

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers
August 18, 2026
6:30 P.M.

RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, was called to order at 6:34pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Samuel Carmody, Craig Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, Jesse Reynolds, Bryan Rivard, Melanie Rossacci, Christina Tatta and Chairman Vincent F. Testa, Jr. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Town Attorney Geoffrey Einhorn and Acting Town Clerk, Leanna Gnazzo were also present.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Consent Agenda
 - 3a. Consider and approve Tax Refunds totaling \$3,752.89 (#1-#20) – Tax Dept.
 - 3b. Acceptance donation from Jim and Pat Chieppo and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$1,000 to Revenue Donations – Police, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations – Police, Acct. # 25020050-58830-10127 – Police Dept.
 - 3c. Acceptance of donation from Scoopy’s Ice Cream and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$250 to Revenue, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations – Police, Acct. # 25020050-58830-10135 – Police Dept.
 - 3d. Acceptance of donation from Barbara and Charles Lagerstrom 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.
 - 3e. Acceptance of donation from Wallingford Energy, LLC for Fire Hose Repair Program and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$15,000 to Revenue Account – Donations, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Account – Fire Department Program Expenditures, Acct. #25020150-58830-TBD - Fire Dept.
 - 3f. Consider and approve appropriation of 2026-27 Project Graduation funds in the amount of \$47,474 to Revenue, Acct.# 2324002-49000 and to Expenditures, Acct. # 23240150-58252 – Youth and Social Services Dept.

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- 3g. Acceptance of donation to the America250 Committee and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$30 to America250, Acct. #2505002-47152 and to America250 Expense, Acct. #25040150-58830-10245 – Mayor
- 3h. Consider and approve FY 2025-2026 budget amendment and Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$9,450 from Cash, Acct. #N/A to Power Purchased for Pumping, Acct. #43100623 – Water Div.
- 3i. Consider and approve FY 2025-2026 budget amendment and Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$14,000 from Retained Earnings, Acct. #N/A to Distribution Maintenance Misc., Acct. #598 – Electric Div.
- 3j. Consider and approve FY 2025-26 budget transfer in the amount of \$299,475 – Water Div
- | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------------|
| \$150,000 | From: Operation and Labor Expenses | Acct. #43100642 |
| \$149,475 | From: Maintenance of T&D Line Expenses | Acct. #43100673 |
| \$59,975 | To: Maint. of Coll. & Imp. Res | Acct. #43100612 |
| \$9,450 | To: Pumping and Labor Expense | Acct. #43100624 |
| \$18,450 | To: Misc. Exp. – Pumping | Acct. #43100626 |
| \$8,750 | To: Maint. of Treatment Equipment | Acct. #43100652 |
| \$45,450 | To: Engineering Misc. Expenses | Acct. #43100665 |
| \$61,750 | To: Maintenance of Services | Acct. #43100675 |
| \$95,650 | To: Customer Records & Coll. Exp | Acct. #43100903 |
- 3k. Consider and approve FY 2025-26 budget transfer in the amount of \$63,550 – Sewer Div
- | | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| \$63,550 | From: Engineering Exp | Acct. #46100665 |
| \$34,300 | To: Attendant and Lab Expenses | Acct. #46100642 |
| \$4,850 | To: Meter Expenses | Acct. #46100663 |
| \$11,750 | To: Maintenance of Meter Expenses | Acct. #46100676 |
| \$12,650 | To: Admin Salaries | Acct. #46100920 |
- 3l. Consider and approve FY 2025-2026 budget amendment and Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$7,763 from Retained Earnings, Acct. N/A to Liability Insurance, Acct. #46100925 – Sewer Div.

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- 3m. Consider and approve FY 2026-2027 budget amendment and Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$10,975 from Retained Earnings, Acct. #N/A to Pumping and Structure Improvements, Acct. #46300321 – Sewer Div.
- 3n. Consider and approve FY 2026-2027 budget amendment and appropriation of funds in the amount of \$65,000 from Retained Earnings, Acct. #N/A to General Plant – Office Furniture & Equip., Acct. #391 – Electric Div.
- 3o. Consider and approve FY 2026-27 Bid Waiver for Vision appraisal software
- Assessor
- 3p. Consider and approve FY 2026-27 Bid Waiver for Yalesville Veterinary Hospital - Animal Control
- 3q. Consider and approve a Lease Agreement between the Town of Wallingford and the Wallingford Community Theatre, Inc. for the use of free-standing storage building at 284 Washington Street (former Police Department sign shop) for a term of 5 years, at a rental of \$1.00 per year - Mayor
- 3r. Approve Minutes of July 14, 2026 Regular Town Council Meeting and July 28, 2026 Special Town Council Meeting

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve Consent items 3a – 3p and item 3r, withdrawing item 3q from the agenda

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

ROLL CALL
ALLINSON: ABSENT
CARMODY: AYE
FISHBEIN: AYE
LAFFIN: AYE
REYNOLDS: AYE
RIVARD: AYE
ROSSACCI: AYE
TATTA: AYE
TESTA: AYE
8 - AYE
0 – NAY
1 - ABSENT
MOTION: PASSED

Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD

Keith Massimino inquired about the inspection of the work being performed at the Community Pool project. He stated he submitted a Freedom of Information Act to the Town Engineer, requesting all records pertaining to the inspection of the pouring of the concrete and the Town Engineer has no record of it. He would like to know why. Mayor indicated the project is being overseen by several departments, and the Engineering Department hasn't been called in to inspect. Mr. Massimino is concerned about the oversight of the Community Pool project and feels the Engineer should have records of the concrete being checked. Mr. Massimino asked the mayor if the Town Engineer's job responsibilities include the overseeing of work done with third party contractors. Mayor stated that depending on how the job is spec'd, it is not absolute. Chairman Testa stated he would have the contract reviewed.

Jason Michael inquired why an amended agenda was not issued after an item was removed from the Consent Agenda. He feels that when an item is removed from the Consent Agenda the public should be made aware so they can speak on the item. Chairman Testa agreed to look into this. Mr. Michael also had a question regarding the appropriation of the budget. Mr. Michael has a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Community Theater and was awarded \$5000.00 in this year's budget. He is inquiring about the procedure to release the funds. He was told by the Finance Department that he needed to submit a request-letter to release the funds. He later received correspondence from the mayor's office asking for a detailed budget and plans of what the funding will be used for. Mr. Michael feels he is being "jerked around" and asked if this is a blanket policy for all that apply. Mayor stated this was included in the general request for submissions and the other requesters fulfilled the requirements. Chairman Testa asked the mayor to provide a brief explanation in writing to Mr. Michael's organization as to what the situation is, a list of the documentation needed and a timeline to release the appropriation. Chairman Testa assured Mr. Michael that he will look into the issue and get him answers.

Steve Drumheller, 75 N. Orchard St, wanted to say how much he enjoys living in Wallingford and the positive responses he gets from others, when he says he lives in Wallingford. He wanted to add some positivity to the Public Question & Answer Period.

Councilor Tatta asked Chairman Testa if it is appropriate for her to speak during the Public Question & Answer Period. Chairman Testa consulted the Parliamentarian and agreed to allow the statement.

Councilor Tatta stated she is troubled by Mr. Michael's comments. The Council approved the funds to be issued to Mr. Michael's non-profit organization. She would like the issue to be handled and resolved quickly. Mayor stated he resents the representation that anyone is being "jerked around". Mr. Michaels received a direct response, the administration did not say no, they just asked for additional information.

Keith Massimino thanked Councilor Tatta for her support in expediting the release of funds to Mr. Michael.

4. Consider and approve new job description for Information Systems Security Manager - Human Resources

MOTION WAS MADE TO consider and approve the new job description for Information Systems Security Manager

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

Director of Human Resources, James Hutt and Director of Information Technology, Charles Carrozza addressed the Council to request the approval of a job description for Information Systems Security Manager with a salary of \$98,388 - \$124,985 (without benefits) annually. Establishment of this position is necessary to ensure the Town's technology infrastructure and assets remain secure and reliable with all applicable regulations.

Councilor Fishbein asked why there is a requirement for a valid Driver's License. Mr. Hutt explained the position includes travel to other buildings such as the Electric and Water Divisions, so the employee will need a valid Driver's License to travel between offices.

Councilor Tatta inquired about the salary with benefits and asked if it is in line with other municipalities who have similar jobs. Mr. Hutt explained they look at external competitors and internal consistency, and the wage is very competitive. It is the same pay grade as the network administrator at the Police Department and Information Technology. Councilor Tatta asked about the hiring process. Mr. Hutt explained that the position is part of the classified service, and they will accept applications in the same manner they did for Information Technology Director. The most qualified will go to the next phase, which could be an oral examination. He expects the process to be the same method of selection as the IT Director. Directors of Information Technology from other municipalities will be asked to serve on a panel as part of the hiring process.

Councilor Rivard asked how this position will fit with the approved budget of the Council and when it will go into effect. Mr. Hutt explained that the position may not be filled until the end of October – November 2026 and someone will need to go back to the Council to get funding for the position. Councilor Rivard stated this is incremental to the 2026-2027 approved budget. Mr. Hutt stated he believes the Finance Director will come before the Council for the funding of the position once it is ready to be filled, depending on the applicant pool.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: ABSENT

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: AYE

LAFFIN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

RIVARD: AYE

ROSSACCI: AYE

TATTA: AYE

TESTA: AYE

8 - AYE

0 – NAY

1 - ABSENT

MOTION: PASSED

5. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Collective Bargaining Agreement between Town of Wallingford and WEPCU, NIPSEU effective from September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2028 – Human Resources

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Town of Wallingford and WEPCU, NIPSEU effective from September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2028.

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

Director of Human Resources, James Hutt and General Manager of Wallingford Electric Division, Jake Arborio addressed the Council. Mr. Hutt asked for approval of a 3-year contract for the non-hazardous production and clerical employees. Some changes include, effective upon signing, language for the implementation of GPS technology, effective upon signing, meal allowance increase from \$11.00 to \$15.00 for employees working overtime or on emergencies, effective upon signing, shift differential increases from \$2.15 to \$2.50 for 2nd Shift and \$3.00 for 3rd Shift, permits sick time usage upon accrual and any clerical employee hired after October 1, 2006 will accrue 1.25 sick days per month and incorporates language from the CT Paid Sick Leave into the CBA and establishes a sick leave donation bank for employees. The probation period for employees that are promoted decreases from 12 to 6 months effective July 1, 2027. The prescription drug copay increases to \$10/\$40/\$60 for non-formulary brand and employee cost share for health insurance increases to 18.5% on 1/1/2028. The general wage increase provides for effective and retro to 9/1/2025, 2.9% effective on 9/1/2026, 2.9% effective on 9/2/2027 and also establishes a \$15,000 per year tuition reimbursement program for job related courses. Employees who are in their 11-14 years of service can accrue 1 vacation day per year until the 15th year.

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ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: ABSENT

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: NAY

LAFFIN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

RIVARD: AYE

ROSSACCI: AYE

TATTA: AYE

TESTA: AYE

7 - AYE

1 - NAY

1 - ABSENT

MOTION: PASSED

6. Consider Pension Increase for Retirees in the amount of 2.5% effective with September 15, 2026 payroll – Human Resources

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve pension increase for retirees in the amount of 2.5% effective with September 15, 2026 payroll

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

Director of Human Resources, James Hutt addressed the Council seeking a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) of 2.5% for retirees. The employee must be retired for one year as of September 15, 2025, not be subject to any automatic cost of living increase, not be receiving any heart, hypertension or workers compensation benefits. There is no prescribed formula or method for which the COLA should be provided. He has reviewed going back 12 months as of February 28, 2026, and the consumer price index and rate of inflation was 2.4%. Following that, after the war with Iran, the spike in oil prices increased the inflation rate in June 2026 to 3.5%. Looking at a more stable time period, prior to February 28, 2026, the 2.4% coincides with the Social Security long term rate of inflation, which is 2.4% and is also the percentage our actuaries use as the assumption for long term inflation for the pension evaluation. He recommends 2.5%, which would cost on an annual basis \$394,691.53.

Councilor Fishbein asked if the adjustment is supposed to be retroactive or prospective. Mr. Hutt stated it is prospective. Councilor Fishbein asked if the goal is to make the retirees whole. Mr. Hutt explained that there is language in some pension contracts that discuss 3% increase and then every 3 years afterwards the Town Council considers some dollar amount. In his 23 years with the Town of Wallingford, it was 1%, 1.5% and 3%. There's no method or prescribed formula. It's the approval of the Town Council based on the recommendation of the Human Resources Department. Councilor Fishbein stated he believes the COLA adjustment is supposed to make up for the increase in inflation or decrease in the value of the dollar. If the prospective is correct, the dollar paid to the retiree is going to decrease

in value by 2.5% for this year and the following year. Mr. Hutt explained that the Council can lower the percentage. The 3.5% would be provided to retirees who met the criteria for September 15, 2026 pension check and they would not get an adjustment until 3 years from now, when Council would take that up to consider. Councilor Fishbein stated that the dollar paid over the next 3 years is prospective and will decrease in value by 7.5% based on the trend. We look at a 7.5% decrease in the value of the dollar yet we find it to be an appropriate COLA increase at a third of that because Human Resources is recommending 2.5%. He feels COLA increases are supposed to make someone whole.

Councilor Tatta asked if the COLA adjustment is typical of other municipalities. Mr. Hutt stated that some municipalities do and some do not. Some municipalities have a certain percentage that is negotiated with the contracts. Councilor Tatta asked if our bargaining units have a COLA already in their pension. Mr. Hutt answered yes, the Police Department, Fire Department and some of the Electric Division. The hazard plans were the original ones that had it. Councilor Tatta asked if the Council does not approve this, a retirees pension check will remain the same amount in year one as they would receive in year thirty. Mr. Hutt confirmed this information and stated that if no additional amount is granted, the topic would not come up again until 2029.

Councilor Tatta asked if they approve the 2.5% increase (\$394,691 annually), this would be paid out of the pension fund. Mr. Hutt confirmed the information.

Councilor Rivard stated he supports the spirit of trying to keep people whole, relative to inflation over time. He asked Mr. Hutt for an overview of how our pension fund looks relative to the open obligations and does this increase fit our pension budget. Mr. Hutt explained that a copy of this fiscal year budget was provided to the Council and that there has been a decrease in employee contributions from 25.3% to 22.7% but the funded ratio increased from 73.2% to 75.1%, so we are on a positive trajectory.

Chairman Testa stated that we fall into a category of the ad hoc legislative bump because there is not an automatic formula. It seems that it's typically a flat 3% to 5% one-time adjustment. Mr. Hutt stated he tries to provide objective criteria, such as social security's best-case scenario, long-term assumption for inflation is 2.4%, which is the percentage that the pension actuaries use for the rate of inflation assumption when they value our pension fund.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: ABSENT

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: AYE

LAFFIN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

RIVARD: AYE

ROSSACCI: AYE

TATTA: AYE

TESTA: AYE

8 - AYE

0 - NAY

1 - ABSENT

MOTION: PASSED

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7. Discussion regarding mayoral vetoes and line-item vetoes -Councilor Tatta

Councilor Tatta asked to have this discussion on mayoral vetoes and line-item vetoes, as it was a topic that repeatedly came up during budget season and there was not time to clarify. She would like to make sure this is discussed and addressed now. She is specifically looking at Ch 3 Section 7 of the Charter where ordinances and appropriations by the mayor and the veto power that comes into play. Two questions came up during the budget season. Can the mayor line-item veto and if so, can the Council line item his line-item veto? In other words, can the Council restore certain items? An example that came up during budget season was the fire department MSO's and a theater receiving money. Councilor Tatta's question was/is the council able to override a part of the mayor's veto or must it be a vote to override all of his veto, thus restoring all of the council's changes to the budget? For example, as this veto currently stands, if Council wanted to simply add back one item, let's say the FDMSO positions, but I agree with all of the other items the mayor vetoed, may I make a motion to simply override that one item to restore it to the budget? The answer she received from the Law Department was you cannot create a third budget proposal at this point. The choice is between the Council's budget and the mayors alteration of the budget, there can be no alternative to those choices. After research of the Town Council records, Councilor Tatta found verbiage during the 1973 Charter Revision added to Section 7a "if the mayor disapproves a proposed ordinance or budget ordinance, the mayor shall within 10 days return it to the clerk of the Council, with a statement of the reasons for disapproval". She is trying to do research around that discussion and why it was added in 1973.

Attorney Small stated that when asked about this topic, during the last budget season, the question was in regard to a need to find money and she stated that you can't change the budget at that point. Ch 19 Section 4 of the Charter states the Town Council shall adopt a budget subject to Section 7. There is nothing in the Charter that says when you get the budget back from the mayor's veto or line-item veto that you could make a change to the actual substance of what is before you. Or are they looking at a clean override of the veto. That is something that should be reviewed with the Town Attorney, in writing.

Chairman Testa asked about a statement in Section 7 "the mayor may disapprove or reduce any item or items in any appropriation". The use of the word appropriation confused him as the budget is an appropriation. Attorney Small clarified that the insertion of the word budget ordinance goes back to the topic Councilor Tatta is bringing forth. The budget is adopted after a public hearing. Chairman Testa stated that they have nothing to do with the appropriation in general, they approve the appropriation for the mayor to act upon. Council also does other appropriations during the year, as suggested to them. They begin with the mayor and are brought to the Council. Chairman Testa asked if the term "appropriation" is interchangeable in so far as that line is written and gives the mayor the ability to create and make line-item changes. Attorney Small confirmed this is correct. Chairman Testa asked if Council has the opportunity to make line item changes with the proposed budget and mayor has the opportunity to veto can the Town Council override the veto provided they have the correct votes? Attorney Small stated they should but that is something that should be researched if there's some circumstance that would create a problem.

Councilor Fishbein has also been researching this issue. He noted June 21, 1960, a Mr. Reynolds wrote a letter to the Charter Revision Commission recommending that a decision should be made as to whether or not the mayor shall have the power to veto all or part of a budget submitted by him and adopted by the Council. Councilor Fishbein could not see any record of that particular charter revision. Providing an example from this meeting, Council could have made a motion to have the pension increase at 4%. That is not a budget ordinance but an appropriation. As drafted, the drafters say the mayor has the power to veto an appropriation. In the same paragraph, they deal with the term budget ordinance. They do not say that the mayor has the ability to veto a budget ordinance. This needs to be figured out. The insertion of “budget ordinance” was put in 1973 and there had to have been a reason but unfortunately, those minutes are not available. In Councilor Fishbein’s opinion the drafters would have written the language differently because of the clause or the term “budget ordinance” appears in the same basic paragraph. The mayor does suggest and make requests to the Council but ultimately it’s the Council that makes the decision whether or not to change that request.

Councilor Fishbein asked why minutes for the Charter revision are not posted on the Town of Wallingford website.

Councilor Laffin believes the Charter revision minutes were emailed to the Council back in 2017 and were not posted to the website. He asked if hypothetically there are line-item overrides to every single line-item veto, wouldn’t the override on the expense side directly affect the revenue side? Attorney Small explained that she would need to do further research.

Councilor Fishbein feels that if the drafters had intended the line-item veto, they would have provided for a check and balance of the revenue.

Councilor Rivard thanked Councilor Tatta for bringing this to the Council’s attention. He would be interested in an interpretation on line-item vetos, overridden by the Council or not. If there are competing opinions he feels the only way to resolve the issue is to fix the Charter.

8. Executive Session pursuant to General Statutes § 1-200(6)(D) and § 1-225(f) for discussion with respect to the purchase of property - Law Dept

MOTION WAS MADE TO GO INTO Executive Session pursuant to General Statutes §1-200(6)(D) and §1-225(f) for discussion with respect to the purchase of property at 8:08 PM

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

THERE WAS A VOICE VOTE AND ALL MEMBERS THAT WERE PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR.

MOTION WAS MADE TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 9:20 PM

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

THERE WAS A VOICE VOTE AND ALL MEMBERS THAT WERE PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR

Time of Executive Session: 8:08 PM to 9:20 PM

Attendance at Executive Session:

**CARMODY
FISHBEIN
LAFFIN
REYNOLDS
RIVARD
ROSSACCI
TATTA
TESTA**

**MAYOR VINCENT CERVONI
TOWN ATTORNEY, GEOFFREY EINHORN
CORPORATION COUNSEL, JANIS SMALL**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Meeting digitally recorded.

Respectfully submitted

Leanna Gnazzo, Acting Town Clerk

Vincent F. Testa, Jr., Chairman

Leanna Gnazzo, Acting Town Clerk

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Wallingford Town Hall, 45 South Main Street