

The regular meeting of the Council of the City of Norwich was held March 16, 2026 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers. Present: Mayor Singh, President Pro Tem DeLucia, Ald. Nystrom, Ald. Zuccardy, Ald. Kadambaya, Ald. Hayes and Ald. Nash. Also in attendance were City Manager John Salomone and Corporation Counsel Aimee Siefert. Mayor Singh presided.

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

Ald. Hayes read the opening prayer, and Ald. Nash led the pledge of allegiance.

Upon a motion by Ald. Nystrom, seconded by Ald. Nash, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to accept the following Petition & Communication:

Roseanne Muscarella

From: Matt Simpson <mattman10128@ymail.com>
 Sent: Sunday, March 1, 2026 4:01 PM
 To: Jacquie Barbarossa; Laurel Hill VFC Chief; Samuel Wilson; Scott Eggert; Tim Jencks; upsfireman1847@aol.com
 cc: Peter Nystrom; Joseph A. DeLucia; Shiela Hayes; William Nash; Swarnjit Singh; Valeria Yraita-Zevallos; Zato Kadambaya; Jill Zuccardy; Roseanne Muscarella
 Subject: [External]Open Letter Regarding Fire Governance Structure

Ahead of tomorrow's meeting, I am submitting the attached open letter regarding fire governance structure and a proposed framework for moving forward.

As this issue involves both operational authority and substantial public expenditure, I believe careful structural consideration is warranted.

For the City Clerk, Mayor, and Council, I respectfully request that the attached letter be entered into the official record of the City Council meeting scheduled for 3/2/26, in light of the absence of public comment on the agenda.

Thank you for your attention.

To the City Administration, Members of the City Council, and the Leadership of Norwich's Career and Volunteer Fire Departments,

As you prepare to meet tomorrow, I offer this in the spirit of stability, structure, and good faith.

It is evident that tensions have escalated. It is also evident that both sides believe they are acting in the interest of public safety.

The City has expressed a desire for a unified command structure. The volunteer companies seek to preserve their independence as recognized in the Charter;

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Neither position is inherently unreasonable.

What is unreasonable is allowing this to devolve into a concentration-of-power dispute.

Fire protection is not an ordinary municipal function. It is one of the most critical public safety responsibilities entrusted to local government. It is also one of the most expensive. Decisions affecting fire governance therefore demand not only operational competence, but structural balance and fiscal discipline.

To date, the public has not been presented with clear, hard data demonstrating systemic operational failure that would justify a dramatic consolidation of authority into a single office. At the same time, the Charter explicitly recognizes the existence and status of volunteer fire companies — a structure that was deliberately designed and remains operative.

This is not simply about command hierarchy.

It is about governance structure, accountability, and stewardship of public resources.

Vesting extraordinary operational control in one individual — particularly amid strained relationships — is unlikely to rebuild trust. Sustainable reform must be collaborative, transparent, and structurally balanced.

There is a path forward that does not require either side to abandon its core principles.

I respectfully propose the creation of a Fire Control Board composed of:

- ' The six fire chiefs (career and volunteer), and
- Seven citizen members appointed through a transparent process.

The Board would operate with a rotating chair, ensuring that leadership responsibility is shared and no single individual holds sustained unilateral authority.

This Board could be empowered to:

- Conduct comprehensive operational reviews, including call volume, response times, and incident types;
- Establish and adopt standardized operating procedures;
- Develop a unified command framework grounded in consensus and data;
- Conduct personnel review processes where appropriate;
- Establish and enforce safety and training standards;
- Make formal recommendations for ordinance or Charter amendments, if warranted.

Such a structure is neither novel nor radical. Across Connecticut and throughout the country, essential public safety and high-cost municipal functions operate under board or commission governance models that balance professional expertise with civilian oversight. Fire districts in several Connecticut municipalities are governed by boards of commissioners. Police departments operate under civilian oversight structures. Utilities, water authorities, and other critical infrastructure systems routinely function under multi-member boards rather than a single concentrated authority.

The principle is straightforward: when a function is both essential to public safety and financially significant, distributed governance enhances accountability, transparency, and durability.

This proposed structure accomplishes several critical objectives:

It preserves the Charter-recognized framework while allowing modernization.

It prevents concentration of power.

It incorporates citizen oversight in matters that directly affect both public safety and tax burden.

And most importantly, it rebuilds working relationships through participation rather than imposition.

If reform is truly the goal, then it should be deliberate and evidence-based.

Returning to the operational status quo while a structured, citizen-inclusive review is conducted would allow tensions to cool and facts — not personalities to guide decisions.

Public safety at this level is too important, and too costly, to be governed by unilateral authority or reactionary escalation.

The people of Norwich deserve balance, transparency, and durable governance.

Tomorrow's meeting is an opportunity not to consolidate power — but to build a system that is stronger, safer, and more accountable than any single office.

Additionally, during the press conference held on the day yantic was shuttered , the City Manager cited Turn of River Fire Department, Inc. v. City of Stamford, suggesting that we all look into this case

Having reviewed that decision, it is important to note that the court's analysis occurred in the context of a charter amendment that had been approved by the voters of Stamford. The restructuring at issue in that case followed a lawful and express modification of municipal charter authority.

The Norwich Charter presently contains no comparable amendment authorizing consolidation of fire governance or alteration of the special tax structure set forth in Chapter X, Section 4(d).

Respectfully,

Matthew Simpson

Sent from my iPhone

Upon a motion by Ald. Nystrom, seconded by Ald. Nash, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to accept the following Petition & Communication:

Jacquie Barbarossa

From: LISA NEUENDORF <lpiacenza@snet.net>
 Sent: Wednesday, March 4 2026 10:48 AM
 To: Jacquie Barbarossa
 Subject: [External]FYI, email sent to S. Hayes, Z. Kadambaya

[You don't often get email from lpiacenza@snet.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Good morning,

I am writing to express my disappointment in your dialogue with the City Manager on Monday, March 2, 2026 meeting.

You came across as a bully when addressing the mil rate printed in the newspaper. YOU, as a member of the city council SHOULD have already known it was inaccurate reporting or fake news. If you were truly performing your job as an elected official, you would already know the factors that calculate the mil rate.

The mil rate is calculated through a mathematical calculation during the budget process. This process typically isn't finalized until late spring, but you should already know that.

To reprimand the City Manager during a public session, appeared to grandstanding, as it was very apparent.

If I was him, in the future I would inundate you with EVERY.SINGLE.INQUIRY and require you sign off on EVERY. SINGLE. RESPONSE. Even if it delays the timely inquiry, waiting for your personal approval.

If you can't differentiate gossip from reality, and if you can't take the heat from constituents, then you should not be sitting on the City Council.

Maybe, I should read this email during public comment at the next city council meeting, so you can assimilate the feeling the city manager must have felt.

In summary, do better, do your homework, do your job thoroughly, take accountability for YOUR lack of knowledge and stop grandstanding in front of the public.

Most sincerely,

Lisa Neuendorf

Sent from my iPhone

2026 MAR - 17 PM 1:02
[Faint, illegible text]

Upon a motion by Ald. Zuccardy, seconded by Ald. Hayes, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to accept the following Petition & Communication:



JOSHUA A. POTHIER, C.P.A.
COMPTROLLER
Phone: (860) 823-3720
Fax: (860) 823-3812

100 Broadway Room 105
Norwich, CT 06360-4431
www.norwichct.org/finance
jpothier@cityofnorwich.org

March 9, 2026

To: Mayor Swarnjit Singh and Members of the Norwich City Council through City Manager John Salomone

Explanation of resolutions regarding the transfer of certain real estate, motor vehicle, and personal property taxes into the suspense account

There are two proposed resolutions for your consideration for the next City Council meeting agenda regarding the transfer of certain property tax balances into the “suspense account.” I’ve prepared a brief explanation of these two resolutions below.

Real Estate

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §12-165, the Tax Collector must research each real estate tax account which she deems as not being collectable prior to presenting them to the City Council. There are different reasons for her to request that the tax account be transferred to the suspense tax book, including: mobile home abandoned and owner deceased or cannot be located, mobile home was removed without consent, property is contaminated, title issues, etc. The properties presented in the resolution for your consideration at the March 16, 2026 meeting are ones that the City of Norwich does NOT wish to acquire, either by tax sale or foreclosure and to date all attempts to collect the taxes have been unsuccessful.

Motor Vehicles

Generally, the Tax Collector submits motor vehicle accounts to be transferred into the suspense account, but there has been a change at the Department of Motor Vehicles. The Department of Motor Vehicles has extended registration time periods from two years to three years. Due to this change in policy the Tax Collector is unable to consider bills from the 2022 grand list uncollectable and is instead asking to transfer the uncollected motor vehicle balance from the 2021 grand list into the suspense account.

Personal Property

CGS §12-165 states the Tax Collector at least once each fiscal year shall transfer into the suspense account any personal property taxes which are deemed uncollectable. The resolution on the March 16, 2026 agenda is to transfer the uncollected personal property taxes from the October 2022 grand list into suspense.

In Summary

To consider these accounts as assets when it is believed that they will never be recouped does not help the City get an accurate picture of its finances. However, it is important to remember that while these property taxes are not **deemed** collectable, they **are** collectable, and payment of the taxes would be accepted until the 15-year collection period is over.

Schedule of Planned Annual Collection Efforts

Month	Real Estate	Motor Vehicle	Personal Property
July	Collect current levy		
August	* Mail delinquent notices Research and re-mail returned mail. Check bankruptcy accounts & send letters as needed	Notify DMV of delinquent accounts. Research and re-mail returned mail.	* Mail delinquent notices Research and re-mail returned mail. Check bankruptcy accounts & send letters as needed
September	Send demand notices to delinquent taxpayers	Send delinquent notices. Research and re-mail returned mail.	Send demand notices to delinquent taxpayers. Research and re-mail returned mail.
October	Identify properties for foreclosure (FC) or tax sale (TS) Meet with Attorney for update on FC Update new owners	Research and re-mail returned mail.	Research and re-mail returned mail.
November	Add new accounts to FC list and send work-ups to Attorney	Research and re-mail returned mail.	Research and re-mail returned mail.
December	Continue to send work-ups to Attorney	Mail supplemental motor vehicle tax bills	
January	Collect second installment of RE taxes	Collect supplemental motor vehicle tax bills	Collect second installment of PP taxes, if applicable
February	Mail delinquent notices. Transfer current levy uncollectable accounts to suspense. Update new owners. Check bankruptcy accounts & send letters as needed	Mail delinquent notices. Notify DMV of delinquent accounts. Suspend accts – previous tax year	Mail Demand notices. Suspend previous tax year accounts. Check bankruptcy accounts & send letters as needed.
March	Mail demands and intent to lien notices. Research and re-mail returned mail.	Mail demand notices. Turn over accts from previous year to TaxServ. Research and re-mail returned mail.	Turn over all delinquent accounts to TaxServ. Research and re-mail returned mail.

April	Meet with Attorney for update on FC. Add new accounts to FC list and send work-ups to Attorney. Begin preparing for a tax sale, if there are enough accounts.	Research and re-mail returned mail.	Research and re-mail returned mail.
May	Continue to send workups to Attorney. File liens on all open accounts. Update new owners		Get List of businesses from Health District
June	Generate next year’s tax levy. Notify Uncas Health District of delinquent accounts.		

City Manager’s Report

To: Mayor Singh and members of the City Council

From: John Salomone, City Manager

Subject: City Manager’s Report

Date: March 16, 2026

Meetings and Professional Engagements

During the reporting period, I represented the City of Norwich at the following meetings and events:

- Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SECOG) meeting.
- City Coordination Meeting.
- Norwich Community Development Corporation (NCDC) Executive Committee Meeting.
- Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) Legislative Committee and Board of Directors meetings.
- Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA) Audit and Investment Committee Meeting.
- Community Investment Fund (CIF).

I also issued press releases on March 4 and March 12 regarding response times and Unified Command support. Both releases have been posted on the City’s website under the News section as well as on the City’s Facebook page. As noted in those communications, the City has an obligation to ensure safe, reliable, and consistent fire and EMS coverage for residents in every neighborhood. While we value our volunteer firefighters and want them to remain a permanent part of our fire service, we must also ensure that modern public safety standards are consistently met.

The City has entered into mediation with 4 of the volunteer fire companies with the goal of reaching a resolution that prioritizes public safety and operational continuity. The City remains ready to reinstate any volunteer company that agrees to meet these professional benchmarks, ensuring a combined fire service that is safe, professional, and unified.

Public Works

Spring citywide brush pickup will begin March 30. Residents can view the collection schedule for their area on the Public Works page of the City website.

Recreation and Parks crews are also preparing parks and athletic fields for the upcoming spring season through routine cleanup and maintenance.

Youth, Family, and Recreation Department

Session Two of the department's winter programs has begun with more than 100 participants registered in various activities.

The department recently hosted a Teens Empowering Norwich event at Norwich Technical High School, where participants designed and customized their own sneakers, promoting creativity and youth engagement.

Upcoming events include a City-Wide Egg Scavenger Hunt and a Sensory-Friendly Egg Hunt on March 28 to provide inclusive opportunities for families throughout the community.

Neighborhood Assistance Program

The City Manager's Office is accepting applications from Norwich organizations for the Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit Program. Information and fillable applications are available through the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services website. Applications must be submitted to the City Manager's Office by June 1, 2026.

The NAA program provides funding opportunities for municipal and tax-exempt organizations by offering corporation business tax credits to businesses that make qualifying cash contributions to approved projects. Organizations interested in applying for or seeking additional information may contact the City Manager's Office.

Mayor Singh called for citizen comments on resolutions.

There being no speakers, Mayor Singh declared citizen comment closed.

Upon a motion by Ald. Nystrom, seconded by Ald. Zuccardy, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to adopt the following resolution introduced by City Manager Solomone.

Relative to the aggregate sums representing motor vehicle taxes up to and including the Grand List October 1, 2021 and personal property taxes on the Grand List October 1, 2022 being transferred to the suspense account.

WHEREAS, there is on file in the Tax Collector's Office the names and addresses of the persons against whom motor vehicle taxes on the Grand Lists up to and including 2021 and personal property taxes on the Grand Lists up to and including 2022, were levied and the reasons why the Tax Collector believes such taxes are uncollectible; and,

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Tax Collector's recommendation, the aggregate sum of \$401,072.46 representing the total outstanding motor vehicle tax on the Grand Lists up to and including 2021 and \$47,622.51 representing the total outstanding personal property tax on the Grand Lists up to and including 2022 be transferred to the suspense tax book; and,

WHEREAS, nothing herein contained shall be construed as an abatement of any tax transferred to the suspense tax account, but any such taxes, as it shall have been increased by interest, penalty fees and charges may be collected; and

WHEREAS, in June 2018, through RFP 18-12, the City selected TaxServ Capital Services LLC to pursue the collection of such accounts.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORWICH that the following aggregate sums representing motor vehicle taxes of \$401,072.46 on the Grand Lists up to and including 2021 and personal property taxes of \$47,622.51 on the Grand Lists up to and including 2022, be and the same hereby are transferred to the suspense account.

Upon a motion by Ald. Zuccardy, seconded by Pres. Pro Tem DeLucia, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to adopt the following resolution introduced by City Manager Solomone.

Relative to placing in the suspense account certain real estate taxes.

WHEREAS, Section 12-165 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended by Section 35 of Public Act 13-276 provides for the administrative procedure for transferring real estate taxes deemed uncollectible to the “suspense” tax book; and,

WHEREAS, taxes transferred to the suspense tax book are no longer listed as an asset of the city in its annual financial report; and,

WHEREAS, listed below are the addresses of the properties with real estate taxes levied on the Grand Lists up to and including 2024 which the Tax Collector believes such taxes are uncollectible because of lack of payment for several years; and,

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Tax Collector’s recommendation the aggregate sum of **\$29,594.93** in real estate tax on the Grand Lists up to and including 2024, to be transferred to the suspense tax book; and,

WHEREAS, nothing herein contained shall be construed as an abatement of any tax transferred to the suspense tax account, but any such taxes, as it shall have been increased by interest, penalty fees and charges may be collected; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORWICH that the aggregate sum of **\$29,594.93** representing uncollectible real estate taxes on the Grand Lists up to and including 2024, be and the same hereby are transferred to the suspense account.

Unique ID	Address	List Years Due	Taxes Due
1000020562	56 ALICE ST	2024	\$1,477.16
0112180001	HOLLAND AVE	2024	2,242.04
0112190001	20 CROWN ST	2024	1,230.28
0108790001	751 NORTH MAIN ST	2024	530.16
118001017N	THAMES TERR	2024	1,153.40
1200020001	BEEBE RD	2024	205.40
0049540001	117 RIVER AVW	2024	109.28
0057480001	35 LAMBERT DR REAR	2024	17.42

7125620001	LAUREL HILL RD	2024	97.47
0100340001	97 FOREST ST	2024	420.88
0105330001	177 CENTRAL AVE	2024	3,751.58
0122790001	145 ELIZABETH ST	2024	1,234.34
0031740001	10 WASHINGTON ST	2024	699.70
0031750001	4 ETHERIAL ST	2024	323.74
0070320001	100 ATLANTIC AVE	2018-2024	5,043.28
0106170001	303 MOHEGAN PARK RD 123	2018-2024	5,200.24
0049360001	303 MOHEGAN PARK RD 122	2024	464.72
0630011222	53 PRENTICE ST 22	2024	579.59
0024200001	57 SWEET BRIAR LN	2021-2022	861.03
0031600001	13 PACEMAKER AVE	2024	36.00
0900010064	303 MOHEGAN PARK RD 64	2019-2024	617.38
0008640001	252 OLD CANTERBRY TPKE 100	2024	983.16
0067690001	252 OLD CANTERBURY TPKE 50	2021-2024	2,293.16
0620112121	303 MOHEGAN PARK RD 121	2024	23.52
TOTAL			\$29,594.93

Upon a motion by Ald. Nystrom, seconded by Ald. Nash, on a roll call vote it was unanimously voted to adopt the following resolution introduced by City Manager Solomone.

WHEREAS, the R.E. Van Norstrand Neighborhood Assistance Act, Chapter 228a of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S. 12-630aa-12-638) offers certain benefits to municipalities desiring to obtain the same and is administered by the State Department of Revenue Services (Commission of Revenue Services); and

WHEREAS, the Neighborhood Assistance Act provides a tax credit for business firms which sponsor local programs; and

WHEREAS, such programs must be proposed and conducted by private non-profit agencies or municipalities and be approved by the local legislative body;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORWICH: A public hearing will be held on June 15, 2026 to review applications and receive comments relative to the Neighborhood Assistance Act.

Mayor Singh called for general citizen comment on non-agenda items.

Peter Clark, Deputy Chief of Laurel Hill spoke on his disappointment with the City’s recent response to a tanker request by Montville FD.

Kera Simpson, explained the Incident Management Systems (IMS) and that it is the national standard for first responders.

Matt Simpson, shared what he saw from video of conflicting responses between Norwich FD & Yantic VFD to a call at 42 Town St.

Roberta Paro, spoke about being a leader & role model in a dominator society while showing respect and integrity to others.

Beryl Fishbone gave a public thank you on behalf of her neighborhood to Yantic Fire. She stated the area has a history of flooding and drainage issues.

John Bilda stated he knew the difference between right & wrong and diminishing community spirit is wrong.

Rodney Bowie spoke about the professionalism of Yantic VFD. As a long-time landlord, he is concerned with Norwich residents with out-of-state vehicle registrations who aren't paying Norwich taxes and would like the City to strictly enforce the law.

Joanne Philbrick spoke regarding her dissatisfaction with the length of time allowed for public comment. She feels that Norwich is a slum and believes that the Council does not truly care about the residents that elected them.

Mark Adams spoke regarding the idea of a City-wide paid fire department has been rejected by Norwich voters in the past and that this conflict could have been prevented by not hiring an outsider as the fire chief. He wants the volunteers reinstated.

“Rocky” (no last name given), spoke regarding his dissatisfaction with the Council, City Manager & Fire Chief Wilson, “no taxation without representation”.

Mayor Singh declared the general citizen comment closed.

Upon a motion by Ald. Hayes, second by Ald. Nash, on a roll call vote, it was 6-1 to adjourn at 7:44 PM. Ald Nystrom voting in opposition.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tianne Curtis, Asst. City Clerk