

**TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
FY 2023-2024 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS  
May 6, 2023**

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

[https://hamden.zoom.us/rec/share/rFWfWzag\\_eLJyinI4boq8IanzmxiG\\_iJcHNdzCeeESgZWObk\\_wN3i1bhTMwsfbypk.J2P\\_ThdaMaC-LWY6?startTime=1683378046000](https://hamden.zoom.us/rec/share/rFWfWzag_eLJyinI4boq8IanzmxiG_iJcHNdzCeeESgZWObk_wN3i1bhTMwsfbypk.J2P_ThdaMaC-LWY6?startTime=1683378046000)

**\*\* If you are reviewing a print copy of these minutes and wish to view the meeting recording, please visit the Agenda Center at [www.hamden.com/agendacenter](http://www.hamden.com/agendacenter) and click the MEDIA link found next to this agenda under the meeting date. OR download the digital version of these minutes and click the link above.**

---

Legislative Council budget deliberations were held on Saturday, May 6, 2023. This was a hybrid meeting held both in person and electronically via Zoom. The meeting was called out of recess at 9:39 A.M. by Council President Dominique Baez.

Z = Zoom P = in Person

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dominique Baez (P)	Katie Kiely (P)
Cory O'Brien (P)	Jeron Alston (Z)
Sarah Gallagher (P)	Ted Stevens (Z) (approx. 11:30am)
Laurie Sweet (Z)	Adrian Webber (Z)
Justin Farmer (Z) (P)	Bob Anthony (P)
Abdul Osmanu (Z) (P) (approx. 10:20am)	

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Lesley DeNardis; Paula Irvin; Betty Wetmore; Kristen Zaehring

**PRESIDING:** Dominique Baez, President

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Sean Grace, Chief of Staff; Curtis Eatman, Finance Director; Melissa Canham-Clyne, Library Director; Karen Bivens, ACR&W Director; Mayor Garrett

**PUBLIC INPUT:** There were 2 written comments submitted for the library. No comments for Elderly Services. There were 2 in person speakers for Community & Youth Services.

**Library:** Ms. Canham-Clyne gave a tour of the library. She said one of the big changes made this year, as she asked them to note in their budget books, was adding wireless printing at all of our locations. That revenue line is funded at \$8,000 and they're already at \$7,800 with 2 months to go and thinks it'll be closer to \$8,500.

Mr. Farmer stated he is a big fan of the library and hopes our branches stay open.

### **Revenues:**

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open revenues. Moved by Ms. Kiely, seconded by Mr. Farmer. Ms. Canham-Clyne reminded them that the wireless printing might be more than what was added here.

A vote was taken and revenues were unanimously approved as proposed.

### **Positions:**

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open positions. Moved by Ms. Gallagher, seconded by Ms. Kiely.

Mr. Farmer **moved a motion** to reduce the Director's salary back to \$100,000, seconded by Ms. Baez. Mr. Farmer apologized saying they're not giving raises this year.

A vote was taken and the motion passed with 1 abstention (Webber)

There was discussion on proposed positions that the Mayor didn't fund. Ms. Canham-Clyne explained the positions. (Librarian I – Childrens) (Library Tech. Asst.)

There was discussion on staffing.

Mr. O'Brien asked about the Social Worker in her budget that she didn't ask for. He asked if she thinks this is the right place for it, and if so, why. Ms. Canham-Clyne said she did ask for one called Outreach Community Specialist last year. ARPA is why she didn't ask for it this year. It was put there because the library is open 6 days a week, plus it's a connector for resources, and opened into the evenings 4 days a week until 8:00pm.

Mr. Anthony asked about 0715 Materials saying the request was \$250,000 and the ytd is at \$154,000. He said the Mayor's \$200,000 seems more accurate and asked if she was expecting something for the \$100,000. Ms. Canham-Clyne said they're at 92.8% ytd right now and thinks it'll be close to \$240,000 when it's done.

Mr. Farmer stated he thinks all counselors should be at the Library and not at the P.D. or 2 different locations. He said he also thinks they should be adding money to the materials line.

Ms. Kiely said they need to be able to offer programs to the community and they have to make sure they have the resources to provide them. She thinks they need the added position.

Mr. Grace explained the Frances Puddicombe money, a lot of which will be going to the library. Mayor Garrett said she agrees with the position but they're just trying to phase things in. Ms. Kiely asked the Director if she had to choose what has the biggest impact. Ms. Canham-Clyne said the Childrens Librarian.

Ms. Kiely **moved a motion** to add a Librarian I – Childrens at \$59,642.16. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gallagher.

Mr. Anthony said with all due respect if they aren't giving raises they shouldn't be adding positions that aren't funded. He said not that it's not needed, but the taxpayers need the break.

Mr. Alston asked if these were newly requested positions this year. Ms. Canham-Clyne said yes. Mr. Grace said there were a number of new positions requested throughout departments, they're just trying to phase in over a number of years. Mr. Alston asked if this was an immediate need. Ms. Canham-Clyne said it's been needed for quite awhile.

Mr. O'Brien said normally he'd side with Mr. Anthony but this is a net neutral budget less than 1% change even with fringes so he'll support this.

There was some more discussion on this position. It was mentioned there was \$131,000 in CDBG earmarked for the digital navigator this year. Ms. Baez asked about the HUD money that she spoke about is able to pay for persons, and it's able to pay for material for the digital navigator program. Ms. Canham-Clyne said that's correct.

A vote was taken on the motion to add the position and it passed with 1 opposed (Anthony) and 1 abstention (Alston)

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

### **Expenditures:**

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open expenditures. Moved by Ms. Kiely, seconded by Mr. O'Brien.

Mr. Farmer asked where they're at with the elevator repair. Ms. Canham-Clyne said they're waiting on materials to come in, it could be a few more weeks. Mr. Farmer stated as long as it's done. He said none of our libraries are accessible and he wants a commitment this will be done within this year. Mr. Grace said it's already funded, they're just waiting on materials and then it's full steam ahead.

Mr. Farmer **moved a motion** to increase 0715 Materials to \$245,000. The motion was seconded by Mr. Osmanu.

Mr. O'Brien said he won't support this because they added the position, plus funds will be coming in to help with this. Mr. Farmer said you need books to read and you can't do it without the materials.

A vote was taken and the item failed with 3 in favor (Farmer) (Osmanu) (Sweet) and 6 opposed (Baez) (Gallagher) (Anthony) (Alston) (O'Brien) (Kiely)

Ms. Baez took the vote on the expenditures as amended and they passed with 2 opposed (Anthony) (Farmer) and 1 abstention (Osmanu)

### **Elderly Services:**

Ms. Bivens gave a tour of the Senior Center saying it will be getting approximately \$140,000 of ARPA money.

### **Revenues:**

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open revenues. Moved by Ms. Gallagher, seconded by Ms. Kiely.

Ms. Bivens said they've been evaluating their fees for rooms and vendors and something will come to the Council with a fee change. She said this line (Program Fees) is at \$970 ytd.

Ms. Baez took the vote on revenues as proposed and they passed unanimously.

### **Positions:**

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

Ms. Sweet asked about the up and down salary of the vacant position. Ms. Bivens said this person applied for a position in the Recreation Department and went over there so the position is now vacant and will go to Civil Service so that number can start lower. Ms. Baez asked what the number is. Ms. Bivens said she thinks \$49,209.

Mr. O'Brien **moved a motion** to reduce this to \$49,209 with the caveat that if it's a different number Ms. Bivens should come back to them. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sweet and approved unanimously.

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

### **Expenditures:**

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open expenditures. Moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Ms. Gallagher.

Mr. Farmer asked if Special Programs had enough \$. Ms. Bivens said the ytd was \$8,401. Mr. Farmer stated then he thinks it should be fine. Ms. Bivens said yes.

Mr. Farmer asked if the transportation line was a flat rate so those numbers won't change in the next year, correct? Ms. Bivens said that contract went to council after it was negotiated. Ms. Bivens said a lot of municipalities provide their own transportation now. Mr. Farmer said he just wants to make sure this amount is good and won't have to do a transfer.

Mr. Alston said it seems the last 2 years this was overfunded by \$50,000. Ms. Bivens said they were out less because of Covid but they're getting out more now. There was more discussion on this line. Mr. O'Brien stated the 5 year pre-Covid average was \$190,000.

After more discussion Mr. Stevens **moved a motion** to lower the Transportation line to \$120,000. The motion was seconded Mr. Alston.

Mr. Stevens said he realizes she may have to come back for a transfer but we're not seeing a return to pre-Covid numbers in his experience and if they do it'll be a few more years.

Mr. Farmer said seniors are savvy. Bus service was free for a year and a half. The numbers he's seen have been going up. There are multiple reasons why people weren't using this service but that will change.

Mr. Anthony said ytd is \$8,100 a month it seems and so he doesn't have a problem with the \$145,000. He said he is also comfy with the reduction but would rather give it up front.

Ms. Kiely thinks it's better in the budget rather than coming back and if it's over it'll go into the General Fund.

After more discussion a vote was taken on the amendment and it failed in a tie with 4 in favor (Stevens) (Alston) (Baez) (O'Brien) – 4 opposed (Anthony) (Osmanu) (Farmer) (Sweet) – and 2 abstentions (Kiely) (Gallagher)

A vote was taken on expenditures as amended (due to change in positions) and they were approved unanimously.

Ms. Baez then announced they would break and head to the Keefe Center. Break at 11:58 A.M. Back from break and at the Keefe Center at 12:40 P.M.

In person: Ms. Gallagher, Mr. Farmer, Mr. Stevens, Ms. Sweet, Ms. Kiely, Mr. Anthony, Mr. O'Brien, Ms. Baez, Mr. Osmanu

On Zoom: Mr. Alson, Mr. Webber

Ms. Bivens gave a tour of the building (Keefe Center)

## **Community & Youth Services**

Public Input: There were 2 (in person) speakers

### **Positions:**

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open positions. Moved by Ms. Kiely, seconded by Ms. Sweet.

There was brief discussion on Objective 4 about Hamden/North Haven Collaborative in the descriptions. Mr. Farmer asked for info on programming with North Haven verses New Haven.

There was some discussion on starting salaries and steps.

Mr. Stevens asked if she could speak to the 2 new Fair Rent positions. Ms. Bivens said the person who is working Fair Rent right now is part time and cannot do all the things that we need them to do. In addition to that person there is a clerk like other boards and commissions. The Clerk she asked for would handle the meetings, the agendas, the minutes for the meetings, and correspondences. She said everything they send out has to be certified mail and regular mail and goes to multitudes of people, and that in itself is a lot. This person will do that and also help with the intakes when folks come in to initially fill out their complaints. The Specialist position she envisions as somebody who could help with some of those inspections, not housing code violations because that's a statute, but issues like a tenant saying their oven hasn't worked in awhile, so this person would go and look at living conditions and see what the tenant has said and verify, and help with any mediation between tenant and landlord before it would go to the Fair Rent Commission to set up a hearing. Mr. Stevens asked if she thinks they will find someone for \$44,000 a year as a Specialist. Ms. Bivens stated it's lined with the CBA.

Mr. Stevens said he thinks it's low. Mr. Grace said this is just a start and if they need to come

back and ask for more they will. Mr. Stevens wonders if they should budget for Step 1.

Mr. Stevens **moved a motion** to increase the Specialist to a Step 1 at \$47,640.94. The motion was seconded by Ms. Baez.

Ms. Baez said she doesn't want it to go unfilled because it's \$3,000 too low.

There was then discussion on the authorities of this person.

Mr. Farmer thinks it's problematic and does not agree with this position.

Mr. Anthony said he agrees with Mr. Farmer on the authority of this saying they can't implement anything. He also doesn't think they should be changing this step if it's under the CBA. Mr. Garce stated it can start at Entry Level or Step 1.

Ms. Gallagher said she agrees with the addition of a full-time position in conjunction with the attorney they gave but agrees with Mr. Farmer on this person going out before the complaint gets to the commission. She said she wants more info on the job description.

There was then a lengthy discussion.

Mr. Grace explained this person would not be going into anyone's place without authority to do so.

Mr. Anthony stated he would want to see a job description before he approves any job at that rate, it may be too low or it may be too much.

There was then discussion on QVHD and their job.

Mr. O'Brien agrees with the sentiments and thoughts on this role, but also shares Mr. Farmer's concern and doesn't know how this would solve a problem. He said he would like to see backup also. They need to decide where it's best to put the resource but he's not in favor of the Specialist.

Ms. Baez said she doesn't want to wait and continue to see the problems and she supports this higher paid position.

Mr. Farmer mentioned the under minding process already in place. Ms. Bivens then explained how the system is currently setup for complaints.

Mr. Stevens said he thinks someone will motion take this out and to be sure it's not based on the salary he'll withdraw his motion. Ms. Baez said she won't withdraw hers.

After another lengthy discussion Ms. Baez said she was moving a motion to table the whole section of positions and expenditures until the 16<sup>th</sup>. The motion was seconded by Mr. O'Brien. Ms. Baez said they want a job description and the Fair Rent Commissioners to ring in on this and join the next meeting.

### **QVHD:**

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open these expenditures. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Kiely.

Mr. Grace explained there is a new Director and vacancies on the Board. He also mentioned the slight decrease was due to population.

Mr. Farmer asked if we had a contract with them. Mr. Grace said an agreement, not sure of a contract. Ms. Gruen said no contract that she's aware of. Mr. Farmer asked how we go about making that happen. Ms. Gruen said she isn't sure how it works. Mr. Farmer asked where he would find their responsibilities to Hamden. Ms. Gruen said she doesn't have that. Mr. Farmer stated they need to come up with a plan. He said how do we hold them to standards if we don't know what those standards are. He said we need a contract or an agreement to know what they should be doing.

Mr. O'Brien said he also wonders what their list of duties are and what their role is. Mr. Grace said to deal with restaurants and health code primarily. Ms. Gruen then explained the housing code.

Ms. Gallagher said she thinks they need clarity, there may be other ways to move forward. She wants a contract and data on what they do and also someone at the table.

There was then a lengthy discussion.

Ms. Baez suggested asking other Towns what they have on the books. Regional agreements, laws and jurisdictions, etc. and a message from the Director or have them join.

Ms. Baez the **moved a motion** to table this until the 16<sup>th</sup>. The motion was seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

### **Mental Health:**

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open these expenditures. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Kiely.

Mr. Grace gave a brief explanation of the lines.

Mr. Farmer asked how did we come up with these numbers and what services are provided. Mr. Grace explained referrals and said he will get the stats on the amount of people being served. Mr. Farmer stated he doesn't know if this is enough for our needs or not.

There was a lengthy discussion and Mayor Garrett explained the lines. There was then more discussion.

Mr. Farmer **moved a motion** to table this until the 16<sup>th</sup>. The motion was seconded by Ms. Baez and approved unanimously.

There being no further business Ms. Baez recessed the meeting at 2:59 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta  
Clerk of the Council