

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Wallingford Town Hall- Room 315
October 28, 2025
6:30 P.M.
RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, was called to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Thomas Laffin, Christina Tatta, Autumn Allinson, Jesse Reynolds, Christopher Regan, Vincent Testa, Samuel Carmody and Chairman Joseph A. Marrone. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Town Attorney Gerald Farrell Sr., Comptroller Timothy Sena and Town Clerk Kristen Panzo were also present. Councilor Craig Fishbein was absent.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Consent Agenda
 - 3a. Consider and approve Tax Refunds totaling \$2,890.08 (#325-#344) – Tax Dept.
 - 3b. Acceptance of Federal/State Highway Safety “2024-2025 Comprehensive DUI Enforcement Program” grant and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$6,693 to Revenue Highway Safety, Acct. #1002001-45208 and to Police Overtime, Acct. #10020050-51400 - Police Dept.
 - 3c. Acceptance of donation from uptown and downtown businesses and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1,250 to Revenue Donations – Police, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations-Police, Acct. #25020050-58830-10135 – Police Dept.
 - 3d. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$2,600 from Regular Salaries and Wages, Acct. #10020100-51000 to Other Pay, Acct. #10020100-51900 – Animal Control
 - 3e. Acceptance of donation for youth recreation programs and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$665 to Revenue, Acct. #2134002-47152 and to Expenditures, Acct. #21340100-58830 – Y&SS
 - 3f. Acceptance of donation for Summer Youth Employment and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount \$3,000 to Revenue, Acct. #2274002-47010 and to Expenditures, Acct. #22702026-51000 – Y&SS
 - 3g. Acceptance of registration fees for WECARE Playful Cruisers and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$660 to Revenue, Acct. #2134002-47152 and to Expenditures, Acct. #21340100-58830 – Y&SS

- 3h. Consider and approve the use of the Parade Grounds on December 9th by the Public Celebrations Committee for Wreaths Across America – Chairman Marrone
- 3i. Consider and approve Active Transportation Microgrant – Program Planning
- 3j. Acceptance of CT DOT Active Transportation Microgrant funds and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$4,600 to Rev-Operating Grant, Acct. #2501002-45114 and to Exp-Transportation Microgrant, Acct. #25010200-58830-TBD – Program Planning
- 3k. Consider and approve reappointment of James Heilman as an alternate to the Inland Wetlands & Watercourse Commission for a term of three (3) years effective immediately and expiring March 1, 2028 – Chairman Marrone
- 3l. Approve Minutes of October 14th Regular Town Council Meeting.
- 3m. Consider and approve bid waiver for CT-TSG to upgrade the Board of Education’s telephone system – BOE

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve Consent Agenda items 3a-3k, 3l as amended for grammatical edits and 3m.

MADE BY: TATTA

SECONDED BY: LAFFIN

ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. COUNCILOR FISHBEIN WAS ABSENT.

4. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD-

Chairman Marrone stated that based on a memo the council received from the Law Department that mentioned a recent Circuit Case, the members of the public do not have to state their address when speaking at the microphone. They only have to give their name now.

Paul Cardullo discussed how at budget time he believed that the forecast for the 2025 budget was inaccurate because it did not reflect the surplus from the 2024 budget. He discussed the June 2025 report he received which shows a surplus. He mentioned that the town under spent by \$6 million and the town overachieved on revenue side by \$4 million. He said because of the large surplus for June 2025 it will reflect this year’s budget. He thinks the under spending of money leads to over taxation. He made a request through Chairman Marrone to Mayor Cervoni asking if the town would consider issuing a tax credit for the tax increase in 2025 before Christmas. Mayor Cervoni stated that he would defer that request to the Comptroller. Mr. Sena stated that when looking at the monthly financial reports the surplus in question in not a surplus but positive variances. He explained what happens when you create a budget. You cannot spend more than you appropriated. Unless the town spends every dollar appropriately there will always be a positive variance. He stated that the audit has not been issued yet and when the audit comes out there is a surplus of about \$1.9 million.

The revenue generated was discussed by Mr. Cardullo. The audit was discussed. He believes that the town has a faulty budget system and it needs to be looked at and changed. He is willing to sit with the Comptroller, the mayor and someone from Finance to go over the reports and help him understand them better. He asked Mayor Cervoni if he will issue that credit. Mayor Cervoni stated that he understands his request and will not express any opinions on the from last year until the audit is final. Mr. Cardullo asked the council to give serious consideration to what he is asking for and put it to a vote.

Larry Kellogg discussed the safety issue of walking across the street with his dog at North Turnpike Road and Parker Farms Road. He stated that he brought this topic up to the whole council via email and hand delivered the same information to the mayor six weeks ago. He received an email from Chairman Marrone last night he mentioned. He discussed that he has walked around his neighborhood talking to people about this issue. People tell him that they are afraid to cross North Turnpike Road to go to Neil's Doughnut Shop because it is unsafe. He discussed what the memo from Chairman Marrone said. It said that the Chief of Police is asking for a memo from the Engineering Department to send to him so he can send that to the State to fix a traffic signal. Mr. Kellogg asked if that same traffic light was at Choate on Center Street would it still take six weeks to produce the memo. Chairman Marrone stated that the same process would be followed. If it was on a town road, the process would be different than if it was a State road. Because Mr. Kellogg mentioned Center Street in his example that is a State road so the process would be the same as it is now. Chairman Marrone stated that the Police Chief went to the Engineering Department to get the memo that was written in engineering language to explain what the problem is and to say that she thinks the traffic light violates the signals. It is a State road and a State traffic signal, so the town has to follow the State procedure on this issue. The Town Engineer will prepare the memo; the Police Chief will sign the memo and send it to the State to have the issue looked into. Mr. Kellogg understands the procedure but stated that if it is a safety issue that takes precedent. He asked the council how many of them have gone and pushed the traffic signal button either on Parker Farms Road or on North Turnpike Road. No one on the council has checked out that area. He has an issue with the fact that it takes six weeks to produce a memo to give to the State. He talked about his time working at a power plant and him being a supervisor and how he handled safety issues. He stated that the fix for the traffic lights is very easy.

6. Discussion of old business – Chairman Marrone

(a) Update on Hidden Brook Lane

Attorney Farrell stated that there has been another easement obtained. They are waiting on another easement to be signed. The fire hydrant has been raised. He said it looks like it is getting very close to the town being able to accept that road.

7. Discussion and possible action regarding Collective Bargaining Agreement between Town of Wallingford and Teamsters, Local 443 effective from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2027 – Human Resources

Jim Hutt, Human Resources Director went over the changes to the contract. He stated that the new contract will run from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027. Wage adjustments for the employees in the bargaining unit, general wage increases of 2% starting July 1, 2024, 2.5% starting July 1, 2025 and 2.5% starting July 1, 2026 were discussed. The TA provides for increases in insurance prescription drug co-pays and the employee share cost increases from 16% to 17%. It also provides an increase in safety shoes from

\$150 to \$180, effective July 1, 2026. There is an increase of \$200 for clothing for employees in Public Works and the Sewer Division and for Engineering from \$275 to \$350. The contract also provides for five days of sick time after six months of service for new employees and also incorporates the CT Sick Leave Law. Employees can now use their sick time once it has accrued instead of waiting the six months.

8. Discussion and presentation regarding the Wallingford Emergency Shelter – Chairman Marrone

Lewis Gill, CEO of Columbus House gave a short presentation on the financials of running the emergency shelter for four months from December 1-March 31.

Mr. Gill discussed the two family shelters that are in back of the emergency shelter and how the families living there are staying longer than in previous years because permanent housing is so difficult to find. He mentioned besides these two units there are an additional two units for permanent supportive housing. He discussed the utilization data and how the emergency shelter is getting people for the night. There was a discussion of how money was spent last year when the emergency shelter was open from January 14, 2024 through March 31, 2024.

Councilor Allinson asked if a motion could be made seeing how there was no motion on the agenda only discussion. Chairman Marrone stated that this item was written as discussion because they needed to have a source of revenue for where the money was coming to fund the emergency shelter first before a motion can be made. He mentioned that he did not see anything wrong with making a motion in attempt to fund the emergency shelter if they could find out where the money would be coming from before making the motion. He did state that the funding suggestion comes from the mayor and then gets brought to the council for approval. Councilor Allinson understands all that but stated that it is now October 28, 2025 and they still do not have a source of funding to be able to fund the emergency shelter. She mentioned that when this was discussed during budget time, the council wanted all of this information in order to move forward with a decision. She feels that a decision needs to be made whether to fund the remaining amount needed to have the emergency shelter open for the full four months or not. She feels that a motion needs to be made tonight because time is of the essence. Mayor Cervoni stated that the administration was not clear on what the intention of the Town Council was for this item until tonight, so funding was never discussed. He said that if the council is inclined to fund the emergency shelter that the funding for it will be found so that it can happen.

Chairman Marrone asked Mr. Gill what is the date that this decision needs to be so that the emergency shelter can be open from December 1-March 31. Mr. Gill stated that he plans on having the emergency shelter open for December 1 and has already authorized his Human Resource to start the interviewing process.

Mr. Gill Continued his presentation. He discussed the cost for renting hotels rooms data because of Councilor Fishbein's discussion about the cost of hotel rooms and how it could possibly be less expensive. He discussed the proposed budget for 2026 and how personal is paid out so that the council can see where the money is being spent. He mentioned that they have already raised \$72,000 and will need the remaining \$111,000 so that the emergency shelter can stay open from December 1-March 31. The \$30,000 that the town allocated is for the family shelters in back.

Chairman Marrone stated that the council has some time to decide because the emergency shelter can open December 1 with the \$72,000 they already have.

Vice Chair Tatta stated that she was under the impression that the \$30,000 the town always funded was for the emergency shelter in the front and not for the family shelter in the back. Mr. Gill stated that in the past the town would rely on the FEMA money from the State to subsidize the funds to be able to have the emergency shelter open but now that, that money is no longer available it is up to the town to find ways to fund the emergency shelter. Vice Chair Tatta wanted clarification on the number of guests staying for the full 18 weeks the emergency shelter is open. Mr. Gill stated that the individuals coming in from the cold will get a bed and will be able to keep that bed if they are there for more than one night. There was a discussion whether it was 14 people per night for 18 weeks total or 14 full beds every night for 18 weeks. The emergency shelter holds 15 beds in it and at any given time there is always one bed available for use Mr. Gill stated. Vice Chair Tatt mentioned that she is still unclear about the math and how much it costs total. The cost for putting individuals in hotel rooms compared to having the same individuals staying at the emergency shelter is unclear. There was a discussion at the last Town Council meeting about possibly having data presented to the council of a maybe cheaper option to house people during the cold winter months compared to having them stay at the emergency shelter for the four months. The hotel comparison data is unclear. There was a discussion of how the needs of these individuals would not be met if they were to stay in a hotel room compared to staying at the emergency shelter. Their individual needs would be met at the emergency shelter if they stayed there compared to if they stayed at a hotel, their individual needs would not be met and they would be on their own to fend for themselves. She is not comfortable with the math and just wants to make sure that if, the town is going to spend taxpayers money that it is going to be beneficial and not have to town paying for duplicate services that could possibly be provided by other departments, like Youth and Family Services or other non-profits that deal with substance abuse. Mr. Gill stated that their primary focus is getting people in from outside of the cold, assessing them and helping them to change their lives.

Councilor Regan asked Mr. Gill if he had any idea on how much the state would be contributing to a cause like the emergency shelter. Mr. Gill stated that he is not aware of any money being given to Wallingford, from the State from the ask that was made. He is not expecting any money from the State. The staffing for early 2025 was discussed and how the emergency shelter found people to help out. Mr. Gill stated that they pulled people from different locations and just pulled anyone who was available to help out for that short period of time. There was a discussion as to having the emergency shelter open for three months instead of four months and how staffing would work for that. Mr. Gill stated that he has not looked into an opening for only 90 days or shorter. Seeing how things happened last year with the emergency shelter only being open for 6 weeks, he did not want to disappoint anyone by suggesting the emergency shelter being open any less than the four months. Councilor Regan wanted to have concrete numbers as to what the town's contribution would be compared to private fund raising. The question was asked as to who is in charge of making sure the money is there to give to the emergency shelter. Mayor Cervoni stated that he had a lot of help in finding funds to make sure that the emergency shelter would be open for last winter season. He mentioned that the United Way was a big help in this. The more money the town can get from the generosity of the community the better. The \$111,000 gap would take up most of the remaining contingency fund that the town has. Councilor Regan asked if the mayor and the comptroller would be able to come up with numbers for what the town can contribute and what the remaining number would be for the fundraising part of it. Mr. Sena stated that during the budget sessions, the comptroller asked for contingency and the town council made a drastic cut to the contingency portion of the budget. He mentioned maybe the town contributing \$60,000 from contingency and leave \$51,000 to be collected from fundraising and donations.

Councilor Testa wanted to know where the figures came from. Mr. Gill stated that the total cost for running the emergency shelter for the four months would be \$183,000. They have already been gifted with \$72,000 from

donations and that would leave \$111,000 left the emergency shelter would need. The operating cost for last winter season was discussed and how it was only 6 weeks and not the full four months that the emergency shelter was opened. There was a discussion of individuals being put in hotel rooms in an emergency situation and them not being able to the services needed like at the emergency shelter if they were able to stay there. He does not think putting individuals in hotels would be a good idea seeing how additional services would need to be provided at an additional cost.

Councilor Reynolds stated that during budget session they allocated \$90,000 for the emergency shelter which got cut down to \$30,000 and that \$30,000 went to the family shelters in back. He is in favor a trying to move forward and find a solution to fund the emergency shelter because he thinks it is important. He mentioned how the town does put people in hotels but that is mostly because there is flooding or a fire at someone's home. There is a difference from these individuals being in the hotel rooms and the individuals coming to the emergency shelter and then being put in a hotel room with no additional services. He mentioned that you cannot look at the cost per individual for the emergency shelter. It is a situation were you would have to look at the cost as if the emergency shelter was full all the time and then budget for full capacity for the full four months. There was a discussion of having qualified people working at the shelter to help the individuals there sort out their lives and be able to give them the best care for them on an individual basis.

Councilor Laffin is in favor of trying to figure out where the money is coming from so that the emergency shelter can be open for the four months from December 1 through March 31. He offered his help with getting the word out and raising awareness for the emergency shelter. He mentioned how it is far more efficient to operate the emergency shelter than to put individuals in hotels without additional services. He agrees with helping the town be able to fund the emergency shelter so it can be open for the full for months this year. Mr. Sena mentioned that the council can possibly make a motion to commit to funding \$60,000 from contingency and the \$51,000 can come from donations or fund raising and then at the next Town Council meeting the paperwork for the motion will be complete for the motion to move forward.

Councilor Allinson made a motion.

**MOTION WAS MADE TO support the funding the full amount of \$111,000 for the Wallingford Emergency Cold Shelter for the winter months as presented by Mr. Gill.
MADE BY: ALLINSON
SECONDED BY: LAFFIN**

Chairman Marrone stated that without having a funding source, he does not know if the council can put a dollar amount to the commitment. Mr. Sena stated that the council can use \$60,000 of contingency funds and \$51,000 from donations. The \$60,000 would be a transfer of funds from contingency and the \$51,000 would be an appropriation.

Chairman Marrone is fully committed to supporting the emergency shelter. The council expected the emergency shelter to be opened last year and funded, and it was not and so this year their expectations are higher because they want to make certain that what happened last year does not happen again. He is not comfortable voting on a motion with a \$51,000 question mark as to whether this money can be raised or not to fund the remaining portion of the emergency shelter. He wants to come up with a better plan on how the town will get the remaining \$51,000 and not have to vote on a motion for a certain amount of money that the town might not

have. He is fully committed to funding the shelter for the full amount of time they want to be open, seeing that the money is there.

Councilor Testa does not see how the council can vote on a motion for approving funds without having the correct paperwork from the administration stating where the money is coming from. He thinks this item should be put on the next agenda for the Town Council meeting so that everyone is aware of where the money is coming from. He does not see the urgency to get this approved now. He stated that this vote can happen at the next Town Council meeting.

Councilor Allinson stated that it is pointed out to the council that they do not always have the opportunity to move projects or funding along and this item is a chance for them to move the funding along to help out the emergency shelter. She stated that she is happy to withdraw her motion if need be and wanted to point out that the next Town Council meeting is cancelled, so they will not meet again until November 25. She mentioned that they are asking Mr. Gill to open the emergency shelter with only \$72,000 to use for paying staff etc., stating that the Town Council will support the emergency shelter but not agreeing to fund the remaining money needed to make sure that the emergency shelter is open for the full four months. She mentioned that if the Town Council does not find the funding to help then there will be people without jobs and will be people without a warm bed to sleep in during the cold winter months. She understands everyone's hesitance to do this right now without a clearly defined funding source, but the Town Council will not be meeting for another month.

Mayor Cervoni stated that in response to Councilor Allinson's motion and at the recommendation of the administration the Town Council will receive the funding source, and the administration will go line by line to find the funding and have the necessary paperwork ready for the next Town Council meeting so that way Mr. Gill will have something to rely upon.

Councilor Carmody stated that there is a level of urgency and that is why Mr. Gill is at the meeting tonight. Mr. Gill stated that the last Town Council meeting that he needed to know if the town was going to help fund this or not. He does not understand why the council is talking about hotel rooms, etc. If the mayor and administration are on board then so should the council. Councilor Carmody stated that he appreciates Councilor Allinson's motion and fully supports it.

Councilor Laffin stated that last year so many people were upset because the emergency shelter was not open and now there is a conversation about trying to fund the emergency shelter to make sure that what happened last year does not happen again. He mentioned that if the \$51,000 in donations isn't met then the administration can find the money somewhere in the budget to make sure that the emergency shelter stays open for the full four months. If the Town Council isn't willing to help out then who will he mentioned.

Larry Kellogg spoke about how the council mentioned saving a life and spending \$111,000 to do so. He mentioned what about him and his life. He asked Councilor Laffin if he would be willing to commit today to sending that letter tomorrow to the State to get the traffic signal light fixed. Chairman Marrone stated that the letter would not come from Councilor Laffin or the Town Council. The letter will come from the Town Engineer and the Police Chief. Councilor Laffin responded by asking Mr. Kellogg if he received his email stating asking Mr. Kellogg received everything that he needed. Mr. Kellogg stated at the last council meeting that he was unsure as to what Councilor Laffin was asking, so Councilor Laffin sent another email explaining to Mr. Kellogg what his first email was about. Councilor Laffin explained that the letter about the traffic signal light is not an agenda item at tonight's meeting and that the letter has to come from the Engineering Department

and not the Town Council. He mentioned that the administration is working on the letter. Mr. Kellogg wanted to point out the hypocrisy that he heard tonight from the Town Council. Councilor Laffin stated that no one disagrees with Mr. Kellogg and the Town Council as a whole feel that the traffic light on North Turnpike Rd and Parker Farms Rd is a problem that needs to be fixed. Mr. Kellogg mentioned that the council was discussing saving 14 lives by helping to fund the emergency shelter and he just wants the same courtesy when it comes to him and fixing the traffic light because he has almost been hit twice while walking his dog. He also mentioned how it has been six weeks and that traffic light is still an issue and that intersection is still dangerous to cross and walk around there. Mr. Laffin stated that the Town Council cannot write the letter needed to give to the State because they are the legislative body of the Town of Wallingford. He appreciates Mr. Kellogg coming to the meetings to make them aware of this issue and so that they can find a way to fix the problem. Chairman Marrone told Mr. Kellogg that no one disagrees with him on this matter of the traffic light being an issue. Mr. Kellogg asked then why it takes six weeks for his issue to be addressed. He mentioned how the council tonight talked about following a procedure when it came to trying to fund the emergency shelter and asked what about the process or procedure when it comes to addressing the issue with the traffic light. He mentioned that tonight the council is jumping the process to get the emergency shelter funded so that it can be open on time for December 1 and remain open until March 31. Chairman Marrone stated that the town does not own the signal light, the State does. The State has to fix the signal light and not the town. He also mentioned that this conversation does not have anything to do with item # 8 on the agenda.

Vice Chair Tatta mentioned that now that the motion is to fund the full \$111,000, is the town still going to look for donations to help fund any of this and is that the intent. Mayor Cervoni stated yes. She mentioned that she would have been ok with the \$60,000 that the town would be funding but is not comfortable with the town funding the full amount of \$111,000. She mentioned that last year did not go as planned with the emergency shelter and money was given in anticipation that it would be open for the full four months and it was not. Mr. Gill stated that tonight the council actually found out that the \$30,000 given to the emergency shelter actually funded the family shelters in the back instead of funding the emergency cold shelter in the front. It was not until the emergency shelter was not going to open that the town had to come up with \$22,000 to be able to have the shelter open for 6 weeks. Vice Chair Tatta stated that the history with all of this does not sit well with her. She wants the emergency shelter to open just as much as anyone does. She just wants to make sure that what they intend to happen with spending taxpayers money actually happens this year. She mentioned that there are five people who sit on the board of this nonprofit who all make over \$100,000 a year. She just wanted to make sure that the money is spend reasonably. She hopes if this motion passes that everything goes well this year and the emergency shelter serves the purpose it is supposed to that they are hoping for.

ROLL CALL:

ALLINSON: AYE

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: ABSENT

LAFFIN: AYE

REGAN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

TATTA: AYE

TESTA: AYE

MARRONE: AYE

8- AYE

0-NAY

**1-ASBENT
MOTION: PASSED**

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Panzo
Town Clerk

Meeting digitally recorded

Joseph A. Marrone III, Chairman

Date

Kristen Panzo, Town Clerk

Date