

The second public hearing from the 2009-2010 fiscal year was held May 11, 2009 at 7:00 PM at Norwich Regional Technical School, 7 Mahan Drive. Present: Ald. Desaulniers, Jacaruso, Zarnetske, Bettencourt, Nash, Nystrom and Mayor Lathrop. City Manager Bergren, Corporation Counsel Michael Driscoll and Comptroller Joseph Ruffo were also in attendance.

Ann Alfiero, 43 Bayberry Hill Rd., spoke on the context of the big picture regarding job losses and program reductions in the areas of recreation, education and Otis Library, there is no doubt that this community is challenged. But how we respond to these economic challenges will either make us a better community or lead us down a path that will take years to recover and at a much greater expense. She has learned that once something is gone it is gone. Job preservation is absolutely paramount to economic recovery. She asked that anyone involved with the city, vendors and employees alike make some kind of concession in the name of job preservation.

Charles Jaskiewicz, 361 Wawecus Hill Rd., feels every time the Council makes a cut to the budget it is always absorbed by the K-8 system. There is no parody in that, there is no equality. It is unfair for the K-8 system to absorb the whole education cut. NFA needs to feel those cuts as well. His observation is that the public school system is the largest department in the city. He believes that there are departments in the city that do not need assistants and the city should consider looking into consolidating as the Board of Ed does.

Elizabeth Hanlon, 9 Caulkins Rd., stated that as a teacher and parent in the Norwich school system, she urges you to fund the education proposed budget, keep the foreign language program and have equity amongst our education system.

Ernie Cohen, 136 Hunters Rd., is concerned that the city has not developed a tax base to cover us when we have times like this. He doesn't see where this Council has brought in any new businesses or industries, there is no new growth. He challenges the Council to bring in new growth and new business. The crisis we are facing is not going away anytime soon. The Council must emphasize economic development now for the future.

Debra Lehman, 560 Boswell Ave., believes that as an NFA alumni family member she is concerned about the cuts to the Norwich Public Schools. NFA brings in extra resources through their alumni association. She is tired of NFA getting their increase and the public schools getting a 0 percent increase. The NFA budget is being balanced on the backs of the public school system

Janis Sawicki, 39 Andrea Lane, is hopeful that you will consider what a 0 percent increase will do to our schools, staff and students. Please think carefully about Norwich's future, the facts are clear.

Betty Lutz, 403 Laurel Hill Ave., stated that as an owner 4 properties in Norwich, she has had to lower her rents to accommodate her tenants because they simply cannot afford them. She is barely breaking even and is sorry that programs are being cut, but she doesn't want her property taxes to go up to pay for the increases. She has had to make personal cuts (she has no medical insurance) and feels the city must do the same otherwise she is going to have to sell and move out of Norwich.

Joanne Philbrick, 10 Elm Ave., thanked Josh Pothier for his informative and quick responses via email. This is a repeat of last year. We have a great representation from the school system tonight and it is understood what they do. She wishes the Board of Ed would show up at other town meetings to show their support or concerns. She is also concerned when looking at the budget under the Planning and Zoning Dept. there are no accomplishments listed for economic development. It is getting impossible to exist in Norwich.

David Crabb, 47 Prospect St., believes that there are only two considerations to apply to the City Managers budget. "A", the Obama administration has the ability to print money and municipalities don't and "B", the power to tax is the power to destroy. Unemployment was about 96% six months ago and now it is about 90 percent.

Gabe Lipman, 148 Mckinley Ave., voiced two concerns. First, accept the Board of Ed proposed budget and don't eliminate the world languages at the middle schools. Secondly, she would like to see a change in the business relationship between the Board of Ed and NFA. She feels it is time the City Manager gets a separate tuition bill from NFA and it is no longer part of the NPS budget. It is time to make a change so that the K-8 system is treated fairly.

Rodney Bowie, 62 Roosevelt Ave., feels NFA is a fine institution and if it weren't for their endowment funds, their budget would be even worse. It is quoted in the Wall Street Journal that people graduating from college today will be lucky to have a job. The one thing we need to have in this city is to have industry come here and we are not going to get industry if we are taxing them out from the beginning. Every year it is the same thing. We beat ourselves up about education, but we need to have someplace for these educated children to work.

Pam Aubin, 20 Wightman Ave., stated that the City Managers budget included a 0 percent increase for the Board of Ed. The Board of Ed submitted a 2.85 increase that was lowered to 1.42 percent. At this point to get to 0 percent the Board of Ed has to cut \$958,000. To accomplish that they will have to layoff about 18 certified staff members and several other positions. The Board of Ed is under incredible mandates. The City Manager was given a mandate for no tax increases from the Council. Without the Board of Ed increase it will have a dramatic impact on our schools. So please reconsider and give us just a little more.

Keith Ripley, 9 Meadow Ave., remembered back about 6 years when his motto was, pay me now or pay me later, and those same words can be applied now concerning the budget. If NFA does what the City unions have done with concessions, then those reductions could be transported to the education budget. The public wants to know what your thoughts are when you make your decisions. He suggested that NCDC does something to help with this budget crisis like the Unions have done through concessions. This is soul searching time and this is the time to decide what are the pay me now or pay me later items. He doesn't believe that if you lose it you don't get it back. He believes if you work at it you can at least get some of it back.

Peter Libert, president NAC, as a representative of the arts in the area of teaching and as member of NAC, it is understood that the arts are the first area cut at the education level. The Council has been a terrific supporter of NAC and has been told that this coming year we will probably not receive anything due the tough economic times. What NAC provides is entertainment which help in providing economic development. NAC hopes that the Council could find some funding to help them to continue on with their work.

Yvette Jacaruso, 192 Wightman Ave., asked that when the Council deliberates this budget to keep two things in mind, consistency and fairness. In listening to the public and the City Manager's proposed budget on the zero percent increase there are inconsistencies and unfairness on the Board of Ed budget. The Board of Ed tries to negotiate with NFA during the year so the bill is not so great. Every Council member has agreed that economic development is the number one priority for this city, but you cannot have that without an educated populous.

Pete Sudlow, North Third Ave., feels Norwich supports itself on taxes from businesses and homes. However, about 75 percent of the city is vacant. Therefore, the city is being supported by homeowners. House sales are

down and you are talking about tax increases. We can't afford things now. No one is moving in. The Board of Ed is upset about the budget and they need more. His suggestion is to do what other towns and the City Hall employees have done and that is to take wage freezes. We don't have businesses in Norwich because the taxes are too high and they moved out and people are moving out because the taxes are too high as well.

Brian Kobylarz, 16 Hobart Ave., defended the downtown as not being vacant as the previous speaker made it seem. Our downtown is doing as well as other cities its size throughout the country. We have many volunteer organizations in the downtown that are keeping this city alive. We do have economic development with people coming into our city to participate in events like First Fridays etc.

John Lavange, 85 Laurel Lane, would appreciate anything that can be done to help out the Board of Ed because things very seldom come back after they are taken out. He has never seen a good year for the Board of Ed whether the economy is good or bad. Once the foreign languages are gone it is very hard to get them back and it is also very hard to find teachers in those fields.

Andy Depta, 105 Vergason Ave., stated that in listening to the speakers tonight some people want more and some want less. He personally has given more in the areas of wage freezes and higher property taxes through the reevaluation. He wants the Council to give him a little more and keep the budget at 0 percent and we will make it through.

John Blackburn, 15 Alice St., believes this is not easy for the Council with this economy. Everybody is feeling the hit through taxes, utilities etc. His plea is, save as many jobs as you can and give the Board of Ed at least 1 percent if possible.

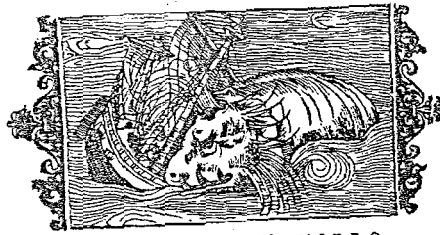
Attached are two letters from citizens not able to attend.

There being no further speakers, Mayor Lathrop declared the public hearing closed at 8:30 PM.

ATTEST:



CITY CLERK



DE PISCIB. MONSTRO.

Joaquín Jacaraso, Council President  
32 Carroll Avenue  
Norwich, CT 06360

Dear Jon:

Joseph Muscarella is one of three Recreation Dept workers who will lose their city employment if the tentative Norwich Budget is adopted. Joe has worked for the city of Norwich for five years. He is very personable and interacts very well with the public.

As I walk regularly near the headquarters of the Rec Dept I witness the quality of his work. He knows what he is doing. His work goes well beyond landscapes maintenance. He is assuring the quality and safety of these highly utilized areas, so uniquely available to Norwich residents and so vital in the current national effort to combat obesity and other health issues.

To realize more significant savings, I suggest adoption of a more efficient student transportation system. The reality of so many high buses riding the streets and transporting very, very few students is abhorrent to the taxpayer.

Thank you for your interest in my remarks.

Sincerely,  
Annal J English

## Norwich City Recreation "Proposed" Budget Cuts

From: **Janet West** (jmw1995@juno.com)

Sent: Mon 4/20/09 4:30 PM

To: [blathrop@cityofnorwich.org](mailto:blathrop@cityofnorwich.org); [mbettencourt@cityofnorwich.org](mailto:mbettencourt@cityofnorwich.org); [pdesaulniers@cityofnorwich.org](mailto:pdesaulniers@cityofnorwich.org); [jjacaruso@cityofnorwich.org](mailto:jjacaruso@cityofnorwich.org); [wnash@cityofnorwich.org](mailto:wnash@cityofnorwich.org); [rzarnetske@cityofnorwich.org](mailto:rzarnetske@cityofnorwich.org)

Dear Mayor Lathrop & Councilmen,

I am writing in reference to the "proposed" budget cuts in the Recreation Department. I believe it would be a detriment to the residents of Norwich to deprive them of safe and well maintained city grounds.

It is nice to know that children have area(s) to play and be outdoors in the fresh air getting physical exercise than to be indoors playing video games or watching tv. The Recreation Department provides clean safe areas for children and adults to walk and play. It also improves the landscape of the City of Norwich.

The Recreation Department does more than just maintain playgrounds as they have many other important tasks to attend to. Please take this in to consideration before you make any budget cuts in this area. There are other ways to cut and save money than to cut jobs.

Sincerely,  
Janet West

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