

PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES: BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2026 at 6:45 p.m.
Killingworth Town Hall/Remote Access Available

BOS Members in Attendance: First Selectman Eric Couture, Selectmen Joel D'Angelo, Nancy Gorski - All present.

The Board held a Public Hearing to consider community projects seeking to qualify for the State of Connecticut tax credits from the 2026 Neighborhood Assistance Act Program. One application was received from the Killingworth Land Conservation Trust for land acquisition funding in the amount of \$10,000. No public concerns were raised. The proposal was referred back to the Board of Selectmen for consideration at its regular meeting at 7:00 p.m.

First Selectman Couture closed the Public Hearing at approximately 6:59 p.m.

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Monday, June 22, 2026 at 7:00 p.m./Killingworth Town Hall/Remote Access Available

BOS Members in Attendance: First Selectman Eric Couture, Selectmen Nancy Gorski and Joel D'Angelo - All present.

Visitors: Ellen Oppenheimer, Rob Rimmer, Clark Judge, Jr., Joanne Nesti, John Samperi, Ed Munster, Cindy Adametz, Walt Adametz, William R. Bowles, Eileen Blewett, Matthew Nunzianto, Richard Pleines, Robert Abrams, Debbie Abrams, Eileen Unger-Pleines (Via Remote), Tim Gannon (Via Remote), Michele Amendola (Via Remote), Deborah McCarty Samperi (Via Remote), Regina Regolo (Director of Finance/Via Remote), Jamie Sciascia (Clerk/Via Remote)

Called to Order/Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman Couture called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes: Motion #1: Selectman Gorski *Moved* and Selectman D'Angelo *Seconded* a motion to approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Monday, June 8, 2026, as presented. Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Motion #2: Selectman Gorski *Moved* and First Selectman Couture *Seconded* a motion to approve the Minutes from the Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, June 16, 2026, as presented. Motion passed [2-0-1].
Couture/Gorski - Yes, D'Angelo - Abstain.

Refunds and Abatements: None.

Department Reports: None.

Appointments: None.

25/26 Budget Report: Director of Finance Regolo reviewed the Budget Report and responded to questions from the Board. Regolo reported that attorney fees were approximately \$127,000 below the \$60,000 budgeted amount, with additional invoices anticipated. She also reported that approximately \$1,500 remained in the water testing account and that PFAS remediation expenses totaled approximately \$405,548.

First Selectman Eric Couture reported that the Town expects to receive approximately \$400,000 from the State toward PFAS remediation costs, with half being forgivable and the remainder provided as a 10-year loan at 2% interest. Regolo also noted that a replacement refrigerator was purchased for the Transfer Station after the previous unit was damaged by a lightning strike.

Old Business: A. NAA Applications - The Neighborhood Assistance Act Application was presented during the Special Meeting held immediately prior to this meeting. A motion was made to accept the application submitted by the Killingworth Land Conservation Trust.

Motion #3 - Selectman Gorski *Moved* and Selectman D'Angelo *Seconded* a motion to accept the Neighborhood Assistance Act Application, submitted by the Killingworth Land Conservation Trust, and forward the program proposal to the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services. Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

B. Code of Ethics Ethics Committee - Rob Rimmer presented the Ethics Committee's revised Code of Ethics and reported that the draft had been reviewed by Town Attorney Joseph McQuade, whose recommendations were incorporated by the Committee. Discussion included notification and education of Town officers regarding the Code of Ethics, including distribution to newly elected and appointed officials and posting on the Town website. The Board also discussed ensuring consistency with existing Town policies. The Board will continue its review of the proposed Code of Ethics at a future meeting and discussed holding a public hearing prior to consideration at a Town Meeting.

C. Multi-Year Capital Improvement Plan

The Board reviewed the updated Multi-Year Capital Improvement Plan and noted that no significant changes had been made since the Special Meeting. Discussion focused on ways to communicate project priorities to the public, including the use of an internal prioritization addendum. The Board agreed the addendum would serve as a working document and would not be included with the plan submitted to Town Meeting, though it would remain available as a public record. Correspondence was received from Parmelee Farm regarding requested projects. It was noted that the requests are currently identified in Year 2 of the plan and may be addressed through the normal annual budget process. The Board emphasized that the Capital Improvement Plan is a living document that may be adjusted as priorities, needs, and circumstances change. The Board discussed the plan's value as a long-term forecasting and budgeting tool, particularly for assisting the Board of Finance in planning for future capital expenditures. It was noted that projected costs were smoothed across multiple years by phasing the replacement of Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) equipment, although that approach may require future adjustment. The Board further noted that the plan reflects approximately \$1 million to \$1.8 million in anticipated annual capital expenditures, underscoring the importance of long-range financial planning. The Board expressed support for continuing discussions regarding project prioritization and future capital needs.

Motion #4 - Selectman D'Angelo *Moved* and Selectman Gorski *Seconded* a motion to accept the Multi-Year Capital Improvement Plan as presented. Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

New Business: A. Paper of Record

Ed Munster presented an update regarding the Town's paper of record, HK News. He provided a brief history of the publication, noting it was established in 2014 due to reduced local coverage from regional newspapers and expanded to print in 2016 in response to community demand. Mr. Munster stated that HK News is experiencing financial and operational challenges due to declining print viability and reduced advertising revenue. He indicated uncertainty regarding long-term sustainability. He confirmed that HK News is not requesting town funding or financial support, and that acceptance of government funding is not being pursued. Discussion included challenges in securing local advertising. The outreach to small businesses (e.g., contractors and local service providers) requires direct, person-to-person follow-up, which is limited by staffing and the absence of a dedicated liaison. It was further noted that HK News could serve as an affordable advertising option for small businesses without larger marketing resources. HK News will continue publishing legal notices through July 9th, and its website will remain active for local content.

The Board discussed the Town's legal requirement to maintain a designated Paper of Record. It was noted that recent state legislation did not eliminate this requirement. It was stated that under the Town Charter, the First Selectman has authority to designate the Paper of Record and Couture indicated a short timeframe would be used to determine the designation. It was noted that if HK News is unable to continue in this role, the Town would likely revert to either the

Hartford Courant or Middletown Press, with operational considerations including legal notice, lead times and administrative deadlines. The Board thanked Ed Munster and acknowledged HK News for its service.

B. Pavilion Enclosure Project: Remove from Capital

First Selectman Couture reported that Richard Pleines reported that the Parmelee Farm Committee, at its May 7th meeting, formally voted to remove the pavilion curtain enclosure project from consideration. It was noted that Town Meeting had previously approved the use of funding for this purpose, including \$56,000 from the Special Activities Account for pavilion curtains and additional capital funds for trail lighting.

Motion #5 - Selectman Gorski *Moved* and Selectman D'Angelo *Seconded* a motion to unencumber \$56,000 from Capital Funds previously allocated for the curtains and additional trail lighting, and to forward the request to a Town Meeting for approval. Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Motion #6 - First Selectman Couture *Moved* and Selectman D'Angelo *Seconded* a motion to add to the Agenda, "Parmelee Request Regarding Replacement Item Funds" to the Agenda as Item 8C and to relabel the Agenda Item "Upcoming Town Meeting Items" as Item 8D both set forth under New Business. Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

C. Parmelee Request Regarding Replacement Item Funds:

The Board discussed a Parmelee Farm request regarding replacement items funds and it was noted that certain capital "clean-up" items require proper classification and alignment with the appropriate funding source, previously referred to as the special activities account (or successor account), and that funds will continue to be tracked separately. It was further noted that any release or unencumbering of funds previously approved by Town Meeting must return for appropriate authorization.

Motion #7 - First Selectman Couture *Moved* and Selectman Gorski *Seconded* a motion to recommend that the Board of Finance approve the presented Parmelee Farm expenses in an amount not to exceed \$10,650 from the FY 2025–2026 Budget. Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

D. Upcoming Town Meeting items

The Board reviewed anticipated agenda items for the upcoming Town Meeting, including the Ethics Code, which will be brought back for consideration after not being approved at the prior meeting, with discussion noting an intent to address it over the summer with a target timeframe of August prior to the Town Meeting. The Curtain Project (pavilion enclosure/permanent curtains) is expected to be included on the agenda, along with the Multi-Year Capital Improvement Plan for presentation and consideration. The Board also noted the reappointment of Jamie Young to the South Central Regional Water Authority, with clarification that she continues to serve until a successor is nominated and approved.

Overs and Unders were also referenced as a potential agenda item, though timing and readiness remain uncertain, and it was noted that up to two additional items may be added prior to finalization, though none were confirmed. The Board further discussed the possibility of holding a public hearing prior to the Town Meeting, with agreement that a special call would not be required and that it could be scheduled administratively. Members noted the importance of allowing sufficient time for public participation and discussion, with the hearing intended to support a broader exchange of information and feedback. The Town Meeting is anticipated to be scheduled for early August.

Public Comment - First Selectman Couture opened public comments and asked speakers to observe a three-minute limit, state their name, and address comments directly to the Board of Selectmen.

- Eileen Blewett stated that while she appreciated the items being moved forward and placed on the upcoming town meeting agenda, the items had already been presented to and approved by the Board of Finance at a prior meeting. She noted that, although there has been some procedural transition and the process has been somewhat uneven, she did not view this situation as problematic, as the items had been properly presented, discussed, and approved, but did not advance through the town meeting step.

- John Samperi commented on the town's budget and mill rate process, stating that the mill rate was set without full alignment on the Board of Education budget. He referenced prior budget actions from the previous year and noted concerns that similar circumstances may be occurring again. He raised questions regarding the timing and purpose of a recent Saturday morning Zoom meeting and discussed the handling of surplus funds in relation to the Board of Education budget. He stated that some residents have expressed concerns regarding transparency and affordability and referenced the potential impact of rising costs on taxpayers. He also referenced confusion regarding election timing and signage and suggested it may have affected voter participation. He concluded by encouraging consideration of taxpayer concerns.

- Eileen Unger-Pleines commented on the importance of transparency and public access in Board of Finance meetings. She referenced a meeting held on Saturday, noting a prior comment that it was valuable to have members of the public present, observing, and better understanding the proceedings. She stated that, after reviewing recent Board of Finance minutes from the past two years, she found them to be very limited in detail. She emphasized that these meetings involve taxpayer funds and are among the board's most important responsibilities, especially given current economic pressures and community concerns. She suggested that improved transparency could reduce confusion and help residents understand the reasoning behind financial decisions. She also recommended considering a larger meeting space and better use of available meeting software to increase public access and awareness.

- Walter Adametz commented on long-term affordability and rising property taxes in town. He noted his family's eight-generation history in the community and expressed concern about whether future generations will be able to afford to remain in town. He referenced the school budget as comprising a large portion of the overall town budget and cited recent mill rate increases, stating his taxes increased approximately \$1,200 last year and are projected to increase about \$1,500 this year, with potential additional impacts from future school building projects. Mr. Adametz questioned the sustainability of repeated mill rate increases, suggesting smaller incremental increases could have been considered. He expressed frustration with the budget process and timing of the mill rate adoption, and disagreed with comments suggesting the town could easily afford the increase. He expressed concerns regarding the process and stated that he would have welcomed additional input from the Board of Selectmen regarding affordability considerations. Mr. Adametz further commented on town demographics and property taxes. He noted that a significant portion of town residents are 55 years and older and stated that many households do not have children in the school system. He described population turnover in which some families leave after their children complete school, while long-term residents remain and continue paying taxes. He stated that long-term residents carry a significant share of the tax burden and referenced concerns regarding recent Board of Finance decisions.

- Robert Abrams, Beaver Dam Road, commented on affordability, taxes, and town governance. He stated he has lived in the area for many years and expressed concern that rising property taxes have become a fairness and affordability issue, noting it could lead some residents, including himself, to consider relocating or downsizing. He referenced recent referendum votes and stated that residents have expressed concern regarding budget decisions and the level of responsiveness to public input. He noted increased community discussion surrounding town finances and governance. Mr. Abrams stated that rising taxes could be especially difficult for residents on fixed incomes and expressed opposition to the school budget. He suggested moderating spending growth over time and focusing on essential needs. He concluded by encouraging continued constructive dialogue and common-sense decision-making in town governance.

- Matthew Nunzianto commented on affordability, taxes, and recent budget decisions. He expressed agreement with prior speakers regarding concerns about rising property taxes and stated that some residents feel town governance is becoming unaffordable, particularly for seniors. He referenced concerns about the Board of Finance's handling of the budget process and stated that some residents feel their referendum vote was not reflected in the final outcome. He questioned responsiveness to voter input and expressed concern about the impact of continued mill rate increases on residents' ability to remain in town. Mr. Nunzianto reiterated his concerns about affordability and expressed agreement with prior public comments.

- Debbie Abrams commented in agreement with prior speakers regarding affordability and rising property taxes. She stated that housing costs are becoming increasingly difficult for some residents, particularly seniors, and expressed

concern that some may feel compelled to consider relocating or downsizing to other towns.

Selectmen's Comments: Nancy Gorski -

- Gorski commented that residents were present tonight in part due to the Board of Finance's current practice of not offering routine public comment during its meetings. She expressed support for increased transparency and public access, including recording Board of Finance meetings and consideration of allowing public comment in an open forum. She referenced a Board of Finance member, Steve Reeps, who had previously expressed appreciation for public input and the importance of understanding community perspectives. Gorski reviewed recent budget trends, noting that approximately \$1.06 million had historically been transferred from the General Fund to capital accounts, but that this practice had changed in recent years. She stated that General Fund resources have instead been used to help mitigate mill rate increases, contributing to a reduction in the fund balance. She also noted recent mill rate increases and stated that the upcoming revaluation may have varying impacts on taxpayers. She emphasized the importance of continued transparency regarding the Board of Finance's use of funds. Lastly, Gorski stated she intended to bring these topics forward for further discussion with the Board of Finance and planned to attend an upcoming Board of Education meeting to provide public input and share informational context regarding prior budget discussions.

- Gorski suggested future discussion with the Department of Public Works staffing, including potential opportunities to reduce Park and Recreation maintenance costs and to assess impacts if volunteer support at Parmelee Farm changes.

- Gorski suggested future discussion with the Library regarding service levels and potential cost-saving opportunities as part of upcoming budget planning.

Joel D'Angelo -

- D'Angelo commented that he had not been publicly engaged in the recent Board of Education "yes or no" discussions, except early in the process, and noted familiarity with the Board's work and budgeting. He stated that the level of increase proposed by the Board of Education was higher than typical in his experience and would have required Killingworth to absorb a substantial annual increase.

- D'Angelo thanked residents for their comments and identified two primary themes raised: transparency in local government and public understanding of financial decision-making. He noted that when constituents feel information is not sufficiently clear or accessible, it raises concern regarding transparency and suggested that improved communication or additional steps may be helpful.

- D'Angelo referenced concerns raised regarding whether the outcome of votes reflects the will of voters, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that public vote results are clearly understood and implemented. He stated that he did not yet have specific solutions but viewed these as the key issues raised and appreciated the opportunity to hear the concerns directly.

First Selectman's Comments:

Eric Couture -

- Couture stated that he would not comment on remarks made during public comment at this time, noting he would like additional time to consider the issues raised. He indicated he has been consistent in his positions to date and acknowledged the perspective expressed.

- Couture reported that there is a Community Forum with the Board of Education and District Leadership scheduled for Wednesday, June 24th at KES at 5:00 p.m. in the All-Purpose Room.

- Couture reported that the Killingworth Ambulance Association is offering free CPR training to residents and encouraged participation. He noted information was recently shared via HK News.

- Couture reported that a RiverCOG meeting is scheduled for Wednesday for Board ratification. He noted discussion will include the Regional Waste Authority concept and other regional service sharing initiatives as potential approaches to reducing municipal costs, and referenced ongoing collaboration among municipalities facing similar fiscal challenges.

Adjournment: First Selectman Couture adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Sciascia

Jamie Sciascia, Clerk