

**TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FY 2023-2024 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS
May 11, 2023**

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Legislative Council budget deliberations were held on Thursday, May 11, 2023. This was a hybrid meeting held both in person and electronically via Zoom. The meeting was called out of recess at 6:18 P.M. by Council President Dominique Baez.

Z = Zoom P = in Person

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dominique Baez (P) Katie Kiely (P) after roll call
 Sarah Gallagher (Z) Abdul Osmanu (P)
 Ted Stevens (Z) Laurie Sweet (P)
 Justin Farmer (Z) Bob Anthony (P)
 Paula Irvin (Z)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeron Alston; Lesley DeNardis; Cory O'Brien; Adrian Webber; Betty Wetmore; Kristen Zaehring

PRESIDING: Dominique Baez, President

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Sean Grace, Chief of Staff; Curtis Eatman, Finance Director; Seth LaVigne; Barry Barnabe, Financial Advisor; Christian McNamara, Finance Commission

PUBLIC INPUT: There were 2 speakers

Medical:

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open medical expenses. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Kiely.

Mr. Eatman explained this line. After a lengthy discussion Mr. LaVigne recommended adding \$500,000 to the Medical Self Insurance line.

Ms. Gallagher moved a motion to increase line 14040-0214 Medical Self Insurance by \$500,000.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved with 1 abstention (Anthony)

Ms. Baez called for the vote on medical as amended and it passed with 1 abstention (Anthony)

Ms. Baez called for a break at 7:33pm – Back from break at 7:41pm

Pension:

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open pension expenses. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Kiely.

Mr. Eatman explained the lines saying ARC has an increase of \$2,000,000 over the previous and that he's waiting for the number to be confirmed but he feels confident with the number and that Segal recommended it.

Mayor Garrett said she's working with the State and in negotiations they were able to make changes to CMERS and the new number for Hamden decreased by 1.4 million. She said you can take \$682,000 out of 0224 and \$818,000 out of 0224B.

Ms. Baez moved a motion to decrease line 14100-0224 Town Contribution to CMERS by \$682,000 and decrease 14100-0224B BOE Contribution to CMERS by \$818,000. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sweet and approved with 2 abstentions (Farmer) (Anthony)

Ms. Baez then took the vote on the pension budget as amended and it passed with 2 abstentions (Farmer) (Anthony)

Debt Service:

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open the Debt Service. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Kiely.

Mr. Eatman explained the lines. Mr. Barnabe gave some background and said the Town is on track. Mr. Farmer asked where we were hoping to be in 2024 with the debt service. Mr. Barnabe said up another \$2,000,000. There was then some discussion and Mr. Barnabe explained interest. He also stated that the Town has made tremendous strides.

Ms. Gallagher moved a motion to reduce the fund balance to 4.25. The motion was seconded by Mr. Farmer. Mr. Barnabe explained how changing this line still keeps the bottom line and explains it doesn't work in the plan. Mr. Grace stated the reason the \$5,000,000 is in that line is because it's in order or inline with the market. Ms. Gallagher modified her motion to take \$250,000 out of fund balance and keep the bottom line.

After a lengthy discussion of restructuring Mr. Eatman recommended they fund this as recommended by the Mayor saying it was a lot of work to get here. Mr. McNamara said he thinks Ms. Gallagher is right that it can be structurally done but doesn't agree with making a change. Mr. Farmer asked if we foresee building a building in the next year and upping this line or any restructuring. Mr. Grace said no. The Mayor said she disagrees with restructures but thinks it's important to go through with this, we made promises. After another lengthy discussion Mr. Barnabe stated keeping it where it is is best. Mr. McNamara also stated he thinks it's a good

thing to keep the amount budgeted where it is.

A vote was taken on Ms. Gallaghers motion and it failed with 2 in favor (Gallagher) (Farmer) – 2 abstentions (Kiely) (Irvin) and all others opposed

There was some discussion on the principal. Mayor Garrett explained how she thinks moving away from the plan in the last year is unwise. Mr. Farmer asked the next time they go out can there be a commitment to include the Council. Mayor Garrett said absolutely, but this was supported by the Council in the past. There was then some discussion on bonding.

Ms. Baez took the vote on the Debt Service as proposed and it passed with 2 abstentions (Farmer) (Gallagher)

Fringe Benefits:

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open Fringes. Moved by Mr. Anthony, seconded by Ms. Baez.

Mr. Eatman explained the lines saying most is determined by the federal government or just things we have to pay. There was some discussion on the retirement cash-out line.

Ms. Baez moved a motion to lower 14201-0231 to \$1,200,000, seconded by Ms. Kiely.

Mayor Garrett stated retirements have been slowing down but they're getting into contract negotiations and people retire when that happens so she still thinks there is a risk out there.

A vote was taken on the amendment and it passed with 1 opposed (Farmer)

A vote was taken on fringes as amended and it passed with 1 opposed (Farmer)

Misc. Revenue:

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open miscellaneous revenues. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Osmanu.

There was discussion on the fireworks and it was mentioned the fireworks donation is in Arts.

There was some discussion on traffic enforcement and Ms. Kiley asked how they come up with the bus traffic enforcement number. Mr. Eatman said they kept it the same as the previous projection. Ms. Kiely asked how many years do they keep a zeroed line before it comes off the books. Mr. Eatman said 3 years. Ms. Baez asked why it (school bus traffic enforcement) is here and not the PD revenues. Mr. Grace explained how the PD writes the ticket and it all goes to the State and they send a portion back. Ms. Baez asked for statistics on the bus traffic enforcement. Ms. Gallagher asked what the actuals are. Mr. Eatman explained how they're conservative with this because they have no data. Mr. Grace stated \$8,000 ytd is accurate.

There was some discussion on WPCA. Mr. Anthony said he thinks we may be getting short changed. Mr. Eatman explained it's a formula worked out and said he doesn't think we're getting short changed.

Mr. Farmer moved a motion to add a line back to the book for Yale University at \$20,000. The

motion was seconded by Mr. Osmanu.

Mr. McNamara said as Finance Commission Chair he appreciates the desire to reach out to Yale but thinks they can do it without putting a marker in the budget. Ms. Baez stated she won't support this. Ms. Sweet suggested putting \$1.00 to keep the line and not have it be forgotten. Mr. Grace stated they will send a formal letter.

Mr. Farmer and Mr. Osmanu accepted a friendly amendment to fund this line at \$1.00.

A vote was taken on the amendment to add and fund a Yale University line at \$1.00 and it passed with 1 opposed (Stevens)

A vote on Misc. Revenues as amended was taken and approved unanimously.

State of CT Revenues (Education):

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open these revenues. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Osmanu.

Mr. Grace explained they are not at a place yet with their negotiations to forecast. He said they just had the conversation today and there is no information right now.

Mr. Anthony moved a motion to accept these revenues as proposed. The motion was seconded by Ms. Baez and approved with 1 abstention (Farmer)

State of CT Revenues (Town):

Ms. Baez requested a motion to open these revenues. Moved by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Ms. Baez

Ms. Gallagher asked why the Municipal Grants line is so low and asked if the projections was based on ytd's. Mr. Eatman said he thinks the State changed the budget allocation and said the actual is more accurate. Mr. Grace said he agrees.

Ms. Gallagher moved a motion to increase line 10495-9511 to 1.2 million.

Mr. Stevens moved a motion to table this for them to get more information. The motion was seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

There being no further business Ms. Baez recessed the meeting at 9:58 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta
Clerk of the Council