

## Norwich City Council/Board of Education Ad Hoc Committee

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

Norwich City Hall, Room 365, 6 PM

### SPECIAL MEETING

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Alderman Joseph DeLucia, Alderman Swarnjit Singh, BOE Chair Bob Aldi, BOE Member Mark Kulos, BOE Member Kevin Saythany, BOE Member Christine DiStasio

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Mayor Peter Nystrom (arrived at 7:04 pm), City Manager John Salomone and Superintendent Kirstin Stringfellow

**Committee Members Absent:** Vice Chair Alderwoman Stacy Gould, Comptroller Josh Pothier BOE Member Charlene Charmelus, BOE Member Heather Fowler

**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 6:01 PM. A quorum was present.

**3. Public Comment:** None given.

#### **4. New Business:**

- a. Discussion and Possible Action: City Council Budget for FY 2023 – 2024 School Budget  
Alderman DeLucia opened the floor to comments.

Alderman Swarnjit Singh opened comments by reporting he was pleased with the savings achieved through the purchase of the reading program.

Business Manager Robert Sirpenski noted that the restated Board of Education budget for FY24 was scrutinized by the BOE members. With tuition to Norwich Free Academy increasing by 7.25%. he asked for consideration from the City Manager and City Council on the final vote.

Mr. Sirpenski presented 12 paper copies of the restated budget. The budget was reduced by \$1,135,412. The requested increase was reduced from 6.98% to 5.68%. He reviewed the updates to the proposed budget with a total of \$91,730,325.

Alderman DeLucia noted the 7.25% NFA increase. Superintendent Dr. Stringfellow stated this is contractual. Discussion ensued regarding NFA tuition.

Alderman Singh asked for NFA Special Education costs. Dr. Stringfellow promised to get those figures to him.

Relevant state legislative initiatives were briefly discussed in terms of potential changes in state reimbursements.

City Manager Salomone asked about ESSER funds. Mr. Sirpenski replied the ESSER 2 will be fully expended by June 30, 2023. The \$4 M remaining is dedicated. No more staffing can be allocated. Assistant Superintendent Gloster confirmed.

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.

Mr. Salomone shared figures relating to the potential rise in the mil rate for each \$200,000 increment in the BOE budget. A 4.8% increase means a .94 mil increase. To fully fund tonight's proposed 5.7% increase, the potential mil increase is 1.4 mil. He had a bipartisan request to present a zero mil rate increase budget.

Discussion ensued on the needs of children to ensure safety and behavioral support.

Alderwoman Gould stated we all have a responsibility to educate our children.

Dr. Stringfellow noted tonight's budget will result in staffing cuts.

Alderman DeLucia noted the revenue side of the budget is not yet set by the state budget. He noted the City Council meetings are June 5 and June 12. He may call a special meeting of this committee. The voting members have not reached consensus on a recommendation to the City Council. This could be done via Zoom.

**5. Adjournment:** On a motion by BOE Chair Bob Aldi, seconded by Alderwoman Stacy Gould, the meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM.