

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

July 7, 2021

***To view the recording, please click the following link and observe the instructions when/if prompted: https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/c2ACnS7NG_elf5H8APNHcoOOWJBI-H55gNSS86c9_1SmQffkQZEw_ssoIPp18Xvb.T2YK_GcdbaantdwR**

**** If prompted for a password, enter: x+hg5YES\$**

***** 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 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 Wednesday, July 7, 2021. This meeting was held electronically, via Zoom, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M. by the Council President. The Clerk took the roll followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mick McGarry	Dominique Baez (approx.. 8:25pm)
Berita Rowe-Lewis	Marjorie Bonadies (approx.. 8:20pm)
Kathleen Schomaker	Brad Macdowall
Justin Farmer	Jeron Alston
Austin Cesare	Kristin Dolan (after roll call)
Athena Gary	Adrian Webber (approx.. 8:00pm)
Jody Clouse;	

MEMBERS ABSENT: Valerie Horsley; Betty Wetmore

PRESIDING: Mick McGarry, President

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; Steve Mednick, Counsel to Council; Frank Dixon, CRC Chair; Jackie Downing, CRC Vice-Chair

PUBLIC HEARING: There were 4 written comments which can be read here: <https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/4367/Public-Comments-07-07-2021> and 6 speakers which can be heard on the meeting recording at Time Code 00:20:25

Mr. Cesare asked about the process going forth. Mr. Mednick said after the Council votes on the 13th the CRC will reconvene and invite the LC to meet on a conferral meeting. Then the commission gets up to 30 days to look at the recommendations and can consider those items only. After they act on those and it's returned the LC can reject any proposals in whole or in part and accept any in whole or in part, or even the entire document. Questions will then be built and need to be approved before the first week of September before they go to the Secretary of the State.

Mr. Mednick said he talked to the Finance Director about **§5-2 D (2) (a)**, who said he doesn't know why there needs to be a threshold and that the Legislative Council could do it at their discretion. Mr. Mednick said he would reflect the criteria for the decision in the Council document if so. After some discussion Mr. Mednick said the issue never came up. Ms. Gruen

also said the issue never came up but if the Council takes the language out she highly agrees with Mr. Mednick on written criteria and the reason for why you're doing it in your document.

Chapter VII:

§7-1-C (4):

Mr. McGarry moved a motion for discussion, seconded by Mr. Macdowall. DISCUSSION: Mr. Mednick said in this provision there is a year break after 12 and then you can go back on. He then went over some of the commission's thoughts while working on this.

Mr. Macdowall said he is in favor of term limits but other things make him nervous like losing all experience at once. Mr. Mednick read the first line and said there is no automatic trigger that can throw a member off until their term is over. After some discussion on this Mr. Macdowall asked about a grace period. Mr. Mednick said the only person who can be effected by this are the ones who served 12 years. Mr. Macdowall said he doesn't want a situation where the Mayor and the LC are locked into commissions with all new knowledge. Mr. Mednick said you can do a deferral. Mr. Macdowall asked Ms. Downing if she was amendable to this. Ms. Downing said she doesn't want to delay it and kick it down the road a year. She said they really looked into this and were thoughtful and that there's a transition period there. Mr. Macdowall said he's glad they looked into this and he will support it and follow her lead and expertise and support the provision as stated.

Mr. Farmer thanked the public for the comments they sent in and said he wants to keep the provision as is.

Mr. Cesare said he doesn't think term limits is a nice way to thank volunteers and thinks the year off is a joke and term limits isn't the right thing to do and as the Council they can decide the reappointments. He said he is highly opposed to term limits.

After some discussion Mr. McGarry said we have a problem filling seats and doesn't think term limitations is a fix to anything.

Ms. Schomaker wonders if the commission did research on policies of other Towns and asked about the research background that they came up with this. Mr. Dixon said a lot of it was hard driven by public input plus the outreach of confidence in not filling vacant seats, or that it wasn't equitable, and that some Boards and Commissions were historically stacked. Ms. Downing said they did not study other Towns, but listened to the public.

Ms. Schomaker said she thinks our problem is already having vacant seats and doesn't think this will help that.

After some discussion Ms. Bonadies asked how many members of the public asked for term limits. She said if it's a handful that's a small population to drive this. She asked if we could maybe instead do things with a waiting list, but doesn't agree with term limits.

Ms. Schomaker stated she'd be in favor of term limits for the Chair and thinks that could help with recruitment. Mr. Cesare said he agrees with a term limit for the Chair.

Ms. Gary, Ms. Dolan and Ms. Baez have left the meeting at this point. (Approximately 9:00pm)

Mr. McGarry said he'd like to offer a friendly motion that they recommend examining the language regarding limitations on Boards and Commissions based on tonight's discussion. Mr. Macdowall accepted the friendly. A vote was taken and it passed with 2 opposed (Macdowall) (Farmer)

§7-1 F (1):

Mr. Mednick explained how this now has better language than the previous, harsher language pointed out by a Councilor.

Mr. McGarry requested a motion to send this recommendation to the CRC. Moved by Mr. Cesare, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

§7-2 A (1) (c): (Finance Commission)

Mr. Mednick explained what this means and said the concept is it looks like we were putting the commission at the table and he clarified the language.

There was discussion on the 6 year term limit and minority representation.

Mr. McGarry requested a motion for this recommendation. Moved by Mr. Cesare, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

§7-2 A (1) (e):

Mr. McGarry requested a motion to add this to the list of recommendations. Moved by Mr. Cesare, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

§7-2 A (2) (f):

Mr. Farmer moved a motion to send this back on the list of recommendations. The motion was seconded by Mr. McGarry. DISCUSSION: Mr. Cesare said he's opposed to this and thinks it should have financial expertise.

Mr. McGarry said he thinks it's necessary to have this. He said professionals are good but thinks it's also good to have a regular Joe for the diversity of thought.

Mr. Cesare asked if this was keeping 5 positions and 1 is lay. Mr. Farmer said yes, that is his intention.

There was some discussion on changing the number and Mr. Mednick explained the thoughts while putting this together.

Mr. Alston, after hearing from Mr. Dixon and Ms. Downing, said he thinks the lay person exists and is what we want so what are we sending back? Mr. McGarry said he would say vote to not send this recommendation.

After a lengthy discussion Ms. Bonadies asked what the motion on the floor was. Mr. Farmer responded the motion is keeping it at 5 and have 1 be a lay person. He said he'd be willing to withdraw and send back to the commission to change the number.

Mr. Farmer asked Mr. McGarry if he'd accept a friendly to have the commission be 7 with 1 lay person. Mr. McGarry said no. Mr. Farmer then asked Mr. McGarry if he'd take a friendly to send the conversation back to the commission to figure out. Mr. McGarry accepted the friendly.

Ms. Downing asked if he's considering lay people to be non-experts. Mr. Farmer said yes.

Mr. Cesare said he wants financial expertise and a body of 5. He thinks it should be diverse throughout Town, but have expertise. Ms. Bonadies said she agrees.

Mr. Farmer moved a friendly to send this back their thoughts and concerns and have the CRC figure out what's best based on all thoughts and ideas thrown out there tonight. Mr. McGarry asked for the membership and qualifications of the commission? Mr. McGarry called for the vote and it failed with 1 in favor (Farmer) and all others opposed. The language remains as is.

There being no further business Mr. McGarry requested a motion to adjourn. Moved by Ms. Bonadies, seconded by Mr. Webber and the meeting adjourned at 10:15 P.M. with 1 opposed (Farmer)

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta
Clerk of the Council