

**TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT  
TOWN COUNCIL  
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE  
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers  
45 South Main Street, Wallingford  
Tuesday, April 7, 2026  
6:30 pm**

**RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES**

The Ordinance Committee Meeting on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, was called to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Autumn Allinson, Samuel Carmody, Thomas Laffin, Bryan Rivard, Melanie Rossacci, Christina Tatta, and Jesse Reynolds, Chairman. Also in attendance were Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Janis Small, Corporation Counsel and Steven Allinson, Assistant Town Attorney.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Discussion Update/status of Ordinance Committee work from 24-25 Council Term – Councilor Allinson (Vice-Chair)**

Councilor Allinson reviewed the accomplishments during the 24-25 Council term including evaluating the Length of Service Award program; evaluating property taxes for volunteer Fire Department personnel; changes to the ethics code of conduct including a statute of limitations for filing a complaint; and changes to the rental housing code; These can be found in the ECO360, In addition there were changes to the food service establishment code; the Fair Rent Commission was established; and revised the line of duty determination in case of death for emergency services. She suggested revisiting instituting an ad hoc building committee for projects, which would include professionals, giving teeth to zoning violation enforcement, and further revisions to the purchasing policy. She thanked Atty. Small for keeping the Council and code book up to date.

**5. Discussion of process for reviewing the existing ordinances – Councilor Rossacci**

Councilor Rossacci shared a draft process for reviewing ordinance requests to bring consistency to the process. She included a simple scoring metric.

Councilor Allinson appreciated the template as it's a great tool to start the conversation for members of the public looking for a change. She added that it will be hard to assign merit as some items can be ambiguous. She thought the scoring could be cumbersome. The template for where to start is amazing because it gives direction. The Law Department might better put together requests.

Councilor Laffin stated that this appears to be extra work. In the past, citizens have brought a problem to a member of the Council, and the Committee meets to discuss it in a broader sense. The Law Department gets the consensus of the Committee and comes up with the language. The Committee tweaks it, and it goes to Council for a vote. It takes a lot less time, and we don't need to quantify everything. People don't always have to come in with proposed language.

Councilor Rivard asked how members of the public have asked for a new or changed ordinance. Atty. Small replied that they usually contact someone on the Committee. The Committee member would put it

in the agenda for discussion then it is assigned to the Law Department. Councilor Rivard asked what typically drives changes. Atty. Small replied that there was an update to the solar ordinance that was based on changes in the law. Planning and Zoning violations were discussed, but the request was broad. She noted that the problem with scoring is that you are creating laws, and once they are passed, they can't be changed. You can frame these as criteria that the Committee looks for. For amending an existing ordinance, there can be a form that says what and why. It's usually done administratively memo to explain why sections of an ordinance need to be updated. Councilor Rivard likes that if a member of the public brings something forward, it would be captured in the meeting minutes. Atty. Small stated that you have a conversation and decide to go forward or not, and that is on the record.

Chairman Reynolds stated that this would not be a requirement but a tool. We can't score laws. This is more of a framework that shows the information to bring to Atty. Small. Atty. Small replied that the request is directed to the Chair to put on the Agenda. As a group, the Committee decides if there is enough interest to do more work or if they need the Law Department to do research or get samples.

Councilor Rossacci noted that the scoring is only for information and can be removed. She intended to bring transparency to the public and consistency to the assessment and tighten up the process.

Councilor Tatta noted that every ordinance requires a public hearing. Ordinances have the most public notice. We notice the public hearing, and ordinances are discussed by the Committee and Council as well. Transparency is not a problem.

Chairman Reynolds thanked Councilor Rossacci for her input.

## **6. Discussion of expectations and process for Ordinance Committee work for the 26-27 Council Term – Councilor Reynolds (Chair)**

Chairman Reynolds asked for confirmation of the process. Does the request come to the Committee first and then to the Law Department?

Councilor Allinson explained what happened during her tenure as Chair and how the process was explained to her by the former Chair. If there are questions, she would go to Atty. Small, particularly to determine enforceability. She noted that the process precludes any private conversations. For example, one issue came up that had to do with the noise ordinance. There was scientific backing on both sides, so it did not move forward. Another had to do with requiring reflective vests for bicyclers. In both cases, she felt there wasn't enough information and ambiguous enforcement issues, so they were not moved forward.

Chairman Reynolds clarified that the goal is to get a sense of how we do this. He suggested meeting at least quarterly or as things come up. He asked Atty. Small, how much lead time does she need? Atty. Small asked for more than a week if it's just information that is needed. Two weeks would be great. If a new section is needed for an ordinance, she would need at least a week to review it and provide enough information to engage the interest of the Council on whether to move forward or not.

Councilor Tatta noted that the website lists the old Ordinance Committee members.

## **7. Discussion of a proposed draft ordinance to protect health, safety and welfare with respect to the regulation of massage therapy establishments.**

Vanessa Bautista, Health Department Director, Michael Hughes, Chief Sanitarian, and Janis Small, Corporation Counsel, presented.

Chairman Reynolds thanked the Health Department for the article with the analysis.

Ms Bautista explained the proposed ordinance. There have been complaints over the last three years about potential illegal operations and safety issues. The department has been unable to resolve them due to limited authority. The proposed ordinance gives them the tools to be proactive.

Councilor Rivard asked if there is a State Statute or if this has to be managed at the Town level. Atty. Small replied that the State requires licenses, but Towns regulate the establishment. Councilor Rivard clarified that the business itself is not regulated unless there is a Town ordinance. He asked if there were examples of best practices from other towns. Atty. Small replied that they looked at other towns, and this ordinance is largely based on Danbury's very thorough and successful ordinance. Mr Hughes stated that he talked to the Health Department in Danbury, and they were able to close establishments in violation. The ordinance also prevents quick changes of ownership. Councilor Rivard asked how many establishments are in Wallingford and whether the reputable ones are comfortable with this ordinance. Ms Bautista replied that there are 10 businesses in town, and they have not seen this document. Councilor Rivard asked if advance notice would be given to the affected businesses. Atty. Small replied that there would be the usual notice of public hearing. Councilor Rivard asked if we would normally reach out to the businesses. Atty. Small stated that from here it would go to the Council for a public hearing. It is publicly noticed on the agenda and the legal notice. She doesn't recommend asking businesses to comment. Councilor Rivard asked if there is a grace period. Atty. Small replied that they have 90 days, and the Health Department can extend that.

Sergeant Henry Cadett, Community Impact Unit, stated that this ordinance is appreciated. He works with the Health Department and other Town entities. He explained that there are currently five suspected businesses in town. A legitimate business wouldn't have difficulty getting the required documents. We need to do something without hurting the vulnerable population that is being subjected to human trafficking. He stated that Wallingford is part of the New York cluster mentioned in the article.

Councilor Allinson stated that she is familiar with how these employees are treated from working in the restaurant business. Workers essentially pay back a fee, and living conditions are poor. This is a great step toward stopping this type of victimisation or abuse. She asked about tracking data collected. Atty. Small explained what was collected.

Councilor Laffin asked if this gives enough teeth. We want them shut down. Ms Bautista replied that after three violations, their license would be suspended. Mr Hughes stated that the proposed ordinance has definitions of what is not allowed. We can suspend and revoke for two years an establishment in that location. The ordinance ties the operator to the property. Atty. Small added that the location and the people can't be involved again. Sergeant Cadett read from a complaint showing how the system works. Councilor Laffin stated that he supports this ordinance.

Councilor Carmody asked about enforceability. Small replied that the fine is \$250 a day if they don't have a license. If they don't pay, then there is an injunction. Councilor Carmody asked if the police work with the employees. Sergeant Cadett replied that it requires victim cooperation and a half an hour with someone who won't break down the barriers. It is very difficult to have a victim realize they are a victim and then get them out mentally and physically. The owners will rotate the women, always bringing in new ones. They do work with the CT Human Trafficking Team and Victim Advocacy.

Mayor Cervoni noted that something was brought up a few years back due to concerns about trafficking, but the police felt the laws were strong enough, so it didn't get any traction.

Councilor Tatta asked if the workers are doing it voluntarily or if they are forced. Sergeant Cadett replied that the vast majority are trafficked from overseas. They are promised a better life, they pay around \$15,000 to get here and pay the debt, plus pay to live. They have no transportation. They are forever in debt and are kept vulnerable and scared. Councilor Tatta noted that this is surprisingly rampant in this area. She referred to the wording on page 5, item C-1, where it says 'less than 21 years of age'. How did they arrive at that age instead of 18? Mr Hughes replied that it may have to do with the experience level in the State Statute, but he will check. Councilor Tatta referred to page 10, item Y, and asked what the rationale for the register inspection is? might customers not want their names and addresses shared? Atty. Small replied that this is to check the legitimacy of the activities and the services. Atty. Small noted that we can't take possession of the register, but can see if they are actually using one. Councilor Tatta asked about item CC on the same page. What if other services, such as acupuncture, were offered and licensed? Atty. Small stated that this applies to the massage part of the business. They have to have licenses for personal services. Mr Hughes noted that there can be an overlap between a med spa and an aesthetician. Councilor Tatta asked if that section could be clarified. She agreed that this allows the police to do what they need to do.

Atty. Small noted that she has found a few more tweaks to the wording. On page 6, the term expiration ties into a set date of March 1, and they will add language about prorating. The Health Department will propose a fee structure for the next meeting.

Atty. Allinson noted that in Section Y, he understands that if the complainant were a patron, this would provide validation.

Councilor Allinson asked about the ID documents. Sergeant Cadett stated that they usually have a form of ID from a consulate or a New York ID. They are generally compliant with requests. We look to see if they comply with State Statutes. Councilor Allinson asked if there is confirmation that they are in possession of immigration documents. Sergeant Cadett replied that they are scripted, so they know what to say. They provide their own documentation. In the Ordinance, if they have legitimate documents, they should also have legitimate licenses to practice. This will allow deterrent action. Councilor Allinson asked if section CC would impact Chinese medicine or holistic medicine. Atty. Small replied that the Ordinance is tied to actual licenses.

Councilor Rivard retracted his request for advance notification. We need to enforce this where it is needed first.

Councilor Allinson asked if the Committee would review changes or send it on to Council. Atty. Small stated that the fees need to be added. They will come back to the next Ordinance Committee meeting.

Chairman Reynolds clarified that this establishes rules that would probably prohibit someone from starting a business. Secondly, it fills the gap where the Health Department and Police can do something. He asked if people living on the premises would trigger a zoning issue or a Health Department issue. Mr Hughes replied that it would be a problem for the Health Department, the Fire Marshal, and the Building official. This opens the door.

Atty. Small stated that this took a year to put together. They will come back next month to see if there is support to bring this forward.

Chairman Reynolds stated that this will be added to the agenda for the May Ordinance Committee Meeting.

## **8. Adjournment**

Chairman Reynolds asked for a motion to adjourn.

**MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 7, 2026, ORDINANCE  
COMMITTEE MEETING AT 8:35 P.M.**

**MADE BY: Reynolds**

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS  
MOTION: PASSED**

Respectfully submitted,  
Cheryl-Ann Tubby  
Recording Secretary