

MINUTES OF MAY 28, 2025
TOWN OF OLD LYME, CT
ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET MEETING

Approximately two hundred and twenty people (220) attended the rescheduled Annual Town Budget Meeting on Wednesday, May 28, 2025, at the Lyme-Old Lyme High Schools.

First Selectwoman, Martha Shoemaker, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

A motion was made by Selectman Jim Lampos and seconded by Selectwoman Judith Read to nominate Fran Sablone as moderator. A voice vote was taken. All were in favor.

Motion Carried.

Fran Sablone asked Vicki Urbowicz, Town Clerk, to read the call of the meeting.

A motion was made by Mary Grecco and seconded by Mary Daley to go to paper ballots. An inconclusive voice count was taken so a hand count was then taken. There were 87 in favor of voting by paper ballots and 110 not in favor of voting by paper ballots.

Motion Denied.

Selectman Jim Lampos motioned to move up Item 7 (golf cart ordinance) to the third item on the agenda. Selectwoman Read seconded the motion. A voice count was taken.

Motion Carried.

1. The Budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

Fran Sablone called upon Bennett Bernblum, Chair of Finance, to present the Town Budget.

Mr. Bennett stated that some of the noteworthy changes to the budget were the significant tax increase of 7.4% due to the school district budget referendum and the reevaluation of home values. The proposed budget was reduced by 1 million due to town expenditure cuts and a withdrawal of \$800,000 from the rainy-day fund. Thus, bringing the mill rate down to 16.23%.

A motion was made and seconded by members of the audience to approve the Town Budget. There was discussion among the audience. A motion was then made and seconded to move the question to a vote. A voice count was taken and the motion was carried to move the question to a vote.

A hand count was taken. There were 167 in favor of approving the budget and 40 opposing the budget.

Motion Carried.

2. A proposal that the 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, 2025, and the second payment on January 1, 2026. Provided that any tax in these categories under

\$100.00 and the tax on vehicles on the supplemental list will be due in one (1) full payment in January 2026.

Kathleen Tracy made a motion to approve Item 2. Bonnie Reemsnyder seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All were in favor.

Motion Carried.

7. Golf Cart Ordinance (New) to, among other things, provide for their operation on designated Town streets.

First Selectwoman Shoemaker presented the new golf cart ordinance. She stated that the State of Connecticut passed legislation in October 2024 allowing golf carts to be operated on any street with a speed limit up to 25 mph. She explained that the prior administration had an agreement in place for golf cart use with Sound View Beach. Hawks Nest Beach asked to be included in the agreement. The new ordinance would allow golf cart use on specific roads, require a golf cart permit fee of \$25 per year and establish fines for rule violations; specifically, a fine of \$90 for the first fine, \$180 for the second fine and impounding of the golf cart for a third offense.

Christine Corison asked if a no vote means the Town would prohibit the golf carts on all areas? First Selectwoman Shoemaker said yes.

Larry Merrill asked if they would require them to have insurance. First Selectwoman Shoemaker replied yes.

Frank Papalardo stated that the program in place with Sound View has been good and positive.

The Rogers Lake area may be added if the ordinance goes well.

Bonnie Reemsnyder asked if we vote "no" would the State law prevail and allow golf carts on the road? First Selectwoman Shoemaker stated that the Board of Selectmen would then make a ruling to disallow them due to safety concerns.

Steven Ross had no objection to the ordinance but thought there were too many rules.

A motion was made and seconded by the audience to move the question to a vote. The motion was carried. A voice count was taken to approve the golf cart ordinance. All were in favor. None were opposed.

Motion Carried.

3. Revised Ordinance § 150-7 - § 150-10 Volunteer Fire and Ambulance Tax Abatement to, among other things, increase maximum amount of abatement from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

Rob McCarthy presented Item 3. A motion was made and seconded to approve the increase of the tax abatement. A voice vote was taken. All were in favor. None were opposed.

Motion Carried.

4. Revised Ordinance § 41-1 Duty of Selectmen regarding publication of notices of special and regular Town Meetings

First Selectwoman Shoemaker presented Item 4. She stated that a 1958 ordinance required the Town to post notices of Town Meetings with appropriations of more than \$25,000 that occurred between November 1st to May 1st in a newspaper in the general circulation of Hartford, New Britain and Springfield Massachusetts. Due to the cost of this, a survey was carried out to see which newspapers were being read. The survey indicated that The Day and Hartford Courant were the newspapers being read. With today's technology, our Town Meetings could be posted on Lyme Line, CT Examiner and the Town's website eliminating the need to post in various newspapers that are not read. The revision of the ordinance would allow the Town to post in The Day and Hartford Courant only.

A motion was made and seconded by the audience to approve Item 4. There was no discussion. A voice count was taken. All were in favor. None opposed.

Motion Carried.

5. Revised Ordinance § 58-1 - § 58-34 Old Lyme Harbor Ordinance to, among other things, add references to "slow-no wake" and increase fines for violations.

Matthew Lynch presented Item 5. He reviewed the changes to "slow-no wake" in the ordinance.

A motion was made and seconded by the audience to approve Item 5. There was a discussion, and a question raised whether refueling would be allowed. No refueling would be allowed. A voice vote was taken. All were in favor. One was opposed.

Motion Carried.

6. Revised Ordinance § 161-8 - § 161-9 Parking Areas on Private Property to, among other things, provide for on-site attendants.

First Selectwoman Shoemaker presented Item 6.

A motion was made and seconded by the audience to approve Item 6. Discussion was had. Frank Papalardo stated that these rules have been in existence since 1985 and the only difference is that the lot needs to be attended.

Dee Vowles from Hartford Avenue asked about keeping the Sound View Parking Lot open until 9 or 9:30 p.m. Selectwoman Shoemaker will investigate it. A voice vote was taken. Most were in favor. A few were not.

Motion Carried.

Selectman Jim Lampos made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Selectwoman Jude Read seconded it. The meeting was adjourned. at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Urbowicz
Vicki Urbowicz
Town Clerk