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

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TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
BLOOMFIELD, CT

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

There was a regular meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held on Monday August 10, 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:*** Mayor Harrington, Councilor(s), Merritt, DeBeatham-Brown, Mahon, ***via Zoom:*** Councilor(s) Deputy Mayor Lloyd, Councilor(s) Oliver, and Cooper.

Councilors absent: Councilor Waterhouse & Goodwin.

Also present were: ***In-Person***—India Rodgers, Director Operations & Communications, Darrell Hill, Director of Finance; Warren Plummer, Director of IT; ***via Zoom:*** Annatouchur Kingland, Senior Administrative Assistant;

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

Announcements and Presentations

Mayor Harrington announced the upcoming Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce Food Truck Festival, scheduled for Saturday, September 19, 2026, from 3:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The event will feature food trucks, wine and beer, live music, a Vendor Village, and other activities. A rain date is scheduled for Sunday, September 26, 2026. Residents and the community are encouraged to attend and enjoy the afternoon of food, entertainment, and community fellowship.

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 to for no longer than three (3) minutes, unless permitted by the mayor of councilor presiding.

1. Robert Berman, 8 Hiram Lane, questioned the accuracy of the tentative minutes from the previous Council meeting regarding the proposed appropriations from the unassigned fund balance for Bloomfield Access Television (BATV) and the Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce. He stated that resolutions included in the minutes were not provided to the public or read during the meeting and that the recorded motions did not include specific dollar amounts. He requested that the minutes be reviewed and corrected to accurately reflect the actions taken during the meeting. Mr. Berman also raised concerns about increasing food insecurity in Bloomfield, noting that the local food bank and Foodshare serve more than 400 families monthly. He encouraged the Council to acknowledge the need and consider providing financial support to the food bank.

2. Kay Sherman, 1252 Blue Hills Ave., spoke on behalf of seniors regarding funding for Foodshare and the Farmers' Market. She stated that the current $40 seasonal food benefit is insufficient and requested that the Council reconsider funding and explore alternative methods of distributing assistance, such as vouchers or additional funds placed on benefit cards. Ms. Sherman also expressed concerns about limited participation in the Farmers' Market and encouraged efforts to attract more vendors and provide greater access to healthy foods. She suggested involving Social Services or community volunteers in administering the program.

3. Gail Riley, 8 Maple Ave., expressed concerns regarding the Charter Revision Committee's proposed charges and timeline, stating that the process could delay adoption of a revised Charter until July 2028. She questioned why a Charter revision previously approved by the Council in 2025, including approved ballot-question language, did not proceed to a town-wide vote. Ms. Riley called for greater transparency regarding the delay and accountability for the Charter revision process.

4. Shelby Young, 31 Alexander Rd., owner of Cottage Grove Business Park, invited the Council and community to participate in upcoming focus groups being held at Cottage Grove. She reported strong participation and constructive discussion at the July 28 and 29 sessions and encouraged Council members to attend the next focus group scheduled for August 18. Ms. Young emphasized the importance of community input and dialogue outside of political considerations.

5. Erin Barringer, 28 Kenmore Rd., reported on the results of the "Dunk Your Local Leaders" fundraiser, which raised $1,000 for Interval House and $1,000 for Bloomfield teachers to help offset classroom expenses. She thanked Mayor Harrington, Dr. Youngberg, Leisure Services, Blue Hills Fire, local businesses, volunteers, and residents for their participation and support. Ms. Barringer highlighted the event as a successful community-led effort and encouraged residents to volunteer, support local organizations, and become more involved in the Bloomfield community.

6. Rickford Kirton, 7 Hickory Lane, thanked Councilors DeBeatham-Brown and Mahon for hosting a community event and emphasized the importance of resident engagement and participation in local government. He requested clarification regarding the Charter Revision process, including why the previously approved revision did not appear on the 2025 ballot and the status of the Charter Revision Committee's required report. Mr. Kirton also expressed concern about Council members regularly participating in meetings remotely and encouraged elected officials to attend Council meetings in person when possible.

7. Elizabeth Lane, Director of Library Services, informed residents that the McMahon-Williamson Library remains open to the public while exterior work is being completed. She also noted that the library's annual report, published in June, is available online and in physical copies at library locations for residents to review.

8. (online) James Biffer, 17 Terry Plains Rd., raised concerns regarding the Charter Revision Commission, stating that the Commission dissolved when it failed to submit its required report on May 11. He noted that, under the Council's recently adopted appointment procedures, the Council cannot simply reappoint the previous members without following the established application and Committee on Committees process. Mr. Biffer also emphasized that the Town Charter serves as the community's local constitution and should reflect the interests and authority granted by the residents, rather than the preferences of the Town Council, Town Manager, or staff.

Report from Council Subcommittees

A. Governance, Policy & Economic Development

Mayor Harrington provided updates on the Rockwell Park project, Cottage Grove Road development, Boole's Avenue, Arbella, and the Popeyes property. He noted that the $4 million Rockwell Park project is progressing toward the RFP stage, with construction anticipated to begin in the fall and additional funding needed for future phases.

The mayor also provided an update on the CIF grant and Town Center redevelopment, which is intended to support infrastructure improvements and attract approximately $85 million in anticipated private development. The project could add commercial space, jobs, and approximately 195–260 residential units, including affordable housing. A Councilor questioned the basis for the $85 million estimate, which the mayor explained was an anticipated figure based on projections from Town staff and consultants.

B. Finance, Budget, Audit & Bonding

Deputy Mayor Lloyd reported that there was no Finance, Budget, Audit & Bonding Subcommittee meeting held the previous month noting that the committee will reconvene on Monday, August 17, at 6:00 p.m.

C. Public Health, Safety & Environment

Councilor Todd Cooper reported on updates, including routine Police, Fire, EMS, and health reports. The Police Department discussed CPR training for Town staff and introduced Luna, the newest police dog. The committee also discussed reducing plastic waste and unnecessary single-use utensils. The scheduled Maple Avenue traffic project update was postponed to the next meeting.

D. Education, Workforce, Youth Development & Community Services

Councilor Michael Oliver discussed Makerspace Connecticut and plans for further discussion. Due to Election Day, the committee's scheduled meeting was canceled, with efforts underway to reschedule it for Thursday, August 20, pending staff availability.

E. Committee on Committees

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown reported on behalf of Committee Chair Councilor Goodwin that a slate of committee candidates has been developed based on completed interviews and is expected to be presented to the Council at the next meeting. Additional interviews are scheduled for Thursday, August 13, with approximately 20 applicants expected to participate. The Committee hopes to begin appointing members at the next Council meeting.

Council Business

New Business

2027:03 Consider and Take Action Regarding the Request to Extend the Subcommittee Deadline for the Charter Revision Commission's Draft Report to the Town Clerk

It was moved by Councilor Cooper, seconded by Councilor Oliver to adopt the Resolution Extend the Submission Deadline for the Charter Revision Commission's Draft Report to the Town Clerk.

There ensued a detailed discussion focused on whether extending the Charter Review Commission's deadline for submitting its draft report to the Town Clerk is appropriate, given the history, scope, cost, and prior outcome of the Charter revision process.

Key points raised included:

- Background and Process: Councilors referenced the prior Charter Review Commission process, including the time and resources invested by the Town and the Commission's deliberations and recommendations.
- Prior Ballot Submission: Questions were raised regarding why the proposed Charter revisions from the prior process did not ultimately appear on the ballot and the need for greater clarity regarding that outcome.
- Scope of Review: Councilors questioned whether extending the current process is appropriate if the review is limited to previously identified provisions, rather than providing an opportunity for a more comprehensive examination of the Town Charter.
- Process and Transparency: Discussion emphasized the importance of an open, transparent, and clearly defined Charter review process that provides residents with an appropriate opportunity for participation and, where applicable, consideration at referendum.
- Timing: Concerns were expressed regarding extending the process substantially beyond the original timeline and whether doing so would provide sufficient additional value to justify the continued commitment of Town resources.
- Financial Impact: Councilors requested clarification regarding the anticipated cost of continuing the Charter review process, including potential legal and administrative expenses and whether previously budgeted resources would be sufficient.

- Follow-Up Information: Council requested additional information from the Town Manager's Office regarding the prior ballot process and anticipated costs associated with continuing the Charter review.

In summary, Councilors generally agreed that additional information regarding the history, process, scope, timeline, and financial implications would assist in determining whether an extension of the Charter Review Commission's submission deadline is warranted.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Lloyd, seconded by Councilor Suzette DeBeatham-Brown and voted unanimously to table this agenda item.

Mayor Harrington responded to concerns regarding food insecurity, noting that the Town currently works with Geysel's and Stop & Shop, as well as the Lions Club, which conducts fundraising efforts for the food bank. He stated that he would contact the businesses to explore additional support and follow up with the Lions Club regarding its next fundraising effort. The mayor also encouraged Council members to provide ideas for additional ways the Town could assist the food bank.

Report from Town Manager

Finance Director Darrell Hill, reporting on behalf of Town Manager Alvin D. Schwapp Jr., provided updates on Town operations, staffing, and the annual audits. He noted that the Town is preparing for several retirements at the end of September and is actively filling vacancies, with seven positions posted and five currently in the interview stage.

Director Hill reported significant progress on the FY 2025 audit, with the trial balance and supporting documentation being submitted to the external auditor. The audit is anticipated to be completed and filed by mid-October 2026, followed by the FY 2026 audit, which is expected to be completed by March 2027, bringing the Town closer to timely audit filings. He also announced that, beginning the following day, the Tax Collector's Office will accept credit card and TAP payments at Town Hall, in addition to cash and checks.

Council Comments

Mayor Harrington

Mayor Harrington reported on community activities, including the West Indian Foundation Golf Tournament, where Desmond Collins was recognized and the Foundation's scholarship contributions were highlighted. He also commended Ms. Behringer for her community fundraiser and expressed support for expanding the event in the future. Mayor Harrington further emphasized the importance of working with the State's legislative delegation to secure CIF grant funding.

During the report, Councilor Mahon raised concerns about communications from the Office of Policy and Management regarding the Town's delinquent FY 2025 audit and requested that

financial communications be shared with the full Council. Finance Director Darrell Hill explained that the communication was intentionally limited to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor due to their roles and concerns regarding elected officials communicating directly with regulators. Councilor Mahon maintained that all Council members should receive information necessary to make informed decisions regarding the Town's finances. Mayor Harrington indicated that the matter would be discussed further.

S. DeBeatham-Brown

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown raised concerns regarding Town governance and Council operations. She called for the Council to revisit blight and property maintenance ordinances and emphasized the need to clarify Council procedures, governance roles, and the working relationship between the Council, Town Manager, and Town staff. She advocated establishing clear Council conduct and meeting guidelines, setting goals for the Town Manager, and addressing governance matters through appropriate discussions.

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown also expressed concern that personal disputes and investigations involving current and former Council members have negatively impacted individuals and the Town. She urged Council members to work together, resolve disagreements constructively, and remain focused on serving residents and improving the community.

T. Cooper

Councilor Cooper emphasized his commitment to serving Bloomfield residents and completing the Council's work despite disagreements and challenges. He called for the Council to move forward with the Charter revision and other outstanding work, emphasizing that collaboration must go beyond public statements and result in meaningful action. Councilor Cooper encouraged Council members to set aside personal and political agendas, communicate openly, attend each other's meetings and events, and work toward common goals that benefit Bloomfield residents, children, and businesses.

M. Oliver

Councilor Oliver reported that he had no comments

S. Mahon

Councilor Mahon thanked the Police Department and first responders for the successful National Night Out event. He expressed support for addressing food insecurity and exploring a voucher program through Social Services, emphasizing the need for an established process and accountability for the use of taxpayer funds. He also thanked the Finance Director Hill for the audit update and Councilor DeBeatham-Brown for her apology regarding the impact of the residency investigation on him and his family. Councilor Mahon reaffirmed his commitment to serving Bloomfield and its residents.

J. Merritt

Councilor Merritt encouraged Council members to work together more cooperatively and emphasized the importance of ensuring that information provided to one Council member by the Town Manager or staff is shared with the full Council to avoid working in silos. He also supported establishing a process for addressing food insecurity but cautioned against delaying assistance to residents while developing that process. He suggested developing and reviewing procedures through the appropriate committees while providing immediate support to residents in need.

Deputy Mayor Lloyd

Deputy Mayor Lloyd emphasized the importance of both the Farmer's Market and food pantry in addressing food insecurity. She supported establishing a clear process for distributing assistance and noted that Leisure Services previously facilitated such a process. She requested that Leisure Services work with Social Services to refine the process and establish vouchers or another assistance mechanism as soon as possible. Deputy Mayor Lloyd also commended Shelby Young and local businesses for their engagement with HEDCO and encouraged other businesses to seek available support.

Deputy Mayor Lloyd urged Council members to demonstrate respectful behavior, communicate directly with one another to resolve concerns, and focus on productive collaboration rather than public criticism.

Mayor Harrington thanked Ms. Young for the focus group presentations and requested copies of the completed charts to share with Council members for further consideration. He emphasized the need to address food insecurity promptly and supported coordinating with Leisure Services and Human Services to develop an assistance process, while also seeking additional support from local businesses and organizations.

The mayor also encouraged Council members to strengthen their working relationships through informal discussions and relationship-building opportunities, emphasizing the importance of working together and maintaining open communication.

Adjournment

It was moved by Councilor Mahon, seconded by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown and voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.