



TOWN OF PLYMOUTH

Parks and Recreation Commission

80 Main Street
Terryville, CT 06786

Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 10, 2026
7:00 p.m. – Community Room

PLYMOUTH, CT
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
RECEIVED FOR RECORD
2026 SEP 14 AM 10:22
TOWN CLERK

1. Call to Order- Please state Date & Time for the Record

Chairman Dennis Fowler called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM on Thursday, September 10, 2026. The meeting was held in the Town Community Room at 80 Main Street, Terryville, CT (noted as a change from the Mayor's Conference Room as listed on the agenda).

2. Attendance

Present: Kelly Vitale (*Commissioner*), Dave Downes (*Commissioner*), Kathy Bilodeau (*Commissioner*), Rich Schnaars (*Commissioner*), Maureen Cappetto (*Parks and Recreation Director*)

Guest: Councilman TJ Zagurski

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

4. Fire Exits

The Chair noted the location of fire exits for the record.

5. Approval of Minutes

July 16, 2026 Meeting

The minutes were reviewed and commended for their quality. A motion to approve was made and seconded.

Motion to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2026 meeting was made by Commissioner Rich Schnaars and seconded by Commissioner Kelly Vitalie. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Public Participation

Addition to Agenda – Eli Terry School / Community Space Proposal (Councilman TJ Zagurski)

Prior to Public Participation, the Commission voted to add a discussion item regarding a proposed community space at Eli Terry School, at the request of Councilman TJ Zagurski, who had attended a Board of Education meeting the previous evening on this matter. This item was inserted as agenda item 6, pushing subsequent items back by one number.

Motion to add the Eli Terry community space discussion to the agenda was made by Commissioner Rich Schnaars and seconded by Commissioner Dave Downes. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Zagurski reported that the Board of Education had discussed a proposal to repurpose space at Eli Terry School—rumored to include the former library area—into a multi-use community facility that could accommodate a senior center and other uses. However, all discussion was tabled at the Board of Education meeting, as no formal plans, cost estimates, or design documents had been presented. The Board of Education indicated it would request a formal meeting with the Town Council before proceeding further.

Councilman Zagurski noted that the Town Council had not been briefed on the proposal and that he had requested a meeting with the Mayor to obtain more information. He encouraged Commission members to attend the upcoming joint meeting when it is scheduled, characterizing it as an important focal point for all parties.

Director Cappetto acknowledged awareness of the proposal and reiterated that she had previously declined a similar offer of space at that location due to chronic parking deficiencies. She noted that parking congestion at the school during events, graduations, and sports activities makes it impractical to host public programs there. She stated she would not support the arrangement unless adequate parking is provided. Director Cappetto also stressed that any space allocated to Parks and Recreation must include at minimum a kitchenette, as approximately 80% of the department's programming involves food, beverages, or cleanup. She noted that while plumbing infrastructure may exist under the area, bathrooms and kitchen facilities would still need to be installed at considerable cost. The Commission agreed that an open dialogue with all stakeholders is essential before any commitments are made.

Nicole Correy – Boys and Girls Club Programming

Nicole Correy of 75 East Plymouth Road addressed the Commission regarding her role in organizing youth programming through the Bristol Boys and Girls Club. Ms. Correy explained that she had coordinated a substantial slate of fall programs—including flag football, basketball, fishing, and wrestling—with 144 total registrations, 95 of which were from Terryville-area youth. She noted that participants were also traveling from Thomaston and other surrounding communities, and that homeschool students were welcomed alongside public school children.

Ms. Correy acknowledged that her programming had not been routed through Parks and Recreation and addressed this directly. She explained that a number of parents had specifically requested that programs not be administered through Parks and Recreation, citing past negative experiences—including concerns about how children were spoken to, allegations of inappropriate physical contact, and perceptions that safety complaints had not been handled appropriately. She was careful to note that she was not asserting the truth or falseness of these accounts, but that community perception had driven parents away from Parks and Recreation programs regardless.

The Chair acknowledged that the Commission's principal concern was that programming had been established through an outside organization rather than through the department, and asked that Ms. Correy consider engaging with the Commission directly in the future. Kathy Bilodeau inquired about the specifics of the complaints, learning they were not financial in nature but related to interpersonal and safety concerns involving prior program personnel.

Ms. Correy clarified the logistics of the programs: flag football had initially been intended to run through the school, but insurance constraints prevented non-public school students from participating. The arrangement was ultimately approved by the Mayor and operates independently. Facility use at the high school is permitted on Sundays, with the cost of custodial overtime—approximately \$1,800—covered through participant fees (approximately \$60–\$70 per child for basketball). Basketball was organized across three age divisions: grades 2–3 (17 participants), grades 4–6 (28 participants), and grades 7–12 (21 participants).

Director Cappetto noted that the basketball program ran through November 8th, the day after Parks and Recreation's own basketball season was set to begin, which she found notable. Ms. Correy explained that the timing was driven by the school coach's needs and the necessity of expanding age groups to generate sufficient enrollment to cover custodial costs.

Ms. Correy expressed that her sole intention was to provide activities for youth who otherwise had limited options, and that she was open to future communication and collaboration. The Commission thanked her for attending and suggested she return for a February meeting to discuss potential spring programming, including tennis, pickleball, and golf opportunities.

7. Terryville Youth Soccer Club Report

The Chair provided an update on behalf of the Terryville Youth Soccer Club. A grant request has been submitted to Thomaston Savings Bank \$4,500. The bank awarded \$1,500—a reduction consistent with reduced grant funding reported by other local organizations.

The club currently fields two travel teams: a Youth-14 boys team coached by Commissioner Dave, and a newly formed Youth-10 boys' team. Recreational play involves approximately 45–50 participants across two groups, though enrollment has declined somewhat as older youth have moved into high school and shifted to spring play.

Due to financial pressures from lower enrollment and higher operating costs, the club decided to consolidate its recreational programs to a single field—giving up play at the Hancock field—by the end of September. The far corner of the Lions Club field, which sees less use, will be utilized for younger age groups ("Dinos," approximately ages 3–5). This consolidation is expected to save several thousand dollars by eliminating the cost of a portable restroom, field lining, and related expenses at a second location. The Chair acknowledged the field is rented from the Army Corps of Engineers for \$1 per year. The consolidation is being treated as a trial run.

The club is exploring fundraising options and is facing a water bill. The Chair noted the club has carried insurance on the field for approximately 25 years.

8. Program Financials to Date

Director Cappetto presented the color-coded financial report. She noted that current figures do not reflect approximately three months of revenue and that accounting is being reviewed by a returning consultant. The department is projecting a draw of \$31,000 from the revolving fund, \$15,000 of which was planned for the Lake Windfield core drilling project. The remaining draw reflects a deliberate policy decision to offer free senior programming. The projected revolving fund balance is

approximately \$253,000. Director Cappetto also clarified that several line items appearing as encumbrances represent blanket purchase orders (e.g., a \$5,000 Amazon PO) rather than actual expenditures, reflecting a new town-wide requirement to use purchase orders.

9. Director's Report

Director Cappetto presented a comprehensive report on current and upcoming programming:

Senior Computer Skills: A third session is planned. The Lunch & Learn program on September 10 was well-attended with approximately 23–25 participants. The library continues to loan a laptop for the computer skills sessions, which the Director intends to continue despite lower attendance at the second session.

Senior Movie Nights: Dates have been set for eight months on the second Thursday of each month. Events are well-attended.

Men's Baseball: The crank-pitch program is running successfully and represents one of only two programs serving the 20-something age group.

Yoga Classes: Classes continue Friday mornings (senior-focused) and Wednesday evenings (advanced). Space constraints remain a challenge, as the community room is the department's only available venue. One class has been temporarily relocated to a fire station to accommodate police training.

Summer Camp: Director Cappetto reported receiving a letter from the Board of Education Superintendent—the fourth consecutive year—indicating that the department will not be permitted to use its previous school space for summer camp. The situation has been a source of ongoing frustration. Director Cappetto has photographic and video documentation refuting claims about carpet damage attributed to the camp program, noting that she voluntarily arranged and paid for professional carpet cleaning the prior year. She stated again that she has informed the Mayor she will not run summer camp if confined to the cafeteria area. The Mayor has indicated camp will continue but suggested the location may shift to Eli Terry School, which Director Cappetto expressed reservations about.

Senior Bus Trips: Trips to Torrington Senior Center and Bristol Senior Center were well-received, with full buses. Additional local trips are planned. Director Cappetto noted that the Dial-a-Ride program has transitioned from Cook Willow to Northwest Community Health, effective the following Monday. As a result, two town-owned buses previously used by Dial-a-Ride may be redistributed, with one potentially retained for Parks and Recreation use.

Pickleball Tournament: The inaugural tournament was described as a great success. Twelve teams participated, and there was strong community interest in future events. Director Cappetto plans to hold approximately three tournaments per year. She noted that the courts are currently not overcrowded, and she intends to be careful not to over-program them. Thompson is currently holding its own tournament, so the next local event will follow its conclusion.

Back-to-School Movie Night & Information Fair: Well-attended; the department intends to more actively promote the information fair component in future years.

Men's Basketball ("Old Man Basketball"): Resumed September 6. A volunteer (Tommy Dough) has agreed to collect a \$5 per-session fee at the door to accommodate participants who resist online registration.

Recreational Basketball: Gym time is reserved beginning November 7. Staff from returning college-aged volunteers is being confirmed.

Lake Windfield Festival: Planning is well underway. The band, lighting, lanterns, banners, signage, parking, and buses have been arranged. The Director is working on food truck and alcohol vendor confirmations, hot chocolate service logistics, and exploring a mobile payment solution for on-site purchases.

After-School Programs: The Director expressed intent to recruit additional teachers to offer after-school programming, noting the financial success of the cheer program as a model.

Core Drilling at Lake Windfield: Invoice has been paid; work is expected to begin in late October/early November.

Space Constraints: Director Cappetto reiterated that the absence of a dedicated Parks and Recreation facility. And continues to severely limit programming capacity, as the department is entirely dependent on school and municipal spaces that are frequently unavailable.

10. Chairman/Commissioners Comments

Commissioner Richard Schnaars expressed appreciation for the updates and echoed the sentiment that cooperation between the Boys and Girls Club programming and Parks and Recreation would benefit the community, suggesting that a collaborative middle ground could serve everyone well.

Discussion touched briefly on potential new program areas for the spring, including tennis, pickleball, and youth golf. Ms. Correy, still present, offered to assist in finding a tennis coach and indicated strong community interest. Director Cappetto noted that the department currently offers pickleball and that Crestbrook Park in Watertown offers discounted golf for youth. The loss of Chippany Middle School's (Bristol) golf program was noted as a gap in local options.

Discussion also briefly revisited the question of whether an alternate venue, such as the Congregational Church or another community space, might be used for programming when the community room is unavailable. Director Cappetto acknowledged that the church has been explored in the past and that some coordination occurs with the senior group that meets there, but noted that the goal is to expand programming opportunities rather than consolidate them, and that a permanent, dedicated space remains the proper solution.

11. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Kathy Bilodeau and seconded by Commissioner Richard Schnaars. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:53 PM.

Submitted by,

Pamela Pelletier
Recording Secretary