

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MONDAY, March 10, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.
Killingworth Town Hall/Remote Access Available**

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

BOS Members Absent: None

Visitors: Nancy Gorski, Jim Duffield, Glenn Johnson, Wayne Linsley, Representative from the Maisano Brothers, Inc., Regina Regolo, Eileen Blewett (Via Remote), Eileen Unger Pleines (Via Remote), Jamie Sciascia (Via Remote/Arrived at approximately 7:08 p.m.)

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.

Approval of Minutes:
The Minutes were *Tabled* until later in the Meeting.

(This was due to Clerk Sciascia not being in attendance at that time.)

Motion #1 - Selectman Nunes *Moved* and Selectman D'Angelo *Seconded* a motion to move back in place as it was listed on the Agenda, Approval of Minutes.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Motion #2 - Selectman Nunes *Moved* and Selectman D'Angelo *Seconded* a motion to approve the following sets of Minutes: The Minutes from the Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting of February 10, 2025, the Minutes from the Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting of February 24, 2025, the Minutes from the Board of Selectmen's Special Meeting of February 25, 2025, the Minutes from the Board of Selectmen's Special Meeting of February 27, 2025 and the Minutes from the Board of Selectmen's Special Meeting of March 3, 2025 as presented.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Refunds:

Motion #3 - First Selectman Couture **Moved** and Selectman D’Angelo **Seconded** a motion to approve the following Refunds, all for overpayment, and allow them to follow its normal course as presented.

Refunds -

Name	Address	Amount	Reason
1. M. Karabeinikoff	21 Whitewood Rd.	\$357.73	Overpaid COC#11517M
2. M.Carri	53 Green Hill Rd	\$28.97	Overpaid COC#11793M
3. R. Millette	538 N Roast Meat	\$9.52	Overpaid COC#11786M
4. R. Goncalves-Sousa	85 Alders Bridge	\$45.87	Overpaid COC#11734M
5. M. Infanta	83 Buell Hill Rd	\$44.49	Overpaid COC#11622M
6. M. Langer	485 Route 148	\$11.63	Overpaid

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Open Bids: PickleBall Courts:

First Selectman Couture opened the following Bids that were received for the PickleBall Courts:

- 1) Hinding Tennis, LLC in the amount of \$137,900;
- 2) Maisano Bros, Inc in the amount of \$103,000; and
- 3) Martin Laviero Contractor in the amount of \$268,096.

Per the Bidding process, all Bids received will go on the Town of Killingworth’s website for public viewing and will be passed onto the Park and Recreation Commission for further review.

Department Reports:

First Selectman Couture reported that the Department Reports were provided in the Board’s packet. Couture is happy to share any feedback and/or questions to the appropriate person that the Board might have.

Appointments:

Motion #4 - First Selectman Couture **Moved** and Selectman D’Angelo **Seconded** a motion to appoint Shauna Ham as Assessor for a term effective April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Motion #5 - First Selectman Couture **Moved** and Selectman D’Angelo **Seconded** a motion to appoint Cheryl K. Fine to the Committee on Aging for a term effective January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Budget:

A. 2024/2025

First Selectman Couture reported that they are operating within expectations. Regolo reported about when the Mill Rate was set for this year, 1.5% of the Fund Balance was put towards mitigating a Mill Rate increase, noting a good portion will likely be utilized. Regolo further reported that the Snow Budget is coming in slightly over, that's with no additional storms occurring. Regolo gave an update on Parmelee Farm being over Budget as well as tracking other Town expenses such as: internet, waste collection, and Eversource (light and power).

B. 2025/2026

The Board had discussion in length about the 25/26 fiscal years Budget.

Couture reported about the addition in Capital of the License Plate Reader Cameras (Flock Safety Falcon Cameras) for the resident trooper program, now at a lower price than initially estimated in a prior meeting.

Couture reported about the Fire Department Investments noting that they are planning for turnout gear replacements due to increased safety regulations. Fire Truck Purchases are scheduled for major purchases planned for years 2031, 2032, and 2034. The Board had discussion about the Fire Department's Needs Assessment with associated costs of approximately \$10 Million for future upgrades.

Couture reported about the Highway & Road Maintenance which includes a Triaxial Roll-off Truck purchase of approximately \$325,000 which was retained in the Capital Plan due to waste disposal concerns. The Bridge replacement at Abner Lane has been added with estimated costs of \$500,000 after damage caused by heavy vehicles.

Couture reported about the Library's Improvements with their plans for a new Pavilion and Solar Panel Installation that are under discussion noting that the Town is waiting to confirm whether this could be funded through possible grants and/or donations.

The Parks & Recreation Projects were discussed: 1) Sheldon Park Playground Renovation in the amount of approximately \$125,000 was approved to upgrade old equipment; 2) Lights at Rocco Field were discussed to extend field usability during evening hours; and 3) Additional trail improvements and facility renovations are planned.

Couture reported that the Town is purchasing Cyber Insurance for the first time to protect against potential cyber threats with security upgrades planned for the Municipal Buildings as well as OSHA Compliance Training added to the Highway Department's Budget in order to enhance workplace safety.

Couture reported that a second Resident State Trooper is being added to enhance the safety of the Community. This decision was based on residents' concerns about police presence and

emergency response times. Couture reported that the Town's assessment for the Trooper program increased by \$145,676, partially offset by a \$20,000 reduction in Trooper overtime expenses.

Couture reported that the Library requested an additional amount of \$11,250 due to the following reasons: 1) Rising costs of books for adults by 10% and children 30%; 2) Increased maintenance costs for their boiler system; and 3) Decreased interest revenue. Discussion took place in length about supporting their increase.

Couture reported that Parmelee Farm requested \$28,300 for additional Maintenance and Groundskeeping Support. The funds were intended for contracted mowing services, noting how volunteers are limited. The Board did not approve the full request but allocated \$15,000 which was a 50% increase from last year's Budget.

Motion #6 - Selectman Nunes ***Moved*** a motion to restore the \$28,300 to the request of the Parmelee Farm Committee.

Motion ***Failed*** for a Lack of a Second.

Discussion - Selectman D'Angelo explained to Selectman Nunes that he could not support the motion due to a lack of understanding of its specifics. However, he agreed that a transition should occur, particularly with Public Works, since it is a Town-owned property. D'Angelo added that if the Chair had declared an emergency, the Board would have found a way to address it through discussions and budget adjustments.

Couture commented that the Town would not allow the property to fall into neglect, noting that while insurance would likely cover repairs, efforts would still be made to restore the building and maintain the property. He further stated that, in discussions with the previous chair, they had considered the costs associated with this transition, particularly since volunteers are so limited. Couture emphasized that he believes this is something the Town should take into consideration, especially as the Public Works Department continues to expand.

The Board scheduled a special Budget Meeting for Thursday, March 13, 2025 in order to finalize decisions before presenting their Budget to the Board of Finance.

Couture reported that he spoke with Robyne, at HK Park and Rec, regarding how their funding request was reduced this year. Robyne advised that Killingworth has historically funded the requested amount, while Haddam has progressively decreased contributions throughout the years. The Haddam Finance Department recently decided to eliminate its contribution to HK Recreation entirely. Couture noted that the request to Killingworth remains at \$17,275, with no adjustments despite Haddam's funding cut.

New Business:

A. Neighborhood Assistance Act

First Selectman Couture reported the Neighborhood Assistance Act deadline is approaching. Couture advised that he spoke about what it entails with the Library and their request for programming funding through that. Couture also noted that Corporations get tax credits to give nonprofit organizations funds. Couture will be putting out the Public Hearing Notice shortly.

B. Legislative Update

First Selectman Couture provided a Legislative Update regarding how the State Legislature passed a Bill allowing Towns to increase the assessed value of vehicles from 85% to 90%. The Board discussed whether to implement this change, which would increase tax revenue but also raise costs for residents. Couture reported that the Towns of Westbrook and Essex, are not adopting the increase, while Clinton has chosen to implement it. Couture further reported about how the Legislature narrowed eligibility for Veterans' Tax Exemptions noting the change will only remove one Veteran from eligibility in Killingworth. The Board expressed concern that the State should be funding these exemptions rather than placing the burden on local Taxpayers.

Couture further reported that the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) fund was adjusted to provide Towns with more immediate financial relief. Couture noted that the Governor had originally proposed this ECS funding increase, but it would take into effect in the upcoming fiscal year, not in the current. Couture also reported that CCM, COST, and RiverCog are continuing to testify and lobby for the Town. Couture noted that he has submitted some testimony regarding some changes that would impact HK Park and Recreation. Couture noted that there is a good Bill in the works which is to allow municipalities to complete their own Legal Notices on their website, which would cut down on costs to the Towns.

Public Comment:

- Wayne Linsley commented about three items relating to the Town's Budget and Operations: 1) Wayne reminded the Board about an existing line item in the Public Works Budget for required Training and Manuals; 2) Wayne asked for clarification on the scheduling of a small pickup truck with a plow, confirming that it has been moved from the 2025-26 fiscal year to the 2026-27 fiscal year; and 3) Wayne referenced Town's history with garbage collection, noting that it was originally contracted out before the Town took on overhauling its own garbage. Wayne suggested this should be considered about possibly outsourcing it out again.

- Eileen Blewett commented about the history and current situation regarding maintenance at Parmelee Farm. Eileen stated how the property was maintained with donated equipment and volunteers, and things have changed over the years especially with volunteers being very limited. Eileen further commented that the current request is not for hiring a dedicated person for Parmelee Farm but rather for funding to cover mowing this upcoming Spring and Summer Season, and also for maintenance repairs that

volunteers can't manage. Additionally, she noted that the original Agreement with the Town states they would provide six maintenance days per year, which would cover mowing and machinery repairs through Town Crew but has not been consistently upheld.

Selectmen's Comments:

Joel D'Angelo - No Comments.

Eric Nunes - No Comments.

First Selectman's Comments:

Eric Couture -

- Couture reported that the Barn work is continuing noting inspection is scheduled for Wednesday with an Engineer regarding some structural items. Couture further noted he chose a roof color of charcoal where its the closest one to what's in place now.
- Couture gave an update on the progress of Eric Auer Park advising the work is continuing, being approximately 50% complete.
- Couture reported that at Town Campus on either Friday, March 14th or March 21st there will be a scheduled power outage that will take place. This is to replace a damaged transformer due to a car hitting a pole in front of Town Hall a few months back.
Couture will make the decision whether to fully close or not since they will be operating off a generator. Couture will send out a constant contact if he plans to make that decision.

Adjournment: First Selectman Couture adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Sciascia
Clerk