email notifications of Town Council, Board of Education and Board of Finance agendas, as these Boards have a direct role in the budget process. Finally, as always we encourage you to share your questions and comments with the Town Manager's Office at (860) 409-4300.

Tax Relief for Elderly and Disabled Homeowners

Homeowners who are age 65 or older or totally disabled may be eligible for **up to \$2,360** in Property Tax Relief. To be eligible, you must have been 65 or older prior to 12/31/22, your adjusted gross income plus social security has to be **\$61,800 or less**, and you must have owned your home on October 1, 2022. The application filing period is **February 1 through May 15, 2023**. If you have any questions or feel you might be eligible, please contact the Assessor's Office at (860) 409-4335 for further information.

Real Estate & Supplemental Motor Vehicle Taxes

The second installment of real estate and supplemental motor vehicle taxes (for those who purchased **OR** reregistered a motor vehicle after October 1, 2021 thru September 30, 2022), due January 1, 2023, must be paid or US postmarked by February 1, 2023 to avoid state-mandated interest charges. Questions, please call the Collector of Revenue office at (860) 409-4306.

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Early Voting was Approved in November. What Happens Next?

During the November 2022 General Election, voters approved a ballot question to amend the State Constitution to allow for early voting. The General Assembly, which convened for the 2023 legislative session on January 4th, has begun to draft legislation outlining the particulars of the new early voting system. A number of questions will need to be answered including, but not limited to, how long the early voting period will be, and how it will be funded.

The initial proposal will be developed by the Government Administration & Elections Committee (GAE) based on input from public hearings, election stakeholders and the Secretary of the State. From there, the bill will follow the standard legislative process. A summary of this process is available on the Attorney General's website: www.tinyurl.com/attnygeneral. To stay informed, subscribe to receive updates from the GAE by visiting www.cga.ct.gov/gae. The public is encouraged to participate in the legislative process by calling, or writing to, your elected state representatives or to the Office of the Secretary of the State to share your ideas. You can also submit testimony during the public hearing process.

In order to prepare for early voting, the Town's Registrars of Voters (ROV) are asking the public to verify their voter information by visiting www.avonct.gov/registrar-of-voters, selecting "Voter Registration" and scrolling down the page to find the link for the Voter Registration Lookup. The Registrars will also be looking to recruit poll workers as the need arises. If you need to correct your voter information or are interested in working at the polls, please send an email to rov@avonct.gov.

Reminders from the Public Works Department

Mailbox Damage: During the winter season, it is inevitable that some mailboxes and posts will be damaged during winter plowing operations. Avon's policy is to reimburse residents \$20.00 for mailboxes and \$65.00 for posts that are damaged as a result of direct contact with a Town snow plow. Mailboxes that are damaged from the force of snow thrown against them or mailboxes that are located closer than 9-inches to the roadway are not eligible for reimbursement.

To report damage to a mailbox, please visit www.avonct.gov, look under the **Citizen Action Center** and select **Report a Concern**. Or, you may call Public Works at (860) 673-6151.

Public Sand/Salt Mix: A sand and salt mix is available to residents at no charge at the Public Works Garage and at the Landfill. Please limit yourself to (1) five-gallon pail.

Save Energy & Save Money this Winter

Take advantage of these Eversource Programs today!

1. Sign up for **Home Energy SolutionsSM** for on the spot energy improvements and personalized recommendations for your home. Customers who heat with electricity are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this offer.
2. Take advantage of the **Heating Cost Calculator** to see how adjustments to your thermostat can help save energy.
3. Enroll in **Budget Billing** to set up predictable monthly payments and even out bill spikes during heating and cooling seasons.
4. Use the **Rate Board** to compare rates offered by other electric suppliers. Choose the option that works best for you.
5. Learn more about **Special Assistance Programs** to lower your monthly payments, forgive past due balances or spread payments over time.

Visit eversource.com/winter-bill for more information about this programs. Information for this article provided by Eversource and compiled by the Avon Clean Energy Commission.



Winter Safety Tips from Animal Control Officer Angela

When it comes to winter preparedness, we can't forget our pets. The Town's new ACO, Angela Grano, is pleased to share the following tips to help keep our furry friends safe and sound throughout the winter months:

- Check their skin and paws often for cracks or drying. Stay off salted roads during walks.
- Ensure access to fresh, unfrozen water as winter temperatures can cause excessive dryness.
- Watch their weight as pets are less active in the winter.
- Check your car engine and tires before starting your car. These are warm places for indoor and outdoor cats to nap. Also check for antifreeze leaks.
- Most pets are not equipped to handle extreme cold. Consider booties and/or jackets to keep short-haired breeds warm.

For routine questions, please contact ACO Angela at (860) 409-4399 or via email at agrano@avonct.gov. For immediate animal control service needs, please call non-emergency dispatch at (860) 409-4200. In an emergency, please call 911.

Special Town Meeting to Consider Purchase of Fire Apparatus

The Town Council has scheduled a Special Town Meeting on Tuesday, January 24, 2023 (Snow Date: Monday, January 30th) at 7:00 p.m. at Avon High School to consider resolutions appropriating funding and authorizing the issuance of bonds of the Town to purchase a new fire engine (\$1,259,000) and a new ladder truck (\$2,172,000) for use by the Avon Volunteer Fire Department. During the Special Town Meeting, the purchases will be proposed and discussed and at the conclusion, the moderator will call for a hand vote on the purchase of each vehicle. The purchases would be approved if a majority of those persons present at the meeting and qualified to vote, vote "yes." The vehicles will be considered independently of one another, with a separate hand vote conducted for each purchase. More information on the purchases can be found on the Town's website and questions can be referred to the Town Manager's Office at (860) 409-4300.

CASHO's 2022 Distinguished Service Award



On November 22nd, the Town of Avon was presented with the Connecticut Association of Street & Highways Officials' (CASHO) 2022 *Distinguished Service Award*. This prestigious award is given to the municipality that demonstrates exemplary support for public works, as related to maintenance and preservation of road infrastructure and other operations. CASHO is primarily an educational association whose mission is to provide education on public works functions. The organization has more than 350 members that are employed by towns, cities and state agencies throughout Connecticut. Alex Trujillo, Avon's Deputy Director of Public Works currently serves as CASHO's President. Congratulations to our dedicated Department of Public Works staff on this award! We thank you for your tireless efforts to ensure our safety in our public buildings and on our streets.

AARP Foundation 2023 Tax-Aide

Free tax assistance to middle and low income taxpayers from February 8 through April 12. Special attention is given to those 50 and older. Appointments are required. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call the **Avon Senior Center at (860) 675-4355.**

Avon Recreation Department

Avon Recreation Department's Summer Programs and Pool Membership registration will begin online on April 14th. For complete details log on to avonrec.com. Watch for upcoming summer job opportunities beginning January 20th.



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, the gross annual household income must be at or below 60% of the state median income. If you have never applied and/or are interested in receiving more information on this program, please visit our website, www.avonct.gov, under the Social Services link ("Energy Assistance & Renters Rebate"), or call our office at (860) 409-4346 to see if you may qualify. **Applications are by appointment only! Program deadline is May 31st.**
- ♦ **Operation Fuel** may be able to provide one-time assistance with heating bills for those households who have applied for the CT Energy Assistance Program and were found to be slightly over income/asset limits. All those interested must apply for the CT Energy Assistance Program **before** contacting Operation Fuel. More information is available through Gifts of Love at (860) 676-2323.

2022 Holiday Food and Gift Programs

Avon Social Services, Avon Youth Services, and the Avon Food Pantry would like to thank all the incredible sponsors who helped provide for the Thanksgiving and the Winter Holiday food and gift programs! The generosity of our sponsors helped brighten so many families' holiday celebrations with presents, food and gift cards!

We also want to give a big thank you to Jim Martino, Mary Lou Connors and all the Food Pantry volunteers for all their tireless, generous and fiercely dedicated efforts running the Avon Food Pantry.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Planning Effort to Commence

In December 2022, the Town Council awarded a contract to the SLR International Corporation of Cheshire, CT to develop a town-wide Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan. The goals of the plan are to improve mobility, connectivity, recreational opportunities and public health. The plan will also aim to enhance sustainability by encouraging non-motorized or public transportation options. Project deliverables will include a prioritized list of recommendations for new or improved bicycle and pedestrian connections and facilities, along with policy and operational recommendations.

The Town expects to begin working with the consultant this winter and anticipates that the project will take approximately a year to complete. The consultant's scope of work includes a robust public involvement process throughout the project that will include a variety of events aimed at engaging a broad cross section of the Avon community in the process. More information about this project and the public involvement process will be posted on the Town's website as it becomes available. Stay tuned!

Sundays at Three - Music by Grayson Hughes

February 19, 2023 at 3:00 p.m., Avon Library Community Room: The Friends free music concerts are back! Join us for Grayson Hughes. His songs have been called "a soul/rock stew with a dash of blues and a pinch of country" (*Stone Phillips, The Today Show*) and his voice has been compared to soul legends Sam Cooke and Otis Redding, and his singing praised by the legendary producer Buddy Miller and Grammy-winning musician Pete Anderson.

More details here: <https://www.avonctlibrary.info/event/sundays-at-three-grayson-hughes/>

Christmas Tree Pick Up

The Public Works Department began picking up Christmas trees on Tuesday, January 3, 2023. There is no established schedule with this pick up. The last day for pick up will be January 31st.

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



Old Farms Road Phase I (North-South Section) to Proceed

The Town held a referendum on December 14, 2022 to consider the appropriation of \$5.4 million in state grant funding to complete the Old Farms Road Phase I (North-South Section). The appropriation was approved with a vote of 1,330 in favor to 1,018 opposed. As of this writing, the Town and its engineering consultants are finalizing the project design and permitting and preparing the bid documents. We anticipate advertising an invitation for bid in the coming weeks. We expect construction to begin in spring 2023. More information about the project can be found on the Town's website, www.avonct.gov, under the Engineering page (Projects), and we anticipate posting regular updates as the project progresses. Please contact the Engineering Department at (860) 409-4322 with questions.

Winter Tips for Outdoor Cycling, Running & Walking

Stay Safe all winter long with these tips prepared by Bike Walk Avon CT, the Department of Recreation & Parks and the Police Department:

1. **Go "Hi Viz."** Lights and high visibility clothing are essential. Bikes should have front and rear lights. Pedestrians should carry lights or use a head lamp when it's dark. Clothing should be light in color and have reflective strips.
2. **Ride, Walk & Run Defensively.** Make eye contact with drivers, limit sudden movements, and always sign with intent. Cyclists should ride with traffic and obey all traffic signs and signals. Pedestrians should walk against traffic while on a road and use sidewalks and crosswalks when available. Crossing beacons are available for your safety on our rail trail.
3. **Adapt your Activity.** Falls are more common in the winter months. Cyclists should slow down and remove their pedal clips and straps. Slower speeds help adjust to the variability in winter conditions.
4. **Layer Up.** New England weather changes quickly. Layers make temperature adjustments easier. Much better to prepare for the cold and remove layers if needed.
5. **Protect your Eyes.** Even if the sun isn't shining, wear glasses to protect your eyes from the wind, glare, dirt, grit and anything else that could be kicked up from the pavement.
6. **Wear a Helmet.** Helmets for cycling are essential year-round. Be sure your helmet fits over a hat.
7. **Don't Forget to Eat & Drink.** In the winter, we generate more body heat to resist the cold and to maintain constant body temperature. The air is usually drier in the winter, and the sweat produced during exercise can cause dehydration.
8. **Let Someone Know Your Plans.** Make sure you communicate where you are going and when you plan to return.

Reminders from the Avon Volunteer Fire Department

The AVFD wishes all a safe and healthy 2023! We would like to thank all those who supported us in 2022 through financial contributions, donations to food and toy drives, and much more. We are grateful for your generosity.

Snow Removal: Please dig out all fire hydrants near your home and office whenever it snows. Immediate access to a water source in an emergency is absolutely crucial to the protection of life and property.

Smoke and CO Alarms: Test your smoke and CO detectors monthly. Confirm they are not expired by checking the manufacture date on the back. Detectors should be replaced within 10 years of the manufacture (not purchase!) date. Place one on every level of the home, including the basement, one in every bedroom, and one outside of sleeping areas within 10 feet of a bedroom door (per State of CT).

Come Volunteer with Us! Our volunteer firefighters are members of the Avon community. We are your friends and neighbors and we are dedicated to keeping you safe. Join us and make a difference! We will provide all necessary training. Connect with us via phone (860) 677-2644; or web at www.avonvfd.org; or stop by a fire station during Monday evening drills, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

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IMPORTANT DATES

Town Council Budget Workshop
Saturday, February 4, 2023, 8:00 a.m.
Hybrid Format (via GoToMeeting & In-Person, Town Hall Selectmen's Chamber)

FY 2023/2024
Annual Budget Public Hearing
Monday, April 3, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Hybrid Format (via GoToMeeting & In-Person, Location TBD)