I. ROLL CALL

Mayor Harry W. Rilling called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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. Nicolé Eaddy	Ms. Anne Wennerstrand
District D:	Ms. Heather Dunn	Mr. Douglas W. Sutton
District E:	Mr. James Frayer	Ms. Lisa Shanahan

There were fifteen (15) present at Roll Call. Also present were Attorney Steve Mednick and City Clerk Irene Dixon.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Levin urged approval of the recommended changes into three separate referenda questions for voters to consider in November. He stated that the three parts should be four-year terms for the mayor, Council, and town clerk; compensation for Council members; and everything else. He expressed concern that the item on four-year terms is strongly opposed by some and could lead to efforts to defeat the entire charter revision, and voters should decide it as a standalone item.

Mr. Levin noted that Council pay has been kept at fifty dollars a month for five decades or more, and he had sent a letter sharing thoughts on how to fix it.

Mayor Rilling thanked Mr. Levin for his service on the commission.

III. ACTIONS PERTAINING TO THE FINAL REPORT OF THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

A. APPROVAL OR REJECTION, IN ITS ENTIRETY, OR IN SEPARATE PROVISIONS, THE FINAL REPORT OF THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION DATED AUGUST 12, 2025, INCLUDING THE RESPONSES TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMON COUNCIL;

Mr. Lopez made a motion to amend by striking Sections 3-4 A2 and 3-3 C2. He stated that while the law's intent was reasonable when enacted in 1974, Norwalk's current population, demographics, and economic growth now allow for competitive elections that foster civic engagement. He stated that extending the law beyond boards and commissions would limit voter choice and hinder democratic progress.

Mr. Mednick clarified that the motion is to strike the additional two members and the mode of election for those two members and keep the current at-large group at five, which Mr. Lopez confirmed, and also to strike section 3-3C2.

Mr. Sead stated that while he respects Mr. Lopez's opinion, many Norwalk residents feel underrepresented. He explained that the proposal ensures voter choice by allowing the public to elect all seven members while capping any single party at five seats, maintaining competitiveness regardless of party. He noted that this concern was raised repeatedly in public comments and emphasized that voters should have a say, as it strengthens representation.

Ms. Dunn mentioned that someone should be presenting the items while they are being discussed. Ms. Smyth noted that it is published in the agenda and they are trying to display it.

Mayor Rilling called for a roll call vote on the amendment to strike the sections. The clerk called the roll on the amendment. Mayor Rilling noted that the vote is on what Mr. Lopez is asking to be stricken from the report.

**** MR. LOPEZ MOVED TO AMEND THE FINAL REPORT BY STRIKING SECTIONS 3-4A2 AND 3-3C2.**

****ROLL CALL VOTE – YES: 9, OPPOSED: 6 (MS. NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER, MR. SEAD, MR. WIGGINS, MS. YOUNG, MS. DUNN, MS. AYERS).**

****THE MOTION PASSED 9-6. ****

This amendment restored the current structure of the Council at fifteen members with five at-large seats.

Mr. Goldstein made a motion to amend section 4-7C by striking the proposed language that each Council member receive no less than three percent of the mayor's budgeted salary and restoring the original language setting compensation at six hundred dollars annually.

Mr. Wiggins spoke in support of the provision, emphasizing equity and accessibility. He stated that service on the Council currently requires significant time and commitment, and higher compensation would enable a broader and more diverse group of residents to participate.

Ms. Ayers echoed this sentiment, noting that equity and respect for time are central. She stressed that many residents were unaware of the issue and that postponing a charter change would incur additional costs in the future. She urged the Council to allow voters the opportunity to decide.

Mr. Burnett stated that the term "compensation" was misleading, given the disproportion between Council workload and payment. He clarified that the proposal was not self-serving, as it would not take effect until 2029, but was intended to make service more accessible for future members.

Mr. Wiggins noted he and his colleagues often commit over 20 hours per week to Council service, and that $50 a month was symbolic at best, costing nearly as much to distribute as the amount itself.

Ms. Smyth expressed deep conflict but ultimately opposed the measure, citing the burden on constituents struggling with tax increases and the larger cost-of-living pressures.

Mr. Sead countered, noting that compensation could help encourage single parents and others with financial pressures to serve. He argued there would never be a "right" time politically and urged the Council to take the step now.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner framed the issue more broadly, saying the low stipend reflects a societal failure to value the legislative body. Even if the increase was modest, it was a step toward strengthening Council as a co-equal check and balance in municipal government.

Ms. Young said the current level was insulting given inflation and demanded overdue adjustment. She stressed diversity of voices at the table and supported compensation as a matter of fairness.

Mr. Goldstein and Ms. Smyth expressed concerns with optics during a period of property tax increases.

**** MR. GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO AMEND THE FINAL REPORT TO STRIKE THE LANGUAGE IN SECTION 4-7C THAT PROVIDED FOR COUNCIL COMPENSATION AT 3% OF THE MAYOR'S SALARY, AND TO RESTORE THE PRIOR REFERENCE TO $600 ANNUAL COMPENSATION.**

****ROLL CALL VOTE – YES: 7, OPPOSED: 8 (MR. BURNETT, MS. NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER, MS. AYERS, MR. SEAD, MR. WIGGINS, MS. YOUNG, MS. EADDY, MS. WENNERSTRAND).**

****THE MOTION FAILED 7-8.**

The compensation increases provision remains in the draft Charter Revision to be placed before the voters in November.

Ms. Shanahan made a motion to amend the final report by striking section 7-2A3, which pertains to the political and geographical balance of the Board of Estimate and Taxation. Ms. Shanahan expressed support for the measure's intent to ensure representation from each district but noted that it lacks a fail-safe provision in case a qualified candidate cannot be found from a specific district. Ms. Shanahan proposed that a two-thirds vote of the Council should be allowed to override the geographic distribution requirement, allowing the appointment of a candidate from another district if necessary.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner acknowledged Ms. Shanahan's concerns but emphasized the importance of district representation on the Board of Estimate and Taxation, arguing that the City's caliber of residents makes it unlikely to face significant challenges in finding candidates. The Council member suggested that while a fail-safe would be ideal, the priority of ensuring district representation outweighs the risk, and the issue could be addressed by a future charter commission.

Mr. Burnett countered this view, drawing on his experience serving on the Board of Estimate and Taxation for two cycles, noting that the board has faced challenges filling seats due to the significant work, long meetings, and expertise required.

Mr. Lopez also supported the motion, stating that while the requirement for district representation is fair in principle, in practice, it could undermine representation and create operational challenges for the board if districts cannot meet the quota.

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO STRIKE SECTION 7-2A3 REGARDING POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC BALANCE OF THE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION.**

****ROLL CALL VOTE – YES: 8, OPPOSED: 7 (MR. GOLDSTEIN, MS. NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER, MS. AYERS, MR. SEAD, MR. WIGGINS, MS. YOUNG, MS. EADDY).**

****THE MOTION PASSED 8-7.**

This maintained the current status of BET membership without the new requirements.

Mr. Sead moved to strike Sections 3-4A1 and 3-4A2, eliminating the proposed change to four-year terms for Mayor, Council, and Town Clerk. Debate ensued, with members expressing both concern about public perception and support for providing voters with the choice.

**** MR. SEAD MOVED TO STRIKE SECTIONS 3-4A1 AND 3-4A2 REGARDING FOUR-YEAR TERMS FOR MAYOR, COUNCIL, AND TOWN CLERK.**

****ROLL CALL VOTE – YES: 5, OPPOSED: 10 (MR. BURNETT, MR. GOLDSTEIN, MR. LOPEZ, MS. NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER, MS. SMYTH, MR. WIGGINS, MS. WENNERSTRAND, MR. SUTTON, MR. FRAYER, MS. SHANAHAN).**

****THE MOTION FAILED 5-10.**

The four-year term provision remained for referendum placement.

The Council then voted on the Final Report, as amended.

****ROLL CALL VOTE – YES: 9 (MR. BURNETT, MR. LOPEZ, MR. WIGGINS, MS. WENNERSTRAND, MS. DUNN, MR. SUTTON, MR. FRAYER, MS. SHANAHAN, NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER) OPPOSED: 6 (MR. GOLDSTEIN, MS.**

SMYTH, MR. SEAD, MS. AYERS, MS. YOUNG, MS. EADDY).

****THE MOTION PASSED 9-6.**

Motion to Reconsider
Earlier, the Council voted (9–6) to strike charter provisions on minority party representation (Sections 3-4A2 & 3-3C2). Later, unease arose that voters should still have a say.

It was clarified that Mason's Rules (used by Norwalk) permit reconsideration at the same meeting and don't limit it to the prevailing side. Several members objected, saying no new information justified a redo and warned about a bad precedent of "re-voting."

****MR. SEAD MOVED TO RECONSIDER THAT EARLIER STRIKE.**

****ROLL CALL VOTE: YES: 2 (MR. SEAD, MS. NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER). OPPOSED: 12. ABSTAIN: 1 (MS. AYERS).**

****MOTION TO RECONSIDER FAILED (2–12–1).**

The prior decision to strike those provisions stands; they will not appear on the ballot.

B. APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF, IN ACCORDANCE WITH C.G.S. §7-191(e) AND THE FOLLOWING QUESTION TO BE PLACED ON THE BALLOT FOR A REFERENDUM TO BE HELD ON THE GENERAL ELECTION OF NOVEMBER 4, 2025 (NOTE: SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION BY THE COMMON COUNCIL IN DELIBERATIONS. THE BALLOT MAY INCLUDE ONE OR MORE QUESTIONS): SHALL THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF NORWALK APPROVE AND ADOPT THE REVISIONS TO THE CHARTER AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION AND AS APPROVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL?

Mr. Frayer's phone lost service; therefore, he was no longer a part of the meeting.

The Council drafted and finalized the ballot referendum questions.

**** MS. NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER MOVED TO APPROVE THREE BALLOT QUESTIONS SUBJECT TO MINOR REVISIONS.**

****ROLL CALL VOTE – YES: 11, OPPOSED: 3 (MR. BURNETT, MS. DUNN, MS. SHANAHAN).**

****THE MOTION PASSED (13-1).**

After an extended discussion, the Council agreed to present three questions to voters.

The three approved questions addressed:

1. Shall the Charter be revised to (A) Change the name of the Common Council to "City Council" (B) reduce petition requirements to facilitate public referenda; (C) create a public applicant pool to publicize Board and Commission vacancies; (D) permit separate expenditure caps on the general government and board of education; (E) establish authority to expand the Board of Estimate Taxation to include a member of the Common Council as a non-voting ex-officio member; and (F0 other revisions building upon the 2023 Charter revision?
2. Shall the Charter be revised to create a four-year term for Mayor and Town Clerk in the 2029 municipal election and the Council in the 2031 municipal election?
3. Shall the Charter be amended to provide each member of the Council with compensation in an amount equal to three percent of the Mayor's budgeted salary following the 2029 municipal election, to be modified from time to time in accordance with the requirements of the State Constitution?

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED TO APPROVE THE LANGUAGE FOR THE THREE BALLOT QUESTIONS.**

****ROLL CALL VOTE – YES: 13, OPPOSED: 1 (MS. SHANAHAN).**

****THE MOTION PASSED 13-1.**

C. APPROVAL OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE AS SET FORTH IN THE FINAL REPORT: "UPON ADOPTION BY A MAJORITY OF THE ELECTORS" UNLESS OTHERWISE SET FORTH IN THE CHARTER."

D. AUTHORIZE THE TOWN CLERK TO PUBLISH THE PROPOSED REVISED CHARTER IN A NEWSPAPER HAVING GENERAL CIRCULATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY WITH A NOTICE THAT A COMPLETE COPY OF THE CHARTER IS AVAILABLE IN THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE AND THAT A COPY BE MAILED TO ANY PERSON WHO REQUESTS A COPY, AS REQUIRED BY C.G.S. §7-191(D) AND, MOREOVER, A COPY OF SAID CHARTER SHALL BE AVAILABLE ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE: AND,

E. AUTHORIZE THE CORPORATION COUNSEL AND CHARTER COUNSEL TO CONTINUALLY REVIEW THE DOCUMENT FOR ERRATA AND NON-SUBSTANTIVE EDITORIAL REVISIONS THROUGH PUBLICATION; AND,

F. AUTHORIZE, PURSUANT TO C.G.S. §9-369B(A), THE TOWN CLERK, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF CHARTER COUNSEL, TO PREPARE AN EXPLANATORY TEXT SPECIFYING THE INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED REVISED CHARTER THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THE BALLOT QUESTION THAT WILL BE VOTED UPON ON NOVEMBER 4, 2025. SAID FINAL TEXT IS SUBJECT TO APPROVAL OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL.

The Council agreed to vote on Items C, D, E and F together. There was no further discussion.

**** MS. NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER MOVED TO APPROVE ITEMS C–F.**

****ROLL CALL VOTE – YES: 14**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary