

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Monday, September 8, 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.

Staff in Attendance: Regina Regolo (Director of Finance), Elizabeth Disbrow (Executive Assistant to First Selectman), and Jamie Sciascia (Clerk/Via Remote - Arrived at 7:03 p.m.)

Visitors: Nancy Gorski (Via Remote), Katie Black (Open Gov Representative), Richard Pleines, Eileen Unger-Pleines (Via Remote), Eileen Blewett (Via Remote), Resident State Trooper Rich Mulhall, Lisa Connelly (RSD17 BOE)

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 Bryne expressed concerns regarding the Killingworth Library, emphasizing the invaluable contributions of volunteers, whose work has saved the library the equivalent of 2½ staff salaries annually. He criticized suggestions that volunteers' retirement is inevitable due to physical limitations, calling it insulting.

Mr. Bryne highlighted the volunteers' expertise, noting that many hold advanced degrees, have extensive management experience, and one is a professional librarian with a Master of Library Science degree. Several volunteers, he said, have more library experience than current staff, including one who trained the present director.

Mr. Bryne criticized the Library Board for poor personnel and financial management over the years, while still acknowledging their volunteer service. He recommended transferring oversight of the library to the Town Manager's Office and suggested converting it into a public library with an elected board to ensure stronger accountability.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion #1 - Selectman Nunes *Moved* and First Selectman Couture *Seconded* a motion to approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of the Selectmen that was held on Monday, August 25, 2025 as presented.

Motion unanimously passed [2-0-1].

Discussion - Selectman D'Angelo abstained since he was not present at the August 25th meeting.

Refunds, Abatements, Transfers:

Motion #2 - 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 -

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Reason</u>
1. Sue Alexander	23 Route 81	\$6.01	COC#12231M
2. Kirk Bole & Brian Lombardi	69 Chittenden Road	\$464.75	COC#12229M
3. Christopher Hohlfeld	277 North Parker Hill Road	\$17.33	COC#12227M
4. Frith Kowalski	11 Beckwith Road	\$230.21	Online Overpayment
5. Emily Passarelli & Hannah Kowalski	11 Beckwith Road	\$241.22	Online Overpayment
6. Deborah Samperi	154 Schnoor Road	\$50.29	COC#12224M
Denied: Peter Sherba	32 Chittenden Road	\$5.06	Has Delinquent Tax Due

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Department Reports:

Board of Education -

Lisa Connelly from the RSD17 Board of Education presented the August Monthly Summary to the Board. Ms. Connelly reported on the following: 1) Update on New Board Member (Ben Sodergren of Killingworth was elected last month, filling the seat left by Nelson Rivera); 2) Superintendent's Report with a Finance Update; 3) Facilities Update; 4) Technology Update; 5) Update on Superintendent Search; 6) Update on Referendum on New High School.

Selectman Nunes inquired about the status of the Referendum. Ms. Connelly advised that the community had previously heard October 7 as the date, but that is no longer correct. The final date will be determined and discussed at the Board of Education's next meeting.

First Selectman Couture noted that additional reports were provided in the Board's packet, with Chris Mello sending reports via email. He also advised that the Resident State Trooper has been busy within the Town. Selectmen D'Angelo and Nunes expressed their appreciation for Mello's efforts.

Appointments: None.

Budget Report:

First Selectman Couture reported that the Town is two months into the new fiscal year, with approximately 55% of property taxes collected to date, which is consistent with expectations given the two major billing cycles. Couture also noted that Abbey Albrecht sent her updates from the Board of Finance today. Director of Finance Regolo noted that there are no major issues to report.

Couture also gave an update on the ARPA projects. Director of Finance Regolo reported that aside from final sign-offs and payment processing, only the Fire Department's projects remain outstanding. Also, Regolo added that reporting requirements will continue, even after project completion.

Old Business:

A. OpenGov

First Selectman Couture introduced Katie Black from OpenGov to address questions regarding the OpenGov Change Order. Couture expressed concern about adding more training and sought clarification on what resources would be available to staff following the upcoming training module.

Ms. Black addressed questions about training and post-implementation support. She acknowledged concerns about relying too heavily on additional training and clarified what resources would be available to staff following the course. Ms. Black explained that OpenGov provides access to recordings of prior virtual trainings, a Help Center with step-by-step articles, and a "university" resource offering basic system walkthroughs. These resources are available to any user with an OpenGov login. In addition, the Town will have a dedicated Customer Success Manager for account-related questions, and a dedicated support team available by chat, e-mail, and phone.

Ms. Black further clarified that she would not leave the project immediately after implementation noting that OpenGov will provide two weeks of "hyper care" following go-live. During this period, both she and the project manager will remain available to assist as staff begin processing permits, ensuring that questions or issues are addressed promptly. After the two-week period, support will transition to the dedicated OpenGov support team, but the Town will not be left without assistance.

Motion #3 - Selectman D'Angelo ***Moved*** and Selectman Nunes ***Seconded*** a motion to approve the Change Order from OpenGov in the amount of \$6,880.00 as presented.

Motion passed [2-1-0].

Couture/D'Angelo - Yes

Nunes - No

**In the original set of motions/votes filed on September 10, 2025, there was an error in the reported vote tally. The motions were recorded as unanimous; however, that was not accurate. This section has been updated to reflect the correct tallies.*

B. Ordinance Review

First Selectman Couture reported that the Board made additional changes to the Building Refund Policy. Following the version presented two weeks ago, input was sought to clarify the review and approval process and to address situations such as six-month permit extensions, during which refunds are not typically granted.

Couture explained that the updated policy is intended to provide consistency and clarity. The Refund Schedule is as follows: 100% refund if requested before the Building Official's review and approval; 75% refund if requested within six months after review and approval; 50% refund if requested after six months but within one year; and no refund after one year. Couture also noted that credit card processing fees will not be refunded, and this policy is modeled on Haddam's but adapted to Killingworth's practices.

Motion #4 - Selectman Nunes **Moved** and Selectman D'Angelo **Seconded** a motion to approve the Building Fee Refund Policy as presented.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Historic Home Abatement

First Selectman Couture reported on Historic Home Abatements. The Board discussed the process for abatements and refunds related to historic homes. When an abatement is approved, it is filed on the land records, and supporting documents such as proof that the structure is maintained or restored in a historically appropriate manner can be attached. The key consideration is whether the current level of taxation is a material factor affecting the preservation of the historic structure, rather than financial hardship alone. Couture provided an example about how tax incentives can encourage owners to maintain historic properties rather than replace them, ensuring the preservation of the building's historic character.

Elizabeth Disbrow noted that if the tax break is not granted, the building is at risk of being lost, and the town would ultimately lose the tax revenue. She added that the property's current condition makes the tax revenue uncertain, and the incentive is a way to help preserve the building and maintain its value.

Couture noted that the process can now begin to be rolled out with the Assessor's office.

C. NAA Update

First Selectman Couture reported that the Neighborhood Assistance Act applications were approved, and the next step is for the businesses to provide the grants. Funding levels include 60% for the Safety Cruiser and 100% for Heating and Insulation Improvements. Generally, energy efficiency and similar improvements receive full funding, while other supportive programs are reimbursed at a lower rate. Couture noted that these funding levels align with what was anticipated.

New Business:

A. Homeland Security Grant Program MOA

First Selectman Couture reviewed the Homeland Security Grant Program Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Board. Couture explained that in the event of a disaster such as a hurricane or severe storm where federal assistance is received, the Town agrees to provide documentation to verify expenditures, including staff hours and material costs. He noted that the MOA, which was also adopted last year, must be adopted again due to a change in fiduciary agent for DEMHS Region 2, shifting from RiverCOG to the East Shore District Health Department in Guilford. Couture stressed that this is a procedural requirement to formally acknowledge the Town's responsibility to provide documentation if necessary.

Motion #5 - Selectman D'Angelo *Moved* and Selectman Nunes *Seconded* a motion that:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen may enter into with and deliver to the **State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security** any and all documents which it deems to be necessary or appropriate; and

FURTHER RESOLVED that Eric Couture, as First Selectman of the Town of Killingworth, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Board of Selectmen and to do and perform all acts and things which he deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents, including, but not limited to, executing and delivering all agreements and documents contemplated by such documents.

The undersigned further certifies that Eric Couture now holds the office of First Selectman and that he has held that office since November 21, 2023.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

B. Lighting Upgrade Quote

First Selectman Couture reviewed with the Board a Lighting Upgrade Quote from Resource Lighting and Energy, who recently completed an audit of the Town's facilities. The audit included a full count and evaluation of existing fixtures and provided a one-to-one quote for upgrades. Couture explained that while there may be some minor disruption during installation, efforts will be made to minimize impacts, including coordination with the Director of Public Works, Chris Mello. The upgrades would be financed through Eversource, which requires review and approval before work can proceed.

Motion #6 - Selectman D'Angelo *Moved* and Selectman Nunes *Seconded* a motion to authorize First Selectman Eric Couture to move forward with the Town Hall Campus and Public Works Lighting Upgrade from Resource Lighting and Energy, LLC.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Public Comment:

- Eileen Blewett, 22 Clarkson Lane, expressed disappointment that recent Board of Education actions were not reported to the Board of Selectmen. She referenced the August 28th Special Meeting Minutes, noting that the High School project motion was found by bond counsel to be legally insufficient and that a required public hearing had not been conducted. Ms. Blewett encouraged the Board of Selectmen to review those specific minutes for further details.
- Nancy Gorski, 18 Wolf Hollow Lane, expressed concern regarding the \$6,800 cost for OpenGov, stating it seemed high given that there are people available who understand the system and could have assisted at no cost. She noted that other towns, such as Clinton, have individuals with relevant experience and suggested that the Town could have explored those avenues. Ms. Gorski added that such resources could have helped through the process without incurring the expense.

Selectmen's Comments:**Eric Nunes -**

- Nunes commented that this was the second time John Byrne had raised concerns regarding the Library. Nunes suggested that the Board seek additional information to understand the issues, the reason for his dissatisfaction, and his request for oversight by the Library. He asked that future meetings include clarification to ensure proper oversight and that operations are proceeding as they should.

Joel D'Angelo -

- D'Angelo stated that, as this was the first time he had been made aware of Mr. Byrne's concerns, he was unable to comment at this time.
- D'Angelo commented about the OpenGov program, that he hopes the upcoming two-day training will provide significant value. D'Angelo proposed a brief soft launch period of one to two weeks to allow the team to familiarize themselves with the system noting that after this period, the program would be implemented fully, as it appears to be a robust solution and aligns with the standard used by most municipalities.

First Selectman's Comments:**Eric Couture -**

- Couture stated that he would reach out to the Library Association, noting that the Library Board's next meeting conflicts with the Board of Selectmen's meeting. He suggested it may be more appropriate to contact them in early October.
- Couture thanked all the Volunteers and Members of the Public Forum Committee who helped make Saturday's Artisan Market successful. Couture mentioned that he stopped by the Market and observed that there were still plenty of attendees throughout the day.
- Couture circulated an email today informing residents about the River Area Health District's upcoming vaccination clinic, which will offer more than just flu shots, and partnering with Stop & Shop. Couture noted that the clinic will begin the week of September 22nd and it will be held in Killingworth at the EOC on the 25th from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. The clinic is open to the public, and Couture noted that a reminder will be sent

via email closer to the date. He emphasized that the clinic is a valuable initiative for maintaining community health through vaccinations.

Adjournment: First Selectman Couture adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Sciascia
Clerk