

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers

February 24, 2026**6:30 P.M.****RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES**

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, was called to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Autumn Allinson, Samuel Carmody, Craig Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, Jesse Reynolds, Bryan Rivard, Melanie Rossacci, Christina Tatta and Chairman Vincent F. Testa Jr. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Comptroller Tim Sena, Town Attorney Geoffrey Einhorn and Town Clerk Kristen Panzo were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Consent Agenda
 - 3a. Consider and approve Tax Refunds totaling \$3,304.61 (#815-#834) – Tax Dept.
 - 3b. Acceptance of Federal/State Highway Safety grant funds entitled “2025-2026 Comprehensive DUI Enforcement Program” and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$10,627 to Revenue Highway Safety, Acct. #1002001-45208 and to Police Overtime, Acct. #10020050-51400 – Police Dept.
 - 3c. Acceptance of donation from Barbara Lagerstrom to be used for the K-9 program and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$100 to Revenue Donations - Police, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations - Police, Acct. #25020050-58830-10127 – Police Dept.
 - 3d. Acceptance of registration fee for the WECARE Playful Cruisers program and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$20 to Revenue, Acct. #2134002-47152 and to Expenditures, Acct. #21340100-58830 – Y&SS
 - 3e. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$2,000 from Program Memory Card, Acct. #10010600-56713 to Maint. of Equipment, Acct. #10010600-54325 – Registrar of Voters
 - 3f. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$22,000 – Animal Control

\$22,000	From: Regular Salaries & Wages	Acct. #10020100-51000
\$17,000	To: Veterinary	Acct. #10020100-56742
3,000	To: Operating Expenses	Acct. #10020100-58735
2,000	To: Other Pay	Acct. #10020100-51900
 - 3g. Acceptance of donation to the Animal Control Trust Fund from the Regan Foundation and Vinny’s Deli in the amount of \$11,865 – Animal Control

- 3h. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$10,000 from Regular Salaries, Acct #10030000-51000 to Other Pay, Acct. #10030000-51900 – Public Works

- 3i. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$37,889 – Public Works
 - \$37,889 From: Maint. of Bldgs. & Grounds Acct. #10030000-54315
 - \$18,744 To: RTU, Room #6 Parks & Rec. Acct. #10030000-57000-TBD
 - \$19,144 To: RTU, Gov TV Acct. #10030000-57000-TBD

- 3j. Consider and approve FY 2025-2026 Budget Amendment and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$65,000 to Miscellaneous Expenses, Acct. #46100643 from Retained Earnings, Acct. #N/A – Sewer Div.

- 3k. Consider and approve appointment of Whitney Mooney to fill a vacancy to the Fair Rent Commission as a tenant member for the remaining term set to expire September 24, 2026.

- 3l. Consider and approve reappointment of Thomas Vitali to the Board of Assessment Appeals for a term of three (3) years set to expire January 1, 2029 – Chairman Testa

- 3m. Consider and approve reappointment of Joseph DaCunto, Robert Jacques, John LeTourneau, Jim Seichter and Tim Wall as Constable for a term of two (2) years set to expire on January 7, 2028 – Chairman Testa

- 3n. Consider and approve appointment of Jim Seichter to fill a vacancy on the Planning and Zoning Commission the remaining term set to expire on January 8, 2027 – Chairman Testa

- 3o. Approve Minutes of February 10, 2026, Regular Town Council Meeting.

- 3p. Consider and approve appointment of Michelle Cucinelli, Nancy Leaman, Erin Benham, Debbi Reynolds, Brenda Shuler, and Ruth Kramer to the Public Celebrations Committee for a term of two (2) years set to expire February 1, 2028 – Chairman Testa

**MOTION WAS MADE TO approve Consent items 3a-3p, 3o as amended.
MADE BY: CARMODY
SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS
ALL MEMBERS THAT WERE PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR.**

4. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

No Items were removed from the Consent Agenda.

John LeTourneau, Robert Jacques and Jim Seichter were sworn in as Constables. Jim Seichter was sworn in as a member of the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Chairman Testa wanted to acknowledge Vinny's Deli and the Regan Foundation for their donation to the Animal Shelter.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD-

Paul Cardullo wanted to congratulate everyone that was elected or re-elected for this term. He talked about an email that he sent to the council. He wants the council to review the budget on a regular basis. Chairman Testa understood what Mr. Cardullo was asking for. He said that there might be councilors who would be interested in something like this. Mr. Cardullo said that the council members should give some serious thought to this. He spoke about the budget and how the town always seems to have a surplus of money after each fiscal year is over.

Bill Comerford asked if the Town Engineer was asked to show up for the Basketball Courts agenda item. Mayor Cervoni stated no. Mr. Comerford asked why the Town Engineer was asked to attend this meeting. Mayor Cervoni stated that her presence was not required. Mr. Comerford discussed his findings with the courts and the issues with them. He mentioned that the final set of plans does not exist because he has asked for them. He discussed the FOI regulations and the contractor who did the work. He discussed the FOIA regulations and state statute. He tried every avenue he could to get these plans with no luck. The diagram that was on the plans for the basketball courts was discussed. He asked Mr. Sena if the courts are 100% paid for and if the bond has been released. Mr. Sena stated that he believes that they were paid for and would have to check with Purchasing to see if the bond was released. There was a discussion about the Sidewalk Inspector and how that person inspects the construction jobs also.

Justin Weekes spoke about last time he was at a Town Council meeting and how he was talking about Ramadan and talked about trying to expand the parking to allow for some neighborhood relief. He spoke to the mayor about this. He discussed the time frame of when there is parking at night. It is usually around 9:30pm every night. He discussed parking bans and signs that are put up by the town to make residents aware of these parking issues. The neighborhood isn't getting any support from the Police Department he said. Chairman Testa asked the mayor if he had a chance to look into this. Mayor Cervoni stated that they have sent a letter to the eman of the mosque and also a map showing where public parking is in in the vicinity of where they are located and to encourage them to make use of that. In the past the Baptist school across the street did allow parking in their lot for events but stopped at a certain point.

Larry Kellogg discussed how he was updated every two weeks with information. Chairman Testa stated he was referring to the fact that Mr. Kellogg was coming to the meetings and that is why he was updated every two weeks. Mr. Kellogg brought up the snow ordinance that the town has in place. He wanted to know if the State has to follow that ordinance. Mayor Cervoni said they can let the State know about it. He said they can follow up with the State. Mr. Kellogg wants the snow cleared from the bridge where he lives in Yalesville so people can walk because there are not many sidewalks where he lives. The State told him that it is not their issue and that it is a town issue. He wants to be updated on this matter.

Jason Michael asked about the concrete barriers in the parks during the wintertime. He wants to know who decides this and why it is happening. Park access becomes more difficult for residents because of these barriers. Chairman Testa said he will get Mr. Michael an answer.

Allie McKeen spoke about the Conservation Commission approving bow hunting at Tyler Mill. She has been expecting this item to be on the agenda, and it has not been, which is why she is speaking at this meeting tonight. Tyler Mill is 1,000 acres and is very parklike. The overpopulation of the deer was discussed. Archery is a very safe sport.

Alex Bates said he was at a Town Council meeting last March asking about the properties that can be hunting on. He was told that Tyler Mill is only for hunting small game. He mentioned that there were other properties in town that are not really publicly posted about where you can hunt. He is in support of deer hunting.

Chairman Testa said that he thought that the recreation Commission did not support deer hunting at Tyler Mill. Mayor Cervoni said he was under the same impression that the recreation Commission did not support this.

Rob Dennis stated that bow hunting is very safe and probably the safest thing you can do outdoors. He wants to see the town have a conversation about this. He said if people did their research they would find that there are no accidents with bow hunting.

A resident stated that there are over 3,000 acres of recreational land in town. 725 of those acres are for hunting at Tyler Mill which is a bird hunting and small game hunting property. He stated that the town needs to have a conversation about the land in town and about bow hunting in town. The land is for recreational use and bow hunting is a recreational sport. There is an overpopulation of deer in town. Deer vehicle accidents is very high in Wallingford because of overpopulation.

Bruce Conroy discussed the issue that the town does not allow bow hunting on town land. He mentioned the land that was bought with recreational funds. The land was purchased for recreational use. He thinks the council should create an ordinance or at least discuss this matter in more detail, but a conversation of some type needs to happen.

Bob McCarthy stated that he is a bow hunter and a landowner. The town land abuts two perimeters of his property. He is concerned for the safety of his family when they are outside and playing with the grandchildren. He stated that he has livestock and he doesn't want to have them step on an arrow and cut themselves because people are allowed to hunt on the property very close to his home. He wants to ensure the safety of his property especially because of his grandchildren. He discussed the different types of bows and arrows used for deer hunting.

6. Discussion of Old Business/New Business – Chairman Testa

(a) Update and discussion regarding Doolittle Park Basketball Courts.

Mayor Cervoni said that there was discussed an email since the last update was given.

Councilor Reynolds spoke about the courts themselves and the cracks he saw in multiple places. The problems with the painting of the courts were discussed. The basketball courts are not regulated basketball courts. He said that the courts look like they are painted as if they were regulated basketball courts, but the paint ends where the

court ends, so there are no out of bound lines, etc. which makes playing unsafe sometimes. The 3-point lines on the courts were discussed. He wanted to bring up the point that if the courts are already paid for and the warranty is in place that at least the basketball courts should be repainted with the correct out of bounds line and 3-point lines. The aging of the courts around where the bib was discussed and there are no signs stating that you cannot go on the courts with anything other than shoes. When he went to inspect the courts, he said he saw tracks. The warranty says you cannot roller blade, skateboarding etc. on these courts. Mayor Cervoni said the signage is something they can address. He said painting or re-stripping of the courts is going to require resurfacing the courts which are not covered under the warranty. It can be a \$9,000 to \$10,000 cost. He can look into it more specifically. He mentioned the Wall Street court is for pick up games. There was a discussion about after the job was completed and if the courts were painted wrong, can we go back to the contractors with public feedback saying that the town wanted the courts to be repainted as long as there was no extra cost. Councilor Reynolds asked if the resurfacing can be looked into. Mayor Cervoni said he can ask to see if they will consider a resurfacing warranty claim.

Bill Comerford wants the council to get the Town Engineer to come to a meeting to answer some questions. He mentioned that they still do not know what the route cause was for the surfaces failing in the first place. There was a discussion about not putting a basketball court in a flood zone. He thinks that the work done should have been questioned before being signed off on. The quality of work for each basketball court was discussed. The maintenance of these courts and who is supposed to do this was discussed.

7. Discussion and possible action to reconsider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$9,857 from Contingency-Misc. Exp., Acct. #10019000-58820 to Exp.- P&Z-PS-POCD Consultant, Acct. #10010700-56822 and Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$106,573 from Surplus, Acct. #N/A to Transfer Out-General Fund, Acct. #20080350-59220 and Appropriation to Revenue - Transfer In, Acct. #1009053-49015 to Exp.- P&Z-PS-POCD Consultant, Acct #10010700-56822- Planning & Zoning Commission

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve item 3g, a transfer in the amount of \$9,857 from Contingency Misc. Exp. Acct. to Exp. P&Z PS-POCD Consultant Acct. and appropriation of funds in the amount of \$106,573 from Surplus Acct. to Transfer Out General Fund Acct. and appropriation of funds in the amount of \$106,573 to Revenue Transfer In Acct. and to Exp. P&Z PS POCD Consultant Acct. as requested by Planning & Zoning Commission.

**MADE BY: CARMODY
SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS**

Chairman Testa stated that this agenda item came up two weeks ago and questions were raised about the process and the council asked the administration to look into this further.

Town Attorney Einhorn stated that Corporation Counsel Small sent a memo to the council regarding this matter. The memo said that it does not require the Planning & Zoning Commission for the hiring of a consultant. Chairman Testa said that was part of the concern. The other part was the fact that a contract was signed and a mistake was made, maybe. He is just looking for an explanation as to what happened. Mr. Sena said a basic error was made by the department head. The department head came before the council in August of 2025 to ask for an RFP to be approved. At that time, the Finance department stated that they would back for funding. They did not know how much this would cost so funding was not discussed at the meeting.

Once the RFPs were open the department head should have contacted the Purchasing department but did not. They might have thought that Finance would do that but that is not the procedure. The correct paperwork was not filed and Finance caught the error. He mentioned that there are procedures in place when something like this happens and it is caught by Finance. They are looking at ways to improve the procedure so something like this does not happen again.

Councilor Rivard said that mistakes happen and he applauds the Town Planner for writing a memo to the mayor stating, he made a mistake. He wanted to know in some cases if the Finance Department can decide and maybe pay for the work being started in some projects if the money is not already allocated to that specific project. He also wanted to know, can there be a system in place that says a bid cannot be awarded, if funding is not in place. There was a discussion of how financial tools can help out a great deal in situations like this. The town just needs to utilize them more.

Mayor Cervoni said that last fall the town did have training on purchasing procedures. The training was after this mistake happened. Mr. Sena explained the process of the contract and who needs to sign off on it before the money is put in place.

Councilor Fishbein asked if August of 2025 was the first time this item for the POCD project was brought to the council's attention. Mr. Sena said he is not the right person to answer that question because this is not his item. The contract in the backup was discussed and how it had a date of January 2025 and not August of 2025. Town Attorney Einhorn said that was the consultant's form that was presented with the RFP. His guess is that the date of January 2025 was some type of place holder that was not filled in. There was a discussion about the January 2025 date. Councilor Fishbein asked who reviews these documents before they are signed. Mayor Cervoni stated that contracts go before the Law Department. There was a discussion about the RFP process and that the council has nothing to do with picking the entities for the RFP. It was mentioned that the same entity that won the RFP also had some mishaps with the new high school fantasy. He is not proud of this contract and what happened.

Jeff Cohan, Planning & Zoning Vice Chair. He said when this RFP went out he was a regular commissioner. He said that the Planning & zoning Commission is responsible for producing the POCD and not the Town Planner, the Town Council, the Mayor or the Town Attorney. He believes that there was no malicious intent on the Town Planner's part. He is disappointed that the Planning & Zoning Commission was not involved in the RFP process when it came to picking a consultant. The general statutes says that a consultant can be hired to get any work done associated with the POCD. He said that some work has been done already and the consultant needs to get paid.

Larry Kellogg asked what POCD stands for. Chairman Testa said it stands for Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Kellogg wanted to know why this can't be spelled out for people. He asked what YSS stands for. Chairman Testa said it stands for Youth & Social Services.

Bill Comerford mentioned how he was accused of hanging the Town Planner out to dry. He thinks the charter was violated because of the situation. Chairman Testa said that it is Mr. Comerford's opinion that the charter was violated. In his opinion the charter was not violated at all. He looked very closely at the charter to make sure. There was a discussion as to Mr. Comerford's opinion of how he thought the charter was violated. There was a discussion on how the charter was not violated. Mr. Comerford said this is not the first time something like this has happened in the town. He said it happened a year

ago with the Electric Division. He was glad that Corporation Counsel Small wrote the memo and glad that Mr. Sena caught it on his end.

Councilor Rossacci thanked the Vice Chair of the Planning & Zoning Commission for being at the meeting to give his prospective on this. She was also disappointed that they were left out of the process. She said there were five companies that bid the job but only two companies scored the RFP. She thinks it is a good idea to look over the procedures of the town. She would like to see the RFP process maybe updated to include more than two companies who scored the RFP.

ROLL CALL:

ALLINSON: AYE

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: NAY

LAFFIN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

RIVARD: AYE

ROSSACCI: AYE

TATTA: NAY

TESTA: AYE

7- AYE

2- NAY

0-ASBENT

MOTION: PASSED

8. Discussion and possible action regarding intent to use RFP for Health and Life Insurance Benefits Consultant – Human Resources

MOTION WAS MADE TO use RFP for Health and Life Insurance Benefits Consultant As requested by Human Resources.

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

Chairman Testa wanted to explain why this item was on the agenda. He discussed the RFP process.

Jim Hutt, Director of Human resources explained why he wanted to use the RFP process. He wants to comply with the Purchasing Ordinance. The current contract for the Insurance Consultant is up right now. He thinks that using the RFP process to determine qualifications for the Insurance Consultant is the way to go. It will also be to determine the price.

Councilor Fishbein said this is one of the most important decisions because it affect every employee in town. He would suggest putting something in place prior to the process being completed just because of the previous item they had before them having to do with the RFP process. He thinks the final document should come before the council so they can see who bid the RFP. They would have the opportunity to read the contract and be part of the process.

Councilor Tatta thinks this is a good plan. She is concerned with the past and having consultants being hired in town for jobs. There has been a lot of money spent on consultants in the past with not so great results.

Mr. Hutt said that he is talking about the health insurance budget, which is approximately \$30 million dollars. The consultant cost per year is \$60,000. If they went with a qualification based, the cost could increase or stay the same. Nothing is going to be much different with an RFP process as it would with a straight bid. You are weighed the qualifications part of the vendor more than you would pricing. You want the qualifications for such a complex subject like health insurance. These are his recommendations.

Councilor Tatta asked if they use a consultant now. Mr., Hutt stated yes they do. He is asking for the RFP process instead of the straight bid process to happen. The consultant they had was picked based on 50% qualifications and 50% cost.

Mayor Cervoni asked Mr. Hutt how long the town has had a consultant to assist with the health insurance. Mr. Hutt said he has been her for 23 years and all 23 years they have had a consultant.

Councilor Rivard wanted to know when they look for higher qualifications what is the process to pick someone who meets the qualifications. Mr. Hutt said they will be looking at long-term planning for health insurance, plan designs, what their process is for looking and evaluating plan designs, what their role is in collective bargaining.

Councilor Tatta asked about town representatives and who they would be. Mr. Hutt said it would be himself, the Assistant HR Director, perhaps the Comptroller. For BOE it could be people from Central Office.

There was a voice vote taken and everyone present was in favor.

9. Discussion and possible action to initiate a charter review and establish a Charter Revision Committee – Councilor Rossacci

Councilor Rossacci explained why she put this on the agenda. She want to go over the process for town government and look to see if anything in the charter can be updated. The council is not Democrat favor so, it is a good time to look over things to see how they can be improved so that the town can run more efficiently. There was a general discussion on whether there needs to be a Charter Revision Committee or not. Councilor Laffin thought that the Charter was fine as is. The public wayed in on this matter and gave there Opinion.

10. Discussion and possible action to approve the Town Council Rules of Procedure – Chairman Testa

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve the Town Council Rules of Procedure

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

There was a lengthy discussion as to if changes needed to be made to the Town Council Rules of Procedure.

MOTION WAS MADE TO change language under Section IV to say at any workshop, public comment shall not be taken.

**MADE BY: FISHBEIN
SECONDED BY: LAFFIN**

ROLL CALL:

**ALLINSON: AYE
CARMODY: AYE
FISHBEIN: AYE
LAFFIN: AYE
REYNOLDS: NAY
RIVARD: NAY
ROSSACCI: AYE
TATTA: NAY
TESTA: AYE
6- AYE
3- NAY
0-ASBENT
MOTION: PASSED**

There was a lengthy discussion about the public comment section and how for workshops they should go back to the Town Council or at least Budget workshops should be only for the Town Council so that they can work the workshop and make the best decisions when it comes to the motions meeting. It was stated that the council needs to work together and possibly not have the input of the public during budget workshops so that the council can get their questions answered by the department heads. The Public Hearing is for the public to ask any of the departments their questions and have them answered.

MOTION WAS MADE TO eliminate the section B Roman Numeral 14 in section B and revise the first line of what is currently section c but will be section b.

**MADE BY: TESTA
SECONDED BY: TATTA**

There was a voice vote and everyone present was in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Panzo
Town Clerk

Meeting digitally recorded

Vincent F. Testa, Jr. Chairman Date

Kristen Panzo, Town Clerk Date