

Town of Ayer

****DRAFT** Executive Bi-Board Meeting Minutes**

January 18, 2024, 2pm on Zoom

Attendance:

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

Call to Order:

The January 18, 2024 Executive Bi-Board Meeting was called to order at 2:00pm on Zoom by S. Houde.

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 or 978-772-8220 ext. 100 prior to the meeting.

Review/Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (November 30, 2023):

The Bi-Board reviewed the DRAFT meeting minutes from November 30, 2023.

Motion: A motion was made by C. Antonellis and seconded by K. Fraczkowski to approve the November 30, 2023 meeting minutes. **Motion passed 7-0 by Roll Call Vote:** S. Houde, Y; K. Fraczkowski, Y; A. Sealey, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y; C. Antonellis, Y; B. Tierney, Y; K. Cooper, Y.

FY 2025 Budget Process Update:

R. Pontbriand provided an update on the FY 2025 Budget Process as follows:

The FY 2025 Budget Process remains on schedule. The First Public Budget Forum will take place on January 24, 2024 at 6pm in the First Floor Meeting Room of Town Hall. There will be a Zoom option for the public to participate remotely. All Town Departments will be in attendance. DRAFT #1 of the Budget will be presented which will include mini presentations on each of the major budget drivers. Questions and input from the Select Board and Fin Com as well as the public will be taken. The Capital Planning Committee is finishing its work on the FY 2025 Capital Plan and the Rate Review Committee is about to begin its process of reviewing the FY 2025 water and sewer rates with recommendations to the Select Board. There are two Union contracts currently under

negotiations: the Police Patrol and the Police Dispatchers. There are also four non-union personal service contracts under negotiation.

FY 2025 – Budget DRAFT #1: Initial Discussion:

R. Pontbriand advised that DRAFT #1 of the FY 2025 Omnibus Budget was transmitted to the Select Board and Fin Com on January 12, 2024 per the Town's Budget Calendar. DRAFT #1 was also available to the public at that time. DRAFT #1 along with all FY 2025 Budget documents are available on the FY 2025 Budget webpage on the Town's website at www.ayer.ma.us/budget

R. Pontbriand continued that DRAFT #1 is just that, a DRAFT and remains a work in progress. DRAFT #1 comes in at \$19,056,771.33 which represents a \$1,141,440.33 increase over FY 2024 or a 6.37% increase. The major FY 2025 Budget Drivers currently are Health Insurance; the I.T. Department due to new cybersecurity requirements as well as the cost of Town email and transitions in the Department; the Fire Department due to the integration of the SAFER Grant into the budget as the SAFER Grant expires; and Borrowing/Debt. Each of these budget drivers will be covered at the Public Budget Forum on January 17, 2024.

R. Pontbriand advised that DRAFT #1 does not include the costs of the two Union contracts (Police and Dispatchers); the four personal services contracts; and the non-Union COLA as these items are all currently outstanding. Additionally, the Town's internal finance team is actively reviewing all budgets and further refining with departments. These adjustments will be highlighted in DRAFT #2 of the Budget. Additionally, the Town has yet to receive the school assessments from the Nashoba Valley Technical High School and the Ayer Shirely Regional High School.

FY 2025 Capital Plan Update:

S. Houde advised that the Capital Planning Committee is almost done with its review and recommendations on the FY 2025 Capital Plan. All Capital Plans and materials are posted on the Capital Planning Committee's webpage on the Town's website. There are no items requiring a debt exclusion this year.

Public Budget Forum Presentation Content (January 24, 2024 at 6pm):

R. Pontbriand asked if the Bi-Board had any suggestions or questions for the content of the Public Budget Forum on January 24, 2024. He stated that he plans to present an overview of the Budget Process; show that the Town enters the Budget Process from a position of strength; highlight the major budget drivers for FY 2025 with mini presentations from each Department that is a budget driver; provide an overview of revenues and expenditures; and highlight next steps in the process. The most important thing is to get to the questions and input from the Select Board, Fin Com, and the public.

There was consensus from the Bi-Board on this approach to the content of the Public Budget Forum presentation.

S. Houde asked about the status of the Clear Gov Budget Platform.

C. Antonellis stated that the goal is to have a working budget platform by March 1st which will give an opportunity for the Bi-Board to see the platform and offer input on the various functions. She

has been working with K. Cooper on this. The Clear Gov Budget Platform will have both the FY 2024 Budget and the FY 2025 proposed Budget available for the public launch.

The Bi-Board discussed using the Clear Gov Budget Platform for the second Public Budget Forum in March as an opportunity to officially launch Clear Gov and to demonstrate how the public can use it.

Scheduling of Next Meeting:

The Bi-Board scheduled its next meeting for Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 2pm on Zoom.

Adjournment:

Motion: A motion was made by C. Antonellis and seconded by K. Fraczkowski to adjourn the meeting at 2:30pm. **Motion passed 7-0 by Roll Call Vote:** S. Houde, Y; K. Fraczkowski, Y; A. Sealey, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y; C. Antonellis, Y; B. Tierney, Y; K. Cooper, Y.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager.

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Executive Bi-Board on _____

Signed: _____
Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager