

Norwich City Council/Board of Education Ad Hoc Committee
Wednesday, April 26, 2022
Norwich City Hall, Room 365, 6 PM
SPECIAL MEETING

Committee Members Present: Chair Alderman Joseph DeLucia, Vice Chair Alderwoman Stacy Gould, BOE Chair Bob Aldi, BOE Member Kevin Saythany, BOE Member Christine DiStasio, and BOE Member Charlene Charmelus (entered at 6:10),

Ex-Officio Members Present: Superintendent Kirstin Stringfellow and Comptroller Josh Pothier

Committee Members Absent: Alderman Swarnjit Singh, BOE Member Mark Kulos, BOE Member Heather Fowler, City Manager John Salomone, and Mayor Peter Nystrom

Others in Attendance: Assistant Superintendent Tamara Gloster, Business Manager Robert Sirpenski and Pupil Services Director Hughes

1. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum: Alderman Joe DeLucia called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. A quorum was present.

2. Review of Committee Scope and Purpose: Alderman DeLucia reviewed the scope and purpose of the committee: To create a working relationship between the City Council (CC) and the Board of Education (BOE) with the goal of making a recommendation to the CC regarding the BOE funding request for the next fiscal year. He stressed three items: To increase and improve communication, to help all gain an understanding of funding sources and requirements, and to act as an advisory board to provide the City Council with a budget recommendation.

3. Public Comment: None given.

4. New Business:

- a. Discussion and Possible Action: City Council Budget for FY 2023 - 2024
Alderman DeLucia made note of the Norwich Public School's proposed budget of \$92,865,737. The City Manager has proposed \$88,973,852. The difference is \$3.9 million. He opened the floor to comments.

Superintendent Dr. Stringfellow presented information on a new, unfunded mandate from the Connecticut Department of Health (DPH). The associated cost will be significant. She provided copies of Guidance and FAQ: Menstrual Equity in CT Public Schools prepared by DPH. She read from a PowerPoint prepared by Dr. Stringfellow which was printed and distributed. The intent of the program is to avoid stigma. She summarized the requirements and gave DPH's estimated costs which were within a wide range of \$4.5 million. Discussion ensued.

Business Manager Bob Sirpenski presented an Excess Cost Reimbursement Update he had prepared. He shared hard copies with those present. Due to changes in the state's reimbursement rate, the estimate for special education costs for FY 23-24 is an increase of \$715,983.

Mr. Sirpenski noted Norwich Free Academy (NFA) raised tuition for Norwich High School students by 7.25%.

Aldерwoman Stacy Gould inquired as to the number of new positions in the proposed \$92.8 million budget. A specific number of positions was not presented. Mr. Sirpenski was adamant that a 2.5% cut to the NPS proposed budget would not work. Dr. Stringfellow noted that the current levels of support for students are working.

Assistant Superintendent Gloster spoke to a file she had shared with committee members earlier in the day via email regarding a new reading program purchased by NPS with ESSER (federal) funds. The program is for Pre-K through 8th grade students.

Alderman DeLucia reminded the committee the City Council must adopt a budget by June 12, 2023 or by default the City Manager's budget is adopted.

5. Agenda Items for Future Meetings:

Dr. Stringfellow noted it is easier for NPS staff to have the committee's questions provided ahead of time.

6. Adjournment: On a motion by Charlene Charmelus, seconded by Aldерwoman Stacy Gould, the meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM.