

**JOINT PUBLIC HEARING WITH MAYOR, CFO, BET CHAIR, COUNCIL  
PRESIDENT, CC COMMITTEE CHAIRS, BOE CHAIR, AND PLANNING  
COMMISSION CHAIR  
ON THE FYE 2025-2026 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2024  
CITY HALL COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
AND ZOOM VIRTUAL TELECONFERENCE**

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Members of the public who wish to provide "live comments" can attend in person in the Common council Chamber, use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the "raise your hand indicator" and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. 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. Please email Tom Ellis at [tellis@norwalkct.gov](mailto:tellis@norwalkct.gov) at least six hours in advance of the meeting start time to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

Public should watch via the youtube link to the City of Norwalk CT is  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRcAj0a6fNzo2prQ6LhSjVA>  
Listen mode only please dial 1 (646) 558-8656 Webinar ID: 854 5823 4294  
To take part in public participation:  
Webinar ID: 854 5823 4294  
Zoom Link: <https://norwalkct-org.zoom.us/j/85458234294>

**ATTENDANCE:** Ed Abrams, Chair, Board of Estimate and Taxation; Gregory Burnett, Chair, Finance Claims Committee; Harry Rilling, Mayor; Louis Shulman, Chair, Planning and Zoning Commission; Darlene Young, Common Council President

Kara Baekey, Secretary Diana Carpio, Chair, Norwalk Board of Education; Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent of Schools; Sheri McCready Pritchett, Vice Chair, Norwalk Board of Education

STAFF: Thomas Ellis, Director of Management and Budgets; Jared Schmitt, Chief Financial Officer, City of Norwalk

Lunda Asmani, Chief Financial Officer, Norwalk Board of Education

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Burnett called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

Mr. Burnett called the Roll as indicated above.

### **III. FINANCE DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER OF NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRESENTATIONS:**

#### **a. City -- Guidelines for Presentation of FYE 2026 Operating and Capital Budgets**

Mr. Burnett reviewed the guidelines for this evening's public hearing.

Mr. Burnett invited Mayor Rilling and Dr. Estrella to give opening remarks.

Mayor Rilling said he welcomed comments from the residents. Dr. Estrella said she looked forward to a fruitful dialogue so they can have a budget that supports the students.

Mr. Burnett introduced the topic.

Mr. Schmitt shared his screen and highlighted the Key Norwalk Budget Highlights FYE 2024 (preliminary unaudited results). He also highlighted the tentative FYE 2026 Operating Budget Calendar and the Key Issues Impacting the FYE 2026 Budget.

#### **b. Board of Education / NPS -- Key Issues Impacting FYE 2026 Operating and Capital Budgets**

Ms. McCready Pritchett offered opening remarks and acknowledged members of the Board of Education.

Mr. Asmani shared his screen and highlighted the General Fund Budget Summary the Board of Education Budget Process, Key FY2024 Achievements and District Performance Index for Connecticut Cities with populations of 70,000 and over. Mr. Asmani highlighted the Norwalk Public Schools HVAC Project by the numbers.

Mr. Asmani highlighted the two new school groundbreaking. He reviewed funding for Norwalk High School/P-Tech (\$239 million total with \$191 million from the State of Connecticut and the balance through the City) and for the new South Norwalk School (\$76 million total with \$39 million from the State of Connecticut and the balance from the City). He then looked at fy 26.

#### **IV. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FYE 2026 OPERATING BUDGET**

Mr. Burnett explained that the objective tonight is to hear from the public how it relates to the upcoming fiscal year budget. He reviewed the budget timeline and announced that the next public hearing would take place in January 2025.

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

Mr. Burnett announced that those residents who submitted e-mails will have those letters entered into the minutes. He reviewed the public hearing procedures.

Ms. Daisy Sebastian spoke about supporting the dual language program at Silvermine Elementary School.

Ms. Sasha spoke about supporting the dual language program at Silvermine Elementary School.

Ms. Becca Stolt requested the addition of funding and staff to the Transportation, Mobility and Parking department's budget.

Ms. Mary Smith spoke about supporting the dual language programs at Silvermine Elementary School and West Rocks Middle School. She also asked about taxes and supporting the Board of Education.

Ms. Corrina Malik spoke about supporting the dual language program at Silvermine Elementary School.

Mr. Nick Kantor expressed gratitude for all the HVAC improvements and asked to include Wolfpit Elementary School. He also asked for improvements on the path to Wolfpit Elementary School.

Ms. Elisa Pragliu requested funding for special education at the Norwalk Early Childhood Center. She said that it is a disservice to the students to have a lottery for the program. She also asked for funding to renovate the playground.

Ms. Audrey Cozzara requested funding for more employees in the Transportation, Parking and Mobility Department. She also asked for funding to connect the bike/walk trails and for public transportation.

Mr. James Faels asked for funding to transit oriented projects such as paths and crosswalks. He said they need to be mindful about how climate change impacts the City, specifically with road flooding. He also spoke in support of funding HVAC projects.

Ms. Megan spoke about supporting the dual language program at Silvermine Elementary School.

Ms. Christina Randall spoke in support of funding Transportation, Parking and Mobility projects and complete streets.

Ms. Jessica Hopkins spoke about supporting the dual language program at Silvermine Elementary School.

Mr. Tanner Thompson spoke in support of funding more employees in the Transportation, Parking and Mobility department and of funding bike trails.

Ms. Angela Gerado spoke about supporting the teachers of the dual language program at Silvermine Elementary School.

Ms. Xena King spoke about supporting the teachers of the dual language program at Silvermine Elementary School.

Mr. Jay Sacker spoke about supporting the dual language program at Silvermine Elementary School.

Mr. Jack Myers spoke in support of funding complete streets and of funding additional Transportation, Mobility and Parking staff. He also encouraged more room for projects surrounding biking and parks.

Ms. Liz Leaderman spoke in support of funding for complete streets.

Mr. Paul Fox urged funding for more staff at the transportation mobility and parking department he also the need for additional bus infrastructure. He noted that the Bike Walk Commission is looking for a grant to create a trail between Norwalk and Darien. He asked the Common Council to include the matching funds amount in the budget.

Mr. Jack Pavia talked about expanding transportation options. He also advocated for more coordination between Norwalk and State delegations.

Ms. Diane Lauricella said they need to look and see how to fund these initiatives and determine needs over wants. She said they need to look at mor revenue that is not on the backs of the public. Ms. Lauricella advocated for a full time, experienced grants department. She said they need to update enforcement at all departments and reinstate the Facilities Committee, look at the Storm Water Authority, a new website and how to handle open space. She urged reducing energy and waste by 20%.

Mr. Jayden Witmore spoke about his experience as an avid bike rider. He said the lanes are too thin and come close to clipping him. He urged allocating more funding for the transportation mobility and parking department, complete streets and for a bus network with more stops for students.

Mr. Jeremy Leone urged additional funding for sidewalks.

Ms. Alysa Petet asked for funding to support the teachers and to keep electrical devices out of the classrooms and to keep guns and weapons out of the schools.

Ms. Ana Tabachnec asked that the schools be fully funded, fund enforcement, fund Parks and Recreation especially lighting at the pickleball courts.

Ms. Andrew Sinclair urged funding for transportation mobility and parking initiatives.

Ms. Sydney Thompson urged funding for transportation mobility and parking initiatives.

Ms. Iliana Zuniga asked to make education a priority, fund and complete sidewalk installation and explore sustainable cost savings.

Mr. Richard Bonenfant advocated for figuring out a way to keep taxes low, such as by phasing out the Enterprise Zones. He urged looking out for the people who pay the bills.

Mr. John Levin said he was elated to learn about the dual language program at Silvermine Elementary School. He said he likes the good things going on in the City that the taxpayers can be proud of.

Ms. Sally Martinez spoke about supporting the dual language program at Silvermine Elementary School. She also spoke in support of funding sidewalks.

There were no other members of the public who wished to comment.

## **VI. DISCUSSION**

Mr. Burnett asked if members of the panel had any comments.

Mr. Shulman noted this is a new process and he will bring this information back to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Ms. Young said she was excited that this part of the budget process is in the Charter. She noted this is true transparency and is happy the Charter Revision implemented this. Ms. Young said there is a calendar of meetings that will allow the residents to be engaged in the process.

Ms. Carpio said she was grateful for the Charter Revision because they get to start the process earlier. She expressed gratitude to the public who spoke tonight. She said the Board and the City need to hear what is important to the public.

Mayor Rilling acknowledged Mr. Burnett's birthday today.

Mr. Burnett said this is the beginning of the process as they craft the new budget.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. YOUNG MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further discussion, and the joint public hearing was closed at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi  
Telesco Secretarial Services



City of Norwalk, Connecticut

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# Public Hearing – FYE 2026 Operating & Capital Budgets

September 23, 2024

Presented by Jared Schmitt, CFO



# City of Norwalk, Connecticut

Public Hearing

September 23, 2024

City of Norwalk, CT (including Board of Ed/NPS)  
FY2024 Preliminary Unaudited Budget vs. Actual  
As of June 30, 2024  
(presented September 23, 2024)

| DRAFT<br>PRELIMINARY<br>UNAUDITED | (presented September 23, 2024)  |                                    |                                                      |                                                        |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|                                   | FINAL Revised<br>2024<br>BUDGET | Preliminary<br>Unaudited<br>Actual | Favorable/<br><Unfavorable><br>Variance              | Comments                                               |
|                                   | Revenues                        |                                    |                                                      |                                                        |
|                                   | Taxes, Interest & Lien Fees     | \$379,605,821                      | \$376,201,146                                        | Settlements of assessment challenges (2018 Grand List) |
|                                   | Intergovernmental               | \$25,301,225                       | \$23,326,931                                         |                                                        |
| Licenses, Permit Fees, & Other    | \$11,258,334                    | \$14,725,376                       | Building Permit Fees (+1.6MIM), Conveyance (+ 0.5MM) |                                                        |
| Drawdown of "Rainy Day Fund"      | \$6,000,000                     | \$0                                |                                                      |                                                        |
| Investment Income                 | \$1,500,000                     | \$7,521,654                        | Increased balances and higher interest rates         |                                                        |
| TOTAL REVENUES                    | \$423,665,380                   | \$421,775,107                      |                                                      |                                                        |

|                                |                      |                      |                    |                                                          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Expenses</b>                |                      |                      |                    |                                                          |
| General Government             | \$6,864,743          | \$6,101,261          | \$763,482          |                                                          |
| Community Services             | \$11,436,124         | \$10,047,030         | \$1,389,094        | Professional and Contractual services, vacancies         |
| Economic & Comm Development    | \$5,741,978          | \$5,271,716          | \$470,262          | Vacancies                                                |
| Employee Benefits              | \$26,613,005         | \$26,490,459         | \$122,546          |                                                          |
| Pension Funds                  | \$18,118,000         | \$18,118,788         | (\$788)            |                                                          |
| Police                         | \$29,623,877         | \$28,896,101         | \$727,776          | Overtime savings                                         |
| Fire                           | \$23,281,516         | \$21,258,436         | \$2,023,080        | Vacancies; salaries down, overtime up less than salaries |
| DPW (Ops / Public Works / Rec) | \$29,757,454         | \$28,103,620         | \$1,653,834        | Low salt usage; fleet usage; vacancies                   |
| Board of Education / NPS       | \$227,007,655        | \$227,007,655        | \$0                |                                                          |
| Contingency                    | \$455,488            | \$0                  | \$455,488          |                                                          |
| Finance                        | \$8,516,678          | \$7,863,685          | \$652,993          | Vacancies; Revaluation expense savings; IT savings       |
| Transfers Out                  | \$40,357,823         | \$40,357,823         | \$0                |                                                          |
| Other                          | \$87,000             | \$85,209             | \$1,791            |                                                          |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>      | <b>\$427,861,341</b> | <b>\$419,601,783</b> | <b>\$8,259,558</b> |                                                          |
| <b>SURPLUS/&lt;DEFICIT&gt;</b> | <b>(\$4,195,961)</b> | <b>\$2,173,324</b>   | <b>\$6,369,285</b> |                                                          |

Total Revised Budget includes \$4,195,961 of rollovers from FY2023.



# City of Norwalk, Connecticut

Public Hearing

September 23, 2024

## Key Norwalk Budget Highlights FYE 2024 (preliminary unaudited results)

- Norwalk maintained its Aaa/AAA/ Bond Ratings with Moody's and Standard & Poor's Rating Services
- No drawdown of Rainy Day Fund
- FYE 2024 Revenues minus Expenditures generated \$2.2MM surplus (prior to rollovers to FYE 2025)
- Tax revenues (\$3.4MM) due to settlements of assessment challenges (2018 reval), offset by revenue from biennial Tax Sale
- Building Permit Fees exceeded final budget by \$1.6MM, Investment Income exceeded final budget by \$6.0MM
- Expenditures for Fire Dept (\$2.0MM), Dept of Public Works (\$1.7MM) and Community Services (\$1.4MM) came in below final budget



# City of Norwalk, Connecticut

## FYE 2026 Operating Budget Calendar – Tentative

Page 1 of 2

| Date                                   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mon 9/23/2024                          | First Public Hearing of FYE 2026 Operating Budget process                                                                                                                                                             |
| Mon 10/28/2024                         | Finance Department distributes pro forma Operating Budget packages to departments and agencies.                                                                                                                       |
| Mon 10/28/2024<br>to<br>Mon 11/25/2024 | City departments and grant agencies prepare and file their Operating Budget requests, including goals and objectives, with the Office of Management & Budgets. City depts enter line items requests in MUNIS.         |
| Mon 12/5/2024 to<br>Fri 12/20/2024     | Finance Department staff meets with each city department and city grant agencies on a staggered weekly schedule to review requests.                                                                                   |
| Fri 12/13/2023                         | Board of Education files its Operating Budget request with the Chief Financial Officer.                                                                                                                               |
| Wed 1/8/2025                           | Board of Education reviews Operating Budget with Finance Department.                                                                                                                                                  |
| Thu 1/9/2025                           | Public Hearing -- Joint Finance Committee - Finance & Claims (City) and BoE Finance Committees                                                                                                                        |
| Mon 2/10/2025                          | Chief Financial Officer prepares and submits the Recommended Operating Budget and tax levy in addition to the department requests to the Board of Estimate & Taxation.                                                |
| Tue 2/11/2025                          | Chief Financial Officer prepares and submits the Recommended Operating Budget and tax levy in addition to the department requests to the Common Council.                                                              |
| Thu 2/13/2025                          | Public Hearing followed by Chief Financial Officer prepares and submits the Recommended Operating Budget and tax levy in addition to the department requests to the Finance & Claims Committee of the Common Council. |
| Fri 2/16/2025                          | Publish recommended budget, tax levy and Notice of Annual Meeting of the Board of Estimate & Taxation in local newspaper.                                                                                             |



# City of Norwalk, Connecticut

## FYE 2026 Operating Budget Calendar – Tentative

Page 2 of 2

| Date                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Tue 2/25/2025 *</i>           | Common Council establishes Operating Budget Cap at regular Common Council meeting.                                                                                                        |
| <i>Tue 3/4/2025 *</i>            | Common Council establishes Operating Budget Cap (final day on or before) at special Common Council meeting if necessary                                                                   |
| Wed 3/4/2025 to<br>Wed 3/20/2025 | Board of Estimate & Taxation conducts meetings to hear from City agencies and other interested parties concerning Operating Budget alterations and formulates tentative Operating Budget. |
| Wed 3/26/2025                    | Board of Estimate & Taxation holds Public Hearing on the Tentative Operating Budget.                                                                                                      |
| Fri 3/28/2025                    | Board of Estimate & Taxation completes its review of the Operating Budget and forwards its Tentative Operating Budget to Common Council.                                                  |
| Tue 4/8/2025                     | Common Council's Regular Meeting sets final cap, but not later than 4/16/2025. Only needed if any change from the vote in late February.                                                  |
| Wed 4/16/2025                    | Publish the tentative Operating Budget and tax levy.                                                                                                                                      |
| Mon 5/5/2025                     | Board of Estimate & Taxation sets Final Operating Budget and tax levy.                                                                                                                    |

**\* Tentative date**



# City of Norwalk, Connecticut

## FYE 2026 Capital Budget Calendar

Page 1 of 2

| Date                               | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mon 9/23/2024                      | First Public Hearing of FYE 2026 Capital Budget process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Fri 11/1/2024                      | Finance Department distributes budget packages to departments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Tue 11/19/2024 to<br>Fri 12/4/2024 | Departments file budget requests on staggered deadlines, including goals and objectives, with the Office of Management & Budgets.<br>Depts enter requests and POCDs in eBudgetBook (available on the City's intranet.)                                                                                    |
| Fri 12/27/2024                     | Board of Education submits its Capital Budget requests to the Finance Department.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Wed 1/8/2025                       | Finance and meet with Board of Education to review their Capital Budget Requests.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Fri 1/24/2025<br>(on or before)    | Chief Financial Officer compiles and transmits requests together with recommendations to the Common Council, Board of Estimate & Taxation, and the Planning & Zoning Commission. Recommendations will include a report of the impact on the debt service in the Operating Budget and various debt ratios. |
| Thu 2/6/2025                       | Planning & Zoning Commission conducts public hearings on Department requests.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Thu 2/13/2025                      | Chief Financial Officer presents Capital Recommendation to Planning & Zoning Commission (Regular meeting).                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Fri 3/4/2025<br>(on or before)     | Planning & Zoning Commission transmits its recommended Capital Budget to the Mayor (alignment with PoCD)                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Tue 3/14/2025<br>(on or before)    | Mayor completes his review and transmits recommended Capital Budget to the Board of Estimate & Taxation.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



# City of Norwalk, Connecticut

## FYE 2026 Capital Budget Calendar

Page 2 of 2

| Date                                  | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tue 4/1/2025<br>(on or before Apr 1)  | Board of Estimate & Taxation, after incorporating therein such recommendations as the Mayor and the Planning & Zoning Commission may make, will forward the same to the Common Council with an expression in writing of its judgment with respect to the amount of funds it is proposing to expend in such Capital Budget and the effect such expenditures will, in its opinion, have upon the operating expenses and credit of the City.                                                                                                 |
| Thu 4/3/2025<br>(on or before Apr 15) | Common Council Economic & Community Development Committee review with Departments. (Regular meeting 7:00 pm).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Tue 4/8/2025<br>(on or before Apr 15) | Common Council may approve, reject or reduce any item in the Capital Budget by a vote of the majority of its members, present and voting, or may, by a vote of a majority of its members present and voting, reinstate therein any item which may have been previously disapproved. The Common Council shall thereupon approve the same as amended on or before the 15th day of April in each year, when it shall be certified to the Comptroller. Any item not rejected or reduced by the Common Council shall be deemed approved by it. |
| Fri 5/9/2025<br>(on or before May 1)  | Chief Financial Officer shall transmit to the Common Council and the Board of Estimate & Taxation recommendations with respect to the most feasible and economical measures to finance the Capital Budget for the upcoming fiscal year.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Tue 5/13/2025                         | Chief Financial Officer submits Bonding resolution to the Common Council.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |



## Key Issues Impacting FYE 2026 Budget

- Exhaustion of Federal ARPA Funds (resulting in lower Intergovernmental Revenues)
- Ongoing inflation with possible increase in expenses
- Year 2 of 4-year phase-in of Property Revaluation
- State legislature changes to motor vehicle valuation/taxation
- Negotiation of New Labor Agreements with all City Unions (previous agreements ended June 30, 2024)
- Possible reduction in Investment Income as Federal Reserve moves towards a rate cutting environment
- OPEB unfunded accrued liability is gone. We are essentially only reserving for normal costs in the future.

# Public Hearing- FYE 2026 Operating & Capital Budgets

Lunda Asmani, CPFO  
BOE Chief Financial Officer  
September 23, 2024



# General Fund Budget Summary

## GENERAL FUND SUMMARY

City General Fund Contribution

### Total General Fund Revenue

Salaries

Benefits

Professional & Technical Services

Property Services

Other Services

Supplies & Materials

Equipment

Other Objects

Transfers

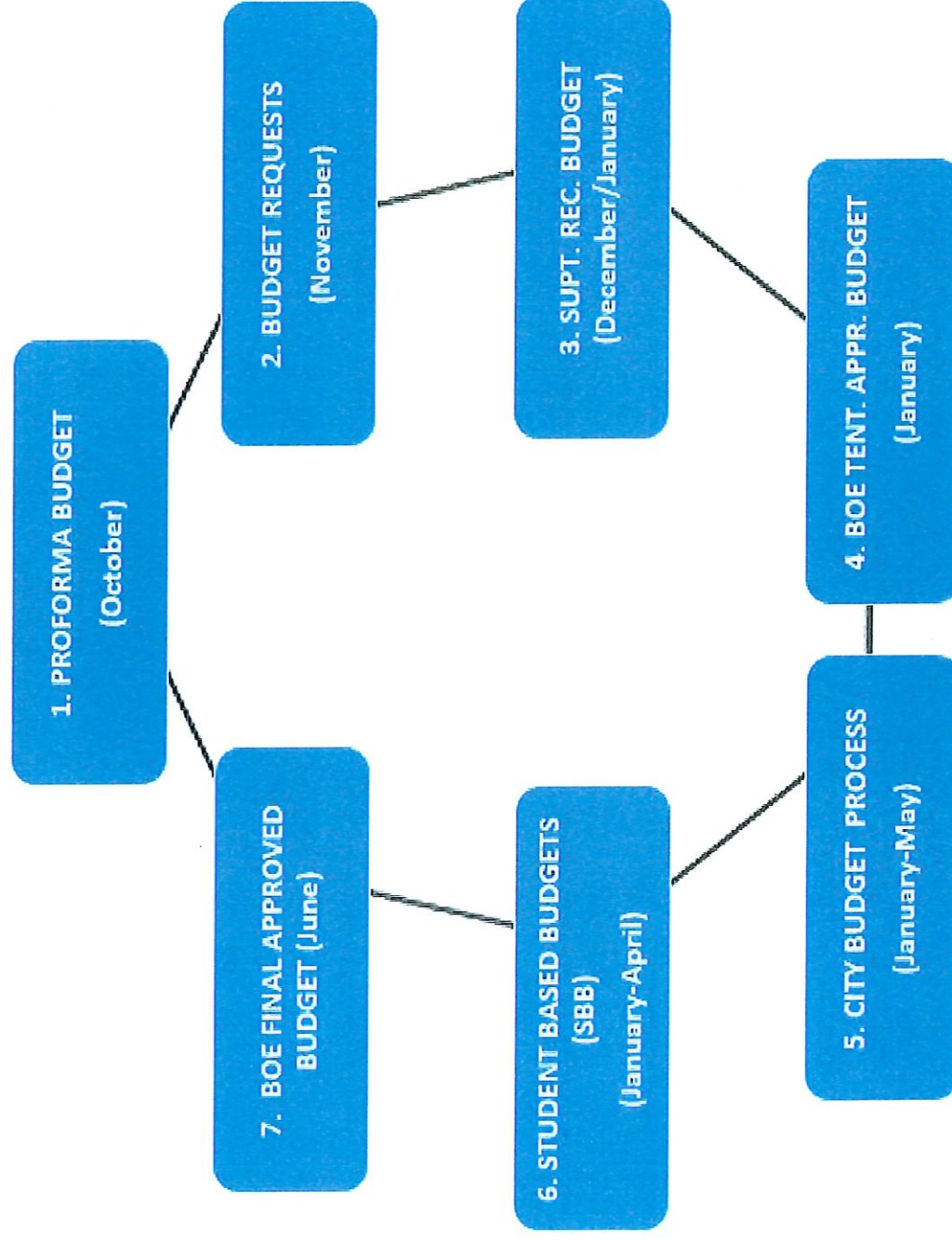
Adjustments

### Total General Fund Expenditures

| 2021-22<br>ACTUAL  | 2022-23<br>ACTUAL  | 2023-24<br>REVISED<br>BUDGET | 2023-24<br>ACTUAL  |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 208,913,949        | 217,822,848        | 226,850,898                  | 226,623,746        |
| <b>208,913,949</b> | <b>217,822,848</b> | <b>226,850,898</b>           | <b>226,623,746</b> |
| 126,320,819        | 128,799,077        | 140,611,421                  | 140,581,320        |
| 35,549,178         | 38,935,755         | 36,227,538                   | 34,978,073         |
| 7,768,305          | 9,012,912          | 7,829,416                    | 7,921,625          |
| 7,544,751          | 8,453,945          | 8,527,949                    | 9,607,356          |
| 18,127,718         | 21,981,528         | 23,988,949                   | 23,934,852         |
| 10,153,615         | 7,948,114          | 7,553,720                    | 7,551,854          |
| 3,134,427          | 2,497,842          | 1,975,783                    | 1,912,990          |
| 172,949            | 193,676            | 136,121                      | 135,675            |
| -                  | -                  | -                            | -                  |
| 142,187            | -                  | -                            | -                  |
| <b>208,913,949</b> | <b>217,822,848</b> | <b>226,850,898</b>           | <b>226,623,746</b> |

**FY24 Non- Lapsing Fund Carryover - CGS 10-248 (a) \$60,900**

# BOE Budget Process



# KEY FY24 Achievements

- Graduation rates for the Class of 2023 rose to 91.6%, up from 91.1% in 2022, with multilingual learners showing the greatest improvement.
- Future Ready Programs (FRP), including Twilight and Virtual Academy, serve about 100 students, offering equitable access to personalized education through direct instruction and distance learning. Most assignments are project-based, positively impacting Norwalk's graduation rate.
- For five consecutive years, the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation has recognized Norwalk Public Schools as one of the Best Communities for music education, honoring districts with a strong commitment to music education.

# District Performance Index (DPI) for Connecticut Cities

## Population over 70,000

Outperformed peer City school districts in the **District Performance Index (DPI)** English Language Arts (ELA), Math & Science

| English Language Arts DPI |             |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| City                      | 2023        | 2024        |
| State                     | 63.9        | 63.9        |
| <b>Norwalk</b>            | <b>59.4</b> | <b>59.5</b> |
| Stamford                  | 58.5        | 57.9        |
| Danbury                   | 57.8        | 55.4        |
| New Haven                 | 50.8        | 50.9        |
| Waterbury                 | 50.7        | 51.9        |
| Bridgeport                | 49.5        | 49.0        |
| Hartford                  | 47.4        | 47.1        |
| New Britain               | 46.4        | 46.6        |

| Math DPI       |             |             |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| City           | 2023        | 2024        |
| State          | 59.7        | 60.2        |
| <b>Norwalk</b> | <b>55.4</b> | <b>56.8</b> |
| Stamford       | 54.4        | 54.3        |
| Danbury        | 52.9        | 51.8        |
| Waterbury      | 43.8        | 44.7        |
| New Haven      | 43.0        | 43.7        |
| Bridgeport     | 41.8        | 43.0        |
| Hartford       | 41.8        | 42.8        |
| New Britain    | 39.9        | 40.9        |

| Science DPI    |             |             |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| City           | 2023        | 2024        |
| State          | 61.6        | 61.8        |
| <b>Norwalk</b> | <b>56.7</b> | <b>55.1</b> |
| Stamford       | 56.0        | 56.1        |
| Danbury        | 54.7        | 53.3        |
| New Haven      | 46.6        | 47.6        |
| Waterbury      | 46.6        | 46.8        |
| Hartford       | 45.5        | 45.7        |
| Bridgeport     | 45.4        | 46.4        |
| New Britain    | 43.1        | 43.5        |

# District Performance Index (DPI) for Connecticut Cities

## Population over 70,000

Outperformed peer City school districts in the Academic Growth Index (Percent of Target Achieved (PTA) for English Language Arts & Math

| English Language Arts PTA |              |              |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| City                      | 2023         | 2024         |
| State                     | 57.2%        | 58.7%        |
| <b>Norwalk</b>            | <b>55.3%</b> | <b>57.0%</b> |
| Danbury                   | 55.2%        | 52.5%        |
| Stamford                  | 52.6%        | 54.3%        |
| New Haven                 | 52.1%        | 56.0%        |
| New Britain               | 51.2%        | 48.9%        |
| Hartford                  | 50.8%        | 52.2%        |
| Waterbury                 | 50.6%        | 58.1%        |
| Bridgeport                | 49.5%        | 51.3%        |

| Math PTA       |              |              |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| City           | 2023         | 2024         |
| State          | 61.8%        | 61.4%        |
| <b>Norwalk</b> | <b>60.1%</b> | <b>60.8%</b> |
| Danbury        | 57.2%        | 52.7%        |
| New Britain    | 56.8%        | 51.0%        |
| Stamford       | 56.4%        | 55.2%        |
| New Haven      | 52.9%        | 52.3%        |
| Hartford       | 52.1%        | 51.8%        |
| Waterbury      | 51.9%        | 52.6%        |
| Bridgeport     | 50.3%        | 55.2%        |

# NPS HVAC PROJECT BY THE NUMBERS

CLEAN AIR. COMFORTABLE CLASSROOMS.  
IDEAL ENVIRONNEMENT FOR LEARNING.

## \$21.5 MILLION IN AIR CONDITIONING GRANTS

In Spring 2024, the State of Connecticut's Department of Administrative Services awarded \$21.5 million in grant funding to the City to improve the heating and cooling systems in six Norwalk Public Schools. This investment underscores a commitment by the State and the City to help maximize student success by fostering optimal and equitable learning environments. The total estimated cost of these projects is approximately \$36 million. A special capital appropriation of approximately \$14.4 million by the City will fully fund the project.



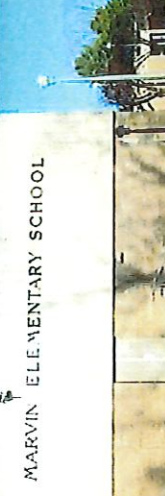

**ROWAYTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
TOTAL PROJECT COST  
**\$10.7 MILLION**  
IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING  
CLEAN AIR GRANT **\$6.3 MILLION**  
SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL  
APPROPRIATION **\$4.4 MILLION**



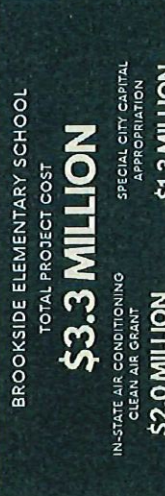
**NARAMAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
TOTAL PROJECT COST  
**\$6.5 MILLION**  
IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING  
CLEAN AIR GRANT **\$3.8 MILLION**  
SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL  
APPROPRIATION **\$2.7 MILLION**



**MARVIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
TOTAL PROJECT COST  
**\$4.1 MILLION**  
IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING  
CLEAN AIR GRANT **\$2.4 MILLION**  
SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL  
APPROPRIATION **\$1.7 MILLION**



**BROOKSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
TOTAL PROJECT COST  
**\$3.3 MILLION**  
IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING  
CLEAN AIR GRANT **\$2.0 MILLION**  
SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL  
APPROPRIATION **\$1.3 MILLION**



**SILVERMINE DUAL LANGUAGE MAGNET SCHOOL**  
TOTAL PROJECT COST  
**\$3.0 MILLION**  
IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING  
CLEAN AIR GRANT **\$1.8 MILLION**  
SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL  
APPROPRIATION **\$1.2 MILLION**



**BRIEN MCMAHON HIGH SCHOOL**  
TOTAL PROJECT COST  
**\$8.3 MILLION**  
IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING  
CLEAN AIR GRANT **\$4.9 MILLION**  
SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL  
APPROPRIATION **\$3.4 MILLION**

# Two New School Groundbreakings

Norwalk High/P-TECH Norwalk

\$239 million total/\$191 million state



South Norwalk School

\$76 million total/\$39 million state



# Looking at FY26....

- Addressing one-time offsets for balancing the FY24 & FY25 budget.
- Special Education: Increased provider rates and identification rates.
- Future Alliance Funding: \$1.2 million.
- Pathways (HVAC, etc.)
- BOE Liability, Auto, and Property (LAP) insurance funding.
- Staff retention and recruitment incentives:
  - Signing bonuses
  - Stipends

City of Norwalk Public Hearing for the FY 2025-2026 Operating and  
Capital Budgets -- September 23, 2024  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SIGN UP SHEET

|      | Name            | Address                                          |
|------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ 1  | Daisy Sebastian | daisyesebastian@gmail.com                        |
| ✓ 2  | SASHNI Popp     | Sashni.popp@yahoo.com                            |
| ✓ 3  | KARINA Malek    | MALEKKARINA@YAHOO.COM                            |
| ✓ 4  | Nick KANTAR     | NKANTAR@gmail.com                                |
| ✓ 5  | James Fales     | Jamie.Fales@gmail.com                            |
| ✓ 6  | Maegan Amato    | maegan1783@gmail.com                             |
| ✓ 7  | Jess Hopkins    | jesshock82@gmail.com                             |
| ✓ 8  | TANNER THOMPSON | thompson.tanner.j@gmail.com ~ 16 Hillside Pl #K5 |
| ✓ 9  | Jack Meyers     | Jack.meyers@gmail.com                            |
| ✓ 10 | LIZ LEADERMAN   | ENL6@CORNELL.EDU                                 |
| ✓ 11 | Jayden Whitmore | JWhitt1658@gmail.com                             |
| ✓ 12 | Jeremy Leung    | Jeremy.Leung48@gmail.com                         |
| 13   | Sydney Thompson | thompson.sydney.a@gmail.com                      |
| 14   | John Levin      | 249 Chestnut Hill Road                           |
| 15   |                 |                                                  |
| 16   |                 |                                                  |
| 17   |                 |                                                  |
| 18   |                 |                                                  |
| 19   |                 |                                                  |
| 20   |                 |                                                  |

Ellis, Tom

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From: KC Hamann <hamann.kc@gmail.com>  
Sent: Monday, September 16, 2024 10:37 PM  
To: Norwalk Public Schools via ParentSquare; Zoe Hamann; Ellis, Tom  
Subject: Re: Sep 16, 2024 Digest: 1 new message from Norwalk Public Schools today

You don't often get email from hamann.kc@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION: EXTERNAL Email: Don't open links or attachments from untrusted senders**

Tom,

I'm writing this email to submit to public comment for the upcoming budget discussion and panel. I'd like to see armed police officers at all public schools in Norwalk, including elementary schools. More and more we hear about episodes of gun violence in our country and at schools. Norwalk must find budget to provide a police presence at each school everyday children are present and all times they are present.

K.C.

On Mon, Sep 16, 2024 at 6:27 PM Norwalk Public Schools via ParentSquare <[donotreply+051b3602-37c9-5500-96d9-2eb9db896362@parentsquare.com](mailto:donotreply+051b3602-37c9-5500-96d9-2eb9db896362@parentsquare.com)> wrote:



Norwalk Public Schools

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Daily digest created for Kellogg Hamann

- [Add Your Voice on Sept. 23 at the City of Norwalk's Budget Public Hearing - FY 2025-26](#)

NPS Communications posted in Norwalk Public Schools

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## **Add Your Voice on Sept. 23 at the City of Norwalk's Budget Public Hearing - FY 2025-26**

Posted by NPS Communications on Monday, Sep 16 at 2:27 PM in Norwalk Public Schools

Dear NPS Community,

The City of Norwalk is hosting a hybrid Budget Public Hearing ahead of the development of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Operating and Capital Budgets on **Monday, Sept. 23 at 6 p.m.** in the

**Ellis, Tom**

---

**From:** Mequitta <mequittaahuja@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 17, 2024 9:57 AM  
**To:** Ellis, Tom  
**Subject:** Written testimony for Budget Public Hearing, Fiscal Year 2025-2026

You don't often get email from mequittaahuja@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

In the upcoming budget and plans, please add two in-person information sessions for local parents about the Open Choice program, especially the newly expanded program allowing 50 seats across 3 schools for the 5 neighboring towns of Darien, New Canaan, Weston, Westport and Wilton. In these information sessions, please include the mission and vision for this initiative as well as the logistics of integrating the out-of-town families into the community.

Thank you!

Mequitta Ahuja

<https://www.norwalkps.org/departments/communications/nps-blog/~board/homepage-posts/post/nps-opens-50-seats-across-3-inter-district-magnet-schools-for-students-in-5-neighboring-towns>

## Ellis, Tom

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**From:** carol anderson <anderson2125@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 9, 2024 2:54 PM  
**To:** Ellis, Tom  
**Subject:** questions for Budget Meeting for town of Norwalk on Sept. 23rd, 2024

[You don't often get email from anderson2125@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

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Here are my questions - please respond to me that they are being answered by the appropriate people at this meeting.

1. How is the city planning to DECREASE its debt service of \$42,583,544 - the sky is not the limit for debt and responsible planning would acknowledge this with appropriate actions.
2. Why are you getting rid of employee benefits and letting them accrue under 'pensions obligations' when those will be unbearable at some point in the future?
3. Please justify the 122.7% increase in contingency spending.
4. Many companies are backing away from DEI policies as they are not proving to be effective - why do you feel you need a DEI when Norwalk itself has a very diverse population and do you think just giving jobs to individuals who say they fall into whatever category you designate to be Equity and Inclusion is the best way to find qualified individuals?
5. Do any public concerns that will be offered at this meeting have any direct impact on your proposed budget or will you just listen politely and move on with whatever the town leadership deems appropriate?

## Ellis, Tom

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**From:** Jessica Garnett <jessicadgarnett@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 10:53 AM  
**To:** Ellis, Tom  
**Cc:** Common Council; Rilling, Harry; Stowers, Robert; Estrella, Alexandra; Diana Carpio  
**Subject:** FYE 2025-2026 Capital and Operating Budget Priorities

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jessicadgarnett@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please include my thoughts below in the meeting minutes for the first conversation on the FYE 2025-2026 Capital and Operating Budget Priorities:

### Capital Budget

When plans were hatched for the new Norwalk High back in 2019 parents were rightly concerned about the impact on sports. We were already tight on field space before 2019. With the removal of a turf field at Norwalk High we knew the years of construction were going to be incredibly disruptive to our athletes. We started sports this fall and immediately issues began to arise. Despite the numerous meetings parents attended in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023.....there was clearly NO plan to get another field in shape with appropriate sports lighting to accommodate the field at Norwalk High being out of commission. Vets Park needs to be looked at to see if the lighting can be upgraded to be used as a lit field for our athletes. We have a massive field in front of Ponus/Concord Magnet that could be turfed and possibly made into a football as well as a baseball field. What is the status with the complex that should have gone into Broad River? I'm so incredibly disappointed that in the years of planning for this new school on the Norwalk High field that none of these options were looked at. PLEASE do not spend \$10 million dollars to renovate a community center in SoNO that will have no pool, no outdoor space and no parking! Getting our alternate fields in working condition needs to be the number ONE priority for this budget season. We are looking at at least 4-5 years without the field at NHS.

### Operating Budget

As I've requested for the last 13 budget cycles PLEASE listen to our schools and their needs. There is nothing more important than supporting our youth, who are still dealing with the impact of Covid. Resources need to be in the classrooms and not sitting in City Hall.

In addition, I urge the city to adopt zero-based budgeting. This way the departments can truly analyze what is needed to do their jobs. City Hall is top heavy with management and not nearly enough staff out in the city doing the work. I urge decision makers to drive down the crowded streets around the city. Speak with our enforcement staff about the plethora of illegal/unsafe apartments, blight, businesses using our residential streets to park their commercial vehicles, construction taking place without permits, the endless trash on our streets and city parks. Population has exploded in our city and yet we don't have staff to keep up with these issues.

I sincerely hope you will take these matters into consideration as you draft this years budgets.

Regards,

Ellis, Tom

---

**From:** sashnipopp@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 11:14 AM  
**To:** Ellis, Tom  
**Subject:** Fwd: Concerns regarding the state of our educational system

You don't often get email from sashnipopp@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION: EXTERNAL Email: Don't open links or attachments from untrusted senders**

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** sashnipopp@yahoo.com  
**Date:** September 23, 2024 at 10:47:15 AM EDT  
**To:** tellus@norwalkct.gov, boepubliccomments@norwalkps.org  
**Subject:** Concerns regarding the state of our educational system

Sun 9/22/2024 9:53 PM

To whom it may concern

My name is Sashni Popp and I am a life long resident of Norwalk. I am a product of our education system having been a Kendall cougar, a Ponus Panther and a McMahon Senator. I am now a mother of 2 girls, an 11 year old who attends 6th grade at West Rocks and a 4th grader at Silvermine. I have had concerns over the years but I put my concerns aside because I was of the belief that our educators and the education system has my daughter's best interest at heart. I remained quiet last year when in Silvermine we had a very unpredictable 5th grade year for the students; they started the year with uncertainty of who their teachers would be since one was our on maternity leave and there seemed to be some other interruptions as well when permanent sub who was introduced at the Spanish teacher that left at Christmas break with no goodbye to the children and when I speculate it would seem that teacher was likely terminated, parents were advised not to worry that they are looking for replacements. Then it seemed ok for a bit when the permanent teacher returned and at the conference in March I got to meet with all 4 teachers as the teaching method has once again changed mid year and now my daughter was going to have classes with each of the teachers (we were informed that it was to help the children prepare for middles school and changing of classes and building responsibility) then few months later my daughter tells me the teachers had them move desks into other classrooms so now there will be 3 fifth grade classrooms instead of 4

because the 2nd spanish teacher was going to be moving down to another grade although if memory serves that is not what the letter the teacher sent but I could be remembering wrong since there has been a lot of emails about staffing and goodbye letters. I let that all go because truth be told we were in the home stretch and I just wanted my daughter to complete 5th grade with the best experience she could possibly have given the circumstances. Fast forward to parent teacher night fall 2024. During our assembly type intro to the evening we were prefaced with statements regarding the shortage of teachers nationwide and how our Silvermine was going to make it work, again I didn't think much of it at the time although there were quite a few new faces and some changes in roles that I wasn't expecting. We met our 3 teachers and parents are made aware as a whole that the 4th grade is now reduced to 3 teachers and the classes are split between the 3 teachers 1 Spanish and 2 English. When I calculate the time spent for Spanish it does not seem that children are now getting the 50/50 immersion we have been promised for years. Now what I need to make sense is how this is considered dual language; but wait it gets better. Last week we were made aware the one Spanish teacher for the 4th grade had resigned from her position and now what was supposed to be 4 classes in 4th grade was reduced to 3 and now we have no Spanish teacher and by the way one of our English teachers is with an injury that has not been made aware to parents and I am wondering how this is going to be accommodated if this teacher needs to be out for a period of time.

While my concerns at this moment are Silvermine specific this is reflection of the entire system and it is failing our children and our teachers. Why is it so easy for teachers to leave their positions? Why are they seemingly leaving in droves? In my experience people leave jobs when the management/administration is lacking, not supportive and it is no longer mentally or physically beneficial. Is the teaching environment so negative for our teachers that they just can't keep up with the work/life balance? Why can't Norwalk retain their teachers? Why is Silvermine seemingly lacking the necessary support needed for the children and teachers to thrive? Our motto at Silvermine is Respectful, Responsible and Safe; this should be a reflection of the standards of the community the administration that is serving our community; how can this be their motto if they are not being shown these standards? The dual language program was sold to me 6 plus years ago with the promise of a bilingual leader and I truly feel that I was lied to and that the Norwalk public school system is failing my children as well as others. I am so concerned for the direction our schools are heading and how our leadership can continue to abuse the patience of the parents and children of Norwalk.

Sashni Popp

**Ellis, Tom**

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**From:** Stacey Yusi <smy92405@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 11:47 AM  
**To:** Ellis, Tom  
**Subject:** public comment - operating budget - FIELDS in Norwalk

You don't often get email from smy92405@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION: EXTERNAL Email: Don't open links or attachments from untrusted senders**

Good morning,

I wanted to get in my comments regarding the budget before the meeting tonight. The #1 capital budget item MUST be focusing on the fields in Norwalk for our kids.

Parents had major concerns back in 2019 and we are still begging & pleading for a resolution.

I'm sure you can all see the value in sports for our youth. For one, it gives them a purpose, they learn commitment, teamwork & friendships and memories that they will carry long into adulthood.

If you look around at the towns that surround us, they have the most beautiful facilities and more than enough field space for all sports. Come on over to Norwalk and you will find ONE softball field at McMahon that is sufficient to share amongst an entire city of softball players. It is embarrassing, quite frankly.

Cranbury school just built a brand new softball field but didn't have the foresight to take into account that Norwalk High will be without their field for the next 5-6 years. This after all the issues the girls had for years at the Norwalk High field to begin with!! The field at Cranbury cannot be used by the high school, as it is not big enough (and no lights). Practices for the high school now have to be held across town, after 5:00 because they are sharing with McMahon. Youth softball is practicing and playing at a bunch of run-down fields in the area.

The lack of facilities is being felt throughout the community. Kids are losing their valuable practice time for soccer, field hockey and many other sports due to lack of lights and parents are being made to leave work early to get their kids to practice at unreasonable times. Nathan Hale has bricks crumbling near the bleachers, that aren't big enough to seat the many people coming to watch the high schools sports.

This is setting Norwalk athletes up for failure. They can't compete if they can't practice and if they don't practice, they don't get better. The "new" Norwalk High will not be completed for years. I am pleading with you to give our kids a chance. The more kids that turn away from sports, the more time they have to get into trouble.

Please make this a priority.

Thank you,  
Stacey Yusi

## Ellis, Tom

---

**From:** Sarah Bradley jr <serenitydagreat1@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 11:47 AM  
**To:** Ellis, Tom  
**Subject:** Education budget meeting

[You don't often get email from serenitydagreat1@icloud.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

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Good morning I am a mother of a kindergarten student who rides the bus and I wanted to know if they would ever put bus aides on the bus because there are students that stand yell out the windows and throw things out the windows and it's not safe for them Sent from my iPhone

**Ellis, Tom**

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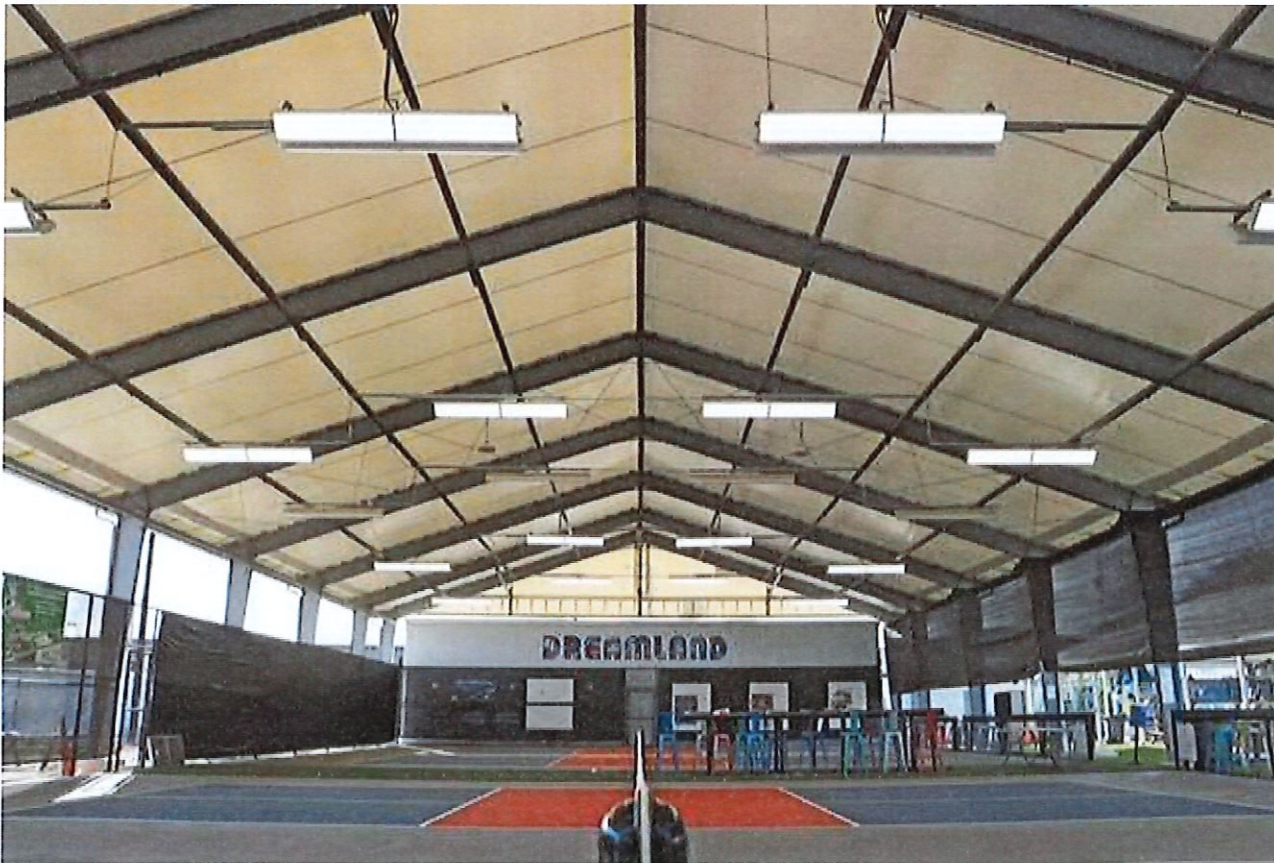
**From:** alan schur <schur.alan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 11:55 AM  
**To:** Ellis, Tom  
**Subject:** Norwalk Pickleball. Tonight's meeting

[You don't often get email from schur.alan@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

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My name is alan schur & I am a norwalk resident & active pickleball ambassador & enthusiast. I would like to see Norwalk consider a roof /doom/lights at one of their existing pb facilities so that players can play all year round in all type of bad weather. This type of facility would cost approximately \$1MM. I believe the pb community would fund this via a public private partnership with the town. Not sure if Woodward Park is the best location because of parking constraints.

Alan schur 203-984-1949



Sent from my phone Alan Schur

## Ellis, Tom

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**From:** Kiki Kuz <kyriaki.a.kuzin@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 12:50 PM  
**To:** Ellis, Tom  
**Subject:** Budget meeting needs to be directed to Norwalk High School

[You don't often get email from kyriaki.a.kuzin@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

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To Whom it may Concern :

The lack of field area for Norwalk High school is unacceptable. That should be given priority over other projects. The bridge on I 95 has been progressing in less than 3 months and building of the New Norwalk High school cannot be done in a year and 1/2? Kids need to go outside to breath fresh air and not be bounced back and forward to different Schools for field activities? Please give priority of this project sooner than all other projects. There are enough apartment complex in the area so those projects need to be given less priority.

Thank you,

Kiki Kuzin  
Sent from my iPhone

**Ellis, Tom**

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**From:** D Lauricella <dlauricella24@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 12:52 PM  
**To:** Council Young; Burnett, Greg; Ellis, Tom; Schmitt, Jared  
**Subject:** Tonight's Budget Public Hearing

**CAUTION: EXTERNAL Email: Don't open links or attachments from untrusted senders**

Dear Darlene and Greg, Tom, and Jared

Thank you for holding the first Charter-mandated public hearing prior to the initiation of the Norwalk FY 25-26 Budget Process.

While the publicity about this gathering has not been robust, it will be interesting to see how many in the public engage meaningfully.

I am happy that your agenda lists the hearings on the Operating Budget and Capital Budgets separately. Does that mean there will be two separate hearings?

Depending upon the turnout, please consider letting those of us who show up a bit more than only 3 minutes per person. Allowing at least 5 minutes would allow a serious effort to let the public who has spent the time reviewing budget documents offer ideas and suggestions.

Please advise.

Regards

**Diane Lauricella**

**2023 Aquarion Water Company Environmental Champion Award**

**2024 Climate Reality Project Ambassador Graduate**

[dlauricella24@gmail.com](mailto:dlauricella24@gmail.com)

203-858-1537

**Ellis, Tom**

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**From:** Alyssa Pepe <alyssalpepe@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 6:41 PM  
**To:** Ellis, Tom  
**Subject:** Written Testimony - City of Norwalk Hosting Budget Public Hearing for FY 2025-26: 9/23

You don't often get email from alyssalpepe@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION: EXTERNAL Email: Don't open links or attachments from untrusted senders**

Good evening,

I realize written testimonies were supposed to be submitted by 12:00pm today; however, given that we come from a household with two full-time employed parents and having received this email just 2 hours and 15 minutes prior to the deadline, we were not able to submit testimony until now.

I just want to emphasize the need to better support our special education program in the NPS system, especially at the stage of early development.

I hope to see more resources being allocated to Norwalk's pre-K special education program for the 2025-2026 FSY. Currently, NECC lacks teachers and support staff necessary to meet the needs of the students in our community. There is one makeshift classroom currently set up in the gymnasium, with one more possibly being added. Classroom sizes are enormous for the size of each classroom, with classrooms having up to 18-20 students by the end of the year, many of which lack the chairs and carpet space needed to fit all students at one time. While the educators are caring, passionate, and loving teachers to our students, the lack of resources leaves them struggling to properly support their large caseloads. NECC lacks support staff. For example, there is currently one person available to help support students with AAC devices, which negates best practices recommended by professionals for full immersion with the device to help students properly use it as a tool for communication. Lastly, having the Full Day Readiness Program be a lottery system fails our special needs students. Many students with special needs need a full day program to properly support their development, and leaving it up to luck of pushing a button at a given time on a specific date, is a huge disservice.

Thank you for your time and opening this to the public.

Best,  
Alyssa Improglou

**Ellis, Tom**

---

**From:** Suzanne Markman <semarkman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 10:03 PM  
**To:** Claudio A - GU; board@norwalkps.org; Estrella, Alexandra; Rilling, Harry; Ellis, Tom  
**Subject:** Concern about Silvermine

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**CAUTION: EXTERNAL Email:** Don't open links or attachments from untrusted senders

Hello!

As several of my fellow Silvermine parents did tonight, I would like to voice my concern about the lack and retention of teachers at Silvermine elementary school. When My eldest son started Silvermine we were so impressed with the concept of a bilingual education. However he is in third grade and in the past two years there have been two instances where he has been without a permanent teacher. The lack of stability has caused many issues in the classroom and undue anxiety for my son.

I now have my youngest son who has started kindergarten and I can tell you I am very uncertain if we can go through the anxiety provoked by a constant lack of teachers for another 6 years.

The degeneration of the program is truly a shame as when it was introduced to us we were so hopeful and excited about the education our children would receive. However how can they receive that education without stable teachers.

Please consider the points/solutions that the parents brought up tonight to try to return the program to provide the excellent and unique education that it was created to provide.

Thank you.

Best,

Suzanne Antonini

Ellis, Tom

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From: Renata Em <rmendrok@gmail.com>  
Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2024 4:31 PM  
To: Estrella, Alexandra; Rilling, Harry; board@norwalkps.org; Ellis, Tom  
Subject: Silvermine needs your help!

You don't often get email from rmendrok@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION: EXTERNAL Email: Don't open links or attachments from untrusted senders**

To:

- Superintendent Alexandra Estrella
- Mayor Harry Rilling and
- Members of the Board of Education

I learned at the beginning of this year that our school is facing some challenges, but I had no idea of the severity until our recent PTA meeting. As you know, Silvermine Dual Language School is very different from other Norwalk Public institutions, and yet it is being assessed the same way as other public schools when it comes to budget and grading which does not seem appropriate. Our program is unique in the way that the children's day is split between English and Spanish, and in order to preserve this extraordinary curriculum, we need qualified and certified teachers. This will demand more funds to attract and retain bilingual educators, so they feel appreciated and rewarded for their hard work. As the only bilingual program in the area, our students deserve the best instructors and resources and the only way to obtain this is by offering competitive salaries. Before similar programs are started in other public schools, the parents and students want to see Silvermine excel at what it was designed to do: focusing on biliteracy, academic achievement and sociocultural competence.

I respectfully urge you to help our Swans.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me.

Renata K. Mendrok (parent of a Silvermine student)

[rmendrok@gmail.com](mailto:rmendrok@gmail.com)