

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

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 norwalkct.gov/meetings

Members of the public who are unable to attend the meeting in person may call in to participate. Callers will not be able to see the meeting participants. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, dial *9 on the phone and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed. Please find the information using the link above.

Members of the public who are unable to attend the meeting in person and wish to provide "live comments" may also use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the "raise your hand indicator" and you will be called by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed. 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.

Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Irene Dixon at idxon@norwalkct.gov to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. and led the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Dixon called the Roll:

Council at Large: Mr. Gregory Burnett

Mr. Joshua Goldstein

**COMMON COUNCIL
NORWALK, CONNECTICUT
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

REGULAR MEETING

**FEBRUARY 13, 2024
COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND**

Mr. Johan Lopez
Ms. Barbara Smyth

Ms. Nora Niedzielski Eichner

District A:

Ms. Nicol Ayers

Mr. Jalin Sead

District B:

Mr. Dajuan Wiggins

Ms. Darlene Young

District C:

Ms. Jenn McMurrer

District D:

Ms. Heather Dunn

Mr. Doug Sutton

District E:

Mr. James Frayer

Ms. Lisa Shanahan

At Roll Call there were fourteen (14) Common Councilmembers present and one (1) absent (Ms. Murray). A Quorum was present.

Also present were Mayor, Harry Rilling; City Clerk, Irene Dixon and Corporation Counsel, Mario Coppola.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting: January 23, 2024

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED
** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MS. MCMURRER)**

Special Meeting: January 29, 2024

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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.

Mr. Nick Wendell spoke in support of Shawn's Lawns, 2 Mueller Avenue. He noted they have not completed some of the special use permit and there was a violation issued, and then covid hit. He explained they plow the local streets as well as the Mission Church. They are part of the community and employ 30 Norwalk residents. He said they want to fix the issue.

Attorney Rick Constantine, Westport, CT said he submitted a letter to the members of the Common Council today. He said that Shawn's Lawns was the successful bidder for the South Norwalk School. He said his client is aware of the Zoning issues, but he came down with covid.

He is working to get his property fully in compliance. He asked the Common Council to delay the vote to their next meeting.

IV. MAYOR

A. RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Rilling announced the following resignations.

RESIGNATIONS:

Ava Jacobs, Arts and Culture Commission

Marilyn Altman, Zoning Board of Appeals, Regular

Thomas Farkas, Zoning Board of Appeals, Alternate

APPOINTMENTS:

**** MR. GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING APPOINTMENT
THOMAS FARKAS, ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS, REGULAR**

Mr. Goldstein spoke in support of the appointment.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

MAYOR'S REMARKS:

Mayor Rilling talked about celebrating Black history beyond Black History Month, a program will be hosted on Saturday Feb 17th 12pm – 2pm by State Representative Kadeem Roberts and Council Members at Bethel Ame Church. He thanked the Department of Public Works and noted positive comments from the public for their work during this snow storm.

Last Friday Norwalk officials and members of the state delegation celebrated the improvements to Freese Park and the events that will be taking place, groundbreaking for Wall Street Phase 1 to be announced soon.

Mr. Burnett spoke about the importance of Black History Month and said it is American History. There should be celebrations each month to recognize the achievements made by Black Americans. This month's theme is African Americans in the Arts.

Mr. Wiggins expressed appreciation about Black History Month being American History. He said we have our share of issues in Norwalk, but as we continue to grow, these issues should be tackled head on. Mr. Wiggins noted this is one of the most diverse Common Councils since Norwalk became a city. He said they need to think about how to assist people that are disenfranchised.

Ms. Young said Black History is American History and we need to get to the point where it is not separated. All should continue to push forward in the best interest of everyone in the community.

Mr. Sead said Black History in its totality is beautiful, although tragic. He said they have come a long way, and should celebrate all the work that has been done. He said a lot of time there is focus on the negative, but there is a lot of positive and progress.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner said there is a sense that the group worked harder and believed in the promise of American. No group worked harder to create powerful art and political movements. She acknowledged the importance of Black History Month.

Ms. Ayers encouraged everyone to celebrate by participating in all activities.

V. COUNCIL PRESIDENT

A. GENERAL COUNCIL BUSINESS:

RESIGNATION AND APPOINTMENTS

RESIGNATIONS: There were no resignations announced this evening.

APPOINTMENTS: There were no appointments announced this evening.

REAPPOINTMENTS: There were no reappointments announced this evening.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR:

**** MS. YOUNG MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CONSENT CALENDAR:**

VI.A.1, VII.A.1, VII.A.2, VII.B.1, VII.C.1, VII.C.2, VII.C.3, VII.C.5, VII.C.9, VII.C.10, VII.C.11, VII.D.1B, VII.D.1C

VI. REPORTS: DEPARTMENTS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

A. CORPORATION COUNSEL

1. AUTHORIZATION TO SETTLE CLAIM: ANITA WINNINGER V. CITY OF NORWALK, DOCKET NUMBER FST-CV-22-6055991-S *EXECUTIVE SESSION*

VII. COMMON COUNCIL COMMITTEES

A. PUBLIC SAFETY & GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

1. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS AND AGREEMENTS NECESSARY TO ENTER INTO A FIELD TRIAL AGREEMENT WITH AXON.

2. AUTHORIZE THE CHIEF OF POLICE, JAMES WALSH, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS, AGREEMENTS, INSTRUMENTS, AND AMENDMENTS THERETO AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE FIELD TRIAL AGREEMENT PROGRAM WITH AXON.

B. RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

1. TECHNICAL CORRECTION: AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE A PURCHASE ORDER TO M. E. O'BRIEN & SONS, FOR THE SOLE SOURCE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF A NEW PLAYGROUND AT BROOKSIDE SCHOOL, PRICING FROM STATE CONTRACT # 17PSX0081, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$187,425.15 FROM THE STATE OF CT DEEP PARKS BEAUTIFICATION GRANT, # 0923-6030-5796-C0832.

ORIGINAL APPROVAL:

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH M. E. O'BRIEN & SONS FOR THE SOLE SOURCE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF A NEW PLAYGROUND AT BROOKSIDE SCHOOL, PRICING FROM STATE CONTRACT # 17PSX0081, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$187,425.15 FROM THE STATE OF CT DEEP PARKS BEAUTIFICATION GRANT. ACCOUNT # 0923-6030-5796-C0832.

C. PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

**1. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORWALK AND TIGHE & BOND, INC. FOR PROJECT DPW2024-2 ON-CALL CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION - OBSERVATION SERVICES. THE AGREEMENT IS FOR A PERIOD OF THREE (3) YEARS, BILLABLE ON AN HOURLY BASIS, FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$350,000.00/ANNUALLY, WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR TWO (2) ADDITIONAL TERMS OF ONE (1) YEAR EACH.
ACCOUNT NO. 13 4010 5796 APW01**

**13 4010 5796 APW10
09 24 4021 5777 C0021
09 24 4021 5777 C0302
09 24 4021 5777 C0315
09 24 4021 5777 C0318
09 24 4021 5777 C0440
09 24 4021 5777 C0471
09 23 7100 5777 C0583**

2. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE AUGUST 2, 2021, AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORWALK AND ALMSTEAD TREE AND SHRUB CARE COMPANY, LLC., FOR TREE REMOVAL AND TRIMMING SERVICES FOR THE SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$60,000.00.

**ACCOUNT NO. 09 23 6030 5777 C0830
09 24 4021 5777 C0318
09 24 4021 5777 C0021**

3. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A 2ND AMENDMENT TO THE JANUARY 24, 2022 AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORWALK AND COLONNA MASONRY CONCRETE & ASPHALT PAVING, LLC., FOR PROJECT DRG 2021-1 DREAMY HOLLOW/BETTS BROOK DRAINAGE, SANITARY SEWER & WATER MAIN IMPROVEMENTS, FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$350,000.00.

**ACCOUNT NO. 09 24 4062 5777 C0361
09 21 4021 5777 C0440
09 24 4021 5777 C0440**

5. AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE AND INCREASE THE PURCHASE ORDER TO THE GRASSO COMPANIES LLC. FOR PROJECT PM2023-4 PAVING AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$70,000.00

ACCOUNT NO. 09 24 4021 5777 C0021

9. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH SAFETY MARKINGS LLC FOR PROJECT TMP2024-1 PAVEMENT MARKINGS, SYMBOLS, AND LEGENDS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$149,500.00.

**ACCOUNT NO. 09 18 4021 5777 C0598
09 20 4120 5777 C0598
09 21 4120 5777 C0598
09 24 3570 5777 C0562**

10. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH K5 CORPORATION FOR PROJECT TMP2024-1 PAVEMENT MARKINGS, SYMBOLS, AND LEGENDS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$80,500.00.

ACCOUNT NO. 09 18 4021 5777 C0598

09 20 4120 5777 C0598

09 21 4120 5777 C0598

09 24 3570 5777 C0562

11. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH THE CT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO INSTALL, MAINTAIN, AND OPERATE A CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISION CAMERA ON THE PROPERTY OF 2 SOUTH SMITH STREET IN ORDER TO VIEW, MONITOR, AND COLLECT VIDEO ON THE PROJECT KNOWN AS WALK RAILROAD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT.

D. LAND USE & BUILDING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1B. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO THE AGREEMENT WITH NEWFIELD CONSTRUCTION GROUP, LLC AS THE CONSTRUCTION MANAGER (CM) FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW SOUTH NORWALK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TO ACCEPT THE GUARANTEED MAXIMUM PRICE IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$51,830,611.00.

ACCOUNT NO. 09225010 5777 C0808.

1C. AUTHORIZE BUILDING MANAGEMENT TO ISSUE CHANGE ORDERS ON CONTRACT FOR A TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED \$2,500,000.00.

ACCOUNT. NO. 09225010 5777 C0808

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

VII. COMMON COUNCIL COMMITTEES

C. PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH WATERS CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, TMP2023-2 EAST WALL STREET – LANDMARK SQUARE SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY AND STREETScape (STATE PROJECT NO. L102-0004), FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2,061,000.89.**

ACCOUNT NO. 09 24 3750 5799 C0845 09 23 3750 5777 C0800

AND TO AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION, MOBILITY, AND PARKING, TO EXECUTE ORDERS ON CONTRACT WITH WATERS CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, TMP 2023-2 EAST WALL STREET – LANDMARK SQUARE SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY AND STREETSCAPE (STATE PROJECT NO. L102-0004), FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$206,100.09.

**ACCOUNT NO. 09 24 3750 5799 C0845
09 23 3750 5777 C0800**

Mr. Frayer explained this is the beginning of a \$27 million project. Mr. Travers, Director of Transportation, Mobility and Parking described the project. He said they plan to hold a ground breaking event followed by a public meeting. Mr. Sead said the residents in District A are very excited about this project. Mr. Goldstein talked about the community outreach for this project. Mayor Rilling said this is an example of real teamwork. The area has been neglected for 70 years.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS AND AMENDMENTS THERETO AS MAY BE NECESSARY FOR THE CITY OF NORWALK TO RECEIVE GRANT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$322,000 FROM THE NATIONAL FISH & WILDLIFE FOUNDATION AND ITS LONG ISLAND SOUND FUTURES FUND GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE PROJECT ‘PLANNING TO IMPROVE RESILIENCY, HABITAT AND PUBLIC ACCESS AT VETERAN’S PARK’.**

AND TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS AND AMENDMENTS THERETO AS MAY BE NECESSARY FOR THE CITY OF NORWALK TO RECEIVE GRANT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$502,700 FROM THE NATIONAL FISH & WILDLIFE FOUNDATION AND ITS NATIONAL COASTAL RESILIENCE FUND GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE PROJECT ‘PLAN DEVELOPMENT FOR FLOOD RESILIENCE USING SALT MARSH REHABILITATION AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE.

Mr. Frayer reviewed the requests.

Ms. Cherichetti, Senior Environmental Officer explained they received two grants to design these projects. The first grant is for a revitalization for the Long Island Sund habitat at Veteran’s Park and the second is near the new South Norwalk School.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner expressed appreciation to all involved. She added that the South Norwalk School is an opportunity to do right by the students in the City.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO AUTHORIZE A SOLE SOURCE PURCHASE ORDER TO ASSET WORKS FOR THE PURCHASE OF TWELVE DUAL ELECTRICAL CHARGER 40AMP UNITS, FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$125,000.00. ACCOUNT NO. 09 24 4031 5777 C0313
09 24 4031 5777 C0681
09 24 6030 5777 C0684
09 24 4021 5799 C0847**

Mr. Frayer said this is a great step forward for the City. These charging stations will be used for the City's electric vehicles.

Ms. Valadares, Chief of Operations and Public Works explained these charging stations will not be open to the public, but will be used for the City's fleet. She added that the charging stations will be at City Hall, South Smith Street and Police Headquarters. She said that in the next month, she hopes to come back with a request for approval for open to the public charging stations.

Ms. Smyth said she was very excited to see this moving forward. Electric vehicles are very important to the City, but they can't move forward without the infrastructure.

Mayor Rilling said this is one of several items that will make the City green.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

D. LAND USE & BUILDING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED TO APPROVE TO REJECT CONSTRUCTION BID FROM SHAWN'S LAWNS INC.'S FOR SITE WORK FOR THE PROPOSED SOUTH NORWALK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT AND PROCEED WITH THE AWARD TO THE NEXT LOWEST RESPONSIBLE BIDDER.**

Ms. Smyth explained this item was passed unanimously at the February meeting of the Land Use and Building Management Committee. She described the timeline beginning in 2017 when Shawn's Lawns was cited for not being in compliance with Zoning regulations. In 2019 he applied for a Special Permit, but did not comply with the requirements. She said that nearly seven years later they are still out of compliance.

Ms. Smyth reviewed the relevant Ordinance and said the Common Council members received a letter from the attorney on behalf of his client. Sean's Lawns requested an extension to bring them into compliance. Ms. Smyth said the efforts were appreciated, but these violations predate covid by several years. She said the South Norwalk School is a very important project and they

can't look at anything that will cause a delay. She wished the applicant well and said she looks forward to him bringing his company into compliance and bidding on other projects.

**** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. WIGGINS)**

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Ms. Dunn recused herself and left the meeting.

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO THE AGREEMENT WITH GILBANE BUILDING COMPANY AS THE CONSTRUCTION MANAGER (CM) FOR THE NORWALK HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT (STATE PROJECT #103-0263N), TO ACCEPT THE GUARANTEED MAXIMUM PRICE (GMP) #1 PROPOSAL FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$219,594,620.00. ACCOUNT NO. 09215010 5777 C0787.**

AND TO AUTHORIZE BUILDING MANAGEMENT TO ISSUE CHANGE ORDERS ON GMP #1 ON CONTRACT FOR A TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED \$3,350,000 FUNDED BY THE OWNER'S CONTINGENCY. ACCOUNT NO. 09215010 5777 C0787.

AND TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO THE AGREEMENT WITH GILBANE BUILDING COMPANY AS THE CONSTRUCTION MANAGER (CM) FOR THE NORWALK HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT (NON-STATE FUNDING), TO ACCEPT THE GUARANTEED MAXIMUM PRICE (GMP) #2 PROPOSAL FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$3,730,982.00. ACCOUNT NO. 918/19 5010 5777 C0610.

AND TO AUTHORIZE BUILDING MANAGEMENT TO ISSUE CHANGE ORDERS ON GMP #2 ON CONTRACT FOR A TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED \$100,000 FUNDED BY THE OWNER'S CONTINGENCY. ACCOUNT NO. 918/19 5010 5777 C0610

Ms. Smyth explained they are looking to approve the contract at Norwalk High School. She said this represents \$226,775,602 of a budget of \$239 million. She said that Gilbane has been working hard on the Norwalk High School project.

Mr. Lo, Building and Facilities Manager described the construction schedule. He said it will take five years and open in the fall of 2028. He noted this is one of the biggest projects done by the City where it will get 80% reimbursement. Mr. Lo said he will approach the State for additional funding in two years.

Ms. Smyth said this is an exciting project due to the 80% reimbursement from the State.

Mayor Rilling expressed his thanks to Senator Duff for securing the 80% reimbursement. He added that he was pleased to have Gilbane on board.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Ms. Dunn returned to the meeting.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS FROM COMMON COUNCIL

There were no resolutions presented this evening.

IX. MOTIONS POSTPONED TO A SPECIFIC DATE

There were no motions postponed to a specific date this evening.

X. SUSPENSION OF RULES

There were no suspension of the rules this evening.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Irene Dixon, City Clerk

COMMON COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING FEBRUARY 13, 2024
NORWALK, CONNECTICUT COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Mayor Rilling called the special meeting of the Common Council to order at 6:35 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Ms. Dixon called the Roll:

Council at Large:	Mr. Gregory Burnett Mr. Johan Lopez Ms. Barbara Smyth	Mr. Joshua Goldstein Ms. Nora Niedzielski Eichner
District A:	Ms. Nicol Ayers	Mr. Jalin Sead
District B:	Mr. Dajuan Wiggins	Ms. Darlene Young
District C:	Ms. Jenn McMurrer	
District D:	Ms. Heather Dunn	
District E:	Mr. James Frayer	Ms. Lisa Shanahan

At Roll Call there were thirteen (13) Common Councilmembers present and two (2) absent (Ms. Murray and Mr. Sutton). A Quorum was present.

Also present were Mayor, Harry Rilling; City Clerk, Irene Dixon and Corporation Counsel, Mario Coppola.

II. PRESENTATION OF THE 2024-25 OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. Ellis explained that it is the Mayor's position to do all he can to keep the budget as low as possible. They have been working extremely hard to get the numbers right. This is not the final budget, but is a work in progress.

Mr. Burnett said this is the first view of the operating budget for the Common Council. Mr. Ellis added that this is the first pass and said it is important to get the numbers in front of the Common Council.

Mr. Ellis shared his screen and presented the recommended fy2024-2025 recommended operating budget. He first reviewed the calendar and said the budget process is about a nine to ten month process. The Board of Estimate and Taxation makes their final vote on May 6th.

Mr. Burnett said the Finance and Claims Committee will hold a public hearing this Thursday, February 15th, because the Norwalk Public Schools will be out of session the following week.

Mr. Ellis reviewed the historical allocation of funds and said that historically, it is a 40% allocation to the City of Norwalk and a 60% allocation to the Board of Education.

Mr. Ellis reviewed the covid and ARPA funding received by the City. He said the money has been committed and there is nothing left to spend. He added that the ARPA funds on the City side took the pressure off the City. He said everything has to be committed by December 31, 2024 and the vendors have to be paid by December 31, 2026.

Mr. Ellis explained that in the recommended budget, the Board of Education would receive an additional \$10.2 million, which is a 4.5% increase and the City would receive an additional \$8.8 million, which is a 4.46% increase. He reviewed the budget by division and reviewed the biggest components in the budget. He noted that the original budget request included adding 18 additional staff; however, a decision was made to eliminate that request. In response to a question, he said there are about 650 City employees with some vacancies. He said he will send the file to the members of the Common Council detailing the additional staff requests.

Mr. Goldstein asked if there would be a situation where they may need to spend over the contingency. Mayor Rilling discussed the upcoming union negotiations.

Mayor Rilling expressed his thanks to Mr. Ellis, Mr. Dachowitz, Mr. Livingston and the department heads. He said he indicated to all departments that he wanted them to come in at 3%. He reiterated there was a request for 18 new positions, but due to the cost involved, they were taken out of the budget.

A public hearing will take place on Thursday.

Mr. Ellis gave a brief summary of the key drivers of the budget. He reviewed the Rainy Day Fund balance and said it is significantly higher than the bond agencies look for. This budget recommends a drawdown of \$6 million. He said this is a fair and balanced budget for both the City and the Board of Education.

Ms. Young said there are some positions she hopes they will be able to support at this point. She expressed her appreciation for all the work that goes into the budget.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner expressed her thanks for the work on this. She said the Common Council has a particular concern around IT and meeting technology requirements for the City.

Mr. Dachowitz said this is the beginning of the process and expressed appreciation for all the department heads coming in close to 3%.

Mr. Burnett said this is a good first pass. The public will want to know the impact. In future meetings they will have the necessary data points. He said this is a great start. This is a fair budget and it provides funding to the schools.

Mr. Frayer expressed his appreciation to Mr. Ellis, his team and the department heads. He asked for an update on the grand list. Mr. Ellis explained the Tax Assessor received the final assessment numbers on Friday. This year it is about \$17.9 million, which is an increase over last year. He added there are a lot of variables that go into the mill rate model.

Mr. Frayer asked if the 18 additional staff are on the City side. Mr. Ellis said they were.

III. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the special meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Irene Dixon, City Clerk

SPECIAL MEETING

Common Council
Chambers Tuesday,
February 13, 2024
6:30 p.m.

- I. ROLL CALL 13 - Ms. Murray and Mr. Sutton absent
- II. PRESENTATION OF THE 2024-25 OPERATING BUDGET -
NO VOTES OR ACTION TAKEN
- III. ADJOURNMENT 7:09 PM

PM

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Mr. Ellis reviewed the covid and ARPA funding received by the City. He said the money has been committed and there is nothing left to spend. He added that the ARPA funds on the City side took the pressure off the City. He said everything has to be committed by December 31, 2024 and the vendors have to be paid by December 31, 2026.

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Mayor Rilling expressed his thanks to Mr. Ellis, Mr. Dachowitz, Mr. Livingston and the department heads. He said he indicated to all departments that he wanted them to come in at 3%. He reiterated there was a request for 18 new positions, but due to the cost involved, they were taken out of the budget.

A public hearing will take place on Thursday.

Mr. Ellis gave a brief summary of the key drivers of the budget. He reviewed the Rainy Day Fund balance and said it is significantly higher than the bond agencies look for. This budget recommends a drawdown of \$6 million. He said this is a fair and balanced budget for both the City and the Board of Education.

Ms. Young said there are some positions she hopes they will be able to support at this point. She expressed her appreciation for all the work that goes into the budget.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner expressed her thanks for the work on this. She said the Common Council has a particular concern around IT and meeting technology requirements for the City.

Mr. Dachowitz said this is the beginning of the process and expressed appreciation for all the department heads coming in close to 3%.

Mr. Burnett said this is a good first pass. The public will want to know the impact. In future meetings they will have the necessary data points. He said this is a great start. This is a fair budget and it provides funding to the schools.

Mr. Frayer expressed his appreciation to Mr. Ellis, his team and the department heads. He asked for an update on the grand list. Mr. Ellis explained the Tax Assessor received the final assessment numbers on Friday. This year it is about \$17.9 million, which is an increase over last year. He added there are a lot of variables that go into the mill rate model.

Mr. Frayer asked if the 18 additional staff are on the City side. Mr. Ellis said they were.

III. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the special meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Irene Dixon, City Clerk