

TOWN OF CANAAN
CONSTABLE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 01, 2026 @ 6:30PM

Town Hall

108 Main St., Falls Village, CT 06031

IN PERSON

MEETING MINUTES

- *In attendance:* First Selectman Dave Barger, Constables Thom Wilson, Tim Downs, Donna Heinz, Matt Hansen, Denny Jacobs and Lou Timolat
- 1. Meeting called to order at 6:30PM by First Selectman Dave Barger
- 2. Equipment consisting of a high visibility baseball type hat and high visibility vest (safety green) issued to each Constable
- 3. Review of CGS relative to the *Duties of a Constable (Elected)*; a handout of the history of Constables in Connecticut and all appropriate statutes governing Elected Constables issued each Constable
- 4. Discussion regarding *Highway/Roadway Traffic Safety (Traffic Control/Direction)* and the possibility of scheduling a class for the Constables and FVVFD personnel with UCONN T2
- 5. First Selectman Dave Barger adjourned the meeting at 6:50PM

Minutes respectfully submitted,

David R. Barger

*copy of handout attached



TOWN OF CANAAN

CONSTABLE INFORMATION

2026



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SUMMARY

As you know, there are two types of constables, elected and appointed. The basic difference is that usually appointed constables have law enforcement functions while elected constables are primarily responsible for serving civil process and tax warrants and carrying out other sheriff-like civil duties. But this general rule does not always hold since towns can, by ordinance, make elected constables law enforcement officials. It appears that such officials would have to take some sort of police training such as that offered by the Municipal Police Training Council. However, there are a number of ambiguities in the statutes concerning constables.

BACKGROUND

The office of constable was transported to Connecticut from England and has undergone gradual changes since its institution. The earliest Connecticut statutory cite for constable appeared in 1650 and authorized constables to have legal powers similar to sheriffs. Some of the basic language contained in the earliest codification of the statutes remains unchanged today.

The main purpose for continuing a constabulatory form of law enforcement in the state was the "preservation of peace." As time progressed, the responsibilities were altered to adapt to what was deemed illegal and a priority by society, for example searching out bootleggers during prohibition. At one time, each town was required to appoint one constable specifically to collect its portion of the state tax (such as the corporation tax) on towns. The office has developed to the point where the constable provides the main law enforcement authority in some towns with no organized police department or

resident state trooper. In towns with resident state troopers, the constables are under the direct supervision of the trooper.

ELECTED CONSTABLES

Constables are elected during the regular municipal elections for two year terms. Towns cannot elect more than seven constables each, except Groton which can elect up to 14. The law prohibits judges, except judges of probate, from holding the office of constable (CGS § 7-87). When the number of constables to be elected is an even number, no person is allowed to vote for more than one-half the number. In cases when the number is an odd number, the person cannot vote for more than the basic majority of the number (CGS §§ 7-187 and 200).

The elected constable is required to take a proper oath of office prior to beginning his term. In addition, elected constables are prohibited from receiving a license to serve alcoholic beverages (CGS §§ 7-87, 30-45).

There are a number of duties of elected constables that are very clear under the statutes.

Service of Process

Constables may serve and execute any and all civil process (CGS § 52-50) and they have the same power in their towns when doing so as sheriffs, as well as the same liability for neglect in doing so (CGS § 7-89). The statutes establish and authorize fees and expense payments to sheriffs and constables who serve process (CGS §§ 52-261 and 261a). The statutes specifically mention certain types of summons that can be served by constables: mechanics liens (CGS § 49-35a), prejudgment remedies (CGS § 52-278c), attachments (CGS § 52-325a), and postjudgment procedures (CGS § 52-350(a)(12)). Constables are also authorized to serve redevelopment agency compensation notices (CGS § 8-129).

Probate Court

The statutes authorize constables to take possession of decedents' estates in certain circumstances and at the direction of the probate court (CGS § 45a-316). They are also directed to serve probate court notices in certain types of cases: to respondents in sterilization cases (CGS § 45a-693) and for hearings on conservatorships and guardianships of mentally retarded persons (CGS §§ 45a-649 and 671).

Command of Assistance

Constables may command necessary assistance in the execution of their duties from any person (CGS § 7-90).

Tax Collection

Constables can serve tax warrants in any part of the state and they may be authorized by a local tax collector to collect taxes due the municipality (CGS §§ 12-135 and 162). They are also included in the definition of "serving officer" in the statutes on state collection agencies for state taxes (CGS § 12-35). They may also be directed to file a distraint (seizure) order against the property of a delinquent lottery sales agent (CGS § 12-569).

Animal Related Duties

Constables have several responsibilities related to animals. They are directed to cooperate with the United States Department of Agriculture in its program for the eradication of bovine tuberculosis and other contagious diseases (CGS § 22-286) and the eradication of avian (poultry) diseases (CGS § 22-326b).

Court Attendance

The sheriff may authorize constables, in place of deputy and special deputy sheriffs, to "attend" the Superior Court when it is transacting business (CGS § 51-30) and constables must be paid \$20 per day when attending such courts (CGS § 6-41).

Other Duties

Constables may be required to deliver to members of the General Assembly notice of special and reconvened sessions of the General Assembly (CGS § 2-7).