COMMON COUNCIL **JUNE 18, 2025**
NORWALK, CONNECTICUT

COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS
AND VIA TELECONFERENCE

I. CALL TO ORDER

Council President Smyth called the workshop to order at 6:03 p.m. She then led the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Dixon called the Roll as follows:

Council at Large:	*Mr. Gregory Burnett*	Mr. Joshua Goldstein
	Mr. Johan Lopez	Ms. Nora Niedzielski-Eichner
	Ms. Barbara Smyth	
District A:	Mr. Jalin Sead	Ms. Nicol Ayers
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*

There were nine in attendance. A quorum was present. Ms. Dixon and Atty. Mednick were also in attendance.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Diane Lauricella, of Little Fox Lane, greeted the Council Members. She applauded the Council, the Charter Commission and others about making changes in the Charter.

She said that if they decided to bring a four year term for the Mayor to the election, she requested that it be a separate question because there were a number of good changes to the Charter. She noted that she had spoken to a State Legislator and said that there could be a Special Act to put a term limit on the for four year terms even though Atty. Mednick said that it was not possible.

Ms. Lauricella then spoke about expanding the Common Council. She suggested that they may wish to offer this as a separate item also. She was pleased that Commissioners Clark and Comacho had brought this forward because it could reduce the workload. Many of the Council Members are on at least three Committees and many of the Council Members are still working and have family obligations. She said that she would like to see the Council Members spending more time doing their own due diligence rather than being subject to the staff and consultant's information.

Ms. Lauricella said that while she recognized that the Council Members work hard, some of them do not call their constituents back. This may allow the Council Members to free up some time.

She went on to say that if they decided to approve the four year Mayoral terms, that when the next Charter Revision Commission is assembled, that they consider changing some of the appointed positions to make it fairer. She gave the example of the BET where the Council appoints half of the BET and the Mayor appoints the other half.

Ms. Smyth asked if there was anyone else who wished to address the Council. There was no one else who wished to address the Council at this time.

IV. REVIEW PROPOSED CHARTER REVISION

A. Proposed Charter Revision Redline Version

Ms. Smyth said that there would be a Public Hearing prior to the next Common Council meeting starting at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Smyth said that they would be reviewing Section 10 first. She proceeded to read the various recommended changes to the Council members and ask if there were any comments or questions.

Mr. Wiggins joined the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner said that she had some recommended changed for Section 10-5. She said that she was fine with the proposed changes.

In this section is where the Council makes the recommendations on the budget. She said that she felt that this general budget would be broken into sections, one on the Board of Education appropriation and the second would be on the City appropriation.

Atty. Mednick said that having the two separate caps would be interesting and gave an outline of the process.

Ms. Smyth said that she thought it was a brilliant suggestion.

Ms. Ayers pointed out that the BOE was a Department of the City and felt that it was important to not start splicing things out. The Council needs to mindful of the perception.

Atty. Mednick agreed with Ms. Ayers and said that the Council has only the authority to allocate the funding for the BOE and no discretion on the actual spending the funding. The City also has control over the bonding.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner suggested that perhaps it would be clearer if it was phrased as the Council voting on the BOE allocation and the BET allocation. Discussion followed about possibly having the BOE provide a line by line budget to the BET by March 15th.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner said that this proposed change would not give the Council any additional authority. This suggestion would work within the system and provide greater transparency. Discussion followed about starting the budget earlier and having the BOE line items available for public input.

Mr. Sead said that he appreciated the steps towards transparency. there were concerns about equity in the schools and reminded everyone that the taxpayers are funding the schools. They are not receiving the same return per pupil like the surrounding towns. This issue is not just with the City. Ms. Smyth noted that the number of unfunded mandates that have been issued to the BOE is amazing. Mr. Goldstein said that the allocation for the BOE is based on the property taxes so the more affluent municipalities have more financial resources, which he felt was not equitable.

Mr. Frayer pointed out that 10-5c also addresses the grant funding. He said that if a grant is awarded after the Capital budget cap is completed, it will have an impact on the budgets. Ms. Ayers said that she would like to see the language for that type of amendment before they would be voting on it. Ms. Smyth reminded everyone that this was a workshop and they would be voting on changes later in the process.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner had several detailed questions about Mr. Frayer's suggestion.

The discussion then moved to Section 10-11 b & c. Mr. Goldstein had several questions about the timeline for submitting the Capital Budget. Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner said that Mr. Burnett had suggested that the Council and BET have a joint meeting to discuss the budget. Ms. Smyth said that she had also discussed this with Mr. Burnett and felt it was a good idea.

The next Section discussed was about the Planning and Zoning participation in the Budget process.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner said in Section 10-16, that there never had been a clear definition of what the reinstatement meant. She would rather see the provision to state that the Council would have the authority to reinstate projects that the Departments had submitted to the Mayor but did not make it into the Capital Plan. Discussion followed.

It was noted that there were also maintenance project in the Capital Budget. One suggestion was having the Capital Budget indicate maintenance and repair indicated so that the Council can consider it.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner said that the Council should have the ability to look at issues from a higher standpoint between the Mayor and the public.

Ms. Smyth stated that they would be holding Article 9 over to the next meeting.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner asked when they would be voting on the amendments. Mr. Goldstein said that it would be in July.

V. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. SEAD MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services