Minutes not yet approved.
Approval and any edits to be made in succeeding minutes.

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE, POLICY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the above-mentioned subcommittee held on Monday, February 2, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in a hybrid meeting format via the Zoom webinar virtual platform. The in-person location was Council Chambers, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee Members present: *In-person:* Mayor Anthony Harrington, Chair; Councilor Todd Cooper, Vice-Chair; Councilor Joseph Merritt; Councilor Suzette DeBeatham-Brown; Councilor Darrell Goodwin

Committee Members *absent:* None

Also present: *In-person*: Alvin D. Schwapp, Jr., Town Manager; Sharron Howe, Deputy Town Manager; Latonia Tabb, Clerk of Council; India Rodgers, Director of Operations & Communications; Darrell Hill, Chief Financial Officer; Warren Plummer, Director of Information, Technology and Innovation; ***via Zoom*:** Deputy Mayor Cindi Lloyd; Sharron Howe, Deputy Town Manager; Annatouchur Kingland, Senior Administrative Assistant; Andrew Crumbie, Town Attorney, Crumbie Law Group, LLC; Jon Colman, Director of Building & Land Use; Councilor Michael Oliver; Denise Robidoux, Gorman & York.

The meeting was scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m., however due the Zoom ONLY Town Council meeting prior to, the meeting was called to order at 6:16 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion and Possible Action regarding the Town's Boards and Commissions Appointment Process- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

Mr. Alvin D. Schwapp Jr., Town Manager, reported that the Town has developed a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Boards, Commissions, and appointment management to address long-standing gaps in documentation, consistency, and transparency, noting that Bloomfield currently has 50 boards and commissions and has historically relied on informal practices. The SOP, led by India Rogers, Director of Communications & Operations, is designed to clarify roles, standardize procedures, improve record-keeping and communication, support continuity, and strengthen public trust, and it will be implemented upon Council approval.

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown requested additional time to review the draft SOP and emphasized the need for broader resident access and Council involvement in reviewing applicant pools. Mr. Schwapp, Jr. confirmed that these elements are addressed in the SOP, agreed to allow time for review, and encouraged feedback due to several expired vacancies.

Mr. Schwapp Jr. also explained that applicants will be recruited through multiple community channels and vetted by the SOP, with final appointment authority remaining with the Council. He recognized Ms. Rogers for her leadership in developing the process. Ms. Rogers noted that the governance committee will oversee the former Committee on Committees' functions and urged Council members to submit feedback promptly to finalize the SOP and address pending vacancies.

It was then moved by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown, seconded by Councilor Merritt, and voted unanimously to move this item out of committee, allowing the Council and residents to provide input by Friday, with a brief meeting scheduled on Monday to present it to the full Council on that evening.

DISCUSSION REGARDING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Mr. Jon Colman, Director of Building & Land Use, provided a report covering January 2026 reporting that there have been minimal changes since his last update, noting that the Town Center Plan was adopted last spring and a revised CIF application remains pending with DECD, with a decision expected in March. He also provided updates on ongoing planning and zoning work, housing policy development, and pre-development activity, including a proposed 215-unit project at 800 Cottage Grove Road and continued interest in other sites. Additionally, he stated that recent permit activity remains steady, with the Town already meeting its FY2026 permit value budget target.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Mr. Alvin D. Schwapp Jr., Town Manager, reported that the DPW was publicly recognized for its outstanding response to a recent major winter storm, emphasizing their effective road clearing efforts, strong safety record, and commitment to protecting both employees and residents. He also highlighted the successful completion of the Town's first Emerging Leaders Program, noting it provided a 12-week leadership development opportunity to build internal talent, strengthen staff skills, and support long-term organizational succession planning.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. **Mark Sanderson, 17 Oak Lane,** expressed support for the proposed SOP, stating it is a positive step toward transparency and will help clarify how residents can apply for and be selected to boards and commissions. He also urged the Council to ensure open and equitable access for all residents—regardless of affiliation with party committees—and encouraged clear criteria and broader public inclusion in appointment processes.

2. **Erin Barringer, 28 Kenmore Road,** expressed her appreciation for India Rogers, Director of Communications & Operations, for her excellent work drafting the SOP and highlighting her collaborative approach in welcoming community feedback. She expressed support for the goal of transparency but raised concerns about the need for balanced political representation on the recommended subcommittee and greater clarity in evaluation standards, feedback, and overall fairness in the appointment process.

3. **Wendy Williams, 48 Gabb Road (online),** thanked India Rogers, Director of Communications & Operations, and Town staff for developing the SOP, noting it would help streamline what has previously been a lengthy and difficult process for joining boards and commissions. Ms. Williams also urged the

Town to ensure broad public notification and open access so all qualified residents—regardless of affiliations—have a fair opportunity to apply before other selection criteria are applied.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown, seconded by Councilor Cooper, and voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes of January 7, 2026, as written.

Mr. Schwapp Jr. provided his closing remarks, emphasizing that the SOP should remain practical and manageable rather than attempting to cover every possible scenario, noting that overly detailed policies could create unnecessary burdens on staff. He highlighted that, while many residents are interested in serving, the process should not be overcomplicated, and expectations should remain realistic given staffing limitations. He also acknowledged that, like most selection processes, not all applicants will receive feedback, and stressed that he will review suggestions with attention to the demands placed on staff to ensure the SOP remains effective and sustainable.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown, seconded by Councilor Cooper and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Standard Operating Procedure (“SOP”): Board and Commission Governance and Appointment Management

Purpose

This SOP standardizes the procedures for managing interest forms, candidate vetting, and facilitating appointments across all 50 Boards and Commissions for the Town of Bloomfield. This process is managed by the Governance, Policy & Economic Development Subcommittee (“GPED Subcommittee” or “We”), with administrative support provided by the Operations & Communications Division (“O.C. Division”).

1. Submission Process and Intake (The "Initial Pool")

We, the Governance, Policy & Economic Development Subcommittee, rely on the O.C. Division to maintain a clear and consistent method for gathering candidates’ interest and managing initial intake.

1.1. Ensure Accessibility:

The O.C. Division must ensure the Official Boards and Commissions Interest Form is accessible 24/7 on the Town website.

The O.C. Division will also ensure hard copies are always available in both the Town Clerk's Office and the Town Manager's Office.

1.2. Manage Submissions:

We communicate that online submission is preferred.

If a hard copy is submitted, the receiver will immediately digitize the form and forward it electronically to the designated GPED contact (The O.C. Division).

1.3. Track and Log Forms:

The Town Clerk's Office conducts a review for political party and residency, and notes any changes in the Board & Commission Software (Onboard, etc.).

The GPED contact will manually enter any hard copy submissions into the Board & Commission Software.

1.4. Acknowledge Receipt:

The Board & Commission Software will send a standardized acknowledgment to the candidate as soon as their application is received to confirm receipt and review against vacancies.

Any hard copy submissions will be confirmed by the GPED contact (The O.C. Division) via email.

2. Candidate Communication and Active Pool Maintenance

The GPED contact (The O.C. Division) maintains active and positive communication.

2.1. Standardized Initial Notification:

The initial acknowledgment (1.4) must inform the candidate that the GPED contact (The O.C. Division) will contact them directly if they are selected for an interview.

2.2. Conduct Quarterly Check-ins:

The GPED contact (The O.C. Division) will email candidates who have been in the "Active Pool" for more than six (6) months to:

- Confirm their continued interest.
- Verify contact information.
- Allow them to update their boards of interest or formally withdraw their application.

2.3. Adhere to Communication Protocol:

We ensure the GPED contact (The O.C. Division) uses professional, standardized templates for all scheduling, deferrals, and non-appointment correspondence.

All external communication must clearly identify the sender (whether the GPED contacts The O.C. Division or the Town Clerk's Office) as supporting the Town Council's appointment process.

3. Candidate Vetting and Interview Process (The "Vetting Stage")

We select, vet, and recommend qualified candidates, utilizing the GPED contact (The O.C. Division) for coordination and verification.

3.1. Selection for Interview

- We review the Board & Commission Software data and current/anticipated vacancies monthly to identify candidates for interviewing.
- The GPED contact (The O.C. Division) contacts all applicable candidates to schedule the interview with the GPED Subcommittee.

- NOTE: When an elected position vacancy occurs, the GPED contact (The O.C. Division) reaches out to the applicable Democratic or Republican Town Committee to ask for a candidate recommendation.

3.2. The Interview

We ensure the interview panel consists of no fewer than three (3) voting members of the GPED Subcommittee.

Interviews are conducted in public session at a publicly noticed GPED meeting (unless law requires otherwise).

All interviews follow a standardized core question set, supplemented by specified questions that are applied only when relevant, as outlined below.

4. Recommendation and Appointment Facilitation

We facilitate the final appointment decision and rely on the Town Clerk for official notification.

4.1. Formal GPED Recommendation:

The GPED Subcommittee votes in public session to formally recommend candidate(s) to the full Town Council.

We prepare a recommendation package (Interest Form, Scoring Rubric (when applicable), GPED Recommendation Memorandum) and submit it to the Town Manager's Office/Clerk of Council for inclusion in the Council packet.

4.2. Background Checks and Certification

Upon favorable interview review by the GPED, and before formal recommendation, the Town Clerk's Office is responsible for:

- Conducting or facilitating the necessary background checks as required and permitted by Town policy. (Residency and party affiliation are verified in 1.3).

4.3. Town Council Review:

We present the GPED Subcommittee recommendation package to the Town Council for their review and final vote at a publicly noticed meeting.

4.4. Notify Candidates (Official Communication):

If Appointed: The Appointing Authority sends the official letter of appointment detailing the term length, oath requirements, disclosure requirements (if applicable), and initial orientation information, along with a copy of the Boards & Commissions Handbook. The

letter is cc'ed to the Town Clerk's Office, applicable Staff Liaison, and applicable Board/Commission Chair.

If Deferred/Not Appointed: The GPED contact (The O.C. Division) sends a standardized communication informing the candidate that they will remain in the Active Pool for future consideration.

5. Governance and Record-Keeping

We ensure the GPED contact (The O.C. Division) maintains rigorous standards for official documentation and accountability.

5.1. Manage Centralized Records:

The GPED contact (The O.C. Division) maintains and is the custodian of the Board & Commission Software (1.3) as the master record for all process artifacts.

The GPED contact (The O.C. Division) conducts an annual review of this system to archive or purge outdated candidate files (e.g., candidates inactive for over two years).

5.2. Ensure New Member Orientation:

We collaborate with the Town Manager's Office and the Town Clerk's Office to ensure all newly appointed members receive a mandatory, standardized Orientation Packet and necessary training on bylaws, Ethics Policy, and FOIA/Open Meeting Law. Completion is tracked in the Boards & Commissions Software.

The Town Clerk's Office will update the Board & Commission Software when appointed candidates complete the Oath of Office and submit a disclosure form. The disclosure forms will be kept and maintained as outlined in Town and State Law by The O.C. Division.

Addendum

Specialized, High-Skill, and Quasi-Judicial Appointments
This protocol applies to appointments for Boards, Commissions, and distinct roles identified by the Town Council as "Specialized" or "Quasi-Judicial." These bodies require specific technical expertise, high-level impartiality, or the adjudication of rights (e.g., Ethics Commission, Citation Hearing Officers, Planning & Zoning, etc.).

For candidates indicating interest in a Specialized or Quasi-Judicial body, the GPED contact (The O.C. Division) will perform a preliminary eligibility review before placing the candidate into the Active Pool.

1. Confirm the candidate is a resident elector of Bloomfield (unless the specific charter/ordinance for that role allows non-residents, e.g., certain technical hearing officers).
2. Review specific ordinances or statutes relevant to the body to ensure the candidate does not hold a conflicting position. This includes:
    a. Verifying they are not currently an elected or appointed officeholder if prohibited by the specific body's establishing ordinance (e.g., Ethics Commission exclusions).
    b. Verifying they are not an officer of a political party, if applicable restrictions exist.
    c. Verifying they are not a current Town or Board of Education employee, where such restrictions apply.

If a disqualifying condition is found, the GPED contact (The O.C. Division) will notify the candidate via a standardized template that they are ineligible for that specific appointment but may remain in the general Active Pool for other boards.

Supplemental Qualification Portfolio

To assist the GPED Subcommittee in evaluating technical competence and impartiality, candidates for Specialized bodies must provide the following in addition to the standard Interest Form:

1. A document emphasizing experience relevant to the specific board's mandate. Examples include, but are not limited to:
    a. For Quasi-Judicial bodies: Law, ethics compliance, arbitration/mediation, investigations, or law enforcement.
    b. For Technical bodies: Engineering, architecture, urban planning, finance, or auditing.
2. A brief statement (approx. 500 words) describing how their professional background prepares them to serve as a neutral decision-maker and/or subject matter expert.

3. Disclosure of Activities: A disclosure of recent political activities, business interests, or lobbying efforts within the last 4 years that could be perceived as a conflict of interest regarding the specific board's jurisdiction.

The GPED contact (The O.C. Division) logs these documents into the Board & Commission Software and flags the profile as “Supplemental Materials Complete”.

Compliance and Conflict Verification (Pre-Interview)

Before a candidate for a Specialized or Quasi-Judicial position is scheduled for an interview, the Town Clerk’s Office will conduct a conflict screen:

1. Cooling-Off Period Check: Cross-check rosters to confirm compliance with any mandated "cooling-off" periods regarding former office-holding or employment.
2. Relationship Flagging: Identify close familial or business relationships with sitting senior officials or parties frequently appearing before the specific commission (e.g., developers for Zoning, town staff for Ethics).
    a. Note: These are not automatically disqualifying unless established by law but are flagged for GPED awareness regarding recusal requirements.

Specialized Core Interview Questions

In addition to the standard interview questions, the GPED Subcommittee will utilize a "Competency & Neutrality" question set tailored to the specific vacancy:

1. Jurisdictional Understanding: Understanding of the specific body's legal mandate and powers.
2. Conflict of Interest: Understanding of recusal protocols and the distinction between personal opinion and statutory interpretation.
3. Due Process: (For quasi-judicial roles) Comfort with hearing procedures, evidence evaluation, and making findings of fact.
4. Impartiality: Ability to separate personal or political views from the decision-making process.
5. Technical Scenarios: (If applicable) Application of specific skills (e.g., "How would you approach a complex site plan?" or "How do you interpret the code of ethics regarding gifts?").

Enhanced Scoring Rubric

For these appointments, the GPED Subcommittee members will utilize an Enhanced Competency Rubric. Categories will be weighted to prioritize:

1. Demonstrated Objectivity: Lack of bias and understanding of neutral adjudication.
2. Subject Matter Expertise: Relevant professional credentials or life experience.
3. Judicial/Board Temperament: Communication skills, patience, and ability to deliberate.

4. Procedural Knowledge: Understanding of confidentiality, FOIA, and due process.

Specialized Recommendation Package

When recommending a candidate for a Specialized or Quasi-Judicial seat, the package submitted to the Town Council must include:

1. Standard Interest Form.
2. Candidate Resume and Statement of Qualifications.
3. Summary Memo addressing:
    a. The candidate's eligibility regarding specific exclusionary rules.
    b. How the appointment maintains necessary political balance or "unaffiliated" representation requirements.
    c. Specific technical or legal expertise the candidate brings to the body.

Post-Appointment Advanced Training

Newly appointed members to Specialized or Quasi-Judicial bodies must complete additional training within 90 days of appointment:

1. Procedural Training: Training on the specific Rules of Procedure for that body (e.g., evidentiary rules for Citation Hearings, Robert's Rules of Order).
2. Subject Matter Training: Town-approved review of the relevant statutes, ordinances, or codes they will be enforcing (e.g., The Code of Ethics, Zoning Regulations, or Blight Ordinances).