

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK SHELLFISH COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 8, 2026**

ATTENDANCE: Steve Bartush (Chair), Jonathan Pageler, Pete Johnson, Mark Hiller, Nick Sacchinelli (6:34 pm).

STAFF: Bill Mooney, Assistant Director of Health.

OTHERS: Geoff Steadman, Consultant.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Bartush called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm. A quorum was present.

II. ROLL CALL

A roll call of those present was performed.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. REGULAR MEETING: DECEMBER 4, 2025

****MR. PAGELER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.
**MR. HILLER SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

V. REPORTS

A. TREASURER

Mr. Mooney reported that there have been no transactions. The balance remains \$28,650.

B. SECRETARY

Mr. Bartush reported that the Maritime Aquarium submitted a brief proposal to establish a small educational oyster area at the southeast corner of Veterans Park. He noted this is a small scale project for children, separate from the larger initiative previously discussed. Mr. Bloom has been

consulted and supports the concept. A representative of the Maritime Aquarium will be invited to the February meeting so preparations can begin in warmer weather.

He and Mr. Mooney contacted a potential additional vendor for shellfish permits, Ben at All American Bait and Tackle, who previously expressed interest. Permits are now available for issuance. He noted the permit design has changed to collect more information. Mr. Mooney also helped set up a Shellfish Commission email account for educational updates.

Mr. Bartush announced that the State Gathering of Shellfish Commissions will be held on Saturday, January 24th, at the New Haven Agricultural Experiment Station. Members interested in attending should reply to Mr. Mooney's email. Mr. Johnson encouraged participation.

C. HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Mr. Mooney reported that December rainfall measured 3.4 inches, compared to 6.05 inches last year and a historical average of 4.06 inches. The average rainfall for 2025 was 2.95 inches. There were three closures on Cook's Ground due to rainfall exceeding 0.5 inches on December 2, 19, and 29. No bypasses were reported.

D. WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

There was no report.

E. WATER QUALITY

Mr. Bartush stated that he will reach out to the Mayor once her schedule settles to discuss her thoughts on reinvigorating the Mayor's Water Quality Committee. On behalf of the Commission, he offered congratulations on her inauguration and noted that she is welcome to attend a meeting at any time.

F. PERMITS

Mr. Bartush provided an update as part of the Secretary's Report.

G. POLICE

Mr. Bartush reported that Sergeant Bisceglie conducted a brief investigation regarding a boat straying onto grounds not associated with it. The investigation determined there was no issue. He expressed appreciation for the Police Department's vigilance in light of another alleged case.

H. ADVISORY

The water temperature is currently around 39 degrees.

I. HARBOR MANAGEMENT

Mr. Steadman reported on the update to the Norwalk River Watershed Initiative plan, noting low attendance at the December 17th public meeting but productive discussion on policies related to stormwater runoff, resilience, and balancing development with environmental protection. He highlighted continued support from the Harbor Management and Shellfish Commissions and the importance of reviewing and commenting on the final draft when released.

He stated that DEEP issued the stewardship permit for the Manresa Island remediation, clarifying the property owner's responsibility for both land and marine sediment contamination. Two local applications remain pending: an Inland Wetlands designation change scheduled for a public hearing and a coastal site plan review not yet referred to the Harbor Management Commission. Dr. Pinto plans to follow up.

Mr. Steadman noted upcoming opportunities at the Shellfish Commission gathering to discuss Harbor Commission authority and ongoing legislative efforts to clarify that authority with support sought from the Connecticut Port Authority. He also referenced an upcoming meeting in Greenwich with DEEP regarding a proposed dock on a natural shellfish bed and related questions about hearing requirements and Shellfish Commission authority.

He reported that the Connecticut Port Authority will cap future grants at \$400,000, though Norwalk should still consider applying. He concluded by noting the volume of ongoing work and its importance to the public interest.

****MR. PAGELER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

****MR. SACCHINELLI SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

VIII. DISCUSSION

Mr. Steadman noted that in Stamford, the Harbor Commission also acts as the Shellfish Commission and previously leased a natural shellfish bed for commercial use, with fees supporting the Harbor Management fund. The terms were developed with the Bureau of Aquaculture, and the arrangement supports both revenue and cultivation of commercial beds.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

****MR. SACCHINELLI MOVED TO ADJOURN.
**MR. PAGELER SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

February 5, 2026.

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm.