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Town of Ayer

Executive Bi-Board Meeting Minutes For

Tuesday, August 23, 2022, 2pm

**Attendance:** Scott Houde (Chair); Fred Aponte (Finance Manager); Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager); Carly Antonellis (Assistant Town Manager)

**Absent:** Barbara Tierney (Treasurer/Tax Collector)

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 2pm on Zoom by S. Houde.

S. Houde read the following statement into the record:

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, in accordance with Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law (ONL), 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 (July 26, 2022):**

The Bi-Board reviewed the DRAFT Meeting Minutes from the July 26, 2022, meeting.

**Motion:** A motion was made by C. Antonellis and seconded by F. Aponte to approve the July 26, 2022, meeting minutes. **Motion passed (4-0)** by Roll Call Vote: S. Houde, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y; F. Aponte, Y; C. Antonellis, Y

**Overview of ARPA Funding and Discussion on Spending Policy/Plan:**

R. Pontbriand introduced Evelyn Martuci from CLA, the ARPA consultant firm working with the Town.

E. Martuci provided a general overview of ARPA and ARPA Funds highlighting the guidelines for the funding. She stated that there is a lot of flexibility in terms of what the Town can use its ARPA funds for. At this time, ARPA funds can be used for almost any type of government spending. ARPA funds cannot be used for OPEB; debt; or anything that is against the mission of ARPA. She advised that ARPA funds are subject to audit and that keeping all documentation related to spending is key. We like to see infrastructure projects as they generally benefit the entire municipality. Procurement laws and rules do apply to ARPA funds and spending.

S. Houde asked if ARPA funds could be used by the Town to electrify its vehicle fleet.

E. Martuci stated, yes.

E. Martuci advised that the ARPA spending period is from March 3, 2021 to December 31, 2024. All ARPA funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024. The Town will then have until December 31, 2026 to spend those obligated funds.

S. Houde asked if the Town could use ARPA funds for partial funding of a project. For example the Town is looking at the need to replace a Fire Ladder Truck which is estimated to cost \$1.5 million. Could ARPA funds be used as a partial funding for this?

E. Martuci advised, yes. The key thing will be the vote of the Select Board indicating that the ARPA funds being used are for partial funding for the item or project.

R. Pontbriand stated that the Town should review the Capital Plan to see if there are items/projects in which ARPA funds could potentially be used to partially fund.

E. Martuci stated that for construction projects over \$1 million dollars there is a required written justification for the use of ARPA funds.

C. Antonellis asked if there is a form or checklist document outlining the various ARPA parameters and rules.

E. Martuci stated that CLA could assist in developing departmental forms for these purposes.

S. Houde thanked E. Martuci for attending the meeting.

#### **Update on Review of Financial Policies:**

R. Pontbriand advised that the deadline for the Bi-Board members to submit their initial updates to the Financial Policies will be September 2. After that deadline, at the next Bi-Board meeting in September, the Bi-Board will review these proposed updates/revisions. After that meeting, the Financial Policies will be submitted to all Town Departments for their review and update. The Departments will have approximately a month for review. In October the Bi-Board should finalize and then submit/present to the Select Board and Finance Committee for their input and approval. The goal is to have the update completed and finalized no later than the end of this calendar year.

#### **Review and Discussion of DRAFT FY 2024 Budget Calendar:**

C. Antonellis presented the DRAFT and proposed new format for the FY 2024 Budget Calendar. Rather than a calendar format document the new format is in check list form and is more user friendly as a "living document". The current DRAFT does not contain the Bi-Board meetings; Rate Review meetings; or Capital Planning meetings.

S. Houde stated that he was a proponent of the calendar and happy to try a new format. He further stated that in terms of the Public Budget Forums, perhaps we have at least one public presentation and then implement a "budget tracker" which would clearly and publicly track any budget changes from the first public presentation throughout the process.

There was agreement and interest among the Bi-Board regarding the idea of a "budget tracker". R. Pontbriand and F. Aponte to further research.

R. Pontbriand asked the Bi-Board to review the DRAFT FY 2024 Budget Calendar and to send any suggestions to C. Antonellis. The goal is for the Select Board to finalize and approve the Budget Calendar by no later than their October 4, 2022 meeting.

**New Business:**

There was no new business.

**Scheduling of Next Meeting:**


The Bi-Board scheduled the next meeting for Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 2pm on Zoom.

**Motion:** A motion was made by F. Aponte and seconded by C. Antonellis to adjourn the Executive Bi-Board Meeting at 2:55pm. **Motion passed (4-0).**

Meeting adjourned at 2:55pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by R. Pontbriand.

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Executive Bi-Board on September 13, 2022.

Signed:  9/13/2022  
Robert A. Pontbriand  
Town Manager