

**AVON TOWN COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
September 6, 2018**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. at the Avon Town Hall, in the Selectmen's Chamber by Chairperson Maguire. Members present: Chairperson Maguire, Messrs: Bernetich, Stokesbury, Pena, and Speich.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Maguire.

**III. PUBLIC HEARING:** None

**IV. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING:**

On a motion made by Mr. Stokesbury, seconded by Mr. Pena, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council accept the minutes of the July 10, 2018 Special Meeting as presented.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Pena, Stokesbury, Speich, and Bernetich voted in favor.

On a motion made by Mr. Pena, seconded by Mr. Stokesbury, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council accept the minutes of the July 26, 2018 Meeting as presented.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Pena, Bernetich, Stokesbury, and Speich voted in favor.

**V. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE:**

Kena Daly – 23 Cambridge Crossing – I have been a resident of Avon for over 34 years. One of the things I wanted to do before we get fully into the budget season is to make a few statements about the town and where it's going, and I think what we need to take a look at. It is no secret that the state is in dire economic straits. A recent article in the Courant said that the state hasn't even recovered 85-87% of the jobs before the recession. And so that reflects on Avon too. There are people who took pay cuts who haven't been able to recover. So where I'm going with this is, of course, our own budget. We're not going to get any help from the state. We're going to be sending more money to the state and nothing is coming back. So in considering all that, I think we need to really, really focus on how we do the budget, how we consider what expenses are really important and necessary. I'm not talking about what is mandated. That's a different topic altogether. But I want the town to really take a look at how we are managing our own budget. We can't do anything about the state, but how we are managing our own money and looking at our costs. And one of the things ahead of the budget is we've got to ask the town to look at eliminating waste. When I worked at The Hartford, The Hartford stock went from like 65 down to 3 ½. Every single person in that company had to say how do we save money? And it was amazing how good all the ideas were from the people when the crunch was on. And it seems to me, the crunch is on now in our own town. We have to cut spending. I think we have to examine

what is really important, what is really necessary. And I am not talking about the mandated expenses. What is a nice to have, what is a want? I want the town to consider consolidating functions within departments, between and among departments, especially between the town and the Board of Education (BOE). It seems to me that there are similar positions – not identical – that can be combined – in part or in whole – to manage more efficiently. A big area is the teacher pension benefits, which has always been a huge issue in town. I ask – and I don't expect an answer – what progress is actually being made to reduce the cost and realign these benefits and pensions in accordance with the marketplace. They are out of line. I note that there are two items up for referendum. One that appears to be a necessity – something that is really important to the town. The other appears to be a nice to have. And it's not that I'm against any of them, it's just that in this time, I think we really need to focus on what we have to do. I want to throw out a question to you that if these two items are passed, coupled with let's say an increase of 2%, and I'm not looking for an increase in 2%, what does that mean to the house in Avon? What does that really mean? Because I can look back and see in the last 10-12 years, the taxes have just increased, increased, increased. And I sold a house in town over 16 years ago. The value of that house has not changed in 16 years. My house has gone down and yet the taxes just keep going up and up and up. And it has just got to stop. So what I am really asking you is – looking at the budget from a really different view point – no increase. And then going back and looking at this is what we have to do. This is what is mandated, this is a necessity, and this is a nice to have but maybe in another time. Not now. And I just think it has gotten out of control. Connecticut hasn't recovered. Avon certainly isn't doing much better. Housing values have gone down. But there are certain things that really are necessities, and I think all citizens are willing to pay for those. But again, we have to look at tightening the belt and really reducing waste. That's all I have to say. Chairperson Maguire thanked Ms. Daly for her comments and added that she was coming in at the perfect time since we are starting the budget process. I think I speak for everyone up here – we don't want to raise taxes. We always go in and we always talk about having 0% increase. I think that is on our minds all the time. Avon runs very lean. We have not changed our personnel – at least on the town side – since about 1970. I think we were running at 106 people full time and this year we added one maintainer. The Town Manager added that is the ratio of employees to population which we have held steady since about 1972. Chairperson Maguire continued that we are always looking at ways to collaborate with the Board of Education (BOE), to collaborate with other towns. So it is truly very much on our minds. And I think your letter will definitely drive home your feeling, as well as I'm sure many others, to be very lean as far as how we handle our budget going forward. As far as the pensions, I will hand that over to the Town Manager as he will have more insight and a better explanation than me. But as I said, we take the concerns and the budget very seriously. Mr. Stokesbury said that as Chairperson Maguire stated, the BOE issue is largely controlled by state law or the BOE. And again, our side of the equation is a single, line item budget item. So we have very little to no control over that. Having been on that side, I think BOE members might also say they are constrained by the pension law and collective bargaining rules out of the state. And there does need to be a change. I would ask you, perhaps, privately, send us any suggestions you have as to where to look. Where do you think we can be better served? We're always looking for input from people from the business community, which frankly work on a different model sometimes. We've looked at a lot, but there is always room for improvement. Mr. Pena stated that we start early with the budget. It's not something we put together overnight. Most of the time we start in October, but this year we started back in April. The Town Manager and his group start looking much earlier. I don't think they ever stop looking at the budget because it is really important. Through the process we go through many

months, going back and forth, reviewing different things, to see what we can reduce or eliminate. So it is a long process, but we put a lot of thought into it. And we do the best we can. But thank you for coming here. Chairperson Maguire said that they could jump to some of the referendum items that are going to be talked about in the next few months. To make the public aware of the financial impact, the tax rate impact. Those are things that have been in the works for so many years. The turf field maybe 10 years it's been talked about. And ultimately we reached a point that it has to come down to the voter to decide whether this is a project that is a want or a need. And the public safety communications system is really a huge need for our town as we sit up here and want public safety to be paramount for our town. But that comes down to us educating the tax payer with all of the information to make an educated decision. But when it comes to a referendum, it will be their choice whether they see it is a want or a need. But to jump on what Mr. Stokesbury said, if you have suggestions, let us have them. Because we really do look at this and take a lot of time. We have a budget workshop that we sit at in February, and things have happened up to that point. But we go through each area and talk about it and where we can cut down. Ms. Daly replied so as a general matter why is there not more of a consolidation with the staff? From the town and the BOE. I know there are some mandated positions, I'm not talking about that. At least the administrative staff. It seems there are some duplicative functions that could be combined other than tradition and the way it has always been. Chairperson Maguire responded that we continue to look at financing, grounds keeping, security, electrical – I believe we work together with the BOE. Our public works is there. They just finished paving at Avon Middle School. They've got the security guards. So, we work together where it makes sense for us to work together. Truly we will keep looking. There was a Human Resources position that was just recently filled by the BOE. And we talked about whether it would make sense to have it on the town as well. But the BOE really does need somebody. There are a lot of pieces that go with that and they haven't had an HR person, and it is a little more directed towards education. So at this point, it didn't make sense to combine the function. Actually, the Town Manager is acting as our HR person. We never rehired after our HR person retired. So where it makes sense, we do try to work together. And I think there are good lines of communication between the Superintendent and the Town Manager. So if there is that opportunity, we're going to jump on it. The Town Manager said one of things he strongly suggests here and, first of all, you should know that this is what we do. It may be very helpful for you to start off by going online and accessing our budget. And when you do that, what you'll find is that Avon's budget document presentation is really one of the 9 or 10 best in the State of Connecticut. And I can say that because it is one of the 9 or 10 that receives the Government Finance Officers Associations annual award for presentation. And it is constructed in such a way, and the reason that we spend so much time on it, a tremendous amount of time and staff level, is to ensure that somebody such as yourself, who wants to understand how their town operates and where the money goes, you can go into that document and both the numbers are there that you can follow and the story behind the numbers is there in text. So what I would strongly suggest – I mean it is the reason we put so much time into the document – so somebody like you can pick it up, spend time with it, and educate themselves with regard to the way things work. The planning effort that goes into the town's finances, how the town on an intergovernmental basis interacts with the State of Connecticut, what the position (inaudible) are, what the status of the pension plans are. All this stuff. I mean it is a huge tapestry. Spend some time with that. Develop some questions, I hope. And then either coming into council meetings or my door is always open. I'm always happy to talk about this as you all know. Sometimes I talk about it ad nauseam. And if you would like to come in and just have a conversation to start with – every year – for the last 10 years now – for

the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities – I do a full day workshop. Where for people just as yourself, who are coming in and trying to get attuned to the municipal financing picture and budgeting process. Whether you are just an interested citizen, a business owner, on a board or commission or professional staff, I have a whole day's worth of material to go through to give you a grounding to be able to critically assess your municipality's budget information. So it's a complicated picture, but I think by starting with our budget document you can really get up to speed quickly. And if you would like to start with a conversation with me so I can point you in the right direction, I'm happy to do that. Or just jump right into the document. You can get a hard copy at the library or in my office. You can go online. And just go through it, mark down your questions and come in and we'll chat. Ms. Daly replied with all due respect, that budget is substantial – page after page. I have gotten to a few meetings and it is not something that your average citizen can digest even after working with it for quite a while. You all know it because you go line by line, you look at all of it, and you know what all of the categories mean. What is required versus what is nice to have, etc.? But the average citizen is not able to go online. But let me suggest that maybe for each of the categories – the Town Council, the Board of Education, Board of Finance – could prepare a summary for each of the things, this is what this contains and why this has to go up. Give a clue to the reader for what it is. The details are there. They are always there. Not that you have to be a CPA, but you have to be pretty well-versed for your average citizen to go into those documents page by page and figure it out. The Town Manager replied you don't have to do that. Let me help you. And part of my job is to translate and help you understand. A lot of that detail has to be there but to understand the broad parameters of the process and what is going on in terms of service delivery you have to dive into that. What I would suggest you do is look at the Executive Summary. It is basically the transmittal letter that goes to the community from me at the end of the budget process. And in that you will see basically bullet points. The reason the budget is going up on the expenditure side is because of x, y and z. The reason it is going up from a service delivery perspective any lay person can look at it and understand it. So a very clear and concise explanation about what is going on with the revenue side. As you said, the State of Connecticut is tanking. One of the things the Town of Avon is doing really prudently over the last 3 or 4 years now – we've seen it coming and we've hedged our bets. We've consistently reduced our intergovernmental revenues from the state. We've been very conservative so that we are not overestimating, we're not creating a cliff when the revenue doesn't come in. And then on the other side with respect to pension plans, we don't have any defined benefit plans that are open right now, they're all closed. The BOE has a couple of defined benefit plans. But one of the issues you run into with the State of Connecticut if you can believe it, they still assume an 8% return assumption on their defined benefit plan. Which anybody who follows the market knows that all you are doing is creating a cliff – creating a huge unfunded liability that's going to have to be made up through the General Fund? On the town side, and this is very clearly articulated in that document, you'll see that we've been by an eighth of a point over the last 10 years or so, reducing our return assumption – our actuaries have given us good advice on this – so that we're now at 6.25% or so. So my point is let us make it easy for you to understand. We're happy to translate and point you in the right direction. I agree, if you start off with a phonebook, which is basically what the budget book looks like, and this is what happens every year when I do the class, and everybody groans and says how am I ever going to understand that, you say look, it is a pyramid. You go to that Executive Summary which gives you the broad outlines, expenditures, revenues and what's going on. Then to your point, you dive into each functional area, and perhaps what you want to do is look at it as a function of how much of the budget does it require? So start with public safety. And there is a text description

that gives you a written explanation of what's going on, so you don't have to go blind looking at all those line items. But then there are a lot of other features like performance metrics, for instance. So that you can see what's being delivered. How does it compare to last year? Or a 5 year rolling average? What do we anticipate going forward? This is obviously, like I said, one of my favorite topics. I'm happy to talk. It can seem overwhelming at first. My advice, start with the Executive Summary. Happy to chat and point you in the right direction. Ms. Daly asked if there is an Executive Summary before you get to the final budget. The Town Manager replied yes – and they are all online. But if you want to go back and look at the initial budget, there's a very simple chart in the budget document that shows you what the steps are in the process. So for instance at this point for the fiscal year which begins on July 1, 2019, I am in the process now – I've already sent out direction and parameters to all the town departments – including the BOE – about capital budget expectations. I'll be getting those back, and I'm about to send out the operating budget expectations. So as you follow these agendas, what you're going to see happening, primarily at the council level, up until the end of the calendar year, are discussions about the capital budget. Which is basically any project that's got a useful life of 5 years or more or a dollar threshold of \$20,000 per (inaudible). But during that time, I'm working with town staff to prepare for the operating budget. The operating budget will go to the Council probably towards the end of January. At that point, there's a transmittal letter that goes to the Council, and it's the same form as the one that goes out after the budget is approved. So it basically says, hey look, here we are, it's the middle of January, we're preparing the fiscal year 20 budget, major expenditure highlights, this is what we're looking at, one page, lots of bullets for you to follow, turn the page over, here's what is going on with the revenue side, here are some of the trends, here are some of the things we need to talk about. So if budget is your interest, you're jumping on the train at just the right time because it is at this point that it is beginning to leave the station for fiscal year 20. Chairperson Maguire thanked Ms. Daly again for her letter and comments. We will take them seriously as always, and the Town Manager is there to answer your questions, so I encourage you to follow up. Mr. Stokesbury thanked Ms. Daly for coming. He said we sit in these hearings and the budgets come and we go to the public hearing, and the same people get up every year and say the same things. And my thoughts are always, why don't you get involved? So thank you for doing it. I think it's something you need to do if you feel that strongly about it. And you can rest assured the Town Council's very attuned to keep the taxes just as low as we possibly can. Thank you for coming. Mr. Bernetich agreed with Mr. Stokesbury. Ms. Daly replied, in defense of other people in town, they have little kids and activities and whatever. Mr. Stokesbury thanked her again for coming.

Chief Mike Trick of the Avon Volunteer Fire Department said he had just a few short comments. I want to bring you up to speed on the grant – the SCBA program that we have been talking about for so many years. This is the result of the program that we ran. About a dozen committee members had gone through and put the paces through both an on paper evaluation of what was going on with the program. So we did an evaluation of what was going on with the SCBA program and we recreated using the new fire training facility to recreate real life scenarios and put two final competitors, Scott and MSA, through the paces. And the result of that is in front of you, and we decided that we are going with MSA for our SCBA replacement next year. We're turning to MSA after 15 years. The bottom line that we have found is that the Scott system has kind of rested on their laurels with technology with the pack. It is essentially the same pack that we had 15 years ago except for the mandated NFPA upgrades. MSA has come leaps and bounds forward in technology – wear, comfort, usability – it's outlined in that document. You can read

it, and if you have any questions just let me know and I can answer them by email. The good news is that we have received a grant of \$277,000 and some change from FEMA for the use towards the SCBA program. That will pretty much cover the seated positions which we are mandated to do under the grant. That's replace all the seated positions with spare bottles in all the apparatus. So that takes about roughly \$725,000 for their complete program. What's that breaking down is new packs and masks, apparatus modifications. Some of the older apparatus need to have the brackets changed to fit the new packs and with the new requirements that are with those packs, crashworthiness, testability for G forces. Compressor upgrade. The existing compressor has been identified that it's still in good condition from the first upgrade 15 years ago, but it needs some rehab/refurb. And that's all it will need to keep it functioning for the next 15 or 20 years. Our RIT packs, which are Rapid Intervention Team, we're going to increase. We have 2 currently, but they are Scott. We're going to increase that to 4, so that pretty much each station, or the frontline apparatus will have an RIT pack. That's used for emergency evacuations of firefighters at scenes out of the hostile environment to get them safe. Miscellaneous expenditures again are (inaudible) test machine releasing new fittings to adapt to the new masks, which are required every year to do fit testing. So roughly, the bottom line is that of about \$725,000 total program, of which \$277,000 has been from a federal grant. We still have some operational that we are going to be meeting the MSA representative later in the month after the convention when things settle down. We're going to put together some of the operational changes that we're going to have to make and see what other apparatus may need to be modified, what equipment can be reused or repurposed within this system we currently own and what needs to be done. We feel confidently about \$725,000. Mr. Stokesbury asked the Town Manager if there was \$500,000 or \$550,000 in the capital for this. The Town Manager replied that he could not recall if it was that much money. It might be more like \$325,000 or so. The last few years we've been approaching it as a pay down. And of course, the great news about this, is with the grant coming, it offsets our cost, and we can allocate for something else. It creates capacity. Chairperson Maguire added that it was wonderful news. Chief Trick added that they were very pleased. It was the first grant that we've received and we have tried on numerous occasions for any types of grants. So we are buoyed by this. The safer grants are coming in now. We're going to go after some escape systems that we can issue to each of the firefighters, the bailout systems. That's what we're going to go after next. The other key thing is the cancer mitigation or the wash program. That's become huge. Because what's killing a lot of firefighters over the course of time is being exposed to different toxins which equals cancer. And some of the most prevalent ones are testicular, breast, the soft tissue areas. That's where the contaminants seem to coalesce. So those are programs we are looking at. We've already gone through that, putting wash machines in all the stations, taking contamination measures that we de-con at the scene almost as a hazardous material spill, a hazardous materials incident. De-conning our gear and ourselves. And either separately transporting the gear back to the station, and the packs back to the station to be cleaned in the bays. Those are some of the measures we are doing. All council members agreed that was great to hear. Mr. Stokesbury said he had two questions. What is the life expectancy of the new equipment? Chief Trick replied that the bottles are the driving force for the life expectancy. 15 years. Mr. Stokesbury asked the anticipated implementation date. Chief Trick replied by next spring. We are hoping to have most of it put into place by spring because most of our bottles will be out of service by the end of next year. Mr. Stokesbury asked so 2020 is when everything is expired. Chief Trick responded yes, so by having the grant, looking at where we are with capital, we may be able to have the funding in place. Depending on where the numbers come in and working with the Town Manager and the committee we can see where we are. We

may be able to start purchasing some of that equipment using the grant to purchase the initial and using the balance of the funds to get the rest of the system. So we can start integrating. Mr. Stokesbury asked if he expected a period of time when they are running both. Chief Trick said absolutely. We did it with the Scott as we did it with MSA and Scott. But we'll be dual trained to ensure – and you'll see if you review the document, there are some really nice features about the new pack system that we like. And again, we feel that those may last longer than the next round of bottles. There was talk of trying to get 20 year bottles certified, but that hasn't gone too far through the regulatory commission. DOT governs our cylinders and they still haven't been successful. We do have some 20 year cylinders out there, but the costs don't really justify the 5 years to us. So we will be revisiting this in 15 years. Mr. Bernetich asked if there was any salvage value to the bottles that are going to be --- Chief Trick responded negative. They are scrapped. We usually punch a hole through them and they go to recycling. Because they are expired. The packs themselves, on a marginal return, we will sometimes get a small credit, as we did before when we turned in MSA's. They gave us a minimal credit for the packs. Mr. Stokesbury said congratulations and thank you. Chief Trick said one last piece of news is that I will be stepping down as the Chief as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, and Assistant Chief Appell will be the new Chief for the Avon Volunteer Fire Department beginning 2019. So I just wanted you to know. I am extremely proud that Bruce is going to have that job. He's earned it. He's my friend and I am very proud to see him have that 5<sup>th</sup> bugle stripe on his jacket. And he is more than qualified for the position. So I am looking forward to that. I've enjoyed working with Council, and I will be around for the next few months. December might be an interesting month. We will see. It has been a pleasure working with Council. If you need anything from me, I'll be here. I hope to see you all at the State Convention and carnival and fireworks next week. Chairperson Maguire thanked Chief Trick for all of his hard work and said he will be missed. Ms. Daly said that she wanted to say one thing as a thank you to Chief Trick and the whole Avon Volunteer Fire Department. If you have ever seen them in action, they are incredible. I am incredibly proud to be a resident of Avon when I see them work. Unbelievable. All the credit should go to them and the Town Council should know. Chairperson Maguire said they do a wonderful job. We are very fortunate. Chief Trick added that Assistant Chief Speich and Grace Bianchi were instrumental in pushing this grant program through. I just wanted to make sure on public record that they got that credit.

## **VI. COMMUNICATION FROM COUNCIL**

Mr. Speich said that he wanted to thank the Town of Avon and the Department of Public Works and the Engineering Department for the dry hydrant. It is completed and I think it looks beautiful. We've been wanting to have the dry hydrant for a number of years in a few other locations. I know we have looked into that over the years to do that. So maybe we should start thinking about that since it was such a success. We have all this great experience now, maybe there are some other ones we could put in the budget over time for dry hydrants. But thanks again for that, I really appreciate it. Mr. Speich asked if the Town Engineer would be at the meeting. The Town Manager replied that he could not make it, but Lt. Walsh would do any translating necessary on that study. Mr. Speich said it was a question about sewers. Mr. Speich continued that there was a sewer assessment, a large sewer assessment this year, and I know I have been getting a lot of comments myself and I'm sure you've been getting phone calls left and right. But I think we should try to start thinking about communicating what the real plan is – if there is a plan – about usage tax or you get done by usage or some other way to do it. As we

roll out the budget season, I think it is something we should spend some time on. The Town Manager said certainly. That is going to be a hot topic with the WPCA for a lot of reasons. Mr. Speich asked about an Executive Session on security. Are they going to do that sometime? The Town Manager said yes, they are trying to get that scheduled. He was working with Bridget to try to get it for the 20<sup>th</sup>. We have a special meeting coming up. But we're not going to be able to do that. We'll shoe horn it in as soon as we can, or if you'd like it sooner rather than later, we can try to do a special meeting just to cover that. Mr. Speich said he just didn't want it forgotten.

Mr. Stokesbury said he had five quick points. First is rather topical. Out of South Carolina. He reads, South Carolina mansion burns to the ground, hit by lightning, and apparently another bolt of lightning hit the county's 911 tower -- the cell tower for the county, and blew it out. And therefore, they didn't even know they were calling for the fire department. One thing we are doing right here in Avon, Connecticut, is building respectable systems. Not one cell tower for the whole county. So, it's money well-spent, and we need to keep up the good work there. Number two is also topical. The Derby turf field, which has been a little bit of a stab in our side. If you remember, it did receive \$2.9 million dollars from DEEP, of all people, to put in a nice synthetic turf field. When the Governor turns around and tells us we're not going to get a dime. Please note that that complex is also benefitting from a total of \$4 million dollars from private donation from one individual. So in addition to the \$3 million. In honor of her father who was -- and Derby is small enough that they are talking about consolidating with Ansonia or Shelton. Third, towns struggling with the cost of removing dead/dying trees. Widely reported in the Courant in the last two weeks. Fortunately, we are ahead getting the right equipment to do it. Again, money well-spent. Fourth, South Windsor is making a push to make their open space more handicapped accessible. They are evaluating it from scratch, I guess. I know we do it with each project, but I think it is worthwhile to take a step back and ask the people tasked with that task to look at it again. And finally, and this may already have been covered by us a few years ago, the Courant reported that Katie Ruez, a longtime resident of Avon, turned 103. The Town Clerk said she was almost certain that Ms. Ruez received a resolution on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, but she would check to confirm. Mr. Stokesbury added that she taught at Towpath from 1946-1955. That's something to make us all feel young.

Mr. Pena said that along with Chairperson Maguire and Mr. Bernetich, I attended a convocation over at the high school, and just to mention they did a very nice job. New Superintendent. It was different than in years past, but nothing to say against what happened in the past but it was a very nice event. And also too they involved kids from the school, and I thought that was very good. The other thing, and it is more of a question than anything else, is the work being done down Route 44, that is what, water? Mr. Stokesbury responded Avon Water. My question is what is the lead time -- are we given any time frame on when they will start and things like that? The Town Manager said there is some general coordination -- there are no permits for us to issue -- but we have a general idea of what work is scheduled. Mr. Pena said the reason he was asking about it is, we may not have wanted to do anything, but in this particular case there is so much construction, marking electrical and everything that goes through there, and a lot of what goes into the building, the digging and what have you, I'm just throwing it out, I'm not saying we would, but talking about sidewalks, and that could have been an opportunity if it would have fit into our budget. But that is something I was asked many times. And I'm asking if we do get an anticipation of lead time because it is the Water Company this time, but it might have been something we would have wanted to tie into as well. The Town Manager replied we didn't have

enough time to plan appropriately for that. We did have a discussion with the State about the possibility of putting in sidewalks. And the way it was left was, it's unlikely the State would object. We can put in the gravel base and you take care of everything else. So as we found with West Avon Road, these sidewalks are never what you expect them to be. I mean to redo West Avon Road -- the bituminous area with cement -- that was a half a million dollar project. And you are probably talking about more on Route 44 because they are even wider. But you know as we talked about on Country Club Road, you also get into this issue of property acquisition. And you've got utilities and you've got work through all this stuff. The Town Planner, Town Engineer, and I had a conversation about this, and perhaps if we had more notice than we had, we'd still probably be talking about a couple million bucks. So there is always the possibility that we can go back and retrofit. And maybe that is a conversation for a different day. But certainly given the CRCOG Route 44 corridor study that was on our minds going through. Mr. Pena said he thought we had been given notice, not enough notice we would have liked to have. And even if we had notice, maybe we wouldn't have wanted to do it. And I think it is important that we work with the State, and I know you do work with the State, to make events like that happen, and it would save us money without having to do it again. But I've been asked many times and I'm sure other Council members have been asked as well, so I thought I'd mention it today.

Mr. Bernetich stated it was Memorial Day, I blinked, it was Labor Day, I walked out today and there were leaves on my car. It's just the passage of time. And here we are all back again.

Chairperson Maguire said that is true. She had a few things. She hoped everyone enjoyed their summer. A lot has gone on within town, with paving, and I was most recently at the Middle School, and they have a fabulous new parking lot. They did a wonderful job, as well as a new security door. So in the past you walked right into the Middle School, and truly, if someone who wasn't supposed to be there would have had access to the whole building. They could go to the gym, upstairs. They could go anywhere. Now they can only go in one door that leads right into the office. It looks like the door has been there forever. There are a few bricks by the side. But I think it was a great fix for that building and definitely will put them in a safer place. And one of the things the staff here in Avon is focused on is Avon, but they are also focused on development and being involved in organizations so they can bring what they learn or share what they have with their community. So I would like to recognize Jennifer Bennett, who is our Senior Center Coordinator, who was nominated and elected to the National Association of Social Workers in Connecticut, and she is going to be serving on their board as Vice President. She is also on their Executive Committee. She was also nominated and elected President of the Connecticut Association of Senior Center Personnel for the 2018-19 calendar year. She does a great job over there. She has so many activities and integrates with so many aspects of the community: the pool, the historical society, the library. So she is doing a great job over there, and congratulations on her appointments. Mr. Stokesbury said this is one of the few nights she's not here. Chairperson Maguire said she comes to a lot of our meetings. We see her around. And we have to congratulate our Town Manager who was just appointed to the Executive Board of the CTCMA, which is the Connecticut Town and City Managers Association. This is an organization that is a local chapter of the ICMA. The International Council and Management Association. And this promotes good government and professionalism in town and city management. So congratulations on that. And you can add to that the Chair of the Energy and Environment subcommittee for CCM, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. So the Town Manager has a lot going on in addition to everything he is doing in Avon and is highly

respected in his field. And I think it really adds a lot for our Town. She asked if the Town Manager wanted to tell a little more about what he is doing. The Town Manager stated that for CTCMA I'm a rethread. They finally got me back on the Board. But I was on the Executive Committee about 15 years ago. But as you said, CTCMA, International Council and Management Association is the umbrella organization for professional town and city management. And CTCMA is really like the Connecticut Chapter. And you should all know, Phil Schenck was the standard bearer for CTCMA for 100 years. And I don't know how many times he served as President. He just kept recycling. So Avon has a long tradition of supporting the organization. And on the CCM front, Connecticut Conference on Municipalities, they are the umbrella organization that represents the interests of cities and towns in Connecticut. And the neat thing about them is they are up to 167 of 169 towns. One of their important functions is developing their legislative agenda every year. So much like the State, they break out into subject areas or subcommittees. And they have subcommittees on energy and environment, which I chair now. They have education, they have municipal law and risk management, and they have all these different functional groups. And the role of those functional groups is to develop initiatives in each of their areas. The chairs then report up to the legislative committee, and the legislative committee adopts the final platform for the session. And that becomes CCM's goals for that session. A lot of times what happens with these organizations is that by the time it gets to the legislative committee it's out of the barn, you can't do anything about it. But while I have been involved at the subcommittee level in the past, now being chair I have much more of an ability to shape, and that can be really important as you are in on the ground level with CCM staff. So all good things for Avon. Chairperson Maguire said congratulations and thank you. She said that before she continues with her last point, she wanted to recognize that there was a Boy Scout here. She said are you here getting your patch or merit badge? Boy Scout replies yes. Mr. Stokesbury asks which one? Boy Scout replies Citizenship within the Community. Chairperson said you are Thomas McHugh? And the boy replies yes. Chairperson Maguire says they are glad he is here and asks if he has any questions. He says no, it seems things have been laid out pretty clearly. Chairperson Maguire said she hopes school is going well for him. She then says the last point she wanted to mention was that last month a dear member of our community passed away, Rick Connel. A friend and dedicated member of the Avon community. And he passed away very suddenly in mid-August. He has served on the Board of Assessment Appeals for 24 years, which may set a record for continuous service for one Board. He was actively involved in the National Alliance for Mental Illness, as well as World Outreach through the Valley Community Baptist Church. He was active in countless other community-based organizations, and he served as a Treasurer for the Avon Republican Town Committee, tutored children in Hartford elementary schools. He coached youth soccer. I think when we talk about Rick, what we'll miss is his smile, his hugs. He always had a way of making everyone feel at ease. He would stop in the office and just chat with you. He was a great man, and he will be missed. So please keep his family in your prayers. And we hope that he rests in peace. So now moving on to old business.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **13/14-48 Avon High School Synthetic Turf Field and Track Improvement Project**

Chairperson Maguire said that as many of you know, we are moving ahead to go to a referendum on this project. We have a few things that are questions that have been brought up through the years, and the biggest one is the infill. So we are going to have a two board meeting next Thursday, the 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Senior Center at 7 pm. And we have an expert in the field of infill, Julie

Lemay from Gradient, which is a company outside of Boston, coming to give a presentation on turf fields and infill, and let us answer some questions. And what we are hoping is that we will reach a decision at the end of the night as to how to proceed with infill. It's important to get this decided before we go to referendum, as we are putting a contingency of almost \$330,000 into the referendum number that we are putting forth because we don't know where we will go with the infill. So I think it will be important to try to reach a consensus between the two boards on how we are going to proceed. She asked if anyone wanted to address that further. The Town Manager replied no, I think we are in good shape, and packets for that meeting will go out either Friday or Monday. I just got a draft today of the presentation which may need some tweaking, but generally looks good. Chairperson Maguire added that one other thing in your background material – there was some talk about a 20% contingency – we're going to relook at these numbers, and we feel 20% is a little excessive. And we are going to see where we can cut costs and keep it to a more realistic number of 10% contingency. The Town Manager is going to work with BSC on that and get back to us. We are going to be having a lot of meetings and we have some scheduled. We have the 13<sup>th</sup>, the 20<sup>th</sup>, so we have a lot of little marks that we have to check off before we reach December 12<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Speich asked, just to refresh my memory, there will be two questions on the referendum, and you'll be able to vote for both, one or none? Chairperson Maguire and others responded yes.

#### **16/17-51      Town and Public Safety Communications System Replacement Project**

Chairperson Maguire said we had in our packets a Q & A. I don't know if you have had a chance to review it. But it is very similar to what we've already looked at, as well as it is on the website. Does anyone have any questions for Lt. Walsh, who is sitting all the way in the back? One board member asked if this information would be available to public. The Town Manager said it will be available on the website. Lt. Walsh added that it is not on yet. The Town Manager said my guess is yes. What we are working towards now is finalizing the town wide mailer. And the town wide mailer is going to provide a more concise version of this. And I want to see how this turns out. And it may be best just to stick with the town wide mailer. Because it is more concise. We have less space to work with. People might not get as confused about it. Or perhaps, we make this available because it does go into a high level of detail and we can treat it as an appendix to that. Mr. Speich said that when he was reading this the first thing that came to mind was it would be good to have a 6 point summary from the very beginning, and here's all the details if you need them. I think this is at a good level of detail and understandable. If we decide to send this, I think you want to put some kind of summary on top. The Town Manager added that when we do the public information presentations, those will be very concise, and honestly, one of the reasons I wanted to go through this exercise was to make sure that the team working on it scoured every corner. Treated it as a white paper to throw it all out there. So this will serve as the base for whatever we do. Chairperson Maguire asked if Lt. Walsh had anything she wanted to add. Lt. Walsh said it is very comprehensive and the Assistant to the Town Manager has done a fantastic job. At the public hearings/information sessions we'll be able to explain it a little bit more, giving examples as well. The Town Manager said that he should also mention that for both of these projects, at the last Board of Finance meeting, we fully brought them up to speed, to the same level of detail as we've been talking with council. We shared all of the background on the field project, information on the communications system, and they also had some good, insightful questions. Chairperson Maguire said she was at that meeting, and it was very beneficial to them to have a good understanding of the projects, and they were very supportive.

**17/18-03      Presentation and Discussion: West Avon/Country Club Road Intersection**

Chairperson Maguire said this was something near and dear to her heart. We've been talking about this for quite some time. We've been working with Fuss & O'Neill. There have been a lot of studies done. I think anyone that stands at that intersection, or has driven that intersection is aware that it is tough. And sometimes when you are taking a left from either direction on Country Club, you're taking your life into your hands. So I'm happy to say that we have a report on that and some action that is going to happen. The Town Manager said that in your packets you have a couple of things. You've got a copy of the traffic study, with all the related jargon, and there is also a summary of Sgt. Gannon, which brought everyone down memory lane as far as a chronology. The shortest version of this is we had Fuss & O'Neill take a look at that intersection. It is an intersection with a state highway of course, West Avon Road. As a result, we have to be a little more rigorous before we make modifications because all of this is subject to DOT approval. Hence, Fuss & O'Neill prepared a traffic study. What I would suggest you do is take a look in your packets, and there is a number, I'm sorry we don't have it up here on the PowerPoint. But there is a map of the existing intersection and the proposed intersection, and basically what Fuss & O'Neill is recommending – and the local traffic authority agrees with and engineering agrees with – is going east and west, to create a dedicated left turn. This, we think, will solve the issue, but the state is scheduled to look at this intersection again in 2019-2020. Through the Chief, we have been trying to prompt DOT to speed it up. Not going to do it. We're in the queue, but they've got to work through these things methodically. And we're welcome to go ahead and do it ourselves, but that means we pay 100% of the cost – which if we get into expanding and adding lanes and signalization – you're going to have to deal with property acquisition, capital costs. So what would seem pretty simple, is already about a million dollar project. And as we kicked it around internally, our thinking was it appears that a dedicated left lane is going to solve the problem, go ahead and propose that final solution to DOT because they have to approve it, implement it, and let's see how it goes. And then we have a couple of years of a track record by the next time DOT looks at it. And if we have to go further, then we can deal with it at that point. There's a lot of jargon and stuff here. Lt. Walsh can correct me if I missed anything. But summary wise, that is where it is. Even though it took this amount of time to get there. Chairperson Maguire asked if DOT will look at it again in September. The Town Manager responded correct. We wanted to do an onsite. Chairperson Maguire said assuming that it is a go, how long until we can implement this? The Town Manager said I think it is pretty simple, and I haven't slotted it in with public works yet, so I don't want to commit them to anything. But from my perspective, I mean we go out there on a quiet afternoon during rush hour. I think we can knock this off pretty quickly. Chairperson Maguire added that there needs to be a big community awareness. The Town Manager said just as we did with Burnham. Put out the notice to let everyone know it's coming. We're in such good shape right now with Fisher Fields and MH Rhodes. We have work to do over at the Annex, and I do think we will be able to shoe horn this in. Chairperson Maguire said that will be great. I am going to go on record as saying I think you need a directional arrow, so in 2020, when the DOT will be there, and I'd love to chat with them. I think an arrow, that when out when it was green, let the people turn left, and then it shut down and stayed green. But it would at least give that flow. And it's really just during the rush hour time that it is bad. So just stand on record, I won't stop until we get that. This is a great start. Lt. Walsh said she knows Sgt. Gannon has been on the DOT as much as possible about this, to the point where they don't always answer his emails. He has been furiously working on this. Hopefully in September we will have more answers

Mr. Bernetich asked if there has been any consideration – because you stand out there and take your life in your hands – additional enforcement, maybe, especially when the kids are walking across over there. Would it be a good idea to have an officer handing out big fat tickets for people who think it's ok to take the left turn when it's not and running the light? Enforcement is usually – you know you have some officers out there for a month and people start getting a lot of tickets and then all of a sudden they are just like maybe I should just slow down. There's traffic and children. Lt. Walsh said we can absolutely do that. We do have special assignment in the department – traffic team – so there are officers assigned who just do traffic, and we do details when we have extra officers on to reassign them. So absolutely, I can add that to the list and have them start doing enforcement out there. Mr. Bernetich added that he is not encouraging our town folks to get tickets, but there are a lot of kids on that corner. The Town Manager said that one of the things we do is whenever there is a major improvement, like Country Club Road, the section from West Avon to Lovely, becomes a speedway. Conditions improve, so you make sure it's stepped up on that special detail. When we did the intersection with Burnham and we threw out the stop sign, we made sure it got special attention. And will make sure this does too. Chairperson Maguire said to that point, you had the big flashing sign. But I think just saying there are kids walking in that area, going back and forth to the library, and they are running from cross country. So a kids, caution, lane change flashing will make people really aware. Lt. Walsh said we have to rent those signs, but for the carnival I was able to borrow signs from surrounding towns, maybe I'll be able to do that again. Mr. Bernetich added that he has been listening in on the police scanner I have on my fire department pager and thank you guys. I hear on a much more regular basis people going back and near the schools. I don't know what they are doing there but it sounds like after they park there – thank you. Please keep that going.

Mr. Stokesbury said I have a couple of questions. I think they are more directed to the Town Manager. I'm a little confused by the presentation or perhaps your summary. If we go forward right away with Country Club Road improvements, does that action cost a million dollars? The Town Manager responded no. The million I threw out is if we get into a larger project. Let's say this doesn't work, and the real solution is adding lanes and signalization. Mr. Stokesbury said number two: does our immediate proposal entail any property acquisition? The Town Manager responded no. Mr. Stokesbury said thank you, that's it.

Mr. Bernetich said he had an observation or question. It appears as though westbound on Country Club Road seems narrower than eastbound. So do you really think that you have enough room to make two lanes on the westbound side? Lt. Walsh said I know engineering has looked at it with us, so it is something that can be done. But obviously they'd have an integral part in it. Mr. Bernetich said it is a little narrower – two feet or so? But I mean is it safe enough to do that? That was my thought. Then you get into acquisition and widening the road there. Maybe you'll eventually be doing that anyway. Chairperson Maguire said I agree. It is a little narrow. I know they have measured it. Town Council thanked Lt. Walsh for coming. Chairperson Maguire said we will be anxious to find out what happens with that.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **18/19-13 Planning & Zoning 8-24 Review: Synthetic Turf Field Project Avon High School & Town and Public Safety Communications System Replacement Project**

Chairperson Maguire said there is a little bit of red tape here with planning & zoning. We have to put in for our two referendum items to go through an 8-24 review. I believe on this one we need a motion to send it to – do we need two separate motions for each project? The Town Manager said I think you have one motion referring to both.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Synthetic Turf Field Project at the High School and the Town and Public Safety Communications System Replacement Project are referred to the Avon Planning & Zoning Commission for a Section 8-24 Review.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Pena, Speich, Stokesbury, and Bernetich voted in favor.

The Town Manager said before we move on to the next one, you may have seen in your packets that there is a debt service analysis that we've included, and this is something we've talked to the Board of Finance about at the last meeting because that is directly what they focus on to approve a project to go forward. So what we did here was work with Dennis Dix – I'm sure this format looks very familiar to you – and we had him size out a 15-year bond and I forget what was the rate? 2.5 or 2 percent? So we made a bunch of assumptions that are pretty reasonable. Keep in mind that the communications system is slightly over \$4 million and soft costs we are funding through existing capital appropriation. As you look at this, and as I've talked about with the BOF, this is about \$700,000 in new debt, from current not historic. As I reminded the BOF, there is a long story to talk about here, which is our debt has been declining for the last 10 years or so. And as you all know in capturing that capacity we've been moving it into capital. So ultimately the decision here as we go into fiscal year 20, and if one or both of these programs are approved, is how to deal with that in next year's budget. Do you want to swing some of that capacity from capital back into debt service? So that there is essentially no impact on the mill rate? Or keep capital where it is and add on the additional debt service and offset either with additional revenue or expenditure reductions? So a couple of moving parts there, but it's generally between \$700 and \$800,000 of debt service. Mr. Stokesbury asked but our current debt service is 2.5? The Town Manager responded yes. Mr. Stokesbury asked and it has been as high as \$5 million if we go back to late 08 or 09? It's a little misleading to talk about it in the abstract that way. We've burned off so much debt in anticipation of future needs. It really comes down to reallocating the capital budget and debt service versus piling it on, which I don't think any of us expect to do. The Town Manager said we always like to recall based on our current debt service – including the Severni property, which of course was approved – we'll be debt free in 2028. And even if these projects are approved, the cycle runs through 2034. So we are still in a strong position. Mr. Stokesbury added with no big building projects unlike our neighboring town. The Town Manager said correct. Mr. Stokesbury said so we are looking long term. The Town Manager replied absolutely. Mr. Speich said so these debt service plot and numbers are for existing debt, and that includes the Severni property? The Town Manager responded yes. Mr. Speich said ok, I just wanted to make sure. The Town Manager said that is baked into the existing. Mr. Stokesbury said we already paid down Severni by 20%. The Town Manager responded we did, July 1<sup>st</sup>. Chairperson Maguire asked for any other questions.

The Assistant to the Town Manager said one more housekeeping thing - Council needs to vote to reschedule their regular meetings of October and November to September 20<sup>th</sup> and October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Chairperson Maguire said the timing of these meetings is being moved so that we can handle the housekeeping items that we need to prior to going to referendum, i.e., reviewing the mailer, and

other things that seem to come up. The Town Clerk added that these will be considered special meetings.

On a motion made by Mr. Stokesbury, seconded by Mr. Pena, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council change the dates of their October 4, 2018 regular meeting to September 20, 2018 and their November 1, 2018 regular meeting to October 23, 2018.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Pena, Speich, Stokesbury, and Bernetich voted in favor.

Mr. Speich said he won't be at the September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting but will be at the September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Chairperson Maguire said we have a lot of things coming up and we will have to be throwing in a couple of public information sessions too.

### **18/19-14 Approval of Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust and Investment Policy Statement**

Chairperson Maguire said we have Chris Kachmar and Becky Sielman here to talk about our asset allocation, and the Director of Finance is here as well. Currently we have 55% in equity and 45% in fixed. And we are looking to change that to 60/40. And I think you'll go over some of the logistics and overall plan. But we will need a motion at the end of this for the Town Manager to proceed. The Town Manager said that Chris Kachmar is with Fiduciary Investment Advisors, and his role is of the portfolio manager for both our pension assets and our other post-employment benefit assets which are in the trust fund. Becky Sielman is our actuary who has the important role of performing a number of functions for our purposes here. The most important role is helping us set a rate of return, and that's where I talked earlier about the state being about 8% or whatever. And based on Ms. Sielman's good advice, we've been ratcheting that down over the years. So the two of them work very closely together because once we budget a rate of return, we have to make sure we have the right mix of fixed and equities so that we hit it. So we don't have an unanticipated hit to our general fund. They are the two outside professionals that advise the pension committee. The Pension Committee consists of the Director of Finance, myself, the Chair of the BOF, the Town Treasurer, a representative from the HR department, and also the Business Manager from the BOE. The Pension Committee has the responsibility of working with our two outside professionals to oversee the performance of the investments. What's being recommended tonight, is that we took a look at the asset allocation for our OPEB trust fund, and there is a feeling that we should rebalance a little bit heavier onto the equity side. We think we have good reason for doing so. In order to implement that change, we have to get authorization from the council to amend the investment policy statement. The investment policy statement gives the committee parameters they can work in for investment mixes.

Mr. Kachmar said thank you to the Town Manager and members of Council. A perfect introduction and we'll hit the high points and give you a little bit more perspective on the two OPEB trusts and how they are invested. Then we can dovetail in with Ms. Seilman's participation to the motivations to tweaking the allocations. Not major changes in any way. And maybe to do that in your materials you should have – I don't remember how we orchestrated it – we don't have tabs or anything. It should be page 4. You should see an allocation that says OPEB trust in the upper left hand corner. June 30<sup>th</sup>. The assets you see here are slightly north of \$2 million represent the town's OPEB trust. We'll look at the BOE's momentarily. You can see a couple of things that come out of this mixture today. As the chair mentioned it is roughly 55%

in equities and 45% income at the broad asset class level. There was a desire when this fund was first put together in 2009 by the town, to be very aware of cost. And the way to do that is indexing. So you do see that, some of you are well aware of this, we warehouse the assets at Simsbury Bank, at essentially no cost, with minimum transactions costs if they do under the guidance of the ad hoc committee. And you do see that we are indexed in entirety. The program today costs less than 1/5<sup>th</sup> of 1% in terms of the investment expense profile and that is by design. I think at the time we worked with the ad hoc committee and your predecessor peers on the council, there was a sensitivity to the cost and an awareness of let's get into the market, and let the markets work in our favor over time as we size the program up. We can assess our ability to bear risk marginally, which we are talking about tonight. And over time, as we grow even more, we can look at the prospect of adding managers. But this is all indexed, and you see the asset totals there for the town contribution. If you turn to page 5, and we're certainly not going to belabor these points in fairness to the council. You'll see the square in the middle of your page, and the track record for the trust over time, and as I just described and as you would intuitively expect, the returns which have been generated mimicked the market, mainly because it is all indexed. A plan that has worked out to our satisfaction, the ad hoc committee's satisfaction, and hopefully yours, annualizing at 7.5 % over the life of the program. So I think it has really done everything in terms of intention that we'd hoped it would do. And then shifting gears before we talk about the contemplated change, just to give you the whole picture starting on page 6, the BOE on a slightly later start date – their program started in the fall of 2011 – but you do see there an allocation schematic that is identical to the town's. Same mix of assets, equities and fixed incomes. Same custodian bank in the form of Simsbury Bank. Same fee structure, same utilization of the mandate (inaudible). Identical. And you see, as you would expect, the performance track level, being similar, if not identical, on page 7. Obviously the inception date is different, but regardless, the numbers are certainly on a 5 year basis. There might be slight cash flow considerations which could tilt those numbers very marginally. But over time you see the program, as you would expect, generates the return that the markets generate over that same time frame. So the plan has worked exactly as advertised, and as these programs have seasoned over time, and Ms. Sielman can speak to this better than I, because she gets better data, just on a projected basis. And they season and size up their innate ability to bear risk marginally. And our estimation increases. So the 55/45 mix that you see today, we'd propose to the ad hoc committee a month or so ago, a 60/40 mix might be more of what we're seeing with your peers around the state as they size up and make the allocation construct feel more like the legacy pension plans. And we don't have the data for you today, but the legacy pension plans have allocations, actually a little bit more slightly in favor of equity, in that 60/40 range. So we are really harmonizing the allocations from the OPEB trusts to look more like the pension plans. We do a lot of statistical work and boring stuff that we drag the ad hoc committee through. And in deference to your busy evenings, on page 8, we are really highlighting just a high level some of that work product. And this is, I confess, not entirely intuitive, but if you can make it out, we run our allocation models, you'll see the existing allocation model squarely on the top of the page if you can make it out there on the bottom half. And then you see right in the middle of the same exhibit, equity 40%, fixed income mixed. And the changes we are contemplating, again, fairly marginal in terms of size, but changes nonetheless. And what does that look and feel like on a projected basis? Based on our best assessments about what the markets might offer for return in the coming years, that is on page 9. What we've done for you there is you is on the form with the pale blue bars on the left of the exhibit, the projected return for today, which I'm rounding for discussions sake. 6.1%. As you would expect, right, as you increase your ability to bear risk and you add equities at the

expense of fixed income, we naturally, with the benefit of time, have higher expectations for equity returns than fixed income returns, and there is lots of perspective and history that validates that consideration. And so we're rejecting now in the new mix, should you adopt an annualized return of about 6.3%. So you're picking up about 25 basis points of model incremental return. And you are doing so with only marginally more volatility in the form of a standard deviation. And I won't drag you through all the gory details. But when we evaluate as advisors, the risk adjusted return, we think the tradeoff is a worthwhile one. That 60/40 is statistically well-justified. Let me pause there because that's a lot of admittedly boring stuff. And I know Ms. Sielman probably wants to add a little bit on the liability side of the ledger as well of what's motivating the recommendation. Ms. Sielman said that the reason behind the motivation of the years long discussion about lowering the interest rate assumption – it's been a very long process of lowering the interest rate assumption. We've been doing that because the expert thinking in the market in the past almost 20 years has been every year a little bit gloomier and a little bit gloomier in terms of expected long term returns. Long gone are the roaring 90's, and we always had double digit returns for years and everyone expected that would continue forever. And those overly rosy years are gone in a very painful fashion. We had the dot com bubble burst, and we had the financial crisis. But even beyond those two single events, the consensus expert thinking is we're just not going to see the same returns in the next 50-75 years that we've seen in decades in the past. So each year we update an analysis based on expert thinking about future returns and recalibrate how much we expect the portfolio to return. And a portfolio that is exactly the same as 20 years ago, we expected to earn 8 to 8.5%. That same portfolio now is only earning about 6.25 to 6.5% long term. Not that the portfolio has necessarily changed, but our expectations about future returns have changed. And when we talk about future returns, we aren't talking about what we think will happen next year, or the year after, or 5 years or 10 years. We're talking about a very long time horizon of the pension plan and the OPEB benefits, which is 50 or 70 or 100 years. So we have a very long time point of view. Even if you weren't changing the portfolio, to introduce a little bit more risk, we would be talking about needing to continue to reduce the interest rate assumption and diligently working away at it. We've gotten down to 7% and we need to keep going down a bit. Raising up the equity profile of the portfolio a little bit helps raise up what our ultimate landing point is. So we still have a little downward path to follow, but raising up the equities so we don't have to go quite so far by the time we finish. The Town Manager said one thing as a reminder, you hear me talk about the annual required contribution. And that is what it is. So if the annual required contribution doesn't come from investments, then it comes out of the general fund, and that is why it is so critical. Ms. Sielman said I would say there are two key considerations. The first is that every dollar that you are not earning in investment income, is a dollar the town needs to pay so that all the benefits get paid for, either through investment income or through contributions. And if you have less of one, you have to have more of the other and vice versa. The other key thing is there is a trade off in returns and volatility. The more equity you take on, the more risk you take on. And long term you get better returns, but you will run the risk of bigger swings from year to year. We do have tools that we use to dampen market volatility because we don't want the town's contribution to be volatile from one budget to the next. So we spend a lot of time on ways to keep the town's contribution stable and predictable from one year to the next. You certainly do, by trying to a little more than 25 basis points return, you are increasing a little the potential swings from one year to the next. We introduced with our last OPEB evaluation, an asset smoothing technique that would dampen the effect of market volatility. A 60/40 split is pretty much the sweet spot in terms of trade off for risk and return. Getting more risky than 60/40 you start really getting into a

risky volatile place that's really hard on municipal budgets. Lower than 60/40 -- we're conservative at 60/40 -- you are perhaps leaving a little potential return on the table by chasing a more conservative stance. Everyone's attitude toward risk is a little bit different which means that every pension plan's asset allocation, and every OPEB plan's asset allocation looks a little different from every other one. In the long run, it is really a question about your willingness to bear risk in exchange for return. Mr. Speich asked if 60/40 would be very representative for the state. Ms. Sielman said yes it is very typical across all Connecticut. We work for dozens of municipalities, looking at pension benefit programs, and 60/40 is very much the norm. Mr. Speich said I can see from your chart that the risk goes up as you move from 55 to 60, at least I can see it going in that direction. What does the sharp ratio mean? Mr. Kachmar said the sharp ratio for us calibrates the incremental return potential versus the risk being borne. The higher that number in a vacuum, the more ideal is that relationship. This is no surprise, right? You can see there that the sharp ratio as our system calculates is pretty darn steady, right? Statistically, there's no measurable difference between .34 and .36, honestly. But it is a way for us to have an additional perspective on ok we're going to increase the return potential but we know that the volatility around that projected return is going to be marginally more. And that just scales and calibrates for us, like you would expect intuitively. What you see is that consistent ramp up. Mr. Speich said about the target asset allocation table -- in the document -- the town of Avon's employment benefit's trust investment statement -- on the back of that it talks about the target assessment, as to what percentages are in each category. Is that on figure 8 on here that shows that? Mr. Kachmar responded the way we get a little more granular in the asset allocation study section, so I think the way you would compare it is at the higher asset class level. So you see we've got, for example, 40% for core fixed income in your allocation exhibit, and you see there arithmetically, no surprise, you've got 30% in what we define is the broad market with some inflation protection securities with your fixed income as well. Within domestic equities, you look under the hood, large capitalization companies, and smaller capitalization companies and our optimization work. We want to capture the differential there and the different forecasts we have for those subcategories and domestic equities. Similarly in international equities, there are developed markets, emerging markets, and under the hood of that 22.5% we kind of segregate those within the optimization study as well. At the category level, the numbers, the 60/40 makes sense. Mr. Speich asked so you want to stay between these, right? I was just trying to go between the two to see if we are within the rules. Ms. Sielman added it is typical for the official statement that you -- or the policy that you adopt -- to be written relatively broadly and then the specific details, for instance, under domestic equities, how much is large capitalization and so forth, and specific management is left to the discretion of the committee. You adopt something in broad brush and they, the committee, then fine tune the details. Mr. Kachmar said you want a policy statement that provides appropriate guidelines and a blueprint for good governance but as Mr. Stokesbury can probably attest to legally, you don't want a document that is so voluminous and technical you're apt to trip up on it. The Town Manager said speaking of the legal perspective here, we did have our pension attorney from Murtha review all of this and they didn't have any updates with regard to the substance. There are updates that are required by Federal Law, IRS rules, and I didn't give you the bold strikeout version including those changes, because you wouldn't have a choice anyway, but they have been reviewed and they'll be updated. Mr. Stokesbury asked if Ms. Sielman was done, since they got sidetracked, and she replied yes. Mr. Stokesbury said I have a number of questions, but I'll start sort of where we left off. The Town Manager noted that we are trying to get down to 7% rate of return -- Ms. Sielman said we used a 7% interest rate assumption for our last look at the (inaudible) which was done as of last July 1,

2016. We will be doing a new one as of July, 2019. Mr. Stokesbury continued and your second statement, your proposal 60/40, is consistent with our peers throughout Connecticut. Are our peers throughout Connecticut also down to a 7% assumed rate? Are they lower? And how do those two factors intermix? Ms. Sielman responded that everyone has been moving down. Different municipalities are at different places. Some, at this point, are well below 7%. Some are straggling a bit above 7%. If I were to guess, I would say 7% right now is probably the median – maybe even 6.75%. Mr. Stokesbury asked but that doesn't even have an impact on the recommendation for the allocation, does it? Ms. Sielman responded that allocation comes first, and then based on the allocation, we evaluate and re-evaluate every year the expected long term return of that allocation and use that for guidance in setting our discount rate assumption. So we start with the allocation. You aren't setting the allocation to match my discount rate assumption. I'm setting my discount rate assumption based on what you've chosen for asset allocation. Mr. Stokesbury said thank you. He then said I'd like to step back maybe five steps because I'm not sure if I fully understand what you are talking about, let alone the audience. Who benefits from these OPEB funds? Who are they for? Like on the BOE side, it's got to be a small class of administrators that aren't getting the benefit of a state pension. The Town Manager said well no – Mr. Stokesbury said so that is one question. My second question is what is the difference between these OPEB trusts and pension trust funds? I think we need to understand who we are talking about and how long is this money going to be out there. Is it perpetual? Or is it money that is being burned off as part of the sunset of the old pension plan? The Town Manager said just to put it in context of our budget process, if you look under the trust funds tab, these are separate funds. Pension is not OPEB. But the actuaries came up with these rules where they basically said that for medical benefits, that had been guaranteed to retirees, we need to pre-fund those in a way similar to what you would do for a defined benefit. What we are essentially doing is – we are funding future retiree medical benefits. Mr. Stokesbury asked retiree? – The Town Manager said -- Town – where they are allowed under contract. You may recall some of the contracts we've negotiated out medical benefits for retirees. So where they are either allowed under collective bargaining agreements for the town or the BOE, or under the rules for non-represented employees. Mr. Stokesbury said so at the most basic level, these apply to current employees still active with the town, as opposed to only those who have perhaps retired under the old pension plan. So when we talk about a long horizon on a return that makes sense because it's perpetual. It's not part of a sun setting plan for a relatively small amount of retired Avon employees. Ms. Sielman said there are a number of groups of town employees – most groups of town employees – are eligible for some level of medical benefits after they retire. Some level of the premium is picked up by the town, and the benefits – the amount of the premium that the town pays versus the amount of the premium that the retiree pays – it varies from bargaining unit to bargaining unit. The town has negotiated changes, reductions for just about every bargaining unit. Just to illustrate – public works employees – I pick on them because they are last in the alphabet and show up on the last page of our report. Public works employees that were hired before 2007, that retire at age 55, the town pays half of the premium for the retiree and half of the premium for family coverage. But for those that retire with 25 years of service, or at age 65 – so they worked longer and retired later – the town pays 80% of the premium for the retiree and 55% of the premium for the remainder of the family. That was changed for public works employees hired after 2007 and later. The percentage premium that the town pays is a smaller amount. There is a state statute that requires the town to provide those benefits to teachers and certified administrators. So you have no choice but to provide OPEB benefits to teachers. As with pension benefits, the idea is that the fairness to taxpayers is to have the current generation of

taxpayers pay the cost of all compensation benefits for the current generation of employees, even though pension and OPEB benefits are not going to be received until the individual employee retires, but they should be paid for, accounted for, recognized while that employee is working for the town and providing services to the taxpayers. So you are setting aside money now, during that employee's working lifetime, so that ideally, when they retire, you've already fully paid for that benefit. That is what we are working towards. The mechanism or philosophy behind that is identical to the legacy defined benefit pension plans and for the OPEB plan, it would be the same way. It came later to the game with OPEB benefits – funding those – that's something over the past 15 years. You're setting aside money in a reserve fund. Avon is one of the earliest municipalities in the state to start setting money aside to pay for OPEB benefits. The Town Manager said the way that was started was an appropriation made to the special revenue fund. And you may recall when I go through this discussion every year at the budget process, for the last 12 years, we've had a plan where we've been drawing down that balance in the special revenue fund every year and ramping up the contribution in the general fund as that's exhausting. Now I think we might have another year in the special revenue fund. It's getting close. Ms. Sielman added the numbers have been getting bigger. It takes a while. It's always difficult for a municipal budget. You say ok we're going to start funding this new thing. It's difficult to go from zero to not zero. So it's a bit of a shock to the system, especially if it's a big, not zero number. And gradually you have been drawing down on your special revenue fund, and in the early years there just wasn't a lot of money to be talking about. So what was set up was just very plain, simple, straight forward, low cost, no frills. Let's wait until we have some money before we start getting a little more sophisticated and intentional about how the money is invested. Between the two programs, we've got to be at \$5 million. So now we're talking real money, and it is a good time to be a little thoughtful, and the liability is substantially more than \$4 million. Our last valuation for town employees -- the liability was \$27.7 million. BOE is another -- \$8.5 million. There's a lot of liability, and you've gradually built up assets to match that liability. The Town Manager said this is all academic but where it matters is when you have rating agency discussions. One of the things that they always key in on is what your OPEB liability is and what your plan to meet it is. Correct me -- I think Avon is well ahead of most communities with respect to OPEB -- with how aggressive we've been to funding liability -- and the way that we've always talked with -- whether it's Moody's or S&P -- is hey, for OPEB, here's our unfunded liability, here's that plan that we've had for the last 12 years, and look, we've faithfully executed on that plan every year. So it shows discipline. We've identified it and stuck with it. And it is just going to continue to increase in the general fund for the foreseeable future. Ms. Sielman said we've worked with several thousand municipalities that have OPEB benefits, and of our clients, half have set up OPEB trusts and half haven't. And of those that have an OPEB trust, there is a significant chunk of those that set up an OPEB trust. Maybe there's a little money in it, but there's no plan. Well we say your contribution is \$2 million, and they say, let's budget \$25,000. There are those communities. So yeah they have a trust fund, but they don't have a plan. The Town Manager said that every year when he does the budget process, he gets people on Boards of Finance, who say, OPEB -- yes I've heard of it. What is that again? This is important stuff and we've got a plan and are executing on it. Chairperson said this was an excellent presentation. I feel -- not that I could explain it -- much more enlightened. It was very informative and I think we have a good plan here. The 60/40 split makes great sense. Mr. Speich asked about the transaction costs for doing this. Mr. Kachmar replied de minimus. Mr. Speich said, meaning not much? Mr. Kachmar said Simsbury Bank charges \$15.00 per trade. The Town Manager said there were two other things he wanted to mention. One is that we are going to be going through a similar process

of reviewing our pension, investment statements, and there may or may not be any rebalancing there. At the very least I'm assuming there is going to be some regulatory language that we have to change. So that's something you're likely to be seeing in the coming months after the pension committee does their thing. The other thing I wanted to mention is with the Director of Finance being the historian that she is, if anyone is so inclined, Mr. Kachmar and Ms. Sielman, we have the history of the ad hoc pension investment management committee going back to 1961. Since inception. The plan was created in 1961, and it is all here, the membership through the years. Ms. Sielman said this is marvelous. I have never heard of a community doing that, and having that all in one place is phenomenal. You are to be congratulated. The Town Manager said we are very good about keeping track and if something changes, it goes in the log. Chairperson Maguire said we need a motion for the information to go through with the 60/40 split on the asset allocation. So it would be 60% equity, 40% fixed. Mr. Stokesbury said is it that, or is it the actual adoption of these two policy statements? The Town Manager said I would just say to adopt the revised policy statements as proposed.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve the Town of Avon Investment Policy Statement, as revised and the Town of Avon Board of Education Investment Policy Statement, as revised, both dated September 6, 2018.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Pena, Speich, Bernetich, and Stokesbury voted in favor.

Chairperson Maguire said thank you for staying so late and you made a great presentation, very easy to understand. Town Council thanked Mr. Kachmar and Ms. Sielman.

#### **18/19-15    Approval of Real Estate Tax Refunds, \$50,210.80**

Chairperson Maguire said these look to be duplicate payments. Mr. Stokesbury said he had a comment. I believe since we were talking about the July payments, which are the first half payments, and I believe in each case – I'd have to look at them carefully – we could take the position, at least on the vast majority of the real estate, is that they have actually just paid the whole year. And we could take that approach, and that is a reasonable approach in my mind. But I don't believe that was the intent of the taxpayer at the time, as you can see from each of their examples. And for that reason, I am in favor of the refunds. I think it is important to understand that they made the mistake, not the Town. Chairperson Maguire said duly noted.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve real estate tax refunds to the following: Bre Apex Property \$13,760.00, Anthony Oh \$1,844.32, Michael Pirro \$3,075.12, Brian C Evanko & Erika Peterson \$22,801.17, Nationstar Mortgage LLC \$3,914.83, and Kevin & Kelley Carillon \$4,815.36.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Pena, Speich, Bernetich, and Stokesbury voted in favor.

#### **18/19-16    Appointment: Avon Water Pollution Control Authority (U – 12/31/2021)**

On a motion made by Mr. Pena, seconded by Mr. Stokesbury, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council table agenda items 18/19-16 Appointment: Avon Water Pollution Control Authority (U – 12/31/2021) to the September 20, 2018 meeting.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Pena, Speich, Bernetich, and Stokesbury voted in favor.

**18/19-17 Appointment: Board of Assessment Appeals (R – 12/31/2021)**

On a motion made by Mr. Stokesbury, seconded by Mr. Pena, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council table agenda item 18/19-17 Appointment: Board of Assessment Appeals (R – 12/31/2021) to the September 20, 2018 meeting.

Mrs. Maguire, Messrs: Pena, Speich, Bernetich, and Stokesbury voted in favor.

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

**Misc. A: Purchasing Update:** The Town Manager reported on grant money, which is always a happy thing. You may recall that we submitted an application for funding, Local Transportation and Improvement Program, which is a state program that Capital Region Council of Governments administers. The bottom line is that the Transportation Committee of CRCOG met yesterday and approved two things regarding Avon's application. One thing is they approved the application for \$1.3 million for the Old Farms Road project. It would be north of Thompson Road. So that's one thing. The other is, and this is very old, the town has had an appropriation with CRCOG through the surface transportation program in the amount of \$1.7 million out there since 2005-2006, and CRCOG staff recommended that that appropriation be moved over to the LOTCIP program. So we would get the \$1.6, whatever it is, plus the \$1.3 all towards Old Farms Road. So that's a great thing. So it's basically enough to complete the project. Mr. Stokesbury asked without any matching? The Town Manager replied no – that is enough to complete the project from Thompson going north. So the other piece of good news here is because of the Assistant to the Town Manager's work with the Town Engineer, we also got a grant in the amount of \$350,000? The Assistant of Town Manager said \$378,000 or \$377,000? The Town Manager said more than \$350,000, through the DOT for something called community connectivity group, which can also be applied to that project. So what we are trying to work out is, we had applied for that funding thinking that it was unlikely to get the LOTCIP money, so we had applied it to the north section. But we are going to see if we can make a good case for that to work as seed money for the south section. So in kind of short order, we've got a couple of pieces that are falling into place. The policy board has to take the final action on the transportation committee's recommendation, which is almost assured. And I am on the policy board, so I'll make sure that happens. So we have the money in place, we've got an agreement in principle with the school, where they're going to pay for their portion of the cost. We'll have to dive into parsing that out. We've got potential seed money for the south section, and everything is on track for the bridge. And the contract has been awarded. It was really weird when I talked to the Town Engineer, there was a very small difference in the bidding process, so that on a \$15 million project, the spread was about \$4500. I guess everyone understood the project very well. So what you're going to see there is they are going to start grubbing it out this fall, and I think that's going to spin up next spring. So at long last I think the final piece of the puzzle that may need to come together is any remaining funding requirement that we're going to have to identify for the section from Thompson down to Tillotson. Mr. Stokesbury said the so called east-west. The Town Manager said precisely. Mr. Stokesbury added which is the biggest section – half the project. The Town Manager said it puts us in a strong position if there's anymore – and we've kind of gone to the well on this – if any more funding becomes available. Because we've got it on either end now. Mr. Stokesbury added that it also puts us in a good position on our own capital plan. We've taken a potential cost of \$8 million – wasn't that the last number we kicked around – we just knocked off how much? \$3.5? \$4? Which plays to the whole affordability of everything. When we are burning off debt and when we might get

around to doing all this. But again on the state bridge, contracts awarded, ground work this fall, maybe contractor on sight actually doing bridge type work which will not impact Old Farms Road. Not really at all – except for that short period near completion. The benefit of the bridge work, taxpayers should see that quickly, and that's the state finally coming through with their taking over the project. The Town Manager added, in 2012. Mr. Stokesbury said yes. The Town Manager added 100%. We're not paying a thing. Mr. Speich said I have one concern with Old Farms, if we flatten it and widen it, I think we need to make sure that we have a consideration for more of a police presence. It's going to be a test track. That's the only thing that I'm worried about. Are they straightening it? Or are they just going to flatten and widen it? The Town Manager said no, as we talked about this, what was baked into the design, and engineers love this, I mean, based on the discussions we had with council, we had the after action meeting and they said what does that mean? I said you need to improve it without ruining the country flavor. So it's like we are not going to create a throughway, we'll retain that certain bucolic setting. The improvements are going to consist of safety related improvements for the crossing of the students at the school. Formal drainage, because the section from Thompson to Tillotson, that's all on grade, and that is just sheet draining, it freezes up. And the gentle curves are going to remain, so it is not going to be a straightaway. Chairperson Maguire said you haven't seen the drawings. Mr. Speich said I did see them. I get concerned that you have a wicked curvy road and can't see around the corners. What does slow people down now are the narrow bridges. I think I've been to one crash on that road. But there's no crashes on that road now because everyone's scared. So that is what I'm saying – I just don't want to flatten it out and make it nice and wide so someone's doing 80 – that's one of my concerns. Mr. Stokesbury said I thought we had the police department's report – an accident per month or more – through the winding section. Mr. Speich said mirrors. The Town Manager responded it's over those little bridges that clip the mirrors. Mr. Stokesbury said the south section is being pushed west towards the old railway. The Town Manager added and you recall that was one of the hang-ups – Mr. Stokesbury continued which will integrate their project better and avoid crashes. The Town Manager said that was the whole idea. And you recall we brought in a wetlands scientist, we got our hip boots on and looked at all the critters. The Town Manager said that is the good news on Old Farms Road. The other updates, for the planning for the carnival, I think you should all feel quite comfortable, even though a hoard of people are going to descend. And I have been impressed. I've gone to a lot of the planning meetings, and Lt. Walsh had been running it through the Police Department, and Dave Theriault for the Fire Department. What they do is have a round table set up, and they have a representative from every discipline, both local. But also we have Farmington PD helping out, there's going to be regional mutual aid, there's going to be a state presence on sight, AMR is a major player to make sure we have onsite medical available. Basically everyone from the kiddy ride operator to the food truck operator down to the porta potty provider has been involved with the meetings. You can't plan for everything, but I'm quite confident in the way they have pulled it all together. The Assistant to the Town Manager had caught a number of these vendors quite unaware because of the rigors with which we require certificates of insurance and endorsements to be provided. It's quite amazing how none of these folks have any employees, they are all volunteers. Mr. Stokesbury said workers comp. They're all family. The Assistant to the Town Manager said I did my best to shake them down. The Town Manager said I think that is in quite good shape. Another thing I wanted to mention, is we were talking about intra-town collaboration earlier today. And of course that's not only cooperation with Town departments but with the BOE. As I've told you before, on a monthly basis we have these Farmington Valley Collaborative meetings. We rotate towns, and it includes my counterparts, First Selectman, if they have one, Chair of the Council, and obviously one of the recurring themes is

talking about inter-town cooperation. And there is a tremendous amount of inter-town cooperation that goes on now. But we are always looking to push the envelope where it makes sense. From Avon's perspective, we recently had a vacancy in the Building Department. So as we often do, when we have these vacancies, and other towns do it too, before we run ahead and fill it, we put a notice out to our colleagues and say look, I've got a position where I need a building official for 25 hours per week. Do you have a need? Is there capacity? Do you have a dip in your permitting stream, where perhaps we can buy some time for you? So those things have worked out to some extent in the past. This time I didn't have any takers. But I think it's important – and we've talked about this before – to recognize that there is an amount of rigor that goes on in review whenever these positions come open, to see if there is an opportunity to do these things. And for the last, as long as I've been going, 17 years now, it's been a mainstay on the agenda and some good things have come out of it. Other things on this Update can be reviewed at your leisure.

**Misc. B: Construction Update:** The Town Manager reported there was not much new here. Mr. Stokesbury asked are we done. The Assistant to the Town Manager said it is getting shorter. Mr. Stokesbury said it says "substantially complete." The Town Manager said Fisher Meadows field expansion – if you get a chance, go down and see the pavilion. There was a pavilion that was specked out on the drawings. I think it looks great. The problem, and I told the Director of Public Works, is that it is going to look so good that the old one is going to look that much worse. Mr. Stokesbury asked how the Fisher Meadows Fund is going. Here's some good news about that, and I am hesitant to throw this out there for sure yet, but we've been watching this spend down for the project – we're going to have money left. I am almost sure of it. So there may be some decisions we can make about that. One of the main variables is what do we want to do with the fencing around the fields, and perhaps council wants to have a conversation about it at some point, maybe putting up another pavilion to match the new one that has just gone up. But they tell me they are very confident that the fields will be ready in spring of 2019. I can't visualize it yet – it's not far enough along – but I've been telling the Director of Recreation & Parks, that when she meets with the Recreation & Parks Committee, really to say more like fall of 2019. And then if they're done, everyone can be happy about that. Mr. Stokesbury said and that is tied to just letting it grow in. The Town Manager added letting it establish. And also on those fields, the Director of Recreation & Parks is working to finalize her plan for how everything's going to be rotated. To make sure that -- this is kind of like a Jenga game – everybody gets equal time, the fields are rested as they need to be and all the scheduling happens. Mr. Stokesbury added those fields are smaller, so it's a different age group. The Town Manager said there are 2 full size and 4 practice, I think. Ms. Tiezzi said 5 practice. The Town Manager said so 7 total. So that's rolling and the police department improvements, I gave you an update there. Fire department Oak Bluff dry hydrant is done. You are going to see on the next agenda that we have to set a public hearing to have a permanent easement approved, so that we can enter the property to maintain it. Mr. Stokesbury asked with the new owner? The Town Manager said well we need to get 4. Because everyone that has a piece of that little pond has to agree. So there were like 4 temporary easements, so 4 permanent easements. So we'll have to get that done. MH Rhodes is coming along nicely. Mr. Stokesbury asked what the future anticipated use of our new established green space at MH Rhodes is. The Town Manager said that will be a good discussion we can have. Mr. Stokesbury said it looks good – it all came together nicely. The Town Manager said it kind of slopes down nicely so it's even with Thompson. I think that with the staff level, we've been hoping the grass would come in as advertised and waiting to get through the carnival to breathe a bit of a sigh of relief. And then have a conversation about long term. And really you've got a lot of options there. I know the Director of Public Works

has talked about some other site improvements as well as security improvements. One improvement would be that crummy Butler building. Maybe putting a nicer façade on that. There's nothing that says that we couldn't -- as there used to be on that site --back in the day when MH Rhodes was still there -- light it up for some practice fields if we're so inclined. It's nicely established now. Mr. Speich asked so between Sperry, MH Rhodes and Fisher, how many fields will be added by the spring of 2019? The Town Manager said well you've got Fisher, so that's 7. MH Rhodes, I couldn't say how many because we haven't even sketched it out. Mr. Speich said 2. The Town Manager said, so say 2. Sperry no new fields. We're going to give it the MH Rhodes treatment, spread out the soil, compress it, plant it, and there is the potential long term for another soft ball field because that's what our last planner of recreation called for. But I would suggest, before we make that decision, I think we want to see what capital comes up for the BOE Annex, they get pushed out every year. That building is kind of a mess, and there may potentially be a decision to make at some point. Does the town want to put a couple of million bucks into that building when another decision could be to level the Annex and sell off -- it's a prime piece of commercial property -- and relocate the BOE. Mr. Stokesbury said as we have lower enrollments -- Mr. Speich said put them right in one of the schools. Mr. Stokesbury said we have been talking about that for 10 years. Mr. Speich added yes we have.

Mr. Stokesbury asked if we had a lot of paving going on this year. The Town Manager said not so much. We had the Middle School -- I know Paper Chase and Hurdle Fence, the catch basins have all been raised. I know they're going to hit those areas. I want to check on Still Brook because I thought that was on the list. But this year, since we had so much other work to digest, it kind of took a back seat. I know at least with Still Brook --with potholes that fill them as they know about them. Mr. Speich said and Winding Trails with Winding Lane with all the sewers, I remember we had some complaints at one of the meetings, is that all complete? The Town Manager replied yes. The Assistant to the Town Manager said that Winding Lane North is done.

**XI. ADJOURN**

On a motion made by Mr. Pena, seconded by Mr. Stokesbury, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Chairperson Maguire, Messrs: Pena, Stokesbury, Bernetich, and Speich voted in favor.

**Attest:**

**Ann Dearstyne, Town Clerk**