

**TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING**

**June 8, 2021**

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

**<https://zoom.us/rec/share/Ikky22nWGFUFsXsr2Jf9HS5z9rDFIOJPtM8u0uyu0ELO66j1HsmOMnmW-FXFCcz..JIjMI7t99R- -xg5>**

**\*\* If prompted for a password, enter: fJF+x8eJ**

**\*\*\* 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) then, review the recording by downloading the digital version of these minutes and following the instructions above.**

---

A special meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Tuesday, June 8, 2021. This meeting was held electronically, via Zoom, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 7:12 P.M. by the Council President. The Clerk took the roll followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

|                   |                                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Dominique Baez    | Brad Macdowall (after roll call)    |
| Mick McGarry      | Austin Cesare (after roll call)     |
| Betty Wetmore     | Kathleen Schomaker                  |
| Justin Farmer     | Valerie Horsley                     |
| Kristin Dolan     | Athena Gary (after roll call)       |
| Marjorie Bonadies | Berita Rowe-Lewis (after roll call) |
| Adrian Webber     |                                     |

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jody Clouse; Jeron Alston

**PRESIDING:** Mick McGarry, President

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; Steve Mednick, Counsel to Council; Frank Dixon, Chair of Charter Revision Commission; Jackie Downing, Vice-Chair of Charter Revision Commission

**PUBLIC INPUT SESSION:** There were 3 written comments submitted which can be read here: <https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/4181/PUBLIC-COMMENTS--06-08-2021>

Mr. McGarry went over some upcoming dates saying they had committees on the 14<sup>th</sup>, a charter workshop on the 16<sup>th</sup>, a public hearing on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, another workshop on the 29<sup>th</sup>, finishing up on July 7<sup>th</sup> and giving it back to the CRC.

Mr. Dixon read the transmittal letter and talked about the start of the meetings and the process going through leading up to the end. He then listed all the Commission members.

Ms. Downing went over there process saying they had 35 meetings, 3 public hearings, public input sessions and expertise panelists at some meetings. She then went through the preamble and the definitions saying here that they included electronic and virtual to be more inclusive and easier to volunteer and participate. They also defined the word “shall”.

Ms. Downing went on to say they increased the term of the Mayor to 4 years, clarified residence requirements, ambiguity on the end of reapportionment and clarified rules for removal based on habitual absence.

Ms. Bonadies asked about the residence requirements. Ms. Downing said the Library Board and Police Commission are the only two Boards that require residence requirements. Mr. Cesare asked how they ensure minority representation with staggering terms. Mr. Mednick said as positions open the Mayor will have to be mindful.

There was some discussion on Boards and Commissions and the responsibility of the Mayor, Town Clerk and LC to ensure their best efforts in diversity for all Boards and Commissions. Mr. Mednick said they left it to the LC as to which others should be district based, but diversity for all is a requirement now. There was some discussion on why only the Library Board and Police Commission were district based. Ms. Downing said they looked at them all but chose Police and Library because they represent their work a little different and you want to make sure your neighborhood is taken care of. Something like P&Z is looking out for the whole Town or Town wide issues.

Ms. Downing said they clarified Chapter 5, The Mayor, and codified the COO as a member of the Mayor's staff. She then talked about the two panels of people they had on from other Towns and came up with a Strong Mayor, Strong LC and a professional person for day to day operations. Ms. Downing then read the Power and duties of the COO and the Professional Management Standards. She said she doesn't think this is an additional position and she thinks it's an existing position. She said some call it Chief Operating Officer, some call it Chief of Staff, etc. There was then some discussion on it being an appointment rather than elect and some discussion on the removal process. Ms. Schomaker said she likes this idea but how do we monitor the performance of a COO. Ms. Downing doesn't think that's a concern as the Mayor would want to point a person who will be successful. She then went on to explain their 4 year term for Mayor saying they did this for two reasons. It attracts better candidates and attracts stronger candidates for Department Heads.

Next was Boards and Commissions where they talk about public speaking, meeting requirements, filling vacancies and 12 year term limits. Ms. Downing mentioned a part here that she asked Council to send back to them to fix about grandfathering in. They added geographic and diversity, and included electronic advertising. Ms. Bonadies said diversity language like this leaves some people out. She doesn't like it and thinks it should be broader. Ms. Horsley said she doesn't necessarily like the meeting requirements. Ms. Downing explained the protected class of the language they used and where it came from. There was then some discussion on the 12 year term limit for Boards and Commissions, as well as discussion on conflict of interest and minority representation.

Next they went over the Finance Commission. Ms. Downing read from the slide and talked about how the functions were laid out carefully.

Ms. Downing went on to say how they provided the LC the opportunity to, by ordinance, create the Civilian Review Board with subpoena powers. She talked about discretionary funds for commissions to bring in expertise when needed, increasing membership to 9, and all districts represented, and resident incentives for resident hiring. Ms. Bonadies said she thinks commissioners should have police training to see what it's like to walk in others shoes. Mr. Mednick said it's at the end (he then read it out loud) and said not doing this is grounds for removal.

As they talked about Best Practices Ms. Bonadies made a statement that she thinks parents should be able to access all curriculum for all grades saying there's a huge lack of transparency. Mr. Cesare said he thinks the BOE should also have district representation. They then went over the budget chapter.

Mr. Farmer thanked the commissioners for their time and dedication working on this document.

Ms. Horsley also thanked them for their hard work in improving Hamden.

Ms. Bonadies also thanked them saying it's a huge undertaking. She said there's a lot she likes and a lot she doesn't like and she thinks it needs more work. She said she wouldn't support it as it is saying it's very left leaning representing as small group of people who attended the meetings. She also thinks it's lengthy and tedious and designed so the residents won't read it and she thinks it's a dis-service to the residents.

Mr. Cesare thanked them for their work and asked for minutes and motions.

Ms. Schomaker thanked them all for their work and good leadership.

Mr. Farmer said he wants the backup that they'll be viewing to be seen by the public too.

Mr. Webber thanked the commissioners for their service for this important work.

There being no further business Mr. McGarry requested a motion to adjourn. Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Mr. Webber and the meeting adjourned at 10:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta  
Clerk of the Council