

**MINUTES OF**  
**MAY 15, 2023**  
**TOWN OF OLD LYME**  
**ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING**

Approximately sixty-five (65) townspeople attended the Town of Old Lyme Annual Budget Meeting on Monday, May 15, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. in the Meeting Hall of the Memorial Town Hall, 52 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, Connecticut.

First Selectman, Timothy C. Griswold, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., and he called for nominations for a moderator for the meeting.

A motion was made by Martha Shoemaker and seconded by Jeri Baker, to nominate Attorney Vicki Lanier to serve as moderator. There being no other nominations for the moderator, First Selectman Griswold called for a vote on the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Attorney Lanier asked Vicki Urbowicz, Town clerk, to read the call of the meeting.

- 1. A proposal that the Town accept title to a parcel of land 1.88 acres in area dedicated to be preserved as open space and depicted in the plans submitted by Greenscapes Development for an 8-lot residential subdivision of property located at 21 and 39 Buttonball Road, Old Lyme, Connecticut, as approved by the Old Lyme Planning Commission on October 13, 2022.**

Following the reading of the call of the meeting, Attorney Lanier asked Michael Aurelia to present the proposal of the town's acceptance of 1.88 acres for open space.

Mr. Aurelia described the 1.88-acre parcel of land as being part of an 8-lot residential subdivision of property located at 21 and 39 Buttonball Road, Old Lyme, Connecticut.

A motion was made by Michael Aurelia and seconded by Jeri Baker to accept the 1.88 parcel of land as open space. There was no discussion made. All were in favor. None opposed.

**Motion Carried.**

- 2. The Budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, as recommended by the Board of Finance.**

Attorney Lanier next asked David Kelsey to present the Annual Town Budget.

Mr. Kelsey, Chair of the Board of Finance, first thanked the members of the Board of Finance, and Michele Hayes, Secretary to the Board of Finance, for their hard work. He also acknowledged the work performed by Nicole Leger, Finance Director for the Town of Old Lyme. Mr. Kelsey then gave an overview of the 2023-2024 budget. He explained that the Board of Finance recommended using \$600,000 from the Town's surplus account to support the budget to keep the mill rate at the current rate of 23.50. Mr. Kelsey then asked if there were any questions or comments pertaining to the budget.

Judith Read made a motion to accept the budget for fiscal year July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, and John Mesham seconded the motion. The budget was then opened for discussion.

Mary Jo Nosal, of 12 Swanswood Lane, inquired as to whether the Ferry Road Improvement grant on the budget is the same grant that was previously obtained. First Selectman Tim Griswold clarified that it is the same grant, but the money had not been used yet. He said a one-year extension (from August 2023 to August 2024) has been requested and will likely be approved by the Department of Transportation (DOT). Mary Jo then inquired whether the ARPA funds affected the overall budget. Mr. Griswold stated that the 2.1 million of ARPA money is not part of the general government budget. Mary Jo thanked the Board of Finance for their hard work.

Charlotte Scot, of 302 Ferry Road, inquired as to the need in Old Lyme for the police to purchase seven (7) patrol rifles in the amount of \$11,000. She mentioned that in Uvaldi, Texas, the police officers had these rifles but failed to act and did not enter the school. Mr. Kelsey advised Ms. Scot that we were voting on the budget, not the line item.

Kathleen Tracy, of 76 Hartford Avenue, expressed concern about the need to have these patrol rifles in our town.

Selectman, Matthew Ward responded to Ms. Scot's concern, by stating that the Texas officers did not fail to act; they were instructed to wait.

Kathleen Tracy made a motion to remove the \$11,000 line item for the purchase of seven (7) patrol rifles from the budget. Anna Reiter seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Steve Jungkeit, of 5 Lyme Street, supports the motion. He asked whether having more guns makes us safer, even if the guns are carried by the trusted police. He suggested slowing this down and having more discussion on this.

Steve Cinami, of 24-2 Short Hills Road, stated that "we won't solve this question here" and suggested putting this to a vote to stop the discussion.

A vote to call the question and end the discussion was taken. The results were thirty-four (34) votes to call the question and twenty-four (24) votes opposed to calling the question. Town Attorney Jack Collins and moderator Vicki Lanier conferred on Robert's Rules. As the vote to call the question did not exceed the two-thirds majority, it failed with only 58% of the vote, and the discussion continued.

BJ Bernblum, of 9 Cutler Road, stated that he supports the police but asked for clarification as to the type of rifles being purchased.

Selectman Matthew Ward stated that the rifles are M-4s, which is a smaller version of an AR-15.

Denise Savageau, of 4 Hillwood East, stated that she is not for or against it but would like the town to be more specific as to what kind of rifles they are. She suggested just taking the \$11,000 out of the budget and voting for amendment.

Kim Thompson, of 2 Littlefield Lane, and a member of the Board of Finance, stated that she never received a narrative from the police as to what the rifles are despite asking them to come to the meetings to explain.

Sheila Riffle, of 57 Coul Lane, suggested that in the future people should be more present at the meetings.

Kathleen Tracy supports the police too but wants the police to let the public know what they are purchasing.

After reviewing his records, Selectman Matthew Ward stated that the rifles in question are in fact M-4 Carbine Rifles. He explained the rifles would be locked in the police vehicles and that our police officers need permission from their Sargent to use them. They cannot be self-deployed.

A hand vote was then taken to vote on the amended motion to approve the budget without the expenditure of the \$11,000 for the seven (7) patrol rifles.

There was a total of 22 yes votes and 39 no votes. The motion to amend the budget, removing the \$11,000, failed.

A vote was then taken on the original motion to approve the budget for fiscal year July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. The majority were in favor. A few were opposed.

**Motion Carried.**

3. A proposal that taxes in the Town of Old Lyme on Real Estate and Personal Property shall be paid in two (2) semi-annual installments, the first payment being due on July 1, 2023, and the second payment on January 1, 2024. Provided that any tax in these categories under \$100.00 and the tax on vehicles on the Supplemental List will be due in full in one payment in July 2023.

The motion was made by David Kelsey and seconded by Andy Russell. All were in favor. None opposed.

**Motion Carried.**

4. The following proposed ordinances:

**A. AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND §§ 101-5 and 101-6 OF THE OLD LYME CODE OF ORDINANCES TO PROVIDE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE TOWN CLERK**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN OF OLD LYME, CONNECTICUT** that §§ 101-5 and 101-6 of the Old Lyme Code of Ordinances shall be amended as follows:

1. This Ordinance is enacted under authority of the Connecticut General Statutes, including without limitation §§ 9-185(A) and 9-189(b).

2. Commencing with the regular municipal election of November 2025, and every six years thereafter, the Board of Selectmen shall appoint a Town Clerk of the Town of Old Lyme for a six year term, as provided by this section. It is preferred but not required that the Town Clerk at the time of appointment be and thereafter remain an elector of the Town of Old Lyme.

3. The term of each Town Clerk appointed to a full term hereunder shall commence on the first Monday of the first January after the November regular municipal elections and, upon the qualification of such appointee, the term of the then incumbent Town Clerk shall cease.

4. Subject to any requirements of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Board of Selectmen shall establish and amend the job description, qualifications, terms and conditions of employment (inclusive of wages and hours) and it may discipline and, in its discretion, terminate the Town Clerk for cause, following due notice and the opportunity for a hearing by the Board of Selectmen.

5. The right to reappoint or not reappoint the Town Clerk or to fill a mid-term vacancy is reserved exclusively to the Board of Selectmen, pursuant to Town policies and state statutes as they may be amended from time to time.

6. This ordinance shall be effective fifteen days after its publication in a newspaper having a circulation in the Town of Old Lyme, provided that the First Selectman, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §7-157 (b), is hereby authorized at his discretion to publish a summary in lieu of the entire ordinance.

**B. AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND § 101-18 OF THE OLD LYME CODE OF ORDINANCES TO PROVIDE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE TAX COLLECTOR**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN OF OLD LYME, CONNECTICUT** that § 101-18(A) of the Old Lyme Code of Ordinances shall be amended as follows:

1. § 101-18(A). The Treasurer shall, at the next succeeding regular election for such offices and thereafter, be elected for a term of four years. Such four-year term shall commence on the 15th day following the date of such election.

a. This Ordinance is enacted under authority of the Connecticut General Statutes, including without limitation §§9-185(A) and 9-189(b).

b. Commencing with the regular municipal election of November 2023, and every six years thereafter, the Board of Selectmen shall appoint a Collector of Tax for a six year term, as provided by this section. It is preferred but not required that the Tax Collector at the time of appointment be and thereafter remain an elector of the Town of Old Lyme.

**c. The term of each Collector of Tax appointed to a full term hereunder shall commence on the third Tuesday after the November regular municipal elections and, upon the qualification of such appointee, the term of the then incumbent Collector of Tax shall cease.**

**d. Subject to any requirements of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Board of Selectmen shall establish and amend the job description, qualifications, terms and conditions of employment (inclusive of wages and hours) and it may discipline and in its discretion terminate the Collector of Tax for cause, following due notice and the opportunity for a hearing by the Board of Selectmen.**

**e. The right to reappoint or not reappoint the Collector of Taxes or to fill a mid-term vacancy is reserved exclusively to the Board of Selectmen pursuant to Town policies and state statutes as they may be amended from time to time.**

**2. This ordinance shall be effective fifteen days after its publication in a newspaper having a circulation in the Town of Old Lyme, provided that the First Selectman, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §7-157 (b), is hereby authorized at his discretion to publish a summary in lieu of the entire ordinance.**

**Copies of the proposed 2023/2024 Budget, the proposed ordinances, and of the plans depicting the open space parcel identified in paragraph 1 are available in the Town Clerk's office and on the Town of Old Lyme website: [oldlyme-ct.org](http://oldlyme-ct.org).**

Attorney Lanier next asked First Selectman Timothy Griswold to present item #4. He gave an overview of proposed changes in the ordinances that would make the Town Clerk and the Tax Collector appointed officials rather than elected officials. He explained that we must follow state statute that requires these positions to either be elected or appointed. They cannot be hired positions. The purpose of these changes is to make sure the person coming into the position is qualified for the job. The Board of Selectmen suggests increasing the term from 4 years to 6 years. The Tax Collector position ends November 2023, while the Town Clerk position does not end until January 5, 2026. The Board would like to have the Tax Collector in office before the December 2023 tax collection season. As to the Town Clerk's position, there is a lot of training involved with certification and continuing education. Typically, the Assistant Town Clerk is groomed to take over after the town clerk leaves. As qualified candidates for Tax Collector and Town Clerk may be limited, the Board of Selectman does not want to restrict the position to just Old Lyme residents, although preference would be given to qualified Old Lyme residents.

Attorney Lanier asked for a motion to approve the changes to the ordinances. Steve Cinami made a motion, seconded by David Kelsey, to consider both ordinances at the same time. The question was then opened for comments.

Mary Jo Nosal, of 12 Swanswood Lane, stated that the ordinance is unclear. The Treasurer is not covered by the proposed changes. She asked why amend now and why change the terms from four years to six years?

BJ Bernblum, of 9 Cutler Road, thought that the wording was confusing between the Treasurer and Tax Collector portions of the proposed ordinance. He said he was in favor of appointing the two offices but thought the discretion to remove the Tax Collector or Town Clerk should be given to the Board of Selectman "without cause."

Selectman, Matthew Ward, stated that the six-year term gives the Town Clerk and Tax Collector job security, as it takes years to become certified for the position.

Judith Read, of 35 Ben Franklin Road, thought the ordinance change seemed rushed and not communicated well.

Tammy Noyes, of 5 Coach Drive, stated that the public did not have enough time to consider the change. Her research showed a 50/50 split between elected versus appointed positions amongst other towns.

Attorney Jack Collins read how the current ordinance reads to clarify the Town treasurer and Tax Collector portion.

Steve Cinami believes that the public has been treated well with these positions being elected and does not think a change is needed.

Denise Savageau believes that the ordinance should be redrafted. She believes that the six-year term is long but understands the rationale for it.

A vote was then taken to approve the proposed ordinance changes “as is.”

The majority opposed approving the ordinance. Two voted in favor of the ordinance.

**Motion Defeated.**

Selectwoman Shoemaker made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and it was seconded by Selectman Ward. Meeting adjourned 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Urbowicz  
Town Clerk