

**CITY OF NORWALK
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - MARCH 17, 2026
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

ATTENDEES: Jalin Sead, Colin Hosten, Richard Dellinger, Anne Wennerstrand, Josh Goldstein, Jesse Buccolo, Johan Lopez.

STAFF: Brian Candela, Vanessa Valadares.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Ordinance Committee was called to order by Chair Mr. Jalin Sead.

II. ROLL CALL

The members present were as listed above.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

No public hearings were scheduled.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION

There was no public hearing discussion.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMENT

No public comments were received.

VI. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. February 17, 2026 – regular meeting of the ordinance committee
Mr. Dellinger noted a correction on page 3 regarding a suggestion about modeling the ordinance on Office of Policy Management and Federal Congress levels, attributing it to Mr. Colin Hosten.

Mr. Buccolo noted that his earlier comments regarding staff time allocation and anticipating future staff capacity as an additional financial impact had not been captured in the minutes. Mr. Candela confirmed the points and stated that he would incorporate the amendments into the minutes.

****MR. HOSTEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 17, 2026, REGULAR MEETING OF THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE AS AMENDED.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Discuss and vote on new ordinance: Financial Disclosures and Impact of Ordinances

Mr. Sead reminded the committee that Councilwoman Ayers had spearheaded the ordinance and that Mr. Candela had refined the draft for feasibility in Norwalk. Mr. Lopez suggested extending fiscal projections from one year to three to five years to better capture multi-year impacts. Mr. Candela responded that similar ordinances in other jurisdictions allow for up to five years and that the council could always amend the ordinance later if projections proved inaccurate. Mr. Sead highlighted Section 6, noting that inaccuracies in the financial impact statement would not affect the validity of the legislation.

Mr. Goldstein expressed concern that Section 3D regarding significant amendments after a public hearing was undefined and could be used to delay or stymie ordinances. Mr. Candela agreed that Section 3D might not be necessary since ordinances can be amended at any time and suggested it could be removed. Mr. Hosten proposed adding language to Section 3D allowing the requirement for a new fiscal impact statement on amendments to be waived by a two-thirds vote of the council. Mr. Hosten also recommended using plural language in Section 3A for “city departments” and “reasons” to account for ordinances affecting multiple departments, and he raised the question of CFO oversight when the finance department itself is the impacted department.

Ms. Wennerstrand asked whether additional language was needed for revisions to existing ordinances that have no financial impact, noting that Section 3A already covers a written statement explaining why no statement is required. Mr. Candela confirmed that a simple statement from the department head would suffice and that CFO review would only be needed if an impact was identified.

Mr. Dellinger inquired about potential administrative burdens on departments and suggested obtaining input from department heads before finalizing the ordinance. Mr. Buccolo emphasized the need for clarity on staffing impacts, including whether existing capacity could absorb the work or if additional staff would be required, and recommended creating a high-level template for feedback from department heads.

Mr. Sead explained that the ordinance would help the council anticipate costs and staffing needs when passing new ordinances, reducing strain on departments during budget season. Mr. Candela noted that most ordinances originate from departments seeking council assistance and that early involvement would allow departments to provide accurate guidance. The committee reached consensus to send an updated draft to department heads for feedback on administrative feasibility and to revise the ordinance accordingly before returning it to the committee. No motion was made.

Mr. Lopez offered five thoughts for the committee’s consideration. He suggested adding language to Section 4, number 1, to require that fiscal impact statements address the upcoming fiscal year and, where feasible, at least three subsequent fiscal years. Second, in response to Mr. Goldstein’s concern, he asked whether the ordinance could define the term “significant

amendment” to some extent. Third, he proposed requiring the use of a standardized guideline for how departments calculate possible impacts, noting that the Chief Financial Officer could prepare this so all departments follow a uniform approach. Fourth, he asked whether the fiscal impact statements should be required to be placed in the public domain and attached to agenda documents when relevant. Fifth, he suggested adding language for an emergency waiver clause in case an ordinance is truly time-sensitive.

Mr. Candela responded that the projection period in Section 4 could be extended for as long as the committee wanted, whether one year, two years, three years, or more. Regarding “significant amendment,” he agreed it could create headaches and might be used to block legislation. He stated that if a council member proposes an amendment, departments could simply provide an analysis of impacts within the available time, or indicate whether they could or could not, and the City Council would decide how to proceed. He confirmed that fiscal impact statements should absolutely be public and attached to the backup materials on the ordinance committee agenda and to the full City Council agenda.

Mr. Lopez followed up by asking whether language requiring a standardized method for preparing impact statements needed to be codified in the ordinance or could be handled internally. Mr. Candela stated that standardization could be done internally and would likely develop naturally once the ordinance passes. Departments would be asked to provide specific information on staffing, costs, and other impacts, probably through required meetings. Over time, the City could identify best practices and create a consistent form or list of topics to cover, with a “not applicable” option and a miscellaneous section for additional details.

Mr. Buccolo agreed that Mr. Lopez’s suggestion for standardization was a good idea and recommended creating a high-level template in advance to solicit feedback from department heads before finalizing the ordinance, rather than reacting after passage. He noted that the template could be refined over time and might vary by department.

Mr. Candela added that if an ordinance passes and the fiscal impact statement later proves inaccurate, departments should promptly notify staff, the Ordinance Committee Chair, or the relevant council members so amendments can be made if necessary. He cited the recent reapportionment of voting districts as an example where feedback led to immediate amendments.

Mr. Sead observed that it might be preferable to keep the standardization process internal rather than codifying it in the ordinance, since the preferred format could change with a new Chief Financial Officer. He noted that department heads and the Chief Financial Officer could establish their own standard during the outreach process.

Mr. Sead thanked Mr. Candela and all members for their input and confirmed that additional work would be done on the draft before the item returned to the committee. Mr. Candela agreed the comments were helpful and that revisions would be prepared.

Mr. Hosten then addressed the effective date. He noted that a ten-day effective period would be too short and recommended allowing more time for departments to become familiar with the requirements, suggesting January 1 as a possible start date depending on passage. Mr. Candela

agreed and referenced the grace period used for the vape ordinance. He proposed that if the ordinance passed by June 1, for example, it could take effect January 1, with departments using the intervening months to test the process and work out kinks. Mr. Hosten concurred that this approach made sense.

No motion was made on this item. The committee agreed to continue refining the draft and to seek feedback from department heads before returning to the matter.

B. Discuss and vote on new ordinance: City Council member being appointed as ex officio member of the Board of Estimate and Taxation

Mr. Sead introduced the item, noting that it was a short discussion. He reminded the committee that the charter revision had authorized the creation of this ordinance to appoint a City Council member as an ex-officio member of the Board of Estimate and Taxation. He stated that he did not believe an alternate was necessary and that if the appointed member could not attend a meeting they simply would not attend, as adding an alternate might complicate the process. He opened the matter for discussion.

Mr. Hosten stated he had no objections to including an alternate, noting that it mirrored the vice-chair structure already in use for committees and provided a fallback if a member could not participate fully. He recommended changing the term from one year to two years, particularly as the Council moves to four-year terms, so the appointee could fully grow into the role. He added that staggered terms for the primary appointee and alternate might be considered but acknowledged it could be too complicated.

Mr. Sead agreed that staggered terms might be complicated and would need to align with elections. Ms. Wennerstrand asked Mr. Sead to elaborate on the complicating factors he anticipated with an alternate, as she could see clear benefits to including one.

Mr. Sead replied that he was not strongly opposed either way. He noted that a prior discussion had focused on avoiding the complication of identifying two people, but he was comfortable with the alternate and observed that it aligned with the vice-chair model.

Ms. Wennerstrand supported the alternate, explaining that the appointee's other committee workload would likely be reduced for equity and that the role was distinct from standard Council committee service. She added that the change should anticipate the future four-year Council terms.

Mr. Dellinger stated that although he was not generally a fan of alternates on other committees, the workload here justified one, and he supported including an alternate.

Mr. Buccolo agreed with the alternate, noting that the purpose of the position was to serve as a liaison to improve communication between the Board of Estimate and Taxation and the Council. He viewed the alternate as helpful to maintain that connection if the primary member could not attend and noted that it followed the same pattern as the vice-chair approach being used this year.

Mr. Sead observed that there appeared to be consensus on changing the term to two years.

Mr. Candela confirmed whether the committee was comfortable with a two-year term rather than one year.

Mr. Goldstein supported the two-year term for the reasons already stated and added that an alternate would also provide a training structure and succession glide path when a Council member leaves the role.

Mr. Sead asked for any other questions or comments and then called for a motion to move the ordinance to public hearing.

Mr. Goldstein raised one additional point: the ordinance required the Council President to provide seven days' notice no later than the second meeting in January each year. If the ordinance took effect before the end of the current year, the committee would likely want to make the appointment this year. He suggested handling the transition with a resolution to clarify the initial term length.

Mr. Sead agreed and noted that the two-year term language regarding expiration of the term of office would naturally refresh with the new Council.

Mr. Goldstein sought confirmation on the approach.

Mr. Candela stated that a resolution could specify that the appointments would occur after the ordinance's effective date and would serve for less than a full two-year term due to the current Council members' terms ending.

Mr. Sead thanked Mr. Goldstein and called for the motion.

****MR. GOLDSTIEN MADE A MOTION TO MOVE THE NEW ORDINANCE REGARDING THE CITY COUNCIL MEMBER BEING APPOINTED AS AN EX-OFFICIO MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION TO PUBLIC HEARING.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Candela explained, for the record, the process for publishing the legal notice of public hearing for this ordinance and all future ordinances. Notices would be posted in the Town Clerk's Office and on the City website under the Ordinance Committee webpage, with a link provided on the agenda for easy access. The notice would be available prior to the agenda being posted and would clearly identify the date of the public hearing (the next meeting in April). This approach was being followed pursuant to the Charter. Beginning in April, every agenda would include a sheet with the direct link to the Ordinance Committee webpage so the public could access past and upcoming agendas, minutes, and legal notices of public hearing. Mr. Candela stated that anyone with access issues could contact him directly.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discuss and vote on Chapter 95 (Streets and Sidewalks), Section 10 (Snow and Ice Removal from Sidewalks and Driveways), Subsection F. City Code § 95-10(F)

Mr. Sead moved the meeting to new business and introduced the item. He thanked Ms. Wennerstrand for taking the lead on the matter and turned the discussion over to her. Mr. Candela noted that Ms. Valadares from the Department of Public Works was present and thanked her for attending.

Ms. Wennerstrand welcomed Ms. Valadares and thanked Mr. Candela for his work on the draft. She explained that this was a clarification of an existing ordinance in Section F concerning landowners and business owners clearing sidewalks and driveways. The current language referring to a “reasonable time frame” had created vagueness for the public, so the proposal tightened it to require sidewalks to be cleared within 24 hours after the end of a weather event. She stated that the change provided transparency, clarity, and a clear expectation for the public.

Mr. Candela reported that staff had reviewed ordinances from surrounding municipalities. The majority used a 24-hour standard or more complicated alternatives that created confusion (such as different deadlines depending on whether the storm ended overnight or before 5:00 p.m.). The committee therefore chose the simpler, direct 24-hour guidance after the cessation of a weather-related event for abutting landowners.

Mr. Dellinger asked about enforcement on the Norwalk River Valley Trail extension along Riverside Road, which is not plowed under an existing arrangement with the Norwalk River Valley Trail Authority. He inquired whether the trail authority would be subject to fines.

Ms. Valadares greeted the committee and explained that the Norwalk River Valley Trail is treated the same as other public trails and parks in the city. It is maintained under a separate agreement and is not plowed in winter. She clarified that the ordinance applies specifically to sidewalks and that the trail is not considered a sidewalk.

Mr. Dellinger asked whether the ordinance should explicitly state that the trail is exempt to avoid public confusion about potential fines. Ms. Wennerstrand noted that a fine structure and enforcement process already exist and suggested additional public outreach and education campaigns during storm seasons to reinforce expectations regarding sidewalks, accessibility, safety, and community responsibility.

Mr. Dellinger observed that newly installed sidewalks in areas such as West Rocks and Cranberry resemble the trail surface, making them hard to distinguish. Ms. Valadares confirmed that the city maintains a map for enforcement purposes and that Chapter 95 already contains clear definitions of sidewalk and footpath. She stated that enforcement officers use the map and definitions so they do not issue citations for footpaths. She added that an updated map would soon be available online.

Mr. Dellinger asked about the reference to driveways in the ordinance title and section. Ms. Valadares explained that the term covers the concrete apron where a sidewalk meets a private driveway, which is constructed as part of sidewalk installation.

Mr. Candela confirmed that the definitions of footpath and sidewalk appear in Chapter 95.1. He emphasized that the legal requirements remain unchanged; the only modification is the clearer 24-hour timeframe. He noted that any future changes to the fee schedule under Chapter 90-4 would be discussed by the Public Works Committee and ultimately by the full City Council.

Ms. Wennerstrand clarified that the vote that evening was solely on the language change to the 24-hour period. Mr. Candela added that the ordinance is governed by two state statutes and that no new fiscal impact or enforcement burden would be placed on the city.

Mr. Dellinger asked whether the ordinance had previously contemplated different fines for homeowners versus businesses. Ms. Wennerstrand and Mr. Sead confirmed that any discussion of the fee schedule would occur in the Public Works Committee. Mr. Candela explained that state law (7-148) caps most municipal fines at \$250 and that the current fee schedule treats each day of noncompliance as a separate violation. He stated that the Public Works Committee could review whether to keep the \$250-per-day amount, lower it, or structure it differently.

Mr. Sead asked whether anyone had additional questions for Ms. Wennerstrand or Ms. Valadares. Hearing none, he invited Ms. Wennerstrand to make the motion.

****MS. WENNERSTRAND MOVED TO MOVE THE AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 95, SECTION 10(F) TO PUBLIC HEARING.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

IX. DISCUSSION

There was no additional discussion.

X. ADJOURNMENT

****MR. DELLINGER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary