

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
Steven P. Rose, Chairman  
Eric S. Beckerman, Clerk  
Jason L. Suzor, Associate

Gregory S. Enos  
**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR**

# Town of Avon Massachusetts



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TOWN OF AVON  
2022 FEB 18 A 10:36  
TOWN CLERK

## **BOARD OF SELECTMEN & FINANCE COMMITTEE JOINT BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING FEBRUARY 5, 2022 at 8:30 a.m.**

**Members Present:** Steven P. Rose, Chairman  
Eric S. Beckerman, Clerk  
Jason L. Suzor, Associate

**Others Present:** Gregory S. Enos, Town Administrator  
Shanna M. Faro, Executive Assistant  
Fire Chief Robert Spurr (via videoconference)  
Christine Godino, School Superintendent  
Kathleen McDonald, Coordinator of School Business Services  
Tracy Sheehan, School Committee Chair  
Paul Chapman, School Committee Member  
William Fitzgerald, DPW Director  
Brian Martin, Assistant DPW Director  
Police Chief Jeffrey Bukunt  
Deb Morin, Treasurer/Collector (via videoconference)  
Erin Barry, Town Accountant (via videoconference)

**Finance Committee:** Dan Norian, Chairman  
James Norian, Member  
Derek Staffier, Member (via videoconference)  
Judith Leggett, Member (via videoconference)  
Richard Jordan, Member (via videoconference)  
Shannon Coffey, Member (via videoconference)  
Lynne McKenney, Recording Secretary (via videoconference)

Chairman Rose called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. He announced that this joint Budget Workshop meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee is being conducted via a hybrid method. The public may attend the meeting in-person or may continue to participate via remote Zoom access. Until further notice, in-person attendees, who are not vaccinated, will be recommended to wear a mask. Chairman Rose reminded the viewing audience that people who would like to view this meeting while in progress may do so by joining the Zoom link for the videoconference.

### **Fire Department**

Chief Spurr presented his proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2023 to the Board and the Finance Committee. He stated that his expense budget has been level funded. Mr. Enos informed the Board that since the building renovations, he is still uncertain about the total cost for utility expenses such as heating and

cooling of the building. Therefore, the energy/utilities line may change as the building is now much larger than it once was. Mr. Enos stated they have put their best estimate based on current rates, like the estimate that was done upon the completion of the Police Station building.

Chief Spurr stated that the biggest line-item increase was the Salary-Union budget as he is requesting adding four additional full-time firefighters to the budget. This will be a \$332,460 increase and the cost will include salaries, training, and paid time off. The cost does not include health insurance for the new employees. Chairman Rose stated that this was a very large increase requested by Chief Spurr. Chairman Norian asked Chief Spurr if it were possible to cut that cost in half by only adding two new full-time firefighters this year and two more in the next year. Chief Spurr informed the Board and Fin Com that he is requesting four new firefighters as there are currently four different groups, so he is requesting one additional person for each group for equal distribution. Mr. Beckerman asked Chief Spurr if he has considered applying for the SAFER grant to assist with the funding of these new positions. Chief Spurr stated that he did apply for the grant one year unsuccessfully and may need help with writing this grant should the Board determine to go that route again. Mr. Jordan informed the Board and Chief Spurr that he was opposed to adding new members to the Fire Department as he felt this cost was excessive. Mr. Beckerman agreed with Mr. Jordan.

### **School Department**

Ms. Godino presented the School Department's proposed operating budget for Fiscal Year 2023. Ms. Godino stated that the School Committee has determined its total operating budget for FY 23 to be \$11,054,437. From this amount, the Committee has determined to apply FY 23 projected school choice funds in the amount of \$961,764. Therefore, the School Committee's total FY 23 request for funding from the town would be \$10,092,673. Ms. Godino stated that this would be a 6% increase from last year's budget.

Mr. Jordan stated that there is approximately \$380,000 in salary increases in the proposed budget. Ms. Godino stated that most of the salary increases are contractual. Ms. McDonald stated that they had to hire a Transportation Coordinator this year at a significantly higher salary as nationwide there is a bus driver shortage, and it is difficult to replace drivers at competitive rates. Ms. Godino informed the Board and the Finance Committee that the School Committee is also requesting two additional positions which consist of an ELL teacher and an Adjustment Counselor. Ms. Godino stated that the Adjustment Counselor will address the social and emotional needs of students at the Avon Middle High School. The ELL teacher will be split between both the Avon Middle High School and Butler Elementary School based on the needs of the student population. Ms. Godino stated that there are currently 70 students at the schools who need ELL teachers.

Ms. Godino stated that another expense to consider is the cost of food services. Ms. Godino stated that free lunches have been offered to all students for this school year as funding was received from the state. However, the schools are currently making no revenue for lunches. If the state decides to stop funding the lunches, the school will have to compensate for that loss. With no further questions from either the Board or the Finance Committee, Ms. Godino, Ms. McDonald, Ms. Sheehan, and Mr. Chapman departed from the meeting.

### **Department of Public Works**

Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Martin approached the Board to discuss the Department of Public Works budget for Fiscal Year 2023. Mr. Fitzgerald informed the Board that all expenses have been level funded. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the salary increases are all based on contractual agreements and step increases of the AFSCME employees. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the DPW is now doing more in-house repairs which results in significant cost savings. He credited Mr. Martin for this reason. Mr. Fitzgerald informed the

Board that some of the larger projects the DPW has planned for this upcoming year include more SCADA upgrades, improvements to DeMarco Park, as well as applying for additional state grants for funding of these projects.

### **Police Department**

Chief Bukunt appeared before the Board to discuss the Police Department's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2023. Chief Bukunt stated that any salary increases were contractual. There was an increase in the union longevity pay. Chief Bukunt informed the Board that the overtime costs for the dispatchers can fluctuate. There is still one vacant position for a part-time AFSCME dispatcher. Chief Bukunt stated that there may be some adjustment to the AFSCME union salaries as they negotiate their new contract. Chief Bukunt informed the Board and the Finance Committee that there are four open positions for Police Officers. He stated that one Officer retired last year, while another resigned from his position. Chief Bukunt stated that there is one Police Officer candidate who is in the process of registering for the Police Academy.

Chief Bukunt stated that the Police Department's expenses are mostly level-funded. The fuel/gasoline line item may need to be increased due to inflation. The education and training line-item was slightly reduced.

### **Other Budgets**

Mr. Enos stated that the town's health insurance line item was budgeted higher this year due to the large number of claims submitted last year.

Mr. Enos stated that the Blue Hills Regional Technical School line-item will be reduced as there are fewer Avon students attending the school

Mr. Enos stated that the liability insurance line-item may increase by approximately 2%.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Beckerman made a motion to adjourn the Workshop Meeting at 11:30 p.m. Mr. Suzor seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. Mr. Suzor voted aye. Mr. Beckerman voted aye. Chairman Rose voted aye. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Shanna M. Faro  
Executive Assistant