

# AVON REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY APRIL 9, 2020

SETUP AS A VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 AND TOWN HALL CLOSURE



## 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was hosted in a virtual format, using Zoom.us. Mayor Smith Hymes called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. A roll call was taken, and Council members present were Amy Phillips, Tamra Underwood, Scott Prince, Jennie Fancher, Jake Wolf and Chico Thuon. Also present were Town Attorney Paul Wisor, Police Chief Greg Daly, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager Ineke de Jong, Town Manager Eric Heil, and Town Clerk Brenda Torres.

## 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Video Start Time: 00:02:13

Councilor Fancher pulled agenda item 5.6 minutes from March 26, 2020 to be discussed. Councilor Scott Prince moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mayor Pro Tem Phillips seconded the motion and the motion passed on a vote of 6 to 1. Councilor Wolf voted no.

## 3. DISCLOSURE OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS

Video Start Time: 00:03:12

No conflicts of interest were disclosed.

## 4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Video Start Time: 00:03:22

Mayor Smith Hymes explained to the public how to participate via video/audio or via phone or via email for public comments.

Michael Cacioppo commented on item 6.1 reusable bags report. He mentioned that grocery store clerks do not want to handle reusable bags because of germs and people not washing them. He requested the Town to ban heavy reusable bags and to revoke the plastic bag ban. He also believes that paper bags are very heavy on carbon imprint and trees are cut down in order to make these bags.

## 5. BUSINESS ITEMS

Video Start Time: 00:12:00

### 5.1. WORK SESSION: 2020 BUDGET REVISIONS (TOWN MANAGER ERIC HEIL AND ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER AND FINANCE DIRECTOR SCOTT WRIGHT)

Town Manager Eric Heil and Finance Director Scott Wright presented budget reductions in the Town of Avon 2020 budget. Several points were discussed by Council.

Councilor Wolf asked about the layoff of Town employees. Town Manager Eric Heil responded that as soon as the Recreation Center was closed, they knew it was a potential action that needed to be considered. Staff also was aware that the Federal Government was coming out with supplemental funding assistance for unemployment payments and benefits, and no decision was taken until an analysis was made based on those resources. Councilor Prince asked if benefits are still provided to Recreation Center employees and if those employees are eligible to be re-hired. Town Manager Eric Heil said that full time employees that have been laid off are still receiving full benefits and they are all eligible for re-hiring. Town Attorney Paul Wisor explained the CARES Act Policies. Finance Director Scott Wright mentioned that the CARES Act includes that full time laid off employees can access their retirement funds and the 10% penalty for early withdrawal will be waived with 3 years to pay taxes, for up to \$100,000. These benefits are available to COVID-19 related employees. The Retirement Board will meet on Tuesday April 14, 2020 to adopt these changes.

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Councilor Underwood made sure that the Town will not be sacrificing fundamental public work such as trash pickup and landscaping.

Mayor Smith Hymes mentioned a gardening group of volunteers to work on the landscaping on the north shore of Nottingham Park land asked Staff whether the Town can support this group with tools and invited people to volunteer.

Mayor Smith Hymes asked about the status for the purchase of solar panels. Town Manager Eric Heil responded that as soon as they get more details, the contract will be brought to Council. He said it is still going forward and it will be funded with cash from the transfer tax revenues.

Councilor Prince asked what the projections of revenues are. Town Manager Eric Heil said that a report will be sent to the Finance Committee on Monday April 13, 2020 and it will be discussed on the Finance Committee meeting to be held on Thursday April 16, 2020.

Mayor Smith Hymes called for public comments and no public comments were made.

## 5.2. DISCUSSION OF AVON COMMUNITY GRANT AND RELIEF FUNDS (MARKETING MANAGER LIZ WOOD, COUNCILOR TAMRA UNDERWOOD AND COUNCILOR JENNIE FANCHER)

Video Start Time: 00:52:23

Marketing Manager Liz Wood gave an update on the Eagle County relief fund and the Eagle County Housing and Development Authority.

Councilor Underwood mentioned that the Eaglebend, Buffalo Ridge and Kayak Affordable Housing non-profit Corporations have deferred April rent 100% and tenants will have to pay for utilities only. Decision on May rent still have to be made.

Mayor Smith Hymes said an average of 100 lunches are served daily at Avon Elementary School. They are still working on how to make the delivery of lunches at Eaglebend, Buffalo Ridge and Kayak Apartments more successful.

Councilor Underwood mentioned she has been in contact with the County to try to assist the Hispanic Community. She asked if the Town should move forward with the Town Manager's recommendation of a \$250,000 allocation to the COVID-19 relief funding and granting the Eagle Valley Community Foundation's request of \$100,000, with \$50,000 payable now and the balance due in late summer.

Councilor Fancher agreed with Councilor Underwood and asked what the application process would be. Town Attorney Paul Wisor mentioned that it is important for the Town to have an application process, a meeting to discuss the application and a decision about the application. There needs to be a paper trail before we issue any funds.

Town Manager Eric Heil suggested to increase the amount for the restaurant vouchers so the town can issue 2,000 vouchers. Councilor Prince agreed with this recommendation.

Mayor Smith Hymes pointed out that this community grant fund is available to individual and businesses and not only to non-profits. She said she is in fully support of the meal voucher program as it gives local businesses an immediate burst.

Town Manager Eric Heil said more information will be presented during the April 14, 2020 meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Phillips would like to take \$50,000 immediately to give to the Eagle Valley Community Foundation request a simple follow up report to confirm that these funds have benefited Avon residents, before we issue further funds.

Councilor Wolf asked if he, as the only renting Council member, should be recused from this item. Town Attorney Paul Wisor said he does not see any conflict. Mayor Smith Hymes agreed. Councilor Underwood moved to waive any conflict of interest, believing there is none, of Councilor Wolf on this

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matter. Mayor Pro Tem Phillips seconded the motion and the motion passed on a vote of 6 to 0 with Councilor Wolf recused from the vote.

Mayor Smith Hymes called for public comments and no public comments were made.

## 5.3. NOTICE OF AWARD NOTTINGHAM PARK UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT (TOWN ENGINEER JUSTIN HILDRETH)

Video Start Time: 01:35:05

Town Engineer Justin Hildreth presented the notice of award. Items 5.3 and 5.4 were discussed together. After Council discussion, these items will be continued to the April 14, 2020 meeting.

Mayor Smith Hymes called for public comments and Michael Cacioppo commented. He supports taking the old Town Hall and old Fire House down now that the Town can get a better deal.

## 5.4. STAFF UPDATE: OLD TOWN HALL DEMOLITION PROJECT (TOWN ENGINEER JUSTIN HILDRETH)

Items 5.3 and 5.4 were discussed together.

## 5.5. REVIEW OF FIRST QUARTER STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE (TOWN MANAGER ERIC HEIL)

Video Start Time: 02:04:25

Town Manager Eric Heil provided an update on progress during the first quarter of all strategic plan items. Mayor Pro Tem Phillips pointed out that the reason the construction company is losing its workers is because they do not have work. She supports any project the Town can afford that does benefit our community is a really good thing to move forward to the Town's best abilities in these unstable times. She suggested to move forward with Avon-In-Deed and put it in the agenda as soon as possible.

Mayor Smith Hymes called for public comments and no public comments were made.

## 5.6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 26, 2020 REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING (TOWN CLERK BRENDA TORRES)

Video Start Time: 02:15:15

Councilor Fancher suggested an edit to the minutes to read "She also commented on the plastic bag ban brought up in public comment by Mr. Cacioppo, noting that the majority of items purchased in a grocery store are packaged, except for produce for which plastic bags are available. Furthermore, many items in a grocery store are touched by multiple hands, posing more of a germ threat than reusable bags which can be washed." Town Clerk Brenda Torres confirmed the version presented to Council reflects that edit. Councilor Fancher moved to approve the minutes from March 26, 2020. Mayor Pro Tem Phillips seconded the motion and the motion passed on a vote of 6 to 1. Councilor Wolf voted no.

## 6. WRITTEN REPORTS

### 6.1. REUSABLE BAGS REPORT (GENERAL GOVERNMENT INTERN CHARISE BISHOP)

## 6. MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMENTS & MEETING UPDATES

Video Start Time: 02:17:17

Mayor Pro Tem Phillips mentioned she posted a video in her Facebook page on how people can wash their reusable bags.

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Councilor Fancher said she was not able to listen in to the Eagle County COVID-19 call that afternoon and asked if anyone found anything interesting. Mayor Smith Hymes said there was nothing remarkable to be reported. Mayor Pro Tem Philips said that late fees are being waived on a variety of property taxes and that the first drive-thru COVID-19 test site was in Gypsum. Councilor Wolf mentioned he received questions from people in town regarding the situation in City Market and the face masks policy. He also mentioned there was a discussion on the Stay at Home order and the Real Estate Taxes.

Councilor Thuon mentioned the plastic bag ban and requested Council to please think about it, to help the County from spreading the virus and relax the ban just for a little bit as people do not wash their bags. Councilor Fancher referenced the report on reusable bags included in the packet where it states that the virus will stick to plastic bags from three to nine days and one day on a paper bag and said it is important to know that grocery store workers do not have to touch our reusable bags and we are the only ones touching our own reusable bags. Councilor Thuon asked Council to consider the idea of testing all residents to see who had the virus, who can get back to work, who can volunteer, who can be in the front lines, etc. He said Telluride was able to tests all its residents, and for \$7,000 we can test all our residents in Town. Town Manager Eric Heil mentioned that even when the Stay at Home order gets lifted, it will be a soft opening and social distancing will be still in place and we will do our best to avoid a second wave on repeated closures. Councilor Thuon said that a resident from The Aspens brought to his attention that prior to the order from the President of closing the border, a large number of Hispanic residents have left.

Councilor Wolf thanked Town of Avon Staff for their dedication and wants the public to know how amazing they are. He showed sympathy towards the loss of musicians John Prine and Bill Withers, and 13-year-old Charlotte Figi. He wished happy holidays and Passover tonight. He closed his comments with a delightful story.

Mayor Smith Hymes said how in this difficult time, it is remarkable and amazing how close this community has come in the past weeks. She mentioned Council requested a call with the Public Health Director because Council was concerned whether enough attention is being paid to the Affordable Housing projects that are so dense and populated and whether they have their eyes on it to make sure if somebody shows symptoms that would not come forward are on their radar.

Mayor Smith Hymes gave Michael Cacioppo the opportunity to say a final public comment. He commented on plastic bags in retail stores.

## 7. ADJOURN

There being no further business before Council, Mayor Smith Hymes moved to adjourn the regular meeting. The time was 6:37 p.m.

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*These minutes are only a summary of the proceedings of the meeting. They are not intended to be comprehensive or to include each statement, person speaking or to portray with complete accuracy. The most accurate records of the meeting are the audio of the meeting, which is housed in the Town Clerk's office, and the video of the meeting, which is available at [www.highfivemedia.org](http://www.highfivemedia.org).*

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda Torres".

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Brenda Torres, Town Clerk

**APPROVED:**

Sarah Smith Hymes

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Smith Hymes".

Amy Phillips

Jake Wolf

Chico Thuon

Jennie Fancher

Scott Prince

Tamra Underwood