

ALL COMMON COUNCIL ACTIONS TAKEN AT THIS MEETING TO APPROVE EXPENDITURES AND CONTRACTS OR TO ACCEPT BIDS AND OTHER PROPOSALS REQUIRING THE EXPENDITURE OF CITY FUNDS ARE SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

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I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. and led the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Roundtree called the roll:

Council at Large: Mr. Gregory Burnett Mr. Edwin Camacho
 Mr. Joshua Goldstein Ms. Nora Niedzielski Eichner
 Ms. Barbara Smyth

District A: Ms. Nicol Ayers Mr. David Heuvelman

District B: Ms. Diana Revolus Ms. Darlene Young

District C: Ms. Jenn McMurrer

District D:

District E: Ms. Lisa Shanahan (7:14 p.m.)

At Roll Call there were ten (10) Common Councilmembers present and five (5) absent (Ms. Alterman; Mr. Frayer; Mr. Kydes; Mr. Meek; Ms. Shanahan). A Quorum was present.

Also present were Mayor, Harry Rilling; Assistant City Clerk, Zulma Roundtree and Corporation Counsel, Mario Coppola.

Charter Revision Commission members present were: Ms. Patsy Brescia, Chair; Mr. Carl Dickens; Mr. Tyler Fairbairn; Ms. Benita Watford Raleigh and Mr. Steven Mednick Commission Counsel.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation comments are not verbatim and represent a summarization of statements unless otherwise noted. Speakers are Norwalk residents unless otherwise noted.

Ms. Moina Noor, Norwalk Public Library Board President, urged the Common Council to reconsider the final approval of the Charter as it stands. She addressed the provision in the revised Charter giving the Mayor the authority to approve the position of Library Director. She said she was surprised to see that this provision was made without consulting with the Library Board.

Ms. Noor noted that by placing the sole power to the Mayor there is the risk of losing the neutrality of the appointment. It is customary for the Library Board to interview candidates for this position and present three candidates to the Mayor for consideration.

Mr. Alex Knopp, Norwalk Public Library Board member urged the Common Council delete the criteria where the Mayor solely appoints the Library Director. He said he supports Ms. Noor's comments. Mr. Knopp said he sent a statement detailing his concerns to all members of the

Common Council. He added this issue has nothing to do with the excellent performance of the current Executive Director. The issue is about protecting the independence of the Library from outside political bias. He said this provision was added to the Charter without notice to the Library Board and there is nothing to be lost by deleting it and nothing to be gained by rushing into this decision without input from the Library Board.

There were no other members of the public who wished to comment.

IV. TO ACT UPON THE RESOLUTION ON THE FINAL REPORT OF THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION, 9 AUGUST 2023 (SEE FINAL REPORT IN BACKUP); WHICH INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS

Ms. Shanahan joined the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

- ** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO SEPARATE ITEM IV INTO FOUR SECTIONS**
- ** MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER SECONDED**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. BURNETT; MR. CAMACHO; MR. GOLDSTEIN; MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER; MS. SMYTH; MS. AYERS; MR. HEUVELMAN; MS. REVOLUS; MS. YOUNG; MS. MCMURRER; MS. SHANAHAN)**

- ** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO REMOVE SECTION 8.2. FROM THE CHARTER AND RECOMMEND THAT IT BE ADDRESSED DURING THE UPCOMING CHARTER REVISION**

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said the section addressing the Library Director was added as a recommendation. Attorney Mednick provided clarity and referenced title 11 and said this would be a shared authorization with the Mayor appointing and the Common Council approving the appointment. He said the Charter Revision Commission added language to make it clear that the process was consistent with the rest of the City.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said she did not feel strongly about this, but thinks this provision was added so the Common Council would have a voice in this position. She said she was not comfortable with an absence of clarity. Mr. Heuvelman said he had reservations about removing this provision. It is important for this department to be a part of the City and waiting two years, is kicking the can down the road.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said the Library Director is a City employee and overseen by the City. A City employee should have the same process as all other City employees. She said she is not talking about the person in the position, but if they wait for this to go to the Ordinance Committee, it could be another two years. She asked how they are supposed to move forward without clarity.

Mr. Camacho said the lack of clarity is not in the best interest of the City. He said he believes the concerns of the Board can be addressed in an Ordinance or in a future Charter Revision. He said that because of a lack of clarity, he will vote no on eliminating the provision.

Mr. Goldstein said it was important to provide clarity and will be voting no on removing the provision where this position will be appointed in the same way all other department heads are appointed.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO PROPERLY STATE THE ACTUAL SECTION AS 8.2.A.3.M AS THE SECTION BEING CONSIDERED FOR REMOVAL**

**** MS. YOUNG SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. BURNETT; MR. CAMACHO; MR. GOLDSTEIN; MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER; MS. SMYTH; MS. AYERS; MR. HEUVELMAN; MS. REVOLUS; MS. YOUNG; MS. MCMURRER; MS. SHANAHAN)**

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED THE ITEM AS AMENDED**

Ms. McMurrer asked what act would be taken if they vote to remove this provision. Mayor Rilling said that last time, he worked closely with the Library Board. Ms. McMurrer said she was uneasy about the unclarity. The whole purpose of the Charter Revision was to provide clarity. She said she will be voting no.

**** MOTION FAILED BY ROLL CALL VOTE WITH ONE (1) VOTE IN FAVOR (MR. BURNETT) AND TEN (10) VOTES IN OPPOSITION (MR. CAMACHO; MR. GOLDSTEIN; MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER; MS. SMYTH; MS. AYERS; MR. HEUVELMAN; MS. REVOLUS; MS. YOUNG; MS. MCMURRER; MS. SHANAHAN)**

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO TAKE ACTION ON THE FINAL REPORT OF THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION, DATED AUGUST 9, 2023**.**

**** MR. CAMACHO SECONDED**

Members of the Common Council expressed their gratitude to all involved in the charter revision, specifically Mr. Burnett, Mr. Livingston, Ms. Niedzielski Eichner, Mr. Mednick and the members of the Charter Revision Commission.

Mayor Rilling said his was a remarkable moment for Norwalk. He expressed his thanks to Mr. Mednick and the members of the Charter Revision Commission and the members of the Common Council. He said that in 1975, the first woman mayor, Jennie Cave who was famous

City of Norwalk

Common Council – Special Meeting

Common Council Chambers and Via Teleconference

August 15, 2023

Page 4

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**** MR. BURNETT MOVED THAT UPON 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 7, 2023:**

SHALL THE CHARTER BE REVISED TO CLARIFY AND STREAMLINE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND STANDARDS, MAINTAIN A TWO-YEAR MAYORAL AND COUNCIL TERM, EXPAND THE POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSIONS FROM TWO TO FOUR MEMBERS, ESTABLISH PROCEDURES TO ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE BUDGET PROCESS, AND REQUIRE CHARTER REVIEW EVERY TEN YEARS WITH AN INITIAL REVIEW IN TWO YEARS?

**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO AMEND ITEM 4b AS FOLLOWS:**

SHALL THE CHARTER BE REVISED TO CLARIFY AND STREAMLINE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND STANDARDS, MAINTAIN A TWO-YEAR MAYORAL AND COUNCIL TERM, EXPAND THE POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSIONS FROM TWO TO FOUR MEMBERS, ESTABLISH PROCEDURES TO ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE BUDGET PROCESS, AND REQUIRE CHARTER REVIEW EVERY FIVE YEARS WITH AN INITIAL REVIEW IN TWO YEARS?

Ms. Shanahan left the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MOTION AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. BURNETT; MR. CAMACHO; MR. GOLDSTEIN; MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER; MS. SMYTH; MS. AYERS; MR. HEUVELMAN; MS. REVOLUS; MS. YOUNG; MS. MCMURRER)**

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED THE FOLLOWING:**

C. IF APPROVED, THE EFFECTIVE DATE SHALL BE 1 JANUARY 2024, UNLESS OTHERWISE SET FORTH IN THE CHARTER.

D. IF APPROVED, 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 CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AND THAT A COPY SHALL BE MAILED TO ANY PERSON WHO REQUEST A COPY, AS REQUIRED BY C.G.S. §7-191(D) AND, MOREOVER, A COPY OF SAID CHARTER SHALL BE AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE OF THE CITY; AND

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

F. AUTHORIZING, 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 7, 2023. SAID FINAL TEXT IS SUBJECT TO APPROVAL OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL.

**** THE REPORT MAY BE APPROVED OR REJECTED IN ITS ENTIRETY, OR IN SEPARATE PROVISIONS.**

**** PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. BURNETT; MR. CAMACHO; MR. GOLDSTEIN; MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER; MS. SMYTH; MS. AYERS; MR. HEUVELMAN; MS. REVOLUS; MS. YOUNG; MS. MCMURRER)**

Mr. Burnett said he was glad they made it across the finish line. He acknowledged and thanked each member of the Charter Review Committee for their outstanding work and thanked Attorney Mednick for his outstanding counsel. He also thanked all of the members of the Common Council sub committee. Mr. Burnett expressed his thanks to all those who have been involved in this. He said it was a team effort.

Mayor Rilling acknowledged the members of the Charter Revision Commission and asked Ms. Brescia if she wanted to make any comments.

Ms. Brescia thanked everyone for their accolades and said it was a great honor. The goal was to have a document that reflected how they operate in the City. She said they now have to present the new Charter to the people of Norwalk and get it passed.

Ms. Brescia noted that she ran against Jennie Cave for Mayor in 1975.

Mayor Rilling again thanked all the members of the Charter Revision.

V. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Zulma Roundtree, Assistant City Clerk

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SPECIAL MEETING

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** 7:09 PM
- II. **ROLL CALL** 11- Mr. Kydes, Ms. Alterman, Mr. Meek & Mr. Frayer absent;
Ms. Shanahan joined 7:14 PM
- III. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** 2
- IV. **TO ACT UPON THE RESOLUTION ON THE FINAL REPORT OF THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION, 9 AUGUST 2023 (SEE FINAL REPORT IN BACKUP); WHICH INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS**
 - A. Action on the Final Report of the Charter Revision Commission, dated August 9, 2023**. **APPROVED**
 - B. Upon 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 7, 2023:
Shall the Charter be revised to clarify and streamline government operations and standards, maintain a two-year mayoral and council term, expand the police and fire commissions from two to four members, establish procedures to enhance public participation in the budget process, and require charter review every ten years with an initial review in two years? **APPROVED**
 - C. If approved, the effective date shall be 1 January 2024, unless otherwise set forth in the Charter. **APPROVED**
 - D. If approved, 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 City Clerk's office

and that a copy shall be mailed to any person who request a copy, as required by C.G.S. §7-191(d) and, moreover, a copy of said charter shall be available on the website of the City; and **AUTHORIZED**

- E. Authorizing the Corporation Counsel and Charter Counsel to continually review the document for errata and non-substantive editorial revisions through publication; and, **AUTHORIZED**
- F. Authorizing, 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 7, 2023. Said final text is subject to approval of the Corporation Counsel. **AUTHORIZED**

****** The Report may be approved or rejected in its entirety, or in separate provisions.

V. ADJOURNMENT 8:07 PM

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At Roll Call there were ten (10) Common Councilmembers present and five (5) absent (Ms. Alterman; Mr. Frayer; Mr. Kydes; Mr. Meek; Ms. Shanahan). A Quorum was present.

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- ** MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER SECONDED**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. BURNETT; MR. CAMACHO; MR. GOLDSTEIN; MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER; MS. SMYTH; MS. AYERS; MR. HEUVELMAN; MS. REVOLUS; MS. YOUNG; MS. MCMURRER; MS. SHANAHAN)**

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**** MOTION FAILED BY ROLL CALL VOTE WITH ONE (1) VOTE IN FAVOR (MR. BURNETT) AND TEN (10) VOTES IN OPPOSITION (MR. CAMACHO; MR. GOLDSTEIN; MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER; MS. SMYTH; MS. AYERS; MR. HEUVELMAN; MS. REVOLUS; MS. YOUNG; MS. MCMURRER; MS. SHANAHAN)**

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**** MR. CAMACHO SECONDED**

Members of the Common Council expressed their gratitude to all involved in the charter revision, specifically Mr. Burnett, Mr. Livingston, Ms. Niedzielski Eichner, Mr. Mednick and the members of the Charter Revision Commission.

Mayor Rilling said his was a remarkable moment for Norwalk. He expressed his thanks to Mr. Mednick and the members of the Charter Revision Commission and the members of the Common Council. He said that in 1975, the first woman mayor, Jennie Cave who was famous

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Page 4

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**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO AMEND ITEM 4b AS FOLLOWS:**

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Ms. Shanahan left the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MOTION AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. BURNETT; MR. CAMACHO; MR. GOLDSTEIN; MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER; MS. SMYTH; MS. AYERS; MR. HEUVELMAN; MS. REVOLUS; MS. YOUNG; MS. MCMURRER)**

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED THE FOLLOWING:**

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Mayor Rilling again thanked all the members of the Charter Revision.

V. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Zulma Roundtree, Assistant City Clerk