



**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
MIDDLETOWN, CT**

**PUBLIC HEARING ON FY 2019-2020 PROPOSED BUDGET
APRIL 25, 2019**

DRAFT MINUTES

The Special Meeting of the Common Council of the City of Middletown, the Public Hearing for the FY 2019-2020 Proposed Budget, was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Thursday, April 25, 2019 at 7:00 PM.

Present: Mayor Daniel Drew
Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta
Councilman Robert Blanchard
Councilman Carl Chisem
Councilman W. Vance Cotton
Councilman Gerald Daley
Councilman Sebastian Giuliano
Councilman Eugene Nocera
Councilman Philip Pessina
Councilwoman Linda Salafia
Councilman Robert Santangelo

Absent: Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr.; Councilwoman Deborah Kleckowski

Also Present: Linda S.K. Reed, Clerk of the Common Council
Carl Erlacher, CPA, Director – Finance Department
Sergeant-at-Arms – Officer Haddad

Members of the Public: 4

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Daniel Drew calls the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He invites those present to join in the Pledge of Allegiance. He welcomes the public to the annual public hearing for City budget. He explains that, since no business is being conducted, there is no call of the meeting.

2. Public Hearing – FY 2019-2020 Proposed Budget Opens

The Chair opens the public hearing at 7:01 PM. He invites anyone wishing to speak to come to the podium, asking that they state their name and address for the record and limit comments to five (5) minutes.

Ed McKeon (Pearl Street): He speaks to support the Board of Education proposed budget, noting that investment in schools is the single best investment in economic development that can be made. The City is lucky to have Dr. Conner as the Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Conner recently said, without a hint of irony that he wants to make Middletown schools the best in the State. He is taking revolutionary steps to make that happen. As Dr. Conner has demonstrated, he is not using unproven methods. The educational programs that he is instituting will provide measurable and observable results. He has already shared available data. He has aligned the budget with programs and methods that will yield results. For too long, we have done too little to help struggling students achieve at high levels. For too long, we have settled for educational strategies designed for an agrarian, industrial society when we live in a connected, data rich society. For too long, the focus has been on rote learning and have ignored social and emotional needs. For too long, we have tinkered with incremental success in closing the achievement gap when we should be addressing the opportunity gap. Already with several new programs in the test phase, we have pre-school children achieving remarkable levels of readiness. They walk into Kindergarten knowing letters, numbers, and fundamentals and foundational concepts, and reading or ready to read. We have middle school students demonstrating double digit advances in achievement test scores. We have students, who never considered enrolling in AP (Advanced Placement) courses now enrolled and discovering that they are capable of tackling advanced subject matter. Dr. Conner deserves support of this proposed budget and deserves the Council's support. He reiterates. Ask any realtor: if you want young families to move to Middletown, improve the schools. You want businesses to move to Middletown and grow tax bases: improve the schools. You want property investment to increase: improve the schools. You want reliable. Stable employees: improve the schools. You want parents to choose Middletown schools over Charters: improve the schools. You want an educated, employable populace: improve the schools. You want to spend less on enforcement and imprisonment: improve the schools. He believes Dr. Conner when he says that Middletown schools can be the best in the State. He believes Dr. Conner when he says he wants to be able to hold up Middletown as an example for the nation. He hopes the Council will believe him too.

Vincent Loffredo (no address): He endorses all the items that Ed McKeon has just raised in his comments. He states that there are two (2) other items that he wants to raise. One is that, during the Board of Education presentation, one figure presented was regarding the dramatic increase in insurance costs for the City and Board of Education. Insurance is a shared responsibility between the employer and employee., that question should be looked at again in a dramatic fashion so the cost to the employee as well as the employer – the City and taxpayers – should be relooked at In terms of what we are providing and how it is provided thru the brokers, CCM, the State Comptroller's Office. He reiterates: take another look at that dramatic increase in that line item for insurance. The other item, which many are aware of from what you hear form the General Assembly and publications, deals with the potential costs shift from the State to municipalities. He knows that the Council debated the issue of tolls. Clearly, in terms of the State Teachers' retirement Fund, which has been the responsibility of the State since inception, and where teachers, administrators, and other members of the retirement system in Connecticut have provided their required contribution since inception. Unfortunately, that has never been the case for many decades for what the State has done. That would be a tremendous hit and undermine the efforts being made locally by Dr, Conner and all of the staff if that shift were to occur. It would be a dramatic impact, a negative impact, on what the City is able to do. He urges the Council to look at the insurance issues, adding that they should be supportive of Dr. Conner and his efforts since his recent hiring, moving the system forward with help and assistance of the various employees, who make up the school system and the other question dealing with teacher retirement.

Lucy McMillan (Pearl Street): She agrees with both of the previous speakers about the proposed budget. She is inspired by Dr. Conner's leadership and the innovations in school system under his leadership. She was present for the Board of Education budget workshop presentation earlier this week, so she will not reiterate the data points. She was very impressed and believes that Middletown can be number one in the State. To do that, we need the financial and emotional support of the Council. She asks the Council to look at this budget and consider approving his full proposal.

4. Public Hearing Closes

The Chair state states that, seeing no additional members of the public wishing to speak, the public comment session is closed. The public comment session closes at 7:07 PM.

5. Meeting adjourned

Councilman Philip Pessina moves for adjournment. Councilman Sebastian Giuliano seconds the motion. The Chair calls for the vote. It is approved unanimously with 10 aye votes. The Chair states the motion passes with 10 affirmative votes.

The meeting is adjourned at 7:07 PM.

ATTEST:

LINDA S.K. REED,
COMMON COUNCIL CLERK