Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Rilling announced that Congresswoman Mia Love had passed away from cancer on the 23rd. Congresswoman Love was born in Brooklyn and raised in Norwalk. She graduated from Norwalk High School.

The City also lost one of its Public Works Junior Engineers, Igor Romao. His hard work and dedication made a lasting impact on all who knew him.

Mayor Rilling request a moment of silence in memory of both Congresswoman Love and Mr. Romao.

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Murillo called the Roll as follows:

Council at Large:	Mr. Gregory Burnett	Mr. Joshua Goldstein
	Mr. Johan Lopez	Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner
	Ms. Barbara Smyth	
District A:	Ms. Nicol Ayers	Mr. Jalin Sead
District B:	Mr. Dajuan Wiggins	Ms. Darlene Young
District C:	Ms. Nicole Eaddy	Ms. Anne Wennerstrand
District D:	Ms. Heather Dunn	Mr. Douglas W. Sutton
District E:	Mr. James Frayer	Ms. Lisa Shanahan

At Roll Call there were fifteen (15) Common Councilmembers present. A quorum was present.

Also present were Mayor, Harry Rilling; Assistant City Clerk, Esther Murillo and Corporation Counsel, Mario Coppola.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: March 11, 2025

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 11, 2025 MEETING**.

Page 6, under **Consent Calendar**: please change the following from:

Ms. Smyth announced that Mr. Lohan would be reading this evening's Consent Calendar.

**** MR. LOHAN MOVED THE FOLLOWING CONSENT CALENDAR**:

To: Ms. Smyth announced that Mr. Lopez would be reading this evening's Consent Calendar.

**** MR. LOPEZ MOVED THE FOLLOWING CONSENT CALENDAR**:

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (AYERS, BURNETT, DUNN, EADDY, FRAYER, GOLDSTEIN, LOPEZ, SEAD, SHANAHAN, SMYTH, SUTTON, WENNERSTRAND AND YOUNG) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER**).

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

Mr. Chris Shimko came forward and greeted the Council. He stated that he was a lifelong resident of Norwalk and involved in flag football and Youth Baseball. He was present to speak about the recent increase in fees from $10.00 to $15.00 per person. He said they try to keep the cost low and the leagues have decreased from five down to one. He noted that they had invested over $80,000 in the two fields that they use, Anastasia and Devine, along with the water bill for those fields. The fee increase last year from $5.00 to $10.00, which was a bit unexpected. He explained that the fields have not been maintained over the years and noted the best fields were the Cal Ripken field along with Anastasia and Devine fields. He noted that all the money for the fields is from the taxpayers and now they have to pay more on top of their taxes. It would cost up to $10,000 a year for 400 kids to play on the fields, which is a lot of money for a non-profit. He encouraged the Council to consider this careful and suggested delaying it a year and possibly added in a phased increase.

Mr. Tyler Fairbairn came forward to speak about the proposed baseball fee increase. He said that they understood that it was probably necessary for maintaining the fees. He explained that they start registration in January and noted that there was a $50.00 field use fee increase. He suggested that they lock in the rate for a few years. The organizations are not able to absorb the increase and have to pass it along to the players. He also asked that they let the organizations know in advance.

Mr. Vinnie Mangiacopra came forward and greeted the Council Members. He gave a brief background history of the group, which is a partnership between the Cal Ripken league and Norwalk Youth Baseball. They have three pillars: Norwalk Baseball, the parents and the City of Norwalk. He asked the Council to put the word “parents” next to all the organizations because that is who ends up paying these fees. It’s nice to make Norwalk a destination.

There was no one online who wished to address the Council at this time.

IV. MAYOR

A. RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS – None at this time.

B. MAYOR’S REMARKS

II.

Mayor Rilling announced that Norwalk was named one of the top 100 places to live in Connecticut. The City's nightlife, diversity and commute were all factors, along with the family friendly atmosphere. He thanked those who contributed to making Norwalk such a great place to live.

The Calf Pasture Skate Park was named as the best playgrounds and best play space in Fairfield County in the 2024 Daily Voice Reader's Choice Awards. It was renovated in 2023 and it has become a very popular spot for resident skaters and visitors around the area. Mayor Rilling recognized the hard work of the City employees, particularly the Parks Department.

He thanked all those who attended the Mayor's Ball on March 14th and said he believed a great time was had by all. There is a possibility that they raised more money than previous Mayor's Balls. These funds will benefit the Salvation Army and the Family and Children's Agency, which are two non-profits which provide many services to Norwalk residents.

V. COUNCIL PRESIDENT

A. RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS – None at this time.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

VI. REPORTS: DEPARTMENTS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

A. CORPORATION COUNSEL

B. BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION

Ms. Smyth announced that Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner would be reading the Consent Calendar.

**** MS. NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CONSENT CALENDAR**.

VII. COMMON COUNCIL COMMITTEES

A. FINANCE AND CLAIMS COMMITTEE

1. NARRATIVE ON TAX COLLECTIONS DATED MARCH 2025

2. MONTHLY TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS DATED FEBRUARY 2025

3. CLAIMS COMMITTEE REPORT DATED MARCH 2025

6. AUTHORIZED THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO A THREE (3)-YEAR PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH SOFTCHOICE CORPORATION, INC. FOR SQL AND WINDOWS SERVER

MAINTENANCE. THE ANNUAL AMOUNT SHALL NOT EXCEED $19,844.13, WITH A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $59,532.39. ACCOUNT # 011370-574C, CITY IT CYBERSECURITY.

7. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT FOR GRANT FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT'S LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND FOR LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM ($859,498.31 – 2025 GRANT)

8. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE THE GRANT ASSIGNMENT CERTIFICATION, SFY 2026 ASSIGNING STATE OF CONNECTICUT 13B-38BB ELDERLY AND DISABLED DEMAND RESPONSIVE MUNICIPAL GRANT PROGRAM APPORTIONED FUNDS TO OPERATION OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES COORDINATING ENTITY, NORWALK TRANSIT DISTRICT. CITY MATCH $390,000 ACCOUNT 012010- 5A0620.

9. AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE A PURCHASE ORDER TO CTL CORPORATION. FOR THE SUPPLY OF 300 CHROMEBOOKS, FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $136,800.00 ACCOUNT 09255010-5777-C0112.

B. ORDINANCE

1. APPROVE SECTION 103-14 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS; INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP (BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS).

C. RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

3. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT CLARIFYING THE LONG HISTORY OF JOINT USE OF THE CITY OF NORWALK'S PUBLICLY HELD SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND FACILITIESBETWEEN NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND ITS PTO AND PTAS AND NORWALK'S DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION; AND THIRD-PARTY USERS. AND CLARIFYING TIMING AND SITUATIONS DETERMINING PRIORITY USE. (THE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN PASSED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD AND IS AWAITING SIGNATURE BY THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT)

4. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF CALF PASTURE BEACH AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY THIRD TAXING DISTRICT FOR THEIR SUMMER CONCERT SERIES TO BE HELD ON SUNDAY, JULY 20TH AND 27TH, AUGUST 10TH, 17TH,

24TH, AND 31ST, 2025 FROM 5:00 P.M. TO 7:00 P.M. SET-UP TIME BY 3:00 P.M. SATURDAY WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 8:00 P.M. APPROXIMATELY 500 PEOPLE.

5. **AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF VETERAN'S PARK AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING GROUNDS BY TRIANGLE COMMUNITY CENTER FOR THEIR PRIDE IN THE PARK TO BE HELD ON JUNE 14TH, 2025 FROM 2:00 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M. WITH A RAIN DATE OF SUNDAY, JUNE 15TH. SET-UP TIME BY 12:00 P.M. FRIDAY, JUNE 13TH WITH TEAR-DOWN BY 12:00 P.M. MONDAY, JUNE 16TH. APPROXIMATELY 10,000 PEOPLE.**

6. **AUTHORIZE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO GRANT AN ELECTRICAL AND GAS UTILITY EASEMENT TO EVERSOURCE IN THE VICINITY OF WILLIAMS STREET, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT, FOR PURPOSES OF ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE. P&Z 8-24 REFERRAL: REFERRAL OF THE PROPOSED EASEMENT IN THE VICINITY OF WILLIAMS STREET, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT, FOR PURPOSES OF ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE, FOR REVIEW AND REPORT.**

7. **AUTHORIZE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO GRANT A TEMPORARY ELECTRICAL AND GAS UTILITY EASEMENT TO EVERSOURCE IN THE VICINITY OF MARVIN STREET, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT, FOR PURPOSES OF ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE. P&Z 8-24 REFERRAL: REFERRAL OF THE PROPOSED EASEMENT IN THE VICINITY OF MARVIN STREET, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT, FOR PURPOSES OF ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE, FOR REVIEW AND REPORT.**

8. **AUTHORIZE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO GRANT AN ELECTRICAL AND GAS UTILITY EASEMENT TO EVERSOURCE IN THE VICINITY OF CALF PASTURE BEACH ROAD, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT, FOR PURPOSES OF ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE. P&Z 8-24 REFERRAL: REFERRAL OF THE PROPOSED EASEMENT IN THE VICINITY OF CALF PASTURE BEACH ROAD, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT, FOR PURPOSES OF ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE, FOR REVIEW AND REPORT.**

9. **AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE A SOLE SOURCE PURCHASE ORDER IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $125,000 TO PLANIT GEO, FOR THE ADDITIONAL INVENTORY OF 25,000 TREES,**

FROM GRANT ACCOUNT 380000 5790 G0058.

D. COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS, OR AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY WITH CINTAS CORPORATION FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE (5) YEARS, IN THE AMOUNT OF $2,476.00 FOR YEAR ONE (1) INCREASED BY 3% FOR EACH YEAR THEREAFTER. ACCOUNT # 0120-70-5276.

2. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AGREEMENTS WITH CT STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE – NORWALK FOR HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS TO USE SPACE ON CT STATE NORWALK CAMPUS FOR THE KNOW YOUR NUMBERS HEALTH SCREENING PROGRAM ON VARIOUS DATES BETWEEN APRIL 1, 2025 AND MARCH 31, 2026.

3. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS, OR AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY WITH CARVER FOUNDATION, INC. TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE 2025 SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF $147,000. ACCOUNT NO. 012010-5A0620.

E. ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO ANY AND ALL PROJECT AUTHORIZATION LETTERS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY CONN. DOT NEEDED FOR EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS UNDER THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S URBAN ACTION GRANT (UAG) PROGRAM FOR ROUTE 53 CHESTNUT HILL ROAD SIDEWALK PROJECT.
ACCT: 0924 3750 5777 C0824
0925 3750 5777 C0824

2. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORWALK AND VHB FOR 100% DESIGN SERVICES, BID ADVERTISEMENT, AND BID ANALYSIS FOR THE ROUNDABOUT AT THE INTERSECTION OF SOUTH MAIN STREET, MEADOW STREET, WILSON AVENUE, & MEADOW STREET EXTENSION, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $377,000. ACCT: 0924 3750 5777 C0835

3. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS AND AGREEMENTS REQUIRED BY THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CT DOT) TO ACCEPT FUNDING RELATED TO THE WEST ROCKS ROAD SIDEWALK PROJECT UNDER BOTH STATE PROJECT(S) 102-365 AND 102-374.

VII. COMMON COUNCIL COMMITTEES

A. FINANCE AND CLAIMS COMMITTEE.

4. Tax Assessor Report and Resolution

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEM**

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Norwalk, acting through its Tax Assessor, makes an assessment of property taxes on motor vehicles on October 1 of each year in accordance with Sections 12-40 et. seq. of the Connecticut General Statutes;
WHEREAS, for assessment years commencing on or after October 1, 2024, any municipality may, by vote of its legislative body elect to apply the modified schedule of depreciation under Section 12-63(b)(7)(B) of the Connecticut General Statutes;
WHEREAS, the Common Council is the legislative body of the City of Norwalk;
BE IT RESOLVED, that the Common Council of the City of Norwalk hereby elects to apply the modified schedule of depreciation under Section 12-63(b)(7)(B) of the Connecticut General Statutes as amended and in effect on the date of this resolution commencing from the October 1, 2024 Grand List.

Mr. Burnett said that they were looking to approve the amount of 90% and allow them to reduce the mill rate slightly.

Mr. Schmitt said that they had been talking about this for some time and the legislature decided to allow the change the percentage from 85% to 90%. He said that the previous formula would result in a 30% reduction in revenue but this change will reduce the shortfall.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eicher asked was what would happen when a vehicle aged out to 20 years. Mr. Schmitt said that the vehicle would be charged a flat rate.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

5. Special Capital Appropriation Relating to School HVAC Grant Projects.

II.

a. Approve the allocation of $4,981,378.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds for interim funding of the State's 60% share of the project costs in compliance with State HVAC grant requirements for Brien McMahon High School HVAC Improvement project.

b. Approve the allocation of $1,996,352.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds for interim funding of the State's 60% share of the project costs in compliance with State HVAC grant requirements for Brookside Elementary School HVAC Improvement project.

c. Approve the allocation of $2,475,127.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds for interim funding of the State's 60% share of the project costs in compliance with State HVAC grant requirements for Marvin Elementary School HVAC Improvement project.

d. Approve the allocation of $1,815,319.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds for interim funding of the State's 60% share of the project costs in compliance with State HVAC grant requirements for Silvermine Elementary School HVAC Improvement project.

e. Approve the allocation of $6,395,171.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds for interim funding of the State's 60% share of the project costs in compliance with State HVAC grant requirements for Rowayton Elementary School HVAC Improvement project.

f. Approve the allocation of $3,877,126.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds for interim funding of the State's 60% share of the project costs in compliance with State HVAC grant requirements for Naramake Elementary School HVAC Improvement project.

Mr. Burnett introduced the items and explained that they needed to vote on each item separately because they were different amounts at different schools.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF $4,981,378.00 IN SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION FUNDS FOR INTERIM FUNDING OF THE STATE'S 60% SHARE OF THE PROJECT COSTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATE HVAC GRANT REQUIREMENTS FOR BRIEN MCMAHON HIGH SCHOOL HVAC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.**

Mr. Burnett said that Mr. Lo was present to speak to the item. This is not a new project for the City and they have been working on other schools in the past. The City is required to allocate and insure that both the City portion and the State fund are secure. There will be reimbursement, but the City has to cover the State's share of the project.

Mr. Lo said that Mr. Schmitt was present to talk about the financial aspect. Mr. Lo said he was present to speak about any technical questions.

Mr. Schmitt said that back in December 2023, the Council had voted to bond for these projects and this was necessary to show they had local commitment to the project. This vote is to authorize the spending of the State's share. He gave the details.

Ms. Dunn asked for clarification on Interim Funding. Mr. Schmitt said he believed it addressed the original funding that was approved to get the project started.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

b. Approve the allocation of $1,996,352.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds for interim funding of the State's 60% share of the project costs in compliance with State HVAC grant requirements for Brookside Elementary School HVAC Improvement project.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF $1,996,352.00 IN SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION FUNDS FOR INTERIM FUNDING OF THE STATE'S 60% SHARE OF THE PROJECT COSTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATE HVAC GRANT REQUIREMENTS FOR BROOKSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HVAC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

c. Approve the allocation of $2,475,127.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds for interim funding of the State's 60% share of the project costs in compliance with State HVAC grant requirements for Marvin Elementary School HVAC Improvement project.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF $2,475,127.00 IN SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION FUNDS FOR INTERIM FUNDING OF THE STATE'S 60% SHARE OF THE PROJECT COSTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATE HVAC GRANT REQUIREMENTS FOR MARVIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HVAC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

d. Approve the allocation of $1,815,319.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds for interim funding of the State's 60% share of the project costs in compliance with State HVAC grant requirements for Silvermine Elementary School HVAC Improvement project.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF $1,815,319.00 IN SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION FUNDS FOR INTERIM FUNDING OF THE STATE'S 60% SHARE OF THE PROJECT COSTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATE HVAC GRANT REQUIREMENTS FOR SILVERMINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HVAC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

e. Approve the allocation of $6,395,171.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds for interim funding of the State's 60% share of the project costs in

compliance with State HVAC grant requirements for Rowayton Elementary School HVAC Improvement project.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF $6,395,171.00 IN SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION FUNDS FOR INTERIM FUNDING OF THE STATE'S 60% SHARE OF THE PROJECT COSTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATE HVAC GRANT REQUIREMENTS FOR ROWAYTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HVAC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

f. Approve the allocation of $3,877,126.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds for interim funding of the State's 60% share of the project costs in compliance with State HVAC grant requirements for Naramake Elementary School HVAC Improvement project.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF $3,877,126.00 IN SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION FUNDS FOR INTERIM FUNDING OF THE STATE'S 60% SHARE OF THE PROJECT COSTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATE HVAC GRANT REQUIREMENTS FOR NARAMAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HVAC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Mayor Rilling commented that the public has been asking for this for a very long time and some of the schools are the location for Summer School. Even when school is in session during May and June, the temperatures can be in the 80's and 90's. When the temperatures are that high, the District has to close the schools. This will address the problem in six schools in Norwalk. Mayor Rilling thanked Senator Bob Duff and the State of Connecticut.

2. Approve Vape Shop ordinance.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE VAPE SHOP ORDINANCE**.

Ms. Shanahan then spoke about the recent proliferation of vape shops and become a troublesome issue because of confusion regarding cannabis and other safety concerns. At the request of the Police Chief, a meeting was held to strategize and to address the Police Chief's concerns. The Ordinance is the culmination of six months of work.

Ms. Shanahan then gave a brief overview of the Ordinance.

Police Chief Walsh greeted the Council. He explained that after Connecticut allowed cannabis sales, the City started to see an increase in individuals selling unregulated, unlicensed marijuana, illegal vape products, and TCH products over the counter. The State of Connecticut lacks regulatory legislation. All the police can do is arrest the individuals. Another concern is the fact that the smoke shops are being burglarized by criminal at night for these items. This ordinance will be a significant improvement and help with public safety. Often customers think that the product that they are buying has been checked and is legal. However, they have no idea where the illegal material comes from. There are items that look like candy that may not be safe to consume.

Mr. Lopez then said that this was to help the Police Department deter some of the sales of unregulated cannabis that may contain other substances such as fentanyl. This ordinance will allow the Director of Health and the Chief of Police to conduct routine inspections to make sure they are complying. There are fines with the first violation being $250, second violation within a 12 month period would be a six month suspension of a license and a third violation within 24 months would result in license revocation. He then continued to review the details of the Ordinance including the appeal process.

Mr. Lopez explained that while the Council Committee was discussing this ordinance, a younger relative of his purchased unregulated cannabis that was laced with fentanyl. That person died in his sleep due to a heart attack. The ordinance will help deter some of the criminal activity.

Ms. Smyth thanked the Committee for their work on this and expressed her condolences to Mr. Lopez. This is so very dangerous, but it takes time to move it through Committee in order to get it right.

Mr. Goldstein also thanked the Committee for their work on this. He noted that both Ms. Shanahan and Mr. Lopez had personal connections to this issue. There is a difference from illegal cannabis and legal cannabis. It is important to make sure these products are safe for everyone. He thanked Chief Walsh for bringing this forward and keeping the community safe.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner said that a small business owner had contacted her about this. He is dedicated to following the law and would like to see others also follow the law. She thanked the Committee for their work on this.

Mr. Burnett asked if this ordinance would result in additional police overtime hours. Chief Walsh said that it could be completed within the current operating budget. They have been doing this for the past two years.

Ms. Ayers said that she was opposed to this. She was happy that something has been proposed and they are trying to regulate something that has affected so many residents in a negative way. However from a legislative point of view, she felt she had not been heard. Any time that the Norwalk legislative body pass any policy or legislation, it has t financial implications. Chief Walsh said that it would not impact his department because it is part of their normal duties.

However, there are other departments that will be partnering with the police to get all this work done. The City is already strapped financially. Ms. Ayers said that they need to build in processes when they create a policy, regulation or an ordinance that has financial implications. It’s not fair to ask departments to cut their budget and then give them more work to do. Ms. Ayers said that she would be abstaining from this vote because while she supports the ordinance, she is against the process of the Council making rules and regulations that have financial implications without providing additional resources to any department.

Ms. Smyth said that the Planning and Zoning Commission was working on this issue in terms of distances from one another.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO AMEND THE POLICY, WHICH HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE CORPORATION COUNCIL:**

> **IN SECTION SIX TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING "NOT LESS THAN 60 DAYS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS CHAPTER FOR AN EXISTING ESTABLISHMENT OR FOR THE OPENING OF A NEW ESTABLISHMENT" FOLLOWING THE WORDS "CITY CLERK" IN THE FIRST LINE**.
>
> **IN ARTICLE FOUR – THE EFFECTIVE DATE, LAST SENTENCE SHOULD SAY "THIS CHAPTER TAKES EFFECTIVE ON AUGUST 1, 2025**.

Ms. Shanahan said that the effect of these small amendments will give the staff and the applicants a bit more time to create the application form and then have the application filed. It would effectively start on October 1st and the applications should ready by then.

**** THE MOTION TO AMEND PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNETT, DUNN EADDY, FRAYER, GOLDSTEIN, LOPEZ, NIEDZIELSKI-EICHER, SEAD, SHANAHAN, SMYTH, SUTTON, WENNERSTRAND, WIGGINS AND YOUNG) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (AYERS)**.

Ms. Young asked what would happen to those who did not fill out an application. Ms. Shanahan said that they would be informed that they were in violation and if they continue not to comply, they would be shut down. Ms. Young said that this ordinance should be assigned to the Public Safety Committee. They should receive regular updates. Ms. Dunn agreed.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED THE VAPE SHOP ORDINANCE AS AMENDED.**
**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE VAPE SHOP ORDINANCE AS AMENDED PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNETT, DUNN EADDY, FRAYER, GOLDSTEIN, LOPEZ, NIEDZIELSKI-EICHER, SEAD, SHANAHAN, SMYTH, SUTTON, WENNERSTRAND, WIGGINS AND YOUNG) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (AYERS)**.

C. RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

1. Approve the fee adjustments for the following fees based on a Fees and Charges Study completed by MGT Consultants where they measured the market demand; and Cost factors in conducting Recreation Programs activities and Uses of the Recreation and Parks Facilities.

**** MS. YOUNG MOVED THE ITEM.**

Ms. Young said that a consultant group did a study to see if the fees were comparable. She said that her concern involved the timing and the Council Members need to think about the impact on the residents.

Mr. Stowers came forward to address the Council. He said that he had looked at the scientific background of raising the fees. The survey compared the region and a cost analysis was done. He also mentioned the price elasticity. He then reviewed the details of various programs and the rate of return for these programs. After reviewing the recommendations of raising the fees between 5 to 20%, the Department decided to stay between 5 and 15%. He said that they had held a Public Hearing and asked many of the major participators about increasing the parking fees and other fees. The information in the packets is the result of what was recommended in the study and would be for the spring of 2026.

Mr. Stowers then reviewed the increases that the leagues would be presented with. They will be asking for $350 for the use of the field for a year.

Mr. Goldberg asked for clarification on when the fees would begin for the youth sports to the beginning of the calendar year 2026.

Ms. Ayers asked why they were amending something that was included in the original agenda items. Mayor Rilling said that it would be clearer if they have a date in the ordinance.

Ms. Dunn asked if all the fees would take effect July 1, 2025 with the exception of the Youth Field Use fees, which will begin January 1, 2026. Mr. Stowers agreed.

Ms. Smyth asked how long the Council should expect these fees to be in effect. Mr. Stowers said that an annual increase would be expected to keep up with inflation.

Mr. Sead said that while it was good to consider what the market could bear, these were tax payers that would be paying these increased fees. They are already paying more in taxes and the grocery bill while their paycheck is not increasing. The cost may be to an organization, but it will be paid by the families.

Ms. Ayers thanked Mr. Stowers for all his hard work and noted that Norwalk had been very behind on their fees schedule. She said it was good for him to have brought this to the Council's attention. If they increase the fees, they have to make sure the fields show the improvements and upkeep. However, they have to be aware of who will be paying the fees. She felt that the City needs a Parks Foundation to help with fund raising.

Ms. Dunn thanked the baseball leagues who have contributed an enormous amount of money to the upkeep of the fields. She thanked them for their contributions.

Ms. Dunn said that more budget funding should be invested in having a grant writer to help explore opportunities.

Ms. Dunn said that it was her understanding that the summer camp fees were a sliding scale fee. Mr. Stowers said that this was so. Ms. Dunn said that this was important for families to know.

Ms. Eaddy said that she wanted to thank Mr. Stowers for being open to the concerns.

Mr. Ken Hughes said that he wanted to clarify since there were some fees included such as parking at Calf Pasture, the Vets boats at the Marina, they need to know if the July 1st start date would be for the sports fees or for all the fees. It was stated that all fees were starting July 1st and the youth fees were starting in January 2026. Mr. Hughes said that the beach parking fees will start on May 15th. Mr. Stowers said that they avoided raising the beach parking fees too much because it would result in people parking in the neighborhoods.

Mr. Goldstein said that Ms. Ayers was correct about the fact that there was no date on the original item and that would give the Department more discretion to handle these various outliers. He said that the Council should make an exception for Youth Sports for January 2026. Discussion followed.

**** MS. YOUNG MOVED TO AMEND THE AGENDA ITEM C1 - APPROVE THE FEE ADJUSTMENTS FOR THE FOLLOWING FEES BASED ON A FEES AND CHARGES STUDY COMPLETED BY MGT CONSULTANTS WHERE THEY MEASURED THE MARKET DEMAND; AND COST FACTORS IN CONDUCTING RECREATION PROGRAMS ACTIVITIES AND USES OF THE RECREATION AND PARKS FACILITIES BY INCLUDING "WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE YOUTH SPORTS FIELD USE FEE TO BE IMPLEMENTED ON JANUARY 1, 2026**".

Mr. Sead thanked Mr. Stowers for all his hard work.

Ms. Dunn asked about holding an event in late June. Mr. Stowers said that the events that have been approved has already paid their fees.

**** THE MOTION TO AMEND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

2. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to sign an agreement with the Friends of Norwalk Dogs whose mission is to represent Norwalk residents with dogs and to collaborate with the City's Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) to preserve and improve current-off leash dog parks; and working with (RPD) in finding ways to develop more leashed and off-leashed space in Norwalk for dogs; establish communication between Norwalk residents with dogs and the City; and fund raise to provide needed amenities in dog Parks named herein.

**** MS. YOUNG MOVED THE ITEM**.

Ms. Young noted that the more that there are new development, the more Norwalk becomes more dog friendly. Mayor said that he would not be fund raising for the dogs.

Ms. Smyth thanked Mr. Stowers for this. She asked for clarification on the language. Mr. Stowers said that they had started with Taylor Farm and then decided to include Oyster Shell Park and now the Cranbury residents have expressed interest also. A group is being formed to take on the advocacy of dogs in Norwalk. Mr. Stowers noted that he was from Seattle which has more dogs than children and he can see the need when there is a growing population. Now there are three places where people can walk their dogs.

Ms. Dunn said that she appreciated having the poop bags at the parks but hoped that this would not mean more asphalt parking area.

Ms. Young said there have been a lot of things over the years that Recreation and Parks could have been doing. She said that Mr. Stowers has address many of the issues and now the Department is actually generating revenue. This is what they need to keep the fields in good condition and recreational spaces. She added that they do need a Foundation so that everyone can help and allow everyone to participate.

Mayor Rilling suggested that they need to have scholarships for young people.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

E. ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

4. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all documents to amend the Plan of Conservation and Development to implement the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Action Plan.

**** MR. GOLDSTEIN MOVED THE ITEM.**

Mr. Goldstein said that one of the biggest challenge in Norwalk was affordability. He then gave a brief overview of the recent Housing Assessment that came out last June He noted that 38% of the renters and 50% of homeowners earn less than $50,000. The median cost of a home increased from $413,000 in 2015 5o $700,000 in 2023. 75% of the teachers, firefighters and police don't live in Norwalk and nearly 40% of Norwalk's Households pay over 30% of their household income towards housing costs. Mr. Goldstein said that the Trump administration was unlikely to help.

He introduced two people who have been very crucial to this effort, Michelle Andrzejewski and Steve Kleppin from Planning and Zoning. He noted that Ms. Niedzielski-Eicher has also taken a leading role in this effort.

Mr. Goldstein said that Ms. Andrzejewski would be presenting the Housing Action Plan to the Council.

Ms. Andrzejewski then displayed a PowerPoint presentation on screen and narrated the slide deck. Some of the action items included: Zoning amendments for 2 bedroom units counting as 1.5 wf units. 80% SMI increase to 90% SMI for recertifying tenants; bonus for construction of units between 80% and 90% SMI.

Legislative proposal were to address food deserts, home ownership for condominiums; and Tax Sale to Home ownership.

Ms. Andrzejewski also spoke about discussions regarding the Community Land Trusts, Tax Incentives, Affordable Housing Account and AHP Tracker.

Ms. Ms. Niedzielski-Eicher said that anyone interested should come to the Affordable Housing Ad Hoc Committee meetings. They will be looking at Tax Incentives and how that might work. She is looking to investigating what State, Federal and local funding is currently available for affordable housing. She noted that most of the funding comes through Federal Tax Credits, which will be a long term concern for the Council. The data that was collected was very helpful and provided some very specific and detailed information on both rental and home ownership properties. The lack of affordable housing in the City may be feeding into the traffic problems that the Council hears about regularly. She said that nationally, no one has enough housing, but it is a particular problem in the Northeast. When there is not enough supply, the price goes up. She said that the ad hoc committee would appreciate new suggestions and ideas.

Ms. Dunn said that there were zero metric in the plan and she noted that the State requires them to create this plan. Currently there is 14% affordable housing in the City. She asked how much more affordable housing they were looking for. She also wondered what the effect would be if Norwalk had 25% affordable housing. She added that one fifth of the Norwalk population were seniors and that this should be a concern. There are unintended consequences and if they shift the tax burden due to tax breaks, where is that burden going to shift to?

Ms. Dunn said that while a majority of teachers, firefighters and police may not live in the City, only 22% of the population commutes to NYC. Young people need access to housing also. This would involve moving seniors into senior housing and the young families can move into homes. It’s important to create more wealth and freedom rather than having people paying more rents that they can barely afford. She said she doesn’t like the plan and will not be voting for it.

Mr. Sead said that affordable housing was not the total answer. He noted that affordable housing was not the quilt, but simply one of the pieces. He felt that this would be a start. It’s not just a Norwalk issue, and it isn’t perfect, but it is a start.

Mr. Lopez spoke about the seniors and how it was important to keep them independent. He went on to give a number of percentages and other data about affordable housing. Most of the units in the City are not affordable for those who are making less than 80% of the State SMI. He went on to speak about the metrics and pointed out that this would limit the City's ability to respond to changes in construction costs or other economic factors.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eicher said that POCD is not to be an economic plan but is a vision, a starting place. This plan is just to help identify how they want to move forward. This will be complex conversations. It helps clarify the resources that are already in place and where are the opportunities. What are people willing to give up. It needs to be part of every conversation they have. Right now, the Capital budget does not fund affordable housing in the City. They mostly rely on Federal tax credits. Now is the time to get these plans started and the discussions going.

Ms. Ayers said that she was not very happy with the plan because she felt the scope was too narrow. When they say "affordable housing", it need to be defined. What is affordable for her, may not be affordable for her colleague. While this plan will help them focus on issues, they need to be clear about the difference between "units" and "housing". While the city is further down the road than when she began, it still needs work. If people want something, they have to give something. Constituents keep saying "No more apartments!" but they need to come to meetings so they can tell the Council what they would like to see. What would they like to see? A few years ago, there was a discussion about tiny homes. However, the issue is today, not down the road.

It will also be important to distinguish between "low income" and "affordable". She explained that she might be able to earn six figures, but it might not be affordable. It is time to clean up the language. For many people, when they say "affordable housing", they think public housing. The police, fire and teachers all deserve affordable housing, and there is confusion about work force housing. The people that work at Stop N Shop deserve affordable housing, also. She said that Norwalk needs everyone's help to build a community that is able to grow but doesn't stifle the community. Norwalk needs home ownership. It's not about units and apartments, it's about homes and houses. They should want people to buy homes in Norwalk and invest in the community.

Mr. Goldstein said that this was an incredible discussion and this should be a focus for the Council and the entire City because it is the single biggest challenge facing Norwalk today. He said that a number of Council Members have lobbied at the state level about this issue. It is not a partisan issue at all. He said that he was grateful to his colleagues and thanked Ms. Andrzejewski for her work along with the Planning and Zoning Board.

Mayor Rilling said that Norwalk is growing, but cautioned people about going up more than a few stories.

**** THE MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS TO AMEND THE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTION PLAN PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (AYERS BURNETT, EADDY, FRAYER, GOLDSTEIN, LOPEZ, NIEDZIELSKI-EICHER, SEAD, SHANAHAN, SMYTH,**

SUTTON, WENNERSTRAND, WIGGINS AND YOUNG) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (DUNN).

VIII. RESOLUTIONS FROM COMMON COUNCIL

There were no resolutions from Common Council members this evening.

IX. MOTIONS POSTPONED TO A SPECIFIC DATE

There were no motions postponed to a specific date this evening.

X. SUSPENSION OF RULES

There were no suspensions of the rules this evening.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

** Ms. Young
MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

There was no further discussion, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

ATTEST:________________________
Esther Murillo, Assistant City Clerk