



AVON TOWN CLERK
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Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2024

Members Present: Derek Staffier, Suzzette Waters, Daniel Norian, James Norian, Paul Smith, Janet Shaw (in person)

Members Not Present: Jarrett Beeley

Also Present: Jonathan Beder, Town Administrator; Deborah Moran, Finance Director; Lynne McKenney, Recording Secretary; Ellen Norian, Shannon and Malik LaBree, Avon Residents

Derek Staffier, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Motions

Paul Smith made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 25, 2024, seconded by James Norian. No discussion on the motion. All in favor. The motion carries.

New Business:

There is no Chairman's report this week.

Reports by Committee

There are no department reports. Derek Staffier discussed that the liaisons speak with your department heads monthly.

2025 Budget Approval

The Finance Committee discussed the budget. The following recommendations were made:

James Norian made a motion to recommend all budgets except for the police department, fire department, DPW, Board of Health, and public schools that were discussed at the budget workshop held on 1/9/24 and 1/11/24, seconded by Paul Smith. No discussion on the motion. All in favor. The motion carries.

Suzzette Waters made a motion to recommend the fire department budget that were discussed at the budget workshop held on 1/9/24 and 1/11/24, seconded by Daniel Norian. No discussion on the motion. All in favor. The motion carries.

Paul Smith made a motion to recommend the police department budget that was discussed at the budget workshop held on 1/9/24 and 1/11/24, seconded James Norian. No discussion on the motion. All in favor. The motion carries.

Daniel Norian made a motion to recommend the Board of Health (BOH) budget that was discussed at the budget workshop held on 1/9/24 and 1/11/24, seconded by Paul Smith. No discussion on the motion. All in favor. The motion carries.

Paul Smith made a motion to recommend the Department of Public Works (DPW) budget that was discussed at the budget workshop held on 1/9/24 and 1/11/24, seconded by James Norian. No discussion on the motion. All in favor. The motion carries.

Daniel Norian made a motion to recommend the school budget that was discussed at the budget workshop held on 1/9/24 and 1/11/24, seconded by Paul Smith. Discussion on the motion. The Finance Committee discussed the 1-million-dollar increase from the previous year's \$10M budget. Janet Shaw asked for clarification regarding what influence the Finance Committee has on the school and other budgets. Derek Staffier explained that the Finance Committee can only recommend the budget and are not able to say how they spend it. Suzzette Waters is concerned with the increase in the budget of 11 million dollars. Daniel Norian, James Norian, Derek Staffier, Janet Shaw, and Paul Smith voted aye. Suzzette Waters abstained from the vote. The motion carries 5-1.

2024 ATM Warrant Update

The Finance Committee discussed adjusting the Town of Avon Bylaw to eliminate the requirement to mail the ATM. Derek Staffier, Chair explained that the special town meeting book cost for printing is \$1,900; shipping costs are \$250. On average there are 2-3 meetings a year. Derek Staffier is looking to save the cost of shipping, which at 2-3 meetings a year, would save anywhere from \$500-\$700 a year. The members discussed having the special town meeting book available online and in seven different other locations.

The explanation of the bylaw is shown below:

Zoning Bylaw Section 84-2 Notice of Town Meetings.

Notice of the Annual Town Meeting and every Special Town Meeting shall be posted by the Chief of Police or any other designated police officer of the Town in not less than seven public places in the Town, including the Post Office, and not less than 20 copies of the warrant shall be left in each of the public places for distribution at least seven days before the date fixed for the Annual Town Meeting and 14 days before the date set for a Special Town Meeting.

A motion was made by Daniel Norian to adjust the Town of Avon Bylaw to eliminate the requirement to mail the ATM, seconded by Suzette Waters. Discussion on the motion. James Norian is unsure how he feels regarding the bylaw change. Janet Shaw and Paul Smith feel that the ATM should continue to be mailed. Daniel Norian voted aye, Suzette Waters voted aye, Derek Staffier voted aye.

Open Discussion

Janet Shaw, Finance Committee member asked for clarification regarding how the voting process works at town meetings and what the role and responsibility of the Finance Committee is regarding the budget. She feels that the process does not encourage the residents to get involved. Janet Shaw would like the residents of Avon to feel welcome to attend meetings and feel that their voices are being heard.

Jonathan Beder, Town Administrator explained the primary duties of the Finance Committee. He explained that the Finance Committee duties are to advise and make recommendations at town meetings on budget and other areas of finance. The committee's authority is limited to the town meeting approved Reserve Fund budget.

Shannon LaBree of Lawson Street discussed the process with the members of the Finance Committee. Suzette Waters feels like there is a disconnect in the process. Jonathan Beder explained that residents are welcome to come to town hall to view the budget. Shannon LaBree is pleased with the information she received at this meeting and feels welcome to attend more meetings.

Derek Staffier and the members of the Finance Committee discussed scheduling an open house/meet and greet to welcome residents to ask questions. It was agreed that the best day would be a Saturday morning.

At the next meeting, Derek Staffier, Chair discussed the members of the committee create a one paragraph opening letter, like a welcome letter for the front page of the town meeting book.

There will be a meeting scheduled with the Finance Committee and the Select Board to go over warrants on February 15, 2024, at 6:15 p.m.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for February 22, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

Paul Smith made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 7:30 p.m., seconded by Daniel Norian. No discussion on the motion. All in favor. The motion carries.

Derek Staffier, Chair



List of Documents

- Meeting Agenda 2-8-24
- Meeting Minutes 1-25-24