

**BOARD OF FINANCE PUBLIC HEARING
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 11, 2016**

I. CHAIR BOARD OF FINANCE: Thomas Harrison

A. Preside and convenes meeting

Board of Finance Chairman Thomas Harrison called to order the Public Hearing at 7:04 p.m.

B. Leads Audience in Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Mr. Harrison led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

C. Advises the audience of the order of presentation tonight

Mr. Harrison reviewed the procedure and process for the meeting. He stated that the meeting is required per the Town Charter to discuss the budget requests. The Town Council and the Board of Education will present their budget proposals that have been submitted to the Board of Finance for the fiscal year 2016/2017 beginning July 1. Following those two presentations, the Board of Finance will make its presentation detailing the revenue sources used to fund the budget. No decisions are made tonight. Wednesday night at the end of the Budget Workshop, this Board has the discretion to make adjustments to the budget requests as it deems necessary per the Town Charter. The Workshop is a public meeting, but it is not a public hearing. There is no opportunity for public comments or questions. The Board will vote to adopt the final budget. This budget as a total spending amount will be discussed on the first Monday in May at the Town meeting. This meeting adjourns to referendum. Under the Charter there can be a maximum of three referendums. If after the third referendum the budget is defeated, the Town Council then sets whatever budget it sees fit with no further hearings or public process. If voter turnout is below 9% of registered voter the budget is automatically approved. After the three presentations, the audience will have an opportunity to speak and ask questions of any public official present. He reminded the audience that this is a conversation among friends and neighbors, not a political rally.

II. CHAIR, BOARD OF FINANCE: Thomas Harrison

Calls on Chair, Town Council to present proposed Town Council, Sewer, Debt Service and Capital Improvement Budget for FY 2016/2017

Mr. Harrison called on the Town Council Chairman Mark Zacchio to come forward to make his presentation.

III. CHAIR, TOWN COUNCIL: Mark Zacchio

Presents the Town Council, Sewer, Debt Service and Capital Improvement Budget for FY 2016/2017

Chairman Zacchio guided the audience through a Power Point Presentation. The slides are attached to these minutes. He stated our mission statement has not changed over the last few years, it's been to provide quality town services at a reasonable cost to all citizens and taxpayers. The group responsible for delivery of that mission statement is the Town Council. Mr. Zacchio introduced the members in attendance; David Pena, Bill Stokesbury, Heather Maguire and Jim Speich. The first slide highlighted the town department services funded by the operating budget. Included in the Public safety line

item are the Fire Department activities. Of note is that 43% of the Public Safety budget is to pay for the rental fee on the fire hydrants in town. The hydrants are a public utility and not owned by the town. The Strategic objectives have not changed from last year. The three largest drivers of this budget are increases in salaries and wages due both to contractual obligations and new staff in the Engineering Department and at the Library, OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) and retiree health benefit costs and health insurance costs. The town has focused on Capital Improvement projects for the last several years. Dollars have been moved to take care of a growing population in terms of schools, roads and infrastructure. Significant money has been shifted from debt service to capital projects. As we reduce the debt of Avon, those dollars already included in the current levy are used to fund the Capital budget without raising new taxes. There are several proposed projects that will increase Avon's debt; a proposed fire station, an athletic complex and the Old Farms Road project. The current population in Avon is about 18,597. The ratio of town employees to the population has remained consistent at about one half of one percent since 1970. We have become as efficient as we can in terms of delivery of services. We continue to operate the Board of Education in a cooperative manner, sharing some services to increase efficiencies. We are requesting an increase in the Town operating Budget of 3.96% or \$890,410 in new dollars. Sewers are included and accounted for in the budget, but paid for by user fees and not taxes. The audience was reminded that there is a place on the town website to sign up for news by e-mail.

- IV. CHAIR, BOARD OF FINANCE: Thomas Harrison
Calls upon Vice-Chair, Board of Education to present the proposed Board of Education Budget for FY 2016/2017

Mr. Harrison called on the Vice- Chairman of the Board of Education, Debra Chute to come forward.

- V. VICE-CHAIR, BOARD OF EDUCATION: Debra Chute
Presents Board of Education Budget for FY 2016/2017

Vice- Chairman Debra Chute introduced the members of the Board of Education present; Kathy Zirolli, Wendy Howard, Jay Spivak, Ken Birk, Peggy Roell and Jackie Blea. She called upon Superintendent Gary Mala to present the budget for the Board of Education.

Mr. Mala guided the audience through a Power Point Presentation. The slides are attached to these minutes. The mission statement and beliefs have not changed over the past five years and he encouraged everyone to read them. The twelve highlighted goals of the budget requests are similar to those in the past. He stated this budget works to adjust staffing for a rising enrollment that did not decline at the projected levels. As an example, the Central Office registered 6 new students that start tomorrow from the same family. In this budget we want to eliminate a rental revenue that we have been charging ourselves from the Food Service Department and continue to operate in a fiscally responsible manner while advocating for the educational needs of all students. He has used a three pronged approach to developing this budget. He made reductions from proposed requests from the building principals of \$488,823, re-appropriated existing funds where needed and increased requests that advance the District Strategic Plan. The difference in the Gross Budget Request is \$2,125,581 or 3.89% over last year. Public schools are labor

intensive. They require people to deliver services. Salaries and benefit increases represent most of the requested increase. The budget has benefited from a significant energy conservation plan that was initiated about four years ago. The utility costs have decreased in this budget. The town is obligated to pay tuition for students who receive services out of Avon. There is a significant decrease in Grant Revenue most notably in Title I Federal flow through funds for students who require supports particularly in reading. A listing of how the Open Choice revenues are allocated is included in the presentation. Most of the funds are attached to teacher positions and some is attached to tuition for Magnet Schools. Staffing changes include the 5 FTE unbudgeted certified staff that were added in 2015 due to enrollment plus one new position and 5 non-certified staff plus the one unbudgeted position added in 2015. Without these additions, class size would have been unacceptable. Factors that have influenced this budget are contract settlements with four labor Associations, a move to a HSA insurance plan (Health Savings Account) that includes an initial cost to fund but will provide savings in the future and a contractual increase in our transportation contract. Year one and two had no increases and year three has a 4% rate increase. Mr. Mala stated that we continue efforts to reduce out of district tuitions and transportation costs for disabled learners, respond to state mandates and implement cost avoidance strategies. The net current expenditures per pupil continue to increase. Projected enrollment reflects a slight decrease, however kindergarten enrollment is underway. All questions may be sent to 20162017budget@avon.k12.ct.us. Mr. Mala thanked everyone for the opportunity to present the Board of Education's proposal.

VI. CHAIR, BOARD OF FINANCE: Thomas Harrison
Presents Board of Finance Overview

Now we talk about the other side of the coin, how do we get the money to fund these requests? Mr. Harrison stated both the Town and the Board of Education finished the 2014/2015 FY with a fiscal surplus. He stated we are careful with how we spend your tax dollars. We are currently in the 4th quarter of the 2015/2016 Fiscal year. As general observation, revenues have been matching projections and we anticipate we will finish the year adding some money to fund balance.

Mr. Harrison guided the audience through a Power Point Presentation. The slides are attached to these minutes. He began with a comparison of the budget requests from FY 15/16 to FY 16/17 and stated that there is a 3.47% increase in total spending requests. He stated that it is the responsibility of his Board to balance the requests with revenues. The Board considers many things, exercises its judgement and considers the comments from the audience tonight in determining what voters will be comfortable with spending and taxing. Revenue options are limited in Connecticut. We have two sources property taxes (the levy) & assessments and non-property taxes (Licenses, Permits, Fees and Grants) to fund our budgets. Mr. Harrison reviewed how the required tax increase of 2.5% to fund the budget request is calculated. Breakdowns of property and non-property tax revenues were detailed. Operating, Debt Service and Capital Budget spending percentages were highlighted for both the Board of Education and The Town budget requests. It was stated that there will be a modest increase in the Grand List of .58%. Avon is pretty well built out. The town center when completed will give a nice jolt to the money raised from the Grand List. A mill rate comparison over a nine year period was presented. A 2014

equalized mill rate was presented. This represents the mill rate a home in Avon would be charged if it was located in one of our comparison towns. The conclusion is that we do very well only surpassed by Farmington which has a greater commercial base than Avon. On a per capita basis, Avon is fairly high when compared to the same towns. In order to fund the requested spending increases of the proposed budget a combination of growth in the Grand List and growth in the Mill rate will be used. Mr. Harrison addressed recent articles in the Hartford Courant in regards to the State Legislature making reductions in the amount of payments it will be making to the towns. Last Thursday there were big cuts in the ECS (Education Cost Sharing) budget. For Avon we were advised of a \$470,000 reduction. There will be other cuts coming. The governor is already complaining that these cuts are insufficient. Nothing is final yet. There may be less grants than what we are used to receiving. Historically, we budget about 5% from state aid. We will look at this prudently. If revenues are reduced at modest amounts, we will manage. If cuts are larger, the Boards will put their heads together and develop solutions. The next steps are that the three Boards will meet this Wednesday night here to evaluate what spending level to recommend to the voters of Avon. It is open to the public, but not open to public comment. May 2nd is the Town Meeting. At the Town Meeting we will present the budget as recommended. The public can ask questions, but it can't be changed at that point. The meeting adjourns to referendum on May 11th.

VII. CHAIR, BOARD OF FINANCE: Thomas Harrison

Calls upon the audience for questions and comments on the Town Council, Board of Education, and Board of Finance budget presentations.

The speaking requirements are that you are a resident of Avon and at least 18 years of age. If you are not a resident, you must own property in Avon with a minimum assessed value of \$1,000. Speaking is limited to three minutes.

Chairman Harrison asked speakers to state your name and street address or if you're not speaking as a resident, to state the location of the property you own in town. He reminded everyone this is a conversation among friends and neighbors.

As audience members came forward, Mr. Harrison introduced members of the Board of Finance as Michael Oleyer, Vice-Chairman Tom Gugliotti, Margaret Bratton, Dean Hamilton and Jeff Bernetich. Cathy Durdan couldn't make it as she recovers from surgery.

Bruce Corbett, 171 Huckleberry Hill Road – I have been wearing sign at the landfill and the library trying to promote citizenship and I call it the Avon Citizenship Endeavor. You need to be informed. You need to communicate with your town leaders. I have done that and they have been very responsive. They have answered my questions, returned my calls; they have been excellent and thank you. You need to think. Knowledge is empowerment. We got a lot of knowledge tonight. With knowledge there needs to be application in the vote. I put on back table, a green flyer. This is a salary schedule. In talking with people at the landfill and other places they didn't know how a salary schedule worked. I started teaching in 1963. I taught when there was no right to collective bargaining. I went out on strike. Town Marshals were paid \$50 to deliver me a special notice. In the next day or two because this was the first day of school and parents

wanted to get rid of their kids, they wanted a settled strike. If we had gotten the .50 they had paid the Marshals to deliver the notice, we would have been happy. Because there were strikes and because teachers in Shelton went on strike we got the arbitration law. My personal feeling is it's a good law because it levels the playing field. Before, teachers could ask for more money, we couldn't collective bargain. We could ask, that was it. Now they have a very good system on collective bargaining. It levels the playing field. If you have the green sheet, on page two it states the Town Council receives a settlement of a 2.25% general wage increase for three years. To me, with my background, I thought that was a lot of money, especially when you add that to an already high salary schedule. I have three or four letters I've written to people and newspapers. A comment in the newspaper by the Town Council when they received this settlement was that the figures look good, they did a good job. But I don't believe they knew the cost. In another case, I wrote that they should consider going to arbitration. This was a great year to go to arbitration. One – the teachers in this district are very well paid. Second, there was no COLA for a good number of our residents. Finally there were new things being added to an already high salary schedule. So there was nothing that the teachers needed to be afraid of. There was nothing that Board of Education or Town Council needed to be afraid of because the teachers are being very well paid. On the front page of the green flyer I say that the fear of the concept of "a town's ability to pay" causes a false sense of fear on the part of the decision makers. We have a 99.8% collection rate. We have a decent financial reserve balance. We have a good system here and the people on the Board of Finance have done a great job. Mr. Zacchio has also done a great job. Thing that bothers me is that only 4% of people turn out to vote. So I am trying to get the people to know what is going on and to turn out to vote. One thing that I don't like to read in public is the retirement benefits for the teachers. It is on the back of the second page. Avon has one of the highest salary schedules, if not the highest in the state when considering health care and retirement benefits. Avon's retirement benefits are on page 25 of the contract. In the last year of teaching you may receive a salary stipend of \$1,500 - \$3,750 depending on the number of teaching years and you shall receive an additional \$1,000 a year for five years and you shall receive an additional \$2500 in salary in each of the last of the 3 years of teaching. That is on top of an already excessive salary. The danger of that is that it is applied to the teacher's retirement pension program in the State. What we do in this district and in other districts, because it is common, is we are putting that system in jeopardy. My main point here is, I believe that the Finance Committee should consider the need to cut \$1,000,000 from the proposed town budget or get a 2.25% General Wage Increase concession from the Avon teachers or a combination of both. I am hoping to get people out to consider that and be aware of it. We have a great budget, but I don't see too many things in there for people in town. What happened to brush pick up?

Mr. Harrison clarified that Mr. Corbett would like to see a \$1,000,000 reduction in total spending. Mr. Corbett stated the proposed budget is good, but that the teacher portion is excessive based on his background as president of a teacher's association. Mr. Harrison thanked him for his time and effort in preparing the charts and numbers.

Joe Bartosiewicz, 5 Colby Way – I am a Certified Financial Planner, I manage about \$300,000,000 and oversee, with two other partners, 3 billion dollars in this state. I'm here because I'm kind of scared to death. Two years ago I was here because I knew two companies were going to move out and I couldn't tell you. I knew General Electric was

moving out because I have clients that worked there, big clients, and they told me what they were going to do. Aetna is moving out too, I knew this a year ago. 6000 employees are going to be laid off. 720 live in Avon. That's 720 houses up for sale. The backbone foundation of our U.S. economy including Connecticut own economy is based on a strong private sector, not a public sector. Without a strong private sector, think of jobs and taxes paid to continue to support the public sector expenses, the State of Connecticut is heading for bankruptcy. Insolvency, just as so many other states are facing in the north. 2007 I was at this meeting, and four times since then to talk about the State of Connecticut's business atmosphere. It's inability to compete against other states in the nation and global economy. Connecticut is now ranked, according to Fortune magazine, Hartford Courant, Newsweek, NBC, ABC and NBC News, highest cost of living in contiguous states, only Hawaii is more expensive. Connecticut is one of worst places to retire. For every 834 people moving in, 1254 are moving out. Connecticut is one of the worst business climates in the country, one of the highest taxes, the worst places to die, one of the worst rated Governors, rated one of the most corrupt States with State Union's controlling the Governor and Congress. It has the highest pension out of any other state by 12% meaning Connecticut pays its citizens 12% higher than any other state. It has the second worst underfunded pension liability, but they have the best benefits in the country. So how can Connecticut, a state that is driving businesses away, continue to afford these pensions and not prevent companies from moving out and support the expenses of the public sector? Private sector pays so much and gets so little. Companies like GE, Pfizer, United Technologies, Sikorsky, Aetna and another big one that I cannot name but you will know in six months - 4,000 more employees. With this mass exodus of corporations from the State of Connecticut we lose the tax base. Our residence feel the job loss, thousands of homes will be up for sale and less people will move to Connecticut as there are less new jobs opportunities found here to replace the lost wages, home buyers and taxes. The private sector employee compared to the public sector employee with the same education, position and experience earns only .42 to .47 on the dollar. We talk about the women earning .79 on the dollar compared to men that's including the time off, the well care, pregnancy. But it is a fact that private sector workers for the same job, same education gets .42 to .47 on the dollar compared to their salary. Remember they get 75% of their highest career with all the overtime they can pack in, that means they work 35 years but they get paid for 60. Now as a certified Financial Planner my clients put money into a 401K. They get .50 on the dollar to 6% of their income. They have 4% of \$400,000 or \$16,000. I have clients who are teachers who are earning \$82,000 - \$85,000; great for them. State employees, I had a client from the DMV getting a \$92,000 per year pension for life as a clerk; are you crazy? I compared this whole thing and how we continue to afford to support this? The State can't figure out how to support our pensions. Now you can see why the true cost of public employees is so high. The pay discrepancies for the private sector compared to the public sector is so disjointed that most teachers in Avon with their 75% pension for 30 years collect \$3,500,000. In 2017 teachers only pay taxes on half their benefits. There is a 50% exclusion. The rich and the upper middle class don't leave the state because of a lack of services; they leave the state because of high taxes. The mass exodus is just beginning. In 5-10 years, I deal with economists all the time, this state is gone.

Ms. Boyd, 22 Rexinger Lane – I am not astute. I have nothing profound to say. I would like to ask who is in charge of letting the people of the town know when and where to

vote? Last year I saw one sign out in front of the Senior Center; nowhere else in town. No one seemed to know – oh there's voting today. Where is it? Who puts out the signs? I think that is very important.

Mr. Harrison stated it is on the town website. It lists the time, date and place of voting. Ann Dearstyne, Town Clerk - There are 5 or 6 signs around town at the Library, Town Hall, Landfill and Fisher Meadows. There is a mailing that goes out. Residents can sign up for email notifications on the town website at www.avonct.gov. Ms. Boyd stated she doesn't go past those places very often. She suggested that we have more signs on Route 44. If you forget because your mind is full of other things, you need a physical reminder. Mr. Harrison stated we could consider more signs, but there is a cost associated with it. He added notification is also made in the Hartford Courant.

Bruce Corbett stated he called town because the signs were down because of a storm and later that day they were all put back up. The town responded.

Florence Stahl, 2 Sunset Trail – Well, I'm not sure how we did it, but we dodged a bullet this year. The recent 3 year Board of Education teacher contract requires and will continue to require large amounts of new money year over year. The new health plan doesn't come close to offsetting the obligation and commitment we must honor for the next three years. And by the way, although the general increase was 2.25%, that is totally misleading. There are so many ways, particularly the certified personnel, salaries are increased and enhanced that the real figure is not 2.25%, the real rate is closer to 8%-9%. Where is the boundary? What other town projects might have been done? I understand we have refinanced our debt to save money on interest and that's a great strategy. But that is limited. Meanwhile, the Grand List as you heard shuffles along at barely 1% growth. New development in Avon Park North won't be generating revenue for years. Just think of the possibilities we might have had for a family friendly open space and cultural amenities right in the middle of town at Avon Park North if we had the luxury of not needing to develop almost every available acre to generate revenue to cover extravagant spending. Now even though the teacher's union would have you believe that we are scapegoating them, that couldn't be farther from the truth. All of us parents and the community in general we are all concerned about property values and educational outcomes. We should not be silenced for even questioning whether this monetary policy is good for education, is necessary for academic results or is healthy for the greater good of the town. We criticize our State employees, the Legislature and the Governor for the fiscal mess in Connecticut, but right here in Avon we are in danger of creating our own mess. This is not sustainable. Logic tells you that next year's challenge will be even greater. So have a nice evening everybody.

Richard Burkett, 40 School Street – I've been here about 40 years, every year my taxes have gone up. Every year, we look at the budget and wonder why. I have a hard time with the math. When I first moved here the land fill was open all week, now it's only open 2.5 days. The little school on Huckleberry Hill was still in operation. That is now gone, another cut in the operation. Toll Brothers is building houses all over the mountain in back of my house. That generates revenue. I can't figure out with all that revenue, why my taxes keep going up. The school board here says enrollment is going down. Kids aren't going to school, so why are we spending more money? Last year we hired three

new teachers. Why are we hiring new teachers with enrollment going down? Can you answer me that? Gary Mala, Superintendent, replied we actually had to hire five unbudgeted teachers because our enrollment increased. It did not decrease. Mr. Burkett said the paper stated enrollment decreased and that's all I have to go by, reading that paper. Then I talked you before that I was going to donate some lighting equipment. Free. No charge because I read in the paper that you open up a broadcasting class. I never heard from anybody, so one day I went to the school at the end of the day. I went into office where there were 3 or 4 secretaries; we have to pay for them. None knew who runs the class. That's three secretaries we have to pay for that don't know what they are doing because they can't figure out who is running that particular class. We see all these new houses coming up; they start at \$800,000 and go up over one million. So why do my taxes keep going up? The Landfill is cut down to only 2.5 day. It was free when I moved here, now I have to pay. They used to pick up the brush once a year, now you have to pay someone to do it. So you have cut back a lot of things and I don't see why my taxes keep going up. Can the Board here answer me that? Tom Gugliotti responded that all of your questions are good ones, sir. A lot of the materials that is in the slides you saw provided the numbers and the math works out such that... Mr. Burkett stated I saw your numbers. Let's talk about collective bargaining. That works out great for the people getting the money. My wife works for a union place, they lost their health insurance. The State is laying people off and they have bargaining units. Like the other lady said, they have problems, they overspent and the State is almost bankrupt. If we keep spending like that we're going to have problems because either people are going to move out or they are going to vote this thing down. So it's something to think about.

Diane Hornaday, 515 Huckleberry Hill Road – I hope at the Town Meeting it will address the question about the social workers. It was a conversation last year, it was a conversation during the elections and I would like to know what the status of that is. If persons were hired and if they were, if adjustments were made in those hires because my understanding was that when those positions were eliminated new positions were created as school psychologists. Secondly, I would like to say and I know it is very short notice, but I hope the Board of Finance will be able to present at the Town Meeting proposals for what to do if in fact this town does not receive \$423,000 of State revenues. How exactly are we going to address that and if we go forward with the budget anticipating those revenues and don't receive them, exactly how do we intend to address it and where the replacement revenues will come from? I would also like to say, piggy backing a little bit on what Mr. Corbett stated, I hope one of the ways I hope we will look in the future regarding the pensions is special additional monies that come through coaching over time, all of those things, they get added onto the salary and the basis of pensions. As we've been driving those salaries up over that last few years, we lose some control over what those pensions will cost us.

Joe Bartosiewicz – 5 Colby Way - New Canaan is the best high school in the state, Westport is one of the best. The average home in New Canaan is 1.62 million dollars. Avon's average home is \$400,000 but yet we have the highest paid superintendent in the state. You have the highest teacher's salaries in the state. We are number 17 or 22. In the private sector you are paid by performance. I am suggesting that Avon's teachers go down 20% because technically the teachers are making 7-8 million dollars over their life based on their pension, salary, benefits, longevity payments, Medicare reimbursement,

add it all up. It's about 7-8 million dollars, divide that by 30 years, the average teacher makes \$220,000 per year for the time they work. We're the highest in the State, so I suggest you cut the teacher's pay by 10% unless you can bring the teacher's down to the top five. Mr. Harrison thanked him for his comments and stated that this is nothing that we can address tonight.

Richard Burkett, 40 School Street – Salaries of teachers keeps going up. The State is cutting things. I am on Social Security. The feds told me there was no inflation, so why is everything going up? I didn't get a raise last year and I didn't get a raise this year on my Social Security.

Robert Wolfangel, 70 Paperchase Trail – I didn't come prepared to make a speech. I came after meeting Bruce Corbett with his sign. I felt sorry because I hadn't been here for years, so I thought I'd better come and just listen. It's really been entertaining to me having heard the content. The presentations were excellent and the numbers scare the hell out of me and I'm financially oriented having been with a corporation in that line and seeing some of the numbers. I'm not going to deprive teachers of income, it's nice to keep growing, but there is a limit and I think we are beginning to lose sight of what reality is. I have been here in the town of Avon for 35 years. My son was here for one year and left so I've been paying educational taxes all these years, never begrudged it. I think the school is good. I like the town, I like the people. So, for the first time I took a look at some of the numbers here. Now I don't believe anyone here can understand all those numbers and what's behind them because they're complicated. What is being hidden? You don't know, I know from corporations that's what they do. The numbers that stuck me were salaries of 1.2 million dollars, benefits of \$700,000 – wow! In the corporations I knew, we used to look at benefits as a percentage of salaries. 35% was high. We are talking 60% here. Something is unrealistic. Corporations are profit oriented and its return on equity, return on investment. Schools are not set up that way. They rely on the taxes of the people. As long as the people keep paying it, things can get out of line. Maybe this is what's happened here. It was mentioned here about Governor Malloy and the budget troubles he has. He got major, major problems. It gets to a point the older people they are going to move out. The youngsters are making much more money so they can afford it. The Governor is cutting back \$400,000 for the schools. I think you have to hedge for it and put it into your plans not only for the \$400,000 but probably a whole lot more because the State is going to find that it is in deep trouble and that amount has to be passed on.

Anne Yurch, 6 Stony Corners Circle – I just have a question that impacts everyone in the room here. In the early 90's Avon was given one million dollars from the State to improve Old Farms road. Here we are. The last time I came to a town meeting to discuss this was after that horrific accident on Route 44. Phil Schenck was leading our town. What I learned was that we were granted one million dollars to fix this road back in the 90's that includes the grading from Route 10 on Waterville road and they were also going to fix the curves. I am amazed. One million would have really helped that road back in the 90's. I learned from Phil Schenck five or six years ago that we were not given the money because of the State Legislature. So here we are, it's still not done and every year that situation gets worse. I went to the town engineer last year and they told me they were working on finally getting this done. Do we have any idea of a start date? It just kills me,

now it's 7,664,000. Back in the 90's if we could have had the money, it would not have been as bad. Mark Zacchio stated he can't speak to the million dollars in the early 90's. You are talking about two different projects. The seven million that was up on the board is purely an estimate for illustrative purposes. One project is run by the State of Connecticut DOT and it addresses not only the angle of ascent to Waterville road but replaces that entire bridge. The bridge is going to be located to the north of where the current bridge is today, will come down at the same grade as Waterville road and will end in the vicinity where the parking lot begins for Fisher Meadows. That's project number one. It is a State project. The million dollars in the past would have been for the intersection and not Old Farms Road. We have put some funds into this project from undesignated surplus balances because the town needs to pay for some for some engineering and architectural design. We get that back from the State when the project goes forward. The second project addresses Old Farms road from that point forward past the school. There are two different scenarios that could take place there. One is If we fix where it lies today, or second possibility that we are negotiating with Avon Old Farms School (and have been for the past 30 years) is to relocate the road southerly almost to the border of Devonwood. The road would come through around Fisher and you would come south around the woods in the hill and you would come all the way around Beaver Pond and connect where MH Rhodes is. The Town is only interested in doing that if there is a deal for some open space land and the ability to connect the parcel from MH Rhodes down to Fisher Meadows. It is vastly more expensive than anyone ever intended. It is more expensive to redo the road where it sits than we ever intended. There are two separate projects. They are both in action. Brandon Robertson stated the bridge (project A) is slated for construction in 2018. At the next Council meeting the engineer will be giving a presentation on the feasibility analysis.

Mark Zacchio addressed state aid that was brought up this evening. He stated we really don't depend on the State for a lot of revenue. When you hear about the State making reductions, the pinch isn't as bad as it could be. The real issue we have is through the Educational Cost Sharing which is revenue at the Town level which is offset by expenditures within the BOE budget. The two boards will have to meet and discuss how this will be handled prior to going to referendum. Flo has been a voice of reason for open contract negotiations and changes in arbitration laws because we often don't win when we go to arbitration.

Florence Stahl, 2 Sunset Trail – You're a very fair man Tom so I know you did not do this on purpose, but it was mentioned that my colleague here served on the Town Council, but so did I and the Board of Finance, but it wasn't mentioned.

Bruce Corbett – 171 Huckleberry Hill Road – Please read carefully the green sheet of paper. This is a salary schedule. People at the landfill I spoke with didn't know how a schedule works. In this, down at the bottom, it gives maximum salaries and our teachers are getting \$8,000 - \$11,000 more than the towns that touch Avon because there is a fear of going to arbitration and the Town feels it has the ability to pay.

Joe Bartosiewicz – 5 Colby Way – added that why does New Canaan, the richest town in the state, where the per capita is five times Avon's, paying their teacher's less? Mr. Harrison replied that you would have to ask them. Mr. Bartosiewicz stated he did and

they said Avon was corrupt. Mr. Harrison stated that conversation is out of place here. Mr. Gugliotti added he was far out of line.

Jamie DiPace, 55 Wheeler Road – I'm a 60 year resident of the town. I've been a little bit involved in our community. I wanted to thank everyone for the work they do. We are working on a project to build a fire training center for the volunteers who are currently working a serious motor vehicle accident on Route 44 and a house fire. I want to thank Public Works for the work they have done supporting this project. What we get for the amount of dollars we spend here is tremendous.

Mr. Harrison called for final comments. There were none. He reminded everyone the next budget meeting is Wednesday night at the Senior Center. The three Boards will have a discussion and take appropriate action.

VIII. CHAIR, BOARD OF FINANCE: Thomas Harrison

Advises audience that there being no further discussion, the Budget, in its final format, will be presented to the Annual Budget Meeting on Monday May 2, 2016, at the Avon Senior Center Community Room, 635 West Avon Road, Avon, Ct 7:00 p.m. and will be submitted to vote at Referendum on May 11, 2016, at the Avon Senior Center Community Room, 635 West Avon Road, Avon, Ct, between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

IX. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Thomas A. Gugliotti, Secretary

Attest: Mary Marinello, Clerk

All referenced material will be available to the public in the Town Clerk's office.