



# City of Westfield

## PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

February 3, 2026  
City Council Chambers

Chair Carellas called the meeting to order at 7:00.

Members Present: William Carellas, John Bowen, Cheryl Crowe, Jane Magarian, Philip McEwan, Raymond St. Hilaire

Associates Present: Richard Salois, Dylan Sweeney

Members Absent: Bernard Puza

Board Staff Present: Jay Vinskey (Planner)

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### ➤ PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ron Roux, 79 Woodsong Rd. – began discussing the BESS matter. Chair Carellas advised him to defer comments until the subject hearing is opened.

Chair Carellas stepped to the podium and Vice Chair Crowe assumed the chair.

William Carellas, 16 Wildflower Cir. – Congratulated Member St. Hilaire on his military retirement after 24 years and 2 tours in Iraq. He presented a proclamation from the Mayor as Ray and his wife Nicole joined him at the podium.

### ➤ REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Member Crowe MOTIONED, seconded by Member Magarian to approve the 1/20 minutes. All in favor.

### ➤ PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A zoning petition of the City Council to implement an interim restriction for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

Chair Carellas designated Associate Salois as a voting member. Councilor Fanion summarized the proposal, just a moratorium at this point which the Board had earlier advocated for. Chair Carellas invited questions:

Ron Roux – referencing the States Model BESS bylaw, questioned the power tiers that would be established and what would be by special permit vs. by-right, especially re: aquifer concerns. Lighting and noise regulations?

Chair Carellas – is this already set by the state? Vinskey noted we can tailor regs to Westfield but at this point it is just a moratorium to allow time to develop regs. There will be another public hearing when the local regs. are ready.

Mary Ann Babinski, 114 Rogers Ave. – We don't have any BESS regs now? City allowed to add zoning rules, grace period? Vinskey- yes, proposing a pause. City will have more control on these? Vinskey-

state will still control large facilities. Moratorium a good idea. Will residents/officials be able to offer comments on Westfield regs? Carellas- yes, it will have a public hearing. We need to look at the zoning for Water Resource Protection.

Mike Jabier, 13 State St. - Is the Board familiar with the Moss Landing, CA BESS fire? Fire protection precautions should be considered.

Member Sweeney felt this pause was a good idea; concerns about Lithium ions specifically. Member Bowen, Carellas also supportive. Crowe noted these facilities are in their infancy.

Vinsky explained the City needs to offer the state's local consolidated permitting option by October 1, so felt regs should be adopted or at least formally noticed, by then. Local zoning regs would apply to both this process and to the traditional permitting route.

Carellas invited those in favor or opposed.

(Councilor) Dan Allie, 38 Union St. - as a resident, in favor. Energy Facilities Siting Board regs still in progress, may be delayed. Agawam BESS pursued through town instead. Solar and wind not adequate. State's push not well thought out and usurps local authority.

Mary Ann Babinski - in favor. State now working on their rules and regs.; offering public hearings, comment period. Encouraged the City to participate, get questions answered. We can protect resources and still comply.

Chair Carellas read the proposed text.

Member Bown MOTIONED, duly seconded, to close the hearing. All in favor.

Member Salois MOTIONED, seconded by Member Magarian, to send a strong recommendation to City Council to impose the moratorium as drafted, and in meantime to write local regulations. All in favor.

➤ ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Carellas requested designation of the PVPC commissioner be added to the next agenda.

At 7:47 Member St. Hilaire MOTIONED, seconded by Member Salois, to adjourn. All in favor.