TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers
November 10, 2026
6:30 P.M.
AMENDED RECORD OF VOTES AND MINUTES

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, November, 2026, was called to order at 6:35pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was said and a moment of silence for Veterans. Councilors in attendance were Autumn Allinson (arrived 7:35pm), Samuel Carmody, Craig Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, Jesse Reynolds, Bryan Rivard, Melanie Rossacci (remote), 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 $6,566.30 (#263-290) – Tax Dept.

3b. Consider and approve a correction to the tax refunds amount from October 28, 2026 Town Council meeting in the amount of $3,969.57 – Tax Dept.

3c. Acceptance of donations from uptown and downtown business owners and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of $1,150 to Revenue Donations-Police, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations-Police, Acct. #25020050-58830-10135 – Police Dept.

3d. Acceptance of donation from Ms. Dorothea Rooney to be used for the K9 program and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of $300 to Revenue Donations-Police, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations – Police, Acct. #25020050-58830-10127 – Police Dept.

3e. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of $2,200 from Purchase Svs-Entertainment, Acct. #10050050-56746 to Gas & Oil, Acct. #10050050-53100 – Parks & Recreation

3f. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of $24,400 from Salaries and Wages, Acct. #10030000-51000 to Waste and Compost, Acct. #10030000-56754 – Public Works

3g. Approve Minutes of Regular Town Council Meeting of October 27, 2026.

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

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 Kellogg addressed the Council to ask for money to be budgeted to purchase signage for crosswalks, specifically at schools. Chairman Testa advised Mr. Kellogg to send a written request to the administration. Chief Ventura of Wallingford Police Dept is in favor of the signs but needs to identify which crosswalks would be appropriate and allocate funds for the signage in the next budget.

Keith Massamino followed up with a question from a previous meeting, as to why the Parks and Recreation Director is signing off on change-orders. Mayor responded that Parks and Recreation is in charge of that project and has the authority to sign off but not it's not without consultation from other appropriate professionals.

Bill Comerford asked about painting in Town Hall hallways in 2024 and again in 2026. He inquired as to if the issue that caused the paint to peel had been resolved. Chairman Testa responded that he will look into the issue.

Christine Coleman asked about flock cameras in Wallingford. Mayor responded that "flock" is a brand name, such as calling a tissue a Kleenex. Wallingford does not have flock cameras but has discussed cameras to enforce speeding and traffic signal enforcement. There is a state statue that governs their adoption. If Wallingford were to go forward, the issue would need to go before Town Council.

Jason Michael inquired about removing items from the consent agenda and if an amended agenda should be issued. Chairman Testa answered that these procedures are something the Council is looking to discuss. He also asked for a final number for the cost of the Police Station. Mayor indicated this topic will be put on a future agenda and addressed. Mr. Michaels also commented on the tone of which the public is addressed and asked that all members of the public be treated equally.

Sheila Tierney asked for an update on sidewalks. Chairman Testa responded that he has requested an agenda item for the next meeting to have a lengthy discussion with the Engineering, Public Works and Finance Departments on the sidewalk program and road paving program. Ms. Tierney also expressed concern over public vehicles using the parade ground driveway and asked for signage to be put up to indicate "Town Vehicles Only". Chairman Testa asked the Mayor to review

6. Chairman's Update
   a. Golden Fox Theatre

Joey Abate, co-founder of Golden Fox Theater made a statement regarding the impact on him and Golden Fox Theatre, not yet receiving the $5000 non-profit grant funds. Mayor stated he has never denied the funds but needs a budget in order to release them.

7. Consider and approve the naming of softball field #1 at Pragemann Park after Stanley Shepardson - Parks and Recreation

Kenny Michaels, Director of Parks and Recreation addressed the Council to ask to name softball field #1 after Stanley Shepardson, the first Recreation Director, serving 28 years in the Town of Wallingford. Mr. Shepardson's children were in attendance to support their father's service and the dedication to him. Councilor Fishbein and Councilor Rivard spoke in favor of the dedication.

Attorney Einhorn added that there was an opinion filed in the Law Department, created by then Corporate Counsel Adam Mantzaris in 2001, pertaining to the naming of one of the fields at Pragemann Park. There is a Will from Mr. and Mrs. Pragemann with two testamentary trusts, to contribute to the upkeep of the park, in the amount of $20,000 per year. The Will states that the name of the park should not be changed from Pragemann Park. The opinion at the time was that the naming of the field could affect the funds coming from the trust. However, no issue was ever brought up since the naming of the Doyle Field in 2016. Councilor Fishbein and Councilor Tatta expressed dissatisfaction in not having this information prior to the meeting.

Keith Massamino asked about his request to ask a question to Mr. Michaels regarding the pavilion at Pragemann Park. Chairman Testa stated it was not on the Agenda but to wait until agenda item #7 is completed and he will address it.

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve the naming of softball field #1 at Pragemann Park after Stanley Shepardson

MADE BY: CARMODY
SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

ROLL CALL
ALLINSON: AYE
CARMODY: AYE
FISHBEIN: AYE
LAFFIN: AYE
REYNOLDS: AYE
RIVARD: AYE
ROSSACCI: AYE
TATTA: AYE
TESTA: AYE

9 – AYE
0 – NAY
0 – ABSENT

MOTION PASSED

MOTION WAS MADE TO waive Rule 5 and add an item to the agenda.

MADE BY: TESTA
SECONDED BY: CARMODY

ROLL CALL
ALLINSON: AYE
CARMODY: AYE
FISHBEIN: AYE
LAFFIN: AYE
REYNOLDS: AYE
RIVARD: AYE
ROSSACCI: AYE
TATTA: NAY
TESTA: AYE

8 – AYE
1 – NAY
0 – ABSENT

MOTION PASSED

Kenny Michaels, Director of Parks and Recreation explained that the Pavilion is an ongoing project, started in 2018, in discussion with the Wallingford Vikings Youth Football League and the Wallingford Youth Lacrosse Team, looking for storage spaces. The Pragemann Pavilion has seen a decline in rentals since 2017. Construction for the storage shed was to begin between 2019 – 2020 but was delayed by COVID. The conversation was revisited by both leagues in 2024 and Parks and Recreation felt it was the right time to start the project again. The project converted the pavilion to a storage shed and was funded by the Pragemann endowment fund. This will provide leagues a viable storage facility at what would be considered their home location.

Keith Massamino asked if repairs and installs at the park require authorization from the town or administration. Mr. Michaels explained that as long as it's not a capital project and he has the funding in his budget, he can move forward, following the proper purchasing procedures.

Chris Cirri, President of Wallingford Youth Football spoke in support of the storage shed, explaining that teams use the shed to house expensive equipment that keeps our children safe. He questions why we spend so much time criticizing improvements in our community instead of embracing them.

Councilor Tatta questioned why we couldn't have the Pavilion and a storage shed. She feels we have taken a space that all residents can use and have turned it into a free storage space for nonprofits. Mr. Michaels reiterated that reservations of the Pavilion had been declining since 2017. Chairman Testa stated he would like to see a discussion about the long-term plans of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

8. Discussion and possible action on a Resolution of the Town Council regarding the educational specifications for the proposed new high school – Chairman Testa and Councilors Carmody, Reynolds, Rivard, and Rossacci

Town of Wallingford Town Council resolution concerning revisions to the educational specifications for the proposed high school consolidation project.

Whereas the Wallingford Town Council recognizes the significance of the proposed high school consolidation project and its lasting impact on the students, educators, families, and taxpayers of the town of Wallingford.

And whereas the educational specifications for the proposed project were developed through a process involving substantial public input including recommendations and advocacy from teachers, school staff, parents, students, and members of the community.

And whereas the inclusion of 17 additional classrooms was strongly advocated for by teachers and school staff to provide each teacher with a dedicated classroom and to ensure an educational environment that best supports effective instruction, student learning and the daily operations of the school.

And whereas teachers and school staff, whose professional experience and firsthand understanding of classroom needs are essential to the planning of educational facilities have consistently emphasized the importance of these additional classrooms.

And whereas the inclusion of these 17 classrooms received support from a majority of the Board of Education at various stages of its deliberations and decision-making process.

And whereas the town council is concerned that the subsequent revisions to the educational specifications eliminating the 17 classrooms represent a significant departure from the priorities established through public participation and the educational needs identified by teachers and school staff.

And whereas the town council firmly believes that should the town proceed with the consolidation of its two high schools, the resulting facilities must reflect the highest standards of educational excellence and provide the best possible learning environment for current and future generations of Wallingford students.

Now therefore, it be resolved that the Wallingford Town Council hereby formally expresses

its opposition to the revisions to the educational specifications eliminating the 17 additional classrooms.

And be it further resolved that the town council strongly urges the Wallingford Board of Education to reconsider and reverse its decision and restore these classrooms to the educational specifications consistent with the recommendation of teachers, school staff, parents, students, and the substantial public input received throughout the planning process.

And be it further resolved that the town council affirms its commitment to ensuring that any consolidation of the town's two high schools represents a responsible forward-looking investment in public education and provides the highest quality educational facilities reasonably achievable for the benefit of generations to come.

Be it finally resolved that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Wallingford Board of Education for its formal consideration adopted by the Wallingford Town Council this 10th day of November, 2026.

Councilor Rossacci spoke in support of the Resolution and feels the Board of Education should reconsider eliminating the 17 additional classrooms.

Councilor Fishbein clarified that the Board of Education is a creature of the State of Connecticut. The only connection to the Town of Wallingford is the budget. We are essentially asking a state body to reconsider something that is already voted on. He feels the teachers provided input and the teachers should be heard. If we are going to spend $400 million on a new high school, we should have the best high school available. He offered some revisions to the Resolution. Councilor Carmody accepted the revisions as a friendly amendment. Revised Resolution reads as follows:

TC Resolution re: HS Project Classrooms

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD

TOWN COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Resolution Concerning Revisions to the Educational Specifications for the Proposed High School Consolidation Project

WHEREAS, the Wallingford Town Council recognizes the significance of the proposed high school consolidation project and its lasting impact on the students, educators, families, and taxpayers of the Town of Wallingford; and

WHEREAS, the educational specifications for the proposed project were developed through a process involving substantial public input, including recommendations and advocacy from teachers, school staff, parents, students, and members of the community; and

WHEREAS, the inclusion of seventeen (17) additional classrooms was strongly advocated for by teachers and school staff to provide each teacher with a dedicated classroom and to ensure an

educational environment that best supports effective instruction, student learning, and the daily operations of the school; and

WHEREAS, teachers and school staff, whose professional experience and firsthand understanding of classroom needs are essential to the planning of educational facilities, have consistently emphasized the importance of these additional classrooms; and

WHEREAS, the inclusion of these seventeen (17) classrooms received support from a majority of the Board of Education at various stages of its deliberations and decision-making process; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council is concerned that subsequent revisions to the educational specifications eliminating the seventeen (17) classrooms represent a significant departure from the priorities established through public participation and the educational needs identified by teachers and school staff; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council firmly believes that, should the Town proceed with the consolidation of its two high schools, the resulting facilities must reflect the highest standards of educational excellence and provide the best possible learning environment for current and future generations of Wallingford students;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wallingford Town Council hereby formally expresses its opposition to the revisions to the educational specifications eliminating the seventeen (17) additional classrooms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council strongly urges the Wallingford Board of Education to reconsider and reverse its decision and restore these classrooms to the educational specifications, consistent with the recommendations of teachers, school staff, parents, students, and the substantial public input received throughout the planning process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council affirms its commitment to ensuring that if there is a consolidation of the Town's two high schools this should be a responsible, forward-looking investment in public education and provides the highest-quality educational facilities reasonably achievable for the benefit of generations to come, and removal of classrooms in the view of the Town Council does not support that vision.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Wallingford Board of Education for its formal consideration.

Adopted by the Wallingford Town Council this 10th day of November, 2026.

A question was asked how the Resolution was created. Chairman Testa explained it was a caucus of the Democrats, having a discussion and jointly putting this item on the agenda. Councilor Tatta asked a question about what documentation can be requested under the Freedom Of Information Act. Attorney Small explained that communications regarding the Resolution could be requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Councilor Tatta stated she would like to have been included on the final draft of the

resolution. She is also concerned about the Board of Education re-voting on this issue and how the votes changed through the process. She would like to know the reasons for the change.

Councilor Reynolds spoke in support of the Resolution and feels we should not be making any changes to size or shape while we are in the process of negotiating to buy property. We need to support our educators and plan smarter, think long term and think success.

Councilor Rivard believes the best people to make the assessment for the schools are the professionals that work in them and supports the teachers getting the 17 classrooms. If we are to move forward with this project we should do it right.

Councilor Laffin explained that the 17 classrooms and the pool could affect our reimbursement rate. He feels we should go to the State of Connecticut to lobby for that reimbursement to be covered. He would like a real vote and this Resolution will not do anything to resolve the situation. This is a Board decision and we need to follow the system the way is it designed.

Councilor Fishbein commented that before we can go to the State of Connecticut we need to find a site for the school.

Chairman Testa feels the Board of Education made their decision to change the educational specifications based on a memo from the Mayor. Mayor added that there is a possibility there are enough votes on Council to move forward with the project. There is talk about the Council supporting a referendum for it. If it goes to referendum and you get enough participation and positive votes, the project will move forward. These are all variables. Other variables include getting our legislative delegation to increase the reimbursement rate. If we build the right size building, per pupil and square footage, the State of Connecticut could reimburse 52.5%. The building we are trying to potentially build is looking at a reimbursement rate of 42.5%. He feels we should absolutely be going to the State for more money but we cannot count on the certainty in the outcome. He is hoping to get the most competitive 30-year term rate possible.

Maureen Reed, Board of Education member spoke in support of the 17 classrooms. She asked the Council to remember that every decision made in education should be about the kids. She feels the Town Council needs to understand every aspect of the project as Council ultimately makes the decision about the land purchase and project.

MOTION WAS MADE TO approve a Resolution of the Town Council regarding the educational specifications for the proposed new high school as amended.

MADE BY: CARMODY
SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

ROLL CALL
ALLINSON: AYE
CARMODY: AYE
FISHBEIN: AYE

LAFFIN: NAY
REYNOLDS: AYE
RIVARD: AYE
ROSSACCI: AYE
TATTA: NAY
TESTA: AYE

7 – AYE
2 – NAY
0 – ABSENT

MOTION PASSED

9. Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §1-225(f) and 1-200(6)(B) regarding strategy and negotiations with respect to the pending tax appeal matter of *35 Thorpe Avenue Associates, LLC v. Town of Wallingford* – Law Dept.

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

11. Motion to consider and approve settlement in the pending tax appeal matter of *35 Thorpe Avenue Associates, LLC v. Town of Wallingford* as discussed in Executive Session – Law Dept.

12. Executive Session pursuant to CGS Sections 1-200(6)© and 1-225(f) for the purpose of discussing security strategy and the deployment of security personnel.

MOTION WAS MADE TO enter Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §1-225(f) and 1-200(6)(B) regarding strategy and negotiations with respect to the pending tax appeal matter of *35 Thorpe Avenue Associates, LLC v. Town of Wallingford;* enter Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §1-200(6)(D) and §1-225(f) for discussion with respect to the purchase of property; enter Executive Session pursuant to CGS Sections 1-200(6)© and 1-225(f) for the purpose of discussing security strategy and the deployment of security personnel at 9:20 P.M.

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 10:27 P.M.

MADE BY: CARMODY
SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

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

Time of Executive Session: 9:20 P.M. to 10: 27 P.M.

Attendance at Executive Session:

ALLINSON
CARMODY
FISHBEIN
LAFFIN
REYNOLDS
ROSSACCI (REMOTE)
TATTA
TESTA

MAYOR VINCENT CERVONI
TOWN ATTORNEY, GEOFFREY EINHORN
CORPORATION COUNSEL, JANIS SMALL
****POLICE CHIEF, JOHN VENTURA – ITEM 12 ONLY**

MOTION WAS MADE TO consider and approve settlement in the pending tax appeal matter of *35 Thorpe Avenue Associates, LLC v. Town of Wallingford* as discussed in Executive Session

MADE BY: CARMODY
SECONDED BY: REYNOLDS

ROLL CALL
ALLINSON: AYE
CARMODY: AYE
FISHBEIN: AYE
LAFFIN: AYE
REYNOLDS: AYE
RIVARD: AYE
ROSSACCI: AYE
TATTA: AYE
TESTA: AYE

9 – AYE
0 – NAY
0 – ABSENT

MOTION PASSED

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 P.M.

Meeting digitally recorded.

Respectfully submitted,
Leanna Gnazzo Acting Town Clerk

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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.