

**TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT**  
**ORDINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers**  
**45 South Main Street, Wallingford**  
**Tuesday, October 6, 2026**  
**6:30 pm**

**RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES**

The Ordinance Committee Meeting on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, was called to order at 6:30 p.m. There was a moment of silence, and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Autumn Allinson, Craig Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, Bryan Rivard, Melanie Rosacci, Christina Tatta, and Jesse Reynolds, Chairperson. Also in attendance were Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Steven Allinson, Assistant Town Attorney, and Janis Small, Corporation Counsel.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Discussion of Purchasing Ordinance**

Councilor Laffin presented the proposal developed by former Councilor Regan. He reported that discussions have been held with the Purchasing Agent and the Law Department. He explained that the change would raise the bid threshold from \$16,000 to \$25,000. The bid limit was increased from \$7,500 a few years ago. This makes it easier for purchasing and keeps up with inflation. He provided a draft that would be reviewed by the Legal Department.

Councilor Fishbein stated that he would support this at \$20,000, but \$25,000 seems to be a lot. He asked how cooperative purchasing is handled now. He stated that the current system has adequate guardrails. Why is this necessary?

Mayor Cervoni stated that the bid threshold was last addressed in 2020. The last section of the ordinance allows for cooperative purchasing but requires a process where members of the cooperative groups must have gone through our lowest qualified bid process. This can open a little for the ability to compare what's offered by cooperatives. This would justify buying from a cooperative. A purchase can be done with a bid waiver through a cooperative after the bid process. With guardrails, it protects the taxpayers' interests.

Councilor Fishbein asked about the third item on emergency authority. Councilor Laffin replied that it is to keep it in line with the changed bid minimum. He asked for feedback on \$20,000 vs. \$25,000.

Chairman Reynolds stated that the memo from the Purchasing Agent suggested \$20,000.

Councilor Rivard asked about the open market quotation floor changing from \$750 to \$5,000, where the Purchasing Agent says \$2,000. Atty. Small noted that this is to avoid having to get three quotes for an item costing \$750. Councilor Rivard stated that he is okay with the Purchasing Agent's recommendations of \$2,000 and \$20,000. The use of cooperatives is to avoid extra bid waivers. He asked if there is a way to qualify cooperatives.

Atty. Small stated that she is still reviewing the language as she doesn't want it to be too broad.

Councilor Rossacci stated that she supports the cooperative purchasing and increasing the floor. It will be valuable to be able to purchase on the NASCO (cooperative) site. Vendors on that site meet rigorous requirements.

Councilor Laffin thanked everyone for their input and stated that he would give his notes to the Legal Department.

Councilor Fishbein stated that he has no problem with the amounts in the memo. He asked for a definition of public notice. Does that include Facebook and the Town website, and should that be stated? Atty. Small noted that Purchasing has their portal as well. She will be working with them on this language.

Councilor Laffin stated that he is comfortable with what Purchasing is using now.

Mayor Cervoni noted that the Town can publish small advertisements with a link as a compromise instead of paying for an advertisement.

## **5. Discussion of the Potential/Feasibility of an Ordinance for Leasing Town-Owned Property**

Councilor Rossacci explained that she is introducing the discussion to start the conversation. As background, she stated that historically the Town lets non-profits and community organizations use town land for \$1 per year. There is no ordinance on this, which leaves the Town at risk. The draft ordinance is proposed to fill the gap. The draft language still needs to be reviewed by Legal.

Councilor Fishbein agreed that this is needed. The term of the contract should not exceed the current term of Town Council. Also, the public benefit description should be to the Town of Wallingford. The Town could sell property it is not using to benefit the Town. We have to show the balance.

Councilor Laffin stated that he likes the public benefit definition. He added that two years is too little. A standard lease is for 5 years. May cap leases at 5 years. We could time renewals to a certain time of year and do a review a year in advance. We need to avoid political whims.

Mayor Cervoni stated that there are about half a dozen properties involved. They include the library, the senior center, and community daycare. The buildings were built for these purposes. Think about creating legislation that will bind future Councils and administrations. Consider the magnitude and impact on the community.

Councilor Rossacci mentioned the importance of transparency requirements. The public should be aware of the eight properties. We need to give equal access.

Atty. Allinson stated that he did some research and could find no other Connecticut towns with a Nominal Lease ordinance. Most towns that have leasing have something similar to what's in our Charter to identify who is authorized to make these agreements. He stated that we need to tread carefully. If we have an ordinance and someone decides that they should have been granted the lease and sue, it can set legal precedent that will bind the Town.

Councilor Rivard stated that there should be something in place to protect the Town. He asked if there is a legal benefit to the Town having something in place. It feels good to have a documented process.

Atty. Small suggested a policy instead of an ordinance. She stated that the draft ordinance is good and that she can review it. The bottom line is that the leases come to Council for approval. She agreed that there is benefit to sharing the criteria. She noted that an ordinance would lock in future Councils.

Councilor Rossacci stated that she is willing to look at a policy, but just wants something in writing.

Councilor Fishbein stated that it is better to have a process to avoid appearing unfair. He reminded the group of the issue with Wallingford Daycare a few years back where the Town had to give them money due to the State grants not coming through. We couldn't do anything about it because of the lease.

Chairman Reynolds asked if the powers in the Charter allow the Council to break leases. Atty. Small replied that each lease has terms that say how it can be broken. She added that most leases have a 90-day separation notice period.

Councilor Rivard asked if we went with a policy, could we include the 90-day severability clause and severability review by each Council and put what we want as a minimum. Atty. Small replied that Council has discretion in each case and it's not good to be too specific. She added that public purpose is the reason the leases exist.

Councilor Rossacci read the list of properties provided to her by the Town. It included the three properties already mentioned plus Wallingford Municipal Federal Credit Union, SCOW, Wallingford Community Theater, CT Stem Academy, and Wallingford Committee on Aging.

Atty. Small clarified that we own the land the credit union is on and that they paid for the building. In addition, the parking lot is public parking. Originally, the credit union was for Town employees. That was the transaction approved by Town Council. The Town didn't want to give up the land.

Councilor Fishbein referred to the transparency section where it says approximate fair market rental value when reasonably ascertainable. He doesn't like the phrase reasonably ascertainable. We have a duty to let the public know what's being given away. These are commercial properties. He noted that for the Coalition, we don't give them the building, but pay their rent. That doesn't fall under this ordinance. He asked what other towns do. He stated that we could write the criteria for nominal leases and exempt the library, senior center, and the daycare.

Councilor Rivard likes that this has come up. We should be thinking about town value items and how we decide. There should be a minimum framework to assess them.

Atty. Allinson stated that he would see if other towns have a similar leasing arrangement.

Atty. Small stated that next would be a Council policy creating a procedure for presenting something for approval. This group needs to specify what they are looking for.

Councilor Fishbein stated that this will be a directive to administration from the Council. He would rather have an ordinance.

Chairman Reynolds asked what would be needed from the Council to proceed with an Ordinance.

Atty. Small replied that if they like the draft shared tonight, she can look at it and add exclusions for the three stated leases. She will also do more research.

Councilor Laffin stated that an ordinance would bind future Councils to the process. We had discussed not binding future Councils. He suggested extended communication, something like a union negotiation where the Council gets briefed on the background and has an opportunity to comment.

Chairman Reynolds agreed with exempting these buildings with proper procedures and transparency. He is willing to pursue this.

Councilor Fishbein stated an ordinance would set criteria for evaluation. A Council should not be bound by the actions of a prior Council. All ordinances are set by prior Councils. The Charter gives the Council the power to lease and delineate criteria for review of the leases.

Councilor Tatta stated that a current fair market rent estimate should be included for transparency. She suggested something similar to the ordinance that requires a report to Council on the Cap and Non by a certain date. The report could include who's in which properties, etc.

Councilor Rivard stated that he found examples of similar ordinances and policies in other states. He asked staff to look to see if anything was applicable. He added that he is not a fan of something complicated.

## **6. Discussion of Streets and Sidewalks related Ordinance(s)**

*In attendance: John Ventura, Wallingford Chief of Police*

Chief Ventura referred to chapter 198 of the Town Ordinances and explained that the volume of traffic and construction in town has increased. There have been complaints, many of which are for projects that are not using the police department. There is no provision requiring hiring a police officer for traffic control and no conduit to allow him to require it. Other municipalities have language that contractors need to contact the Police Department to direct traffic, and if not available, they can use a flagger. He noted a letter of support from the president of the police union. He added that flaggers often don't have any training, though the State offers certification. To enhance safety and ensure traffic flow, we need to address the ordinance. He recommended allowing Wallingford Police Officers first right of refusal to work these jobs. The Police Department has a policy that guarantees quality control.

Councilor Rossacci agreed and stated that she was surprised that it's not already there. She clarified that the contractors would pay the officers. Chief Ventura confirmed that the outside contractor pays.

Councilor Laffin stated that he supports this. He added that he assumes that some of the fee is retained and goes toward vehicle usage, saving the Town money. He clarified that the department wants first right of refusal instead of just notice. Chief Ventura replied that if a cruiser is booked, the money goes to the general fund. The contractor will still have the ability to use flaggers if an officer is not available. He added that this would be for high-volume traffic.

Atty. Small stated that she is working on the language. The ultimate decision will be on the Chief. The ordinance may list some streets, and the Chief would be able to edit the list. There would be a posting requirement. This gives the Chief ultimate authority.

Councilor Fishbein clarified that it would be the Chief's discretion whether officers are available. He asked about town projects.

Chief Ventura clarified that extra duty work is not pensionable. He noted that he spoke with the utilities departments, and Public Works is exempt from the current ordinance due to their union contract. If it's a

paving project, Public Works runs traffic control. They do hire police for bigger projects. He added that any flaggers are subservient to the police officer.

Councilor Tatta stated that we don't want to get into a union issue with Public Works, but if there is a public safety issue, there should be a police cruiser there. Chief Ventura stated that they now have specified Road Job vehicles. Councilor Tatta asked if this applies to Town roads only. Chief Ventura agreed. He added that if Eversource subcontracts to do work on Rt. 68, they hire us. If the State is doing work, they don't. Councilor Tatta asked if there was ever a cost issue with a contractor. Chief Ventura replied that Wallingford is low compared to other towns. The cost has never been an issue. Councilor Tatta stated that we need to figure out the Public Works issue, but she is in favor of public safety.

Councilor Rivard asked if smaller jobs that might have road incursions are still allowed to use certified flaggers. Chief Ventura replied yes. Councilor Rivard asked if using certified flaggers needs to be spelled out in the Ordinance.

Councilor Laffin noted that the discretion of the Police Chief is a must. He stated that Public Works is town employees with our own trucks with lights, so he is not as concerned.

Councilor Fishbein asked if there should be a dollar trigger to avoid smaller projects. Chief Ventura stated that roadway construction would be specified. The only other issue may be a moving van backing up traffic for hours. He added that Water & Sewer and Electric usually contact the police for a cruiser.

Chairman Reynolds stated that he is in favor of this with full discretion to the Chief.

Councilor Fishbein asked if there would be any issue with the Police Union contract. Chief Ventura replied no.

## **7. Adjournment**

Chairman Reynolds declared the meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cheryl-Ann Tubby  
Recording Secretary