RECEIVED
JUL 13 2026
3:40 PM
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
BLOOMFIELD, CT

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

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

There was a special meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held on Monday June 22, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in a hybrid meeting style. The in-person meeting location was Bloomfield Town Hall Council Chambers, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT, and the virtual location was via Zoom.

Councilors present: ***In-Person:*** Councilor(s), Merritt, Waterhouse, and Cooper
via Zoom: Councilor(s) Oliver, DeBeatham-Brown, and Mahon (7:08).

Councilors absent: Mayor Harrington, Deputy Mayor Lloyd, and Councilor Goodwin

Also present were: ***In-Person***—Latonia Tabb, Clerk of Council; Alvin D. Schwapp, Jr., Town Manager, Jon Colman, Director of Building & Land Use; Darrell Hill, Director of Finance; Annatouchur Kingland, Senior Administrative Assistant; Warren Plummer, Director of IT; ***via Zoom:*** Andrew Crumbie, Town Attorney, Sharron Tai-Willims, Deputy Town Manager, India Rodgers, Director Operations & Communications.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Waterhouse and voted unanimously to appoint Councilor Cooper as Chair for this meeting.

Citizens' Statements and Petitions

Statements by members of the public may be oral or written and shall start with the speaker's name and address and shall continue for no longer than three (3) minutes, unless permitted by the Mayor or councilor presiding.

1. **Bonnie Berkowitz, 492 Park Ave.,** speaking in her capacity as Chair of the EDCDA, commented on the proposed streetscapes initiative. She suggested incorporating the Pollinator Pathways program into future landscaping plans by encouraging landowner participation or providing limited funding for low-maintenance wildflower plantings to support sustainability and enhance the community's aesthetic appeal.

2. Erin Barringer, 28 Kenmore Rd., addressed concerns regarding the Town's public-facing Open Finance portal, noting that certain expenditures continue to appear in an "undefined" category despite previous inquiries. She urged the Town Council to work with the Finance Department and Town Manager to determine why some transactions are not being properly categorized and encouraged the Council to review the portal as part of its financial oversight.

3. (online) James Biffer, 17 Terry Plains Rd., commented on the number of Council members present and noted that, with five members in attendance, any action taken by the Council would require five affirmative votes to pass under the Town Charter. He contrasted this with subcommittee voting procedures, where the majority of members present is sufficient, and offered the reminder for the Council's consideration.

Council Business

Consent Agenda:

It was moved by Councilor Waterhouse, seconded by Councilor Merritt and voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

A. Approval of Minutes

- June 8, 2026

New Business

2026-66: Consider and Take Action Regarding First Quarter Hiring Authorization Request For FY 2027

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Waterhouse and voted unanimously to open discussion.

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown stated that she could not support the proposed hiring request, citing the Council's recent discussions regarding a hiring freeze and the need for additional information before filling positions. She indicated that she wanted her concerns placed on the record and expressed that she was not comfortable voting in favor of the item at this time.

Mr. Alvin D. Schwapp, Town Manager, explained that the requested hiring authorization would allow the administration to proceed with staffing in accordance with the previously established cost-savings plan without returning to the Council for approval as vacancies arise. He stated that only positions consistent with the plan would be filled, noting that the Town intended to hire a Town Engineer and a custodian while delaying the Deputy Town Engineer position for approximately 90 days to achieve savings. He further explained that positions eliminated under the cost-savings plan would not be refilled, while positions vacated through the retirement incentive would be filled as needed to maintain operations and ensure a smooth transition before the end of September.

There was ongoing conversation with the councilors regarding this item. It was moved by Councilor Waterhouse, seconded by Councilor Mahon and voted to table this item regarding first quarter hiring authorization request for FY 27027

VOTE: **AYE:** E. Waterhouse, S. DeBeatham-Brown, M. Oliver, S. Mahon, T. Cooper

NAY: J. Merritt

ABSTAIN: None

Motion passed 5-1-0

2026-67: Consider and Take Action Regarding the Granby Street Complete Street Project-Authorization and Appropriation of Funding

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Waterhouse and voted unanimously to open the floor for discussion.

The Town Manager spoke in support of the proposed Granby Street streetscape project, emphasizing its potential to improve the appearance, economic development, and community pride of a key gateway into Bloomfield, noting that the project would be funded through existing grant sources at no cost to taxpayers and requested the Council's authorization to move forward with the initiative. He also acknowledged Bonnie Berkowitz for her collaboration and advocacy regarding improvements to the Granby Street area.

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Waterhouse and voted unanimously for Councilor Cooper to read and adopt the resolution. (*attached*)

RESOLUTION

Whereas, *the Bloomfield Economic Development Commission and Development Agency has identified Complete Streets improvements along Grandy Street as a priority initiative and has recommended advancing aa project to support local businesses, improve multimodal access, encourage development and redevelopment, and further the Town's transportation, economic development, and public safety objectives within this industrial corridor; and*

Whereas, *the Engineering Division has developed conceptual Complete Streets renderings which address the current lack of pedestrian amenities, and include the installation of a sidewalk extension or multi-use trail, pedestrian lighting, street trees, and related corridor improvements; and*

Whereas, *the proposed improvements will enhance safety and mobility for employees, customers, transit riders, pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorist by providing safer pedestrian accommodations, improved access to CTtransit bus service, and stronger connections among employers, workers, businesses, and industrial properties; and*

Whereas, *the Project will further enhance the marketability of vacant and underutilized parcels, support business retention and tenant recruitment, encourage private investment and redevelopment, and increase the long-term value and productivity of the Town's commercial and industrial tax base; and*

Whereas, *the preliminary cost estimate for the design and construction of the Complete Streets Project is $2,000,000; and*

Whereas, *the Finance Department has determined that funding for this project is available through the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) Municipal Grants-in-Aid Program, which is designated for transportation-related purposes;*

Now therefore be it Resolved, *that the Town Council hereby formally authorizes and appropriates $2,000,000 in funding from the State of Connecticut OPM Municipal Grants-in-Aid program for the Granby Street Complete Street project*

2026-68: Consider and Possible Action Regarding Bloomfield Arts District Branding and Gateway Signage Funding Request

There was discussion with Councilors in attendance, Town Manager, and resident Bonnie Berkowitz, regarding this item.

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Oliver and voted to move to appropriate up to $5,000.00 from the Town Council Contingency account (GL 0956400-52231) for the professional design services for the Bloomfield Arts District at the Granby Street and Cottage Grove Road entrances.

VOTE: **AYE:** J. Merritt, E. Waterhouse, M. Oliver, T. Cooper

NAY: S. DeBeatham-Brown, S. Mahon

ASTAIN: None

Motion passes 4-2-0

Prior to closing out of Council business section, the Town Councilor took a 5 min recess at 8:39 p.m. to discuss this item vote. The council returned at 8:45 p.m. and Councilor Cooper clarified the prior vote is noted as **motion failed**.

2026-69: Consider and Possible Action Regarding the Proposal Install a Community Peace Pole on the Bloomfield Town Green- The Peace Pole Project

It was moved by Councilor Waterhouse, seconded by Councilor Merritt and voted unanimously to open the floor for discussion.

Councilor Cooper introduced the proposal to install a Community Peace Pole and associated garden on the Town Green, noting the estimated project cost of $1,000 to $3,000 and the request to use Town Council contingency funds. During discussion, Councilor Mahon requested a more detailed cost estimate before taking action, while Councilor DeBeatham-Brown asked for additional information regarding the design. Council members also discussed the possibility of reducing costs through volunteer assistance with the installation.

It was moved by Councilor Mahon, seconded by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown and voted to table this item.

VOTE: **AYE:** S. Mahon, S. DeBeatham-Brown

NAY: J. Merritt, E. Waterhouse, M. Oliver, T. Cooper

ABSTAIN: None

Motion failed 2-4-0

There was further discussion on this item with Councilors. It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Oliver and voted unanimously to call the question.

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Oliver and voted unanimously to approve the use of funds from the Town Council Contingency Account (GL 095064-52231) in an amount not to exceed $3,000 for the installation of a Community Peace Pole and associated garden on the Bloomfield Town Green contingent on before the design is approved, the Council will approve it, the rendering.

2026-70: Consider and Take Action Regarding a Token of Appreciation (Gifts) from Fairview Architectural to the Town of Bloomfield

Councilor Mahon sought clarity as to why the name changed. In response to Councilor Mahon's question, the Town Manager explained that the donor had approved expanding the original donation so it could benefit all Town employees rather than only specific departments. He stated that the equipment would also be available for use by residents during Town Green events, maximizing the value of the donation while recognizing employees whose work is not typically public facing.

It was moved by Councilor Waterhouse, seconded by Councilor Merritt and voted unanimously to approve the acceptance of a gift of two cornhole boards from Fairview Architectural for use by the Town.

2026-71: Consider and Take Action Regarding FY 2026 Fourth Quarter Budget Transfers

It was moved by Councilor Mahon, seconded by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown, and voted unanimously to table this item.

Report from Town Manager

Mr. Alvin D. Schwapp Jr., Town Manager recognized the Town's Juneteenth celebrations and congratulated the Center and Blue Hills Fire Departments on their anniversary events. He also acknowledged Bloomfield's achievement of bronze certification under the Sustainable CT program, commending Environmental Analyst Nicholas Gabuzda and the Building and Land Use Department for their contributions and noting the Town's goal of achieving silver certification next year. Additionally, he reported that the Town had received a $804,000 state grant for the Gap Road project, with the design procurement process expected to begin upon acceptance of the

funds and informed the Council that his work schedule had been distributed to reflect upcoming availability.

Council Comments

J. Merritt

Councilor Merritt informed the Council that he expected to be away for the next few weeks and would likely be absent from the next meeting. He stated that he would attempt to participate remotely if possible.

E. Waterhouse

Councilor Waterhouse stated- no comment

S. Mahon

Councilor Mahon commended the organizers, volunteers, public safety personnel, and participants for a successful Juneteenth Parade, noting its importance to the community and its historical significance. He also reminded fellow Council members of the importance of maintaining respectful discourse during meetings, encouraging colleagues to allow one another to speak without personal remarks or interruptions. Councilor Mahon concluded by thanking Councilor Cooper for presiding over an efficient meeting.

S. DeBeatham-Brown

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown thanked the organizers, sponsors, volunteers, and the Blue Hills and Center Fire Departments for a successful Juneteenth celebration, parade, carnival, and fireworks display. She reiterated her request for a Council discussion on decorum, emphasizing the importance of respectful communication among Council members and its impact on public trust. She also expressed concerns regarding communication about scheduling a special meeting and the absence of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, while noting that the Council's compromise on Resolution 2026-69 demonstrated the value of collaboration and respectful dialogue.

M. Oliver

Councilor Oliver reflected on the success of the Juneteenth celebration, expressing appreciation for the parade, carnival, fireworks, and the efforts of the Blue Hills and Center Fire Departments. He also requested that the Council observe a moment of silence in honor of Coach Kennedy, recognizing his longstanding contributions and service to the Bloomfield community.

T. Cooper

Councilor Cooper reflected on the community's Juneteenth weekend events and Father's Day celebrations, thanking residents for their participation and engagement. He acknowledged that while Council discussions can at times be passionate, members are motivated by their commitment to serving the Town and its residents. He concluded by thanking those who attended

the meeting, encouraging residents to have a safe summer, and reminding motorists to remain mindful of children and increased outdoor activity during the school break.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown, seconded by Councilor Waterhouse and voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:04 p.m.

RESOLUTION

Whereas, *the Bloomfield Economic Development Commission and Development Agency has identified Complete Streets improvements along Grandy Street as a priority initiative and has recommended advancing aa project to support local businesses, improve multimodal access, encourage development and redevelopment, and further the Town's transportation, economic development, and public safety objectives within this industrial corridor; and*

Whereas, *the Engineering Division has developed conceptual Complete Streets renderings which address the current lack of pedestrian amenities, and include the installation of a sidewalk extension or multi-use trail, pedestrian lighting, street trees, and related corridor improvements; and*

Whereas, *the proposed improvements will enhance safety and mobility for employees, customers, transit riders, pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorist by providing safer pedestrian accommodations, improved access to CTtransit bus service, and stronger connections among employers, workers, businesses, and industrial properties; and*

Whereas, *the Project will further enhance the marketability of vacant and underutilized parcels, support business retention and tenant recruitment, encourage private investment and redevelopment, and increase the long-term value and productivity of the Town's commercial and industrial tax base; and*

Whereas, *the preliminary cost estimate for the design and construction of the Complete Streets Project is $2,000,000; and*

Whereas, *the Finance Department has determined that funding for this project is available through the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) Municipal Grants-in-Aid Program, which is designated for transportation-related purposes;*

Now therefore be it Resolved, *that the Town Council hereby formally authorizes and appropriates $2,000,000 in funding from the State of Connecticut OPM Municipal Grants-in-Aid program for the Granby Street Complete Street project*