



# Town of Avon Newsletter

ISSUE LXII

October 2020

## FY 2021/2022 Budget Process

The process is already under way to begin planning for the FY 2021/2022 budget that takes effect on July 1, 2021. All town departments have submitted their capital budget requests, and operating budget requests are due in early November. Residents who are interested in the details of the proposed budget may be interested in attending the following meetings:

**Capital Budget Presentations** will be held either in the Selectmen's Chamber at Avon Town Hall, 60 West Main Street, or virtually on the following dates and times:

- Thursday, November 5th at 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday, December 3th at 7:00 p.m.

**Operating Budget Workshop** is traditionally a half-day meeting held on a Saturday in February in the Selectmen's Chamber at Town Hall. Please check the January 2021 issue of the Newsletter for the date. The complete budget calendar is available on-line at: [www.avonct.gov](http://www.avonct.gov).

The annual budget process is a long one with plenty of opportunities for public participation. The process may be affected by the extension of the Governor's Executive Orders concerning COVID-19. We encourage you to visit the Town's website often to access documents related to the process, including the proposed operating budget in its entirety, and the Town Manager's Budget Message which includes a high level summary of the budget. We expect that these documents 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**" on the Town's website under the **Citizen Action Center** to receive email notifications of Town Council, Board of Education and Board of Finance agendas, as these three Boards have a direct role in the budget process. Finally, as always, please do not hesitate to call the Town Manager's Office at (860) 409-4300 with questions.

## Old Farms Road Bridge Project Reaches Completion

As of this writing, the CT DOT's Old Farms Road Bridge and Intersection Project is substantially complete. Passersby may notice touch-up work and landscaping being completed in the coming weeks. The project has greatly improved travel through the area by providing a safer and more user-friendly roadway for drivers, while making significant improvements to the Fisher Meadows recreation area, including the car-top boat launch on the Farmington River which is currently available for public use, a viewing area/pocket park on the eastern bank of the river, and parking improvements. Town staff would like to thank the CT DOT and the Contractor, Rotha Construction of Avon, for their dedication to this project.



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## Annual Report & Town Calendar

Residents are reminded that the Annual Report is not mailed to households. A limited number will be available at the Town Hall and the Landfill. Reports will be ready for pick-up on November 30, 2020.



## Reminders from Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Director

**Fall Fire Safety:** As the weather cools, many will take the opportunity to clean their yards or enjoy a campfire. We would like to remind everyone of the local ordinance and state regulations regarding open burning. Burning is not allowed when Fire Danger is High. Never use gasoline or other flammable liquid to start a fire. Keep fire a minimum of 10' from any structure. Have a water supply available – a hose or bucket of water. Consider the health of your neighbors, smoke must go up and away from neighbors. Keep kids away from the fire! *Even if a fire is allowed the person responsible for the fire is liable for any and all damage caused by the fire.*

- **Campfires – Do Not Require Permit:** Only non-processed and untreated wood may be burned. Burning of glued or painted wood is prohibited. Burning of trash is prohibited.
- **Open Burning – Permit required:** Open burning is limited to the burning of brush only. Brush is defined as shrubs, vegetation or pruning's, the diameter of which is not greater than three inches at the widest point. Leaves and grass are not considered brush. Open burning is not allowed for the purpose of clearing land, or for the disposal of construction debris, household trash, or leaves. If requested, we will inspect your burn area. **If fire is found to be creating a nuisance or is in an unsafe manner, a Fire Officer may order the fire extinguished.**
- **Contacts:** Questions - Fire Marshal's Office at (860) 409-4319. Report Nuisance or Unsafe Fire - Non-emergency Dispatch at (860) 409-4200. Permit Application & Open Burning Ordinance - [www.avonct.gov/fire-prevention](http://www.avonct.gov/fire-prevention).

**Portable Generator Safety:** When the power goes out, many turn to a portable generator for a temporary solution without being aware of the risks. Follow these guidelines from the National Fire Protection Association to use your generator safely: (1) Place your generator in a well ventilated location, outside at least five feet from all doors, windows and vent openings. (2) Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open. (3) Place the generator so that exhaust fumes can't enter the home through windows, doors or other openings. (4) Install carbon monoxide alarms in your home. (5) Turn off generators and allow for cooling time before refueling. NEVER refuel a generator while hot. (6) Store fuel in a container that is intended for the purpose and properly labeled. For more safety tips visit [www.avonct.gov/emergency-management](http://www.avonct.gov/emergency-management).

## Public Safety Communications System Project Update

The project to replace the Town's existing Public Safety Communications System continues to be of critical importance. The \$3.89 million project was approved by voters at referendum in December 2018 and provides for the replacement of the Town's existing analog communications system with a digital system meeting the Project 25 (P25) standard. Unfortunately, the project is unable proceed as originally designed and approved due to the Town of Canton's denial of Avon's December 2019 request to replace the existing communications structure at 170 Kingswood Drive with a taller structure in order to achieve the required coverage for public safety communications. As a result, staff have been working diligently with our consultants to identify alternative sites, and we are now focusing on a site located at the rear of the Transfer Station on Huckleberry Hill Road. At this time, the Town continues to develop and refine the new proposal and once complete the project will likely require a vote at Referendum. Please contact John Zematis, Police Records & Communications Manager, at (860) 409-4251 with questions about the project.

## COVID-19 Pandemic Response

We are pleased to share that as of this writing, the majority of Town programs, facilities and services are once again open and available to the public, albeit with a number of modifications and limitations. Given the dynamic nature of the Town's pandemic response, the best resource for up-to-date information regarding operations and other pandemic updates is our website. **"Subscribe"** on the Town's website under **Citizen Action Center** to receive these updates straight to your inbox. Any resident requiring support or assistance at this time should contact Social Services at (860) 409-4346. As always, the best way to prevent the spread of the virus is to wear a mask, practice good hygiene and social distance.

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## AAA Rating Reaffirmed & Annual Budget Featured

In June, the Town issued \$3.275 million in general obligation bonds to finance the Avon High School Synthetic Turf Field and Track Improvement Project and a portion of the Town and Public Safety Communications System Replacement Project and the results were very positive. In preparation for the issuance of the bonds, the Town's AAA rating was reaffirmed by both Standard and Poor's and Moody's following a ratings review process. The prestigious AAA rating allows the Town to take advantage of low interest rates when issuing debt and is a function of the Town's strong fiscal policies and financial management. We are pleased to share that our Total Interest Cost (TIC) related to the issuance was 1.248%.

Avon's Annual Budget document was recently featured as a case study in the second edition of ***Understanding Government Budgets: A Guide to Practices in the Public Sector*** by R. Mark Musell and Ryan Yeung. The textbook is intended for graduate and undergraduate public administration students and provides a survey on budgeting in the public sector at the federal, state and local levels. Avon serves as a case study for best practices in local government. This is not the first time the Town has been recognized for its excellence in budgeting. The Town has been awarded the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Award for thirty-four consecutive years, most recently for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019. The budget document is available at [www.avonct.gov](http://www.avonct.gov) for public review.

## Enroll to Receive Emergency Updates from the Town!

The Town of Avon is committed to providing residents with up to date information about storm preparations and emergencies. Below are three ways to make sure that you stay up-to-date when weather and other emergencies strike.

**SUBSCRIBE TO TOWN NEWS** - To receive regular updates about Town business in a variety of categories, including storms and other emergency situations, **"Subscribe"** on the Town's website under **Citizen Action Center** to receive email updates straight to your inbox. Select "Town Alerts" and "Town News and Announcements" to receive updates regarding storms, emergencies, and other types of timely general news.

**CT ALERTS** - To ensure that you receive critical emergency information even when the power is out and you can't receive emails, you should also sign up for the **CTAlert system** (link on the Town's website) which sends time-sensitive notices wherever you specify, such as your home, cell or business phone, SMS text messages, email, hearing impaired receiving devices and more. Both the State of Connecticut and the Town of Avon have the ability to send alerts to those registered with the CTAlert system. When the State or the Town issues a message about an emergency, the message will be sent to all phone numbers and email addresses enrolled in the system in order of the priority set by the user. If you do not confirm receipt of the message, the system will attempt to reach your next contact number or device entered into the system. **The Town suggests enrolling in both "Subscribe" and CTAlert to stay informed.**

**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!** - "Like" and "Follow" **Avon Police Department, Connecticut** and **Avon Fire Prevention and Emergency Updates** for updates related to public safety and emergency management.

## Tips for Eco-Friendly Fall Yard Work

Fall is an ideal time to get outside and finish the yard work you may have been neglecting all summer. Here are a few eco-friendly tips to integrate into your fall clean-up (*courtesy of EarthShare*):

1. Choose hand-powered or electric tools instead of gas to reduce noise and pollution.
  2. Plant trees, bushes and flowers. Your landscaping will have a better chance of surviving now than if you wait until next summer. Choose native species and make sure that your selections are appropriate for the soil and sunlight on your property.
  3. When preparing your garden for next year, add organic, slow-release fertilizers that will enhance the soil over time.
  4. Instead of bagging your leaves, collect and compost them to create nutrient-rich, organic soil just in time for spring.
  5. Ensure that your garden keeps giving throughout the winter months by canning your harvest.
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## News & Notes to Remember for the November Election

### ABSENTEE BALLOTS

- The Office of the Connecticut Secretary of the State sent out applications for absentee ballots to all active, registered voters in mid-September. If you did not receive an absentee ballot application in the mail, you may download an application from the Town Clerk's page of the Town website, or call (860) 409-4310 to request that an application be mailed to you.
- Absentee ballots became available in the Town Clerk's Office on **October 2, 2020.**
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all registered voters are eligible to vote via absentee ballot by checking "COVID-19" on the application. Please note that the polling locations will be open on Election Day.
- The last day to apply for an absentee ballot is **November 2, 2020.**
- We encourage voters to drop their completed absentee ballots in the secure drop box located outside of Town Hall, Building #2, Town Clerk's Office as an alternative to U.S. Mail. **Absentee ballots must be RECEIVED by the Town by 8:00 p.m. on November 3, 2020.**

### VOTER REGISTRATION

- Last day to register to vote **in person or by mail** to be eligible to vote on November 3, 2020 is **October 27, 2020.** The Registrars of Voters will be in their office at Town Hall, Building #1, from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. to register voters that day. Any questions regarding voter registration should be directed to the Registrars at (860) 409-4350.
- Persons whose rights as to age, citizenship and residence mature after the above date may apply to vote until **November 2, 2020.**
- Election Day Registration will be held at the Registrars of Voters Office on **November 3, 2020.**

### POLLING LOCATIONS

- The polls will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, November 3, 2020.** See back page of this Newsletter for polling locations. Voters should wear masks at all polling locations and social distance.

## Town Council Approves New Lease with Sub Edge Farm

Following a public hearing on September 3, 2020, the Town Council approved a new lease agreement with Rodger and Isabelle Phillips for approximately 162 acres of the Fisher Farm property located on Tillotson Road. Rodger and Isabelle have been farming the parcel on the west side of Tillotson since 2014 following a competitive request for proposals process. The new lease agreement adds the parcel on the east side of Tillotson to their existing holdings in order to accommodate their growing business, the Sub Edge Farm. The term of the lease is January 2021 - March 2023 with options for two one-year renewals. One of the best ways to grow a sustainable, healthy community, is to help its members understand where their food comes from. For the last six years, Sub Edge Farm has helped the Avon community to do just that through its programs and events. We are proud of Rodger and Isabelle's accomplishments to date and are delighted that they continue to serve as faithful stewards of our beautiful historic farm. Visit their website [www.subedgefarm.com](http://www.subedgefarm.com) for more information on the Sub Edge Farm.

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



## Social Services Programs

**CT Energy Assistance Programs:** The State of Connecticut can help certain households pay for primary heating bills (i.e. oil, propane, electric, and gas), if those households meet certain federal poverty income guidelines and limited asset tests. For the upcoming 2020-2021 winter season, you may call Avon Social Services to see if you qualify (regardless of whether you are a new or returning applicant). **In person appointments are limited, applicants are encouraged to call for a phone interview and send documentation by U.S. Mail or Email.** The program for oil ends on March 15, 2021, and all others on April 30, 2021. PLEASE APPLY EARLY! If you would like more information on this program, please visit the Town's website, [www.avonct.gov](http://www.avonct.gov), and go to the Social Services link "[Energy Assistance](#)" or contact the Social Services Office at (860) 409-4346 with any questions.

**NOTE:** The Avon Social Services Department may have limited ability to provide emergency fuel deliveries through the Avon Fuel Bank, so OIL users should apply EARLY!

**Holiday Donation Changes for 2020:** The Social Services Department is collecting **gift cards** (to grocery, retail or online stores, \$15 - \$25 increments preferred) for the upcoming holiday season in order to help Avon families in need. Please join us! You may download, complete, and submit the Donor forms, and find information on the **Drop-Off** days and times, by visiting the Town's website, [www.avonct.gov](http://www.avonct.gov), and go to the Social Services link "[Holiday Donation Program](#)."

## Warm Welcomes, Best Wishes, & Fond Farewells

The Town would like to welcome some new faces, and offer congratulations to those employees and volunteers that were promoted or retired in 2020.

Please welcome our newest employees: **Stephanie Askeland**, Director of Human Resources; **Jason Craig**, DPW Maintainer II; **Franklin Guth**, Patrol Officer; **Kimberly King**, PT Administrative Secretary I - PD; **John Patraw**, DPW Mechanic I; **Matthew Ross**, DPW Maintainer I; and **Alyssa Skorski**, Library Specialist. A warm welcome to all!

Congratulations to all those who were reclassified or promoted this year: **Claudia Frutuoso**, DPW Sr. Administrative Coordinator; **Susan Guimaraes**, FT Administrative Secretary I - Planning & HR; **Linda Landi**, Assistant Assessor; **Armand Perera**, PT Recycling Coordinator; **Christine Pescatore**, FT Administrative Analyst - Finance & Social Services; **Timothy Roberts**, FT Dispatcher; **January Thompson**, Police Records Aide; **Grace Tiezzi**, Assistant Town Manager; and **Rodney Williams**, Police Lieutenant. Best of luck to all in their new roles!

We would like to wish four employees well as they begin retirement: **Margaret "Peggy" Colligan**, Director of Finance - 38 years; **Jamie DiPace**, Fire Marshal/Assistant Building Official/Emergency Management Director - 25 years; **Denise Dwyer**, Personnel Administrator - 24 years, and; **Laurie Rotondo**, DPW Senior Administrative Coordinator - 22 years. The Town is fortunate to have a number of employees whose dedication to the community is reflected in the length of their tenure. We thank you all for your service and commitment and we wish you well on your next adventures!

### Want to Serve on a Town Board or Commission?

*The Town is always looking for residents to share their time and talents with their neighbors by serving on one of our voluntary boards or commissions. Interested? Visit [www.avonct.gov](http://www.avonct.gov) and select "Volunteer Opportunities" under the "Find it Fast" menu to download an Application for Appointment to a Board/Commission/Committee. Completed applications should be returned to the Town Manager's Office. The applications are reviewed by the Town Council when vacancies occur to assist in making appointments.*





## Avon Village Center Status Update

The work on the Avon Village Center Project continues. Most recently, a significant portion of the road, sewer and water utility infrastructure has started to take shape. At this time, the developer is completing two significant tasks related to the roadway: lowering the grade of Climax Road to create a more gentle roadway, and constructing a new roundabout connecting Climax Road and Bickford Drive. It is anticipated that both of these tasks will be completed before the winter weather sets in and will significantly improve Climax Road between Route 44 and Bickford Drive by enhancing traffic flow and safety.

Additionally, work continues on the exterior of the grocery store building and the commercial building located to its north. Ultimately, a second commercial building will be located across from the structure currently under construction, forming a two-sided main street for the Village. While it is difficult to envision at this time, the buildings should provide a highly walkable area once completed. Trail users may also notice that the building housing the public restrooms adjacent to the Rails-to-Trails is taking shape. We expect that this structure will be a welcome amenity for those visiting the Village and using the trail. We expect the restrooms will be ready for use this fall. Drivers will also notice that the installation of the landscaping in front of the grocery store building has begun. We anticipate that the landscaping will soften the parking area. The parking area itself will not be visible from Route 44 but will still provide plenty of parking for the grocery store.

While work is progressing steadily, there is still a ways to go. The Avon Village Center is a highly complex project with many moving parts. Staff is continuing to work with the developer to move the construction process along as expediently as possible in order to keep disturbances to the public to a minimum. As always, if you have questions or concerns, please contact Hiram Peck, Director of Planning & Community Development at (860) 409-4328 or [hpeck@avonct.gov](mailto:hpeck@avonct.gov).

## Amendments to Ordinance Chapter 15

At its September 3rd meeting, the Town Council voted to amend Chapter 15 of the Code of the Town of Avon, "Emergency Services" to assess a charge on users of burglar, fire, medical and any other alarms or emergency signaling devices that emit false alarms.

Alarm users will be permitted three (3) false alarms per billing cycle (July 1-June 30) without charge. The next four (4) false alarms will be assessed at \$25.00 per occurrence. Any subsequent alarms during the billing cycle will be assessed at \$100.00 per occurrence. These amendments are effective as of September 30th and have been implemented to reduce the number of false alarm calls annually. Please contact the Police Department at (860) 409-4200 with questions.

## Slow Down, Keep our Community Safe!

The Avon Police Department regularly conducts traffic enforcement efforts on local roads. Drivers may be stopped for speeding, failing to obey stop signs, passing in a no passing zone, and more. Motorists who violate traffic laws can expect to receive anything from a payable infraction of \$150 or more (passing a school bus displaying flashing red lights can cost you \$470!), to a summons for court. **Please respect your neighbors by obeying the traffic laws and drive through town as if your own children are playing on every street.**

### RECREATION DEPARTMENT • SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, October 31, 2020

**What:** Halloween Party for Pre-k through Grade 4 (*masks & social distancing required*)

**Where:** Sycamore Hills Park

Register at [www.avonrec.com](http://www.avonrec.com)



## DPW Snow Removal & Ice Control Operations and Guidelines

**General:** Avon Public Works is charged with the responsibility of responding to winter snow and ice events. Our goal is to keep streets passable and reasonably safe during the storm and to clear the streets, curb to curb, within 8 to 12 hours after the storm has ended. Our plow drivers work long hours in hazardous driving conditions, and we appreciate your patience during snow and ice events.

**Snow Routes:** The 112 miles of town roads (approximate) maintained by DPW are divided into 11 snow plow routes. One plow truck and driver is assigned to each plow route for the entire winter season.

**Priorities:** During snow events, the primary focus is to provide a safe travel way for cars and emergency vehicles on heavily traveled roadways. While snow is actively falling, plowing is generally limited to the center portion of the roadway to clear a path wide enough for one travel lane in each direction. As a winter storm subsides, more efforts can be directed to local roadways and cul-de-sacs. Depending on the severity of a storm, it can take up to 4 hours +/- to make passes on all streets in town. Snow removal often continues for 8 to 12 hours after snow has stopped falling.

**Mail Box 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.



### Frequently Asked Questions:

**I live on a cul-de-sac and end up with significant amounts of snow in my driveway. Why?** Plowing cul-de-sacs is one of the most challenging operations during a snow storm. Most properties on cul-de-sacs have frontages that are narrower than lots on a straight street. Therefore, snow must be pushed into a smaller space.

**Why is snow pushed into my driveway by street plows?** It is unavoidable and it is not done intentionally. Snow cast into driveways is an unfortunate byproduct of a very necessary service we provide. When we plow a street, we are simply moving the snow that is in the street off to the side of the street. The greater the amount of snow, the more snow that is deposited on the side.

**Who is responsible for clearing snow in front of my mailbox?** We plow the streets curb to curb, or as close as we can get. Whatever snow is left in front of mailboxes is the responsibility of the property owner to remove (or at least to move in order for the mailbox to be accessible to the mail carrier).

**Can I, as a resident, push snow from my property onto the sidewalk or street? NO!** Town Ordinance restricts the act of pushing snow back onto a street and doing so may result in a fine of \$50 and/or liability if an accident is caused by this dumping of snow. Please be respectful of passing motorists expecting a clear street by not putting snow back onto the street. Remember, if you contract for snow removal, you are still responsible for where the snow ends up.

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## Household Hazardous Waste Collection October 17, 2020

The Town of Avon, in conjunction with Canton, Farmington, Granby, and Simsbury, will be holding a Household Hazardous Waste Collection on Saturday, October 17, 2020 at the Simsbury Public Works Facility at 66 Town Forest Road (Town Forest Road is located off Stratton Brook Road). The collection will run from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and will be open to all residents from Avon, Canton, Farmington, Granby, and Simsbury. Please visit [www.avonct.gov](http://www.avonct.gov) for more information.

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**ISSUE LXII**  
**October 2020**

Avon Town Council  
Town of Avon  
60 W. Main St.  
Avon, CT 06001-3719

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[www.avonct.gov](http://www.avonct.gov)



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## **IMPORTANT DATE**

### **PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

**NOVEMBER 3, 2020**

**6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.**

**Absentee Ballots will be available.**

**Any questions regarding absentee ballots should be directed to the  
Town Clerk's Office at (860) 409-4310.**

**District #1**—Avon High School  
510 West Avon Road  
Gymnasium

**District #2**—AVFD Co. #1  
25 Darling Drive  
Upper Level

**District #3**—Roaring Brook School  
30 Old Wheeler Lane  
Gymnasium