

DRAFT

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES CITY COUNCIL AND BOARD OF EDUCATION AD HOC COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 7, 2020
Via ZOOM virtual meeting (recorded)
6:30 PM

Present: Alderman Joseph DeLucia, Alderman Mark Bettencourt, Alderwoman Stacy Gould, Heather Romanski (BOE), Carline Charmelus (BOE), Christine DiStasio (BOE), Dr. Yvette Jacaruso (BOE), Mark Kulos (BOE), Swaranjit Singh Bhatia (BOE), Patricia Staley (BOE)

Staff and Administration Present: Superintendent of Norwich Public Schools (SOS) Dr. Kristen Stringfellow, Business Manager for Norwich Public Schools (NPS) Athena Nagel, Director of Student Services and Special Education for NPS Jamie Bender, Executive Assistant to the SOS Amber Rutigliano, City Manager John Salomone, City Comptroller Josh Pothier, Mayor Peter Nystrom

Media: Claire Bessette (The Day), Ms. Regan (The Bulletin)

Alderman DeLucia welcomed everyone and explained Gov. Lamont's directive 70-1 regarding the rules for holding a public meeting.

1. Call to Order: Alderman DeLucia called meeting to order at 6:33 PM. Quorum was present.
2. Adoption of Minutes from 4/30/20: Voting tabled until corrections made. First Alderwoman Gould, second Ms. Romanski.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Review of purpose and scope of Ad Hoc Committee.

Stated by Alderman DeLucia.

- b. Discussion of submitted questions and responses to date.
No comments made.

4. New Business:

- a. Discussion and possible action on recommendations to the City Council.

Mr. Kulos asked if the meeting with NFA, that was supposed to have taken place that week did. Alderman DeLucia asked Mr. Salomone if it had, and if so, what was said. He responded that the meeting hadn't taken place. Mayor Nystrom concurred and said an attempt is still being made. Mr. Nystrom said during a previous call with Mr. Salomone, Head of NFA, Mr. Klein, and DeVol Patrick, President of NFA's Board of Trustees, they stated that our numbers for Special Ed. Should be lower. Ms. Romanski said she had emailed them asking for a discussion re:clarification of their figures. Alderman DeLucia asked the SOS how much has been paid to NFA for 19-20 and what will be for 20-21. Ms. Nagel said the amount paid as of now is \$22,556,762 for this year. She doesn't foresee that number changing as a result of the school closure. Ms. Staley asked Mayor Nystrom if NFA had given any costs for individual programs. The SOS expressed that she wishes to sit down with Mr. Klein to review all figures, to insure that we are all on the same page. Alderwoman Gould asked for a total cost projection for NFA. The SOS said they won't have a final number until Sept. due to not knowing the number of paraprofessionals that will be needed. Alderman DeLucia asked the Mayor to "nail down" tuition rates and costs of individual programs per student, when he speaks with NFA. Ms. Staley mentioned that when speaking with NFA, make sure they are giving the costs for Norwich students with the \$200.00 reduction. Alderwoman Gould referenced the out of district placement costs and that there was no change noted. Ms. Bender said ,as of the day before, there had been no change, but that she had just been given a new number of students that day and will have to rework the figures. The SOS explained that they won't know the exact costs until 10/1/20. Ms. Romanski is going to ask NFA if there is any room for negotiation re: general and special ed. costs. Alderwoman Gould, in reference to the Resource Program, doesn't believe the \$200 reduction per

Norwich student is accounted for. Mr. Salomone asked the SOS if NFA knows about her latest figures. She responded no, that she doesn't share info. with them, but would be glad to do so. Alderwoman Gould asked if the NPS would be able to make "it work", with the 83 million offered by the City Manager. The SOS stated that, "We will need the 88.6 million requested. Costs are going up in every line item." She then reviewed the increases, and explained that all the ways that she has cut budgets in her past experience, have already been done here. She is trying to replace some positions that were cut in the past that are essential to our children, such as reading teachers. Alderwoman Gould asked about a discrepancy in the City Budget Book and Mr. Pothier responded that the number in question doesn't include Adult Ed. Alderman DeLucia asked if anyone had a recommendation they wanted to offer. None were given.

5. Items for Next Meeting Agenda:
Please let Alderman DeLucia know.
6. Scheduling of Next Meeting:
Alderman DeLucia asked for suggestions, and if committee members felt another meeting was necessary. The response was yes, and Alderman Bettencourt suggested 5/21, which was agreed to. Time 6:30 PM.
7. Adjournment:
Call for adjournment at 8:10 PM. First, Dr. Jacaruso. Second, Mr. Singh.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

Christine A. DiStasio

