

SELECT BOARD

Eric S. Beckerman, Chair
Jason L. Suzor, Sr., Clerk
Shannon M. Coffey, Associate

Jonathan L. Beder
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Town of Avon Massachusetts



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AVON TOWN CLERK
REC'D FEB 16 2024 AM 8:19

**SELECT BOARD
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2024
MARY MCDERMOTT MEETING ROOM
6:30 P.M.**

Members Present: Eric S. Beckerman, Chair
Jason L. Suzor, Sr., Clerk
Shannon M. Coffey, Associate (via videoconference)

Others Present: Jonathan L. Beder, Town Administrator
Shanna M. Faro, Executive Assistant/Human Resources Coordinator
Joseph S. Lalli, Esq., Town Counsel
Richard Jordan, Town Planner
Wayne Feiden, FAICP, University of Massachusetts (via videoconference)

School Committee: Tracy Sheehan, School Committee Chair
Ann Hagberg, Vice Chair
Paul Chapman, Member
Claudia Lucia, Member

Mr. Beckerman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with all members present. Mr. Beckerman announced that this meeting of the Select Board is being conducted via a hybrid method. The public may attend the Select Board meetings in-person or may continue to participate via remote Zoom access. Mr. Beckerman 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. Links to watch the recorded meeting will be available on the Avon Cable Access website www.avontv.org.

Shannon Sabree led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Participation

None

6:35 p.m. – Joint Meeting/Vote of School Committee and Select Board for Candidates for Blue Hills Regional School Committee

Mr. Beckerman called the joint meeting of the School Committee and Select Board into order. Ms. Sheehan informed Mr. Beckerman that the School Committee does have a quorum present at the meeting. Mr. Beckerman asked each candidate to make a brief statement as to why they should be selected as the representative for Avon on the Blue Hills Regional School Committee. Mr. Beckerman noted that the Board received three letters of interest for this position including a letter and resume from candidate Carl

Walker. Mr. Beckerman noted that candidate Myrdell Milfort was not present at the meeting. Mr. Beckerman read her letter stating that she has a daughter that attends Butler Elementary School and she would like to be engaged in decisions that will make an impact on her education. The next candidate was David Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan appeared via videoconference. He stated that he is a Boston Latin School graduate. He has been a member of the local IBEW 2222 for 25 years. He also has two children, one at Butler Elementary School, and one at Avon Middle High School. Mr. Sullivan stated that he was interested in educational options for his children as he did not feel the Avon schools are currently meeting the town's standards. The final candidate was Carl Walker who appeared via videoconference. Mr. Walker stated that he is a Boston Latin School graduate. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from Framingham State University and a Master of Education from the University of Massachusetts. Mr. Walker has served as a Procurement Officer and Project Manager in the Operations Department of the Brockton Public Schools. Mr. Walker requested to be appointed to the Blue Hills Regional School Committee for the opportunity to serve as a voice for the administrators, teachers, and students to advocate for their needs and to actively contribute to the overall enhancement of both the school and the community.

Mr. Beckerman informed the candidates that he would like to see the new representative for the Blue Hills Regional School Committee provide regular updates to the Select Board as currently they only receive information about the yearly assessment. He would like that to change and for there to be more communication.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Chapman made a motion to appoint Carl Walker to the Blue Hills Regional School Committee. Ms. Lucia seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Chapman voted aye. Ms. Hagberg voted aye. Ms. Lucia voted aye. Ms. Sheehan voted aye. The motion passed.

Mr. Suzor made a motion to appoint Carl Walker to the Blue Hills Regional School Committee. Ms. Coffey seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Coffey voted aye. Mr. Suzor voted aye. Mr. Beckerman voted aye. The motion passed.

Both the School Committee and Select Board congratulated Mr. Walker on his appointment.

At 6:51 p.m., Ms. Sheehan made a motion to adjourn the School Committee meeting. Mr. Chapman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Chapman voted aye. Ms. Hagberg voted aye. Ms. Lucia voted aye. Ms. Sheehan voted aye. The motion passed.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Suzor made a motion to approve the January 25, 2024 (Regular Session) meeting minutes as written. Ms. Coffey seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Coffey voted aye. Mr. Suzor voted aye. Mr. Beckerman voted aye. The motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation on Draft Master Plan

Mr. Jordan appeared before the Board to introduce Wayne Feiden. Mr. Feiden is the Director for the Center of Resilient Metro-Regions for Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts. Mr. Feiden has been working with Mr. Jordan, the Planning Board, and the Select Board on developing a master plan. Mr. Feiden appeared via videoconference to provide an update on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Avon.

Mr. Feiden informed the Board that focus groups were held in the fall with the stakeholders, residents, and citizens of the community. The feedback from the focus group shows that the community vision and values include that people like the “small town feel. They are seeking community cohesion, an affordable place to live, a clean environment, safety, and security.

Mr. Feiden stated that land usage for the town should focus on preserving the existing neighborhoods. The master plan should also focus on the Industrial Park, Stockwell Drive, and key focal points such as the downtown area. Mr. Feiden stated that the need for a sewer system is extremely important for the Industrial Park. A sanitary sewer is preferential for Stockwell Drive. That area can also be a mixed use of commercial and residential with upper floor affordable housing in some of the buildings.

Mr. Feiden informed the Board that housing should be both attainable for all and affordable. The master plan will encourage smaller and lower cost housing. It will also limit special permits for large multi-family dwellings. The plan will also devise a comprehensive permit for affordable houses and alternatives to 40B projects.

Economic development will focus on the Avon Industrial Park and Stockwell Drive opportunities. There will be a focus on small businesses and opportunities. Mr. Feiden stated that there are municipal campus opportunities in the downtown area and streetscape improvements.

In terms of open space and recreation, Mr. Feiden will promote social connections and the master plan will seek to serve all neighborhoods and residents by creating accessible parks for safe gatherings and play. Some streets may be redesigned for the safety of citizens.

The master plan will also design a plan to preserve the town’s natural and cultural resources such as water supply, improving the green infrastructure to address flooding, clean stormwater, and adapting to climate change.

Mr. Feiden stated that the master plan will improve mobility and circulation by improving travel safety such as transit designs for pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, and trucks. Mr. Feiden stated that a majority of the focus group citizens were concerned about safer streets and the need to slow the speed of traffic with engineering.

Another section of the master plan will include a focus on community services and facilities such as the preservation of the municipal buildings, public schools, and building environmental and energy resilience buildings to minimize the tax burden.

Mr. Feiden stated that in terms of climate, sustainability, and resilience, the town must consider full life cycle costs. One option is to become a member of Green Communities and adopt the energy stretch code. There are also nature-based solutions for green infrastructure for street trees, resilient parks, and a focus on stormwater.

Mr. Feiden stressed the importance of justice, diversity, and inclusion for the Town of Avon. A small-town means embracing, including, and welcoming all of its citizens. This should include all aspects of Avon including town government, schools, civic life, and climate justice.

Finally, Mr. Feiden displayed the 2040 Comprehensive Plan schedule with the Board. The next two meetings are with the Planning Board on February 15, 2024 and March 7, 2024. The final product is due in May. Mr. Feiden stated that the project is still on schedule for that deadline. With no questions from the Board, Mr. Feiden departed the meeting.

Personnel Action Form

Mr. Suzor made a motion to approve the Personnel Action Form for Town Administrator Jonathan Beder for a rate change upon obtaining his Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official designation effective February 5, 2024. Ms. Coffey seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Coffey voted aye. Mr. Suzor voted aye. Mr. Beckerman voted aye. The motion carried.

New Appointments

Mr. Suzor made a motion to approve the appointment and Personnel Action Form of Gwaishmee Cherilus as a Youth Prevention Leader for the Board of Health at the rate of \$15.00 per hour effective February 5, 2024. Ms. Coffey seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Coffey voted aye. Mr. Suzor voted aye. Mr. Beckerman voted aye. The motion passed.

Mr. Suzor made a motion to approve the appointment and Personnel Action Form of Clarissa Polynice as a Youth Prevention Leader for the Board of Health at the rate of \$15.00 per hour effective February 5, 2024. Ms. Coffey seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Coffey voted aye. Mr. Suzor voted aye. Mr. Beckerman voted aye. The motion carried.

Mr. Suzor made a motion to approve the appointment and Personnel Action Form of Victoria Dang as a Youth Prevention Leader for the Board of Health at the rate of \$15.00 per hour effective February 5, 2024. Ms. Coffey seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Coffey voted aye. Mr. Suzor voted aye. Mr. Beckerman voted aye. The motion passed.

Ms. Coffey made a motion to approve the appointment/classification change and Personnel Action Form of Jason L. Suzor, Jr. for the Senior Water Systems Operator position at a grade PW-3, Step 1 rate of \$30.76 per hour effective February 5, 2024 with the offer being contingent that employee will obtain his T-2 water operator's license within six months of his hire date. Mr. Beckerman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Coffey voted aye. Mr. Suzor abstained from the vote. Mr. Beckerman voted aye. The motion passed.

Surplus Equipment

Mr. Suzor made a motion to approve the request from the Fire Department to declare a 2007 Ford F250 pickup truck as surplus equipment. Ms. Coffey seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Ms. Coffey voted aye. Mr. Suzor voted aye. Mr. Beckerman voted aye. The motion passed.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Beder informed the Board that he has been working on an agreement with the Wildlands Trust, the property owner, state officials, and a variety of stakeholders on the 30-acre Open Space T.L. Edwards

Land Acquisition. Mr. Beder anticipates that the signed purchase and sale agreement will be presented to the Board for approval at their next meeting.

Mr. Beder is serving on a Steering Committee assembled by the Old Colony Planning Council in which a consultant has been retained to aid in the development of a regional water study. This project is funded through grants. Over the next twelve months, the committee will develop this regional study for those communities situated within OCPC's region. The Steering Committee will meet once a month.

Mr. Beder informed the Board that he has started a draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant. He will be meeting next week with the Town Clerk to review all draft articles. The Warrant closes on February 8, 2024 and will be on the agenda at the Board's next meeting.

Mr. Beder is also working on capital articles. He will review all capital articles next week and review sources of funding for these requests.


Town Counsel's Report

Mr. Beder will give Mr. Lalli a copy of the draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant next week to review the articles in detail as general counsel to the town.

Adjournment

At 7:18 p.m., Mr. Suzor made a motion to adjourn the regular session and to convene in executive session for the Review and approval of executive session minutes to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements – and more specifically the Open Meeting Law, G.L. Chapter 30A, Sections 22(f) and (g); to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining as an Open Meeting may have a detrimental effect on the town's bargaining or litigating position (AFSCME, Police, Fire, Call Firefighters); and to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel (Library Director Elise LaForge, Council on Aging Director Jane Carthas, Human Resources Coordinator Shanna Faro, Police Chief Jeffrey Bukunt, Interim DPW Director Brian Martin).

Respectfully submitted,



Shanna M. Faro
Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

1. February 1, 2024 Meeting Agenda
2. January 25, 2024 Meeting Minutes
3. Letters of Interest for Candidates for Blue Hills Regional School Committee
4. PowerPoint Presentation on Master Plan Update
5. Personnel Action Forms for Youth Prevention Leaders (Gwaishmee Cherilus, Clarissa Polynice, Victoria Dang)
6. Personnel Action Form for Town Administrator Jonathan Beder
7. Personnel Action Form for Senior Water Systems Operator Jason L. Suzor, Jr.
8. Surplus Equipment Form for Fire Department
9. Town Administrator's Report