

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Monday, August 25, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.
Killingworth Town Hall/Remote Access Available**

BOS Members in Attendance: First Selectman Eric Couture, Selectman Eric Nunes

BOS Members Absent: Selectman Joel D'Angelo

Staff in Attendance: Regina Regolo (Director of Finance), Elizabeth Disbrow (Executive Assistant to First Selectman), Mike Bekech (Reval Consultant), Shauna Ham (Tax Assessor/Via Remote), and Jamie Sciascia (Clerk/Via Remote)

Visitors: Nancy Gorski (Via Remote), Richard Pleines (Via Remote), Eileen Unger-Pleines (Via Remote), Eileen Blewett (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:

- John Byrne expressed concerns regarding an incident at the Library where a long-serving volunteer was abruptly informed by the Library Director that her services were no longer needed. He felt the matter was handled poorly and that volunteers, who played a crucial role in establishing and sustaining the Library, particularly during COVID, are now being pushed aside.

Mr. Byrne questioned the Library's leadership decisions, including the promotion of the current director, suggesting more experience should have been required before assuming such a role. He also voiced frustration over a lack of visible fundraising efforts by the Library's Association, despite annual funding requests to the town. Mr. Bryne proposed that the town consider transitioning to a public library overseen by an elected board representing all political affiliations, rather than continuing under the current library association model.

- Nancy Gorski commented about the following items:
 - 1) Gorski appreciated the Public Comment from John Bryne.
 - 2) Gorski inquired about the status of the water filtration system at KES.
 - 3) Gorski inquired about whether the Ethics Committee will be covered under the Selectmen's Comments.

Department Reports:

A. HKYFS

Kelly Webster presented the Haddam-Killingworth Youth & Family Services highlights to the Board of Selectmen and Visitors. Mrs. Webster reported on the following:

- Hosted 90 programs and events this year, a 55% increase from last year;
- Supported by 34 partnerships with local organizations and businesses;
- Student participation increased by 50% in the High School and Middle School Clubs;
- HK Mentoring Program expanded from 18 to 25 matches, serving Grades 1–8;
- Partnership with HK Youth Unplugged to promote the "Wait Until 8th" Pledge;
- Encouraging device-free activities and raising awareness of early device use risks;
- Provided 61 students with backpacks and supplies (up from 45 last year);
- Hosted the 7th Annual Free Haircut Event, giving 24 students fresh cuts for school;
- Community Give Back Days brought rising Freshmen to local nonprofits for service projects;
- Trained 14 Teens and two Adults in QPR (Suicide Prevention) and Narcan Administration;
- Upcoming QPR and Narcan training will be open to the public at the Killingworth Library.

Selectman Nunes inquired about the growing concern surrounding children’s screen time. He acknowledged that research increasingly points to the harmful effects of excessive device use and expressed curiosity about how many parents in the community are reporting this as an ongoing issue, as well as what types of programming might help address it while balancing the educational use of technology. Mrs. Webster reported that over the past year, HKYFS hosted screenings of the documentary “Screenagers” at the Middle School, offering separate versions for younger and older audiences. These events were well attended and included panel discussions featuring school administrators and a licensed psychologist. She also noted that their collaboration with HK Youth “Unplugged”, a parent-led initiative focused specifically on reducing excessive device use and promoting healthier technology habits. Together, they provide resources for parents and develop programs encouraging device-free, play-based, and community-driven activities. Mrs. Webster emphasized that HKYFS continues to offer a range of experiences, such as farm visits, Girls on the Run, and other programs which are designed to foster meaningful, technology-free engagement for local youths.

Board of Education:

Lisa Connelly submitted the Regional School District #17 Board of Education Meeting Summary for July to First Selectman Couture for the previous meeting since it was cancelled. The following items were reported: 1) Capital Projects Update; 2) Summer Projects Update; 3) HS Diving Blocks; 4) HKHS Building Project; 5) BOE Summer Workshop.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion #1 - First Selectman Couture ***Moved*** and Selectman Nunes ***Seconded*** a motion to approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of the Selectmen that was held on Monday, July 28, 2025 as presented.

Motion unanimously passed [2-0-0].

Refunds, Abatements, Transfers:

Motion #2 - First Selectman Couture *Moved* and Selectman Nunes *Seconded* a motion to approve the following Refunds, all for overpayment, and allow them to follow its normal course as presented.

Refunds -

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Address</u> | <u>Amount</u> | <u>Reason</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Dustin Asbury | 33 Spencer Hill Road | \$152.15 | COC#12148M |
| 2. Todd Blewett | 22 Clarkson Lane | \$69.35 | COC#12139M |
| 3. Andrew Brough | 102 Cow Hill Road | \$335.62 | Sec. 12-129 |
| 4. Randall Calistri-Yeh | 170 Old County Road | \$19.79 | COC#12107M |
| 5. Lisa Casanova | 8 Grouse Court | \$151.03 | Sec. 12-129 |
| 6. Lisa Casanova | 8 Grouse Court | \$559.01 | Sec. 12-129 |
| 7. Gary & Karol Cota | 644 Route 81 | \$15.73 | COC#12192M |
| 8. Lisa Delaura | 65 Beaver Dam Road | \$90.28 | COC#12219M |
| 9. Caris Disharoon | 250 Route 148 | \$9.00 | Sec. 12-129 |
| 10. Robin & James Duffield | 191 Little City Road | \$10.72 | COC#12198M |
| 11. Laurenz Freibauer | 189 Emanuel Church Road | \$5.53 | COC#12206M |
| 12. Jackson Hines | 9 Lee Street Middletown, CT 06457 | \$274.22 | COC#12176M |
| 13. Honda Lease Trust | 11675 Great Oaks Way Suite 200 Alpharetta, GA 30022 | \$74.36 | COC#12195M |
| 14. Honda Lease Trust | 11675 Great Oaks Way Suite 200 Alpharetta, GA 30022 | \$498.93 | COC#12202M |
| 15. Alexis Kelsey | 30 Madison Hollow | \$23.67 | COC#12221M |
| 16. Jennifer & William Logiodice | 177 Burr Hill Road | \$13.64 | COC#12190M |
| 17. William & Nicole Lucey | 68 Titus Coan Road | \$58.47 | COC#12128M |
| 18. Mark McCormick | 15 Tower Hill Road | \$72.91 | COC#12214M |
| 19. Donna McNamara | 20 Partridge Hollow | \$22.08 | COC#12212M |
| 20. Christopher Minio | 137 Parker Hill Road | \$10.83 | COC#12205M |
| 21. Charles & Kathleen Montagnon | 196 Reservoir Road | \$57.21 | COC#12178M |
| 22. Debra Reznik | 110 N Tower Hill Road | \$79.97 | Sec. 12-129 |
| 23. Charles Rice | 103 Green Hill Road | \$50.00 | COC#12119M |
| 24. Casey Szeligowski | 116 Chittenden Road | \$147.88 | Sec. 12-129 |

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|------------------------------|--|----------|------------|
| 25. Janice Talevi | 91 Emanuel Church Road | \$48.77 | COC#12211M |
| 26. Janice & Nicholas Talevi | 91 Emanuel Church Road | \$58.21 | COC#12210M |
| 27. Denise Volo | 4 Beechwood Road | \$26.22 | COC#12071R |
| 28. Ambrose Wong | 62 N 3 rd Street Apt. 5A Brooklyn, NY 11249 | \$151.05 | COC#12193M |
| 29. Tesla Lease Trust | 3000 Hanover Street Palo Alto, CA 94304 | \$292.69 | COC #56730 |
| 30. Michael Melillo | 36 Kelseytown Rd | \$177.04 | COC #54489 |
| 31. Charles Griffin | 461 Rte 148 | \$107.50 | COC #57746 |

Motion unanimously passed [2-0-0].

Appointments: None.

Budget Report:

First Selectman Couture stated that the Board received the Budget Reports at the start of the month, reflecting only the first month of the fiscal year. Director of Finance Regolo confirmed there were no interruptions resulting from the School Budget delay, noting that initial payments were made at the prior year’s level until the referendum was finalized, after which all figures were reconciled.

Couture provided an update on ARPA Funding, noting three remaining projects: one for Parks and Recreation and two for the Fire Company noting that some invoices required clarification, but these issues will not affect year-end financials since ARPA funds are tracked separately. A final report will be provided once projects are complete and federal reporting requirements are met. Couture noted that the third project is the Pavilion at KRP. The construction pad has been completed, and work on the pavilion itself is starting this week.

Old Business:

A. Park and Recreation Sports Turf Bids

Motion #3 - First Selectman Couture *Moved* and Selectman Nunes *Seconded* a motion to award Langer Landscapes the 2025-27 Sports Turf Maintenance Services Contract for Irene Sheldon Memorial Park, Rocco Reale Memorial Field, and Bethke Field.

Motion unanimously passed [2-0-0].

Motion #4 - First Selectman Couture *Moved* and Selectman Nunes *Seconded* a motion to reissue the RFP and go back out to bid for the 2025-08PR-2 Eric Auer Park Contract, incorporating the new specifications as outlined in the attached cover sheet.

Discussion - The Board discussed the Parks and Recreation Commission's requested changes to the RFP, which were primarily due to escalating costs. The revisions include breaking out the current existing fields from the under construction field. Couture confirmed that these updated specifications will be attached to the same RFP when it is reissued for bidding.

Motion unanimously passed [2-0-0].

B. Historical Society Lease/Parking:

First Selectman Couture reported that The Black Rock Schoolhouse, located on Recycle Way, is leased by the town to The Historical Society under a 25-year lease noting that parking has been a recurring concern. Both the town and The Historical Society discussed the possibility of renegotiating the lease. Couture noted that The Historical Society was briefly behind on lease payments by \$3, which has since been rectified. The Historical Society's Board discussed the possibility of allocating some land back to the town for parking. They discussed the strip of land which has historically been a source of tension due to liability concerns, as it is used by multiple nonprofits including the Girl Scouts, Lions Club, and the Fire Department. Clarifying property boundaries, adding fencing, and creating diagonal parking were seen as ways to improve safety and usability.

If implemented, the additional parking could provide roughly 10–12 spaces, supplementing the existing 38 spaces behind right field. Any changes would be formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), outlining key points and confirming consensus. The Historical Society expressed a preference for a simple rail fence rather than a picket fence, as it is easier to maintain, functional, and aesthetically appropriate. This discussion was for informational purposes only, allowing the Board and The Historical Society to consider options and gauge consensus before moving forward.

C. Ordinance Update

First Selectman Couture gave an update on two ordinance-related items. Couture reported on a draft application for the Historic Structure Abatement Program. This draft was prepared following the previous meeting and the Board's attendance at the Historic Review Committee meeting, with the goal of formalizing the application process. The draft was included in the Board's packet as a "first review".

Couture also reported on the proposed Building Fee Refund Policy, adopted from a version used by Haddam and updated to reflect local needs. The policy includes language specifying that credit card processing fees will not be refunded, consistent with standard tax office practices, as these fees are collected by the processing company. The Board discussed that they will wait until Selectman D'Angelo returns for a full discussion.

D. Capital Project Update

First Selectman Couture gave an update on the Capital Projects to the Board:

- **Pavilion at KRP:** Construction pad completed; pavilion construction starting this week.
- **Black Rock Schoolhouse:**

- Lease renegotiation being considered to allow additional parking (10–12 spaces).
- Rail fence preferred for safety, functionality, and low maintenance.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) planned to formalize any changes.
- **Historic Structure Abatement:** Draft application prepared; feedback requested before submission.
- **Road Projects:** All completed.
- **Wall Air Power and Fire Company Projects:** Ongoing.
- **Town Campus Storage Structure:**
 - \$300,000 State Funding secured.
 - Reporting requirements with the State still being clarified.
 - Construction is projected to take 6–8 weeks once started.
- **ARPA Projects:** Previously mentioned projects remain in progress

New Business:

A. RFP Revaluation

The Board was joined by Mike Bekech, the Town’s Reval Consultant, Shawna Ham, the Town’s Assessor and Director of Finance Regolo to discuss the upcoming statistical revaluation scheduled for next year. They discussed that commercial property values have generally lagged behind residential values; however, because commercial properties comprise a very small portion of the town’s total property base, their overall impact on the final assessed values is minimal. The primary goal of the revaluation is to ensure all property owners pay an equitable share of taxes, based on accurate and comprehensive information.

The revaluation process includes required public notices and outreach efforts. These efforts have historically included meetings with community groups, senior citizens, library patrons, and other local organizations to provide information, answer questions, and maintain transparency. Participation from property owners is encouraged, as comprehensive data helps ensure fair and accurate assessments.

Motion #5 - First Selectman Couture ***Moved*** and Selectman Nunes ***Seconded*** a motion to issue an RFP for the 2026 Revaluation pending final concurrence with the Finance Director and Assessor’s Office on language of the RFP.

Discussion - Selectman Nunes confirmed that the intent is to contract an outside firm to come in and assist with the process.

Motion unanimously passed [2-0-0].

B. Digital Services Update

First Selectman Couture provided a detailed update on the town’s digital services initiatives, focusing on the implementation of OpenGov Software. Couture reported that work continues on

getting the permitting software fully operational, with a proposal to bring in OpenGov for a full-day of training session at a cost of approximately \$6,900. This amount falls below the town's financial threshold and the training would ensure everyone across departments are trained and cross-trained. The Board agreed to wait for input from Selectman D'Angelo upon his return to make a final decision.

Couture also reported that the town is evaluating a full build-out of asset management capabilities to better track equipment, particularly within Public Works. The Board discussed whether to integrate this function into OpenGov or utilize multiple vendors for specialized needs. Couture emphasized the importance of balancing efficiency, flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and long-term sustainability while ensuring secure data retention.

First Selectman's Comments:

Eric Couture -

- Couture commented that the Ethics Committee is working on a final draft of the town's Code of Ethics. No meeting was scheduled for this month, but the committee plans to meet soon, with the next meeting date to be confirmed (noting that the first Monday of September falls on Labor Day). The most recent meeting minutes are available on the town website, outlining the committee's review of other municipal codes and progress on their draft.
- Couture highlighted upcoming community events, including the Artisan Market at Parmelee Farm on Saturday, September 6, 2025 and the Free Ride Bike Event the following Saturday, September 13, 2025. Both events are expected to generate some traffic, which will be managed accordingly, and are anticipated to be engaging for the community.

Selectmen's Comments:

Eric Nunes -

- Nunes expressed appreciation for the department reports, noting that Haddam-Killingworth Youth and Family Services consistently delivers their updates in person.
- Nunes thanked Mr. Bryne for his feedback and insights regarding the Library.
- Nunes noted his anticipation for further updates on OpenGov initiatives.

Motion #6 - Selectman Nunes ***Moved*** and First Selectman Couture ***Seconded*** a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of Real Estate and Ongoing Litigation.

Motion unanimously passed [2-0-0].

The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:45 p.m.

Executive Session: Real Estate and Ongoing Litigation:

The Board discussed Real Estate and Ongoing Litigation.

The Board exited the Executive Session at 9:10 p.m.

Adjournment: First Selectman Couture adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Sciascia
Clerk