

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 FUNDS ARE SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone, Zoom, and/or the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at norwalkct.org/meetings Members of the public can call in and listen to a meeting. They will not be able to speak or see any of the meeting participants. Each meeting will use a unique Meeting/Webinar ID. Please find the information using the link above.

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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Irene Dixon at idxon@norwalkct.org to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 6:42 p.m. and led the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Dixon called the Roll:

Council at Large:	Mr. Gregory Burnett	Mr. Joshua Goldstein
	Ms. Dominique Johnson	Ms. Nora Niedzielski Eichner

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Ms. Barbara Smyth

District A:	Ms. Nicol Ayers	Mr. David Heuvelman
District B:	Ms. Darlene Young	Ms. Diana Revolus
District C:	Mr. John Kydes	Ms. Jenn McMurrer
District D:	Ms. Heidi Alterman	Mr. Thomas Keegan
District E:	Mr. Thomas Livingston	Ms. Lisa Shanahan

At Roll Call there were fifteen (15) Council members present. A Quorum was present.

Also present were Mayor Harry Rilling, City Clerk, Irene Dixon and Corporation Counsel, Mario Coppola.

II. PRESENTATION OF THE 2022-23 OPERATING BUDGET

Mayor Rilling explained that the purpose of this special meeting was for a review of the proposed 2022-23 operating budget by Mr. Dachowitz. He said this is a work in progress and thanked Mr. Dachowitz, Mr. Ellis and Ms. Lam for their hard work in putting the budget together. He also thanked Mr. Burnett and Mr. Livingston.

Mayor Rilling said he knows this has been a difficult time; people have lost jobs and are unable to make payments. He said they are trying to be fair and equitable so that they do not overtax the citizens or underserve the children. The department heads have been very responsible and living within their budgets. Last year he asked them to come back to the Board of Estimate and Taxation with a ½% reduction. Everybody came back with a reduction. He said this is not the final budget; this is the first iteration.

Mr. Dachowitz shared his screen and presented the Mayor and CFO joint recommended budget. He reviewed the schedule and said the Board of Estimate and Taxation sets the final budget and tax levy. He explained that economics is about setting priorities.

The share of the proposed \$412 million budget is 40% for the City and 60% for the Board of Education. He reviewed how the ARPA and ESES funds were divided. Funds were designated to help ameliorate a tax increase, flood mitigation, Community Services, Economic and Community Development and for high speed fiber optic cabling.

Mr. Dachowitz explained that last year, the City and the Board of Education entered into an efficiency study with Evergreen Technology. He reviewed the scope of services and

said they believe they can make their target date of delivering their final report in March. The goal is to get that information to the Common Council to help them make their decision.

The recommended operating budget is \$412 million with \$216 million for the Board of Education which represents a \$7.8 million increase over last year which is a 3.75% increase and \$196.2 million for the City which represents a \$7 million increase which is a 3.69% increase over last year.

Mr. Dachowitz presented the budget line by line. He reviewed the rainy day fund and said the current year budget did use rainy day funds. He said there should not be a ceiling on a rainy day fund. He noted that because of the rainy day fund, the City was able to handle Covid. He said it is a very major factor in the City's bond rating. He said he worries about the AAA bond rating and how a strong rainy day fund works in the City's favor.

Mr. Dachowitz said they have to get enough tax to fund \$412 million and to have to increase that amount, they need to be covered for various situations, such as the senior tax credits. He described how the mill rate for each district is determined.

Mr. Dachowitz congratulated the members of the Pension Board for doing a phenomenal job.

Mr. Dachowitz said he and Mayor Rilling feel this budget is balanced, fair and affordable to Norwalk single family home owners.

He asked if there were any questions. Ms. Niedzielski Eichner asked about the percentage difference between taxing districts. Mr. Dachowitz explained that the City is divided by the full grand list and the Sixth taxing district has a different grand list. He said that if a district has twice the value of the grand list, they are going to pay twice the tax.

Mr. Goldstein asked about the ARPA funds and what the plans are to reduce taxes once fy 2022-2023 passes. Mr. Dachowitz said if they have an increase in expenses each year and the supplement to the budget with the one time funding source goes away, they will have to ask the taxpayers for a tax increase the next year.

III. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Irene Dixon, City Clerk