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The Bulletin

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Norwich Flag Day celebrated May 13



The city flag flies outside Norwich City Hall for Norwich Flag Day. PHOTOS BY MATT GRAHN/NORWICH BULLETIN

Local leaders honor city and its history

Matt Grahn
Norwich Bulletin
USA TODAY NETWORK

While Norwich normally hosts flag raisings for other cultures in the community, the city hosted a flag for itself.

Norwich Flag Day was held on May 13 because it's the day in 1784 that Norwich was legally made a city by the state of Connecticut.

Local leaders and members of the community gathered outside Norwich City Hall, at the David Ruggles Freedom Courtyard, to celebrate the city and its history.

Norwich Mayor Swarnjit Singh said

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Norwich Mayor Swarnjit Singh reads a proclamation for Norwich Flag Day, surrounded by City Council members Jill Zuccardy, Shiela Hayes, Peter Nystrom and Zato Kadambaya.

Fire chief criticizes volunteer failures

Wilson says unified response model needed

Connor Linskey
Norwich Bulletin
USA TODAY NETWORK

Eight days after the Norwich Fire Department's union called out the city's volunteer fire departments for their responses to calls, Norwich Fire Chief Sam Wilson did the same.

On May 12, Norwich Fire Chief Sam Wilson sent a letter to the chiefs of the city's five volunteer fire departments documenting a series of operational failures within their departments, including delayed or incomplete responses to life-threatening emergencies, failures to engage with established communications procedures and inconsistent use of Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) technology.

"These documented service gaps are not isolated incidents; they are symptoms of a structural system failure," Norwich Fire Chief Samuel Wilson said in a press release. "My goal remains a harmonious, unified operation where the closest and most capable resources are dispatched automatically. We cannot continue to manage public safety through discretionary corrections when a standardized, professional command structure would eliminate these risks entirely."

Wilson lists volunteers' inadequate responses to emergencies

Wilson detailed several recent events in his letter that demonstrate the fragility of the current volunteer-based system. He added that Norwich's volunteer fire departments responded inadequately to calls prior to the Yantic Fire Department closing in February, which is why the unified command structure was established in August 2025. Here are examples of inadequate responses mentioned in Wilson's letter.

• **May 4:** The Taftville Fire Department was unable to respond to two

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Plainfield residents voting on town, school budgets

Connor Linskey
Norwich Bulletin
USA TODAY NETWORK

Plainfield residents will vote on the town's annual operating and education budgets as well as the capital improvement plan for fiscal 2027 at the budget vote on Monday, May 18.

The proposed annual operating budget totals \$13,220,514. This figure is up \$192,467 or 1.5% from the \$13,028,047 town spending plan in the fiscal 2026 budget.

Plainfield First Selectman Kevin Cunningham said the main factor for

the year-over-year increase in the town budget was contractual raises. Cunningham said he was satisfied with the proposed town and education budgets.

"I think the proposed Town of Plainfield budget for both town and BOE (Board of Education) are fiscally responsible and would encourage people to call the town or superintendent if they have any questions on the budget if they still have questions or concerns," Cunningham said.



Cunningham

Cunningham can be reached at 860-230-3001, and Plainfield Public Schools Superintendent Paul Brenton can be reached at 860-564-6404.

Proposed education budget

The proposed education budget totals \$40,690,401 for FY27, which is an increase of \$1,562,579 or 3.99% from the FY26 total of \$39,127,822.

Brenton said the biggest driver that caused the increase is the rising cost of health insurance.

"Over \$900,000 of our increase is related to health insurance costs," Bren-

ton said. "Without the health insurance, our total budget increase is less than 1.6%."

Brenton added that in order to maintain a fiscally responsible budget, positions had to be cut. Seventeen positions were eliminated and one grounds/maintenance position was reduced to part time. The eliminated roles included 10 teachers, four part-time paraeducators, one career coordinator, one social

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