

TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 3, 2020

A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Monday, February 3, 2020 in the Legislative Council Chambers at Memorial Town Hall. The meeting was called to order at 7:16 P.M. by the Council President. The Clerk took the roll which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mick McGarry	Justin Farmer
Harry Gagliardi	Marjorie Bonadies
Austin Cesare	Jody Clouse
Brad Macdowall	Kathleen Schomaker
Betty Wetmore	Valerie Horsley
Mike Colaiacovo	Berita Rowe-Lewis
Kristin Dolan	Dominique Baez (arrived at 7:22pm)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Athena Gary

PRESIDING: Mick McGarry, President

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT: Mr. McGarry request a motion to move the President's Report up on the agenda. Moved by Mr. Cesare, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis and approved unanimously.

Mr. McGarry then read the following statement:

“Hello, thank you to everyone for coming tonight.

I believe it is important to first and foremost make some simple truthful statements: racism exists, inequity exists, injustice exists. It exists everywhere in this country, and it exists here in our community... Hamden. I am sorry for what happened to the West Woods community, I am sorry for the family, and, most importantly, the students directly affected. As president of the Legislative Council I express my sincerest regret, remorse and sorrow that this issue needs to be discussed, here and now in the year 2020, in our community...but we do.

As much as I love this town - a town my wife and I chose to move to in part because of its diversity - we must accept that fact that there is a lot of challenging, daunting, and uncomfortable work to be done. In this council's first meeting I stated: “I also ask that we fully embrace our changing culture and create and empower a Community Relations commission to help the town confront issues of equity and fairness.” In the two months since that meeting, I've had many conversations

with various stakeholders, members of the administration. Consultants to the BOE, and community members. I have learned a lot, but what I have mainly learned, is that I have a lot more to learn. And in all of the conversations there are core questions that keep returning: What do we need to do differently? What do we need to do better? How do we create a space for the difficult conversations we need to have? And then, what actions do we need to take?

The BOE formed an Equity committee last year, the town has a Human Rights and Relations Commission, both of these organizations are working hard, and staffed by good people, but clearly, there is more work to be done. Mayor Leng is creating a Task force charged with pulling together community institutions and stakeholders and developing a plan to create a more equitable and just Hamden.

Quinnipiac University

- Anti-Defamation League
- Albertus Magnus College
- Greater New Haven NAACP
- Hamden Human Rights & Relations Commission
- Mothers Demand Action Against Gun Violence
- Action Together Connecticut
- Racial & Ethnic Disparities Committee (RED)
- CONECT (Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut)

The Council and BOE will work with the Mayor's office in partnership to create and empower this task force. For this task force to be successful, we must listen and learn. There are institutions and stakeholders in the room tonight as listening partners.

Our Public input rules usually imposes a 3 minute time - limit per individual, but, without objection from the council, there will be no time limit on how long anyone can speak. Just everyone please respect that there are a lot of people who wish to speak and be mindful of their time as well. For the sake of clarity, I must also communicate that as the Town's legislative body, the Council appropriates funds to the Hamden Public Schools, but it has no authority over their operation. We want to hear your thoughts and concerns; specific ideas we hear tonight about operational or personnel issues on the BOE side, will be communicated to them, but we can't act on ourselves. Part of trying to improve ourselves is hearing the thoughts and experiences of people who are concerned about and more importantly, affected by inequity and racism, so please help us

become a better Hamden, we are here to listen and learn. If you would like to address the council, please approach the microphone, state your name and address for the record, and speak to us, help us become a better Hamden, we're here to listen and learn.

Thank you. ”

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION: There were 20 speakers – 18 who spoke about the West Woods School incident, and 2 who spoke in favor of the CCA Resolution.

After the Public Input Session the Council recessed at 8:50pm and reconvened at 9:05pm.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS: None

REPORTS OF COUNCIL LIAISONS: None

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: Mr. McGarry requested a motion to approve the minutes of January 21, 2020. Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis and approved with 1 abstention (Clouse)

CONSENT CALENDAR: Mr. McGarry said the consent calendar includes items #'s 1 thru 8 and #'s 10 thru 17. He said #9 is being pulled and added to the regular agenda for an amendment. He then requested a motion for approval. Moved by Ms. Rowe-Lewis, seconded by Ms. Wetmore.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer asked if he could make a friendly amendment and have item #10 pulled from consent also. Mr. McGarry said item #10 is now pulled from the consent. Mr. Gagliardi asked why #9 is being pulled and Mr. McGarry said there's a mistake on the date and it needs to be amended. A vote was taken and it passed unanimously.

The consent calendar includes all items that have passed unanimously in Committee on January 21, 2020 and will now be considered in toto by unanimous consent:

- 1. Refund of property taxes collected between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020 – Overpayments on current Grand List – (33) totaling \$13,740.05**
- 2. Refund of property taxes collected prior to July 1, 2019 – (6) totaling \$2,180.43**
- 3. Appointment of Tracy Bowens to the Human Rights & Relations Commission for a term to expire April 30, 2021**
- 4. Appointment of Joseph Banks as a full member to the Planning & Zoning Commission for a term to expire January 31, 2022**
- 5. Appointment of Robert S. Reger to the Farmington Canal Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2022**
- 6. Amendment to expiration date – Appointment of Daniel C. Ioime to the Historic Properties Commission for a corrected expiration date of September 30, 2022**

7. **Reappointment of Carl Jordan to the Clean & Green Commission for a term to expire November 1, 2022**
8. **Reappointment of Chris M. Ruggerio to the Parks & Recreation Commission for a term to expire January 31, 2023**
11. **Town of Hamden Legislative Council Resolution of Endorsement – Regional Cybersecurity Initiative**
12. **Town of Hamden Legislative Council Resolution of Endorsement – School Waste Diversion Pilot Program**
13. **Order authorizing interdepartmental transfer 2019-2020 Fiscal Year Budget - \$55,000 for Animal Control Land/Building Rental - (\$15,000 from Finance Salaries) (\$30,000 from Police Salaries) (\$10,000 from Library Salaries)**
14. **Order authorizing the Town of Hamden to donate a Bus Shelter to Davenport Residences, Inc. and enter into a Temporary Construction Easement for the installation of the Bus Shelter (125-135 Putnam Avenue)**
15. **Order authorizing the Town of Hamden to enter into an agreement with Neopost USA, Inc. and Mailroom Finance, Inc. for mail machine services and a funding account to purchase postage from the U.S. Postal Service**
16. **Order to approve agreement for support services by and between the Town of Hamden and Total Communications, Inc. (\$23,709.66)**
17. **Order approving the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year schedule on expenditure and revenue (Ice Rink) \$465,000**

REGULAR AGENDA:

1. Resolution amending the resolution establishing a School Building Committee – **TABLED ITEM**
-- Mr. McGarry requested a motion to take this item off the table. Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis and approved unanimously.

-- Mr. McGarry then requested a motion to approve this item. Moved by Mr. Cesare, seconded by Ms. Horsley. DISCUSSION: Mr. Gagliardi expressed his concern with the change of the Chairman no longer being a Council person and said he thinks the Chair should be someone who is responsible and accountable to Hamden. Mr. McGarry said the thought was they are trying to reduce the number of political people and increasing the number of resident electors and professionals. Mr. Gagliardi said he understands that but he thinks the Chair should be a Council person and someone responsible to the voters in the Town of Hamden.

Mr. Farmer expressed with his concerns with getting a quorum with a smaller body and asked if the ex-officio members count towards a quorum. Mr. McGarry said no. Mr. Farmer said he hopes we don't have quorum issues in the future with multiple projects that are already behind schedule. He then said he also shares Mr. Gagliardi's concern.

Mr. Gagliardi said he'd like to make a motion to (paragraph number 3 on page 2) to read "The president of the Legislative Council shall appoint a chairperson (and add) **from the Legislative Council** and a vice-chair person for the School Building Committee from among the various voting members of the committee" The motion was seconded by Mr. Farmer.

Mr. Colaiacovo said he respectfully disagrees with Mr. Gagliardi He said we need people with experience and that's why he never wanted to sit on that committee, he's never built anything, and thinks the chair of this committee should be someone with professional abilities and said they (the Council) still have the ability to say yes or no to money when it comes back to them, so he'd like to see someone with a background in some type of building as the chairman of the SBC.

Ms. Dolan asked if they actually approve all the money or do they approve it after it's already been spent. Mr. McGarry said many of the funds have already been approved of when they go out for bonding for the project in total, but some specific items will come back like contracts and stuff like change orders will go to the School Building Committee, and major changes and additional funds will come back to Council.

Mr. Cesare asked if the BOE members were staggered terms or in other words how are they replaced if they're not doing a good job? Mr. McGarry said the members can be replaced by the President of the Council and is under section B (5). Mr. Cesare asked if the staggering terms have ever been considered so that there's consistency on the Board. He's just thinking about the fact that if the chair is removed and there's all new members who is going to carry the torch for the whole committee? He's concerned about a Chair who's a renegade and possibly not do the job properly. Mr. McGarry read a little more and then said if he was reading correctly that there is a staggering of the dates in section C.

Mr. Cesare said he's torn with this because he sees the points that Mr. Gagliardi makes about it being an elected official, but he also understands Mr. Colaiacovo's point.

Ms. Schomaker said she likes Mr. Gagliardi's reminder that the former chair has always been a Council person and after hearing that reminder she's inclined to think that she thinks it's a good strategy to continue and she also likes specifying that the vice-chair should be one of the resident electors and the job of the chair and vice-chair is to preside over the committee and not to dictate what happens in the committee. She said we're already increasing the number of resident electors with people with professional backgrounds with building so she's inclined to support this amendment.

Mr. Farmer suggested that there should be gender neutral language.

Mr. Macdowall said he thinks reducing the number of elected officials is a step in the right direction as we do need more of the input coming from individuals with a professional background and to Mr. Gagliardi's and Ms. Schomaker's point he thinks the Chair of the committee really needs to be somebody who's responsive to the residents.

Mr. McGarry said it's not a deal breaker one way or the other but it does allow for greater flexibility. He said saying that it's only going to be a Council person it limits the choice, if we say it can be any voting member it can be any member of the committee.

A roll call vote was taken and the item passed with 7 in favor (Bonadies) (Farmer) (Gagliardi) (Macdowall) (Rowe-Lewis) ((Schomaker) (Wetmore) and 6 opposed (Cesare) (Clouse) (Colaiacovo) (Dolan) (Horsley) (McGarry) and 1 abstention (Baez

Mr. Farmer moved a motion to amend the resolution and change all gender language to gender neutral language Seconded by Mr. Cesare and approved unanimously.

Mr. McGarry asked Town Attorney Gruen if they can just make a general statement that all language should be general neutral and that don't have to give specifics for all the language. Ms. Gruen said yes.

Mr. McGarry requested a motion to approve the resolution as amended. Moved by Ms. Clouse, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

10. Bid waiver for the Street Outreach Worker Program - \$60,000 (Police Dept. – Connecticut Violence Intervention Program (CTVIP)

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Schomaker. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer said he just wanted to speak about the hard work this program does on behalf of the community, he often sees them out in southern Hamden doing a lot of door knocking and talking to a lot of community members and reaching out to the youth first in need. A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

9. Reappointment of Jean Larson to the Ethics Board for a term to expire January 31, 2025

-- Moved by Ms. Wetmore, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis. DISCUSSION: Mr. McGarry moved a motion to amend the date on this to expire January 31, 2022. The motion was seconded by Ms. Schomaker and approved unanimously. A vote was taken on the item as amended and it passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS: - None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business Mr. McGarry moved a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Bonadies and the meeting duly adjourned at 9:39 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta,
Clerk of the Council