

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers
October 13, 2026
6:30 P.M.
RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, was called to order at 6:36pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were Autumn Allinson, Samuel Carmody, Craig Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, Jesse Reynolds, 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

There was a presentation from Coalition for Better Wallingford for Red Ribbon Week. Nicolina Cotto, Youth Sector Representative and Diane Tourangeau, Coalition for Better Wallingford board member addressed the Council. Red Ribbon Week is the oldest drug prevention campaign, celebrated every year from October 23 – October 31. The main goal being to encourage a drug-free lifestyle and spread awareness. They encourage everyone to participate in their upcoming events.

3. Consent Agenda

- 3a. Consider and approve Tax Refunds totaling \$8,647.49 (#188-227) – Tax Dept.
- 3b. Acceptance of donation from J. Michael Johnson and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$2,000 to Revenue Donations-Police, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations-Police, Acct. #25020050-58830-10135 – Police Dept.
- 3c. Acceptance of donation from J. Michael Johnson for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus accessories and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$10,000 to Revenue Account-Donations, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Account-Fire Department Program Expenditures, Acct. #25020150-58830-TBD – Fire Dept.
- 3d. Acceptance of WECARE Playful Cruisers registration fees and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$660 to Revenue, Acct. #2134002-47152 and to Expenditures, Acct. #21340100-58830 – Youth and Social Services
- 3f. Approve Minutes of September 22, 2026 Regular Town Council Meeting.

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve Consent items 3a – 3d and 3f.

Councilor Tatta asked to be recused from 3c but approves of the rest of the items.

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**

Larry Kellog addressed the Council and gave thanks for the painting of crosswalks that was completed. He would like to see additional signage placed near the crosswalks, especially near the elementary schools.

6. **Chairman's Update**
 - a. Golden Fox Theatre
 - b. Parker Farms/Route 150 Intersection
 - c. Sidewalk repair and replacement program
 - d. Property purchased on Route 150 in Yalesville to support a new crossing to the Linear Trail

Chairman Testa asked for the Chairman's Update so he could specifically address these items. (a) Mayor stated there has been no change since the last meeting with Golden Fox Theatre. (b) As discussed in Public Question & Answer Period with Larry Kellogg, crosswalks have been painted. (c) regarding sidewalk repair, there are no guidelines to the specificity of a raised lip on a sidewalk, but any concerns should be reported to the Engineering Department. Chairman Testa reiterated that Wallingford is one of the few towns that has a sidewalk replacement program within the budget for scheduled repairs. (d) Chairman Testa asked for an update on the property. Mayor answered that the Fire Department had completed training there and the house is slated for demolition.

7. **To conduct a public hearing to consider and act on an ordinance concerning Property Tax Exemption for Certain Farm Machinery and Farm Buildings – Law Dept.**

Corporation Counsel Janis Small and Wallingford Tax Assessor Kevin Coons addressed the Council. Legislature increased the number of allowable exemptions, and the ordinance is proposing to make those increases. Kevin Coons stated there are 10 farming organizations in Wallingford that would benefit from this program. They are looking to increase the exemption to \$250,000 on farm equipment and \$500,000 on farm buildings. Councilor Fishbein asked to clarify if this is an exemption and not a deferral. Mr. Coons stated that it is an exemption. Currently, if a building is assessed exclusively for farm use and it's assessed at \$250,000, the first \$100,00 would be exempt and the difference would be

taxable. This ordinance would also benefit local vineyards. Councilor Tatta asked what the amount of taxes would be that the town would forego if the ordinance was passed. Mr. Coons calculated a little over \$80,000 in tax revenue. Councilor Carmody expressed his support to our farms and wants to make sure the program is available to all who qualify. Councilor Reynolds would like to help reduce costs to farmers, as they are usually a family-owned business and would like to provide benefits to stay in Wallingford. Councilor Laffin feels this is what government can do to help farmers and agriculture. He's happy we are maxing out what Wallingford can do, in this case.

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve an ordinance concerning property tax exemption for certain farm machinery and farm buildings.

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: AYE

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: AYE

LAFFIN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

RIVARD: ABSENT

ROSSACCI: AYE

TATTA: NAY

TESTA: AYE

7 – AYE

1 – NAY

1 – ABSENT

MOTION PASSED

Chairman Testa returned to an item overlooked during the consent agenda. Two donations were received from J. Michael Johnson in the amount of \$2000 to the Wallingford Police Department and \$10,000 to the Wallingford Fire Department for self-contained breathing apparatuses. Chairman Testa wanted to publicly express his appreciation to Mr. Johnson and his business.

8. Consider and approve new job description – Safety and Risk Management Coordinator – Human Resources

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve a new job description for safety and risk management coordinator.

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

Human Resources Director Jim Hutt and Risk Manager Kurt Treiber addressed the Council seeking approval of a job description for Safety and Risk Management Coordinator with an annual salary range of \$85,431 - \$108,409. The position was presented to the Council during fiscal year 2027 budget and was approved by the Council with a funding of six months. The filling of the position would not be until January 2027.

Councilor Fishbein asked about the new position and participating in meetings in a hybrid capacity or attending in person. Mr. Hutt stated that is a management decision. Councilor Fishbein feels it makes sense to be more specific on this topic.

Councilor Rossacci asked if the job would include inspections on current construction projects in town. Mr. Hutt clarified they would be inspecting existing buildings not construction related inspections.

Councilor Tatta asked if this position is being created for the purpose of succession planning. Mr. Hutt explained that that is a small part of it, as the current management in Human Resources will be retiring in the next 5 years. Councilor Tatta expressed concern over creating a new union position, as once created, it will be there forever.

Councilor Fishbein asked what portion of the description says that this individual would not inspect construction projects. Mr. Hutt explained they tried to make the description as broad as possible. The position is not for a trained Engineer or Construction Inspector. The applicant will need to be familiar with worker's compensation, safety and risk.

Councilor Tatta asked for clarification on the salary range and what the total cost would be, including benefits. Mr. Hutt explained that it would depend on what class size they are for insurance and if they even take our insurance. The applicant may be in a position where insurance is not needed and would not be a cost to the town.

Councilor Fishbein asked for clarification on the word "considerable" in the job description and what constitutes something to be considerable. Mr. Hutt explained that the person being hired may have experience in one aspect and less in another. The individual would be given experience to grow on the job.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: AYE

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: NAY

LAFFIN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

RIVARD: ABSENT

ROSSACCI: AYE

TATTA: NAY

TESTA: AYE

6 – AYE
2 – NAY
1 – ABSENT

MOTION PASSED

Chairman Testa asked Sheila Tierney to speak on the sidewalks as she did not have the opportunity during the Chairman's Report. Ms. Tierney asked for an update and specific guidelines that constitute a risk and if the Engineering Department will be developing guidelines regarding the condition of the sidewalks. Mayor answered they would not at this time. Ms. Tierney asked what the time frame is from when an inspection request is submitted to the time it takes for an inspector to go to the property. Chairman Testa answered he was told as soon as someone can get there. There are no specific guidelines for that.

9. Discussion and possible action regarding tentative agreement for successor pension contract between Town of Wallingford and Local 1570, AFSCME effective from July 1, 2026 to October 13, 2029 – Human Resources

Human Resources Director Jim Hutt addressed the Council seeking approval of a 3-year pension contract extension with the Police Union Local 1570 of ASME from July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2029. There are few changes to the language pertaining to the IRS code that was provided by the town's pension attorney. There are no substantive changes to the benefit.

10. Consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$50,000 from CAP & NON, Fund 301 to Exp.-Industrial Egress Study, Acct. #30102027-57000-TBD – Economic Development

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve an appropriation of funds in the amount of \$50,000 from CAP & NON, Fund 301 to Exp.-Industrial Egress Study, Acct #30102027-57000.

MADE BY: CARMODY
SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

Economic Development Specialist Don Crouch addressed the Council. The Town of Wallingford is pursuing a \$250,000 Economic Development Administration Grant for the John Street Bridge egress and resiliency planning. The request is for a 20% match required by the \$250,000 grant. The purpose of the grant is to help address needs assessment feasibility analysis on what will be required to be replaced or enhanced on the John Street Bridge and create a viable alternate access and egress routes, potential economic impacts on bridge disruption and impacts on large businesses such as Amazon, Ulbrich Steel and Wallingford Public Utilities.

Councilor Tatta expressed appreciation for this item on the Agenda. She asked about a plan to extend the road to go out to Toelles Rd and then connect directly to exit 13 on ramp. Mr. Crouch confirmed that this would be part of the grant.

Councilor Carmody asked when we would hear if the grant was awarded. Mr. Crouch stated the original date was December but the federal government moved it up a couple of months. He expects to hear something soon and begin the process of bidding out for consultants.

Chairman Testa clarified that we are pursuing a grant for \$250,000 to initiate a study focused on the John Street Bridge and issues related to egress for the town from Route 5. Part of the requirement is a 20% contribution of \$50,000. The bridge was inspected last year and is safe.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: AYE

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: AYE

LAFFIN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

RIVARD: ABSENT

ROSSACCI: AYE

TATTA: AYE

TESTA: AYE

8 – AYE

0 – NAY

1 – ABSENT

MOTION PASSED

11. Consider and approve the placement of bicycle racks on the Parade Grounds – Mayor

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve the placement of bicycle racks on the Parade Grounds.

MADE BY: CARMODY

SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

Economic Development Specialist Don Crouch and Town Planner Kevin Pagini addressed the Council. Mr. Pagini explained we have been working with Connecticut Main Street to identify ways to initiate more walkability in downtown Wallingford and provide alternatives for cyclists to secure their bikes on bicycle racks instead of light poles. We have been working with Wallingford Center Inc to determine the location of the 13 new bicycle racks from the historic train station park to the Parade Grounds and across to Simpson Court. Bicycle rack options include artistic, engraved bicycle racks that say Wallingford, bicycle racks that look like bicycles, and standard slotted U-shaped bicycle racks, in the colors of red and yellow. Approval is needed from the Council to place two bicycle racks on the Parade Grounds. Installation will be completed and donated by Choate Rosemary Hall.

Councilor Tatta expressed displeasure with the color choice and would have preferred Hunter Green to match the esthetic of downtown Wallingford.

Councilor Fishbein asked for an explanation of Connecticut Main Street and their organization. Mr. Crouch explained that Connecticut Main Street meets with Wallingford Center Inc and the Town Planner to analyze how we are doing as a town and a community for the downtown. We have been ranked in the top 10 most walkable downtowns. There was discussion on the placement of the bicycle racks which would be between the road and the sidewalk. Councilor Fishbein stated he wished Council had been a part of discussion from the beginning to pick the colors.

Barbara Kapi asked about the impact of the bicycle racks and the events held on the Parade Grounds put on by Wallingford's Public Celebration Committee. Chairman Testa explained there would be no impact on the events. The Council could restrict cyclists from riding through the event like they request no dog walking during events.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: AYE

CARMODY: AYE

FISHBEIN: NAY

LAFFIN: AYE

REYNOLDS: AYE

RIVARD: ABSENT

ROSSACCI: AYE

TATTA: NAY

TESTA: AYE

6 – AYE

2 – NAY

1 – ABSENT

MOTION PASSED

12. Presentation from Chief Timothy Wall regarding new State Statutes authorizing additional EMT/Firefighter tax abatements and/or exemptions – Chairman Testa

Councilor Tatta recused herself from the discussion.

Volunteer Fire Chief Tim Wall and William Celata from Volunteer Fire Chief Company 8 addressed the Council. In doing research for initiatives and benefits for the volunteer fire service, EMT's and police officers, General Statutes 1281W and 1281X were brought to attention. Chief. Wall and Chief. Celata are asking the Council to consider General Statute 1281X for property tax abatement for the surviving spouse of a police officer, firefighter, or emergency medical technician who has died in the line of duty.

Chief Wall wanted to bring this to the Council's attention and determine the next course of action. Chairman Testa explained the next course of action would be to forward to the Ordinance Committee for review. Councilor Reynolds, Chairman of the Ordinance Committee advised the next meeting would be the 1st Tuesday of December.

13. Discussion regarding the status of the potential consolidated high school as it relates to possible Town Council action – Councilor Tatta

Councilor Tatta stated that she, Councilor Fishbein, Councilor Carmody and Councilor Rossacci have asked for this item to be placed on the agenda to update the public on the Council's role in the consolidation of the high schools. This is a big issue in town and the councilors wanted to clarify that there is no action that can be voted on by the Council until they are presented with something from the Board of Education. Another issue is how the money the project would be appropriated. If the Mayor vetoes but the Council approves, does the project move forward? Lastly, the issue of a referendum to vote on the consolidation of the high schools.

Councilor Laffin has been advocating for a referendum. He feels this is a decision that should be voted on by the community.

Councilor Carmody acknowledged the project is a huge undertaking and feels we should have transparency as much as possible. He supports a referendum, so the people have a chance to vote.

Councilor Rossacci would like to open up the Charter. She feels large projects like this should automatically go to referendum.

Councilor Fishbein addressed the short time frame we have to go through the process of initiating a referendum.

Councilor Reynolds is in favor of a townwide referendum to make a decision. He feels regardless of a time frame, if an issue is important to an individual, they will show up to vote in November.

14. Discussion and possible action on developing a standard operating procedure for town staff to follow when they have received a communication from a member of the public including a forwarding directive intending dissemination to the Town Council, as well as to possibly others – Councilor Fishbein

Councilor Fishbein wanted to discuss directives from the public to forward email communications to the Town Council or other departments. As well as respond to the requestor that their email has been forwarded. He feels this could create a problem if an email was inadvertently not forwarded to Council or a certain department. If a member of the public emails pictures of sidewalks needing repair and the email was not properly forwarded, this could put the clerk in the middle of being a witness to the notice. He would like to alleviate the possibility of that.

Mayor clarified that the Charter states the Town Clerk is the clerk of the Town Council. The Council has the authority to direct the Town Clerk. If a resident has an issue, it should be up to the Town Council to direct the clerk on how to handle that request. There are certain notices that go to the Town Clerk by statute and must follow a statutory procedure. If it is a matter of filing a Claim against the town, that would be directed to the Town Clerk's office.

Acting Town Clerk Leanna Gnazzo addressed the Council with an example of a resident asking for an email to be forwarded to Council and any other relevant departments. Also, emails asking for personal email contact information for Boards and Commissions. Ms. Gnazzo stated she did not feel comfortable making assumptions and would not forward to unspecified departments and would not give out personal information. She advised the resident to contact the Commission directly and they would provide the information to the members.

Corporation Counsel Janis Small added that the Town Clerks does not answer for other departments and doing so makes her the middleman. Since the Town Clerk is acting as the Council's secretary, it would be appropriate for the Council to advise on how to handle those scenarios.

15. 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.
16. Executive Session pursuant to General Statutes §1-225(f) and §1-200 (6)(B) regarding strategy and negotiations with respect to the pending tax appeal matters of *Wal-Mart Real Estate Business Trust v. Town of Wallingford* and *Connecticut Proton Therapy Center, LLC v. Town of Wallingford* – Law Dept.

MOTION WAS MADE TO enter Executive Session pursuant to General Statutes §1-200(6)(D) and §1-225(f) for discussion with respect to the purchase of property and pursuant to General Statutes §1-225(f) and §1-200 (6)(B) regarding strategy and negotiations with respect to the pending tax appeal matters of *Wal-Mart Real Estate Business Trust v. Town of Wallingford* and *Connecticut Proton Therapy Center, LLC v. Town of Wallingford* at 8:56 PM

**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 10:20 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: 8:56 PM to 10:20 PM

Attendance at Executive Session:

ALLINSON

CARMODY

FISHBEIN

LAFFIN

REYNOLDS

ROSSACCI (REMOTE)

TATTA

TESTA

MAYOR VINCENT CERVONI

TOWN ATTORNEY, GEOFFREY EINHORN

CORPORATION COUNSEL, JANIS SMALL

COMPTROLLER, TIM SENA

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 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.

