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2026 SEP 16 P 2:43
ATTEST: David I. Langley
TOWN CLERK
Meeting Minutes Sept 8, 2026

Public Protection & Safety Committee

Members Present: Tim Condon, Kathleen Elbaum, Brianna Hogarty, Kathy Mullen Kohl, Tim Sullivan (6:20 p.m.)

Also Present: RTM Majority Leader Mary Childs, RTM Moderator Sue Driscoll

1. Call to order: Temporary Chair Driscoll called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.
2. Public comment: Helen Kwasniewski (Quaker Hill) expressed concerns with street takeovers and mass gatherings, and shared that she is in favor of enforcement cameras, especially if they would help with addressing increased speeding on Route 32 (see attached).
3. Previous Minutes: Motion by Mullen Kohl second by Elbaum, to approve the March 16, 2026, minutes as presented.
Voice vote: Unanimous Motion passed.
4. Consideration of/possible action on items referred to committee:
 - Review of assigned duties to the Director of Fire Services (RTC 6/3/24)
 - Review of Mass Gatherings Ordinance, Chptr 9.08 (RTC 2/2/26)
 - Street Takeovers (RTC 8/4/25) **as time available*
 - Enforcement Cameras (RTC 8/4/25) **as time available*
 - First Responders' Survivors' Benefits (RTC 2/3/25) **as time available*

The Temporary Chair briefly explained the changes in the committee's list of issues since the last meeting. The First Responders' Survivors' Benefits issue has been restored as a charge to the committee, after research confirmed that it was inadvertently dropped due to a clerical area sometime in mid-2025. The committee had deemed the Street Takeovers a priority in March, with the intent to get an ordinance on the books before summer, the typical season for takeover events. With that window gone, and the state legislature considering takeover laws, and a few towns proposing potentially useful ordinances, Mass Gatherings has been moved up. Driscoll noted that Chief Ferland was consulted and had not only okayed the priority switch but added there was no rush in the WPD or Police Commission to bring in speed enforcement cameras.

Chair Sullivan was handed the gavel at 6:24 p.m. to lead discussions on the agenda items:

Fire Services Director duties: Condon explained that the proposed addition in the Aug 2024 draft [provided to current members with March 2026 agenda] was boilerplate language crafted by Town Attorney Avena to clarify that as head of our fire department the Director could and should assume all the duties, rights and responsibilities conveyed by the state statutes, which reference only Fire Chiefs. Attorney Avena had noticed the language discrepancy while working on ordinances to address 2024 state-mandated benefits for first responders and felt this amendment would codify and clarify the equal status of directors and chiefs to prevent confusion in the future. Chair Sullivan noted the members' general consensus for the proposed revision and said that after consultation with the current Town Attorney, the committee could consider a vote to move the issue to a public hearing at the next meeting.

Condon stated that with the fire services ordinances "opened up" for review, the committee should consider revision of the fire marshal's inspection fee schedules that were first established in 2023. He noted, and Driscoll confirmed, that the fire marshal had asked the previous committee to consider increasing the fees but declined to follow up. He also explained that the current fees—which raised enough in the first year to fund a much-needed inspector—are lower than many other

towns' fees and could be an effective revenue source. The Committee agreed to have further discussion on the fees and Condon offered to provide samples of other towns' schedules.

Mass gatherings: The committee reviewed Waterford's current ordinance for mass gatherings, as well as the ordinances enacted by East Lyme and New London. Consensus that listing exemptions up-front was more helpful than somewhat buried in lengthy narrative toward the end of the ordinance. Members noted that the timelines specified for both submission of an application and the town's approval/decision period were much longer than in neighboring towns. Also, it seems that the virtually one-size-fits-all requirements—such as lengthy, detailed applications covering food, safety, water, insurance, and sanitation—that made sense for multiday events with several hundred to 1,000 participants were onerous and unnecessarily burdensome for smaller groups planning a gathering of just a few hours. Some members recalled earlier public comments on how applicants would have extra steps or sign-offs before the final approval/decision that were not mentioned in the ordinance. It was noted that the provision allowing one individual to overrule a decision made by a board earlier seemed to be a wildcard. Committee consensus that it would be very helpful to get a copy of an application form to review in conjunction with the language of the current ordinance and to invite a decision-maker to walk the group through the process and offer examples of requirements for approval and reasons for rejection. Members agreed to prepare questions and suggestions for discussion at the next meeting.

Street takeovers: Brief discussion on tracking progress of potential state legislation and the need for more specific information from the Chief on what WPD is looking to be covered in the ordinance.

Enforcement cameras: Brief discussion on holding until legislation promised by state officials starts moving and the need for more input from the Chief on plans, if any, to pursue enforcement cameras in town.

First responders' survivors' benefits: Condon stated that he was able to track down the original 2025 request that included a draft ordinance as well as Cromwell, Groton, and North Haven ordinances that could serve as models. These will be provided to members with the next meeting's agenda.

5. Adjournment: Committee tentatively scheduled the next meeting for Oct. 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
Motion by Condon; second by Hogarty, to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. Voice vote: Unanimous.

Submitted by
Tim Sullivan, Public Protection & Safety Chair

RTM – Public Protection & Safety Committee
September 8, 2026, at 6pm Meeting

Street Takeovers/Mass Gatherings:

Just recently there was a street takeover, I believe in Hartford with 80 arrests along with taking their bike, ATV.

I strongly urge that IF anyone under the age of 18 that their parents also get arrested.

It is the same as the 17-year-old with AR-15 rifle that the father/parents gave to their son, I believe that happen in GA, as well as in MI or WI.

Enforcement Cameras:

The Police have items, tools, etc., that has been taken away from them by the powers to be in Hartford.

These cameras are just that “enforcement cameras.”

The world has change drastically after 2020 “The Covid-19 ERA”.

Too many:

1. Speeders
2. People who do not have insurance, driver's license
3. Shoplifters (if they need food and are a town resident Waterford has an awesome Food Bank thanks to Anne Ogen Hines. Sunday 9/6/2026 @ S/S there was a shoplifter.
4. Accidents up the waz zoo. On a daily average 4-6
5. With EB joining the Waterford traffic on RT 85 as well as many side roads going to be heardredness/terrible
6. RT 32 in N.L. has cameras. Every single day on RT 32 no matter what time of day speeders/accidents. With these cameras it will free up the officers to do other department duties

YES, I am in favor of these CAMERAS!

Thank you,

Helen Kwasniewski