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For Immediate Release

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\$367.6 million Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 presented to the Board of Estimate and Taxation

Proposed budget reduces taxes for majority of single-family homeowners in Norwalk

(Norwalk, Conn.) - On Monday, February 11, the City of Norwalk submitted its proposed Fiscal Year 2019-20 Operating Budget to the Board of Estimate and Taxation (BET). The \$367.6 million budget represents an increase of 3.8 percent from the previous Fiscal Year. As presented, the budget reduces taxes for the majority of Norwalk single-family homeowners, while funding critical Norwalk services and programs. In total, the \$367.6 million proposed budget equates to an increase of \$13.6 million from last Fiscal Year.

“I know residents are concerned with increased City costs and what that means to their wallets,” said Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling. “We made some tough decisions, and I am proud to say this is a budget that keeps the momentum moving forward for our City while being responsible to the taxpayers. I am hopeful this budget will be approved as it is reflective of the needs and values of our community.”

Approximately 90 percent of the Operating Budget is funded by local taxes. The City’s recent property revaluation showed the Grand List increased by 16.6 percent. Residential properties, excluding apartments, went up 10.7 percent, while commercial properties increased by 32 percent. As property values increased, a subsequent decrease in the Mill Rate was possible. As proposed, the Mill Rate is decreasing by 10 to 11 percent across the six taxing districts. The end result means most single-family homeowners will see a decrease in their taxes based on median assessed values.

	1 st Downtown Norwalk	2 nd South Norwalk	3 rd East Norwalk	4 th Sewered Main Area	5 th No Garbage Main Area	6 th Rowayton
Median Assessed Value	\$240,170	\$227,420	\$304,840	\$275,550	\$375,840	\$764,730
% Increase v. 2018-19	9%	13%	19%	8%	6%	11%
FY 2019-20 Taxes	\$5,593	\$5,296	\$7,099	\$6,430	\$8,557	\$16,371
FY 2018-19 Taxes	\$5,739	\$5,244	\$6,709	\$6,720	\$9,070	\$16,458
Change Inc./ (Dec.)	(\$146)	\$51	\$390	(\$290)	(\$513)	(\$87)
% Change Taxes	(2.55%)	0.98%	5.81%	(4.32%)	(5.65%)	(0.53%)

Education funding accounts for \$198.5 million - or 54 percent - of the proposed \$367.6 million budget. The Mayor and Superintendent, in discussion with leadership of the Common Council and Board of Education, crafted a proposal for review by the BET and Common Council. The proposed budget provides an increase of \$8 million from last Fiscal Year.

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“We’re pleased to have reached an agreement on a proposal that will maintain existing services and complete major program improvements,” said Dr. Steven Adamowski, superintendent, Norwalk Public Schools. “Under the Board of Education’s Strategic Operating Plan, Norwalk schools have delivered significant growth as measured across a broad set of indicators, with an accountability index score that was the second largest gain of any K-12 district in the state. By supporting programs and plans to raise the bar and close the gaps, this proposed budget agreement enables NPS to continue to progress towards its goal to become the most successful city school district in Connecticut.”

The proposed budget plan maintains current school services while also funding major program enhancements under the Norwalk Public Schools Strategic Operating Plan. The proposal also anticipates that a 1 percent carryover, the maximum allowed under law, will be applied from \$1.8 million in savings from the Board of Ed’s 2018-19 budget. For more details on the strategic priorities covered by the recommended Board of Education budget visit norwalkps.org.

The proposed Operating Budget presented to the Board of Estimate and Taxation on Monday night includes the use of \$6 million from the Unallocated Fund Balance, often referred to as the Rainy Day Fund. Of the \$6 million, \$3.7 million is being used for tax relief, and \$2.3 million is being allocated for one-time Board of Education expenses.

“This budget represents a collaborative effort between the City and Board of Education that funds top priorities, services, and programs. I appreciate the openness and willingness of Dr. Adamowski and the Board of Education to work together with the City on crafting a judicious budget,” Mayor Rilling said. “By using some of our reserves to fund one-time expenses, we will help alleviate the impact on our residents. We are funding necessities that will make a difference in the lives of our students and families.”

Following tonight’s meeting, the proposed budget will be presented to the Common Council at the regularly scheduled meeting on February 12. By February 26, the Common Council will establish an Operating Budget cap. On March 20, the BET will hold a public hearing on the budget, with plans to forward a tentative budget to the Common Council by April 1. The Common Council has until April 16 to set a final budget cap. By May 6, the BET will set the final budget and tax levy.

Visit norwalkct.org to view draft documents and timelines related to the budget.

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About Norwalk, Conn.

Located in Connecticut in the heart of Fairfield County, the City of Norwalk is a diverse community rich in culture and personality. Uniquely situated on Long Island Sound, Norwalk has a vibrant Urban Core, remarkable schools, and beautiful beaches and parks. As of the 2017 United States Census Bureau estimate, Norwalk’s population was nearly 90,000, making it Connecticut’s sixth-largest city. Find out why Norwalk is the Sound of Connecticut by visiting norwalkct.org.