



# Town of Avon Newsletter

ISSUE LXXI

October 2023

## FY 2024/2025 Budget Process

The process is already under way to begin planning for the FY 2024/2025 budget that takes effect on July 1, 2024. 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 2nd at 7:00 p.m. & Thursday, December 7th at 7:00 p.m.*

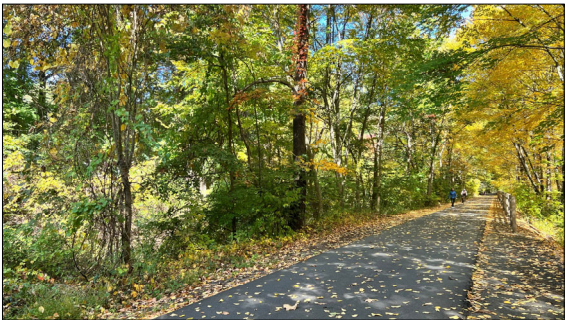
**Operating Budget Workshop** is traditionally a half-day meeting held on a Saturday in February in the Selectmen’s Chamber at Town Hall, and/or virtually. Please check the January 2024 issue of the Newsletter for the date. The complete budget calendar is available on-line at: [www.avonct.gov](http://www.avonct.gov).

The annual budget process is a long one with plenty of opportunities for public participation, culminating with the Annual Budget Referendum in May 2024. 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.

## Recreation & Parks Master Plan to Begin; We Want to Hear from You!

In September 2023, the Town Council awarded a contract to Weston & Sampson Engineers of Rocky Hill, CT to prepare an update to the Town’s 2007 Recreation & Parks Master Plan. The Town is looking for an updated Master Plan that will address the short, medium and long-term facility and infrastructure needs for the Department of Recreation & Parks and its community partners by serving as a road map for investments in the Town’s recreation and parks facilities over the next ten years. We anticipate that the project will get underway this fall and finish up in spring 2024. There will be multiple opportunities for the public to weigh in on this project as it progresses and we would encourage the public to engage with Town staff and the consultant when that time comes. To stay informed and be alerted to opportunities for public involvement regarding this project, we recommend that you Subscribe to News on the Town’s website [www.avonct.gov/subscribe](http://www.avonct.gov/subscribe), and follow the Town and the Department of Recreation & Parks on Facebook [@townofavonct](https://www.facebook.com/townofavonct) and [@avonrecreationandparks](https://www.facebook.com/avonrecreationandparks). We look forward to hearing from you!



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## Your Election Questions Asked & Answered

*By Nick Hogan, Town Clerk and Lisa Anderson & Ann Clark, Registrars of Voters (ROV)*

A municipal election will be held on November 7, 2023. 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](http://portaldir.ct.gov/sots/LookUp.aspx), or call the Registrars at (860) 409-4350, or the Town Clerk's Office at (860) 409-4310 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 Registrars of Voters. The ROV webpage can be found at [www.avonct.gov/registrar-of-voters](http://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 7, 2023?**

A: The last day for eligible electors to register to vote in-person, online or by mail is October 31st. 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 October 31st. Persons whose rights as to age, citizenship and residence mature after the above date may apply to vote on November 6<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup>**. 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](http://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 6<sup>th</sup>. The last day to apply for an absentee ballot is November 6<sup>th</sup>. Applications are available in the Town Clerk's Office or online at [www.avonct.gov/town-clerk](http://www.avonct.gov/town-clerk). Voted absentee ballots, if returned by mail, must be **RECEIVED (not postmarked!)** by the Town Clerk by **8:00 p.m. on November 7<sup>th</sup>**. If the applicant wishes to submit their ballot in person at the Town Clerk's Office, they must do so **no later than 4:30 p.m. on November 6<sup>th</sup>**. 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 between 16 and 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](mailto:rov@avonct.gov) if interested.

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## Social Services Programs

**CT Energy Assistance Program:** The State of Connecticut can assist households in paying for primary heating if the income of those households is at or below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines or 60% of the State Median income guidelines for 2023. The Program ends on May 31, 2024. Applications are by appointment only by calling (860) 409-4346. For more information visit <https://www.avonct.gov/social-services/pages/energy-assistance>.

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

Looking to help your community? Donations to the Avon Fuel Bank can be mailed to 60 W. Main St., Avon, CT 06001.

**2023 Holiday Donation Programs:** The Town of Avon, Departments of Youth & Social Services are 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>.



## October is Fire Prevention Month

This year's Fire Prevention Month campaign theme is "Cooking safety starts with YOU! Pay Attention to Fire Prevention." 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. Contact the Fire Marshal's Office at (860) 409-4319 with questions.

**Cooking Safety.** Always keep a close eye on what you're cooking. For items with a longer cook time, set a timer to help monitor them. Clear the cooking area of combustible items such as dish towels and oven mitts. Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove and keep a lid handy to put out any small grease fires by covering the pan and turning off the burner. Create a "kid and pet free zone" at least three feet around the cooking area.

**Change your clocks and your batteries.** Use the end of Daylight Savings Time (11/6) as a reminder to check your the 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.

**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.

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## Avon Free Public Library Upcoming Events

**Kids & Teen Book Sale • Saturday, October 21, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Avon Library Community Room (281 Country Club Road), no admission fee. *Cash & Credit Cards accepted.*

**Homegrown National Park: Virtual Lecture with Doug Tallamy • Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.**

Our parks, preserves, and remaining wildlands – no matter how grand in scale – are too small and separated from one another to sustain the native trees, plants, insects and animals on which our ecosystems depend. We can fix this problem by practicing conservation outside of wildlands, where we live, work, shop, and farm. Thus, the concept for Homegrown National Park: a national challenge to create diverse ecosystems in our yards, communities, and surrounding lands by reducing lawn, planting native, and removing invasives. We are at a critical point where we are losing so many native plant and animal species that our natural life support is in jeopardy. If many people make small changes, we can restore healthy ecological networks. Doug Tallamy is a professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, where he has authored 111 research publications and has taught insect-related courses for 42 years.

**Nature's Best Hope: virtual book discussion • Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.**

Join us for a discussion of Nature's Best Hope, with special guest appearances by industry experts, as well as time to share your personal Homegrown National Park success stories.

## 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 28th 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](http://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 again partnered with 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 run from November 4 - November 30.

**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.

### A Reminder from the Collector of Revenue

The second installment of the residential Sewer Usage bill became due on October 1st. November 1st is the last day to pay without penalty. If you have already paid your balance in full, thank you!





## Avon is a Bicycle Friendly Community!

In May 2023, the Town was designated a **Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC)** by the League of American Bicyclists. Avon is now one of over 500 Bicycle Friendly Communities across the country that are united in their commitment to improving their transportation networks through investments in infrastructure, programs and policies that support and serve all users. Avon is the 11th BFC in Connecticut and the 7th in our immediate region alongside West Hartford, Simsbury, Canton, Farmington, Hartford and New Britain. The Town was previously awarded an Honorable Mention for its 2021 application.



The Town's Bronze-level designation represents an organized effort and partnership between the Town Council, Town staff and members of BikeWalkAvonCT (BWACT), a local advocacy group dedicated to improving the safety and accessibility of walking and cycling in town. In the three short years since BWACT began meeting just before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Avon has made tremendous strides in improving and showcasing our bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programming.

Perhaps one of the most exciting achievements that made our application stand out is the Town's ongoing town-wide **Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Planning Effort**. Since January 2023, the Town has been working with a third-party consultant to develop a prioritized action plan of facility improvements, infrastructure projects and recommendations for programs and policies to improve and extend the existing bicycle and pedestrian network in Town. As of this writing, three public meetings have been held to solicit feedback from residents and Town staff are currently working with our consultants to refine the proposed recommendations based on this feedback. We expect a final draft of the plan to be presented to the Town Council at an upcoming meeting. In the meantime, we continue to encourage the public to review the work that has been completed to date on the project's StoryMap site: [arcg.is/0851im](https://arcg.is/0851im). We also welcome questions and comments from members of the public. Please call or email Linda Sadlon in the Department of Planning & Community Development at [lsadlon@avonct.gov](mailto:lsadlon@avonct.gov) or (860) 409-4328. We're looking forward to hearing from you!



## American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Update

The Town Council and the Board of Finance continue to appropriate ARPA funding in response to proposals that have been submitted by Town and Board of Education staff and members of the public to date. As of this writing, the Town has appropriated a total of \$4,181,434 of its \$5.4 million ARPA allocation and a total of \$1,227,359 remains unobligated. Funds have been appropriated for projects across a broad spectrum of functional areas including public works, recreation,

social services, information technology, education, planning and public health. Town staff continue to implement approved projects at this time. A full list of approved projects, as well as the most recent monthly progress update is available for review at [www.avonct.gov/arpa](https://www.avonct.gov/arpa). Please contact Grace Tiezzi, Assistant Town Manager, at [gtiezzi@avonct.gov](mailto:gtiezzi@avonct.gov) or (860) 409-4300 with questions.

## 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, 2023.



## AVON UNDER CONSTRUCTION



It has been a very busy construction season for Town staff and our contractors! Here are some updates on just a few of the exciting projects that are underway or were recently completed:

In December 2022, voters approved state grants totaling just over \$5.4 million to fund the **Old Farms Road Phase I (North/South) Project** which will improve the section of Old Farms Road between Scoville Road and Thompson Road. As of this writing, a contract has been awarded to Spazzarini Construction of Enfield, CT and we anticipate that preliminary site work will begin this fall. In all, this project is expected to take about two years to complete, wrapping up in late 2025.

In June the Town Council took a significant step forward in the **Town & Public Safety Communication System Replacement Project** (approved at referendum in December 2018) by authorizing the Town Manager to enter into an agreement with the CT Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection to join the CT Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN). Participation in the CLMRN offers significant benefits to the Town including enhanced coverage, increased interoperability with other agencies, lower capital outlay and annual recurring costs and real time 24/7 monitoring of the network. As of this writing, the Town continues to work with its vendor, Motorola, to finalize plans for the implementation of the system.

The Town's recreation facilities received a number of upgrades this year. In mid-May the **new playscape at Sycamore Hills** was opened to the public. The project was partially funded by a \$60,000 state grant with the balance of \$15,000 funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Also at **Sycamore Hills**, the **tennis courts** are scheduled to receive a facelift (milling, paving, and painting) in October. Weather permitting, we expect they'll be back open for play in early November. The project was funded by a capital budget appropriation in the amount of \$225,000. Finally, the **renovation work at the Countryside Park Building** continues to progress at this time. The project features interior and exterior renovations to preserve the structural integrity of the building, accessibility improvements to meet current ADA requirements and aesthetic improvements. The project is being funded by a \$540,000 capital budget appropriation and much of the work is being completed in-house by Department of Public Works staff in order to keep costs low. We are excited to reopen the building to our recreation programs and private rentals in the next few months.



At Town Hall, we just wrapped up a project to add a 600 square foot addition to the **Town Clerk's Vault**. The project was required to provide storage for the Town's records and to comply with the guidelines of the state Public Records Administrator for a community of Avon's size. A total of \$555,000 was appropriated in the capital budget to fund this project. In the upcoming year, the remaining balance will be used to make some improvements to the office areas in Building #2 to make the spaces more efficient for staff and the public.

This summer, the **courtyard at the Avon Free Public Library** was restored after being excavated several years ago to allow the Town to address issues with the geothermal HVAC system. The new courtyard includes a new drainage and gutter system, a patio of pervious pavers and commemorative donor bricks that were salvaged from the original courtyard, landscaping, and a pergola that can be used for shade and as a stage during library programming. The project was funded by an available balance that remained in the project account after the replacement of the geothermal system. Just outside the Library, in August, the Town completed a grant-funded project to **replace the existing sidewalks along a portion of Country Club Road and West Avon Road**. In all, approximately 1,800 linear feet of sidewalk was replaced at a cost of approximately \$163,000. A grant-funded project to replace the remaining sidewalks along West Avon Road and Scoville Road in a future year is being designed at this time.

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## 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 10 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.

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

**ISSUE LXXI**  
**October 2023**

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## **IMPORTANT DATE**

### **MUNICIPAL ELECTION**

**NOVEMBER 7, 2023**

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

**Absentee Ballots will be available.**

**Please visit the Town Clerk's page on the Town's website for information on**

**Absentee Ballots at [www.avonct.gov/town-clerk](http://www.avonct.gov/town-clerk).**

***Want to Receive Election & Referendum Updates from the Registrars of Voters? Subscribe on the Town's website at [www.avonct.gov/subscribe](http://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