

**TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**February 27, 2023**

**\*To view the recording, please click the following link and observe the instructions when/if prompted:**

[https://hamden.zoom.us/rec/share/wJ\\_ukm2kI79RnCCtp7375VGp1uvS1QcD0YC1DZhDbx1wb2AfE\\_Oj5yAaFCTHwJ5m.HJ3ZjA5KEGtrG\\_UN](https://hamden.zoom.us/rec/share/wJ_ukm2kI79RnCCtp7375VGp1uvS1QcD0YC1DZhDbx1wb2AfE_Oj5yAaFCTHwJ5m.HJ3ZjA5KEGtrG_UN)

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A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Monday, February 27, 2023. This meeting was held electronically via Zoom due to predictions of bad weather. The meeting was called out of recess at 7:03 P.M. by Council President Dominique Baez. The Clerk took the roll followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Sweet then read the Land Acknowledgement followed by a moment of silence.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dominique Baez	Abdul Osmanu
Katie Kiely	Jeron Alston
Justin Farmer	Ted Stevens
Sarah Gallagher	Paula Irvin (after roll call)
Laurie Sweet	Adrian Webber (after roll call)
Bob Anthony	Cory O'Brien
Kristen Zaehringer	Lesley DeNardis

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Sarah Gallagher; Betty Wetmore

**PRESIDING:** Dominique Baez, President

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Sean Grace, Chief of Staff; Curtis Eatman, Finance Director; Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; David Cappelletti, CPA, Clermont Associates

**PUBLIC INPUT SESSION:** None

(Written comments can be sent to [LCpublicinput@hamden.com](mailto:LCpublicinput@hamden.com))

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None

## **REGULAR AGENDA:**

### 1. Audit presentation and motion to accept audit – **TABLED ITEM**

<https://www.hamden.com/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/263>

<https://www.hamden.com/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/262>

Ms. Baez moved a motion to untable this item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved with 1 abstention (Zaehringer)

Ms. Baez then asked Council members if they had questions for Mr. Cappelletti.

Mr. Farmer asked if our plans are sustainable to address the issues raised in terms of longevity, and are they aggressive enough. Mr. Cappelletti said they don't look at the plans and only look at work performed, but he thinks the process is started in the right directions and the goals are capable of being reached. Mr. Farmer asked if it's appropriate for him to look at that and then asked in terms of our debt is there concern? Mr. Cappelletti said one difficult area is the pension because you have a pension obligation bond at 108 million and also a net pension obligation of 294 million and they're supposed to grow to 32 million so moving forward you're going to have to have to increase your debt obligations by 8 million. He then stated they're not allowed to look at projected plans or forecasts.

Mr. O'Brien stated he's been through a number of these and this audit was probably the most pleasant ones in terms of releasing some progress for the Town. He then asked if this is the first time in recent history that we've had a budget that balanced without any extraordinary means at the end of the year. Mr. Cappelletti said our revenues never met the budgeted numbers and this is one year where the original budgeted number was 162.4 million and actual revenue was 261 million and so it's something he noted in the management letter as a new trend. He said two reasons were increase in property taxes and the recalculation of property taxes and got a more accurate number. Mr. O'Brien, after mentioning previous overinflated revenues, stated it's painful as a Town that to get to that realistic revenue number the mil rate had to be increased and why for a number of years we had shortfalls.

Ms. Baez mentioned Ms. Gallagher couldn't be here tonight but wanted to ask what they should look for or plan for in the new budget. What is his recommendation on the best way to move forward? Mr. Cappelletti said there are some challenges moving forward. There's the post Covid period, an increase in education costs and an increase in medical costs, and at the same time you still have to maintain your ARC payment. He said then for long term trends and what he mentions is the management letter is to protect the General Fund. Mr. Cappelletti also mentioned some areas he thinks are more vulnerable, specifically medical and workers comp. He said these are very difficult costs to control and a little bit of savings in these areas would help keep the General Fund protected. Another thing being watched is where other resources are being pulled from and mentions is the debt in total coming down or is it just stealing from Peter to pay Paul.

Mr. Cappelletti then said it took a long time for the Town to get into this deficit and it will take a long time to get out and so he thinks every year you want to see those resources being used properly.

Ms. Baez asked if he had a chance to look at the financial policy manual that was put together for them. Mr. Cappelletti said he was able to take a glance at it and thinks it's a good start and answers some of the problems and findings and is a good beginning to the corrective action plan.

Mr. Farmer asked the Administration if they could send comparable Town and Cities with such plans. Mr. Eatman explained the Towns they followed who had budget awards and said he sent a document but would send it again.

Mr. Anthony asked financially prudent or fiscally responsible in taking a little bit of the surplus and applying it to debt like the pension. Mr. Cappelletti said the Pension Obligation Bond's come with when they can be refunded so there would be no paying off, it would be putting money into a trust or maybe to reserve some funds for future debt.

Mr. Cappelletti then explained the numbers on page 16 of the second book at the request of Ms. Baez.

Ms. Baez then took a vote to accept the audit and it passed with 1 abstention (Zaehringer)

There being no further business Ms. Baez announced the meeting closed at 7:31 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta  
Clerk of the Council