

**ALL COMMON COUNCIL ACTIONS TAKEN AT THIS MEETING TO  
APPROVE EXPENDITURES AND CONTRACTS OR TO ACCEPT BIDS AND  
OTHER PROPOSALS REQUIRING THE EXPENDITURE OF CITY ARE  
SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS**

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 7:33 p. m. and a Boy Scout from Troop 222 led the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. King, City Clerk read the notice stating that the meeting was being videotaped and audio recorded for the public broadcast and that assisted listening devices were available.

**I. ROLL CALL**

Ms. King called the Roll. The following Common Council members were present:

|                   |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Council at Large: | Mr. Richard Bonenfant<br>Mr. Douglas Hempstead<br>Mr. Nicholas Sacchinelli | Mr. Michael Corsello<br>Mr. Bruce Kimmel |
| District A:       | Ms. Eloisa Melendez  |  |
| District B:       | Mr. Travis Simms   | Ms. Phaedrel Bowman                      |
| District C:       | Mr. John Kydes   | Ms. Michelle Maggio                      |
| District D:       | Ms. Shannon O'Toole Giandurco  | Mr. Michael DePalma                      |
| District E:       | Mr. John Igneri  | Mr. Thomas Livingston                    |

**I. ROLL CALL**

At Roll Call there were fourteen (14) Common Council members present and one (1) absent (Mr. Serasis)

Also present were Mayor Harry Rilling; Corporation Counsel, Mario Coppola and City Clerk, Donna King.

## II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

January 24, 2017

\*\* MS. MELENDEZ MOVED TO RESCIND THE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 24, 2017  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

\*\* MS. MELENDEZ MOVED THE FOLLOWING CORRECTION TO PAGE 5:

**IF IT IS DETERMINED THAT NO POLICE OFFICERS ARE NECESSARY OR IF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IS UNABLE TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT POLICE OFFICERS, THE DIRECTOR SHALL, IN THE ALTERNATIVE, DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF TRAFFIC CONTROL PERSONS NECESSARY TO INSURE THE PUBLICS' SAFETY**

\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

February 14, 2017

\*\*\*\* MR. SIMMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 14, 2017 AS PRESENTED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

## III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

*Public participation comments are not verbatim and represent a summarization of statements unless otherwise noted.*

Ms. Debora Goldstein, spoke about the budget cap. She said that the amount in the Planning and Zoning category is insufficient. She asked the Common Council to consider moving toward an outcome based budget. Ms. Goldstein said that it requires going out to the public and then prioritizing what goes into the budget.

Ms. Joanna Cooper thanked the Common Council for their efforts on behalf of the Board of Education budget.

## IV. MAYOR

### A. RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

RESIGNATIONS: There were no resignations announced this evening.

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APPOINTMENTS: Raymond Burney, Director of Personnel and Labor Relations

**\*\* MR. SACCHINELLI MOVED TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF RAYMOND BURNEY AS DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL AND LABOR RELATIONS**

Mr. Burney said that he looked forward to coming to work in Norwalk. He said that he lived in Norwalk for a period of time in the 1990s. He reviewed his background and qualifications.

Mayor Rilling welcomed Mr. Burney and described the recruitment process. He said that Mr. Burney is a talented and experienced person who can rise to the occasion.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION**

REAPPOINTMENTS: There were no reappointments announced this evening.

#### MAYOR'S REMARKS

Mayor Rilling announced that working with the Board of Education, an operating budget was crafted that meets the vast majority of their needs. The tax levy will remain the same as recommended by Mr. Barron. He thanked all who worked so diligently putting together a budget that will help the schools move forward and close the achievement gap. Mayor Rilling said that the Board of Education and the Superintendent agree with the budget.

Mayor Rilling said that the capital budget is still a work in progress.

Mayor Rilling read an announcement from Mr. Livingston asking for volunteers to host students. March 9<sup>th</sup> is the Fairfield County Community Foundation annual giving day. The grand marshal for the second annual St. Patrick's Day parade will be Ollie O'Neil.

### **V. COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

#### **A. GENERAL COUNCIL BUSINESS**

**\*\* MR. IGNERI MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Igneri said that the City would like to create a Norwalk Innovation District. To start the process, they need to agree that the City is in favor of this program.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

\*\* MR. SACCHINELLI MOVED THE FOLLOWING CONSENT CALENDAR:

CORPORATION COUNSEL

6A1

6A2

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

7A3

FINANCE COMMITTEE

7B1

VI. REPORTS: DEPARTMENTS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

A. CORPORATION COUNSEL

1. AUTHORIZATION FOR DISCUSSION: SCOTTY AND LESLIE SCHULAR V. CITY OF NORWALK *EXECUTIVE SESSION*
2. APPROVE THE SETTLEMENT OF OUTSTANDING TAX CLAIMS OF THE CITY AGAINST THE ORIGINAL GRASSO COMPANIES LLC AND AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT REGARDING OUTSTANDING TAX LIEN AND ELIGIBILITY TO BID ON PUBLIC PROJECTS *EXECUTIVE SESSION*  
CONSENT TO TABLE BACK TO THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT

VII. COMMON COUNCIL COMMITTEES

A. ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

1. APPROVE PROPOSED NEW ORDINANCE RE: ARTS COMMISSION

**B. FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**1. RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$200,000 FOR THE PURPOSE OF A  
PARKING CAPACITY STUDY  
CONSENT TO SEND BACK TO COMMITTEE**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**VII. COMMON COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

**A. ORDINANCE COMMITTEE**

**\*\* MS. MELENDEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**1. APPROVE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CITY CODE CHAPTER 73A-  
PARKING AUTHORITY**

Mr. Kimmel said that Mr. Kydes and Mr. Hempstead agreed to work with the Parking Authority and attended their meetings. He explained that this Ordinance addresses what happens if the Parking Authority decides to change fees mid-year. He said that this has been an exercise in good government.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* MS. MELENDEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**2. APPROVE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CITY CODE CHAPTER 103-  
TAXATION §103-5**

Mr. Kimmel explained that most of the work was done at the Finance Committee and they sent the Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Ordinance to the full Common Council. They changed the Tier 1 tax relief from \$1,390 to \$1,400 per year and adjusted the qualifying income from \$42,900 to \$46,500. This change will allow more families to participate with a minimal cost to the City. Mr. Kimmel said that tonight, the Common Council is taking care of their youngest and oldest residents.

Mayor Rilling thanked Mr. Kimmel, Ms. Melendez, the Finance Committee, Mr. Barron and Mr. Stewart. He said any senior tax relief is always welcome and appreciated. He hopes that in the future, the threshold will be increased.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **C. FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Kimmel thanked all those involved and who spent a lot of time working to try and figure out the best way to address the operating requests of the Board of Education. He said they were frank, good, constructive discussions.

Mr. Kimmel said the Finance Committee voted unanimously to add \$1 million to the operating budget and it should come out of the fund balance, which will not add to the recommended tax levy.

**\*\* MR. KIMMEL MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

- 2. WHEREAS, SECTION 1-289 OF THE NORWALK CHAPTER REQUIRES THAT A MAJORITY OF THE COMMON COUNCIL VOTE TO ESTABLISH A SPECIFIC SPENDING LIMITATION ON LOCALLY FUNDED EXPENDITURES DURING THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR'S OPERATING BUDGET.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORWALK THAT:**

**THE MAXIMUM LIMIT ON TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CITY OF NORWALK FOR FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2017 SHALL BE NO MORE THAN \$329,667,112. THIS APPROPRIATION CAP REPRESENTS TOTAL EXPENDITURES OF \$348,908,852, LESS ESTIMATED INTERGOVERNMENTAL GRANTS OF \$19,241,740.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT THE RESULT OF THIS VOTE AND RESOLUTION, TOGETHER WITH THE ATTACHED 2017-18 BUDGET GUIDE BE FORWARDED BY THE CLERK OF THE CITY OF NORWALK TO THE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION.**

**\*\* MR. KIMMEL MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS:**

- 1. WHEREAS, SECTION 1-289 OF THE NORWALK CHAPTER REQUIRES THAT A MAJORITY OF THE COMMON COUNCIL VOTE TO ESTABLISH A SPECIFIC SPENDING LIMITATION ON LOCALLY FUNDED EXPENDITURES DURING THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR'S OPERATING BUDGET.**

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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT THE RESULT OF THIS VOTE AND RESOLUTION, TOGETHER WITH THE ATTACHED 2017-18 BUDGET GUIDE BE FORWARDED BY THE CLERK OF THE CITY OF NORWALK TO THE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION.**

Mr. Kimmel explained that the additional amount would come from the fund balance and be directed to the Board of Education. This increase will have no impact on the recommended tax levy.

Ms. Bowman asked Mr. Barron if the \$1.3 million is in his recommended budget. Mr. Barron said this represents a total of a \$3.3 million draw down from the fund balance. This is not an action that will jeopardize the fund balance in a year. For the next year, this will drop the City below the median, but he does not feel it will have a credit impact next year. His biggest concern is for the next year. At some point, they will have to stop drawing down from the fund balance. Rating agencies look for significant departures in the median.

Ms. Bowman said she heard Mr. Barron caution the Common Council and she does not want to see the City not listen to the professionals. She said that she wants to take heed and listen to the professionals. The Chair of the Board of Education made disparaging comments at the N.A.A.C.P. stating that they do not know what is best for the African American community. She said that people who represent the people going to the schools should be people who live in that neighborhood.

Mr. Corsello said he heard that by putting \$1.3 million in the budget, it will not be an increased cost to taxpayers. Mr. Barron said that it will not cost the taxpayers any more than his recommended amount. There will be no impact on the mill rate, but there will be a tax increase. The mill rate will remain at 2%.

Mr. Corsello asked if going forward, if no money comes out of the rainy day fund, will it impact taxes. Mr. Barron said that the Board of Education cannot be funded less than the previous year. The said it is a reasonable conclusion that the second year will have a larger tax increase.

Mr. Kimmel said that a municipality has to find a balance and it is a tough call. He said that he will listen to the Finance Director, but because of the ECS formula Norwalk is in dire straits to provide students a 21<sup>st</sup> century education. The Board of Education and the City are in a good position to make savings by going on to the State's insurance system.

Mr. Kimmel said it is important to spend for the schools and let the schools get the services they need.

Mr. Igneri said that Mr. Barron is conservative in his estimate and he is conservative in the grand list of development. Mr. Igneri said that he is optimistically looking at the grand list growth for help.

Mr. Simms said that they need to support the schools and he would like to see money put toward the education of the kids. Currently, Norwalk is ranked 82<sup>nd</sup> in the state; that shows a failing school system. He said that he wants to be sure the kids are getting a top of the line education.

Ms. Bowman said that half of the budget goes to the Central Office and not to the schools. She said she wants to hear what the programs do. She wants to hear that kids are not in study halls. If the Board of Education is getting the money from the rainy day fund, she said she wants them to report what they did – what went well and what went wrong.

Ms. Bowman said the taxpayers cannot afford to see an increase and get nothing back from the schools. She said that she wants to see results next year.

**\*\* THE AMENDMENT AS PRESENTED PASSED WITH ONE (1)  
ABSTENTION (MR. SIMMS)**

Mr. Hempstead said that this is his 14<sup>th</sup> operating budget. He said that when money is assigned to a particular effort, it needs to be associated with a particular measurable goal.

Mr. Hempstead said that he was perplexed. He said that he heard too much about Common Council leadership, and asked to call it what it is. He said that the leadership of the Democratic party made the decision. No one from the minority party was invited to any of the closed door meetings. He said that all 15 Common Council members were elected by a majority of the people they represent. Mr. Hempstead said that when he sees comments that a news agency has information before they do, he questions why they invite the public in for a public hearing. He said that the Fix it First guys should mind their own business and suggested they start with the ECS funding.

Mr. Hempstead said that he was happy the parties came together to accomplish the budget, but the process was partisan and not inclusive.

Ms. O' Toole Giandurco said she received breaking news from Nancy on Norwalk. She said that it is disheartening to hear that it is a done deal.

Ms. Maggio suggested that she was not invited because she is supposed to be an extremely conservative Republican. She said that she is a mom with three kids in the



Norwalk Public school system and would have made the recommendation to fund the budget. She said that she is not doing her constituents any service if she does not have the chance to say what the people in her district are feeling. She said that the people who voted for her matter.

Mr. Kimmel recalled phone conversations to keep Mr. Hempstead in the loop. He said that he did not know they were going to reach an agreement. He told Mr. Hempstead he does not know where he stands. He said that when he was in the Minority, he made his position clear.

Ms. Bowman said she hoped the capital budget was not yet decided. The South Norwalk community loudly voiced an opinion about building a new school in South Norwalk. Although the location would be in South Norwalk, the school would not serve South Norwalk children. There is no plan to build a neighborhood school in South Norwalk.

Ms. Bowman pointed out that they are talking about over enrollment and based on immigration, all the research may not be relevant. She said that she hoped no one is making deals regarding the capital budget.

Mr. Hempstead asked how many meeting with the Board of Education, Superintendent and Common Council members took place and asked how many were the four Republicans invited to. He said that he did not recall anyone being invited. He said that he received e-mails. He noted that he does keep things close, because he wants to hear from the public.

Mr. Hempstead said that he will vote in favor of the budget, because it is the right thing to do, but it is a question of how it was done. He said that he hoped the Board of Education will be able to deliver what they say they can.

Mr. Igneri said that long ago, he spent time in the Minority position and felt ignored. He said they were flawed in the way they do things. Both sides made errors and he apologized and asked to sit down to move forward on this.

**\*\* MOTION AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ADOPTED BY MAJORITY**

VOTE: 14 IN FAVOR AND 0 AGAINST

### **VIII. RESOLUTIONS FROM COMMON COUNCIL**

There were no resolutions presented this evening.

**IX. MOTIONS POSTPONED TO A SPECIFIC DATE**

There were no motions postponed this evening.

**X. SUSPENSION OF RULES**

**\*\* MR. IGNERI MOVED TO APPROVE SUPPORTING THE DECISION TO APPLY FOR A GRANT TO HELP CREATE A NORWALK INNOVATIVE DISTRICT**

Mr. Bonenfant asked for information. Ms. Stocker explained the item and said that it is a private collaborative group. This entity is applying for a grant from the State; this is not a City of Norwalk endeavor. If they are not funded by the State, they are hoping a corporation will fund them. The program requires the legislative bod of the City to show proof of their support of the application by submitting a letter of support.

Ms. Bowman said that she would like to see the applicants at this meeting. Ms. Stocker said this came up suddenly. Mr. Simms said that this item should go back to committee. Mr. Igneri said that they are sending a letter to the State saying that the City is interested in having an Innovative District in Norwalk. Mr. Simms said that he is not comfortable approving this request because he does not know who they are and there is no backup information.

Mayor Rilling asked if this item could go before the Common Council at their next meeting. Ms. Stocker said the letter is needed by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Kydes said he has a Planning Committee meeting this Thursday.

**\*\* MR. KYDES MOVED TO TABLE THIS ITEM AND SEND IT TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. IGNERI MOVED TO ADJOURN**  
**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

ATTEST: Donna King, City Clerk