

**TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers
45 South Main Street, Wallingford**

**Tuesday, April 1, 2025
6:30 pm**

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 4-7-25
AT 10:48am AND RECEIVED BY
Kristen Panza TOWN CLERK

RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES

The Ordinance Committee Meeting on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, was called to order at 6:35 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Thomas Laffin; Council Chair Joseph Marrone; Christopher Regan; Jesse Reynolds; Christina Tatta; and Autumn Allinson Chairperson. Also in attendance were Mayor Vincent Cervoni and Janis Small, Corporation Counsel.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Discussion and Possible Action on Revisions to the Rental Housing Ordinance**

Atty. Small stated that she recommends several changes including changing the inspection to every 5 years, expanding the notice provision for Violations to \$50 per violation per day, deleting the reference to the Housing Board of Appeals, and replacing it with a Hearing Officer. A similar format is used for other departments.

Councilor Tatta asked who the Hearing Officer would be. Atty. Small replied that this would be a volunteer position appointed by the Mayor. It is not an employee. But it is up to the Council.

Chairperson Allinson asked for a motion.

MOTION WAS MADE TO MOVE THIS TO FULL COUNCIL TO REVIEW AS AMENDED.

**MADE BY: ALLINSON
SECONDED BY: MARRONE
VOTE: UNANIMOUS**

- 5. Discussion and Possible Action on Revisions to the Abatement for Members of the Volunteer Fire Departments**

Present: James L. Buck, Wallingford Fire Chief; William Celata, Sr., Chief of East Wallingford Fire Department and Timothy S. Wall, Chief of North Farms Fire Department.

Councilor Tatta recused herself.

Chief James Buck explained the extended process the chiefs committee used to put together the package of abatements and benefits for volunteers. He outlined the changes to the document, including the definition of those eligible who are Active Members. The definition of the pool of who is eligible aligns

with the State. The person needs to have met all the requirements. The language has been updated. Specifically, paragraph 23.17 states that you need to be an Active member to be eligible which comes through the department leadership of each company. Paragraph 23.18 is how to qualify for the tax abatement and additional benefits. He noted that this includes the same point system which has already been approved. Paragraph 23.20 is the benefits approved by the Council.

Atty. Small noted that additional benefits have already been addressed.

Chairperson Allinson asked for a motion.

MOTION WAS MADE TO REFER THIS TO FULL COUNCIL FOR A PUBLIC HEARING

**MADE BY: MARRONE
SECONDED BY: LAFFIN
ABSTAIN: TATTA
VOTE: UNANIMOUS
MOTION: PASSED**

6. Discussion and Possible Action on Revisions to the Code of Ethics

Atty. Small explained that she noticed that there is no statute of limitations for someone to bring a complaint. Many other towns have limitations. She discussed it with the Board and the recommendation is that a one-year statute of limitations is appropriate. If someone were to willfully hide something it would be one year from the time of discovery.

Chairperson Allinson asked for a motion.

MOTION WAS MADE TO REFER THIS TO THE FULL COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL

**MADE BY: ALLINSON
SECONDED: MARRONE**

Chairman Marrone asked what this would do. Atty. Small replied it would prevent someone from complaining about something 5 years later. She found this when looking at something else. There has been no other impetus.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS
MOTION: PASSED**

7. Discussion and Possible Action on the Creation of a Permanent Building Committee

Chairman Marrone explained that there are quite a few building projects coming up. In the past, the Mayor appointed a committee for each project. He thought it might make sense to have a permanent committee. He provided the ordinance from North Branford as a sample. He recommended looking for people with expertise and putting them on a permanent committee.

Atty. Small noted that these would be volunteers and if there is more than one project at a time that would be a lot to ask. She found that other towns have an ordinance with the structure of the committee and the Council decides when a committee is needed and the specific assignments. She noted that School projects come under State Statutes and the Chair or a designee is entitled to be on the committee. The ordinance would say how the Committee relates to the administration.

Chairperson Allinson suggested a size cap. School renovations can be done by a permanent building committee but to fully renovate or build a school would need different input such as parents and the Board of Education. She suggested a structure with different appointees for BOE. The Building Committee would provide consistency on smaller projects.

Councilor Reynolds asked what would be different than now. The sample language has a 5-year term and it sounds like they report to the Town Manager. He asked if the committee would make recommendations on bid awards, etc. Chairman Marrone replied that this language is an example. He said the committee would make many decisions and interface with architects and builders.

Mayor Cervoni noted that the last building committee was appointed by the Council and managed the school roof replacements. They oversaw the whole project and reported to the Council. If there is a building project that requires a committee, the committee is appointed for that project. The difference here is that there would be a standing committee.

Councilor Regan asked if this precludes an engineer working on the project. No professional volunteer would be able to give up that much time. Chairman Marrone noted that in the past we have used retired or semi-retired engineers and construction managers. Councilor Regan suggested including some level of current knowledge of codes, etc. Chairman Marrone explained that experts present the facts and recommendations and the lay persons make the decisions.

Chairperson Allinson noted that the appointees are volunteers and if unable to serve a substitute or alternate can be used.

Atty. Small stated that the ordinance can be written in such a way that you create a committee as projects come out. You can form a committee for each project. She agreed that we need professionals to be involved. Both options are there.

Chairperson Allinson agreed that if we have a pool of appointees, we can write it as a per-project committee. She suggested some educational requirements or guidelines for committee members.

Councilor Regan suggested limiting the involvement of current council members. Chairperson Allinson noted with the exception of the Chair as an ex-officio. Chairman Marrone noted that there can be council liaisons that report back.

Chairman Marrone stated that the question is whether to have a permanent committee or just the structure.

Chairperson Allinson added that the public needs to be made aware of how committee members are appointed.

Councilor Laffin noted that if the volunteer's term ends in the middle of the project it could be a problem. Atty. Small noted that if the committee is appointed for each project, the term would be the length of the project. Chairperson Allinson stated that if there are multiple projects, the term can be defined at the appointment.

Chairman Marrone offered to work on the language and send it to Atty. Small. Chairperson Allinson volunteered as well.

Chairperson Allinson asked for a motion to gauge the interest in this topic.

MOTION WAS MADE TO MOVE THIS TO A SUBCOMMITTEE TO WORK ON THE LANGUAGE

**MADE BY: MARRONE
SECONDED BY: ALLINSON**

Chairman Marrone stated that one benefit is having a pool of volunteers available.

Councilor Laffin stated he is open to further discussion. He is concerned about builders on the committee involved in projects.

Councilor Reynolds stated that a permanent committee results in politics instead of project by project.

Chairperson Allinson suggested an ordinance on how to establish a building committee. Lay out stipulations for projects or just that committee, so there are no surprises. We can give guidelines for establishing Building Committees. The council can regulate who is on the committee.

Chairperson Allinson clarified the motion:

MOTION WAS MADE TO ALLOW CHAIRMAN MARRONE AND VICE CHAIR ALLINSON TO PUT SOMETHING DOWN ON PAPER FOR THE POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BUILDING COMMITTEE. THE DRAFT INCLUDING INPUT FROM ATTY. SMALL WILL COME BACK TO THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS
MOTION: PASSED**

8. Adjournment

Chairperson Allinson asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 1, 2025 ORDINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:15 P.M.

MADE BY: ALLINSON

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS
MOTION: PASSED**

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl-Ann Tubby
Recording Secretary