

WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026
Town Hall Main Meeting Room

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

First Selectman Mica Cardozo, Deputy First Selectman Steven Munno, Maria Madonick, Lauren Francesc, Andrea Urbano, and Amey Marrella.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese, Assistant Administrative Officer Karen Crosby, Town Counsel Nick Bamonte, Clerk Alison Valsamis

FULL MEETING RECORDING

WGATV79 - www.youtube.com/live/mG-NhRCV7EU?si=-l4F5-7jQVqmmXHX

CALL TO ORDER

The First Selectman called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REMARKS

First Selectman Mica Cardozo

TOWN PLANNER UPDATE

Mike D'Amato and John Guszkowski – Tyche Planning and Policy Group

www.youtube.com/live/mG-NhRCV7EU?si=O3qTwASPNDg5BpJO&t=1018

PUBLIC COMMENT- 6:00 pm

www.youtube.com/live/mG-NhRCV7EU?si=VkfHJ6GLbVcDTwEp&t=3930

1. Sheila McCreven – 63 Center Road
2. David Aversa – 22 Woodbine Road
3. Bonnie Blake – 64 Beecher Road (comments attached)
4. Sharon deKadt – 94 Center Road
5. Diana McCarthy Bercury – 18 Ranch Road
6. Bob Hill – 68 Acorn Hill Road
7. Joi Prud'homme - 21 Barberry Lane

TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION UPDATE

www.youtube.com/live/mG-NhRCV7EU?si=oI7jbS1SmzOibyGZ&t=5753

Chairman Jeff Kennedy

AERIAL FIRE APPARATUS PURCHASE

www.youtube.com/live/mG-NhRCV7EU?si=LOS_2PPoiRSvgg9q&t=8567

Presentation by Chief Sean Rowland

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT

www.youtube.com/live/mG-NhRCV7EU?si=p-VqXAmChJizS38X&t=9964

The Board VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Munno-Urbano) to approve Line-Item Transfer Number 2526-09 (\$4,297) to transfer fees collected from the 27 Beecher Road application to the Inland Wetlands budget to pay consultants regarding this application.

TOWN COUNSEL UPDATE

www.youtube.com/live/mG-NhRCV7EU?si=m2UC1VTgxKPXt3MC&t=10882

Attorney Nick Bamonte

BOARD OF SELECTMEN SUBCOMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

www.youtube.com/live/mG-NhRCV7EU?si=MKfy2UBTvUIkJQ7L&t=12216

- The Ordinance Sub-Committee will consist of Steve Munno, Maria Madonick, and Amey Marella.
- The Personnel Committee will consist of Lauren Francese, Andrea Urbano, and Mica Cardozo.
- The Strategic Plan Committee will consist of Maria Madonick, Amey Marrella, and Mica Cardozo.

CHARTER REVISION COMMITTEE

www.youtube.com/live/mG-NhRCV7EU?si=OxfBGYkBFF0JGiP_&t=12390

A motion was made (Cardozo-Munno) to nominate a slate for the Charter Revision Commission: Susan Jacobs, Nicole Donzello, Jeff Ginsburg, Pat Madden, Susan Davidson, Melissa Durso, and David Vogel.

Discussion and debate ensued.

The First Selectman called for a recess. Upon returning from the recess, the First Selectman withdrew the original motion.

The Board VOTED (Cardozo-Munno) to appoint Susan Jacobs, Jeff Ginzberg, Nicole Donzello, Cynthia Anger, Patrick B. Madden, Melissa Durso, and David Vogel to the Charter Revision Committee.

AYE- Cardozo, Munno, Madonick, Francese
NAY- Urbano, Marrella

The Board VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Marrella-Munno) to combine the two recommendations into one, as directed, and provide them to the Charter Revision Committee.

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CONSENT AGENDA

The Board VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Cardozo-Madonick) to remove the items from the Consent Agenda to discuss the minutes.

The Board corrected the minutes to reflect Dan Del Prete's appointment to the Recreation Commission as a 2-year term, not a 4-year term.

The Board VOTED UNANIMOUSLY (Munno-Urbano) to approve the January 6, 2026, minutes with the noted correction.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned (Madonick-Munno) at 9:48 pm.

WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
JANUARY 14, 2026

BONNIE BLAKE
64 BEECHER ROAD
bonnie.blake@yale.edu

I was asked to speak at tonight's meeting about my past experience as a planner for towns across Connecticut. Woodbridge is one of 169 "small cities" entitled to apply for HUD Community Development Block Grants designed to assist small cities with their housing needs. For many years I worked with towns such as Orange, Chester, Seymour and others across the State to coordinate their particular needs with the current goals of Connecticut and help them qualify for grants. I haven't done this for a number of years so am not an expert on today's housing issues. But I want to encourage Woodbridge to explore a variety of options to achieve the current goals set by the State *without* destroying the character of the town and *with* public input.

At previous Woodbridge meetings on housing where experts spoke to residents, they urged our Town to take a kinder, gentler approach to adding affordable units and not shock established one-family, low-density neighborhoods with high-density apartments. Some of these experts were people with whom I had worked. Those with long-term experience shared an important rule of thumb – don't put a square peg in a round hole.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS TO EXPLORE:

HUD GRANTS: As a planner and grant writer/administrator, one of the first things I did when I signed with a new town was hold a public meeting with residents to determine what mattered most to them while advising them of the State's focus for grant distribution that year. Then we got to work trying to coordinate the needs and wants of the residents and town administration with the State's requirements.

In the past, Woodbridge might not have been qualified for some of these grants due to our average income level - though I was able to secure grants for other high-income towns like Tolland, Suffield, and Chester. And, with the current intense focus on adding affordable housing units in Connecticut, it would be wise to see if we could obtain a housing rehab grant. We did this successfully in Shelton and other towns where large older homes that were either in disrepair and/or the owner no longer needed so much space, were rehabbed, and if not already done, divided into 2- to 4-units – at least one of which would be affordable.

IN-LAW APARTMENTS: Twenty years ago I proposed to our Town that they allow in-law apartments as a way to enable seniors to remain in their homes while creating affordable rental units. The proposal was rejected, and residents who tried to create such interior units even for their own family members were often given cease and desist orders.

Orange began allowing in-law units more than 20 years ago, and it has been very successful. Either the owner or the renter had to be over 55, and the house nor property could be

significantly changed on the exterior. Typically, a house that was now too large for empty nesters was divided up to create a small apartment with a separate entrance. Unless more bedrooms were added than subtracted, there were no issues with septic systems. They did NOT have to be in an area served by public utilities, and the cost was moderate.

Rather than encouraging this simple, non-intrusive way to add affordable and elderly units, Woodbridge advocates ADUs – but with little guidance provided, and most people have no idea what they are. They tend to be quite expensive – requiring a new foundation be excavated while setbacks, well and septic requirements have to be met. Thus, the people who could most benefit from adding a rental unit cannot afford to build an ADU.

The Town should actively promote In-law units by reaching out to local contractors willing to lend their expertise at Town-planned and widely promoted informational sessions. The Town should look into providing grants for homeowners willing to create such affordable units. Judging from many conversations with Woodbridge seniors, this would likely be a welcome program and will add affordable units and help seniors.

MULTI-USE ZONING: Small businesses in town have asked to be allowed to create a housing unit in unused space as a way to make ends meet. The town said No. This would be an excellent way to add affordable units while supporting our business community – without disrupting the area.

CREATE A VILLAGE: I had also suggested to the Town that they create a mixed-use village square atmosphere in the business-zoned area with sidewalks, no car traffic in the interior, interesting small retail shops at ground level, with business offices and/or affordable housing units above or behind – accessed by a parking area. The creation of **Business Incubators**, which I have successfully funded with grants in other towns, is a great way to get all our creative residents who make wonderful homemade items out of their garage into shared space where their items could be displayed in a store front. This would attract foot traffic and feed other businesses in the area. An old-fashioned ice cream shop would be a great attraction.

EMPOWER WOODBRIDGE RESIDENTS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR ZONING: the Town needs to listen to its residents and involve them in all stages of zoning. If the Town focused on the mentioned and other proactive, non-invasive steps towards growing our affordable housing and businesses immediately, and demonstrated to the State that we are developing a comprehensive, well-thought-out housing plan – with strong input from our residents, we could perhaps qualify for a temporary moratorium on the assault of 8-30G applications and avoid such inappropriate developments like Fountain Street and Beecher Road. I and most of my over 70-year-old friends qualify for affordable housing but would never live in a project like Fountain Street that fails to meet basic safety standards and is not serviced by public transportation; besides, most of us couldn't afford the “affordable” units.

Thank you for your efforts to maintain what's great about Woodbridge with gentle, thoughtful growth.