

**TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT**  
**SPECIAL PUBLIC HEARING MEETING**  
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers  
**April 28, 2025**  
**6:00 P.M.**  
**RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES**

The Town Council Meeting on Monday, April 28, 2025 was called to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Thomas Laffin, Christina Tatta, Samuel Carmody, Christopher Regan, Jesse Reynolds (came to meeting at 6:25pm), Autumn Allinson, Craig Fishbein and Chairman Joseph A. Marrone. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Comptroller Tim Sean and Town Clerk Kristen Panzo were also present. Councilor Vincent Testa was absent.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
- \*\* 3. Consent Agenda

Acceptance of a donation from Christopher Regan to the Town of Wallingford valued at \$1062.44/Chairman Marrone

4. PUBLIC HEARING:

**MOTION WAS MADE to approve Consent item 3.**

**MADE BY: TATTA**

**SECONDED BY: ALLINSON**

**ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR**

Chairman Marrone opened the Public Hearing. He explained that the Public Hearing is for the public to ask questions to the departments that were present at the meeting.

**BOE:**

Danielle Bellizzi Superintendent, Dominic Barone Business Manager for BOE and Marlo Roscoe BOE Chair were present to answer any questions.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked how much revenue does the BOE generate from the Sage Program. Mr. Barone stated that the YMCA funds that program and not the BOE. Mr. Comerford asked if the BOE lets the YMCA come in and use the facilities free of charge. Mr. Barone stated that the YMCA pays for the custodian depending on the school year.

### **Electric Division:**

Jake Arborio General Manager, Rick Hendershot Director of Public Utilities and Marianne Dill Business Office Manager were present to answer any questions.

Bill Comerford of Broadview drive asked about all of the downtown decorative lights and when will they finally be painted. Mr. Arborio stated that a bid is being put together. He hopes to have it posted by July 1, 2025. He stated there is a line item for this in their budget. Mr. Comerford asked if the money from previous years was spent. Mr. Arborio stated no because it is a different expense. The money not spent goes back to retained earnings. Mr. Hendershot stated that money can be used for whatever the Electric Division sees fit to use it for. Mr. Comerford asked how much money is in the account now. Mr. Arborio stated that it is between \$10,000 to \$25,000. He does not know the exact number. Mr. Comerford asked if they will just be repainted or replaced. Mr. Arborio stated that the plan is to replace them. The contractor doing the work can take the light poles and resurface them and then repaint them. They are looking at both options.

### **Social Services:**

Mayor Cervoni stated that there is no department head for Social Services. It is the various organizations that benefit from the contributions.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked why the letter that went out to all the organizations was not sent out yet. He wanted copies of the responses to the letters. He wanted to know what the cost to the town was that all the organizations were paying. He cannot ask though because none of the non-profit organizations were present at the meeting.

### **Economic Development:**

Don Crouch EDC Specialist was present to answer any questions.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked if the Grant Coordinator fell under this department. Mr. Crouch stated that it does not fall under this department. Mr. Comerford asked if the town still pays Steven Knight as a ghost writer for the town. Mr. Crouch stated that there is money budgeted for the magazine that Steve writes articles for. Mr. Comerford asked if there is anyone in the EDC that can do that for free. Mr. Crouch stated that at this time the department has 1.5 people in it, so Steve helps with the

articles, and it is budgeted for \$300 for the year. Mr. Comerford asked if Mr. Crouch is part-time and how many hours does he work every week. Mr. Crouch stated he is a full-time employee working 35 hours per week. Mr. Comerford asked if Mr. Crouch is asking for more help this year. Mr. Crouch stated that this year he is not asking for more help.

Darrell Stancuna asked about the breakdown of what EDC stands for. Mr. Crouch stated that it stands for Economic Development Commission. Mr. Stancuna asked how much money will be put away for the EDC budget this year. Mr. Stancuna specified by asking which programs the EDC has. Mr. Crouch stated that they have a marketing promotional budget for \$30,000. Mr. Stancuna asked if any part of that \$30,000 was used for the article that Mayor Cervoni did. Mr. Crouch stated that there was no cost to the town for that. Mr. Stancuna asked why it would not be funded by the town. Mr. Crouch stated that it is ad-based funding. They are private businesses that secure ads to support an ad in the magazine or the website. Mr. Stancuna asked if the restaurants would have to pay for this. Mr. Crouch stated that yes they would have to pay for the ads. Mayor Cervoni explained how this all came about. He stated Business View reached out to Mr. Crouch. They asked if the town would participate in an interview that would result in an article.

#### **Information Technology:**

Andrew Winters Director of IT was present to answer any questions.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked when will the public have access to Wi-Fi in the council chambers. Mr. Winters stated that it is coming soon. They had to re-design the network first. Mr. Comerford asked if the Town Council had Wi-Fi. Mr. Winters stated that they have a low-cost version. He stated that hopefully by the end of the year the building will have Wi-Fi access for the public. Mr. Comerford asked if the IT Department is being consulted in other departments in town. Mr. Winters stated that he takes care of the Town Hall departments, Public Utilities, Youth and Social Services, Park and Rec, GovTV and Public Works for internet access and Wi-Fi. Mr. Comerford asked if the main frame is located in the town hall building. Mr. Winters stated that the town does not have a main frame but servers throughout the town hall building. There are some services in the cloud depending on the application.

Bob Gross of Long Hill Drive asked if the public will have access to directly pay their utility bills online from their checking accounts. Mr. Winters stated that they public will be able to do that. They are in the planning stages of making that happen. Mr. Gross asked if there are any fees the public would have to pay for this service. Mr. Winters stated there will be a fee but it will not be much.

Jim Allen asked how efficient of all of the new upgrades to town will be. He asked about the savings from all of these upgrades and will it save money in the long run. Mr. Winters

stated that each department used to buy their own computers and monitors. That money is not going into the IT budget. A lot of the money in the IT budget has come from other departments and from savings in the Public Utilities department, so it is not new spending. Everything the IT department is doing will make town hall and other departments much more efficient.

#### **Park & Rec:**

Kenny Michaels Director of Parks & Recreation was present to answer any questions.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked about the picnic tables being one of the line items in the budget. Mr. Michaels stated that was not a line item in this budget. Mr. Comerford asked if any new picnic tables would be put out this year. Mr. Michaels stated that they have done it for the last 3 years. Mr. Comerford asked if there was a plan to put picnic tables at Walles Park. Mr. Michaels stated there is no plan to add picnic tables there. Mr. Comerford asked if there was an ADA Compliance line item in the budget. Mr. Michaels stated that there is no need for that line item.

Jim Allen asked if the residents versus non residents passes will ever be looked at again. Mr. Michael states that there have been discussions about the pros and cons of them. The non resident fee is not a financial driver to the department. It does not make sense to have it.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked if there is anything in the budget to redo West side field. Mr. Michaels stated that there is nothing in the budget for that.

#### **Engineering:**

Alison Kapushinski Director of Engineering was present to answer any questions.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked if the Doolittle basketball fields have been paid in full. Mrs. Kapushinski stated that is not part of this budget. Mr. Comerford asked why they need a new plotter. Mrs. Kapushinski stated that they are out of their service contract and are looking to trade it in and get a new service contract. The service contract has to go out to bid. Mr. Comerford asked what does the plotter do. Mrs. Kapushinski stated that it is used for plans that need to be scaled to size to print.

#### **Police:**

John Ventura Chief of Police Anthony DeMaio Deputy Chief of Police and Beth Dighello Executive Secretary were present to answer any questions.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked Atlas one and where they are with that. Chief Ventura stated that they spoke with the company of Atlas one and grant writers to try to partner with the BOE for a student violence protection grant. After a draft grant was

created, they were told that they did not meet the requirements so they could not access that funding. They have to find another source of funding. Mr. Comerford asked if the police department can have a motorcycle fleet. Chief Ventura stated that after the budget they can sit down and discuss this. Some police officers would be more inclined to use the bicycles than others.

### **Public Works:**

Rob Baltramaitis Director of Public Works and Steven Palermo Superintendent were present to answer any questions.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked about the vac truck for \$600,000. Mr. Baltramaitis stated that it was put out to bid recently. The bids are in and he has not gotten the official results yet. Mr. Comerford asked if any type of study was done on the Public Works department as far as efficiency money spent etc. Mr. Baltramaitis stated that they are always trying to be more efficient. He also mentioned that the vac truck is needed so they can clean more. There is a list of roads that is already budgeted for and a list of roads that they would like to do with the money being requested in the 25-26 budget.

Debbie Gross of Long Hill Road asked about the paving of roads and who is responsible for that. Mr. Baltramaitis stated that the finishing of the roads is done by the contractor. Public Works preps the roads, inspects them, etc. They replace the drainage and catch basin tops.

Kara Forte of Parker Street asked about the road work on 68 in front of Fritz School. Mr. Baltramaitis stated that it is not a town project.

### **Youth & Social Services:**

Mandy Miranda YSS Director was present to answer any questions.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked about an employee they wanted to hire but was not able to. Ms. Miranda stated that was a couple of years ago. Mr. Comerford asked if she has been fully staffed. Ms. Miranda stated that they have been fully staffed since then. Mr. Comerford asked if they ever look for any grants. Ms. Miranda stated that they do when they can. The town's grant coordinator helps them out. Mr. Comerford mentioned looking into grants for the railroad station.

### **Government TV:**

Tom Caneschi Supervisor and Susan Schott P/T Production Assistant were present to answer any questions.

Bill Comerford of Broadview drive asked about the full time person they want to hire. Mr. Caneschi stated it has been about four years since the town has had one. Mr. Comerford asked how many part time people do they have. Mr. Caneschi stated that they have five part time employees now. Mr. Comerford asked what the new manager position will consist of. Mr. Caneschi stated that it would be a question for Mr. Hutt. Mayor Cervoni stated what the manager will be doing if hired.

**Mayor's Office:**

Teshida Roberts of center Street asked if there was a way to do a gradual increase instead of the 19% all at once. Mayor Cervoni stated that is not an option because of the legislation and also because of the re-evaluation that was done one year earlier than scheduled. To decrease the tax increase by 2% like Ms. Roberts suggested would mean a \$6 million dollar decrease to the budget Mayor Cervoni stated.

Deborah Donback of Walnut Lane asked is there any other alternates to raising revenue in lieu of raising taxes. Mayor Cervoni stated that the Economic Specialist and Economic Development Commission is always looking for ways to increase revenue around town.

Debbie Gross of Long Hill Road asked if the town can apply a different mill rate to each category. Mayor Cervoni stated no that can not be done. Mrs. Gross asked about the \$0 dollar amount for the pilot programs for the colleges, etc. Mr. Sena stated that the town used to get money separately for each line item and now the state gives one check for everything.

Bill Comerford of Broadview Drive asked when the last time any of the businesses were audited. Mr. Sena stated that the property audits are done every year.

Jason Michael of Meadow Street asked if there is a line item for an efficiency study. Mayor Cervoni stated that there is not one yet. He is not aware of any other department putting a line item in for an efficiency study.

Jim Allen stated that everyone should be looking for ways to be more efficient.

Bob Gross of Long Hill Road asked why couldn't the town charge different tax districts depending on the services they use. He thinks there should be taxing districts.

Paul Cardullo of Bayberry Drive talked about the method that was used to asses the industrial and current commercial businesses.

Bob Gross of Long Hill Road talked about the transactions of some of the commercial businesses in town.

**Finance:**

Bob Gross of Long Hill Drive asked about the interest that the town generates and wanted an explanation of it. Mr. Sena stated that it gets invested in money markets. The money markets that the town has was in question. He stated that the town has five banks they work with. Mr. Gross asked why can't the town look at other ways to invest money other than banks. Mr. Sena stated that you cannot invest general fund money in anything other than banks. There are state statutes as how the town can invest general fund money.

**Contingency:**

Paul Cardullo of Bayberry Drive stated that he does not see a need for the contingency fund because the town has a rainy day fund to use. He discussed the Cap n Non fund.

**Pension:**

Bob Gross of Long Hill Road asked how the pension funds have done versus the S&P 500. Mr. Sena stated that the pension contribution is a percentage calculated from payroll. Mr. Gross asked if the pension can make a better return.

The meeting adjourned at 8:26pm p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Panzo

Town Clerk

Meeting digitally recorded

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Joseph A. Marrone III, Chairman

Date

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Kristen Panzo, Town Clerk

Date