



VOTER GUIDE: Mayoral Candidates, Norwalk, 2019

Questions for all candidates:

1. What motivates you to run for this office?
2. What qualifications and skills do you bring to the table?
3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities?

Mayor

- Harry Rilling* (D/WFP)

1. Born and raised in Norwalk, I first ran for mayor in 2013 after retiring from the police department following a 41-year career, including 17 as chief. I have always loved the city and I was disappointed in many things that weren't happening. Having served as Mayor for the past six years, I've fought hard to keep taxes & spending under control. Norwalk has one of the lowest mill rates in Connecticut among its peers. As a result, the city has strong cash reserves and superb credit ratings (Moody's, S&P and Fitch ratings are all AAA).

- Norwalk has experienced grand list growth every year.

- Crime is down in every neighborhood.

- Norwalk public schools are ranked #1 on the state education report card.

- New technology and apps employed to make city hall more accessible to residents.

I want to continue this record of progress for our great city!

2. I have dedicated my life to public service in the U.S. Navy, as a police officer and Police Chief and as Mayor of Norwalk. I have a BS in Criminal Justice, Summa Cum Laude, from Iona College, and a Masters in Public Administration from the University of New Haven. I am a

graduate of the FBI Executive Development Course. I have been an Adjunct Professor of Criminal Justice at Norwalk Community College, an on-site assessor and team leader with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA); past Chairman of the Mid-Fairfield Substance Abuse Coalition (MFSAC); past President of the Fairfield County Chiefs of Police Association (FCCP) and the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association (CPCA); a Life member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP); and a Board member of the National Committee on Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. I served as Norwalk's Police Union President in 1976.

3. Keeping taxes down while providing excellent services for residents is my top priority. Economic Development is underway across the city including the new SoNo Collection, Washington Street Improvements, new mixed-use developments such as Waypointe and hundreds of new businesses with good-paying jobs for residents. A recent \$500 million SoNo Collection project has brought 1500 new jobs.

Education is another key priority. I have supported school expansion and development through Capital Expenditures of \$189 million. Norwalk public schools ranked #1 on the state education report card - first among peer districts including Stamford according to the 2019 CT Accountability Report. Significantly outperforming the state average.

Reducing crime is also a key focus. As a result, Norwalk is as safe as it has ever been. Serious crimes are at a historic low down by over 1000 incidents per year and 911 response times have been improved from 6 minutes to 3.5 minutes.

- Lisa Brinton (U, R endorsed)

1. I've an emotional attachment to Norwalk having raised my sons here. I've advocated for students and homeowners for 13 out of my 21 years. My corporate career was cut short by

illness, but I found fulfillment in public service. I first got involved in our schools helping to close the achievement gap in a variety of capacities, then in neighborhood quality of life over planning and zoning issues.

I'm frustrated with our mayor, who I feel is more responsive to special interests than residents and he lacks the financial skills to lead and advocate for Norwalk during the state's challenging times. We're experiencing growth, but not necessarily the corresponding revenues needed to service the increased population density. We approach the city in piecemeal, lacking a vision for our downtown and negotiate poorly with developers. We're squandering our future, as residents are left with higher taxes and lower quality of life.

2. I have a managerial and business background - 20 years with AT&T and Lucent Technologies building networks around the world and five more as a management consultant to Fortune 500 companies. I recently obtained a master's degree from American University, in Public Policy & Administration. I'll draw on colleagues and national best practices.

I was a teacher in Norwalk's schools and housing authority for 12 years, helping close the achievement gap and worked tirelessly as a land-use advocate. This has provided a unique understanding of the two largest areas affecting Norwalk's budget- our schools (54% of expenses) and land/real estate (90% of revenues).

I'll bring financial management, operational savvy, negotiating and fundraising skills to the mayor's office. Our budget must be managed effectively for residents and small businesses. We must recognize Norwalk's value and aggressively pursue our share of state funding and private grants to lessen the burden on taxpayers.

3. Unbalanced growth and increased density are reshaping Norwalk into an expensive and transient city. New leadership is needed for a livable community that works for residents, not

just special interests. We must preserve our historic character, while growing small business.

Residents can't afford City Hall be Norwalk's most lucrative employer.

We may have a small-town personality – but we're seeing the strains of being a bigger city and need a city government that acts accordingly. This means more inclusive, stronger leadership and better financial management to safeguard quality of life and ease homeowner's financial burden.

Norwalk's mayor must more strongly advocate for residents, so Norwalk remains an affordable and livable city.

Priorities:

Review all land-use projects (No to POKO, Walk Bridge, No development with negative ROI).

More funding from the state, grants and foundations.

Reform city hall – Ordinance improvements and enforcement, review zoning and third-party agencies.