

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 4-17-26  
AT 4:54 pm AND RECEIVED BY  
Kristen Panzo TOWN CLERK

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT  
**SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING BUDGET WORKSHOP**

Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers

**April 8, 2026**

**6:30 P.M.**

**RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES**

The Special Town Council Meeting Budget Workshop on Wednesday, April 8, 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 and Town Clerk Kristen Panzo were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. FY 2026-2027 Budget Workshop

Health

Library

Parks & Recreation

Senior Center

Social Services

Veterans Center

Youth & Social Services

4. Workshop with HSS Departments
5. Public comment
6. High School Project Discussion Workshop
7. Public Comment
8. Board of Education and Cafeteria Fund Budget Workshop
9. Public Comment
10. Executive Session pursuant to General Statutes § 1-200(6)(d) and § 1-225(f) for a discussion regarding the possible purchase of real property (to be held jointly with the Board of Education)

Chair Testa explained why he picked tonight's budget workshop to add the BOE High School Project and discussion workshop along with the Executive Session. He wanted

to stress that tonight is not a Public Hearing on the one High School nor are they voting on anything tonight.

## **Health**

Vanessa Bautista, Health Director, talked about what her department does and talked about her budget.

Councilor Tatta mentioned that the Health department has seen a 24% increase in cost over the past two years. She wanted to know what that is attributed too. Mrs. Bautista explained that in FY 2024 they had a new position to fill and hired someone. It was a Public Health Educator/Coordinator that was hired. That was a brand new position that was added to their budget. She also discussed having a software support line item and that is for inspection flat platform that will allow the sanitarians to go out into the field and inspect in a digital platform. That cost is \$12,680 for the new FY budget. She discussed the purchase service lead testing and their lead standards going down and that funding is not getting used up every year because it depends on the need for it.

Councilor Reynolds discussed the hiring of a part time sanitarian over a full time sanitarian that was asked for. He wanted to know if in the future if there was more oversight with businesses and the work load for the Health Department increased can the Health Department keep up with the part time sanitarian. Mrs. Bautista said she would definitely need a full time person.

Councilor Rivard discussed the fact that if he looked at the complete budget the Health Department is underspent. He wanted to know why that is. Mrs. Bautista said it is as needed for using that money. The lead testing cost was discussed. He mentioned that if they were to assist a family with an abatement then that would come out of that line item which is the purchase service.

Councilor Rossacci asked about the community grants line item. The request was for \$50,000 but it is down \$25,000 and she wanted to know why that number is down. She realized that it is a question for Youth and Social Services and not for the Health Department.

Councilor Fishbein asked when Mrs. Bautista started with the Town of Wallingford. Mrs. Bautista said that she has been with the town since 2016 and became the Director of Health two years ago. There was a discussion about her bottom line and FY 2025. He wants to know what the town is getting for the increased bottom line for the new fiscal year. Mrs. Bautista said that they will be positioning the part time sanitarian to a full

time sanitarian. That will be an increase of \$42,189. That number does not include benefits. The software line item went from \$9,200 to \$12,680. The telephone line item currently is \$950, and it is increasing to \$1,350 and that is because they need their data plan for the tablets for the sanitarians who will be using those tablets. The transportation line item increased from \$1,800 to \$2,300. The perch ser code comply line item was discussed because it went from \$60 to \$6,000. Mrs. Bautista said that line item is as needed. Her example is bulky waste in a vacant home that needs cleanup. If they encounter that problem then they do the work through a contractor and then they lien the property and they will get that money back. Mayor Cervoni said that the same amount of money was approved for the current fiscal year. He said a lot of the adjustments to her budget were made in the last fiscal year. There was a discussion about the personnel backup. There was a discussion about the sanitarian position and how she did not get the full time person she wanted but was approved the part time sanitarian. So, she decided to take the part time sanitarian she already has and make that person full time. There was a discussion is the staff she has is going to be enough to run the department. Mr. Bautista said they are going to try to make the staffing work. She discussed how the number of inspections have gone down but are more complex now and take longer to process now. There was a discussion about the food inspections themselves.

Councilor Tatta is concerned about the 24% increase in the Health Department budget. There was a discussion as to where this increase is in the budget. Mrs. Bautista said they had a new position. She said that position was grant funded initially and then the grant was expiring so they only used it to cover the salary for half of the year and the other half of the year was funded by the town. This position was created in 2024.

### **Library**

Sunny Scarpa, Director spoke about what the library is used for and the programs that are run in the library. She also spoke about her budget.

Councilor Fishbein asked if the library is asking tax payers to contribute \$3,733,854 to their budget. Mrs. Scarpa said yes. That is a 3% increase from last year. Even after the library gets that money they will still need \$107,482 to balance. There was a discussion about the balancing of their budget and how the board members can weigh in on it and grant to use 3%-6% of the financial audited funds to help balance the budget. Jared Lui, Chairman of the board said it is actually donor restricted when it comes to what they can use that money for. There was a discussion about the donor gifts that the library

receives and exactly what that money can go to and how much can be used from each donation. Councilor Fishbein brought up the fact that the copier/printer line item is showing 100% increase in income. He wanted to know why that is. Mrs. Scarpa explained that the library has charged 10 cents per copy for black and white copies and has not changed for quite some time. In the past 30 years the cost of paper and ink has gone up and because of that they are going to be raising their rates to 20 cents per page. Councilor Fishbein mentioned another expense of \$725,000 that is increasing by 100%. Mrs. Scarpa says that it is due to usage. There was a discussion about the contract services line item and the fact that it decreased. It is about a 25% decrease. Mrs. Scarpa explained that some of the contract services were moved to licenses and software. The license and software line item went up. She mentioned that they have a new staff member as their head of technology and when this person gave their budget request it made more sense to move that money. There was a discussion about the professional fees line item.

Councilor Allinson thought that the increase of 3% to the budget was reasonable. She discussed the continuation of services and the growth that has happened with the library. She discussed some of the programs at the library and how wonderful they are. There is the online instruction, in person programming, etc. She gave praise to Mrs. Scarpa and Mr. Lui for the great job they are doing with the library.

Councilor Rivard talked about how great the library is and the services they provide. There was a discussion about e-licensing and the cost associated with it along with how it works. Mrs. Scarpa explained that there are two main vendors for e-licensing, Overdrive and Hoopla. They work on two separate models so that causes challenges for the library. Overdrive has all of the best sellers that everyone wants to read. The library owns the book for either a certain amount of check outs or for a certain length of time depending on the book. They do not own the book outright. They are being charged five to six times the amount for each license.

### **Park & Rec**

Kenny Micheals, Parks & Recreation Director and Shawn Keogh, Superintendent of Recreation spoke about the budget and what the department does.

There was a discussion about his budget and the parks and the upkeep to them. There was a discussion about the maintenance of the parks and how he works with the Public Works Director.

### **Senior Center**

Ann, Director of the Senior Center, Susan Gomez, Board Member and Rosco, Vice President of the Board spoke about the budget and what the department does.

There was a discussion about how wonderful the Senior Center is and how they help the community greatly. There was a discussion about the programs that they provide.

### **Veteran's Center**

George Messier, Veterans Services Officer spoke about what hi department does and his budget.

There was a discussion about what a great job he does for the veterans in Wallingford. There was a discussion about how his budget did not change at all.

### **Youth and Social Services**

Mandy Miranda, Director of YSS, Diane Marks, Director of the Coalition spoke about the department and the budget.

There was a discussion about why the Coalition is the only nonprofit that gets paid through the YSS and why that is. There was a discussion about how that came about and for how long they have been getting paid through YSS.

### **Social Services Contribution**

There was a discussion about the Social service Contributions and how to go about handling how much money is given to each nonprofit. Lew Gill from Columbus House spoke about the impact from the storms and how they affected the emergency shelter. He spoke about the great things that happened with the shelter, and some people found permeant housing thanks to the community.

### **Workshop with HHS Departments**

Michale Votto, BOE member, Danielle Bellizzi, Superintendent, Marlo Rosco, resident od Wallingford, Scott from Colliers discussed the new High school project with the power point presentation.

There was a lot of discussion about the one high school verses the tow high school and what is better foe the community. There was a discussion about having a referendum for the public to decide what is best for the town instead of having the BOE decide. There was a discussion as to why the BOE will not make the June 2026 grant schedule and why it is now pushed back to June 2027.

### **BOE**

Danielle Bellizzi, Superintendent, Dominic Barone, Business Manager spoke about he BOE budget and what the BOE does.

There was a discussion about their budget and how the council is pleased that is was fully funded this year. There was a discussion about the bottom line and how it affects this upcoming fiscal year.

### **Cafeteria**

Danielle Bellizzi, Superintendent, Dominic Barone, Business Manager and Mike Votto, BOE member spoke about the cafeteria budget.

There was a discussion about the bottom line of the budget. There was a discussion about whether there will need to be any heavy equipment purchased for the cafeteria this fiscal year.

11. Executive Session pursuant to General Statutes § 1-200(6)(d) and § 1-225(f) for a discussion regarding the possible purchase of real property (to be held jointly with the Board of Education)

**MOTION WAS MADE TO go into Executive Session at 11:56pm**  
**MADE BY: CARMODY**  
**SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS**

In attendance was the full town council. The full BOE members, Janis Small Corporation Council, Mayor Vincent Cervoni.

**MOTION WAS MADE TO come out of Executive Session at 12:50pm**  
**MADE BY: CARMODY**  
**SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Panzo  
Town Clerk

Meeting digitally recorded

---

Vincent F. Testa, Jr. Chairman

Date

---

Kristen Panzo, Town Clerk

Date