

**MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING OF  
THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TUESDAY, April 29, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.  
Killingworth Town Hall/Remote Access Available**

**BOS Members in Attendance:** First Selectman Eric Couture and Selectmen Joel D'Angelo and Eric Nunes

**BOS Members Absent:** None

**Visitors:** Elizabeth Disbrow, Regina Regolo (Via Remote), James Joseph Duffield, Nancy Gorski, KVFC SR Trustee Todd Hajek (Via Remote), KVFC Chief Rick Darin (Via Remote), Eileen Unger-Pleines (Via Remote), Richard Pleines (Via Remote), Eileen Blewett, and Jamie Sciascia (Via Remote)

**Called to Order:** First Selectman Couture called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Public Comment:** None.

First Selectman Couture advised that tonight's meeting is a special meeting and only items listed on the posted Agenda could be discussed. Couture asked that all Public Comments be kept relevant to Agenda items, which included Traffic Safety.

**Public Comment:**

Nancy Gorski expressed appreciation for the work of the Park & Recreation Commission and Parmelee Farm, and the volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to benefit the Town of Killingworth. She extended kudos to these individuals for their countless hours of service, underscoring the vital role that volunteers play in maintaining the vibrancy and well-being of the Community.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Motion #1 - Selectman D'Angelo ***Moved*** and Selectman Nunes ***Seconded*** a motion to approve Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen that was held on Monday, March 14, 2025 as presented.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

**Refunds:**

Motion #2 - First Selectman Couture ***Moved*** and Selectman D'Angelo ***Seconded*** a motion to approve the following Refund, for its overpayment, and allow it to follow its normal course as presented.

**Refunds -**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Reason</u>
1. Gomez L. 127	Chestnut Hill Rd	\$59.34	Overpayment COC#2499

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

**Department Reports:**

Jim Duffield provided an update on the ongoing projects in the Town: 1) Eric Auer Park: The project is approximately 75% complete noting that crushed rock has been laid, and next steps are compacting, applying topsoil, and finishing the grading; 2) New Pavilion at Eric Auer Park: Plans were approved recently, and discussions are ongoing about the best location with the original placement in the back corner raised concerns about limited use due to distance from the fields. Alternative placement near the fence was also debated due to potential hazards from lacrosse balls. They will be walking KRP this month to finalize the location; and 3) Sheldon Park Pavilion Repair: Work was scheduled to begin this week, with completion expected shortly.

**Pickleball Court Project -**

There were three bids received for the Pickleball Project: 1) \$268,000; 2) \$103,000; 3) \$130,000. The lowest bidder is a reputable contractor and the team is confident in the quality of service planning to move forward with that contractor.

**Opening Day for Little League -**

The Opening Day for Little League was rescheduled due to rain and the First Pitch Ceremony will now take place on the new date which includes team photos.

**New Fee for Non-Resident Field Use -**

The Town of Killingworth will begin charging field use fees to outside groups not based in Town to help cover maintenance costs and fees will be set at \$25.00 for a 2-hour block, aligning with or below surrounding towns, many of which charge significantly more or restrict use altogether.

**Appointments:** None.

**Budget:**

First Selectman Couture reported that the Town Meeting was held the previous night and was well attended. During the Board of Finance portion of the meeting, the only change made after Public Input was a reduction in the transfer to Capital by \$340,313 noting the new Operating Budget of \$5,361,750. While the reduction was met with some concern due to known Capital needs, the Board of Finance vote was unanimous in favor of the reduction.

The First Selectman voiced concern that while the reduction may be a short-term necessity, it will place strain on future Capital planning, especially given the Town's known infrastructure and investment needs. Board members agreed, noting that the Multi-Year Capital Plan will now be tighter and more difficult to manage. The Town is facing a projected shortfall of 3.86 Mills, with much of the impact dependent on the upcoming School Budget Referendum. There's some hope that general fund transfers may help mitigate the impact, but the Board emphasized the need for long-term solutions. The Town's Grand List saw a slight decrease, driven by State mandated motor vehicle tax change, and an increase in the Veterans' Property Tax Exemption. The Board discussed the sewer and water infrastructure restricting commercial growth, as well as homes in Killingworth being limited and expensive. A property revaluation is scheduled to be completed next year which will reassess property values and could adjust the Grand List accordingly. Lastly, the Board discussed communication on efforts to inform residents about Fire Safety and Outdoor Burning Restrictions.

### **Old Business:**

#### **A. Multi-year Capital Improvement Plan**

A \$225,000 steel structure will be built this summer to provide short-term storage relief, especially for fire trucks currently kept outside. However, this is a temporary solution and does not resolve the critical need for a full-scale fire station upgrade or town campus renovation. A larger construction project is being targeted for the year 3031, allowing time for planning, design, and funding likely through bonding and/or State grants. The Town has currently set aside \$10 million, but it's widely acknowledged that actual costs could exceed this, especially with rising construction prices. The Board emphasized the importance of being prepared with hiring architects or consultants soon to refine plans, ensure accurate budgeting, and avoid delays when the time comes to build. The steel structure helps temporarily but does not lessen the urgency of a comprehensive long-term solution.

Motion #3 - First Selectman Couture ***Moved*** and Selectman D'Angelo ***Seconded*** a motion to accept the Multi Year Capital Improvement Plan amended to include the Fire Company's Needs Assessment to include Fiscal Years 2030-31.

First Selectman Couture ***Amended*** and Selectman D'Angelo ***Seconded*** the motion to accept the Multi Year Capital Improvement Plan amended to include the Fire Company's Needs Assessment with an estimated cost of \$23,928,968 to include Fiscal Years 2030-31.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

#### **C. Capital Projects**

First Selectman Couture reported on the Capital Projects: Chip Sealing; Water Hole Dredging Emmanuel Church, Culvert Project; Eric Auer Park Pavilion: An additional \$6,500 is needed due

to revised structural requirements and this is not eligible for ARPA funds; Fire Truck Acquisition: Total estimated cost is \$143,000. Vendors are aware of payment delay; a common issue in municipal purchasing. Also included in the Town meeting call for funding approval; Street Sweeping began earlier this week with work temporarily paused due to vendor equipment failure.

#### **D. Traffic Safety Safe Streets for All Program - Upcoming Meeting**

First Selectman Couture reported that there is another meeting for the Safe Streets for All meeting virtually scheduled for May 15, 2025. and an email announcement will be sent on Thursday via Constant Contact to engage the Community and discuss Traffic Safety improvements. The Town, in coordination with All Safe Streets, has identified two high-priority areas due to safety concerns:

1. Intersection of Roast Meat Hill Road and Route 80 (Frequently cited by residents as problematic and currently under review for improvements)
2. Route 81 coming down from Eli Road to Chittenden Road including the traffic circle, has been identified as a priority area due to a serious past accident

A site walk is planned for later in May to evaluate the area and provide local feedback to the Connecticut DOT for potential improvements to those locations. Route 81 roadwork begins with milling on May 30, 2025 and paving is scheduled for June 19, 2025. Fog cameras are being planned to enhance safety monitoring. Street sweeping will resume Thursday after a brief delay.

#### **B. Award Pickleball Courts Bids**

First Selectman Couture reported that the Pickleball Court project had already been approved at previous Town meetings and budgeted for in a prior Capital Plan.

Motion #4 - First Selectman Couture **Moved** and Selectman D'Angelo **Seconded** a motion to Award the Bid for the Pickleball Courts to Maisano Brothers of Northford, CT in the amount of \$103,000.

*Discussion: The Board raised concerns with parking limitations and traffic concerns especially during peak times (e.g. Saturday mornings) when the Library, Baseball Games, and Pickleball might all coincide. It was noted that while the outfield could serve as overflow parking, it's currently unimproved (grass, not paved), and that might be an issue for capacity and safety. The Board discussed and considered alternative locations for the Pickleball Courts like Eric R. Park or Sheldon Park but all had significant logistical issues including drainage, space constraints, noise complaints, and existing congestion. Ultimately, the current location was seen as the most viable, even if not perfect.*

*The Board further discussed the importance of investing in recreational spaces, particularly for active adults and non-traditional athletes like teens not involved in organized sports. The courts*

*will be asphalt, high-tension, and are expected to have a lifespan of 10–15 years with standard maintenance. Comparisons were made to similar surfaces like the Town's tennis courts. The Board recognized the significant planning already done by the Park and Recreation Commission and confirmed that the funding had been approved by the Town.*

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

#### **New Business:**

##### **A. Closer to Free Ride**

First Selectman Couture reported the Closer to Free Ride is an Annual Charity Bicycle Ride scheduled for September 6th. The primary goal of the event is to raise donations in support of the Smilow Cancer Hospital and the Yale Cancer Center noting donations are welcomed and encouraged. The route for the ride will follow Route 148, and it falls under the responsibility of the Local Traffic Authority since there will be road closures.

Motion #5 - Selectman D'Angelo ***Moved*** and Selectman Nunes ***Seconded*** a motion to accept the Closer to Free Ride Route scheduled on September 6, 2025 as presented.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

##### **B. Issue Call to Town Meeting**

Motion #6 - Selectman D'Angelo ***Moved*** and Selectman Nunes ***Seconded*** a motion to accept the Legal Notice as presented:

### LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF KILLINGWORTH NOTICE OF ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET AND SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

The Electors of the Town of Killingworth and all those qualified to vote in meetings of said Town are hereby notified and warned that the Annual Town Budget Meeting and Special Town Meeting will be held in the All Purpose Room of the Killingworth Elementary School on Monday, May 19, 2025 at 7 p.m.to consider and act upon the following items of business:

1. To adopt the Budget recommendation of the Board of Finance of an Operating Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$5,361,750.
2. To adopt the Budget recommendation of the Board of Finance of Capital Expenditures for the fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$972,114.
3. To approve the Multi-Year Capital Improvement Plan for FY 2026 through FY 2035 approved at the Board of Selectmen's meeting held Tuesday, April 29, 2025.
4. To approve additional funding of \$6,500 for Park & Rec Pavilion at Eric Auer Field project to come from the assigned fund balance of the capital reserves.

5. To approve additional funding of \$142,925.42 for the Killingworth Volunteer Fire Company vehicle to be incorporated into the lease purchase agreement.

6. To confirm the Selectmen's appointment of James Joseph Duffield (U), Chris Robert Smalley (U) and William Raymond Burley (U) as Killingworth representatives to the Haddam-Killingworth Recreation Authority, for a term to commence upon the confirmation and to continue until June 30, 2026

Dated at Killingworth, Connecticut this 29 day of April 2025.

Eric Couture  
First Selectman

Joel D'Angelo  
Selectman

Eric Nunes  
Selectman

**Public Comment:**

- Nancy Gorski urged the Board of Selectmen to prioritize the school budget with the same energy and commitment shown toward other initiatives, such as the Pickleball Courts. She referenced a comment made by Selectman D'Angelo regarding the impracticality of building projects due to looming tariffs, noting what she viewed as an inconsistency in light of the decision to proceed with constructing a new school. Nancy further emphasized the importance of Selectmen attending school budget meetings in person rather than virtually, in order to better understand public sentiment and engage more meaningfully in the budgeting process.
- Eileen Blewett had several comments 1) Eileen followed up on a request that was made to provide the final cost for the Barn renovations, as it relates to ongoing budget discussions noting that while the initial allotment is known, the actual total cost incurred has not yet been confirmed; 2) Eileen raised a follow up question regarding the reduction in the transfer from Operating to Capital noting that the remaining \$659,000 didn't include funding for the Library project inquiring what would happen to the project if the Library does not receive that funding.

**Selectmen's Comments:**

**Joel D'Angelo -**

- D'Angelo thanked Jim Duffield, acknowledging the lengthy projects and expressing his appreciation for the due diligence demonstrated by Jim and the Park and Recreation Commission throughout the course of their work.

**Eric Nunes -**

- Nunes echoed Nancy Gorski's earlier Public Comment to stay informed about the financial obligations facing the Town of Killingworth. He noted that in addition to the proposed Town's Budget, residents should be mindful of the School's Budget Referendum on May 6th;

- Nunes highlighted that Killingworth has a predominantly 55 population, many on fixed incomes, while student enrollment is trending downward per District data. This demographic context should factor into financial decision-making.
- Nunes stated that the Board of Finance identified a preliminary Mill Rate shortfall of 3.86 Mills and expects the final increase to be closer to 1.75/2 Mills, which is still significant. Nunes emphasized that while the Town has long prioritized education spending, it has underinvested in municipal infrastructure and services. The current needs assessments reveal the Town requires substantial reinvestment to remain viable and attractive, especially to younger families and encouraged residents to educate themselves on both municipal and School budgets;
- Noted the risk of making the town less accessible for new families if tax burdens grow without thoughtful planning;
- Nunes stressed the importance of balancing long-term investments with fiscal responsibility, particularly in light of the Town's aging population and changing demographics.

#### **First Selectman's Comments:**

Eric Couture -

- Couture expressed difficulty agreeing with the school budget, particularly this year and they supported the Superintendent's original budget, which aimed to protect Killingworth from sudden financial shifts, but the School Board chose a different path. Couture emphasized that education is fundamental to a healthy democracy, noting that an informed and educated public is essential for understanding societal structures and participating meaningfully in civic life. Couture commented that he is unsure as to how he will vote on the School budget referendum scheduled for Tuesday, acknowledging the complexity of the issue and encouraging Community members to vote thoughtfully. Couture commented about the Budget concerns particularly around education costs are not new referencing was made to reports from as far back as 1993 or 1994 expressing similar worries further noting that these challenges have been ongoing. Couture commented that Killingworth has limited its potential tax base by restricting commercial growth due to infrastructure limitations like lack of sewers and water mains. Holding costs down year-to-year, while helpful in the short term, can lead to missed opportunities for strategic investment like improving town hall facilities. Couture further advised that rising school costs are a statewide issue and rural and suburban Towns like Killingworth face rising costs with declining student populations, while urban areas face similar cost increases due to growing enrollment noting this presents a shared required collaboration.
- Couture encouraged Community members that are going to the Opening Day Ceremony on May 4th to bring lifesavers and other Star Wars-themed items.

First Selectman Couture warmly wished the Community to enjoy the lovely weather and drive safely.

**Adjournment:** First Selectman Couture ***Moved*** to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Sciascia  
Clerk