

**AVON TOWN COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
July 28, 2022**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Avon Town Hall, in the Selectmen's Chamber as well as via GoToMeeting by Chairman Polhamus. Members present: Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico. A quorum was present.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Polhamus.

**III. PUBLIC HEARING:** None

**IV. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING:** June 2, 2022  
June 30, 2022 Special Meeting

One correction to the June 2, 2022 minutes was noted as follows:

On page 5, under Communication from Council, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 23<sup>rd</sup> line, change "damn" to "daily."

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council accept the minutes of the June 2, 2022 Meeting as amended. Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council accept the minutes of the June 30, 2022 Special Meeting as drafted.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

**V. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE** - None

**VI. COMMUNICATION FROM COUNCIL**

Ms. Ausiello reminded everyone about the Child Tax Rebate that runs through July 31<sup>st</sup> and asked if it could go out through the Town's web site.

Chairman Polhamus noted that a postcard was mailed out to residents regarding voter redistricting; the August Primary is coming up with the November Election after that; you can also look up your polling location on the Registrar of Voters' web page. He attended the Hug A Horse event at the U.S. Horse Welfare and Rescue – it is a beautiful facility – we have had some discussions about ARPA funds being used for Youth Services, possibly through this program; June was Pride month and thank you to Avon Congregational Church and West Avon Congregational Church who hosted events; and the Avon Police Department was doing school drill training last week at Avon High School and Lt. Schmalberger was great on camera. He thanked the Chrissie and John D'Esopo at the flower house who had an open house event and raised \$8,000 to \$10,000 that will go to students

at the schools who are studying equity and diversity and how to spread that knowledge around town.

He recognized and welcomed the Town's new Chief of Police, Paul Melanson, who is present at tonight's meeting. He once again thanked Jim Rio who was a strong, good leader for us over a tumultuous period. Chief Melanson provided a brief introduction about himself. He noted that there is a huge foundation already built here in Avon; we will keep those relationships, make them better and stronger; he appreciates the opportunity and respects the men and women in the Department; Avon is on the cutting edge with their training, including SWAT; we are working on the Public Safety Communication System Project; and looking for a new Animal Control Officer with Beverly LaPlume's retirement.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **14/15-20      Review and Discuss: Project Referendum Mailer for Old Farms Road Phase 1-North/South Section-State Project No. L004-0001**

The Town Manager noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission has already approved the 8-24 referral, it was on the Inland Wetlands Commission agenda earlier tonight, and the Board of Finance took their first review of the mailer on Monday this week and had a few suggestions around ensuring that we emphasize in the mailer that this is not costing the Avon taxpayer a penny as far as construction goes; the expanded FAQ document is designed to anticipate potential questions from residents; the Town Council will also receive resolutions from Bond Counsel that will need to be adopted along with the Board of Finance to move this item to a Town meeting which will then adjourn to the referendum; this project is the largest supplemental appropriation we have ever done; we have to go through this process as the Charter states that a referendum is required for any appropriation more than 1/10 of 1% of the value of the Grand List (current around \$2.8 million); and we will have a Letter of Understanding with Avon Old Farms School who are 100% onboard with this project. Ms. Ausiello recommended some clarification regarding Q10 on the FAQ document. The Town Manager noted that these projects have independent utility, designed to stand alone if one is approved and the other isn't. Chairman Polhamus confirmed that the mailer is sent out townwide.

### **21/22-46      American Rescue Plan Act: Discussion re: Projects List**

The Town Manager noted that all of the projects that have been approved are all in some state of implementation; we are in the process of implementing Office 365 which has a pretty good project management function and how we are going to track all of these projects and you will start getting a reporting on those once implemented; funding for the Fiber Project did not make it on the last State Bond Commission meeting and he spoke to Representative DeGraw who is optimistic that it will either make it onto their next meeting agenda or there may be another pot of money at the State, a Broadband appropriation of approximately \$150 million that we may be able to use to offset the cost of this project. He noted that other member towns are moving along and approving appropriations for the Farmington Valley Health District; we continue to work the Avon Little League regarding the Sperry Park field plan; we have the Connectivity RFP that we shall be prepared to talk about at Council's September meeting; we can also have the Architect for the Senior Center multi-purpose room come in for that meeting as well; overall we have made a lot of

progress in terms of appropriations and making good headway in terms of project implementation and we have a number of other projects in the hopper. Ms. Ausiello asked for an update on the Buckingham Baseball Infield Renovations. The Town Manager responded that the contractor ran into a COVID issue which delayed the work there for a bit. Ms. Ausiello commented that Social Services has a few small requests and the FVVNA has a request for medical supplies. She inquired about the status on the ARPA request for the U.S. Horse Welfare and Rescue; other departments are well represented, and she wants to make sure that Youth/Social Services is as well. Chairman Polhamus commented that we are in a holding pattern until we receive confirmation about the Fiber Network Project funding from the State and we should revisit ARPA requests from Youth Services and Social Services.

#### **21/22-119    Appointment: Inland Wetlands Commission (R – 12/31/2023)**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council appoint Kevin Tobin to the Inland Wetlands Commission, to fill a vacancy with a term to expire on December 31, 2023.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

### **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **22/23-01    Appointment of Municipal Advisor**

The Town Manager reported that Dennis Dix was the Town's Financial Advisor for about twenty-six years and was responsible largely for setting us up to get a bond rating upgrade in 1998; it was time to test the market and see what other options were available; we issued an RFP in the spring, we had four responses, we brought in two firms, and we felt unanimously that Phoenix Advisors would be the best fit for Avon; they come highly recommended; and many of the towns in our geographic area use this firm. Matt Spoerndle, Phoenix Advisors, provided a brief background about his firm and their role with the Town related to bonding, debt issuance, and ensure the Town's AAA rating is maintained going forward. He noted that they also work with Canton, Simsbury, Bloomfield, Farmington, Bristol, and Plainville. He is excited to be working with the Town.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council appoint Phoenix Advisors as the Town's Municipal Advisor with a term to expire on December 31, 2023.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

#### **22/23-02    Presentation: Affordable Housing Plan**

Hiram Peck, Director of Planning and Community Development, provided a brief overview regarding the Affordable Housing Plan. He noted that the Affordable Housing Plan was required by every town in the state by legislation (CGS 8-30j) passed in 2017; this topic was discussed for about a year with a deadline to approve by June 1, 2022 and we received grant funding for it; affordable housing is housing where the owner/renter pays 30% or less of their annual median income for housing and utilities; Avon is at about 3.9% or 291 units of affordable housing; State statute looks to have 10% of housing in each town dedicated as affordable which can also include CHFA or USDA subsidized mortgages; an AdHoc committee consisting of five members will be

formed to flesh out suggestions on how we increase the number of affordable housing units in Town and make it fit well; Avon's population is projected to continue to grow; what will the Town look like in five to twenty years; the housing crisis is a difficult situation. He noted the expansion of Avon Mill apartments which currently has 188 units and are proposed to be upgraded and an additional 250 units were approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission with 50 units being identified as affordable. He added that 20 Security Drive is approved for 176 dwelling units with the existing buildings and another building being built with approximately 70 units; all affordable housing; this will bring our total of affordable housing units up to 6.0%.

Council thanked Mr. Peck. Mr. Peck explained that CHFA and USDA mortgages are classified under State statute as a mortgage which is subsidized; available to people who qualify for them by past governmental service or income criteria; these units can be bought or leased, and the Town verifies that their income level meets the requirements, and a report is filed with the State every year. Chairman Polhamus recommended putting together some material regarding these options for the public. In response to a question from Ms. Ausiello, Mr. Peck responded that a buyer who gets a CHFA or USDA mortgage counts as an affordable housing unit. He noted that it is a constant game of keeping track of the number of units in Town; we want to require the developer to provide that information to us annually and remain qualified on an annual basis. In response to a question from Mr. Weber, Mr. Peck responded that the committee would consist of five members as well as staff representation, we will put something out in September/October looking for members, the Planning and Zoning Commission will select the members, and the committee will report back to the Planning and Zoning Commission and to the Town Council quarterly. In response to a question from Chairman Polhamus, Mr. Peck responded that with regards to the legislature they probably wanted to give the towns as much latitude as they could for doing this and they are now making an assessment of the Plans and make a determination on whether they are providing enough information for towns to actually increase affordable housing; within the next year, the State will eventually decide whether the legislation was efficient in terms of getting that information in the Plans; if Plans are ineffective, then legislation may be changed and made more specific; and we will have to wait and see. He noted that a lot of Litchfield Country towns are not interested in increasing affordable housing but unfortunately where a lot of it is needed because of cost of housing in those areas. Council thanked Mr. Peck for his presentation.

## **22/23-03      Avon Senior Center/Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance**

### **a) Acceptance of Grant Award**

Jennifer Bennett, Senior Center Coordinator, provided a brief overview of the Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance Program; this is the second time getting funding for this program.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council accept the grant award of \$2,880 from the Connecticut Healthy Living Collective, in accordance with Section 4.3.2(1) of the Town Charter, to be used for the Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance Program at the Avon Senior Center.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

### **b) Supplemental Appropriation, \$2,880**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council hereby recommends that the Board of Finance amend the FY 22/23 Budget by increasing:

**REVENUES**

Recreation Activities Fund, Other Local Revenues, Donations & Grants, Private Sources, Account #09-0360-43651 in the amount of \$2,880.00 and increasing:

**APPROPRIATIONS**

Recreation Activities Fund, Senior Citizens, Services-Other, Account #09-5301-52189 in the amount of \$2,880.00, for the purpose of allocating grant funding towards the Tai Ji Quan Moving for Better Balance program at the Avon Senior Center.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

**22/23-04     Avon Senior Center/Monday Meals and Minds Program**

**a) Acceptance of Grant Award**

Jennifer Bennett, Senior Center Coordinator, provided a brief overview of the Monday Meals and Minds Program.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council accept the grant award of \$6,000 from the North Central Area Agency on Aging, in accordance with Section 4.3.2(1) of the Town Charter, to be used for the Monday Meals and Minds Program at the Avon Senior Center.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

**b) Supplemental Appropriation, \$6,000**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council hereby recommends that the Board of Finance amend the FY 22/23 Budget by increasing:

**REVENUES**

Recreation Activities Fund, Other Local Revenues, Donations & Grants, Private Sources, Account #09-0360-43651 in the amount of \$6,000.00 and increasing:

**APPROPRIATIONS**

Recreation Activities Fund, Senior Citizens, Services-Other, Account #09-5301-52189 in the amount of \$6,000.00, for the purpose of allocating grant funding towards the Monday Meals and Minds program at the Avon Senior Center.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

**22/23-05     Supplemental Appropriation: Board of Education-Open Choice, \$184,209**

The Town Manager noted that this is a function of enrollment in the program and the actual enrollment and the dollars that follow the enrollment were greater than what was assumed in the budget; we have a grant that needs to be appropriated so we can spend it. Mr. Indomenico added that estimates are generally made before the school year begins and what they end up with is typically different.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council hereby recommends that the Board of Finance amend the FY 21/22 Budget by increasing:

**REVENUES**

General Fund, Intergovernmental, Education Program Grants, Account #01-0330-43343 in the amount of \$184,209.00 and increasing

## APPROPRIATIONS

General Fund, Board of Education, BOE Expenses, Account #01-9401-55000 in the amount of \$184,209.00 for the purpose of funding instructional supplies and curriculum.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

### **22/23-06     Consulting Services for Route 44 Sanitary Sewer Pump Station Upgrade**

#### **a) Contract Recommendation**

The Assistant Town Manager noted that this upgrade is needed due to implementation of necessary safety and technology upgrades, to increase flow to the pump station, and for environmental resilience; the current pump station is over forty years old.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council award the contract to Fuss & O'Neill of Manchester, CT for consulting services for the Route 44 Sanitary Sewer Pump Station Upgrade Project in an amount not to exceed \$97,000.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

#### **b) Transfer of Appropriation, \$100,000**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council favorably recommends to the Board of Finance to amend the FY 22/23 budget by transferring, \$91,100 from Capital Projects Fund (Facil & Equip), Town CIP-Facilities, Lateral Extension Program, Account #02-4829-53392; to Capital Projects Fund (Facil & Equip), Town CIP-Facilities, Sewer Pump Station Replacement, Account #02-4829-53361; and \$8,900 from Capital Projects Fund (Facil & Equip), Town CIP-Facilities, Lateral Extension Program, Account #02-4829-53392; to Capital Projects Fund (Facil & Equip), Town CIP-Facilities, Riverdale Pump Station Rehabilitation, Account #02-4829-53392; for costs associated with ongoing sewer pump replacement projects.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

### **22/23-07     Approve Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget Calendar**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council adopt the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget Calendar as follows:

#### **TOWN OF AVON FY 2023/2024 BUDGET CALENDAR**

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED DATE</b>	<b>LATEST DATE PER TOWN CHARTER</b>
Capital Budget Forms Prepared and sent to Departments	August 15, 2022	
Operating Budget Forms Prepared and sent to Departments	September 9, 2022	
Completed Capital Budget Forms returned to Town Manager	September 30, 2022	
(a) CIP Budgets presented at Town Council Meetings by Department Heads	Nov. – Dec. 2022	
Completed Operating Budget Forms returned to Town Manager	November 04, 2022	February 15, 2023

(a) Town Manager meets with Department Heads to review budget submissions.	Nov. – Dec. 2022	
(b) Town Manager makes recommended reductions.	Dec. 2022 – Jan. 2023	
Town Manager's Proposed Operating and Capital Budgets submitted to Town Council	January 20, 2023	March 01, 2023
Board of Education Budget to Town Council	February 03, 2023	February 15, 2023
(a) Town Council holds Special Budget Workshop.	February 2023	
(b) Further reductions are made by Town Manager's Office if necessary.	February 2023	
Capital Improvement Program Submitted to Planning & Zoning Commission for Sec. 8-24 Review	March 14, 2023	
Budget Work by Town Council completed and Budget submitted to Board of Finance	March 27, 2023	April 01, 2023
Public Hearing on Budget held by Board of Finance not later than three (3) weeks before May 01, 2023 Town Meeting	April 03, 2023	April 11, 2023
(a) Board of Finance holds evening Budget Workshop(s)* with Town Council and Board of Education after the Public Hearing. *additional dates (April 10 and/or April 12), if needed	April 04, 2023	
Board of Finance Completes Work on Budget	April 2023	
Copy of Budget approved by the Board of Finance printed in Newspaper at least five (5) days before the Annual Town Meeting	April 21, 2023	April 24, 2023
Annual Town and Budget Meeting First Monday in May	May 01, 2023	May 01, 2023
First Referendum	May 10, 2023	May 12, 2023
Second Referendum (if necessary)	May 31, 2023	June 02, 2023
Third Referendum (if necessary)	June 21, 2023	June 23, 2023

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

## **22/23-08 Appointment: Avon Clean Energy Commission (R – 12/31/2023)**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council appoint Dan Carvalho to the Avon Clean Energy Commission, to fill a vacancy with a term to expire on December 31, 2023.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

## **IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT/MISCELLANEOUS**

**Misc. A: Purchasing Update:** The Town Manager highlighted the RFP Comprehensive Update of the Avon Zoning Regulations with proposals due on August 17<sup>th</sup> and the AVFD Master Plan

which we shall have a draft of the consultant's study any day now and shall be on the agenda for a presentation by October.

**Misc. B: Construction Update:** The Town Manager noted that the Town Clerk's Vault Addition should start any time now and for the next Council meeting he can have the Director of Public Works come in and talk about progress with road improvements so far this season.

**Misc. C: Town & Public Safety Communications System Replacement Project:** The Town Manager noted this project continues to slowly move forward; Chief Melanson came onboard July 5<sup>th</sup> and has made a lot of progress this past month and made contacts with the Commissioner's Office; we had a meeting this past week with Town staff, walked away with follow-up items, will meet in another two weeks and have this item on for a more substantive discussion in September.

**Misc. D: Municipal Animal Control Officer:** The Town Manager noted that for years we had an interlocal agreement with Canton where Canton has access to Avon's animal control facility and vehicle and paid us based on a population calculation to offset their cost and that expired on June 30, 2022 and Canton decided that they do not want to continue and will be making other arrangements.

**Misc. E: Approved ARPA Projects Update:** The Town Manager noted that he has nothing else to report on this item.

**X. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Real Estate

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

**XII. ADJOURN**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Mmes: Maguire, Ausiello, Messrs: Polhamus, Weber, and Indomenico voted in favor.

Attest: Jennifer Worsman, Clerk