COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS
AND VIA TELECONFERENCE

I. CALL TO ORDER

Council President Smyth called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and led the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Dixon, Atty. Coppola and Atty. Mednick were also in attendance.

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 ten (10) in attendance. A quorum was present.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Diane Lauricella of Little Fox Lane came forward and greeted the Council Members. She thanked the Council and Atty. Mednick for their hard work. She noted that she did not always agree with Atty. Mednick, but was impressed by his work.

She requested that the four year term issue be listed as a separate item. She said that she would be contacting the League of Women Voters to requested them to reach out to their members and contacts about reading the Charter.

Ms. Lauricella said that she supports the larger Council because it would lighten the work load and have Council Members assigned to fewer committees. This would allow them more time to do more due diligence.

Ms. Lisa Brinton of Shorefront Park greeted the Council Members. She said that she was the Independent Party Town Chair. Since 2016, through three Democrat controlled Charter Revision Commissions, the public had begged the administration to improve and diversify the representation of the local government. She said that those were not Democrats and who spoke to the Commissions during those times were ignored, insulted or gaslighted. She said that she had compiled a great deal of research over the last decade and most of the Council had already seen it, heard and apparently don't care. She said she posted something her social media page of Save Norwalk Neighborhoods: Single party rule isn't working at national, state or local levels. Power corrupts & absolute power breeds mediocrity. 49% of Norwalk has no say in its local government. No transparency, no accountability. No Minority Party Representation despite most of the State having it. So, basically, it's going to be no to Charter Revision in November and the campaign starts tonight because with the continuation of ignoring what the public has asked for and dancing around the topic is just not fair. This is a blue state and a blue city, so 49% of the public is excluded. You are excluding half of the community and you have the opportunity to fix it. Every other city in Connecticut has it and Norwalk chooses not to. That's a shame. Thank you.

Mr. Richard Bonnefant of Parkfield Avenue greeted the Council Members and said that he had read some of the recommendations. He said that the plan appeared to be a power grab for four year terms and to be paid.

This Council has not seen a constituent at a Committee meeting in four years, since COVID, so they have totally lost touch. There are no committee meetings in person and they don't have to look people in the eye. He said that he did not think they should be allowed to vote remotely because someone could be at a Las Vegas gambling table and vote on half a billion dollar budget via an iPad.

He said that the important thing for a referendum signatures was not the number of signatures but the percentage of voters that turn out to vote on the issue. Thank you.

Ms. Diane Cece greeted the Council Members and said for the record that she would agree with Ms. Brinton's statement and would like a ditto on that for the minutes. She said she had been speaking up during each of the Commissions.

Ms. Cece said that it was a shame that there were some good Charter changes that had been proposed but essentially due to the issue of the four year term, they were likely to die an ugly death. This is unfortunate. Without State level changes to allow term limits, the four year term is not going to pass. It is insane that the Minority Party Representation was not being taken seriously.

She said that she modestly supported the changes for the referendum that have been proposed and felt that they would make a difference for the residents of Norwalk. As a resident, voter, taxpayer and an individual, she will unfortunately be doing her part to make sure these proposals do not pass. Thank you.

Ms. Smyth asked if there was anyone else who wished to address the Council. There was no response. She asked again. Hearing none, she closed the Public Hearing at 6:15 p.m.

IV. REVIEW PROPOSED CHARTER REVISION

A. Proposed Charter Revision Redline Version

Council President Smyth explained that this was a workshop and there would be no votes taken until the July 8th meeting. She said that they had invited Mr. Schmitt, the CFO, to the meeting to present to the Council.

Mr. Schmitt greeted the Council Members and reminded them that the Budget had not been finalized at this time. said that they had budgeted $4 million and had expected to add $8 million to the Fund Balance. He then gave a brief update on the current revenues and expense side including the allocation for the Board of Education from the City and the State.

He explained that prior to this coming fiscal year, the Board of Education has not allocated any funding for legal settlements. Going forward, they will allocate funding for this. The School Resource Officers will be covered by the Police Department.

Mr. Schmitt updated the Council on recent State funding, which will partially used for the Board of Education and also for Capital projects such as paving.

Ms. Ayers asked where the surplus funding from the City that was being given to the BOE would be in the Budget. Mr. Schmitt said that they will be transferring the funding from individual departments and then presented to the BET for approval before it is transferred to the BOE.

Ms. Wennerstrand asked if the $500,000 would be coming from the City. Mr. Schmitt said that the $500,000 would be coming from the State.

Mr. Goldstein asked about the amount of money that had been appropriated from the Fund Balance but not yet used. Mr. Schmitt reviewed the details with him. Mr. Frayer said that they shouldn't be too happy that they didn't use up all the Fund Balance allocation since they did have to use some of the Fund Balance.

Council President Smyth said that there had been a discussion about the word "reinstatement". Mr. Schmitt said he has spoken to Atty. Mednick and they had clarified the definition. He said that the process would start with the Mayor and work its way to the Council and through the appropriate Committees. The end goal is that everyone agrees. Discussion followed.

The discussion moved to Article XI, which addresses having the Charter reconvene on a regular schedule.

Mr. Goldstein said that holding a Charter Revision costs a lot of money. He felt that having the Commission every five years was unnecessary. Ms. Wennerstrand disagreed and said that with the technological changes, she felt it would make the Council seriously consider it. Discussion followed.

Atty. Mednick said that what the Council had done a few years ago had focused on putting in some flexibility. He agreed that there would be technological changes in the future, but reviewed what things had changed regarding the timeline and the ability to have additional Public

Hearings. He reminded everyone that this was the City's Constitution and encouraged them to let the new changes settle a bit. Atty. Mednick said he did not know of any other city that had a five year timeframe.

Mr. Clark said that there had been quite a discussion about this and there was quite a bit of unfinished business from this revision. He said that if the next Charter Commission got to a place where it seemed to be somewhat completed, they could change it to a ten year cycle.

Mr. Goldstein said that he really appreciated Mr. Clark's comment about having a brief summary before each chapter to outline what the chapter contains. Mr. Clark said that one of the residents had originally suggested it. Council President Smyth said that the Table of Content in the last revision was a major benefit.

Ms. Eaddy said that another resident had commented that it would be helpful to have the Charter in more readable language.

Ms. Dunn joined the meeting via phone.

Ms. Dunn said that she believed it was Mr. Chris Dunn who made the suggestion.

Ms. Ayer said that there had been quite a bit of controversy about the changes in the Charter and she felt that waiting for ten years between revisions was too long. They don't want to lose the knowledge between revisions.

There were no changes in Article XII and in Articles XIII and XIV would sunset. Atty. Mednick said that the Commission had moved the last two chapters had been moved into the appropriate sections of body so they would sunset and the Charter will become shorter.

Council President Smyth directed everyone's attention to Article IV and 4-7C, which addresses Council salaries. She noted that there would be some discussion but they might have to stop in the middle of the conversation because of time constraints.

Ms. Ayers said that Mr. Bonnefant had stated that this was a greed move. She said that the Council Members say they are volunteers and they work many long hours. She said that the $50 a month compensation was simply an acknowledgment of the worth of their work. Some people actually lose money by being on the Council.

Mr. Goldstein then reviewed the details of the language of the article with the Council Members. He said that he agreed with Ms. Ayers. Mr. Goldstein said that there was nothing in that section required a salary. Atty. Mednick agreed. He explained that if they wished to raise the compensation amount, they would have to do that through a referendum.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS WENNERSTRAND MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

ATTEST:_________________________
Irene Dixon, City Clerk