

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 2-3-2026

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2026 AT 3:57pm

6:30 P.M.

AND RECEIVED BY

Kristen Panzo TOWN CLERK

RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, January 27, 2026, was called to order at 6:35 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were, Autumn Allinson, Samuel Carmody, Thomas Laffin, Jesse Reynolds, Bryan Rivard, Melanie Rossacci, Christina Tatta and Chairman Vincent F. Testa Jr. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Town Attorney Geoffrey Einhorn, Comptroller Timothy Sena and Town Clerk Kristen Panzo were also present. Councilor Criag Fishbein was absent from the meeting.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Consent Agenda
 - 3a. Consider and approve Tax Refunds totaling \$3,511.94 (#613-#627) – Tax Dept.
 - 3b. Acceptance of 2026 “Click It or Ticket Enforcement Campaign” Federal/State Highway Safety grant and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1,352 to Revenue Highway Safety, Acct. #1002001-45208 and to Police Overtime, Acct. # 10020050-51400 – Police Dept.
 - 3c. Acceptance of donation and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$70 to Revenue, Acct. #2134002-47152 and to Expenditures, Acct. #21340100-58830 – Y&SS
 - 3d. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$6,344 from Class 8 Plow/Dump Truck, Acct. #10230000-57000-01362 to Crewcab Flatbed Truck, Acct. #10230000-57000-01361 – Public Works
 - 3e. Consider and approve FY 2025-2026 Budget Amendment and Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$150,000 from Distribution Plant-Station Equipment, Acct. #362 to Retained Earnings, Acct. # N/A- Electric Div.
 - 3f. Consider and approve FY 2025-2026 Budget Amendment and Appropriation of funds in the amount \$79,000 from Cash, Acct. #N/A to Liability Insurance, Acct. #43100925 – Water Div.
 - 3g. Consider and approve FY 2025-2026 Budget Amendment and Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$67,000 from Cash, Acct. #N/A to Liability Insurance, Acct. #46100925 – Sewer Div.
 - 3h. Consider and approve the Wallingford Community Theatre’s use of the Robert Parisi Town Council Chambers from April 15, 2026, through April 27, 2026, for the production of KISS ME KATE scheduled for April 24, 2026, through April 26, 2026 – Mayor

- 3i. Approve Minutes of January 13, 2026, Regular Town Council Meeting.

Chairman Testa spoke briefly about Adam Manseris, who had recently passed. He spoke about how Adam had worked in the Law Department as Corporation Counsel and his many years in that office. He asked for a moment of silence.

MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 3A-3N AS CORRECTED.

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR

COUNCILOR LAFFIN ABSTAINED FROM VOTING ON CONSENT AGENDA ITEM 3H.

Chairman Testa talked about the appointments for different Boards & Commissions that were on the agenda. David Leonardo was sworn in to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

4. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD-

There was no Public Question & Answer Period.

6. Discussion of old business – Chairman Testa

(a) Update on Community Pool

Mayor Cervoni stated that the existing park has been demolished. Construction has been going on. The foundation has been poured for one of the locker facilities. He mentioned that the mild season gave them the opportunity to work on the Gabian Wall. The wall is an erosion eliminating feature along with allowing proper drainage

(b) Update on Basketball Court at Doolittle Park

Mayor Cervoni stated that the condition that was seen in a photograph that was given to them was not obvious from the photograph. He was informed that the photograph showed an expansion joint and it may have expanded last winter. It has since contracted. He mentioned that if they can observe the conditions again, they will reach out to the contractor so they can inform the town as to how to handle the situation properly. A benefit of post tension concrete is that it allows the concrete to heave and because of the tension of the structure in cold weather when the ice and moisture drain away, the structure will go back to where it is supposed to be. They will also be looking at that joint to see if there is some type of compound that needs to be maintained in it.

Chairman Testa mentioned that on behalf of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Planning Department that the Plan of Conservation Development is going on right now with the development of

the new one. There is a survey out and they would love everyone to participate in the survey and weigh in. The link for the survey is wallingford2036.com

7. Discussion and possible action regarding the proposed fixed tax agreement for the affordable housing development by Honeycomb Real Estate Partners at 55 Kondracki Lane – Economic Development Commission

Steve Capriana, Honeycomb Real Estate partners, Kurt Montagno, Montagno Construction, partners with Honeycomb and the general contractor for the project along with Nick Lombardi, Economic Development Commission member and Austin McAnney, Economic Development Commission member were present to speak and answer questions.

Steve Capriana gave a power point presentation explaining the project to transfer the vacant building at 55 Kondracki Lane into an affordable housing building. He explained that this is a proposed redevelopment of the former Quinnipiac Valley Center Skilled Nursing Facility at 55 Kondracki Lane. The goal is to transform the vacant building into 66 units of 100% affordable housing through the reuse of the existing 69,000 square foot structure. The development is designed to serve households at or below 60% of area median income with a mix of studios, 1 bedroom and 2 bedrooms that align with the needs identified in Wallingford's 2022 Affordable Housing Plan, especially the need for smaller accessible units. Wallingford's current affordable housing inventory is approximately 4.37%. It is below the Stat's 10% target for affordable housing. This project will be a step in closing that gap. The property already benefits from a prior site plan approval for a 71-unit market rate conversion and the 66-unit affordable configuration fits within that existing approval. Mr. Capriana explained that they are pursuing a capital stack that includes a first mortgage, Connecticut Department of Housing second mortgage, LITC investor equity and developer equity with an invitation to apply already issued through DOH's development management process. For these State and investor commitments to move forward, the project must demonstrate long-term financial stability under the rent and income restrictions that will be in place for at least 40 years. He states that the reason they are at this meeting tonight is to request approval for a local fixed assessment for 55 Kondracki lane. The proposed fixed rate would be \$3.3 million dollars for a length of 18 years with annual yearly taxes continuing to be calculated with the town's adopted mill rate. He stated that this is not a request to freeze the tax bill but to provide predictability in the assessed value, so that the lenders, the State and their institutional investors can underwrite the property with confidence. Without this tax fixing agreement, the combination of restricted rents, long-term affordability covenants and rising operational costs would jeopardize the project's feasibility and make it very difficult to secure the necessary DOH funding and tax credit funding. With this agreement in place, the town will see a substantial increase in taxes over the current level, long-term improvements of a problem property and the creation of desperately needed affordable homes for Wallingford's workforce, seniors and residents on fixed incomes. The PowerPoint slide show presentation that followed showed how this Affordable Housing Project would benefit Wallingford.

Kurt Montagno gave a brief introduction. He stated that he is at this meeting a member of the development team and also as the general contractor for the project. He explained that between Honeycomb Realtors and Montagno Construction, they bring decades of years of experience in construction and development in the multi-family marketplace. He mentioned that for over 40 years his company has built thousands of units of apartments that are both affordable and market rate, in addition to many assisted living and skilled nursing facilities throughout the State of CT. This project was of interest to

them and they wanted to be a part of this project.

Steve Capriana went over the Power Point Presentation, giving a brief overview of the project and what the cost will be. He explained the pricing for each apartment and how that number came out. He explained how this project would help the working-class residents of Wallingford be able to afford a place to live and how the town's senior citizen population would have a place to live for those who needed to downsize their homes.

Chairman Testa asked to have the salaries on page 5 of the Power Point presentation explained again. He wanted to clarify that the numbers on this page were for a single adult and not a family of four like previously mentioned. There was a discussion as to what the top salary can be to qualify for 80% for affordable housing. The person would have to make no more than \$63,392 to be able to qualify to receive 80% of the AMI or the Area Median Income. He wants to make sure that the public receives the correct information and numbers when it comes to this project so they know who can qualify for the affordable housing. There was a discussion about the amount that would qualify for the 50% AMI and the 60% AMI for the units available. Mr. Capriana stated that for the 2-bedroom units the salary qualification can actually be higher because two individuals would be living there and that means two separate salaries to take into consideration.

Nick Lombardi, an Economic Development Commission member stated that when the developers approached them with this project he wanted to participate in this project because of his background with the Town of Wallingford. He spent the last 10 years working at the Wallingford Housing Authority working alongside the former Executive Director, Kelly McDermott, working on a transformation of the authority. The portfolio consists of State Public Housing, Federal Public Housing and Tax Credit Properties. He learned how projects are financed and how they can remain sustainable through rent stratification, capital funding and support from the municipality in Wallingford. He explained that there is a need for affordable housing in Wallingford. They explored what is the best type of housing for Wallingford and its residents. They believe that affordable housing is something that the town of Wallingford needs and should see more of. 30% of working families in Wallingford struggle to afford the basic cost of living here in town. This project is 100% affordable. That is one of the reasons that makes this project attractive to the EDC. Working class people who live in Wallingford who might not make a lot of money will be able to get the opportunity to be able to live in Wallingford with this affordable housing project. They have reached out to other surrounding towns who have done tax abatement projects for reference.

Austin McAnney, an Economic Development Commission member stated that he has been in the town of Wallingford his whole life. He stated that he worked for Masonic for 10 years at Ashler Village. He now is a CPA with an office in downtown Wallingford. He has two kids in the school system in town. He mentioned that the EDC started the conversation with Homeycomb and Montagno Construction in March of April of 2025. They have been very transparent with the EDC about their underwriting process and the numbers needed for this project. He mentioned that the companies answered all of their questions relating to this project. The idea that the residents of Wallingford are paying for this project is not true because the affordable housing is not a tax break project in town. There has been a 16% decrease in tax revenue from 2023-2024 and it will only keep going down if something is not done with the building.

Councilor Laffin asked for clarification on some of the other abatement deals that were made from projects that Honeycomb Real Estate Partners and Montagno Construction did. He wanted to know why Wallingford would

get an 18-year deal compared to other towns in CT who got 10-, 12- or 15-year abatement deals. Mr. Capriana started with Enfield, CT property. Enfield was a market rate deal. He stated that 12.5-year deal was all that they needed to make the project work for that town. The New Haven, CT project was only set up for 15 years. 15 years is the end of the tax credit compliance period. He stated that New Haven set that policy of 15 years because the State allowed for 12 years max. The West Hartford, Ct project was similar to the New Haven, CT project as far as timeline of either 10- or 12-years max for the tax abatement. They got their lender to be ok with the 12-year max period. They thought that the market outlook was good for the project for West Hartford, CT. The town agreed to re-evaluate after the 10 years was up. He stated that after 18 years is up in Wallingford, that would give them enough time to figure out what is next with the tax compliance period. Councilor Laffin mentioned that the market rate in Wallingford is high. He mentioned that this project gives new residents the chance to move into town and have an affordable place to live. It also gives current residents who might need to downsize due to retirement, a place to live. This project will bring Wallingford closer to the State goal.

Mr. McAnneny stated that Honeycomb Rela Estate Partners and Montagno Construction have to go through an audit every year to make sure that they are in compliance with the State regulations for the affordable housing plans. Mr. Capriana stated that every single renter has to be income qualified. That information goes to the State as well as the tax credit investor.

Councilor Rivard is an advocate for affordable housing in Wallingford. He stated that this project was originally approved for market rate back in 2023. He asked that if this project gets approved that they go back and get this affordable housing project into the affordability plan for the town so they can receive the 2% moratorium on 830G. That would make sure that the affordable housing projects now and in the future can be built in places in Wallingford that would be beneficial for the residents. He discussed the tax break if you will for the town and how it can be beneficial, but it is a unique situation for Wallingford and possibly a first of its kind. He asked what the percentage is that the first qualified people can be town of Wallingford residents or people who are or will be employed in Wallingford. Mr. Capriana stated that they do have to comply with all fair housing. He has gotten two separate answers to this exact question from property management companies. The first answer is that it violates fair housing to put that stipulation in the affordable housing plan. The second answer he received was that it does not violate the fair housing. They will look into this to make sure that they do not violate local fair housing and then go from there. He said that they will make the information about the affordable housing units public on the website and set a date as to when the applicants have to submit their applications. He mentioned that if the town of Wallingford wanted to send out that information so that they can certainly do that as well. There was a discussion about the possibility of getting market rate for this affordable housing project, seeing how there are residents who believe and feel like they would have to pick up the slack when it comes to taxes and have to pay more just so someone can be able to have an affordable housing unit in town. Mr. Capriana stated that with the returns, it would not attract any additional capital with what the market rate is right now.

Councilor Tatta asked how much profit Honeycomb Real Estate Partners would be making on this Affordable Housing Project. Mr. Capriana stated that cash flow on a monthly basis would be \$50,000 that they would be making on this project. She mentioned one of the largest if not largest tax increases, the town has ever seen last year on the residential side. There was no predictability for this increase for the residents of Wallingford. Honeycomb Real Estate Partners will not be the owners of 55 Kondracki Lane unless this affordable housing project gets approved by the town. She mentioned some of the reasons the current owners and the prior project did not get approved and go forward is because of the issues with

town departments and having to replace and fix issues that came up after the purchase of the building already happened. She stated that she wished the EDC was present then for those meetings with the current owners and not just at this meeting now. She stated it was a local business owner in town who gave back to the community and was not asking for a tax break and this person could not make that project go forward and that is the reason this new affordable housing project is among the Town Council tonight. She mentioned how she did not like how we got here and hopes that going forward everyone can work together for the sake of the town. After the last Town Council meeting, where this idea was first presented she went and met with the Tax Assessor to get more in-depth figures for this project. She went over the tax figures for the past years. She wanted to show that there are other options for this building that could be making the town more tax revenue than the affordable housing project. She is in favor of the project but her issue is with the tax break. She does not feel that it is right for certain residents to get tax breaks and then the rest of the residents in town have to pay more tax because certain people have got tax breaks while others did not. Mr. McAnney stated that Honeycomb Real Estate Partners cannot raise the rates for rent to make more money. They do not have the option to charge whatever they want for rent. To be considered a subsidy, the property or project would have to consume more town resources than it takes in in tax revenue. Councilor Tatta stated that they could charge whatever they want if they had market rate. Mr. McAnney stated that the stipulations being asked for this project to move forward is what they need for the DOH to move forward with the project. Councilor Tatta discussed the two-bedroom apartments that could be possible to have 8 children in total for all the two-bedroom apartments. She mentioned that it is around \$21,000 per student to educate. She mentioned that right there, the town is spending more in taxes than this project is bringing in.

Councilor Rossacci discussed the need for more affordable housing in town. There needs to be a place for teachers, police officers, dental hygienists to be able to have a place they can afford in town to live. She mentioned that over the 18-year tax abatement around \$1.43 million would be paid. Without the tax abatement it would be about \$1.96 million. It is about \$525,000 over the 18-year tax abatement. It would calculate to about \$29,000 per year over the 18 years. She made the argument that with this project there would be more money coming in for the total of 18 years compared to what is coming in now on the property. Mr. Capriana stated that the taxes will go up if the mill rate goes up each year. The term sheet that was provided by the Economic Development Department was discussed. She asked if there is a way to add some type of language to specify responsible contracting policy for the State for anyone working on this project will follow the State responsible contracting policy. Mr. Montagno stated that they have to follow the CHFA guidelines when they are constructing these buildings. They also provide performance and payment bonds for every project that they do.

Chairman Testa asked how that would be incorporated into something that they would approve for tonight. Mayor Cervoni stated that the only action able to be taken tonight is to tell the town that they can move forward and draft an agreement. Once the agreement is drafted, they will be back to have the council vote to approve the agreement.

Councilor Reynolds stated that there is a need for affordable housing in town. He understands Councilor Tatta's point with how much money will be collected. He asked the question is the cost for the project, without the State money, without the DOH money, etc. would it still cost \$23,897 million to fund this project. Mr. Capriana stated that it might actually be more expensive if they did not receive the money from other resources. He asked how the Town Council would know that the property is being maintained properly. Mr. Capriana stated that CHFA and DOH will be overseeing this property because it

is part of their PERM financing. They would make sure any issues are addressed and fixed properly. If there is any violations and the property is not being maintained then the tax credit investor has the ability to remove that partner from the project. There is an emergency fund of about \$450,000 that can be used for emergencies for the property. There was a discussion as to how \$3.3 million was set. That number is based on the value approach. Councilor Reynolds asked if the amount for the units of 50% and 60% were set in stone for the duration of 18 years. It is actually set for 40 years Mr. Capriana stated.

Councilor Laffin stated that this project is important for the town to move forward with. This property has not been used for a while now. He mentioned that the old project did not work prior. He mentioned that the cost per student is not collected on the average median home. He believes that the town needs to provide more opportunities for people to be able to live and stay in Wallingford.

Vice Chair Carmody stated that there is an affordability crisis here in Wallingford. He thinks it is very important to have an affordable housing unit so that young people and elderly people can actually afford to live in town. He appreciates all of the EDC's work on this project.

Chairman Testa asked who else in the town has reviewed and supports this affordable housing project. Mr. Lombardi stated that Don Crouch, the Economic Development Specialist is in support of this and has spent time on this project with different town departments, talking about this project. He has met with the Town Planner. They also had meetings with Mayor Cervoni about this. He also mentioned that not much of a material change has been made from the last project that was approved in 2023. Chairman Testa went over the handouts that were given to the Town Council. He wanted to know what the Town Council is being asked of to do tonight. Mayor Cervoni stated that if the council is interested in supporting this project as the developers requested that they let the administration know that and then they come back with a final agreement for the Town Council to approve. Mr. Capriana stated that they were hoping for a vote on the two terms of the fixed tax assessment which would be the \$3.3 million dollar value and the 18-year term which would then allow the town to draft that agreement. Chairman Testa wanted to make sure that how the letter from Mr. Crouch said was written, that no more units can be added to this project.

Councilor Allinson is in support of this project.

MOTION THAT THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDS THE MAYOR AND THE LAW DEPARTMENT DRAFT A CONTRACT FOR THE 18 YEAR FIXED TAX AGREEMENT FOR THE ASSESSED VALUE OF \$3.3 MILLION DOLLARS AND WITH THE CAVEATS MENTIONED.

MADE BY: ALLINSON

SECONDED BY: CARMODY

Town Attorney Einhorn mentioned that the motion just made should have some type of language stating the recommendation of the contract moving forward as presented.

Councilor Tatta asked for clarification about what would happen after the 18-year term is up. She mentioned that the renters are locked in for 40 years, but what would happen if after 18 years it is not affordable any more for them. Mr. Capriana stated that in that scenario there would have to be a conversation with the town. She asked if after the 18 years is up, would they have enough money saved from the earnings

that they would be able to pay the full taxes. Mr. Capriana stated that the plan would be to pay the full taxes at that point. There will be a reassessment of the property so they can see where they land after that. The hopes would be that the operating reserve would be able to offset the increase in taxes if need be. She asked because the prior project was approved, if this project needs the approval of the EDC, etc. again. He stated that this project is fully approved and does not have to go back in front of departments for approval. He stated that it is the same project that got approved in 2023, the only difference is who is living there.

Bruce Conroy agrees that affordable housing is necessary in town. He wants to see the use of apprentices and local people in town are helping to work on this project. He is concerned with who builds this project and what contractors and sub-contractors are used for this project. He talked about the apprentice program here in town and how those people should be helping on projects like this in town.

Mary Muchinsky stated that she is a member of the Wallingford Works for Housing Coalition and they have been talking about projects like this to enhance the Town of Wallingford. She mentioned how sale prices have gone up 47% in only four years for homes and rents went up 24% in only three years. There was a discussion of how some homeowners and renters can't afford to live in the places they are right now. She talked about how families in town are struggling to make ends meet and how this affordable housing project would be a great first step in helping people to be able to stay in town.

Joann Humble stated that she is very passionate about affordable housing. She has been working hard as a member of the Wallingford Works for Housing Coalition and had no idea how many people in town struggle to make ends meet. She mentioned how the need for affordable housing is great here in Wallingford.

Councilor Tatta asked to hear the motion being voted on again. Councilor Allinson read the motion she made.

Chairman Testa asked for clarification purposes, how would the Town Council proceed with adding any conditional language. Attorney Einhorn stated that the mayor and the party would have to have a meeting with the Law Department to determine exactly what the contract's going to say and then it would come on the agenda for the council to approve.

MOTION WAS MADE TO RECOMMEND THE CONTRACT MOVING FORWARD AS STIPULATED IN THE PRESENTATION WITH AN ASSESSED VALUE OF \$3.3 MILLION DOLLARS FOR 18 YEARS FIXED TIMING.

**MADE BY: ALLINSON
SECONDED BY: CARMODY**

**ROLL CALL:
ALLINSON: AYE
CARMODY: AYE
FISHBEIN: ABSENT
LAFFIN: AYE
REYNOLDS: AYE**

RIVARD: AYE
ROSSACCI: AYE
TATTA: NAY
TESTA: AYE

7- AYE
1- NAY
1- ABSENT
MOTION PASSED

- 3e. Consider and approve FY 2025-2026 Budget Amendment and Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$150,000 from Retained Earnings to Distribution - Maint. of Station Equipment and Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$150,000 from Distribution Plant-Station Equip. to Retained Earnings – Electric Div.

\$150,000	From: Retained Earnings	Acct. # N/S
\$150,000	To: Distribution-Maint. of Station Equip.	Acct. #592

\$150,000	From: Distribution Plant-Station Equip.	Acct. #362
\$150,000	To: Retained Earnings	Acct. #N/A

- 3j. Consider and approve appointment of Emilia Menna-Erdman to Board of Assessment Appeals for a term of three (3) years set to expire January 27, 2029.
- 3k. Consider and approve appointment of Leslie Williams as an alternate to the Historic Properties Commission for a term of five (5) years set to expire January 27, 2031.
- 3l. Consider and approve appointment of David Leonardo to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a term of five (5) years set to expire January 27, 2031.
- 3m. Consider and approve appointment of Bob Gross to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term of five (5) years set to expire January 27, 2031.
- 3n. Consider and approve appointment of Chris Larocque as an alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term of three (3) years set to expire January 27, 2031.

Chris Larocque was sworn in as alternate member for the Zoning Board of Appeals Commission

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Panzo
Town Clerk

Meeting digitally recorded

Vincent F. Testa Jr., Chairman

Date

Kristen Panzo, Town Clerk

Date