

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers
April 14, 2026
Immediately following the Regular Town Council Meeting

RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, was called to order at 8:04 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Autumn Allinson, Samuel Carmody, Thomas Laffin, Jesse Reynolds, Bryan Rivard, Melanie Rossacci, Craig Fishbein, Christina Tatta and Chairman Vincent F. Testa Jr. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Comptroller Tim Sena and Town Clerk Kristen Panzo were also present.

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

Building
Conservation Commission
Inland/Wetlands
Planning & Zoning
Zoning Board of Appeals

4. Public Comment

Building Department

Lou Coppola, Chief Building Official spoke about his budget and what his department does.

Councilor Tatta asked about the overtime and other pay line item. Mr. Coppola explained that is there on call pay for on call inspectors. They would be needed if the police department called saying there is a car in a building. That is just one example. If the fire department calls it would be for house fires, kitchen fires, things of that nature and floods that happen. She thanked Mr. Coppola and his department for being so nice to work with and so accommodating to businesses and contractors that come into the office.

Councilor Reynolds wanted clarification about the staffing. There was staffing that Mr. Coppola had asked for that was not approved in the mayor's budget. He wanted to know if

the senior clerk position was supposed to help out with the work load in the office. Mr. Coppola explained that he and the two assistants are adequate. They have a lot of landlord tenant complaints that are taking up a lot of their resources and administrative staff.

Councilor Fishbein wanted to discuss the typo that was mentioned in the budget. Mayor Cervoni explained that they will make sure that the bottom line number reflects the correct number for the telephone line item. There was a discussion about the staffing and the clerk position that was not approved. The full time senior clerk that Mr. Coppola had asked for was approved. The different scenarios that he presented for the senior clerk are not represented in the upcoming budget. There was a discussion about the negative impact that not having this full time senior clerk would have on the department. Mr. Coppola explained that it is the volume of calls and the ability to perform required inspections. The rental housing market has increased, and they are seeing more complaints, which means more paperwork.

Councilor Rivard discussed how they budget has not changed much since last year. There was a discussion about the revenue and how much is generated from overtime and other pay line item. There was a discussion that the department is on track for a million dollars in revenue due to the rental housing. There was a discussion about permit fees and how they are structured.

Conservation Commission

Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner discussed what the commission does.

Councilor Tatta discussed the salaries and wages and wanted to know where the number \$1,333 comes from. Ms. O'Hare said she did not know where that number came from. There was a discussion about purchase services natural resources and what happens to that money if it is not used. Ms. O'Hare said the unused money will go back to the general fund.

Councilor Fishbein wanted to discuss what the \$6,000 for purchase services natural resources is generally used for. He thought it was used for blazing trails in the past. Ms. O'Hare explained that that money can be used for a lot of different projects. The blazing of the trails is done by volunteers. There was a discussion as to what is meant by blazing trails. In the past the commission used a professional in conjunction with the commission to determine where a trail would go. Ms. O'Hare mentioned that she does not remember ever using the \$6,000 to hire a professional to blaze a trail. They had a \$60,000 grant from the Connecticut DEEP recreational trails grant program in 2009. Since then, they have never paid a professional to layout or construct a trail. There was a discussion how back

then the commission was more active in the community. The commission elects what to use the \$6,000 for. There was a discussion about the open space in town and how the commission handles them. The routine maintenance for some open space and the money used for it was discussed. Sometimes the money can be used for environmental studies. There was a discussion about the various projects that the \$6,000 could be used for. There was a discussion about Tyler Mill Preserve and how the commission has been focusing on the issues there. There was a discussion about staffing.

Inland/Wetlands

Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner discussed the budget and what her department does.

Councilor Tatta wanted to know why if Ms. O'Hare is leaving next month why does the budget reflect the maximum step in salary. Mayor Cervoni explained that they want to be prepared to retain a qualified applicant. They have been accumulating applications and are finding that they have a lot of very qualified applicants. They want to make sure that they have the range in the salary line to keep the best. The qualifications the applicants possess would determine what step they start at.

Planning & Zoning

Kevin Pagini, Town Planner discussed the budget and what his department does.

Chair Testa wanted to know the two positions under management for this department. Mr. Pagini explained that it is the Town Planner and the Land Use Specialist/Zoning Enforcement Officer. There was a discussion about the staffing.

Councilor Fishbein asked about the recording secretary. Mr. Pagini explained that the person is paid per diem or hourly. There was a discussion about the dues and fees line item being high. Mr. Pagini explained that is the SCRCOG fee. If they want to be a part of SCRCOG that is the fee to be a part of it. There was a discussion about the SCRCOG membership.

Councilor Laffin discussed the staffing. There was a discussion about replacing Erin and possibly the part time person they share.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Panzo
Town Clerk

Meeting digitally recorded

Vincent F. Testa, Jr. Chairman

Date

Kristen Panzo, Town Clerk

Date