
Council Chamber | Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
4 So. Eagleville Road, Mansfield, CT

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Antonia Moran called the meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Council Chamber of the Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Dufresne, Kueffner, Moran, Shaiken, Tomecko, Zaicek
Virtual: Bruder, Mullen
Excused: Cotton

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Public Hearing – Proposed Amendments to the Ordinance for the Town of Mansfield Application for Farm Tax Abatements

The Town Clerk read the legal notice. Mayor Moran asked for comments. No comments were offered and the public hearing was closed.

B. Public Hearing – Proposed Amendments to the Ordinance for Ambulance-Type Motor Vehicle Exemption

The Town Clerk read the legal notice. Mayor Moran asked for comments. No comments were offered and the public hearing was closed.

4. OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Brian Coleman, Centre Street, questioned the hiring of an attorney for housing code enforcement and the wisdom of taking mom and pop landlords to court. He asked for the installation of the new generator at the elementary school to be reconsidered and stated the math does not add up in regards to the solar project the Town Council voted on at their January 26, 2026 meeting. Lowry Deboer, Blacksmith Road, shared complaints about working with the Building and Housing Department in regards to his rental property and asked the Town to maintain Blacksmith Shop Road.

At Mayor Moran's request, Aylesworth shared that the School Building Committee will be discussing the new generator at a future meeting and noted that some language was corrected in the solar agreement before it was signed that may address the concern voiced during public comment.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Proposed Capital Improvement Program Adjustments FY2026

B. Neighborhood Assistance Act Program - Scheduling of a Public Hearing

C. Appointment of Auditor to Conduct Financial Audit for FY 2025-2026

D. 02.23.2026 Minutes

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Shaiken explained the Proposed Capital Improvement Program Adjustments FY2026 and Appointment of Auditor to Conduct Financial Audit for FY 2025-2026.

Shaiken **moved** and Kueffner seconded to approve the consent agenda. Motion **passed** unanimously.

Motions approved by consent:

- Move, effective March 9, 2026, to approve the adjustments to the Capital Projects fund, as presented by the Director of Finance in her correspondence dated March 9.
- Move, to schedule a public hearing for 7:00 PM at the Town Council's regular meeting on Monday, June 8, 2026, to solicit public comment regarding potential program applications to the Neighborhood Assistance Program.
- Move, effective March 9, 2026 to appoint CliftonLarsonAllen LLP as the auditing firm for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026).
- Move to approve the February 23, 2026 regular Town Council meeting minutes as presented.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. Proposed Amendments to the Ordinance for the Town of Mansfield Application for Farm Tax Abatements

Kueffner requested the proposed amendments be referred to the Agriculture Committee for review and comment.

Shaiken **moved** and Kueffner seconded to refer the Proposed Amendments to the Ordinance for the Town of Mansfield Application for Farm Tax Abatements to the Agriculture Committee with the request that they convene promptly and review and make recommendations so that the Council can consider the amendments at their March 23, 2026 meeting. Motion **passed** unanimously.

B. Proposed Amendments to the Ordinance for Ambulance-Type Motor Vehicle Exemption

Shaiken **moved** and Zaicek seconded to suspend the rules to consider the proposed changes to the ordinance. Motion **passed** unanimously.

Amanda Backhaus, Director of Finance explained that the proposed amendment removes the requirement for the applicant to file an annual notification and only requires a filing when a new vehicle is purchased.

Shaiken **moved** and Tomecko seconded effective March 9, 2026, to approve the proposed amendments to the Ordinance for Ambulance-Type Motor Vehicle Exemptions.

In support of the motion, Shaiken explained that Connecticut General Statutes allow for the Town to make this amendment. Councilors discussed details of the filings required, the definition of an ambulance-type motor vehicle, and the related tax implications.

Motion **passed** unanimously.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Appointment of Legal Counsel for Land Use, Code Enforcement, Real Estate, and Related Matters

Aylesworth explained the need for legal services specific to land use, code enforcement, real estate, and related matters, noted why the firm of Hoopes and Morganthaler, LLC was selected, and stated the proposed contract has been reviewed by the Town Attorney. In response to Councilor questions, Aylesworth explained that the Town will still retain the Town Attorney for other legal matters.

Shaiken **moved** and Dufresne seconded to appoint Hoopes and Morganthaler, LLC as legal counsel to the Town for land use, planning, zoning, code enforcement, real estate and related matters. Further move to authorize the Town Manager to execute an Engagement Agreement with Hoopes and Morganthaler, LLC, as approved to form by the Town Attorney. Motion **passed** unanimously.

B. Mansfield Resources Recovery Authority - Requesting Transfer of Funds for Transfer Station Gate Attendant/Office Building

Aylesworth described the space and equipment needs of the swap shop and the proposed new spaces and amenities. Virginia Walton, Recycling Coordinator, noted that the swap shop may be able to take small furniture if their space is increased and may be able to operate year round with better climate control. John Carrington, Director of Public Works, spoke to the benefit of having the gate attendant and office space in the same place, explained that the current swap shop would be used to garage vehicles over the winter, and described the new swap shop parking area as being where the propane tanks are currently located.

Bruder **moved** and Shaiken seconded that the Council recess as the Town Council and convene as the Mansfield Resources Recovery Authority (MRRA). Motion **passed** unanimously.

Bruder **moved** and Dufresne seconded that the MRRA transfer \$100,000 from the Solid Waste Fund to the Capital Projects Fund to fund the construction of a new gate attendant/office building in order to relocate the Swap Shop to the red building following its renovations. Motion **passed** unanimously.

Bruder **moved** and Shaiken seconded that the Council recess as the Mansfield Resources Recovery Authority and convene as the Town Council. Motion **passed** unanimously.

C. Capital Appropriation - New Animal Control Facility

Shaiken explained that the state is requiring a new animal control facility and the new facility can be built while keeping the existing facility operational. Site preparation for the new facility requires fill to be dug out and replaced with material appropriate for pouring a foundation on. The proposed appropriation allows the site work to begin this construction season.

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee, Shaiken **moved**, effective March 9, 2026, to appropriate up to \$200,000 from the Capital Nonrecurring Reserve Fund to the Animal Control Facility capital project to fund site preparation. Motion **passed** unanimously.

D. Planning and Development Department Update

Jennifer Kaufman, Director of Planning and Development, provided the Town Council with an overview of the Department's programs and operations and updated the Council on notable planning projects and initiatives.

In response to Councilor questions, Kaufman discussed the timeline for reviewing the Plan of Conservation and Development, the current state of commercial leasing at The Standard and The Mark, the permitting process for The Villages at Four Corners, and affordable housing funds and requirements.

8. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth presented and discussed his written report. The report is available online at www.MansfieldCT.gov and is on file with the Town Clerk.

9. REPORTS AND COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Moran reported that she signed the final beam at the new UConn School of Nursing today. She was also a judge at Connecticut History Day at UConn on Saturday where teams from Mansfield Middle School and E.O. Smith High School advanced to the national level.

10. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Shaiken reported that the Finance Committee will be reviewing a request from Chaplin to regionalize their tax collection and assessment services.

11. PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. H. Fitch - Request to Speak at March 9, 2026 Town Council Meeting

Shaiken requested Aylesworth to confirm whether the University has been fully engaged in this issue.

B. Mansfield Public Schools - Invites Community Input to Strategic Plan

C. Mansfield Public Schools - Help Shape the Future Flyer

12. FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Kueffner **moved** and Dufresne seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:11 p.m. The motion **passed** unanimously.

Antonia Moran, Mayor

Sara-Ann Chaine, Town Clerk