



**Town of Ayer**

**Executive Bi-Board Meeting Minutes from November 30, 2023**

**Attendance:** Scott Houde (Select Board Chair); Kurt Fraczkowski (Fin Com Chair); Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager); Carly Antonellis (Assistant Town Manager); Barbara Tierney (Finance Manager); Kerry Cooper (Town Accountant)

**Absent:** Sebastian Cordoba (Fin Com Vice Chair)

**Also in Attendance:** Pauline Conley (Resident)

**Call to Order:** S. Houde called the November 30, 2023 Executive Bi-Board to order at 2pm on Zoom.

S. Houde read the following statement into the record:

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law (OML), public bodies otherwise governed by the OML are temporarily relieved from the requirement that meetings be held in public places, open and physically accessible to the public so long as measures are taken to ensure public access to the bodies' deliberations "through adequate, alternative means." This meeting will be live on Zoom. The public may participate remotely by joining Zoom (Meeting ID# 854 0032 4335) or by calling 929-205-6099. For additional information about remote participation, please contact Carly Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager at [atm@ayer.ma.us](mailto:atm@ayer.ma.us) or 978-772-8220 ext. 100 prior to the meeting.

**Review/Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (April 11, 2023):**

The Bi-Board reviewed the DRAFT meeting minutes from the April 11, 2023 meeting. There were no edits.

**Motion:** A motion was made by R. Pontbriand and seconded by B. Tierney to approve the meeting minutes from April 11, 2023. **Motion Passed (6-0) by Roll Call Vote: S. Houde, Y; K. Fraczkowski, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y; C. Antonellis, Y; B. Tierney, Y; K. Cooper, Y.**

**Final Review and Approval of the Update to the Financial Policies (For Recommendation to the Select Board and Fin Com):**

R. Pontbriand provided an overview of the proposed changes to the Financial Policies as reviewed and discussed by the Executive Bi-Board over the past year. Additionally, these proposed changes were also sent to all Town Departments for an interdepartmental review. There were no proposed recommendations for changes from the Town Departments.

R. Pontbriand summarized the proposed substantive changes as follows:

- A section codifying the Town's Budget Calendar was added on Page 6.
- A section on the local Cannabis Tax was added on Page 8.

- A section on the UDAG (Urban Development Action Grant) was added on Page 13.
- A section on Reserve Fund for Future Payments of Accrued Liabilities for Compensate Balances was added on Page 13-14.
- The Capital Finance threshold was increased from \$300,000 to \$500,000 on Page 18.
- The entire actual Investment Policy was removed from the Financial Policies on recommendation of the Town's Auditors since the Investment Policy changes annually under the direction of the Town Treasurer; and replaced with the appropriate language and reference to the Town's website to find the current Investment Policy on Pages 16 and 17.
- The Procurement Requirements Sections on Pages 19 and 20 were updated to be consistent with Massachusetts State Procurement Law.

Pauline Conley (Resident) stated that she did not see a TIF Review Committee in the Financial Policies and she would like to see one.

S. Houde stated that the Bi-Board would investigate a TIF Review Committee for the next review of the Financial Policies.

Pauline Conley (Resident) asked about a section on the balance on debt-service capital expenditures.

B. Tierney stated that was old language in the policy that came from wording from another Town. It is basically another term for Capital Stabilization. The Town's Auditor has recommended that the debt expenditure amount be limited to 8%.

There were no further questions or comments from the Bi-Board regarding the proposed update to the Financial Policies.

**Motion:** A motion was made by C. Antonellis and seconded by K. Fraczkowski to recommend that the Select Board and Finance Committee approve the updates to the Financial Policies as presented and recommended by the Executive Bi-Board. **Motion passed (6-0) by Roll Call Vote: S. Houde, Y; K. Fraczkowski, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y; C. Antonellis, Y; B. Tierney, Y; K. Cooper, Y.**

R. Pontbriand advised that he will transmit the Financial Policies to the Select Board and Fin Com for their review and approval at their respective future meetings.

#### **Update on the Clear Gov Budget Platform:**

C. Antonellis and K. Cooper provided an update on the development of the Clear Gov Budget Platform.

K. Cooper advised that the Town's financial software interfaces with Clear Gove and converts MUNIS information into charts and graphs to be used by Clear Gov.

C. Antonellis advised that the Department pages have been designed and that we can download and print what materials we want. There is a lot of functionality not only for the user but for the Town in terms of how materials are presented.

K. Cooper advised that all the financial information uploaded is current as of November 22, 2023.

S. Houde asked that once set up, moving forward how long will it take to upload and update Clear Gov with the current financials.

K. Cooper stated that it will only take two to three days maximum.

B. Tierney suggested that the Bi-Board could determine a schedule of updates.

R. Pontbriand stated that a timeline for implementation needs to be developed and an update on the timeline for implementation at the next Bi-Board meeting.

**FY 2025 Budget Process Update:**

R. Pontbriand provided a brief update on the FY 2025 Budget Process. The Budget Calendar and all materials related to the FY 2025 Budget can be found on the Town's website at [www.ayer.ma.us/budget](http://www.ayer.ma.us/budget).

**Review/Discussion on Content for the DRAFT FY 2025 Budget Directive:**

The FY 2025 Budget Directive is scheduled to go out on December 1, 2023 with all budgets due back from Departments by December 29, 2023. DRAFT #1 of the FY 2025 Budget will be transmitted to the Select Board and Finance Committee on January 12, 2024 at which time it will also be available to the public on the Town's website at [www.ayer.ma.us/budget](http://www.ayer.ma.us/budget) or upon request from the Town Manager's Office during normal hours of operation. The Directive asks Departments to prepare a level service budget based on FY 2024; no new personnel requests; and any new expenditures to be identified and explained.

R. Pontbriand asked if there were any questions or comments on content for the Budget Directive.

There were none from the Bi-Board.

**Scheduling of Next Meeting:**

The Bi-Board scheduled its next meeting for Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 2pm on Zoom.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion:** A motion was made by C. Antonellis and seconded by B. Tierney to adjourn the Bi-Board Meeting at 2:54pm. **Motion passed (6-0) by Roll Call Vote: S. Houde, Y; K. Fraczkowski, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y; C. Antonellis, Y; B. Tierney, Y; K. Cooper, Y.**

The Executive Bi-Board adjourned at 2:54pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager.

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Executive Bi-Board on January 18, 2024.

Signed: , Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager