

AGENDA

SPECIAL MEETING - BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION

August 21, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone, Zoom, and/or the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at

www.norwalkct.gov/meetings



Members of the public can call in and listen to a meeting. They will not be able to speak or see any of the meeting participants. Each meeting will use a unique Meeting/Webinar ID. Please find the information using the link above.



Members of the public who wish to view the meeting, but are not participating, can view a live stream on the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. This stream is delayed by approximately 20 seconds. Please find the information using the link above. The meeting recording and minutes will be posted on the City of Norwalk website within seven (7) days after the meeting.

Item 1:

RESOLUTION: Requesting a special capital appropriation in the amount of \$2,900,000 for the Norwalk Public Schools for the acquisition of 6 properties abutting the proposed South Norwalk School and other project related purposes.

Item 2:

1. ACTION REQUESTED:

a. Recommend the allocation of \$2,900,000.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds to the Norwalk Public Schools for the acquisition of 6 properties abutting the proposed South Norwalk School as identified herein this memo.

b. Recommend the reduction of \$2,900,000 from free balance in the Jefferson School Improvement Project – capital budget account # 0919-205010 5777 C0619

2. ACTION REQUESTED:

a. Revise the project description for capital budget account # 092-06210 5777 C0662.

Current: Funding for building programming phase with design options

Proposed: Funding for building programming phase with design options and property acquisition

This project was approved in FYE 2020 with a budget of \$450,000, no actuals to date.

b. Revise the project description for capital budget account # 092-16210 5777 C0662.

Current: Belden Ave Library Expansion – Architectural Services

Proposed: Belden Ave Library Expansion – Architectural Services and property acquisition

This project was approved in FYE 2021 with a budget of \$1,570,000, no actuals to date.



CITY OF NORWALK
Tom Ellis
Director of Management & Budgets
tellis@norwalkct.gov

Office: 203-854-7708
125 East Avenue, PO BOX 5125
Norwalk, CT 06856-5125

MEMORANDUM

August 21, 2023

To: Members of the Board of Estimate & Taxation
Members of the Planning Commission
Members of the Common Council

From: Tom Ellis, Director of Management & Budgets 

Re: Special Capital Appropriation Request from Buildings and Facilities
Department for \$2,900,000 for the acquisition of land abutting the South
Norwalk School.

Attached is a request from the Norwalk Buildings and Facilities Department for a special capital appropriation in the amount of \$2,900,000.

Last year, the City acquired the old Hatch and Bailey Lumber Company's property at 1 Meadow Street Extension for a new South Norwalk Elementary School. The property is 11.7 acres. The new pre-kindergarten to fifth grade school will have a maximum capacity of 682 students with the intended occupancy at approximately 85% of capacity. The proposed building will be two stories for a total of approximately 86,000 square feet. The City has allocated \$76,000,000 for land acquisition and development of the new school. We are scheduled to go out for bid by the end of 2023, start construction through the winter, and complete by August of 2025.

The current site design meets the basic vehicle traffic, parking and open space needs when the school opens, anticipating that 4th and 5th grades attendance will lag behind for two years. Acquisition of additional properties along Oxford Street and South Main Street is essential to enhance both vehicular and student access into the property, will provide additional parking and will provide open space meeting the needs of full occupancy of the school. The acquisition of property along South Main Street will allow right-of-way improvements by Traffic, Mobility and Parking Department to remove existing sightline obstruction by the modification of travel lane and reconfiguration of the intersection at the South Main Street/Meadow Street/ Wilson Avenue/Meadow Street Extension.

The amount of \$2,900,000 is being requested at this time. It is anticipated that additional funds would be required in the future to cover final purchase prices, relocation costs and site development costs that are not included in current budgets. It is important to note that as the State has approved this project for a specific amount, this additional cost will likely not be reimbursable.

In an effort to help manage the City's overall capital debt, we have identified a remaining free balance from the Jefferson School improvement project in the same amount that can be used to support the proposed land acquisition. Further details are included in the attached memorandum from Building Management & Facilities dated August 7th, 2023.

We are also seeking approval to modify the description of two existing projects as noted in Resolution #2 below.

RESOLUTION:

1. ACTION REQUESTED:

a. Recommend the allocation of \$2,900,000.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds to the Norwalk Public Schools for the acquisition of 6 properties abutting the proposed South Norwalk School as identified herein this memo.

b. Recommend the reduction of \$2,900,000 from free balance in the Jefferson School Improvement Project – capital budget account # 0919-205010 5777 C0619

2. ACTION REQUESTED:

a. Revise the project description for capital budget account # 092-06210 5777 C0662.

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Finance recommends approval.



CITY OF NORWALK
Office of the Mayor

P: 203-854-7701 / F: 203-854-7939

125 East Avenue, PO BOX 5125
Norwalk, CT 06856-5125

MEMORANDUM

August 21, 2023

To: Members of the Board of Estimate & Taxation
Members of the Planning Commission
Members of the Common Council

From: Harry Rilling, Mayor 

Re: Special Capital Appropriation Request from Buildings and Facilities
Department for \$2,900,000 for the acquisition of land abutting the South
Norwalk School.

Attached is a request from the Norwalk Buildings and Facilities Department for a special capital appropriation in the amount of \$2,900,000.

Last year, the City acquired the old Hatch and Bailey Lumber Company's property at 1 Meadow Street Extension for a new South Norwalk Elementary School. The new pre-kindergarten to fifth grade school will have a maximum capacity of 682 students with the intended occupancy at approximately 85% of capacity. The City has allocated \$76,000,000 for land acquisition and development of the new school. We are scheduled to go out for bid by the end of 2023, start construction through the winter, and complete by August of 2025.

The current site design meets the basic vehicle traffic, parking and open space needs when the school opens. Acquisition of additional properties along Oxford Street and South Main Street is essential to enhance both vehicular and student access into the property, will provide additional parking and will provide open space meeting the needs of full occupancy of the school. The acquisition of property along South Main Street will also allow right-of-way improvements by Traffic, Mobility and Parking Department to remove existing sightline obstruction by the modification of travel lane and reconfiguration of the intersection at the South Main Street/Meadow Street/ Wilson Avenue/Meadow Street Extension.

The amount of \$2,900,000 is being requested at this time. It is anticipated that additional funds would be required in the future to cover final purchase prices, relocation costs and site development costs that are not included in current budgets. It is important to note that as the State has approved this project for a specific amount, this additional cost will likely not be reimbursable.

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RESOLUTION:

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CITY OF NORWALK
Alan Lo, Buildings and Facilities Manager
alo@norwalkct.org P: 203-854-7877
Norwalk City Hall
125 East Avenue, PO Box 5125
Norwalk, CT 06856-5125

TO : MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING
HENRY DACHOWITZ, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

FROM: ALAN LO, BUILDING AND FACILITIES MANAGER

RE : SPECIAL APPROPRIATION - LAND ACQUISITION
ABUTTING SOUTH NORWALK SCHOOL

DATE: AUGUST 7, 2023

As you know, the South Norwalk School project team is working expeditiously on the development of this project. We have completed the design development phase and are currently preparing construction documents. Although the current design generally meets project requirements, the acquisition of an additional six abutting properties is essential in meeting school's needs for open space, public roadway vehicular access, safe route to school and internal vehicular circulation/parking including pick-up/drop-off.

For more the 50 years, the City of Norwalk through Norwalk Board of Education has provided public school busing for South Norwalk students with access to schools throughout the City. Columbus School became a magnet school in meeting student enrollment demographics of the City. With changes in the demographics in the Norwalk community through the years, there is significant need to provide a South Norwalk neighborhood elementary school.

Last year, the City acquired the old Hatch and Bailey Lumber Company's property at 1 Meadow Street Extension for a new South Norwalk Elementary School. The property is 11.7 acres. The new pre-kindergarten to fifth grade school will have a maximum capacity of 682 students with the intended occupancy at approximately 85% of capacity. The proposed building will be two stories for a total of approximately 86,000 square feet. The City has allocated \$76,000,000 for land acquisition and development of the new school. This project will benefit from the

2022 State's Special Legislative Action which granted the City of Norwalk a new reimbursable rate of 60% in lieu of 33% for renovation work and 22% for new construction. We are scheduled to go out for bid by the end of 2023, start construction through the winter and complete by August of 2025.

The current site design meets the basic vehicle traffic, parking and open space needs when the school opens, anticipating that 4th and 5th grades attendance will lag behind for two years. Acquisition of additional properties along Oxford Street and South Main Street is essential to enhance both vehicular and student access into the property, will provide additional parking and will provide open space meeting the needs of full occupancy of the school. The acquisition of property along South Main Street will allow right-of-way improvements by Traffic, Mobility and Parking Department to remove existing sightline obstruction by the modification of travel lane and reconfiguration of the intersection at the South Main Street/Meadow Street/Wilson Avenue/Meadow Street Extension.

Attached is a site plan showing the properties. On August 2, 2023, the Land Use and Building Management Committee recommended to proceed with the acquisition of these properties. Introduction letters expressing the City's interest have been sent to the property owners and we had initial meetings with most of the property owners. The Law Department has received two set of appraisals from two independent appraisal companies establishing current appraised values.

At this time, I would like to initiate the Special Capital Appropriation process to allocate funds for the acquisition of the six abutting properties listed below.

- (1) 28 Oxford Street, Norwalk, CT
- (2) 32 Oxford Street, Norwalk, CT
- (3) 36 Oxford Street, Norwalk, CT
- (4) 38 Oxford Street, Norwalk, CT
- (5) 16 Meadow Street Ext., Norwalk, CT
- (6) A portion of real property identified as Portion of Parcel A to be Deeded to the City of Norwalk, Area = 44,338 s.f.± (1.01786 Acres), and Portion of Lots 8 & 9 to be Deeded to the City of Norwalk, Area = 4,426 s.f.± (0.10161 Acres) on and as shown in a certain map entitled "Boundary Survey (Parcel A and

Lots 8 & 9)" Scale 1" = 30' dated July 27, 2023 prepared by Langan CT, Inc., on file in Building Management Department of the City of Norwalk.

The amount of \$2,900,000.00 is being requested at this time. It is anticipated that additional funds would be required in the future to cover final purchase prices, relocation costs and site development costs that are not included in current budgets. It is important to note that as the State has approved this project for a specific project amount, this additional cost will probably not be reimbursable.

In an effort to manage the City's overall capital debt, we have identified a remaining free balance from the Jefferson School improvement project in the same amount that can be used to support the proposed land acquisition.

ACTION REQUESTED:

- a. **Recommend the allocation of \$2,900,000.00 in Special Capital Appropriation funds to the Norwalk Public Schools for the acquisition of 6 properties abutting the proposed South Norwalk School as identified herein this memo.**
- b. **Recommend the reduction of \$2,900,000 from free balance in the Jefferson School Improvement Project – capital budget account #0919/205010 5777 C0619**

CC: Greg Burnett, President of Norwalk Common Council
Barbare Smyth, Chair, Land Use and Building Management Committee
Tom Livingston, Chief-of-Staff
Darin Callahan, Assistant Corporation Counsel
Tom Ellis, Budget Director
Dr. Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent of Schools
Sandra Faioes, Assistant Superintendent
Lunda Asmani, CFO, NPS
JoAnn Acquarulo, Assistant Facilities Manager
Dan Phillips, Project Manager

