

Council at Large:

Mr. Joshua Goldstein
Mr. Johan Lopez
Ms. Nicole Ayers

Jesse Buccolo
Colin Hosten

District A:

Mr. Jalin Sead

Mr. Broderick Sawyer

District B:

Mr. Dajuan Wiggins

Ms. Darlene Young

District C:

Ms. Nicolé Eaddy

Ms. Anne Wennerstrand

District D:

Jan Degenshein

Richard Dellinger

District E:

Mr. James Frayer

Brian Bailey

The special organizational meeting of the City Council was called to order by Mayor Smyth, and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Elbourne conducted roll call. All members were present, and a quorum was established.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. John Levin, 249 Chestnut Hill Road, congratulated Mayor Smyth and the City Council members on their election victories. He noted the unanimous control of the legislative body by one party and expressed hope that the Council would follow Mayor Smyth's commitment to transparency by conducting debates in public when necessary, ensuring agendas clearly convey matters, and sharing related materials timely with the public.

Ms. Diane Lauricella, 21 Little Fox Lane, congratulated all and wished Mayor Smyth success. She offered advice for Council members to facilitate robust discussion by asking follow-up questions in committee meetings and on agenda items, requesting in-person meetings or Zoom video on during public speaking, allowing more than three minutes for public comment when appropriate, returning constituent calls promptly, holding special meetings for committee plans, and engaging neutral professional advice on issues such as the safety of artificial turf when appropriate.

No further public participation occurred. Public participation was closed.

III. MAYOR

A. APPOINTMENTS

1. Announcement of Corporation Counsel

Mayor Smyth announced Mario Coppola as Corporation Counsel.

2. Announcement of City Clerk

Mayor Smyth announced Marsha Elbourne as City Clerk.

3. Appointment of Division Chief: Jared D. Schmitt, Chief Financial Officer

Mayor Smyth moved the appointment of Jared D. Schmitt as Chief Financial Officer, noting his strong performance, innovative approaches to budget challenges, and transparency.

Mr. Frayer spoke in support, highlighting Mr. Schmitt's handling of budget issues, innovative methods to minimize tax impact, hardworking staff, openness, and focus on economies of scale.

Ms. Young echoed the comments, praising Mr. Schmitt's accessibility, willingness to answer questions, wealth of knowledge, and openness.

**** MAYOR SMYTH MOTIONED TO APPOINT JARED D. SCHMITT AS
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. Appointment of Division Chief: Vanessa Valadares, P.E., Chief of Public Works & Operations

Mayor Smyth moved the appointment of Vanessa Valadares as Chief of Public Works & Operations, noting her long service as Chief Engineer, excellent performance in the role, dedication, and efficiency on a limited budget.

Mr. Frayer spoke in support, describing the vast scope of the department, Ms. Valadares's supervision of a large and diverse staff, innovative approaches to save money, management of a major budget item with minimal increases, and personal involvement during inclement weather.

Ms. Young spoke in support, noting that Ms. Valadares is the first woman in the position, has set a high bar, demonstrates professionalism, and excels in a traditionally male-dominated field.

**** MAYOR SMYTH MOTIONED TO APPOINT VANESSA VALADARES AS
CHIEF OF PUBLIC WORKS & OPERATIONS.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. Appointment of Division Chief: Sharon Torres, Chief Human Resources Officer

Mayor Smyth moved the appointment of Sharon Torres as Chief Human Resources Officer, noting her strong background in HR and positive early interactions despite her relatively short tenure.

Ms. Young spoke in support, stating the appointment was the right decision for employee morale after a prolonged vacancy, that filling the position was not easy, and expressing hope that Ms. Torres remains long-term to address needs in the department.

**** MAYOR SMYTH MOTIONED TO APPOINT SHARON TORRES AS CHIEF
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. Appointment of Division Chief: Jay Habansky, AICP, Chief of Economic and Community Development

Mayor Smyth moved the appointment of Jay Habansky as Chief of Economic and Community Development, noting his strong performance, contributions to small business growth, knowledge of zoning, and plans to improve enforcement.

Mr. Goldstein spoke in support, describing Mr. Habansky as conscientious, ambitious, forward-thinking, responsive, and a strong leader who has delivered extraordinary work, including events, online permitting, and joining CMDA for increased school reimbursement.

****MAYOR SMYTH MOTIONED TO APPOINT JAY HABANSKY AS CHIEF OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. MAYOR'S REMARKS

Mayor Smyth wished everyone a happy and healthy New Year, congratulated the Council members, and expressed enthusiasm for working together to move Norwalk forward. She reiterated her commitment to govern out loud, improve communications with constituents, and collaborate with all departments on issues including the budget. She announced a Joint Finance and Claims Committee meeting with the Board of Education Finance Committee on January 8, 2026, at 6:00 PM to review priorities and challenges.

IV. COUNCIL PRESIDENT

A. GENERAL COUNCIL BUSINESS

1. Election of Council President

Nominations were opened.

Mr. Sead nominated Mr. Goldstein, praising his willingness to engage in conversation, proactive outreach, and ability to handle tough discussions.

Ms. Young nominated Mr. Lopez, highlighting his conscientious service, community engagement, dedication, vision, innovation, and integrity.

No further nominations were made.

A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Goldstein received 11 votes & Mr. Lopez received 3 votes.

Mr. Goldstein was elected Council President.

Mr. Goldstein thanked the Council for their support, acknowledged Councilmember Lopez for making the election a robust contest of ideas, and expressed eagerness to work with all members.

2. Announcement of Majority Leader

Council President Goldstein announced Mr. Sead as Majority Leader.

3. Adoption of Council Rules

****THE MOTION WAS MADE TO ADOPT THE COUNCIL RULES.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. REMARKS

Mr. Wiggins thanked both Council President Goldstein and Mr. Lopez for their candidacy and expressed enthusiasm for working with Council President Goldstein and Majority Leader Sead.

V. ADJOURNMENT

****MS. YOUNG MADE THE MOTION TO ADJOURN.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 PM.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin,
Recording Secretary**