

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers
September 22, 2026
6:30 P.M.
RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, September 22, 2026, was called to order at 6:36pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Samuel Carmody, Thomas Laffin, Jesse Reynolds, Bryan Rivard, Melanie Rossacci (remote), Christina Tatta and Chairman Vincent F. Testa, Jr. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Town Attorney Geoffrey Einhorn, Comptroller Tim Sena 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 \$5,318.00 (#139-187) – Tax Dept.
 - 3b. Acceptance of a donation from Tom Villano and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$20 to Revenue Donations – Police, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations – Police, Acct. #25020050-58830-10135 – Police Dept.
 - 3c. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$62,500 from Contingency-Misc., Acct. #10019000-58820 to Exp. - IT - Regular Salary & Wages, Acct. #10010130-51000 - Information Technology
 - 3d. Consider and approve the replacement of First Congregational Church's sign on the Parade Grounds – Mayor
 - 3e. Approve Minutes of September 8, 2026 Regular Town Council Meeting.

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve Consent items 3a – 3e

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

**THERE WAS A VOICE VOTE. ALL COUNCILORS PRESENT VOTED AYE.
MOTION: PASSED**

4. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

5. PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD

Bill Comerford asked the Mayor about the status of the possible contaminated soil at Center Street Cemetery. He stated he has an audio tape with someone saying the soil is contaminated. Chairman Testa responded that he had asked for a copy of the recording at the previous meeting. Once the audio recording has been provided to the Town Council, they will address the issue.

Larry Kellogg asked about the status of signage for the crosswalk at the intersection of Parker Farms Rd and North Turnpike Rd, promised by the Wallingford Police Department in April 2026. Chairman Testa apologized for not having answers and will follow up.

Susan Huizenga addressed the Council as a representative of WPAA-TV and Community Media Center and asked for more transparency and a public process regarding the budget and handling of nonprofit matters. Chairman Testa stated that there are discussions for a workshop to review the process and encouraged Ms. Huizenga to participate and provide feedback.

Sheila Tierney asked Attorney Einhorn for an update on the sidewalk inspections and procedures. Attorney Einhorn responded that there is no written policy in the Engineering Dept. Chairman Testa expressed apologies for not having answers and will follow up. Ms. Tierney also asked about a \$390,000 transfer for paving, made at the June 9, 2026 Town Council meeting. She would like a list of the roads that have been paved this year, and which are still due to be paved.

Bill Comerford asked why the Building Maintenance Dept was disbanded and would like to see it reinstated. He would also like a list of catch basins that have been cleaned.

Anthony Parent expressed concern over a catch basin on Lincoln Drive that has been paved over, and the grate cannot be removed. We had a large storm in June, and he is concerned about small animals being trapped if washed into the basin by extreme water.

6. Discussion of old business – Chairman Testa

(a) Discussion of status of the town contribution to the Golden Fox Theater.

Chairman Testa requested an update on any potential progress regarding the Town contribution to Golden Fox Theater. Mayor stated that he invited Mr. Michael to schedule a time to review financial information with him and help to complete his budget. Mr. Michael responded that he was away on vacation and would respond to the Mayor upon his return.

7. Consider and approve a Lease Agreement between the Town of Wallingford and the CT Stem Academy for the use of free-standing storage building at 284 Washington Street for a term of 5 years, at a rental of \$1.00 per year – Mayor

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve a Lease Agreement between the Town of Wallingford and the CT Stem Academy for the use of free-standing storage building at 284 Washington Street for a term of 5 years, at a rental of \$1.00 per year - Mayor

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

Christopher Stone, Executive Director of CT STEM Academy, Donna Regan, Board Member CT STEM Academy and Doug Papallo, President of the Board CT STEM Academy addressed the Council regarding the renewal of the Lease. Mayor Cervoni stated this is an enriching and confidence-building program that benefits the students of Wallingford.

Councilor Rossacci stated that she feels the STEM Academy does great work but would like to see a more transparent process of deciding town resources. She would like to focus on reducing subjectivity and adding objectivity.

Councilor Tatta agreed with Councilor Rossacci. After reviewing the lease, Councilor Tatta is ok with the town providing maintenance and normal repair but has concern over the town supplying janitorial services and utilities such as water, sewer, gas and electricity. She asked what other groups are given notice of use of this facility or the opportunity to have use of the town facility for free. She would like to see a more transparent process for others that may express their interest. She finds it difficult to listen to residents talk about how they cannot pay bills and then give resources away where the town can make a profit. She also questioned why these leases are not included in the budget and would like a comprehensive list of all contributions that the town has provided, such as Public Work hours and janitorial services. Siting the Charter, Councilor Tatta questioned why these leases are presented by the administration to the Council. Her understanding of the Charter is that Council approves and administers the leases. Attorney Einhorn stated that is not his understanding of the Charter and if Council submits a question to the Law Department, he will supply an opinion to the Council. Mayor clarified that the lease is in front of the Council for approval. This is the Council's time to scrutinize the lease and the process. The Council can deliberate and vote for or against it but the lease is before the Council for their approval.

Christopher Stone addressed the Council. He stated that CT Stem Academy is a nonprofit 501-3(c). They attain their own funding and partner with other organizations. They are not funded by the Town of Wallingford and do have paid staff. They offer programs through Wallingford Parks and Recreation Department and use donations, grant funding and programming fees to reduce costs to make their programs accessible to anyone that wishes to participate. They collaborate with SCOW to offer free programming to students in the summertime.

Councilor Reynolds asked about any renovations to the building since they have been using it 5 years ago. Mr. Stone stated they added wall hangings for competitions that were won, TV's and equipment for the facility such as 3-D Printers. They are continuously looking to enhance the building without making permanent modifications. Internet is being utilized with an agreement with SCOW. Councilor Reynolds asked about enrollment. Mr. Stone answered that the program registers approximately 600 families through the Parks and Recreation Department per year. Councilor Reynolds expressed his appreciation of the programs and providing a variety of options not available in sports.

Councilor Rivard reviewed the lease and acknowledged the agreement has a clause that either party can termination the lease with 90-day written notice. He wishes the terms of the lease were more in line with a Council or budgetary time-period. He feels this would make more sense to review the leases with more frequency. He supports the CT STEM Academy and feels these types of enrichment programs provide value to the taxpayers.

Councilor Testa feels this is an organization that outgrew the schools and Wallingford was able to assist and provide a space so the program can continue. He acknowledges they are not a town department or specifically a town organization but provides programs that benefit Wallingford residents.

Councilor Laffin expressed his support for CT STEM Academy and is impressed by the growth and success of the program. Wallingford provides maintenance of sports fields and outbuildings for soccer, football, and baseball. We should provide building maintenance for the CT STEM Academy. The programs provide opportunities to excel in STEM and future career advancement. He feels we are a better community for having strong community partners.

Christopher Stone thanked the Council and Mayor for placing this item on the Agenda. Connecticut STEM Academy is an established program with positive community impacts rooted in youth and family engagement. It began as the Young Astronaut Club and has evolved into the CT STEM Academy through continued partnership with Wallingford Youth and Social Services, Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW), Wallingford Parks and Recreation Department, offering low cost or free programs to families in need.

Donna Regan added that the CT STEM Academy has provided employment opportunities to Wallingford youth, which in turn helps foster productive members of society.

Doug Papallo stated that the program helps kids get exposed to something they may otherwise not have had and can put them in a direction that could result in a lucrative career in coding, engineering, etc. The program also gives exposure to females in male-dominated fields.

Mark Britton spoke in favor of CT STEM Academy and the positive impact he has seen with his own children.

JD Oliveira spoke in support of CT STEM Academy. The money put forth for services is not meant to have a monetary return but help to better educate children, create a collaborative work environment and expose children to things they may not ordinarily see. The program offers opportunities to kids that may not participate in sports.

Lara Juarez expressed her support for CT STEM Academy. She is a Wallingford resident and started the program in middle school. She has worked at CT STEM Academy for the past 10 years and currently serves as a program facilitator, community outreach coordinator and robotics director. The program provides benefits for underserved Latina women.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: ABSENT

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: ABSENT

LAFFIN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

RIVARD: AYE

ROSSACCI: AYE

TATTA: NAY

TESTA: AYE

6 – AYE

1 – NAY

2 – ABSENT

MOTION PASSED

8. Executive session pursuant to CGS Sections 1-225(f) and 1-200(6)(C) for discussion regarding public security matter – Mayor

MOTION WAS MADE TO enter Executive Session pursuant to CGS Sections 1-225(f) and 1-200(6)(C) for discussion regarding public security matter.

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

THERE WAS A VOICE VOTE. ALL COUNCILORS PRESENT VOTED AYE.

MOTION: PASSED

MOTION WAS MADE TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:52 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: 7:59 pm to 8:52 pm

Attendance at Executive Session:

CARMODY

LAFFIN

REYNOLDS

RIVARD

ROSSACCI (REMOTE)

TATTA

TESTA

MAYOR VINCENT CERVONI

TOWN ATTORNEY, GEOFFREY EINHORN

COMPTROLLER, TIM SENA

DIRECTOR OF IT, CHARLES CARROZZA

Councilor Rossacci left the meeting during the Executive Session.

9. Motion to waive the bid for the purchase of critical IT infrastructure as discussed in executive session - Mayor

MOTION WAS MADE TO waive the bid for the purchase of critical IT infrastructure as discussed in executive session.

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: ABSENT

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: ABSENT

LAFFIN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

RIVARD: AYE

ROSSACCI: ABSENT

TATTA: NAY

TESTA: AYE

5 – AYE

1 – NAY

3 – ABSENT

MOTION PASSED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Meeting digitally recorded.

Respectfully submitted,

Leanna Gnazzo
Acting Town Clerk

Vincent F. Testa, Jr., Chairman

Leanna Gnazzo, Acting Town Clerk

Individuals in need of auxiliary aids for effective communication in programs and services of the Town of Wallingford are invited to make. Their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance Coordinator at 203-294-2070 five days prior to meeting date.