



Town of Avon Newsletter

ISSUE LXVIII

October 2022

FY 2023/2024 Budget Process

The process is already under way to begin planning for the FY 2023/2024 budget that takes effect on July 1, 2023. All town departments have submitted their capital budget requests, and operating budget requests are due in early November. **Residents who are interested in the details of the proposed budget may be interested in attending the following meetings:**

Capital Budget Presentations will be held either in the Selectmen’s Chamber at Avon Town Hall, 60 West Main Street, and/or virtually on the following dates and times:

Thursday, November 3rd at 7:00 p.m. & Thursday, December 1st at 7:00 p.m.

Operating Budget Workshop is traditionally a half-day meeting held on a Saturday in February in the Selectmen’s Chamber at Town Hall, and/or virtually. Please check the January 2023 issue of the Newsletter for the date. The complete budget calendar is available on-line at: www.avonct.gov.

The annual budget process is a long one with plenty of opportunities for public participation, culminating with the Annual Budget Referendum in May 2023. We encourage you to visit the Town’s website often to access documents related to the process, including the proposed operating budget in its entirety, and the Town Manager’s Budget Message which includes a high level summary of the budget. We expect that these documents will be posted in late January, and will be updated in March, and again in May as the budget process progresses.

We also recommend that you “**Subscribe**” on the Town’s website under the **Citizen Action Center** to receive email notifications of Town Council, Board of Education and Board of Finance meeting agendas, as these three Boards have a direct role in the budget process. Finally, as always, please do not hesitate to call the Town Manager’s Office at (860) 409-4300 with questions.

Town Continues to Allocate American Rescue Plan Act Funds

Over the last ten months, the Town Council has worked to distribute the Town’s \$5.4 million allocation under the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to fund projects across a broad spectrum of functional areas. The Town Council has received and considered presentations and proposals from Town and Board of Education staff, local non-profits and members of the public. The project ideas that have been submitted by the community to date have been very thoughtful and the Town Council is appreciative of the time and effort that has been spent developing these ideas.

As of this writing, a total of \$3,629,934 has been appropriated, or is pending approval, by the Town Council and the Board of Finance, leaving a total of \$1,778,859 unallocated. The Town anticipates allocating the remainder of the funds over the next several months. Per the requirements of the ARPA program, funds must be committed by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026.

The Town has created a page on its website dedicated to the ARPA process: www.avonct.gov/arpa. Detailed updates, including a list of approved projects, are posted monthly and all archived updates are available for the convenience of the public. Should you have any questions, please contact Grace Tiezzi, Assistant Town Manager at gtiezzi@avonct.gov or (860) 409-4300.



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Your Election Questions Asked & Answered

By Nick Hogan, Town Clerk and Ann Clark & Maria Mozzicato, Registrars of Voters (ROV)

An election for certain state and federal offices will be held on November 8, 2022. We recommend that every voter start now and make a plan for Election Day to ensure that you can cast your vote. We are pleased to provide the following information to assist voters in developing their Election Day Plan.

Q1: How do I determine if I am a registered voter in Avon?

A: Visit portaldir.ct.gov/sots/LookUp.aspx, or call the Registrars, or the Town Clerk's Office to find out.

Q2: How do I register to vote in Avon?

A: There are several ways to register to vote: (1) Online Voter Registration through the Secretary of the State's Office is available via the ROV webpage; (2) In-person at the ROV Office (Town Hall Building #1), or in their absence, the Town Clerk's Office (Town Hall Building #2); or (3) Download a Voter Registration Form from the ROV webpage, fill it out and bring or mail it to the Registrar of Voters. The ROV webpage can be found at www.avonct.gov/registrar-of-voters and these links are available under "Voter Registration." Election Day Registration is also available (details in Q3 below).

Q3: When is the last day to register to vote in-person, online or by mail to be eligible to vote on November 8th?

A: The last day for eligible electors to register to vote in-person, online or by mail is November 1st. The Registrars will be in their office from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. to register voters that day. Online registration is available until 11:59 p.m. and mail-in registrations must be postmarked by November 1st. Persons whose rights as to age, citizenship and residence mature after the above date may apply to vote on November 7th from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. in the ROV office. For those voters who are eligible, Election Day Registration and voting will be held at the Avon Town Hall, Building #1, Selectmen's Chamber on November 8th from 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Contact the Registrars at (860) 409-4350 with questions about voter registration.

Q4: Where do I go to cast my vote in person?

A: The polls will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, November 8th**. Please note that your polling location may have changed due to the state's 2021 Redistricting Project. The Project is required by federal and state law to ensure that state and federal office districts have relatively equal populations so that everyone's vote has equal importance. The new districts are based on data from the 2020 Decennial Census. A map illustrating the new districts is available on the ROV webpage. Visit portaldir.ct.gov/sots/LookUp.aspx and enter your name and date of birth to verify your polling location. Note that Fire Company #1 is no longer being used as a polling location; all voters have been assigned elsewhere.

Q5: Am I eligible to request an absentee ballot?

A: An absentee ballot may be applied for by any eligible voter that is unable to vote due to the following reasons: (1) Active Service in the Armed Forces of the United States; (2) Absence from Town; (3) Sickness/Illness; (4) Religious tenets which forbid secular activity on the day of the election, primary or referendum; (5) Duties as an election official at a polling place other than your own during all hours of voting; or (6) Physical Disability. Absentee ballots became available in the Town Clerk's Office on October 7th. The last day to apply for an absentee ballot is November 7th. Applications are available in the Town Clerk's Office or online at www.avonct.gov/town-clerk. Voted absentee ballots must be **RECEIVED (not postmarked!)** by the Town Clerk by **8:00 p.m. on November 8th** in order to be counted. Contact the Town Clerk's Office at (860) 409-4310 with questions about absentee ballots.

Q6: Who should I contact if I'm interested in working at the polls on Election Day?

A: The Registrars are always looking for enthusiastic individuals of all political affiliations to work at the polls. Interested individuals must be U.S. Citizens and registered to vote if over the age of 18. If you are under 18, you must have permission from your parent or guardian. Full and part time shifts are available on Election Day and training and compensation are provided. Call the ROV office at (860) 409-4350 or email rov@avonct.gov if interested.



Social Services Programs

2022 Holiday Gift Basket Program: The Town of Avon, Department of Social Services is seeking local families, individuals, and other parties who would be interested in sponsoring an Avon family in need for the upcoming holiday season. For more information visit <https://www.avonct.gov/social-services/pages/holiday-donation-program>.

CT Energy Assistance Program: The State of Connecticut can assist households in paying for primary heating if those households meet federal poverty income guidelines or State Median income guidelines. For the upcoming 2022-2023 winter season, please call the Social Services Department for an appointment (regardless of whether you are a new or returning applicant) at (860) 409-4346 to see if you may qualify. The program ends on May 31, 2023. **PLEASE APPLY EARLY!**

For more information visit https://www.avonct.gov/social-services/pages/energy_assistance.

NOTE: The Avon Social Services Department may have limited ability to provide emergency fuel deliveries through the Avon Fuel Bank, so OIL users should apply EARLY!

Halloween News & Notes

Avon Recreation & Parks Trunk-or-Treat Event - The Avon Recreation and Parks Department is hosting a Trunk or Treat event on **Saturday, October 29th at Sycamore Hills Park from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** Registration is not required for this event and there is no fee to participate. Visit avonct.myrec.com for more information and event updates.



Recycle Your Pumpkins - Did you know that over 1 billion pounds of pumpkins end up in landfills annually and contribute to climate change by releasing methane, a potent greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere? The Avon Clean Energy Commission (ACEC) has partnered with the Sub-Edge Farm (199 Town Farm Road, Farmington) to sponsor a **Pumpkin Recycling Drive** during the month of November. Bring your used pumpkins and gourds (unpainted and removed of tealight candles and other non-organic materials) to the Farm during farm shop hours (Tuesday - Saturday, 10-6 and Sunday 10-3) and drop it in the trailer in the parking area. The collection will begin on Saturday November 5 with an informal kick-off event. Bring the whole family down to the farm to enjoy some hot apple cider and donuts and let the kids play in the hay! Collections will run through November 30 and the farm will use the pumpkins to enrich its soils for the next planting season.

A Note About Trick-or-Treating - When planning Halloween festivities, parents should be aware that the Town of Avon does not “cancel” or “reschedule” Trick-or-Treating unless there are extreme hazards that would make it unsafe for the public to be out on the roads. In the event of inclement weather, parents should consider whether they feel comfortable allowing their children to Trick-or-Treat. When Trick-or-Treating, remember to wear clothing that will reflect light, or is of a light color. Children should be accompanied by an adult and carry a flashlight.

Want to Serve on a Town Board or Commission?

The Town is always looking for residents to share their time and talents with their neighbors by serving on one of our voluntary boards or commissions. Interested? Visit www.avonct.gov and select “Volunteer Opportunities” under the “Find it Fast” menu to download an Application for Appointment to a Board/Commission/Committee. Completed applications should be returned to the Town Manager’s Office. The applications are reviewed by the Town Council when vacancies occur to assist in making appointments.



October is Fire Prevention Month

This year's Fire Prevention Month campaign theme is "Fire won't wait. Plan your escape." The Town's Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Director has shared these simple but important actions that everyone can take to keep themselves and those around them safe from home fires. More detailed resources on each of these topics from the National Fire Protection Association can be found on the Fire Marshal's page of the Town website. Contact the Fire Marshal's Office at (860) 409-4319 with questions.

Change your clocks and your batteries. Use the end of Daylight Savings Time (11/6) as a reminder to check your smoke alarms batteries and to replace any alarms that are 10+ years old. Smoke alarms should be placed in each bedroom, on each level of the home, and at least 10 feet away from the stove to prevent false alarms. Test them monthly.

Map out your Home Escape Plan. If a fire breaks out in your home, you may have only a few minutes to get out safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Everyone in your household needs to know what to do and where to go if there is a fire.

Campfires & Open Burning. Campfires do not require a permit from the Town. Only non-processed and untreated wood may be burned. Burning of glued or painted wood is prohibited. Burning of trash and leaves is prohibited. Open burning requires a permit and is limited to the burning of brush only. To report a nuisance or Unsafe Fire, contact non-emergency dispatch at (860) 409-4200. Apply for an Open Burning Permit on the Building Department page of the Town website.

Heat your Home Safely. Did you know that home heating equipment is one of the leading causes of fire deaths? Now is the time of year to have your heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional. When using heating equipment, clear anything that can burn from a three-foot radius (or more if possible). Never use your oven to heat your home and turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to sleep. Place a sturdy screen in front of the fireplace to prevent sparks from entering the room. Allow ashes to cool before storing in a metal container a safe distance from your home.

Portable Generator Safety. When the power goes out, many folks turn to a portable generator without being aware of the risks. To use your generator safely: 1) place your generator in a well-ventilated outside location at least 5 feet from all doors, windows, and vent openings. 2) never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open. 3) place the generator so that the exhaust fumes can't enter the home through windows, doors or other openings. 4) install carbon monoxide alarms in your home. 5) turn off generators and allow for cooling time before refueling. NEVER refuel a generator while hot. 6) store fuel in a container that is intended for the purpose and properly labeled.

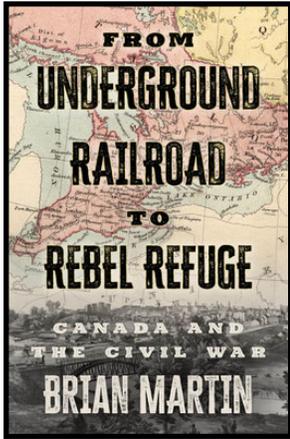
Route 44 Underpass Gets a New Look!



A huge thank you to local artist Christy Hickey for designing and hand-painting, with help from daughter, Olivia, a decorative mural inside the Rt. 44 underpass through which the Rails-to-Trails passes in the Avon Village Center! The project was proposed by Fran Gurtman, co-leader of BikeWalk Avon, CT and was made possible by her efforts, the work of Town staff, and the support of the Town Council. We are very appreciative of the anonymous donors that provided the funds to purchase the paint and other materials needed to create the mural. Thank you to Christy, Olivia, and all who played a part in this important beautification project!



IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING INFORMATION PRINTED IN THIS NEWSLETTER, CALL THE TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE, AVON TOWN HALL, AT (860) 409-4300.



Avon Free Public Library - October Events

From Underground Railroad to Rebel Refuge: Canada and the Civil War/Virtual Author Event with Brian Martin, Thursday, October 27 at 6:30 p.m. **via Zoom.**

Join us for a virtual presentation with Brian Martin, followed by an audience Q&A to celebrate the release of his new book. Filled with engaging stories and astonishing facts, this book examines the role of Canadians in the American Civil War. This event is co-sponsored with the Avon Historical Society & Farmington Libraries.

To register for this event, please visit: <https://www.avonctlibrary.info/event/from-underground-railroad-to-rebel-refuge-brian-martin/>.

Children & Teen Book Sale, Saturday, October 22nd - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. No admission fee. Avon Library Community Room (281 Country Club Road). Cash & Credit Cards accepted!

Slow Down, Keep our Community Safe!

The Avon Police Department regularly conducts traffic enforcement efforts on local roads. Drivers may be stopped for speeding, distracted driving, failing to obey stop signs, passing in a no passing zone, and more. Motorists who violate traffic laws can expect to receive anything from a payable infraction of \$150 or more (passing a school bus displaying flashing red lights can cost you \$470!), to a summons for court. **Please respect your neighbors and keep you and your loved ones safe on the roads by obeying the traffic laws.**

Warm Welcomes, Best Wishes, & Fond Farewells

The Town would like to welcome some new faces, and offer congratulations to those employees that were promoted or retired in the last twelve months.

Please welcome our newest Town employees: **Nicole Chambers**, Administrative Coordinator (Engineering); **Jodie Enriquez**, Assistant Collector of Revenue; **Amy Stanis**, PT Administrative Secretary (Building); **Angela Grano**, PT Animal Control Officer; **Marjorie Guidice**, PT Administrative Secretary (Fire Marshal); **Matthew Hiller** and **Michael Huffman**, Maintainer II (Highway); **Paul Melanson**, Police Chief; **Halaree Monnerat**, Collector of Revenue; **Karolina Staszewski**, Patrol Officer; and **Christopher Szylobryt**, Assistant Building Official. New Library employees include: **Jordan Nolan**, PT Reference Librarian; **Cara Peterson**, Library Specialist; **Meghan Phan**, PT Library Technical Assistant; **Stephanie Smith**, Teen Librarian; **Andrea Torriolo**, Library Assistant; **Sonya Williams**, Library Assistant; and **Amy Branch**, **Pamela Cunningham**, **Garret Johnson** and **Katherine Schwendemann**, Library Pages. A warm welcome to all!

Congratulations to all those who were reclassified, promoted or transferred this year: **Susan Guimaraes**, Administrative Coordinator (AVFD); **Marisa Hicking**, Children & Teen Services Manager (Library); **Nick Hogan**, Town Clerk; **Kimberly King**, Police Records Support and Systems Coordinator; and **Victoria Kiszka**, Technology & Technical Services Manager (Library). Best of luck to all in their new roles!

We would like to wish three employees well as they begin retirement: **Ann Dearstyne**, Town Clerk - 23.5 years, and **Deborah Fioretti**, Collector of Revenue - 25 years. The Town is fortunate to have a number of employees whose dedication to the community is reflected in the length of their tenure. We would also like to offer a special thank you to **Jim Rio**, who served as temporary Director of Police Services for 2.5 years and returned to his well deserved retirement in July. We thank you all for your service and commitment and we wish you well on your next adventures!



ACEC Launches “100 Homes in 100 Days Challenge”

The Avon Clean Energy Commission has kicked off its Green Up Avon! community campaign with the “100 Homes in 100 Days Challenge.” The Commission challenges Avon households to sign up for the Energize Connecticut Home Energy Solutions (HES) Assessment program with a goal of 100 homes signed up to participate in the program in the first 100 days (September 8, 2022 – December 17, 2022).



Through the HES program, Eversource-approved technicians will evaluate your home’s energy performance and install basic weatherization and energy-saving measures such as sealing air leaks and installing hot water pipe wrap, faucet aerators and low-flow showerheads. The average home receives about \$1,000 in services and realizes \$200-250 in savings on their annual energy bills. Participants also receive written recommendations for deeper energy saving measures and access to rebates and financing beyond what is offered to the general public.

The cost of the program is just \$50 and free for those that meet certain income eligibility guidelines. The program is open to those that own or rent (with permission of property owner). To learn more or sign-up visit www.energizect.com or call 1-877-WISE-USE. Join the challenge today!

Subscribe to News on the Town’s website at www.avonct.gov/subscribe for more on the Green Up Avon! campaign, including an upcoming Mascot Design Contest for students in grades K-6!

Old Farms Road: Special Town Meeting & Referendum Set

At its October 6th meeting, the Town Council scheduled a Special Town Meeting and Referendum Vote to consider the appropriation of state grants in the amount of \$5,459,458 to fund the Old Farms Road Phase I (North/South Section) Project. The Special Town Meeting will be held on November 7th at 7:00 p.m. at Avon High School (510 West Avon Road) and the Referendum Vote will be held on December 14th from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Senior Center. Absentee ballot applications will be available beginning November 9th in the Town Clerk’s Office or online at www.avonct.gov/town-clerk. A referendum mailer was sent to all households in mid-September with details about the project. Details related to the Special Town Meeting and Referendum are available on the Town’s website at www.avonct.gov.

Town Welcomes Applications for Community Events Grants



In June 2022, the Town Council approved the creation of a Support for Community Events Grant Program aimed at providing financial aid to local festivals, special events, or community programs designed to provide recreational and/or cultural opportunities for residents and generally promote the Town of Avon.

One award under the inaugural application cycle was approved at the Town Council’s October 6th meeting. Congratulations to the Bottoms Up Organization on its award of \$4,350 to support the 5th Annual Avon 5K Turkey Trot and Health & Fitness Expo scheduled for November 24th!

The Town’s next application cycle for events scheduled between March 1, 2023 and June 30, 2023 is expected to be released on December 5th with an application deadline of January 6, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. Town expects to have three application cycles per fiscal year.

The Support for Community Events Grant Program Regulations and Application is available for download on the Department of Recreation & Parks page of the Town’s website www.avonct.gov. Questions should be directed to the Department of Recreation & Parks at avonrec@avonct.gov or (860) 409-4332.



DPW Snow Removal & Ice Control Operations and Guidelines

General: Avon Public Works is charged with the responsibility of responding to winter snow and ice events. Our goal is to keep streets passable and reasonably safe during the storm and to clear the streets, curb to curb, within 8 to 12 hours after the storm has ended. Our plow drivers work long hours in hazardous driving conditions, and we appreciate your patience during snow and ice events.

Snow Routes: The 112 miles of town roads (approximate) maintained by DPW are divided into 11 snow plow routes. One plow truck and driver is assigned to each plow route for the entire winter season.

Priorities: During snow events, the primary focus is to provide a safe travel way for cars and emergency vehicles on heavily traveled roadways. While snow is actively falling, plowing is generally limited to the center portion of the roadway to clear a path wide enough for one travel lane in each direction. As a winter storm subsides, more efforts can be directed to local roadways and cul-de-sacs. Depending on the severity of a storm, it can take up to 4 hours +/- to make passes on all streets in town. Snow removal often continues for 8 to 12 hours after snow has stopped falling.

Mail Box Damage: During the winter season, it is inevitable that some mailboxes and posts will be damaged during winter plowing operations. Avon's policy is to reimburse residents \$20.00 for mailboxes and \$65.00 for posts that are damaged as a result of direct contact with a town snow plow. Mailboxes that are damaged from the force of snow thrown against them or mailboxes that are located closer than 9-inches to the roadway are not eligible for reimbursement.



Frequently Asked Questions:

I live on a cul-de-sac and end up with significant amounts of snow in my driveway. Why? Plowing cul-de-sacs is one of the most challenging operations during a snow storm. Most properties on cul-de-sacs have frontages that are narrower than lots on a straight street. Therefore, snow must be pushed into a smaller space.

Why is snow pushed into my driveway by street plows? It is unavoidable and it is not done intentionally. Snow cast into driveways is an unfortunate byproduct of a very necessary service we provide. When we plow a street, we are simply moving the snow that is in the street off to the side of the street. The greater the amount of snow, the more snow that is deposited on the side.

Who is responsible for clearing snow in front of my mailbox? We plow the streets curb to curb, or as close as we can get. Whatever snow is left in front of mailboxes is the responsibility of the property owner to remove (or at least to move in order for the mailbox to be accessible to the mail carrier).

Can I, as a resident, push snow from my property onto the sidewalk or street? NO! Town Ordinance restricts the act of pushing snow back onto a street and doing so may result in a fine of \$50 and/or liability if an accident is caused by this dumping of snow. Please be respectful of passing motorists expecting a clear street by not putting snow back onto the street. Remember, if you contract for snow removal, you are still responsible for where the snow ends up.

Annual Report & Town Calendar

Residents are reminded that the Annual Report is not mailed to households. A limited number will be available at the Town Hall, Avon Free Public Library, Avon Senior Center and the Landfill. Reports will be ready for pick-up on December 1, 2022.

ISSUE LXVIII
October 2022

Avon Town Council
Town of Avon
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www.avonct.gov



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IMPORTANT DATE

GENERAL ELECTION

NOVEMBER 8, 2022

6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Absentee Ballots will be available.

**Any questions regarding absentee ballots should be directed to the
Town Clerk's Office at (860) 409-4310.**

***Want to Receive Election & Referendum Updates from the Registrar of Voters? Subscribe
on the Town's website at www.avonct.gov/subscribe.***

District #1 – Avon High School
510 West Avon Road
Gymnasium

District #2 – Thompson Brook School
150 Thompson Road
Gymnasium

District #3 – Roaring Brook School
30 Old Wheeler Lane
Gymnasium