

**BOARD OF FINANCE  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 28, 2022**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was opened at 7:04 p.m. via GoToMeeting by Cathy Salchert, Chair, present: Cathy Salchert, Margaret Bratton, Ellen Retelle, Carl Gisnarian, Charles Harvell, Houston Putnam Lowry and Brian Loveless. A quorum was present.

Ms. Salchert welcomed the new Board of Finance member, Brian Loveless.

**II. COMMUNICATION FROM THE AUDIENCE - None**

**III. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING:**

**January 24, 2022 Meeting**

On a motion made by Houston Putnam Lowry seconded by Ellen Retelle, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** The Board of Finance approves the minutes of its January 24, 2022 meeting as drafted.

Messrs: Lowry, Gisnarian, Harvell, Loveless and Mmes: Salchert, Bratton and Retelle voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0-0.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

**21/22-09          Review and Discussion: FY 22/23 Budget.**

Mr. Robertson gave an update on the 2022-2023 Budget process.

The budget workshop for the Council was held at the beginning of February. The first Council meeting following the budget workshop will be on March 3, 2022. Further discussion and probable adoption of the proposed fiscal year 2023 budget is on the agenda. The original proposed budget refers to an estimated 1.37% tax increase, due to the budget being drafted in late December, 2021-early January 2022, when the grand list had not been finalized, resulting in using a conservative estimate for the mill rate.

The grand list filed by the Assessor was considerably higher than the original estimated grand list, resulting in the 1.37% tax increase dropping to 0.91%, which may be adjusted further at the Council meeting.

The net grand list has increased from fiscal 2022 to 2023 by \$57mm, approximately a 2.2% increase in revenues, with a large share coming from the increased value of motor vehicles. With all municipalities using the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) publication to value vehicles and the supply and demand issues (the cost of motor vehicles has increased markedly during the pandemic because of a shortage of computer chips and other parts), the value of the same vehicles has significantly increased from the prior year. Looking forward, not knowing what vehicles values will do, it is hard to say what our risk level could be

for next year. The value of cars could increase further, remain stable or drop. If the value of motor vehicles drops, taxes will increase more than if the values remained flat. The approximate increase of \$1.5mm in revenue from the motor vehicle taxes we collect this year due to the book value increase is not the only variable to consider. There is a proposed cap on motor vehicle taxes at 29 mills pending in the Connecticut General Assembly, which would play a role in budget planning if adopted. The vast bulk of our tax revenues comes from residential property taxes.

The next property tax reevaluation is in 2023, which would have an impact on the fiscal 2024/2025 budget.

**21/22-21      American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA):**

**Supplemental Appropriation: Pavement Management, \$500,000**

On a motion made by Ellen Retelle, seconded by Charles Harvell, it was voted for the following six items as a package:

**RESOLVED:** The Board of Finance hereby amends the fiscal year 21/22 budget by increasing:

**REVENUES**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, Intergovernmental, American Rescue Plan Act Grant Revenue, Account #50-0330-44037 in the amount of \$500,000.00 and increasing:

**APPROPRIATIONS**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, Paving-ARPA, Pavement Management-ARPA, Account #50-4825-53455 in the amount of \$500,000.00, for the purpose of allocating funding received through the American Rescue Plan Act towards making road improvements as identified in the October 6, 2021 Pavement Management Plan prepared by the Beta Group.

**Supplemental Appropriation: AHS RTU Replacement-Phase II, \$320,000**

**RESOLVED:** The Board of Finance hereby amends the fiscal year 21/22 budget by increasing:

**REVENUES**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, Intergovernmental, American Rescue Plan Act Grant Revenue, Account #50-0330-44037 in the amount of \$320,000.00 and increasing:

**APPROPRIATIONS**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, BOE CIP Facilities, AHS RTU Replace Phase II-ARPA, Account #50-4859-54603 in the amount of \$320,000.00, for the purpose of allocating funding received through the American Rescue Plan Act towards the completion of Phase II of the Avon High School Rooftop Unit Replacement Project.

**Supplemental Appropriation: Deepwood Drive/New Road Drainage, \$275,000**

**RESOLVED:** The Board of Finance hereby amends the fiscal year 21/22 budget by increasing:

**REVENUES**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, Intergovernmental, American Rescue Plan Act Grant Revenue, Account #50-0330-44037 in the amount of \$275,000.00 and increasing:

**APPROPRIATIONS**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, Town CIP Facil./Drainage Imp., Drainage Improvements-ARPA, Account #50-4830-53041 in the amount of \$275,000.00, for the purpose of allocating funding received through the American Rescue Plan Act towards the completion of immediate repairs to the drainage system that flows from Deepwood Drive to New Road to the Farmington River.

**Supplemental Appropriation: Sycamore Hills Pool Repair, \$100,000**

**RESOLVED:** The Board of Finance hereby amends the fiscal year 21/22 budget by increasing:

**REVENUES**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, Intergovernmental, American Rescue Plan Act Grant Revenue, Account #50-0330-44037 in the amount of \$100,000.00 and increasing:

**APPROPRIATIONS**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, Town CIP-Facilities, Sycamore Hills Pool Repairs-ARPA, Account #50-4829-53329 in the amount of \$100,000.00, for the purpose of allocating funding received through the American Rescue Plan Act towards the completion of repairs to the main pool at Sycamore Hills Recreation Area.

**Supplemental Appropriation: Building #1 Flood Prevention, \$50,000**

**RESOLVED:** The Board of Finance hereby amends the fiscal year 21/22 budget by increasing:

**REVENUES**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, Intergovernmental, American Rescue Plan Act Grant Revenue, Account #50-0330-44037 in the amount of \$50,000.00 and increasing:

**APPROPRIATIONS**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, Town CIP-Facilities, Building #1 Flood Prevention-ARPA, Account #50-4829-53457 in the amount of \$50,000.00, for the purpose of allocating funding received through the American Rescue Plan Act towards making improvements to Town Hall Building #1 in order to prevent future instances of flooding.

**Supplemental Appropriation: Sycamore Hills Playscape, \$15,000**

**RESOLVED:** The Board of Finance hereby amends the fiscal year 21/22 budget by increasing:

**REVENUES**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, Intergovernmental, American Rescue Plan Act Grant Revenue, Account #50-0330-44037 in the amount of \$15,000.00 and increasing:

**APPROPRIATIONS**

American Rescue Plan Act Grant, Town CIP-Facilities, Sycamore Hills Playscape Replace-ARPA, Account #50-4829-53456 in the amount of \$15,000.00, for the purpose of allocating funding received through the American Rescue Plan Act towards the replacement of the existing playscape at Sycamore Hills Recreation Area.

Messrs: Lowry, Gismarian, Harvell, Loveless and Mmes: Salchert, Bratton and Retelle voted in favor of all six items. Motion carried 7-0-0.

**V. NEW BUSINESS****21/22-22 Distinguished Service Recognition**

Margaret Bratton read comments from Tom Harrison about his recognition because he was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Tom was flattered to be invited to tonight's meeting and appreciates the gesture in recognition to his tenure, although he would prefer to ride off quietly into the sunset. He had a wonderful run and expressed his gratitude for all the town and education employees, other elected officials, and town residents, who were so friendly and helpful along the way. Cathy Salchert appreciated his kindness to her when she first started serving on the board, his appreciation for letting everyone ask whatever questions we had and for making everyone feel welcome. She feels very honored to follow in his footsteps, although she does not expect to fill his shoes.

Cathy Salchert, Chair, read aloud the resolution for Thomas Harrison.

On a motion made by Cathy Salchert, seconded by Margaret Bratton, it was voted.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Finance on this 28<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2022 adopts this resolution in recognition of Thomas F. Harrison's nearly 29 years of exemplary service to the Town of Avon, including two years on the Inland Wetlands Commission and just under 27 years on the Board of Finance, with 20 years as its Chairman; and

**WHEREAS:** During Tom's tenure, the Town of Avon experienced a period of tremendous growth and development. Avon's population at the start of Tom's tenure was 14,700. By 2021, the population had increased by 29% to 18,932. Similarly, the Grand List grew approximately 91% from \$1.4 to \$2.6 billion over the same period. Growth of this scale required the guidance and the firm hand of the Board of Finance to ensure that the community's infrastructure and service needs were balanced with the ability and willingness of taxpayers to pay for these needs; and

**WHEREAS:** Tom's wise counsel based on his profound understanding of the role of the Board of Finance and the needs of the community as a whole was central to Avon's successful management of this growth. Tom established the expectation that this growth would be managed in the context of best management and financial practices. As a result of his support, the Town was awarded a coveted AAA Bond Rating by Moody's Investors Service in 1997, a rating that it continues to hold to this day. Further, the Town of Avon has been awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award by the Government Finance Officers Association every year during Tom's tenure on the Board.

**WHEREAS:** Tom ensured all voices were heard and was particularly proud of the fact members of the Board of Finance took principled positions during their discussions to reach a consensus.

**WHEREAS:** In recognition of his standing on the Board and in the Community, Tom was elected to the position of Chairman by his fellow members on January 28, 2002, and continued to serve in this leadership role until December 2021.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Board of Finance of the Town of Avon, on behalf of the citizens, recognizes Thomas F. Harrison for his dedicated work on behalf of the community and, with profound thanks and deep appreciation, directs that this RESOLUTION be

spread upon the minutes of the February 28, 2022 Board of Finance meeting and that a copy of this Resolution suitably inscribed be presented to him.

Messrs: Lowry, Gismarian, Harvell, Loveless and Mmes: Salchert, Bratton and Retelle voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0-0.

**21/22-23**      **Discuss and Possibly Appoint a Policy Sub-Committee of the Board of Finance**

The concept was discussed at length. It was the sense of the Board (without a vote being taken) that proposals could be developed by individual members of the Board and presented to the Board as a whole, who would consider them. This would result in a savings of time and money so the Town would not have to staff committee meetings and to ensure all committee meetings complied with the Freedom of Information Act.

**21/22-24**      **Board of Finance Contacts with Town Staff**

On a motion made by Ellen Retelle, seconded by Margaret Bratton, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** The Board of Finance will continue the practice of bringing questions or concerns to Chair, Cathy Salchert, who will discuss them with the Town Manager and relay the information back to the full Board.

Messrs: Lowry, Gismarian, Harvell, Loveless and Mmes: Salchert, Bratton and Retelle voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0-0.

**VI. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

**A. Monthly Financial Report Summary**

Details were included in the packet report dated period ended 1/31/2022 prepared and reported by Tom DiStasio. Mr. DiStasio provided an overview of the report for the members.

There were no questions regarding the report.

**VII. OTHER BUSINESS**

On a motion made by Cathy Salchert, seconded by Charles Harvell, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** The Board of Finance agrees with conducting the Board of Finance Public Hearing, Budget Workshop(s), and Annual Town Budget Meeting virtually.

Messrs: Lowry, Gismarian, Harvell, Loveless and Mmes: Salchert, Bratton and Retelle voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0-0.

On a motion made by Charles Harvell, seconded by Ellen Retelle it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** The Avon Board of Finance requests from the Town a written plan for the use of ARPA funds. Notwithstanding the fact that lists of possible projects are included on the Town of Avon website, a written plan setting forth the Town's goals and objectives in the use of these funds (along with the criteria for judging and selecting projects in relation to the approved priorities) will be useful to the Board of Finance when requested to approve expenditures of ARPA funds. The Board of Finance is aware of concerns within the Town of Avon for the timing and deadlines for the use of ARPA. This motion is not intended to delay the consideration of the \$1,260,000 supplemental appropriation presented at this meeting.

Messrs: Harvell, Loveless and Mmes: Salchert, Bratton and Retelle voted in favor, Messrs: Lowry and Gismarian were opposed. Motion carried 5-2-0.

**VIII. ADJOURN**

On a motion made by Houston Putnam Lowry, seconded by Cathy Salchert, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Finance adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Messrs: Lowry, Gismarian, Harvell, Loveless and Mmes: Salchert, Bratton and Retelle voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0-0.

Please note: ***Minutes are official only after approval by the Board of Finance, usually at its next meeting.***

Respectfully Submitted,

Houston Putnam Lowry, Secretary

Attest: Christine Pescatore, Clerk

All referenced material is available to the public in the Town Manager's Office.