

**TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT**  
**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**October 19, 2020**

A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Monday, October 19, 2020. This meeting was held electronically, via Zoom, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 7:06 P.M. by the Council President. The Clerk took the roll followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brad Macdowall	Kristin Dolan
Mick McGarry	Jody Clouse
Valerie Horsley	Berita Rowe-Lewis
Harry Gagliardi	Justin Farmer
Betty Wetmore	Marjorie Bonadies
Dominique Baez	Athena Gary (@ 7:20pm)
Kathleen Schomaker	Austin Cesare
Adrian Webber	

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Curtis Eatman, Finance Director; Rick Galarza, Deputy Finance Director; Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; Walter Morton, Director of Town and BOE Leg. Affairs; Darryck Dean, Department of Justice Community Relations

**PRESIDING:** Mick McGarry, President

**PUBLIC INPUT SESSION:** 2 Comments submitted – Recess from 7:10pm to 7:20pm for reading

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT:** Mr. McGarry said the Capital Budget will be delivered to the Council tomorrow for the 6 year plan. He then went on with the following updates. The Rules Committee will be meeting soon and the information flow should be that questions and/or ideas should go to Ms. Renta or Leadership who will then forward them onto Mr. Eatman. There is no Bulk Pickup this year but the Transfer Station will have Saturday hours on November 14, 21, 28 and December 5, 12, 19 with no overtime costs. He hopes to have an Animal Control Facility update at their next meeting. Mr. McGarry then shared his screen talking about tonight's transfer and said in the next budget he thinks they should exclude concessions. Mr. McGarry read a proclamation to the Hamden Fathers 12 and under All Star League.

**REPORTS OF BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS:** Mr. Eatman gave the following update for the first quarter. Property Tax collection is trending good collecting \$107,000,000 or 43%. This is about the same as last year. Motor Vehicle Tax collection is \$9,000,000 which is about \$380,000 less than last year. He has concerns with department revenues. The Building Department has only collected 10% of its

revenue and for Public Works only 5% has come in. For expenditures the top 3 largest are BOE, Insurance and Public Safety. Medical is still positive for the first quarter at approximately \$1,000,000. Fiscal Year 2020-2021 challenges are the \$6,000,000 Covid line which hasn't been confirmed by the State or Federal. Union concession of \$2,500,000 nothing has yet been received and emergency expenditures due to past hurricanes have added almost an additional \$2,000,000 in cleanup costs and this is a challenge until the Town gains a healthy fund balance.

**REPORTS OF COUNCIL LIAISONS:** None

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:** Mr. McGarry requested a motion to approve the minutes of the October 5, 2020 meeting. Moved by Mr. Cesare, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

**REGULAR AGENDA:** Mr. McGarry took a vote on suspending their rules for tonight's agenda and it was approved with 1 opposed (Farmer)

**1. Presentation by Department of Justice and Hamden Police Department on the  
"Strengthening Police Community Partnerships Program"**

(Notes on this presentation can be found at the end of these minutes)

At this time Ms. Dolan moved a motion to add an item to the agenda. "Budget amendment for a 3.5% cut from every department. The motion was seconded by Mr. Farmer, Ms. Horsley and Mr. Gagliardi. DISCUSSION: Mr. Cesare asked if this includes the BOE and Ms. Dolan said no, just the Town side. Mr. McGarry said he's not sure about the status of concessions and was thinking of having the Labor Attorney come to speak at the November 18<sup>th</sup> in an Executive Session. Ms. Gruen reminded them that they needed to add this to the agenda or not before discussing it. A roll call vote was taken to add this item to the agenda and it failed with 7 in favor (Baez) (Dolan) (Farmer) (Gagliardi) (Gary) (Maddowall) (Webber) and 8 opposed (Bonadies) (Cesare) (Clouse) (Horsley) (Rowe-Lewis) (Schomaker) (Wetmore) (McGarry)

**2. Refund of property taxes collected prior to July 1, 2020 – (10) totaling \$3,323.93**

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Cesare and approved unanimously.

**3. Refund of property taxes collected between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 –  
(41) totaling \$18,040.24**

-- Moved by Mr. Cesare, seconded by Mr. farmer and approved unanimously.

**4. Reappointments of Nicole N. Woolard-Figueroa and Richard M. Weiss to the  
Human Services Commission for terms expiring March 1, 2023**

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Schomaker. DISCUSSION: Mr. McGarry said he appreciates all the volunteers who serve on our Boards and Commission, without them we wouldn't get important work done. A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

**5. Reappointments of Brian C. Courtney and Joyce Blandon to the Community  
Development Citizens Advisory Commission for terms expiring March 31, 2023**

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Schomaker and approved unanimously.

**6. Order authorizing interdepartmental transfer 2019-2020 Fiscal Year Budget  
(Year-end closeout – various departments) - \$2,850,000**

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Schomaker. DISCUSSION: Mr. Eatman said what they have is similar to what the Town has done in the past and possibly again for the 20-21 budget. He said this transfer is to cover planned/budgeted lines with savings from other lines. He said they brought it back again and the change is they took out the Board of Education and the BOE said if they don't spend it they'll give it back. Mr. Eatman said this is imperative from his department that this is brought to Council, it's what's good for the Town standing and the bond rating. He recommends that if they start with a new practice of closing out the fiscal years to start with the 2021-2022 FY budget.

Mr. Farmer asked if there's been discussion on what we'd do if this doesn't pass tonight. Mr. Eatman said it's his hope that Council passes it, if not there's a precedence set. He said our current budget has the same numbers and that concerns him. He said they have to move forward with the audit it can't be delayed again so the auditors are coming in whether this passes or not. Mr. Farmer said he's concerned too because it failed last time because they didn't get what was asked for and they still don't have it. He then asked Mr. McGarry what the plan is for MARB. Mr. McGarry said to stick to this transfer and they could talk offline.

Ms. Bonadies said she did vote for this 2 weeks ago because she knows they need to smooth it out, but she said they also need to learn from their mistakes. She said this will hit us again next year. She said she appreciates Ms. Dolan's cuts but she thinks that budget amendments need to be more strategic and surgical and those are coming. She said again, she will support it, but they must learn and not repeat.

Ms. Dolan read an email from the CPA and said she will vote for this only because she knows it's in the best interest of the Town. She also said that our current budget amendments need to be done now we can't wait.

Ms. Horsley said she spoke with the auditor and asked if only Hamden does this process or if others also do it and the auditor said it's a common practice and he said that he also doesn't understand why we have concession in our budget. Ms. Horsley said she will support this tonight but the powerful move they need to make is better budgets.

Mr. McGarry said he agrees. He said they made difficult steps this budget season and they'll make more next budget season and they'll need to keep making positive steps.

Mr. Gagliardi said they asked for the capital 2 weeks ago and they still don't have it and he's angry that when they ask for something they don't get it. He also said he agrees with no more concession lines in the budget.

Mr. Cesare said he appreciates Ms. Dolan's sentiments on cuts but would rather look more strategically. He said departments were already cut a lot at budget time. He said he'd support this tonight so they can move on.

Mr. Farmer said he'll be voting no because he hasn't seen the changes that are needed. He also doesn't think they made great enough cuts.

Ms. Rowe-Lewis said she'll support this transfer but she also appreciates Ms. Dolan's amendment but doesn't think all departments can support the 3.5% and that's why she didn't support it.

Mr. McGarry said he'll be supporting this because Mr. Eatman and his finance team asked for it and he gave his reasons so he's supporting him in his efforts for a clean audit. He said they all know what they have to do going forward and it'll require a lot of time, work and sacrifices.

Ms. Baez said we talk about moving forward and being fiscally responsible and we just had an opportunity to have a conversation about 3.5% cuts and we didn't even do that. She said they're shutting themselves down and they can do better.

Mr. Macdowall said he's glad that was brought up because he also thinks they could have had the discussion if it was added to the agenda. He said he knows all departments can't handle the 3.5% but that's up to the administration. He said they're not doing what they need to do to hold themselves accountable and he's tired of hearing next time.

Ms. Schomaker said she thinks the creation of the Fiscal Stability Committee and their work are holding themselves accountable and she'd like to see their work first. She said she too will support this to support the finance team.

Mr. Cesare moved a motion to call the question, seconded by Ms. Schomaker and approved with 5 opposed (Baez) (Farmer) (Gagliardi) (Gary) (Macdowall) and 2 abstentions (Clouse) (Webber)

A vote to approve item #6 was taken and approved with 4 opposed (Farmer) (Gagliardi) (Gary) (Macdowall)

There being no further business Mr. McGarry requested a motion to adjourn. Moved by Ms. Rowe-Lewis, seconded by Mr. Farmer and the meeting was adjourned at 9:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta  
Clerk of the Council

**A Power Point Presentation titled “Strengthening Police and Community Partnerships” was given by Darryck Dean of the Department of Justice Community Relations Service.**

Mr. Dean explained the Community Relations Service (CRS) is a division of the Department of Justice (DOJ) created under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. CRS was mandated by Congress to assist communities experiencing challenges and conflicts arising from differences of race, color and national origin. The CRS is not connected to any other Department of Justice Division, such as investigatory or prosecutorial. They are third party neutral mediators and their work is conducted confidentially unless the community being assisted grants permission. The mandate of CRS was expanded under the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 to act to prevent and respond to violent hate crimes based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, race, color and national origin.

CRS provides free facilitation, consultation, mediation and training to communities. The Strengthening Police and Community Partnerships Program (SPCP) is a facilitation service of CRS. They come into municipalities and facilitate the creation of a local SPCP Council. The goals of SPCP are to 1. Improve trust and develop partnerships between law enforcement officers and the diverse communities they serve. 2. Engage local law enforcement and community leaders in dialogue to identify issues and solve problems collaboratively. 3. Help local leaders address longstanding community distrust and other historical barriers that hinder police–community partnerships. 4. Increase local capacity, develop partnerships, and develop local solutions to problems.

Mr. Dean explained that a very important aspect of the SPCP process is that they engage broad sectors of the community in the conversation including law enforcement, youth, faith-based organizations, community organizations, city and country officials, civil rights groups and businesses. The SPCP process goes through steps: An initial planning group meets, the SPCP program is delivered, issues are identified and solutions developed, the local (Hamden) SPCP Council is formed, said Council convenes and creates a strategic action plan and solutions are implemented. The Council will consist of two representatives from each group. A strong commitment is required from the SPCP Council. They will meet regularly and continue for at least a year to eighteen months. This Council will: act as an “Advisor” on police-community relations issues and create action plans for the solutions created during the SPCP program and work with law enforcement to implement said plans. This work increases communication and collaboration among leaders, proactively identifies and collaborates with community leaders and policy to address community conflicts and tension. The Council reports progress to the broader community.

Questions were asked during and after the presentation as follows:

Mr. Farmer asked how the SPCP would differ from the Police Commission and does the program work with the commission or separately. Mr. Dean explained that the community group, the Hamden SPCP Council which the SPCP program will create, will consist of Hamden residents and they will act as an advisory board to Chief Sullivan which will help him identify and address issues related to community trust and police.

Mr. Farmer asked if the SPCP will provide anti- bias and anti-racist training. Mr. Dean answered that based on a recent executive order issued by President Trump, they will not be providing anti-bias and anti-racist training in the foreseeable future.

Ms. Horsley asked about who chooses the SPCP Council members and how they are vetted. Mr. Dean explained that volunteers arise from the breakout groups and the group votes on who is selected to represent them.

Ms. Horsley inquired as to whether the CRS Facilitators bring possible solutions with known efficacy from other communities, or do solutions arise organically in the local group. Mr. Dean indicated that all concerns and solutions are from the local group and his role is solely to facilitate.

Mr. Cesare asked Chief Sullivan to explain the thought process that led him to bring this program forward. Chief Sullivan indicated that he reached out to the DOJ and he believed this was a good fit for Hamden and they provide free training. Mr. Cesare asked what the cost of this program is and Chief Sullivan said no cost.

Ms. Schomaker asked how long the program has been in existence. Mr. Dean explained it began in 2018 after officer involved shootings in Erie, Pennsylvania and Topeka, Kansas.

Mr. Macdowall asked if any data is available about the program results. Mr. Dean answered that they do a check in immediately, in six months, and in another 6 months to a year. They do not track crime statistics. Also, since their work is confidential, they can only disclose information from the two towns mentioned already which have granted permission, Erie, Pennsylvania and Topeka, Kansas.

Mr. Macdowall asked since the Federal government will not allow them to provide anti-bias training, is there another source of said training. Chief Sullivan answered that Hamden PD provides monthly training which will be ongoing.

Mr. Macdowall asked Chief Sullivan whether individuals are assessed on their implicit bias. Chief Sullivan said they are not but he will look into it.

Mr. Farmer asked if the implicit bias training is mandatory or if an officer can take that day off. Chief Sullivan answered that it is offered three times a month and if it is missed, the officer is reassigned to another training.

Mr. McGarry asked how long does the CRS Facilitator stay in the process with the Hamden Council. Mr. Dean answered that He will be present for the first two meetings and then identify a local leaders or leaders to take over and he will continue to check in.

Ms. Schomaker asked if Hamden could bring in anti-bias training from another source during the program. Mr. Dean answered yes. Ms. Schomaker said the organization Sustainable CT provides excellent anti-bias training and she would like to bring them in.