

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING PUBLIC HEARING

Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers

April 27, 2026

6:00 P.M.

MINUTES

The Town Council Meeting on Monday, April 27, 2026, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Autumn Allinson came late, Samuel Carmody, Thomas Laffin, Bryan Rivard, Melanie Rossacci, Christina Tatta and Chairman Vincent F. Testa Jr. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Comptroller Tim Sena and Town Clerk Kristen Panzo were also present. Councilors Jesse Reynolds and Craig Fishbein were absent.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. PUBLIC HEARING:

Chair Testa explained that this is a Public Hearing and that the Town Council will not be speaking at this meeting. He called out each department and members of the public were to raise their hands if they had questions for the departments.

BOE

Danielle Bellizzi, Superintendent of Schools, Dominic Barone, Business Manager of Schools and Mike Votto, Chairman for BOE.

Larry Kellogg asked about the increase in teacher funding. He wanted to know if new teachers received an increase as well. The new teachers did receive an increase. The teacher's contract is on the BOE website. There was a discussion about the increase overall in their budget.

Bill Comerford discussed the lack of maintenance and when does the BOE have to ask Public Works to step in to help with that maintenance. The school parking lots were discussed and whose budget it falls under. Some of the parking lot repairs fall under the BOE depending on how big a job it is. There was a discussion about the big parking lot jobs. He suggested having a more transparent look at the BOE budget so that the big ticket items can be addressed and so that the public is made aware.

Keith Massamino asked what has the BOE done with the increase given to improve the rankings of the schools in town. Most of the BOE budget is for staffing and for benefits. The BOE has been addressing these concerns by providing more resources for the teachers and students, but it will take some time for those scores to improve and go up. There was a discussion about

maintenance for the schools like the gym floors, etc. Things like that are on the BOE 10 year capital plan. Their focus right now is on the boilers. They are always reprioritizing. There was a discussion about the capital items and how they will move forward with that list.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Alison Kapushinski, Town Engineer.

Bill Comerford asked if it is in the budget to hire a Construction Sidewalk Inspector. He was told no and asked why that is. The staff for the Engineering Department is looked at every year, and it was determined that a Construction Sidewalk Inspector is not needed for this FY. There was a discussion about how this job already exists. The job description for the Construction Inspector was read. The conditions of the sidewalks was discussed.

Keith Massamino asked how many engineers and assistant engineers are in the Engineering Department. There is the Town Engineer and the Assistant Town Engineer. The Town Engineer is the only engineer in that department that professionally licensed. There was a question as to if both of those individuals received raises this year. The answer was yes.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Jim Allen talked about the budget last year being a million dollars and this year it has been reduced drastically. There was a discussion as to whether the town is more efficient since creating an IT Department.

HUMAN RESOURCES & RISK MANAGEMENT

Jim Hutt, Human resource Director and Kurt Trieber, Risk Manager.

Bill Comerford asked if the new position that the department wants to create will be doing sidewalk inspections. The new hire will not be doing sidewalk inspections. There was a discussion about worker's compensation claims. Workers' compensation claims fall under the Risk Management Department. There was a discussion about the tracking of the workers' compensation claims and the money. There was a discussion about how similar workers' compensation claims are tracked. There was a discussion as to the number of workers' compensation claims the town gets each year and what the average is.

Larry Kellogg asked if this department assesses pedestrian accidents in town. The Risk Management Department does not assess these types of accidents unless there is a complaint that was brought forward or there is an issue. Police, Engineering and Public Works would assess these types of accidents.

Jim Allen wanted to know who negotiates the labor contracts for the town. The Human Resources Director negotiates the labor contracts. There was a discussion about the increases to the budget and what was stated in the paper by the mayor. Mayor Cervoni said of the total

increase in general government, the 2.5% increases on wages amounted to 7.9% of the budget increase. There was a discussion about the health care benefits. The town goes out to bid with an RFP for health insurance.

LAW DEPARTMENT

Janis Small, Corporation Counsel and Geoffrey Einhorn, Town Attorney

Bill Comerford wanted to discuss the Town Attorney salary. There was a discussion about the salary and hours for the Town Attorney and the Assistant Town Attorney. There was a discussion about the job descriptions for both jobs. These two positions follow what is written in the town charter. Both positions are appointment positions.

Jim Allen wanted to discuss Choate. There was a discussion as to why they do not contribute and why they do not pay taxes to the town. There was a discussion about Masonicare and how they do not pay school taxes.

Larry Kellogg asked who audits Choate. Choate applied to the Assessor's Office and the Assessor's Office does an analysis of their application to determine whether or not they fall in the exemption. They are not required to pay the pilot funds for something that is exempt.

PARKS & RECREATION

Kenny Michaels, Parks & Recreation Director.

Bill Comerford asked if the theater company falls under this budget. He was told yes it does. There was a discussion about possibly removing them from this budget and putting it in the Social services Contribution lines. It has been in this budget for the last 15 years. There was a discussion if they pay to use any of the Parks & Recreation buildings. They do not. The town sponsors them. There was a discussion about the picnic tables. There was a discussion about the snow plowing.

Keith Massamino wanted to know who orders the cement blocks in front of the parks. Public Works is in charge of putting the blocks up. There was a discussion about the porta potties. There was a discussion about the bath rooms and if they can be opened.

Jason Michael wanted to also discuss the porta potties and why the regular bath rooms can't be opened. There was a discussion as to who decides to keep the bath rooms locked all of the time.

Jim Allen discussed charging out of town residents a higher rate than town residents for using the facilities and for programs they sign up for.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

James Buck, Fire Chief and Mike Shaw, Deputy Fire Chief.

Tim Wall, North Farms Volunteer Fire Chief wanted to discuss the apparatus plan that the department had discussed with the Town Council. Some of the volunteer fire trucks were discussed. There was a discussion about bonding the cost of the apparatus plan for the fire trucks replacement. The LOSAP was discussed. The staff for this department was discussed. There was a discussion about the training that happens within the Fire Department.

Larry Kellogg wanted to discuss the vehicle maintenance for all of the vehicles in this department and are they up to date. Yes, the vehicle maintenance is up to date. There was a discussion about an EVT technician.

Keith Massamino wanted to thank the Fire Department for responding first to a medical emergency he had at his home in 2022.

SOCIAL SERVICES CONTRIBUTIONS

Bill Comerford wanted to discuss what department does the contributions fall under. It is the administration that this falls under. There was a discussion as to why the non-profits are not here to take questions themselves. There was a discussion about the Center Street Cemetery.

Keith Massamino discussed the committee that was formed to assess the social services contributions and whose received money and who did not. There was a discussion about the committee itself.

Larry Kellogg wanted to discuss the emergency shelter in town and the money they received. Columbus House representative Lewis Gill and Beth Gross explained what Columbus House does and he discussed the emergency shelter and the great work the staff did last year.

Bill Comerford wanted to discuss the emergency housing houses behind the shelter. The budget for those houses was discussed. There was a discussion about who can use those family emergency housing. There was a discussion on the staffing at the emergency shelter.

Jason Michael discussed his non-profit in town and the procedure he had to go through and the paperwork he had to fill out and submit to be able to try and get funding from the town. There was a discussion about the amounts the non-profits received from the town.

Keith Massamino discussed the other theater in town that received funding and how Mr. Michael's theater did not.

Bill Comerford wanted to discuss whether the mayor had participated in any of the shows that the theater received money put on.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

John Ventura, Police Chief and Beth Dighello, Executive Secretary.

Bill Comerford wanted to discuss the Atlas One program and what became of that. The cost was not feasible. There was a discussion about road closures in town. There was a discussion about the shooting range at the police department.

Larry Kellogg discussed putting up signs around town that says you have to stop for pedestrians in the cross walks.

ELECTRIC DIVISION

Ric Hendershot, Public Utilities Director, Jake Arborio, General Manager for Electric Division and Marianne Dill, Business Manager.

Bill Comerford discussed the decorative polls in town and how they are in bad shape. There was a discussion about the signs around town and who hangs them up. The Electric Division hangs them.

Keith Massamino wanted to discuss the banners in town and who hangs them up. There was a discussion about the banners. The Electric Division hangs them.

PUBLIC WORKS

Rob Baltramaitis, Director of Public Works and Mark Roland, Foreman.

Keith Massamino discussed with Mr. Baltramaitis how much it would cost in road repairs each year. It will cost about \$3 million per year. There was a discussion about his budget and if the mayor's budget allocated that cost this year. There was a discussion about the blocks that are put at the parks.

Bill Comerford discussed the Pavement Management Assessment Study report he received from Mr. Baltramaitis. The last time this study was done was in 2014. There was a discussion about the road paving and how some roads will get repaved and some roads will get a chip seal. There was a discussion about the staffing and seeing how he has 48 staff members is the department still short staffed. There was a discussion about the roof on the town hall. There was a discussion about the capital items.

Larry Kellogg wanted to know if there was a way for the public to know which roads will be paved and when. There was a discussion about the list of roads.

CAP & NON RECURRING AND SIX YEAR CAPITAL

There were no questions for either department.

FINANCE

Keith Massamino discussed raising taxes for the third year in a row. There was a discussion about how much it would be to pave the roads properly each year. There was a discussion as to what is the plan to move forward with the infrastructure of the town.

Larry Kellogg wanted to know if the town has a 5 year plan. There was a discussion about how the town is always looking for ways to increase revenue. There was a discussion about the grant coordinator.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Panzo
Town Clerk

Meeting digitally recorded

Vincent F. Testa, Jr. Chairman

Date

Kristen Panzo, Town Clerk

Date