

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance/Safety Committee
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
on Tuesday, January 20, 2026**

Finance Committee Chair Tony Moore called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Finance/Safety Committee Members Present

Ward 3 Council Member Tony Moore, Finance Committee Chair; Council Member At Large Mary Berges; Ward 4 Council Member Scott Radcliffe; Council Member At-Large Michelle Patton, Safety Committee Chair; Council Member At-Large/Council President Brian Fischer; Ward 2 Council Member Anne Marie Etienne

Others in Attendance

Ward 1 Council Member Jennifer Demaline; Mayor Bryan Jensen; Safety/Service Director Duane Streator; Finance Director Steve Presley; City Engineer Ryan Cummins; Planning and Economic Development Coordinator Pam Fechter; Law Director John Gasior; Fire Chief David Swope; Assistant Fire Chief Brett Bruehler; Assistant Fire Chief James Fischer; Clerk of Council Barbara Brooks; Host of Parents and Players of Avon Little League

Lighting for Little League Fields

Mayor Jensen introduced the topic of lighting for the Little League Fields, highlighting the importance of enhancing recreational activities for children in Avon. He discussed how this initiative, aimed at both Little League baseball and softball, was part of the budget considerations from the previous year. Given the current lack of property available for expanding fields, the Administration proposed adding lights to existing fields as a more feasible solution. Mayor Jensen pointed out that installing lights across all fields in a single year would be more cost-effective compared to staggering the projects, as past experience showed that delaying projects resulted in higher costs. Including lighting would not only prolong playing hours but also alleviate the need to expand by adding more fields.

Furthermore, Mayor Jensen informed the Council of Ford Motor Company's substantial financial contribution to support the project. The donation, initially provided to the Little League, would be redirected back to the City to aid in project funding. As part of the plan, improvements would also include rebuilding batting cages. These enhancements would benefit both baseball and softball participants, ensuring equity in their playing experiences. The lighting projects would also offer the potential for hosting additional games and possibly attracting tournaments, increasing opportunities for both the Leagues and the Community.

Mike Burcewicz, representing Avon Little League, provided an overview of the organization. Avon Little League was chartered in 1971, making this its 56th season in Avon. The League is entirely volunteer-run, with nearly 30 Board Members and about 200 coaches and volunteers. Mr. Burcewicz expressed gratitude for the partnership with the City, which has made their League a premier organization in the district, reaching areas from Maumee to Galleon to Bellevue.

In 2025, the league saw 744 athletes in the regular season and 481 in the fall season. Impressively, 44% of these participants were girls playing softball, highlighting the League's commitment to growing its

softball program. Across both seasons, the league had 1,225 registered athletes and 942 unique registrations, effectively making Avon Little League the largest community recreation sports organization in the local area. This participation level is on par with the combined numbers of youth football, recreation soccer, and recreation basketball.

Mr. Burcewicz also highlighted the League's special programs, including the Challenger League, designed for children with physical or intellectual challenges who might not otherwise participate in mainstream Little League. Last year, this program involved 41 athletes, and it's entirely volunteer-run, with each athlete paired with a volunteer to assist them on the field. The Challenger League games occur on Sundays at Veterans Park throughout the summer and are a key part of the League's commitment to inclusivity.

Another significant aspect of Avon Little League is its employment of nearly 80 youth umpires, aged 13 to 18. Mr. Burcewicz noted that thanks to strong community support and responsible financial management, the League has kept registration fees stable despite rising expenses. This pricing stability is bolstered by sponsorships, with nearly 30 sponsors in 2026, up from previous years, offering financial support through team sponsorships and defined monetary contributions. The generous donation from Ford Motor Company was acknowledged as the largest in the League's history, playing a crucial role in funding projects like the installation of new batting cages and lights at Veterans Park, further enhancing opportunities for the players and the broader community.

Adding lights to Field 3 at Veterans Park, as Mr. Burcewicz outlined, would allow for additional evening games, effectively increasing the capacity by accommodating approximately two more teams each season. This significant enhancement would help ensure that no participants are turned away due to capacity constraints, reinforcing the League's commitment to inclusivity and growth. By extending playing hours, the lights would also provide an equitable playing experience between the baseball and softball fields, ensuring that girls can enjoy the same evening playing conditions as the boys—a factor emphasized by both Mayor Jensen and Mr. Burcewicz.

Moreover, the project involves essential upgrades to the existing facilities. Rebuilding the batting cages between Fields 4 and 5 is a priority, addressing the wear and tear that has occurred over the years. These cages are crucial for warm-ups and pre-game preparations, benefiting both Little League and broader community use. Additionally, a new batting cage will be added between Fields 1 and 2. Such improvements, significantly funded by a generous donation from Ford Motor Company, are part of a broader effort to enhance the facilities, aligning with feedback from seasonal surveys conducted by the League, which emphasize player and parental concerns about amenities and safety. This strategic investment ensures the infrastructure meets both current demands and future growth, fostering a vibrant community hub for recreational sports.

Council Members expressed strong support for the project, emphasizing the importance of team sports in providing valuable life lessons to children. Mr. Fischer remarked on the significance of having children actively engaged in team sports rather than on their devices, highlighting how sports can teach essential skills beyond physical activity. Mr. Radcliffe, a Little League alumnus, praised the organization for being well-run and organized, sharing that his son is also an alumnus and noting that his family had been involved in the organization for years, emphasizing the long-standing impact the League has had on local families. Mr. Radcliffe recalled personal experiences and championship celebrations with the League, indicating a deep appreciation for the League's role in the community.

Ms. Patton, who shared her extensive experience playing softball from ages 8 to 18, highlighted the personal growth and skills she gained through participating in team sports during her formative years. She

also mentioned her son's involvement in the Challenger League, acknowledging the critical role such programs play in providing inclusive opportunities for children with special needs. Ms. Patton expressed her appreciation for the benefits of the proposed improvements, noting how they would enhance the experience for both regular participants and those in the Challenger League. Additionally, she expressed her willingness to volunteer more actively with the program in the future, driven by a desire to support and contribute to the community that has provided her and her family with such enriching experiences.

Council discussions reflected a shared belief in the value of the City's investment in recreational infrastructure, recognizing that the proposed improvements would enrich the lives of many children and families in the community.

Mayor Jensen concluded by reiterating that the project finance plan would be explored further at the upcoming work session of Council. He highlighted the importance of detailed discussions on the financing aspects, emphasizing that the project aims to enhance the recreational infrastructure in Avon and serve the community for many years to come.

Ford Motor Company's generous financial contribution of \$75,000 plays a vital role in the project, as the donation will aid in funding improvements like the installation of new batting cages and lights at Veterans Park. These upgrades are crucial not only for current participants but also for the growth of both the baseball and softball programs, providing equitable opportunities for all athletes.

Mayor Jensen encouraged community members to engage in the upcoming Council work session discussions, as the details of sponsorships and budget considerations would be critical to ensuring the project's success. The proposal is set to be put to a vote the following week, and he urged Council Members and the community alike to consider the long-term benefits of the investment for Avon's recreational offerings, further bolstering the City's commitment to enriching community life through sports and other recreational activities.

Proposed Second Fire Station Logistics

Mayor Jensen introduced the next topic, focusing on the logistics of a second Fire Station. He emphasized the need for Council to be apprised of the site selection, which he said was critical to improving emergency response and addressing potential expanded needs as the City grows. Mayor Jensen mentioned that discussions around a second Fire Station had been ongoing, but they were finally making progress toward tangible steps forward. He underscored the significance of selecting the right location, planning phases, and ensuring financial stability in moving forward.

Fire Chief David Swope joined the presentation alongside Assistant Chief James Fischer, who elaborated on the thorough analysis conducted to choose the proposed site for the second Fire Station. Assistant Chief Fisher, addressing the Council, emphasized the diligent efforts in evaluating potential locations, highlighting the strategic decision to select a site near Meijer and Sheetz. This location was chosen based on its ability to manage 33% of the call volume currently handled by the main Fire Station, thereby extending the operational life of the Fire Department's apparatus and alleviating burdens on the central facility.

The decision was driven by a comprehensive assessment where the need to optimize response times and distribute calls more effectively was paramount. Chief Swope and Assistant Chief Fischer conveyed the importance of placing the second Fire Station strategically to not only improve logistical efficiencies but also to enhance firefighter morale and extend the longevity of equipment. Notably, the new site would benefit the organization by potentially decreasing the wear and tear on equipment and reducing firefighter

burnout, addressing common challenges faced by other Fire Departments with equivalent call volumes but lesser resources.

Assistant Chief Fischer acknowledged the site's potential impact, maintaining an optimistic outlook about its future service improvements. He underlined the significance of forward-thinking within the Council, ensuring that the new Fire Station wouldn't just alleviate immediate pressures but would position the City to better manage emergency services as Avon grows. The consensus within the Council was clear that this location was optimal for enhancing service delivery across the City, and the decision was backed by extensive data analysis and strategic planning, aiming for operational excellence and community safety improvements.

Chief Swope discussed the project's timeline, emphasizing how extensive interviews with several architectural firms resulted in selecting the firm, Perspectus, known for its experience in public safety infrastructure. The selection process involved a Committee comprising several Department Heads, including the Building Department, Water Department, and their staff, along with Council representation and City Engineer Ryan Cummins. They meticulously reviewed submissions from various firms, assessing their capability to address recent advancements in Fire Station design, like air movement systems and protocols for managing carcinogens and cancer risks. This careful evaluation process led to narrowing down the firms to Perspectus due to their notable experience in constructing Fire Stations and understanding of specific safety requirements.

The first phase, as Chief Swope explained, would involve a comprehensive design development process. This phase includes conducting a needs assessment and functional programming to determine the size and operational requirements essential for the Fire Station. The process aims to optimize space for apparatus, including a minimum of three bays, and facilities that support firefighter health and operational efficiency. Assistant Chief Fischer underscored the operational advantages of the proposed location, suggesting that positioning the ladder truck at the new facility could improve response capabilities for the northeastern commercial areas and align with maintaining a favorable ISO rating.

Although the property was still undergoing some due diligence to ensure it was free from encumbrances like easements, Chief Swope expressed confidence in the progress of the property vetting process. Mr. Cummins had received positive indications from Columbia Gas regarding the removal of a blanket easement, further reinforcing confidence in moving forward. Mayor Jensen informed the Council that while hiring Perspectus for design development was necessary, it would not commit the City to a specific property until final decisions are confirmed, ensuring flexibility and due diligence continuity. The overarching approach reflects a commitment to strategic planning, ensuring budget alignment, and prioritizing firefighter and community needs as the project progresses.

Mr. Presley elaborated on the financial strategies designed to support both the operations and construction of the second Fire Station. He clarified that the recent income tax increase is earmarked to cover the operational aspects of the Fire Department, specifically including the operations of the second Fire Station. However, the construction costs for the Fire Station are not covered by this income tax adjustment. Instead, the City plans to use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds to cover the construction expenses.

Mr. Presley explained that as the City continues to pay down existing bonds, they are effectively building up capacity to issue new bonds targeted at the Fire Station project. These bonds would be structured over a period of 15-30 years. Such a timeline provides a balanced approach, aligning long-term repayment obligations with immediate enhancements to community safety services. The approach ensures that the

operating fund, fueled by the income tax, remains untouched for construction purposes, thereby allowing the City to maintain stable financing while simultaneously expanding its public safety infrastructure.

Mr. Presley also mentioned that the financing plan includes issuing bond anticipation notes, which serve as short-term financing tools. Once the Fire Station's construction is complete and the total cost is known, the City will then issue a longer-term bond to cover the expenditures. The bond duration could theoretically extend up to 40 years, but Mr. Presley assured that a timeframe that long is not intended. This strategy reflects a careful balance between fiscal responsibility and the City's imperative to enhance emergency response capabilities as part of its broader strategic growth and safety objectives.

On staffing, Chief Swope reported the Fire Department currently maintains 39 firefighters, with 12 on duty, ensuring 9 personnel are available daily at the main Fire Station. The addition of a second Fire Station necessitates hiring about 6 more firefighters to sufficiently staff both locations. This increase would bring the headcount to approximately 14-15 firefighters per shift, thus maintaining a minimum staffing level of 6 at the main Fire Station and 4 at the new Fire Station. The decision to position the ladder truck at the new facility was also under consideration, potentially enhancing response times to commercial districts and aligning with ISO rating improvements.

During the discussion, Chief Swope highlighted that achieving the new staffing levels requires careful planning, considering retirements and the ongoing need for training to ensure operational readiness. The Chief acknowledged that the negotiation process is underway to finalize the staffing structure, with considerations given to contractual obligations and time off. While the current contract allows for a certain number of personnel on duty, the future staffing model aims to adapt to the evolving demands of the City's growing population and infrastructure.

Assistant Chief Fischer contributed to the conversation, noting that the strategic location of the second Fire Station near key commercial areas would significantly relieve the main Fire Station. This shift in operations not only promises to enhance response times but also aims to optimize the workload distribution among firefighters, potentially increasing morale and extending the lifespan of the Fire Department's apparatus. The newly proposed staffing structure also anticipates accommodating more complex logistical needs, projecting a comprehensive response strategy that aligns with the City's broader public safety objectives.

Moreover, Chief Swope emphasized the importance of maintaining a proactive approach in terms of equipment resources and future operational capabilities. He mentioned the potential inclusion of the ladder truck at the new station, which is particularly strategic given the proximity to highway and commercial zones, further strengthening response capabilities. The reflective planning process allows Avon's Fire Department to not only address present challenges but also ensures resilience against future demands.

Ms. Patton inquired about expansion capabilities, prompting Chief Swope to respond by affirming that plans are indeed in place to accommodate future growth. He referred to the space constraints experienced in the 2003-current Fire Station, noting how storage had been a significant issue at that time. The Chief emphasized the critical importance of foresight in this new project to prevent similar limitations. The new Fire Station aims to address these prior shortcomings by ensuring adequate space for personnel and equipment, accommodating potential future expansion as Avon continues to grow.

Chief Swope detailed that the design development phase is set to begin immediately, which will include functional programming to determine the necessary size and layout of the new facility. He expressed optimism that they could break ground soon, projecting that the architectural and design phase would take

approximately 12 to 18 months. This phase is essential to ensuring that the Fire Station is built with the required infrastructure to support future advancements in fire response capabilities, incorporating state-of-the-art safety features and logistical efficiencies.

Once the architectural phase is complete, Chief Swope anticipates about another 12 to 18 months of construction to finalize the project. He remains hopeful that the comprehensive approach to planning and execution will enable the completion of the new Fire Station within a two-year timeframe, reflecting a balance between prompt action and thorough preparation. This process includes engaging architectural experts that specialize in public safety facilities, whom Chief Swope trusts to design a facility that meets both current needs and future scalability. By addressing these considerations early in the planning phase, the new Fire Station will be well-positioned to serve the community effectively in the years to come.

Mr. Radcliffe inquired about equipment needs, specifically regarding costs. In response, Chief Swope explained that the Fire Department would require an additional fire engine, emphasizing that the procurement of this equipment is as crucial as the construction of the second Fire Station itself. He noted that a committee led by Assistant Chief Fischer is actively working on specifying the requirements and finalizing the cost for the new engine. Chief Swope predicted that these budgeting efforts would align with the construction timelines, suggesting the possibility of consolidating the procurement within the same bond issuance planned for the Fire Station.

Additionally, Chief Swope highlighted the Fire Department's foresight in already possessing an additional ambulance. This strategic move allows the Fire Department to maintain operational readiness, particularly given the high usage rate of the ambulances, by implementing a plan to remount one of the existing ambulance boxes onto a new chassis. This approach ensures that the renovated ambulance will be ready around the same time as the new Fire Station's completion, thus aligning with the timeline for the Fire Station's debut. By proactively addressing these equipment needs, the Fire Department aims to enhance its response capabilities in tandem with the expansion of its facilities.

Adjourn: 7:07 P.M.

Mr. Moore adjourned the Meeting of the Finance/Safety Committee of Council.

PASSED: _____

SIGNED BY: _____
Tony Moore, Chair of the Finance Committee

Michelle Patton, Chair of the Safety Committee

ATTEST: _____
Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council

Respectfully submitted by Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council