

**AVON TOWN COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 7, 2021**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. via GoToMeeting by Chairperson Maguire. Members present: Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Speich, Polhamus, and Weber. A quorum was present.

Chairperson Maguire made a statement regarding the unacceptable, terrifying riot that occurred yesterday in our nation's capital. She noted that she is scared for our nation, our community, and mostly our children who are bearing witness to the tumultuous times and dealing with the overwhelming effect of living in a pandemic. She looks to her colleagues on the Town Council and thanks each of them; we show civility to each other, set an outstanding example for those in the community to look up to; you come to meetings with the objective of doing what is the best for our Town; the road ahead is going to be rocky and uncertain but when we are united and working together we are unstoppable and very committed; let us look to 2021 as a time for hope; after the hostility of yesterday and the adversity of 2020 let us give our all to a brighter 2021. She looks forward to a successful, busy 2021.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Maguire, followed by a moment of silence.

**III. PUBLIC HEARING:** None

**IV. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING:** December 3, 2020

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council accept the minutes of the December 3, 2020 Meeting as drafted.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Speich, Polhamus, Weber, and Bernetich voted in favor.

**V. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE** - None

**VI. COMMUNICATION FROM COUNCIL**

Mr. Speich expressed Happy New Year to all and looks forward to a better 2021. He looks forward to working with the Town Council and the people of Avon to make Avon even better than it is today.

Mr. Polhamus noted that is important to identify within our own party when we are demonizing another party and we need to stop doing that as it leads to the chaos and unrest we are seeing now; he hopes 2021 becomes a return to collaboration and a unified spirit. He attended the menorah lighting which was a joint event with the Valley towns. He noted that the CT Water Customer Advisory Council met last night; they are talking about a 20% rate hike, the first one since 2010; it is possible that the 5% hydrant rental fee could make up the difference for the rate increase;

WICA fees will be increasing as well; the rate hike increase would start in July 2021; he noted there are grant opportunities and maybe Avon would be interested in installing a water fountain along the rail trail, a give back to the community; and Happy New Year to all.

Mr. Weber expressed Happy New Year to all. He extended congratulations to our newly elected State representatives and he hopes for cooperation in working towards the best with the State of which the Town would benefit from as well. He complimented the extensive and comprehensive Town of Avon Annual Report. He applauded Holly Freeman, 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Avon Middle School, for making and selling “everyone belongs” masks at Beanz & Co. and donating her profits to charity; she was quoted, “disability or no disability everyone belongs and isn’t that how the world should be.” He noted that September 11<sup>th</sup>, Sandy Hook, and today were hard to explain to a classroom of 10-year olds. He hopes that we can find some commonality, sensibility, and levity about the grandeur and honor of this country and take perspective in that. He thanked his colleagues on the Town Council; he enjoys spending some time with all and thanked them for their service and commitment to this Town.

Chairperson Maguire thanked the Avon Volunteer Fire Department for spreading holiday cheer throughout the neighborhoods, including the car parade with the Avon Police Department. She shared a save the date for the first Wednesday in May for a bike ride to kick-off Bike Walk Avon. She noted receipt of a letter from a resident regarding veterans’ tax exemption and noted this item would be placed on Council’s February agenda for discussion.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **20/21-22 Appointment: Committee on Aging (R – 12/31/2021)**

On a motion made by Mr. Speich, seconded by Mr. Bernetich, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council appoint Kathy Randall Gill to the Committee on Aging to fill a vacancy with a term to expire on December 31, 2021.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Weber, Polhamus, and Speich voted in favor.

### **20/21-24 Appointment: Central Regional Tourism District (12/31/2021)**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council table agenda item 20/21-24 Appointment: Central Regional Tourism District (12/31/2021) to the February 4, 2021 meeting.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Weber, Speich, and Polhamus voted in favor.

Mr. Speich inquired about a set of requirements for this role. The Town Manager’s Office will distribute a copy to all Council members.

### **20/21-27 FY 21/22 Budget: Town Council Budget Workshop Schedule: Recommended Date: Saturday, February 6, 2021 at 8:00 a.m.**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve the Budget Workshop Schedule for Saturday, February 6, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. via GoToMeeting as follows:

8:00 a.m.	Budget Overview
8:20 a.m.	Library
8:40 a.m.	Police Department
9:00 a.m.	Public Works
9:25 a.m.	Break
9:40 a.m.	Fire Department
10:10a.m.	General Government
10:30 a.m.	Public Safety (except Fire and Police)
10:50 a.m.	Health/Social Services
11:10 a.m.	Recreation & Parks
11:30 a.m.	Conservation & Development
11:50 a.m.	Engineering/Sewers
12:10 p.m.	Lunch
12:40 p.m.	Special Revenue Funds / Capital Improvement Program
1:00 p.m.	Adjustments, wrap-up – Adjourn

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Weber, Polhamus, and Speich voted in favor.

**20/21-29     Appointment: Avon Clean Energy Commission (R – 12/31/2021)**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council table agenda item 20/21-29 Appointment: Avon Clean Energy Commission (R – 12/31/2021) to the February 4, 2021 meeting.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Polhamus, Weber, and Speich voted in favor.

**20/21-45     Appointment: Inland Wetlands Commission (D – 12/31/2021)**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council appoint Michael Sacks to the Inland Wetlands Commission to fill a vacancy with a term to expire on December 31, 2021.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Speich, Weber, and Polhamus voted in favor.

**VIII.   NEW BUSINESS**

**20/21-46     Contract Recommendation: Avon Free Public Library Replacement of Geothermal System**

Larry Baril, Town Engineer, reported that Fuss & O'Neill assisted with selecting our consultant, RZ Design; we are going with a conventional geothermal system using antifreeze-type system versus the current freon type system; the design has been reviewed by Fuss & O'Neill and RZ Design as well as Town staff; the total cost comes in under budget. In response to a question from Mr. Polhamus, Mr. Baril responded that RZ Design will stay on as the project engineer and conduct necessary field inspection work.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council awards a contract in the amount of \$1,149,000 to All State Construction, Inc. of Farmington, CT for the replacement of the Avon Free Public Library Geothermal HVAC System.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Weber, Polhamus, and Speich voted in favor.

**20/21-47 Appointment: Assistant Town Attorney (Zoning Violation Matter)**

Chairperson Maguire commented that Chapter 6, Section 2 of the Town Charter states that when the Town has a conflict of interest it can approve an appointment of an Assistant Town Attorney to handle, in this case, a zoning violation matter.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council appoint Thomas A. Kaelin, Attorney-at-Law, as Assistant Town Attorney.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Weber, Speich, and Polhamus voted in favor.

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

**Misc. A: Purchasing Update:** The Assistant Town Manager provided brief highlights including donated funds for the lighting for the AHS Synthetic Turf Field and Track and buffering work; grounds maintenance services bids are currently being reviewed for an upcoming contract recommendation; and the HVAC maintenance services bid is coming up in conjunction with Canton and it is our turn to develop the documents. In response to a question from Mr. Weber, the Assistant Town Manager responded that the price discrepancy with the grounds maintenance services bid results is typically overhead.

**Misc. B: Construction Update:** The Assistant Town Manager noted that with regard to the Town and Public Safety Communications System Project we continue to work on pricing with Motorola; the Police Department building improvements are moving along; CEFA scoping process has been completed for the Old Farms Road Relocation Project; we are working with the Avon Historical Society to do some improvements at the Schoolhouse on East Main Street; we continue to work with the Bike Walk Avon group regarding signs and flashing beacons; and the Public Works salt shed roof should be replaced this month. In response to a question from Mr. Speich, the Assistant Town Manager responded the existing tarp was used to secure the salt itself with little waste. Mr. Polhamus inquired about a timeline regarding the Town and Public Safety Communications System Project. The Town Manager responded that we have a new contact with Motorola who is getting familiar with the project; by the end of January/early February we should have revised pricing based on the new solution we had to develop; and if the project minus the Landfill site is at or below the amount approved at referendum it does not have to go back out to referendum.

Mr. Weber inquired about any update or impact regarding the oil spill containment at the bottom of Avon Mountain. The Town Manager responded that the oil did not get into the pond and was contained to the stream leading to the pond; about 95% of the spill was to be recovered; there will be ongoing monitoring and Town staff is following this. Mr. Weber requested an assessment of soil and downstream impact. The Town Manager will report back at the next meeting.

**Misc. C: Avon High School Roof Top Unit Project:** The Town Manager reported that Eversource is providing grants for projects including this one; 50% reimbursement of the cost but need an appropriation for the project in place to receive such; he will recommend that the Town Council and the Board of Finance approve an appropriation from Unassigned Fund Balance for the full amount of the project, reimbursing ourselves through the grant revenue and the second half being budgeted through the FY22 capital budget.

**Misc. D: CT Water Company Rate Case:** The Town Manager reported that CT Water will be filing a rate case; he had a brief discussion with our representative Craig Patla; we will pull down a copy of the case when it is filed with PURA and see if Town Council wants to take a position on it. Mr. Speich commented that the Town Council should make a stand against a rate increase and against a fire hydrant rate increase; it is our duty to try to keep the rates down. Chairperson Maguire agreed that we should review the case and respond accordingly.

**Misc. E: BOE Requested Special Revenue Fund:** The Town Manager reported that the Board of Education approved a policy regarding an insurance program for their chromebooks; they are now requesting to create a Special Revenue Fund for the revenues/expenditures related to the program and such would require Town Council approval, preferably before the Board of Finance's January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting at which point it would be before them for final approval. In response to a question from Mr. Speich, the Town Manager responded that the insurance policy would cover damage to the chromebook by the user.

**X. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Personnel/Collective Bargaining**  
**Real Estate**

The Town Manager reported that a few updates were provided to Council in their background memo which do not require any further discussion in Executive Session at this time.

**XII. ADJOURN**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Speich, Polhamus, and Weber voted in favor.

Attest: Jennifer Worsman, Clerk