

**CITY COUNCIL AND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SCHOOL BUDGET AD HOC COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING**

Tuesday, May 21, 2025 at 6:30 PM  
Norwich Planning & Neighborhood Services Building  
Lower level conference room  
23 Union Street, Norwich, CT

Present:

City Council: President Pro Tem Joseph DeLucia; Alderwoman Stacy Gould, Alderman Swarnjit Singh

Board of Education (BOE): John Iovino, Kevin Saythany, Christine Distasio, Mark Kulos (non-voting)

Ex-Officio Members: Susan Lessard - SOS, Jamie Bender - Asst. SOS, Dr. Lisa Hughes - NPS Director of Pupil Services, Bob Sirpenski - NPS Business Manager, Orla McKiernan - Deputy Comptroller City of Norwich

Absent: Ella Myles, BOE; John Salomone, City of Norwich

1. Call to Order. Pres. Pro Tem DeLucia called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.
2. Public Comment Period. None was given.
3. New Business.
  - a. Discussion and Possible Action - Recommendation to the City Council regarding FY 2025-2026 School Budget

Pres. Pro Tem DeLucia turned the meeting over to Superintendent Lessard to bring the committee up-to-date on the status of the current and proposed school budget.

Ms. Lessard distributed copies of five updated slides from the presentation distributed at the May 6, 2025 meeting (Attachment A). These slides showed scenarios that could result in cost savings or cost avoidances that would lower the NPS budget deficit. Ms. Lessard reminded committee members that a reduction of \$627,491 was required.

Dr. Hughes reviewed the first slide, providing details on the Rose City Resilience Program. Discussion followed.

Ms. Lessard described the plan in place in the event one School Resource Officer position would be eliminated as shown on the second slide. Discussion followed.

Ms. Lessard reviewed the third slide, explaining the cost savings to be realized if seven administrative assistant positions were changed back to a 10-month position from the current 12 months. Discussion followed.

Ms. Lessard and Mr. Sirpenski discussed various scenarios with funding percentages from the State of Connecticut Excess Cost Grant as shown on the fourth slide. Discussion followed.

Ms. Lessard and Mr. Sirpenski informed the committee of the outcome of a recent meeting with First Student, summarized on the fifth slide, and also discussed other options they are looking into for reducing transportation costs. Discussion followed.

Ms. Lessard concluded that if the discussed scenarios were implemented it was reduce the budget to the 1% target.

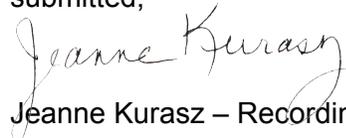
Mr. Sirpenski added that they have received data to begin evaluating health care costs and come up with solutions to reduce costs. Discussion followed.

Pres. Pro Tem DeLucia reminded the committee of the State of Connecticut's Legislative Session end date, and the deadline for the Norwich City Council. Following a discussion, the consensus was to schedule a third committee meeting for June 5, 2025 at 6:30 PM, with the meeting location to be determined.

No formal action was taken at the meeting.

4. Adjournment. Motion made by Alderwoman Gould, seconded by Alderman Singh, to adjourn the meeting. It was unanimously approved and the meeting ended at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully  
submitted,



Jeanne Kurasz – Recording Secretary

**ATTACHMENT A**

Updated slides

**NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Addition of Rose City Resilience Program**  
**2025-2026**

**Addition of Rose City Resilience Program:**

**Purpose:** 5 Middle/High School Students with personalized, in-district services.

**Projected Savings:** \$350K by reducing use of outside services & out- of-district placements

**Goals:**

- Build student resilience & a growth mindset
- Improve attendance and engagement
- Strengthen family-school collaboration
- Ensure access to mental health & academic support
- Promote credit attainment & graduation

Would bring deficit to \$277,491



# NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Scenario: Elimination of one SRO Officer: Savings \$115,000  
2025-2026

## Scenario: Elimination of one SRO Officer: Savings of \$115,000

### Officer Jared Homand:

- Kelly M.S.
- Huntington
- Moriarty
- Stanton
- Wequonnoc

### Officer Robert McKinney:

- Global M.S.
- Mahan
- Uncas
- Veterans
- Rose City School

Would bring deficit to \$162,491



**NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Scenario: 12 month Admin. Assistants to 10 month work year  
2025-2026**

**Scenario: 12 month Administrative Assistants reverting back to**

**10-month positions:**

Potential Savings:

\$73,248: Payroll Savings

\$5,604: Tax Savings

**Total Potential Savings: \$78,852**

Would bring deficit to \$83,639



**NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Special Education Excess Cost**

**Special Education: Excess Cost Percentage Discussion:**

**Presently: 78%**

**80%: \$38,000**

**85%: \$201,789**

**91%: 398,136**



## NORWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Scenario: First Student Meeting: Possible Transportation Cost Reductions 2025-2026

#### Scenario: First Student Possible Transportation Cost Reductions

##### **May 15-First Meeting with First Student**

##### Our Ask:

- Rate Reduction for 2025-2026: From 5% to 0%
- Offered van business: \$400,000
- Proposed: One additional year on the current contract

##### Their Response:

- Rate Reduction for 2025-2026: 0.75%
- Remaining 2 years: 9% increase each year
- Proposed extension: 2 additional years at 9% annually
- Van service: Unable to accommodate

