

**TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FY 2023-2024 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS
April 19, 2023**

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<https://hamden.zoom.us/rec/share/1YevMKWlEqW5m04xhOSwmG3zeQqGm75YyZACfvmXjzrDTYPyL7XsMvi8Y4sfNibn.4QQVp8e3927Q3-Ip>

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Legislative Council budget deliberations were held on Wednesday, April 19, 2023. This was a hybrid meeting held both in person and electronically via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:45 P.M. by Council President Dominique Baez after announcing we had our quorum of 8.

Z = Zoom P = in Person

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dominique Baez (P)	Paula Irvin (Z) (at 8:00pm)
Jeron Alston (Z)	Katie Kiely (P)
Sarah Gallagher (P)	Abdul Osmanu (Z)
Ted Stevens (Z)	Laurie Sweet (Z) (P)
Adrian Webber (Z) (P)	Kristen Zaehring (Z) (at 7:07pm)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Anthony; Lesley DeNardis; Mr. Farmer; Cory O'Brien; Ms. Wetmore

PRESIDING: Dominique Baez, President

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Sean Grace, Chief of Staff; Curtis Eatman, Finance Director; Joe Colello, PW&P Director; Louise Perfetto, PW Account Clerk; Carlo Sarmiento, Building Official; Stephen White, Town Engineer

PUBLIC INPUT: There was 1 speaker on Zoom

Public Works & Parks Dept.: (Council members Baez, Gallagher and Kiely were at the PW&P bldg. and all others were on Zoom)

Revenues:

Ms. Baez moved a motion to open Public Works Revenues. The motion was seconded by Ms.

Gallagher.

Mr. Colello gave a brief explanation of some of the lines in his budget and what they are for.

Mayor Garrett explained the Transfer Station Scale Fees saying the 500,000 is from decreasing the amount of waste that we think will come into the transfer station and multiplying it by 6 cents per pound saying it's a rough calculation with a 10% decrease from the previous years tonnage coming into the Transfer Station.

There was some discussion on expense lines.

Ms. Baez took the vote on the revenues as proposed by the Mayor and it passed unanimously.

Expenditures:

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open the expenditures. Moved by Ms. Kiely, seconded by Mr. Webber.

There was some discussion the Temp. Wages line about hourly rates, discussion on the negotiation line with the Mayor saying that is one line housed in Finance, and discussion on the condo fee reimbursement. Mr. Stevens asked how much we reimburse per unit. Ms. Perfetto said they don't handle that there, they only house the line in their budget. Mr. Eatman said it's calculated in a spreadsheet analysis that they do every year, based off of this number and they can provide the express sheet analysis for review. He said currently he does not have the number. Mr. Stevens said so this goes to the Condo Association and then it's an even amount per association and then each association divides it by their obviously varying number of condos. Mr. Grace said it's a voluntary payment that the town makes and the Council can do whatever it wants with that line, there's no contractual obligation. Ms. Kiely stated the money does not go per resident in a condo, it just goes straight to the Condo association, but the way it currently is right now, the number is not based on a certain cost. She then explained about how it was cut a couple years ago there was a motion to cut it and then there was talk about the percentage. What the Council voted to do was just pick a number to put back, so that number doesn't change based on the residents. She said she thinks if that is something that comes along to take up finding a way to actually connect the amount that we give to the actual fees. This is something she thinks they as a council should look to vote on for the next budget cycle. There was the some discussion on other lines.

Mr. Stevens moved a motion to reduce line 13001-0120 Temp. Wages from \$220,000 to \$214,000. The motion was seconded by Ms. Zaehring and approved with 3 opposed (Gallagher) (Kiely) (Osmanu)

After some discussion on Overtime Ms. Zaehring moved amotion to reduce line 13001-0130 Overtime from \$350,000 to \$300,000. The motion was seconded by Mr. Webber.

Ms. Kiely stated the council and administration worked really hard on making sure that the numbers that they use are accurate and she doesn't think this cut is a good idea and thinks they should keep it where it is. Ms. Gallagher stated she feels there was thoughtfulness put into this and doesn't want to mess with he line. Ms. Sweet asked how much of that is used for the Warming Center. Ms. Perfetto said at the end of March this year it was \$37,757.

A vote was taken and it failed with 1 in favor (Zaehring) and all others opposed.

There was then some discussion on lubricants, fleet vehicles, and parks special events.

Ms. Baez called for the vote on the Public Works & Parks expenditures as amended and it passed unanimously.

Positions:

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open up positions. Moved by Mr. Webber and seconded by Ms. Gallagher.

Ms. Zaehring asked if there were any new positions and Mr. Colello said no.

Ms. Baez took the vote on positions as proposed and it passed unanimously.

At this time of 7:52pm Ms. Baez announced they were going to break and head to the Government Center for the Building Dept. budget. The Council arrived and reconvened at the Hamden Government Center at 8:13pm.

Building Dept.: (Ms. Baez announced Council members Webber and Gallagher were at the Government Center in person with her and Ms. Kiley joined them in person shortly thereafter) (All others were on Zoom)

Expenditures:

Ms. Baez moved a motion to open the expenditures, seconded by Ms. Sweet.

Mr. Sarmiento gave a presentation on his department and budget.

Mr. Stevens asked about the ADA stipend that was moved from Human Resources into his budget and asked if that was an extra job duty that someone takes on. Mr. Sarmiento said it's a huge undertaking and he took that over. Mr. Stevens asked if this \$10,000 stipend was the same amount as last year. Mr. Sarmiento said he believes it was \$5,000 last year.

Ms. Gallagher stated the Overtime line looks like it's for police and fire. Mr. Sarmiento said that's how it was placed in the budget and it's for union workers if they get called, but he takes most of the overnight calls and hopes to not have to use it. He explained how if there's a fire or something they are then called out once it's put out to check for deficiencies.

Ms. Baez took the vote on expenses as proposed and it passed unanimously.

Positions:

Ms. Baez moved a motion to open up positions, seconded by Ms. Kiely.

Mr. Stevens stated there are no raises here and asked if they were all union and if these were under negotiations. Mr. Eatman said all positions in the Building Dept. are union except for the director and since they're under negotiations there are no raises. Mr. Stevens asked will they see any raises throughout. Some departments have raises, right? Mr. Eatman said there are some raises but those are for non-union employees at the Mayor's discretion. Mr. Stevens said Town wide we're not seeing any union raises that are under negotiations is that correct? Mr. Grace said yes, with the exception of the Police Dept. Mr. Eatman said if you do see an increase outside of

the police it's because it's a step increase which is contractual.

Mr. Osmanu moved a motion to increase the Building Official salary from \$105,000 to \$110,000. The motion was seconded by Mr. Webber.

Mr. Osmanu said this is the second presentation he's seen from the Building Dept. and he's astounded by the work there that the Building Official has been able to do in just a year and where most of the revenue we've gotten in he credits to his stewardship of the department and working with other departments across the Town and for those reasons he'll be supporting this.

Ms. Kiley said in general she wants to be careful because she thinks everybody's work is valuable and you can't quantify everything based on how much work is produced, although she astounded at the amount of work the Building Dept. has done. She said in looking back it's been about 4 years with no increase and when you look at inflation or when you talk about ways that we support and value the people who work for our Town she thinks they need to make sure they're reasonable when talking about positions that aren't under contract because they don't have the same way of advocating as those under contract do and so she supports this motion based on 4 years of no increase.

Mr. Stevens said he agrees with everything Mr. Osmanu and Ms. Kiely said but given the Town's budget situation so for the rest of the budget season his goal is to keep all department head salaries flat. He told Mr. Sarmiento this is not a reflection of his work, he appreciates him and thinks he's doing a great job. This is just a reflection of the budget and he doesn't think they should be giving out any raises this year, especially if the Mayor didn't recommend it herself.

Ms. Zaehring said she joins Councilman Stevens in his sentiments and is also extremely grateful for the excellent work that the Director is doing but given the Town's budget situation she doesn't think that they should be giving up increases, especially increases above a cola adjustment. She said for this she'll be a no vote but only because of the Town's financial situation.

After a little more discussion on this Ms. Baez asked the administration if there was a technique they use for department heads. Mr. Grace asked did she mean in terms of who is being recommended for a raise and who is not? Ms. Baez said not recommended for a raise necessarily, but where salaries will lay at the end of the recommendations as a whole? Is there a process that you guys have in it put into place for non-bargaining union positions. Mr. Grace said the only process, which does not apply for this year, and since next year is a reval year and because there's a request for a mil rate increase this year they're being cautious about increasing any non-bargaining union positions, and although you will see a couple in the budget they've been working on a process that they would like to discuss with Council for next year and he thinks they'll be in a stronger position to do that. Ms. Baez asked him to explain the couple raises that are in there. Mr. Grace said there are two department heads that the Mayor recommended for raises going from \$100,000 to \$105,000. One of those positions someone has been in for awhile and is now receiving a raise. Ms. Kiely asked if there is anything that protects or prevents staff under a Director from ending up making more than the Director. Mr. Grace said there is nothing that prevents that.

After some discussion on a Rubik's system Mr. Webber withdrew his second and Mr. Osmanu withdrew his motion. The Council decided to revisit this after the Rubik's.

A vote was taken to accept positions as proposed and approved unanimously.

Traffic Dept.:

Positions:

Ms. Baez moved a motion to open up positions. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kiely.

Town Engineer Stephen White gave a presentation on the traffic dept.

There was discussion on a new vacant position and positions in general.

Ms. Baez moved a motion to decrease the vacant position of Elec. Tech./Traffic from \$87,006.40 to \$69,700. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kiely and approved with 1 abstention (Zaehringer)

Ms. Baez took the vote on positions as amended and they passed with 1 opposed (Zaehringer)

Expenditures:

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open up expenditures. Moved by Ms. Kiely, seconded by Mr. Webber.

After some discussion on the Temp. Wages line Mr. White said with the new position it can be removed.

Mr. Stevens moved a motion to reduce 12901-0120 Temp. Wages to \$0. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kiely and approved unanimously.

Ms. Baez took the vote on expenditures as amended and they passed unanimously.

Ms. Baez then announced it was 10:05 and said she was putting the rest of Engineering and Traffic revenues on hold.

There being no further business Ms. Baez recessed the meeting at 10:06 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta
Clerk of the Council