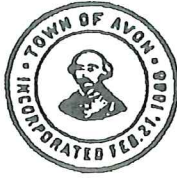


BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Eric S. Beckerman, Chairman
Jason L. Suzor, Sr., Clerk
Shannon M. Coffey, Associate

Gregory S. Enos
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Town of Avon Massachusetts



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TOWN OF AVON

2023 JAN 27 A 8:58

TOWN CLERK

BOARD OF SELECTMEN/FINANCE COMMITTEE JOINT BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING January 14, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.

Members Present: Eric S. Beckerman, Chairman
Jason L. Suzor, Sr., Clerk
Shannon M. Coffey, Associate

Others Present: James Purcell, Interim Town Administrator
Shanna Faro, Executive Assistant/Human Resources Coordinator
Deb Morin, Treasurer/Collector (via videoconference)
Fire Chief Robert Spurr
Kathleen Waldron, Health Agent
Robert Ogilvie, Board of Health
Ralph Jensen, Chair, Board of Health
Christine Godino, School Superintendent
Kathleen McDonald, School Business Coordinator
Paul Chapman, School Committee Member
Tracy Sheehan, Chair, School Committee
Maria Piccirilli, School Committee Member

Finance Committee: Derek Staffier, Chair
Daniel Norian, Member
James Norian, Member
Jarrett Beeley, Member
Suzzette Waters, Member
Richard Jordan, Member

Chairman Beckerman called the meeting to order at 8:30 p.m. with all members present. He announced that this meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee is being conducted via a hybrid method. The public may attend the meetings 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. Mr. Beckerman reminded the viewing audience that people who would like to view this meeting while in progress may do joining the Zoom link for the videoconference.

8:30 a.m. – Board of Health

Ms. Waldron, Mr. Jensen, and Mr. Ogilvie appeared before the Board to discuss the Board of Health's proposed budget.

433 Waste Collect/Disposal – Ms. Waldron stated that there is a 4% contractual increase for Republic Services which is reflected in the budget. There was also a typo in the overall budget for this line and the cumulative total should be \$593,000.

510 Board of Health – Ms. Waldron stated that the Salary-Non-Union line item will decrease from \$9,000 to \$0. Instead, \$2,000 will be added to the Purchase Services line item for the cost to outsource the Food Inspector. Ms. Waldron informed the Board that the Coalition Expenses line item has been reduced to \$8,000. However, that is the bare minimum needed to fund the program. She anticipates earmarked funding from the state for the ACES program. Ms. Waldron stated that the Compost Attendant line item has been increased due to the hourly rate of the position being raised from \$15.00 per hour to \$16.02 per hour.

529 Health Services – Ms. Waldron stated that there is a typo in the overall budget for this line and the cumulative total should be \$14,000.

Avon Public Schools

Ms. Godino, Ms. Godino and select members of the School Committee approached the Board to discuss the Avon Public Schools' proposed budget.

Ms. Godino informed the Board that the School Committee determined its total operating budget for Fiscal Year 2024 to be \$11,838,906.00. The Fiscal Year 2024 projected school choice funds will be \$1,164,512.00. Therefore, the School Committee's total Fiscal Year 2024 request for funding from the town will be \$10,674,394.00. Ms. Godino stated that she does not have the estimate yet from the State for Chapter 70 funding. However, she does expect Chapter 70 funding to increase due to larger enrollment numbers. Mr. Purcell stated that all state figures are currently on hold due to new administration in the Governor's office.

Ms. Godino stated that the Avon Public Schools will be reconfigured next year. The sixth grade classes will move from the Butler Elementary School to the Avon Middle High School. The preschool class at the Avon Middle High School will relocate to the Butler Elementary School. Ms. Godino stated that there has also been a drastic increase in the number of students who are English learners and accommodations must be made for these students.

Ms. Godino stated that the largest increase in the budget will be the addition of four new positions, technology expenses, and transportation expenses. Ms. Godino stated that the School Committee is requesting an additional Assistant Vice Principal at the Avon Middle High School. One Assistant Vice Principal will focus on Grades 6-8, while the other would focus on Grades 9-12. The second request is for a District Curriculum Coordinator in the main office. Ms. Godino stated that the Avon Public Schools currently has no Assistant Superintendent or other source of professional educational assistant to the Superintendent and this position will help oversee many programs including the important ELL program. The third position requested to be added is another Music Teacher at the Avon Middle High School. Ms. Godino stated that the arts program is growing, and an additional music teacher would help enrich the program. The final position requested was for an additional Instructional Assistant at the Avon Middle High School to help students with disabilities. Ms. Godino informed the Board that another area with a large increase is technology expenses. All testing including standardized testing is now done using Chromebooks. The Chromebooks purchased during the pandemic are experiencing wear and tear and becoming outdated. Finally, the last area with a large increase is transportation expenses. Ms. McDonald stated this is due to rising fuel expenses as well as the need to hire an additional bus driver as a growing number of students with disabilities are required by law to be driven to school in a bus separate from other students without disabilities.

Mr. Jordan asked Ms. Godino how many students attend the Avon Public Schools to which she replied 730 students in total. Mr. Jordan requested that Ms. Godino supply the Board and Finance Committee with a breakdown of Avon students attending alternative schools such as charter schools and regional schools. Ms. Godino will report back with that information. Ms. Coffey stated that she felt the four additional positions will help ease the transition changes which will take place next year when the sixth grade moves to the Avon Middle High School. With no further questions on the budget, Ms. Godino, Ms. McDonald, and members of the School Committee departed.

Fire Department

Chief Spurr appeared before the Board to discuss the proposed budget for the Fire Department.

Chief Spurr stated that the Salary/Union line item has increased due to contractual increases pursuant to the settlement of the Professional Firefighters contract. Chief Spurr stated that he has also increased the Retirement Sick/Vacation line item as the Deputy Fire Chief intends to retire within the next year. The Board requested that Chief Spurr place that funding in the revolving account and zero out that line item. Chief Spurr stated that the Salary-Part-Time Secretary line item has been increased due to AFSCME contractual changes for his Administrative Assistant. Chief Spurr informed the Board that the Salary-Call Fire Associates is fully funded as per the intention of the contract. However, last year, approximately \$50,000 was spent from that line item. Chief Spurr stated that he also made a separate proposal to increase the full-time firefighters to four people per shift. This would require the addition of four firefighters to the roster. Chief Spurr informed the Board and Finance Committee that this proposal will require an in-depth discussion for another day, however, he wanted the Board to give this idea some serious consideration. Chief Spurr stated that costs for this proposal would also have to be discussed in detail, but if approved, he would be applying for the SAFER grant.

Chief Spurr stated that although he has level-funded his expenses, he was concerned with the rising fuel and energy costs. Chief Spurr stated that diesel fuel has increased significantly. The budget is based on \$4.00 per gallon, but the price is now \$7.00 per gallon. He has also seen a large increase in Comcast prices for the phone lines and internet usage. Finally, the cost to heat the building has increased especially since the renovated building is larger. Chief Spurr also stated that the back building is currently in the process of being insulated for heat installation. Chief Spurr stated that he will most likely need to readjust certain expense line items in the budget due to these rising costs. The Board advised Chief Spurr to adjust his budget accordingly and come back to discuss his proposal at the January 26, 2023 meeting of the Board.

Mr. Jordan asked Chief Spurr if he could provide a list of the total number of calls per year broken down by the type of call. Chief Spurr stated he was working on the Annual Report and will submit that information as soon as it is completed. Mr. Jordan asked Chief Spurr if he knew the ambulance collection rate. Chief Spurr stated that it is approximately 65% and running to plan. However, he can provide a spreadsheet with the most accurate figures. With no further questions from the Board, Chief Spurr departed from the meeting.

Treasurer/Collector

Deb Morin appeared via videoconference to discuss her proposed budget.

145 Town Treasurer – Ms. Morin stated that she lowered the Salary/Union line item due to the retirement of her longtime Assistant Treasurer. A replacement was hired at a lower step on the grade. Ms. Morin stated that she increased her expenses slightly for the cost of tuition, conferences, and certifications for the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Assistant Tax Collector.

155 Data Processing – Ms. Morin explained that this line item is for the cost of outsourcing the payroll services to Harpers Payroll. Ms. Morin stated that the goal is to still get the Police Department and Fire Department on the automated payroll system.

710 Debt Services – Principal – Ms. Morin stated that the largest debt burden on the town currently is the new Police Station/Fire Station Renovation project, and the Brentwood Streets Rehabilitation project. This could increase should the town vote for a Town Hall Renovation project or Avon Public Schools Renovation project.

752 Debt Service-S/T Interest – Ms. Morin stated that this line item is set up in case the Treasurer needs to borrow for a short-term loan.

760 Bond Issue Costs – Ms. Morin stated that this line item pays for disclosure statements from financial institutions.

911 Pensions – Ms. Morin stated that she has received the appropriation figures for Fiscal Year 2024 from the Norfolk County Retirement Board. She recommends paying the appropriation in full instead of two installments for cost savings.

913 Unemployment – Ms. Morin stated that she has reduced this line item as there were fewer claims for unemployment insurance last year as in the previous years during the Covid pandemic.

914 Medical & Life Insurance – Ms. Morin stated that MIIA has not released the figures yet on the new insurance rates. This is typically done during the annual MMA conference in mid-January. Ms. Morin stated that last year the increase was 6.83%. She has also budgeted for the cost of two additional employees and their families due to the request of departments for additional positions.

916 Medicare – Ms. Morin stated that the town is obligated to pay a portion of employees' Medicare expenses. She does not have the new rates yet for increases in this line item.

With no questions from the Board or Finance Committee, the meeting was requested to be adjourned.

Adjournment

At 11:30 a.m., Mr. Suzor made a motion to adjourn the Workshop Session. Chairman Beckerman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Coffey voted aye. Mr. Suzor voted aye. Chairman Beckerman voted aye.

Respectfully submitted,



Shanna M. Faro
Executive Assistant

List of Documents

1. January 14, 2023 Meeting Agenda
2. Board of Health Proposed Budget
3. Avon Public Schools Proposed Budget & PowerPoint Presentation
4. Fire Department Proposed Budget
5. Treasurer/Collector Proposed Budget