

**COMMON COUNCIL
NORWALK, CONNECTICUT**

SPECIAL MEETING

**JUNE 6, 2022
COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS &
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

**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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Mr. Livingston called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. and led the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. He noted that Mayor Rilling was out of town attending the Conference of Mayors.

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Dixon called the Roll:

Council at Large:	Mr. Gregory Burnett Ms. Dominique Johnson Ms. Barbara Smyth	Mr. Joshua Goldstein Ms. Nora Niedzielski Eichner
District A:	Ms. Nicol Ayers (7:45 p.m.)	Mr. David Heuvelman
District B:	Ms. Darlene Young (7:42 p.m.)	Ms. Diana Revolus
District C:	Mr. John Kydes	Ms. Jenn McMurrer
District D:	Ms. Heidi Alterman	Mr. Thomas Keegan
District E:	Mr. Thomas Livingston	Ms. Lisa Shanahan

At Roll Call there were thirteen (13) Council members present and two (2) absent (Ms. Ayers and Ms. Young. A Quorum was present.

Also present were Chief Financial Officer, Henry Dachowitz, City Clerk, Irene Dixon and Corporation Counsel, Darin Callahan.

II. LAND USE AND BUILDING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO PURCHASE AND ACQUIRE 1 MEADOW STREET EXT, NORWALK, CONNECTICUT, IDENTIFIED IN THE TAX ASSESSOR RECORDS AS MAP, BLOCK AND LOT NUMBER 2-75-71-0 FROM THE HATCH AND BAILEY COMPANY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$14,000,000.00 SUBJECT TO STAND CLOSING ADJUSTMENTS.**

**AND TO AUTHORIZE TO INCREASE SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4.0 MILLION FOR THE NEW SOUTH NORWALK (SONO) ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT FOR A REVISED TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET OF \$76.0 MILLION.
ACCOUNT # 092250105777 C0808**

Mr., Livingston said this was a significant milestone in bringing a school to South Norwalk. There was no other parcel like this in South Norwalk and because the purchase was negotiated on a friendly basis, there was no need for eminent domain.

Of particular concern for everyone was the environmental condition of the property. The City conducted an environmental review and the representatives were made aware that the site was for a school. It was determined that the site was appropriate for a school.

Mr. Livingston explained that this evening's action is a milestone to ensure that this is a true neighborhood school where the students will be able to walk to school. He said that \$1.5 million of ARPA funds have been set aside to fund sidewalks for the students. In addition, Planning and Zoning is reviewing the zoning in the area and they are looking at neighborhood enhancements, that will include trees. That additional funding was approved by the Board of Estimate and Taxation.

Mr. Livingston thanked Mr. Lo and Mr. Callahan for their efforts in regard to the contract and particularly Mr. Lo who put in countless hours over the last six years.

Ms. Faioes thanked everyone on the Common Council and the Mayor and members of his team. She thanked Mr. Lo on behalf of the Board of Education.

Dr. Estrella said the children of South Norwalk will benefit from this new school that will allow families and students to have a space to call home within the community.

Ms. Young joined the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Ms. Young asked if the curriculum was presented to the State and if they were married to it. Dr. Estrella explained that in terms of the curriculum, they were not married to it. She said they wanted to have a conversation with the community because they want to be part of the process. The community wants a school that will allow the students to explore different disciplines where they will ensure students learn social justice and financial literacy.

Ms. Revolus pointed out that the community should know that the school will be based on a lottery.

Ms. Ayers joined the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Dr. Estrella explained that when they were proposing the school, they had a demographer determine what would be feasible by the State. Given the enrollment of the district, the

school was approved to be built within a certain capacity. There are going to be some parents who will opt for other magnet programs. There will be a lottery for the South Norwalk families to have access to the school.

Mr. Kydes said it is important to have a school in South Norwalk and important to have a safe way for the students to go back and forth to school. He asked if additional funding will be allocated for infrastructure. He added that he hoped that in the next budget cycle, there will be additional funding above and beyond what is already allocated.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said she was tremendously excited about this school and asked that the successful analysis of the site be shared. Mr. Lo described the testing process and noted that overall, this is an extraordinary site for an industrial property. There is no remediation required on the property, but they have to do a management plan, when they move material. In addition, they did an air quality test and the numbers were below limits. Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said she appreciated the thoroughness of the team.

Mr. Burnett asked about the specific cost of the project. He noted that this project falls under the 60% reimbursement rate, and that is a huge plus; however, with the cost of construction increasing on a daily basis and continuing to escalate, he asked if the additional cost will fall under the 60% reimbursement rate. Mr. Lo explained that with the economy and construction industry going through interesting times, the project is capped at \$76 million. If the project goes over that amount, the State will not reimburse above \$76 million. He said that with the additional request he added \$2 million to the contingency.

Mr. Goldstein asked about the plans in the event they run into an issue. Mr. Lo said that typically the State will not allow the City to increase the budget. The City would have to support the cost increase. He noted there were multiple contingencies built into the budget. When this project was first developed, it was based on a 30% reimbursement. With this 60% reimbursement, the City saved \$20-25 million.

Mr. Goldstein said this is such a landmark development for South Norwalk. He thanked everyone.

Mr. Dachowitz said that originally, they were assured of getting \$22 – 23 million in reimbursement from the State. Assuming the City gets the 60% reimbursement, the City's cost will be \$30 million. He said that due to inflation, he believes the City has to build the school as quickly as possible, once it is approved

Mr. Lo expressed his appreciation to Hatch and Bailly for working with the City. They are a long-standing business in the community and this was a group effort.

Ms. Smyth said this was such an important moment for Norwalk and the families and children of South Norwalk. She told Mr. Lo that his work has not gone unnoticed. This is a testament to his hard work. Ms. Smyth said they will have families and children who live in the neighborhood walk to school. She asked everyone to use their vision to image how this school might transform this neighborhood.

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

Mr. Livingston thanked Mr. Lo for all his hard work.

Ms. Young said it has taken a long time to get to this point. A lot of people in the community endured not so nice things. She said they are at a turning point for Norwalk and the young children. There is a lot of work that needs to be done and it is going to take a lot of effort to get it right.

Ms. Young thanked Mr. Lo for his level headed leadership. She said there is a lot of work that needs to be done and people need to be flexible. She said she was happy that they have taken a step in the right direction.

Mr. Livingston thanked Ms. Young for her wisdom. Ms. Revolus said she agreed with Ms. Young.

III. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

ATTEST _____
Irene Dixon, City Clerk

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****SPECIAL MEETING****

AGENDA

I. ROLL CALL 15-Ms. Young arrived 7:42, Ms. Ayers arrived 7:45

II. LAND USE AND BUILDING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all agreements and other documents necessary to purchase and acquire 1 Meadow Street Ext, Norwalk, Connecticut, identified in the Tax Assessor Records as Map, Block and Lot Number 2-75-71-0 from The Hatch and Bailey Company in the amount of \$14,000,000.00 subject to stand closing adjustments.
AUTHORIZED

2. Authorize to increase Special Capital Appropriation in the amount of \$4.0 million for the new South Norwalk (SoNo) Elementary School Project for a revised total project budget of

**COMMON COUNCIL
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\$76.0 million. Account # 092250105777 C0808

**ACTION
7:30 PM EST**

AUTHORIZED

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III. ADJOURNMENT 8:11 PM