

The regular meeting of the Council of the City of Norwich was held January 3, 2022 at 7:30 PM in Council Chambers. Present: Mayor Nystrom, President Pro Tem DeLucia, Ald. Neuendorf, Gould (via phone), Singh, Burto (via phone) and Wilson. City Manager Salomone and Corporation Counsel Michael Driscoll were also in attendance. Mayor Nystrom presided.

Ald. Neuendorf read the opening prayer and President Pro Tem DeLucia led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Please be advised that meetings of the Norwich City Council can be viewed in their entirety on the City of Norwich website “norwichct.org”.

Upon a Motion of Ald. Wilson, seconded by President Pro Tem DeLucia, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes of October 4 and 18, November 15, December 7 (with the correction in the motion to adjourn seconded by Ald. Singh and not by Ald. Wilson), and December 20, 2021.

State of the City Address by Mayor Peter Albert Nystrom:



ESTABLISHED 1659

CITY OF NORWICH
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Peter A. Nystrom
Mayor of Norwich

100 Broadway
Norwich, CT 06360

Norwich State of the City, 2022

As we begin 2022, I fully understand that just about everyone in our community has been as patient and persistent as they could have possibly been over the past 21 months. There has been so much change, delay and inconvenience related to the pandemic, above and beyond all of the sickness, death and sadness in Norwich and around the world.

But I have always been a firm believer in the old adage that adversity does not develop one’s character, it reveals it.

As I begin my latest term as Mayor of Norwich, I am more and more certain that Norwich has revealed great character throughout the pandemic, and as a result, we will emerge as a stronger community when this unprecedented event is behind us.

There are many signs for optimism in our midst – from the tireless and inspirational healthcare professionals on the front lines, to everyone in our school system who are caring for and educating our kids; the men and women of the Norwich Fire Department and Norwich Police Department, our volunteer fire departments and first responders have all been there for the public when they have been needed, no matter when or how frequently, without question, without fail.

The economic damage created by the pandemic may have dampened the spirits for many of our small businesses, but so many of them have adapted and adjusted to the changing environment, and will emerge even stronger. One example is our Craftsman Cliff Roaster who switched from a coffee shop location to a coffee manufacturer whose

sales continue to expand and is now looking for a larger location downtown. While at the same time supporting the opening of a new coffee shop on Franklin Street named Cream LLC.

Our ethnic restaurants – the heartbeat of our community – found innovative ways to connect with and serve their patrons. LaStellas Pizzeria ramped up take out services and soldiered on and never stopped assisting the most vulnerable in our city. As we begin this New Year all of us can look forward to the opening of a second store front called LaStellas Pasta and Pastry as Justin Burrows and his family expand opportunities at the former Poppy and Rye Bakery. All of this adversity has brought about creativity and new strategies, and will help us all get through this together.

America always bounces back – that’s part of what makes this country great. And the recovery from the pandemic might take a while longer, but there is no question that Norwich – will be back stronger than ever. The private sector in spite of the pandemic has continued to invest in our city. Back on November 30th Solar Seal Architectural LLC leased over 200,000 square feet of space for the next 12 years. Here they will manufacture premium insulated glass units for medium and large applications. In addition to up to 100 jobs they will become one of our top three utility users.

Over \$8,000,000 is being invested on lower Main St in market rate housing while a \$2,300,000 investment involves the relocation of These Guys Brewery to Church St. Both projects will benefit with some assistance of our share of the American Rescue Funds. These funds are being provided through our local Norwich Community Development Corporation, having been assigned the important task of addressing code correction issues for the first time, on a city wide bases.

Added progress continues in the development of the Business Park North spearheaded through NCDC in partnership with NPU and the City of Norwich. The historic Hale Mill development is moving forward as we look to complete final discussions with the development team this month. American Rescue fund dollars also allow us to expedite and complete Uncas Leap Park, our goal is to have this declared a national park one day.

These enormous economic investments by the federal and state government will make us stronger, our communities safer and healthier, while creating jobs and rebuilding our neighborhoods. Additional emphasis will be placed in upgrading our infrastructure to combat severe flooding, improve communications between our first responders, assisting our human services office to support community health, mental health, employment support, recreation assistance and the largest portion of its share, over \$890,000 going to basic needs for families, which our City Manager John Salomone likes to call the heart of the program.

Additionally we are investing \$500,000 in local arts and culture working through the Southeastern Cultural Coalition. Just yesterday, it was announced that a Norwich Arts and Culture Coordinator has been hired.

In the coming months, the City of Norwich will be working with our federal and state officials to determine the size, scope, and timing for further investments that will have the opportunity to move the Rose City forward in a very significant way. Sometime in May our city will receive an additional \$14,429,000 in ARP Funds.

This work will be difficult and time consuming, but we all must work together to be sure that everything is accomplished in a timely and equitable manner.

As we have all seen, continued obstacles are sure to stand in our way but the new normal requires that we all must accept sacrifice. Please join me in staying strong and being optimistic about Norwich in 2022 and beyond. Further, I ask for your patience as we fight through together, the continued pandemic.

Thank you.

Mayor Peter Albert Nystrom

Upon a motion of Ald. Wilson, seconded by President Pro Tem DeLucia, it was unanimously voted on a roll call vote to accept the resignation of Kristen Talley from the School Building Committee (2020) and thanking her for her service.

CITY MANAGERS REPORT

To: Mayor Nystrom and members of the City Council
From: John Salomone, City Manager
Subject: City Manager's Report
Date: January 3, 2022

Due to the uptick in the spread of COVID over the holiday season masks are required in City Hall and City owned buildings until further notice. The tax office will also be closed for in-person payments until January 10, 2022 due to staffing shortage caused by the COVID virus. We encourage taxpayers to pay taxes remotely if possible. Non-delinquent taxes can be made at any Norwich Peoples United Bank. Taxpayers do not need to be a People's United Bank customer to make their payment at a branch location. The City also offers payments via mail drop box located at the City Hall Broadway entrance or online at <http://norwichct.org/taxes>.

I attended Southeastern Council of Governments (SCCOG) meeting and met with Emergency Management personnel several times regarding the distribution of COVID test kits.

The City received a limited quantity of COVID self-test kits from the State for local distribution for those who are symptomatic or have had a high-risk exposure. Kits were distributed to City employees on January 3rd and the remaining kits were distributed at the drive through distribution site on Stonington Road. We understand the concern of our community members as case numbers increase and unfortunately cannot provide one for each resident at this time. We hope to receive more test kits for the State in the coming weeks to have future distributions.

The Public Works Engineering Department met with Norwich Public Utilities to discuss the paving priorities and schedule for next construction season. Unfortunately some of the roads which had been identified to be paved will not be ready for the coming season, as there is still utility work pending. Other roads that do not require utility work will be identified. Engineering staff also met with paving Contractor Charles Pasteryak Jr. Inc., to discuss the roads, which will be paved next year. Public Works crew made some emergency repairs to the culvert at Leffingwell Place to mitigate further flooding issues for the adjacent house. Repairs were also made at the Lakeside Pavilion at Mohegan Park for deterioration that had been caused by carpenter ants and weather.

Attached are the Fire Chiefs report for the December meeting that will be presented at the January Public Safety Meeting and the Treasurer's report for quarter ending September 30, 2021.

City Manager's Report to Public Safety

December 8, 2021 meeting

I have met with the Fire Chiefs twice over the past month. We met on November 9th with Rob Rautio from American Ambulance. We met again on November 16th with Captain Veiga and Dispatcher O'Brien from Norwich Police Department. Due to scheduling conflicts, the Chiefs have not been able to meet on their own over the past two months, however they did have another meeting with representatives from Motorola and the Connecticut Telecommunications System Unit regarding the Statewide Radio System project.

At our meeting with American Ambulance we discussed a number of concerns raised by the Chiefs regarding procedures, policies, and recent service delivery. We don't normally have American Ambulance at the table, but it was a good to directly address the ongoing concerns of the Chiefs with Rob.

Several topics were discussed involving Emergency Medical responses that the Fire Chiefs and Rob will work on for consistency in response, communication, and expectations when mutual aid ambulance services may be needed. The conversation was helpful for the groups to better understand the needs and concerns of both sides. I will include American Ambulance in future meetings as needed to address the concerns of the Chiefs.

The meeting with Captain Veiga and Dispatcher O'Brien focused on recent incidents and dispatch procedures, and also included some of the items that were raised during the meeting with American Ambulance. There are some challenges and inconsistent application of procedures in dispatch that were addressed.

The Chiefs and Dispatcher O'Brien shared their ideas on how to move forward and what areas can be adjusted to implement specific procedures regarding re-tones and automatic aid assignments. Dispatch and communication procedures were discussed as they relate to all departments following similar practices whenever feasible, with the understanding that there are inherent differences in the services.

We spoke of schedule and staffing level challenges that dispatch faces and what role the Chiefs play. The Chiefs all support increased staffing for the dispatchers, but recognize that it is on the Dispatcher's union and PD leadership to enact any changes to personnel levels.

While it is not normal for me to include the outside agencies in my meetings with the Chiefs, the need to have direct conversation with American and with Dispatch was clearly identified. Both meetings were productive and I think will lead to steps in the right direction to address the concerns of all involved.

My next scheduled meeting with the Chiefs is December 14th.

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Mayor Nystrom called for citizen comment on resolutions.

There were no speakers.

Mayor Nystrom declared citizen comment closed.

Upon a motion of President Pro Tem DeLucia, seconded by Ald. Wilson, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to adopt the following resolution introduced by Mayor Nystrom, President Pro Tem DeLucia and Alderwoman Gould.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Cindy Beauregard be appointed to the School Building Committee (2020) to fill a seat vacated by Kristen Talley with a term to expire on January 21, 2024 or until a successor is appointed.

Upon a motion of Ald. Wilson, seconded by Ald. Singh, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to adopt the following resolution introduced by City Manager Salomone.

WHEREAS, the City Manager John L. Salomone has reappointed with Councils approval as **regular member** to the Harbor Management Commission for a term to expire on 12/7/23 or until a successor is appointed;

Sofia LeWitt (D)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Norwich hereby acknowledges the reappointment of the above named to the Harbor Management Commission.

Upon a motion of Ald. Singh, seconded by Ald. Wilson, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to put the following resolution introduced by Mayor Peter Albert Nystrom on the floor.

Upon a motion of President Pro Tem DeLucia, seconded by Ald. Singh, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to amend the following resolution to add in the #3 paragraph "2,000,000.00".

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut has offered funding through the Office of Brownfields and Capital Projects Small Business and Community Development Program Unit referred to as Round 1 of the CT Communities Challenge Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, applications for funding are competitive and are due by January 14, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the City of Norwich proposes to submit an application with respect to the necessary cleanup of the former YMCA property consisting of three parcels located at 337-341, 351-353 and 355 Main Street and now owned by the City of Norwich in the amount of \$2,000,000.00; and

WHEREAS, the Director of the Department of Public Works is preparing the application.

NOW THEREFORE, the Council for the City of Norwich hereby approves the submission of said application for funding and further authorizes and directs City Manager, John Salomone, to sign and submit said application prior to the deadline on January 14, 2022.

Motion passes on a roll call vote of 7-0.

Upon motion of Ald. Gould, seconded by Ald. Singh, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:10 pm.



City Clerk