



Town of Barkhamsted

Board of Selectman
Meeting Minutes
August 25, 2026 5:00 pm
Town Hall

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Holly P. Krouse
BARKHAMSTED TOWN CLERK

Present:

First Selectman Meaghan Cook
Selectman Ray Pech
Selectman Mark Mahoney

Members of the Public: Linda Gosselin, Amanda North, Nora Bishop, Don Stein

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm. Selectman Cook requested a change in order of the agenda with item #5 moving to #2.

Senior Community Center Request. Don Stein joined the meeting for this agenda item as he oversees the Senior Community Center for the town.

A Barkhamsted resident has requested to rent the senior community center to a religious organization, known as Come and See, for two days in July of 2027. It was noted that the town does not have a written use policy addressing renting the Senior Community Center. Concerns were raised about setting a precedent for renting to an outside, especially religious, organizations and the potential for legal issues.

Consensus: The board leaned toward not approving the request as-is, but agreed the real issue is the lack of a written use policy for the Senior Community Center (as exists for the Community Room). The First Selectman will:

- Consult the town attorney for legal guidance on whether the town can decline the request in the absence of a policy, and on the next steps.
- Begin drafting a use policy for the Senior Community Center
- Respond to the request.

No motion or vote was taken on the rental request itself; it was tabled pending the policy work and legal input.

Minutes — August 11 Regular Meeting

The minutes needed one correction: they described the meeting as a “special meeting,” but it was the **regular meeting** held on the second Tuesday.

Selectman Pech also raised concern for the record regarding a matter discussed at the prior meeting, an issue around what was characterized as an unequal financial burden between the two towns regarding shared costs. It was agreed that this concern is noted but does not require altering the minutes, and that it should be kept in mind when planning the next budget and upcoming appointments.

Motion to accept the minutes as corrected (regular meeting, not special) made by Mrk Mahney and Seconded by Ray Pech. All in favor, motion passed.

Hartford Healthcare Contract Amendment

Hartford Healthcare sent an amendment to its ambulance/EMS services contract with the town. The amendment does not change compensation terms or the contract period — it only adjusts the effective date (from July 1 to June 30) so the agreement aligns with the town's fiscal year rather than crossing it.

Motion: To accept the amendment, adjusting the effective date to align with the fiscal year by Ray Pech and seconded by Mark Mahoney: All in favor, motion passed.

General Fund Profit & Loss Report (Year-to-Date, Since July 1)

This item was added to the agenda that morning. The board reviewed roughly six weeks of income/expense data for the general fund. Notable points:

- Too early in the fiscal year to draw meaningful conclusions
- The Economic Development line showed some revenue- Farmer's Market.
- The Conservation Commission received a \$500 donation (source not recorded/asked)

Tax Credits / Refunds

Two items were reviewed and approved:

- A credit to **Mary Candles** in the amount of **\$9.92**.
- A refund to **Sherry Mona** in the amount of **\$18.89**.

Motion to accept the tax collector's referrals and authorize the credit/refunds as presented by Mark Mahoney and seconded by Rayy Pech. All in favor, motion passed.

Review and Sign Checks

Routine check-signing. During review, it was noted that a refund check to **Cynthia Lange** for **\$22.85** needed a formal motion, since refunds/credits require Board of Selectmen authorization by state statute.

Motion to accept the tax collector's referrals to refund/credit the three items — Mary Candles, Sherry Mona, and Cynthia Langer by Mark Mahoney and seconded by Ray Pech. All in favor, motion passed.

Proceeds from Sale of DPW Truck

The Department of Public Works is selling a truck via sealed bid (bids to open around September 3rd); the town is hoping for approximately \$25,000. Normally, proceeds would go into the general fund. Instead, the DPW Superintendent (Rich) requested that proceeds be redirected to cover approximately \$26,000 in needed accessories/equipment for the new replacement truck, specifically:

- A wood chip box (~\$14,000)
- A salt spreader (~\$12,000)

This would not affect the normal operating budget, since the new truck was purchased outright (no trade-in), and the accessories were not included in the original capital appropriation.

Motion to recommend to the Board of Finance that proceeds from the truck sale be directed to equipment for the wood chip box and salt spreader by Ray Pech and seconded by Mark Mahoney. All in favor, motion passed.

Town Credit Card — Increase in Limit

- The town currently has one credit card, held under former Selectman Don Stein's name. The board agreed this needs to be updated. Selectman Cook will complete a financial affidavit/application process with the bank (Webster Bank) to become an authorized user along with Erica Dyndiuk.
- Current limit: \$1,000, which is insufficient to cover the town's annual QuickBooks subscription (~\$1,300), since many software vendors (QuickBooks, Adobe) require card payment and won't accept checks.
- The First Selectman had personally paid for the QuickBooks subscription and been reimbursed, which is not a sustainable practice.
- Request: increase the limit to **\$2,000** and transition the authorized signers from Don to the First Selectman and Erica (town staff).
- It was agreed this credit card policy should be incorporated into the town's broader financial safeguarding policy currently being drafted.

Motion to increase the town credit card limit to \$2,000, remove Don as a signer, and add Selectman Cook as a signer alongside Erica Dyndiuk, by Mark Mahoney and seconded by Ray Pech. All in favor, motion passed.

Open Positions

Animal Control Officer (part-time, nights/weekends):

- The town shares a full-time ACO with Granby and Hartland who needs relief coverage for nights, weekends, and vacations.
- The posting was reopened with a reduced starting wage of \$25/hr (previously \$30), with the requirement that the hire become licensed within one year (state offers the required training). Pay increases to \$30/hr upon licensure — as incentive structure.
- One application has been received so far. Posting closes on **Monday, August 31st**, timed so a hire could start the ACO training class beginning mid-September.
- Discussion about the current payment arrangement for the daytime ACO. We pay a flat fee to Granby for the kennels and use of the Granby ACO vehicle. More details on the hourly pay schedule are requested. The board requested more information on call volume.

DPW Position

- Posting is open until **September 15th**, followed by interviews.
- A hiring committee has been formed.

Policies and Procedures — 2027 Holiday Schedule

The board reviewed two holiday schedules: one for union (road crew) employees, governed by their union contract (not subject to board approval), and one for non-union Town Hall staff and operating hours for the public.

Proposed changes for Town Hall staff:

- New Year's Day and Christmas Day, which fall on a Friday/Saturday in 2027, will be observed on the preceding Thursdays (Dec. 23 and Dec. 31) rather than as separate paid holidays — effectively reducing paid holidays by two days (removing "day after Thanksgiving" and "Good Friday," both days the office is already closed regardless).
- Staff were consulted prior to final approval of the board.
- A reminder was given to staff regarding snow days (no one is expected to risk safety commuting in poor conditions).

Motion to accept the 2027 holiday schedule as proposed/amended by Ray Pech and seconded by Mark Mahoney. All in favor, motion passed.

Public Comment

Amanda North asked questions about the open Animal Control Officer position, Who pays for the required ACO certification training? Then suggested an on-call stipend is offered, similar to neighboring towns (Canton and Berlin reportedly pay a stipend of about \$75 per two weeks for on-call availability, in addition to per-call and post-certification pay increases). The board acknowledged this is worth researching along with data from the ACO line items.

- Selectman Cook responded - Per the town's informal past practice, the individual pays for the class and is reimbursed by the town upon successful completion.

Motion to Enter Executive Session

The board moved to enter executive session to discuss Town Hall Repairs and Correspondence.

Motion to enter executive session for these items by Ray Pech and seconded by Mark Mahoney. All in favor, motion passed.

Motion to come out of executive session by Ray Pech and seconded by Mark Mahoney. All in favor, motion passed.

No motions were made; no votes were taken during executive session.

Correspondence:

Resident Trooper Program — Fringe Benefit Rate Increase The town received notice that the Resident Trooper program's fringe benefit rate (covering workers' compensation, Social Security, Medicare, retirement, auto insurance, etc.) is increasing from approximately 45.37% to 52.58% of base salary for fiscal year 2026–2027 — a 7.21 percentage-point increase. The board discussed that this is a mandated cost with no room for negotiation. It was also noted the current resident trooper will be going on paternity leave, and the vacancy/coverage process has not yet been posted.

Cybersecurity Review — Voter Registrar Systems A cybersecurity concern was forwarded from the town's voter registrars (apparently prompted by post-election conspiracy-related concerns from a resident/state contact) regarding the security of voter registration systems. The town forwarded the concern to its IT provider (PC Wizards) for review. Their review confirmed the town's systems (firewalls, workstation protections, DNS/malware filtering, endpoint detection, etc.) meet standard security protocols and no issues were found. This was presented as informational only.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn at 6:30 pm by Mark Mahoney and seconded by Ray Pech. All in favor, motion passed.