

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

July 19, 2021

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https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/So6n_o3mTFC4EFphtklFX6uT2GDtymQ_i8dKoCe3a8NqM2gNoDPADVf1u4bwesG.02AyOqz0jrQYzHfC

**** If prompted for a password, enter: V4xK7iy#**

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A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Monday, July 19, 2021. This meeting was held electronically, via Zoom, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 7:11 P.M. by the Council President. The Clerk took the roll followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

PRESIDING: Mick McGarry, President

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Scott Jackson, Finance Director; Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; Adam Sendroff, Chief of Staff; Julie Smith, Community Development Manager; John Sullivan, Chief of Police; Attorney Ann Catino; Aaron Hoffman, NWNH

PUBLIC HEARING: 1 speaker who spoke in favor of the New Business Item #1

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION: There were 2 speakers

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT: Mr. McGarry gave a departing speech before resigning and leaving the meeting:

“This report of the president will be slightly longer than our usual reports of the President. This will also be my last report of the President. I have accepted a new position in my union, that of

Member Engagement Manager. The time requirements of that position will be a lot of afternoon and evening time and therefore it's incompatible with my continuing on the Legislative Council. I'm very excited by this opportunity to focus on education related issues.

When this opportunity arose first back in May, I reflected on my time in Council and I realized where my heart truly was whenever there was an education related item in front of the Council, and so I'm just really excited by the opportunity to focus in on education related matters. So, and it is ironic now, to be leaving because it is a good time to be on the Council. The Administrative team that is now in place is talented, experienced and professional. Finance Director Jackson, Chief of Staff Adam Sendroff, Deputy Chief of Staff Patrick Donnelly, Walter Morton, Julie Smith, Chiefs Sullivan and Merwede, Planner Eric Johnson, Public Works Director Craig Cesare, Town Attorney Sue Gruen, Mark Austin, and if I'm leaving anyone out I apologize, but this is one of the best teams that has ever assembled in the Town of Hamden and in the State of Connecticut. Our Legislative Council office staff has also demonstrated incredible resilience and professionalism in the past year and a half that is astounding. I don't thank them enough and so I do so now. Ms. Renta and Ms. Lion, thank you. Thank you so much for your dedication, your creativity and most importantly, your patience. I would love to continue working with this team of people, but I simply can't and have this other position. It is also a good time to be on Council in terms of Finances.

The past few years have been a challenge to meet the Town's legal and financial responsibilities while understanding and trying to minimize the burden placed on taxpayers. The past few years have been a series of difficult choices, often having to choose the best out of several bad options. However, things are changing. I have always expressed optimism about the future of our Town, partly due to my natural disposition, but partly due to the responsibility that elected officials have, to be honest, but also positive about their Town, and there are lots of reasons to feel optimistic right now. Cautiously optimistic, but still optimistic. The audit of the closing fiscal year will show a budget surplus somewhere around five million dollars. The Town's pension obligations have been the main driver of our Town's fiscal worries and now the pension arc payment is funded at 100% for the first time in the history of the Town. The Pension Fund itself has the healthiest balance in living memory. Now, I am not a gambling person, but if it was possible to take bets on Bond Ratings, I think the smart money is on an improved Bond Rating report this time. Maybe not an upgrade, but an improvement. The Town debt service remains a serious issue but now we have a plan to address our large payment that's due in 2023. We are growing the Fund Balance and we are ramping up debt service to be prepared for it. In short, the past several years have been focused upon fixing problems that have been decades in the making, and while we are not done yet, we must be very careful over the next few budget cycles.

The goal of the next Council and Administration should be not dealing with the mistakes of the past, but planning for the future. There is still work to be done. The next few years should be focused on planning, for our Town or small city, however we want to describe it, but not cleaning up the mistakes that were made in the nineties. I would love to continue working on this Council in this new environment, but I simply cannot. The Town is also taking real and measurable steps to address equity and justice. Efforts across departments like the Board of Ed, Personnel, Public Safety and Public Works should create a more diverse and welcoming work force. The revised Charter includes the creation of the Diversity and Equity Commission, an unprecedented effort by

the Town of Hamden to ensure equity in representation in all Town functions, especially Boards and commissions. The DEI is truly a groundbreaking endeavor and we can all be proud of it. The Board of Education does amazing work through their HDAC process and the Board of Education plan to provide opportunities for all children in our community to benefit from pre-K programs is a real step in closing the resource gap in education.

As I take my leave, I would ask the LC to consider a couple of items in the future. I have mentioned many times in the past, when I came on Council I had to stop coaching soccer. Coaching soccer provided the money for the McGarry family Christmas for over a decade. While the LC stipend did not replace that money, it did help ameliorate the loss of income and the cost associated with serving on Council. Over the years, many Councilors have chosen to return or donate their stipend. This is an extraordinarily gracious act if you are in a position to do so. I only ask that in the future you consider those who are not in that position. The stipend is a small way to help level the field for people considering running for office. It should be maintained and those who need it should not be ashamed because they take it. It is difficult and it is time consuming to run for Council and I don't think anyone should be kept from running for Council because of a fiscal problem. So, I urge you to consider that in the future. Now, having said that, please note Social Media warriors, I will be donating the stipend amount for the time not served in my term back to the Town.

It is no secret also, that our Council meetings have the deserved reputation for being extraordinarily long and acrimonious. Most Hamden citizens that I talk to are often dismayed and baffled by our actions on this Council. It does not have to be this way. I would ask council members to please focus on the issues, not personalities and not politics and to act with kindness and generosity towards each other. I implore this Council and the Council that will be elected in November to focus on the business of the Town. There are many issues in this world and most of them are outside the direct operational control of Hamden Legislative council. Once elected, the members of this body have a sworn duty to the well-being of the Town. The politics should end once the oath is taken. The Legislative Council exists to provide a position to give individuals the opportunity to serve the Town, not for the position to serve the individual. It is a great big, beautiful world and it is a great big and beautiful Town and both are imperfect. We have our issues that need to be faced honestly and thoughtfully. We do not need to exaggerate our issues or create problems. We just need to face our issues with facts, truth and courage. And, whatever problems confront us, we should never let the issues them blind us to the beauty and goodness of this Town that surrounds us every day.

There have been many difficult events for this Council to deal with. But the worst has to be the passing of two serving Councilmembers. Mike Colaiacovo and Harry Gagliardi were dedicated public servants. Their passing left holes in the heart, soul and collective wisdom of the Council. Those seats are being very ably filled, but the people are still missed.

I do leave this Council in excellent hands. Ms. Schomaker as President Pro Temp is smart, tough and wise. Her ability to see issues clearly and thoughtfully will serve the Town well. It has been an honor to serve the Town on Council and in my capacity as President. I offer my heartfelt thanks to the Staff and Councilmembers I have worked with over the years.

Lastly, I must thank and ask forgiveness from my family, my parents, my sons, Sean and Conner and especially my wonderful wife, Jennifer. Time is the one source that can never be replenished and quite often Town time has supplanted family time and while that cannot be corrected, I can and will be able to enjoy more time with my family. Our most valuable resource is time and I will not take up any more of it from the Council. Thank you and Ms. Schomaker, the floor is yours”.

Ms. Schomaker then presided and gave the upcoming schedule of Charter Revision meeting dates of July 20, 22, 26, 27 and 28 and encouraged them to attend.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS: None

REPORTS OF COUNCIL LIAISONS: None

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: Ms. Schomaker said they have a few sets of minutes to approve tonight.

June 22, 2021: Moved by Ms. Horsley, seconded by Ms. Wetmore and approved unanimously.

June 28, 2021: Moved by Ms. Horsley, seconded by Mr. Webber and approved unanimously.

June 29, 2021: Moved by Ms. Horsley, seconded by Mr. Webber and approved with 1 abstention (Farmer)

June 30, Moved by Mr. Cesare, seconded by Ms. Horsley and approved unanimously.

July 7, 2021: Moved by Ms. Horsley, seconded by Mr. Webber and approved with 2 abstentions (Wetmore) (Baez)

CONSENT CALENDAR: Ms. Schomaker said she is pulling #1 from consent to amend the amount and #16 is being pulled to the regular agenda as it was placed on the consent calendar accidentally without being passed unanimously in committee. Mr. Farmer asked if #15 could be pulled and it was. Ms. Schomaker then took the vote to approve the Consent Calendar and it passed unanimously.

2. Appointment of William G. Dennis, Jr. to the Fair Rent Commission for a term to expire June 30, 2022

3. Appointment of Charlotte K. Leftland to the Arts Commission for a term to expire May 31, 2022

4. Appointment of Lisa M. Morrison to the Arts Commission for a term to expire May 31, 2023

5. Appointment of Melissa Canham-Clyne to the Cable Advisory Council for a term to expire June 30, 2022

- 6. Appointment of Coby Serfass to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term to expire January 31, 2026**
- 7. Reappointment of Kenneth R. Riordan to the Fair Rent Commission for a term expiring June 30, 2024**
- 8. Reappointment of Michael Brooks to the Community Development Citizen Advisory Commission for a term expiring March 31, 2024**
- 9. Reappointments of Jennifer S. McGarry, Marita Gargiulo and Charles Kortsep to the Arts Commission for terms to expire May 31, 2024**
- 10. Order authorizing the Town of Hamden to extend the license agreement with Yale University**
- 11. Order approving and authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement between the Town of Hamden and Yale University – Employee Assistance Program**
- 12. Order approving and authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services for Fiscal Year 2021-2023**
- 13. Order authorizing the application and if offered the acceptance and expenditure of funds for the 2021-2022 Summer Youth Employment Grant DCF (\$10,000)**
- 14. Order authorizing the application and if offered the acceptance and expenditure of funds for the 2021-2022 Summer Youth Employment Grant (\$63,500)**
- 17. Order amending the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year Budget – Town Attorney - \$6,600 (Temp. Wages)**
- 18. Resolution endorsing a 2021 Hamden Municipal Energy Planning Guide**
- 19. Resolution authorizing the Town of Hamden to make application and to accept and expend funds if awarded from the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic & Community Development, State Historic Preservation Office for a Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant**

REGULAR AGENDA

- 1. Order to approve pay differential for Walter Morton resulting from military leave**
-- Moved by Ms. Wetmore, seconded by Ms. Bonadies and approved with 2 opposed (Farmer) (Baez) and 1 abstention (Gary)

(items pulled from consent)

16. Order authorizing the first amendment to an agreement between the Town of Hamden and Mutual Housing Association of South Central Connecticut, Inc.

-- Moved by Ms. Bonadies, seconded by Mr. Cesare. DISCUSSION: Mr. Johnson gave a brief overview of this project saying 6 years ago there was an agreement approved to redevelop the site and release land for recreational facilities. He said it was initially a 4 year contract with a 2 year addition that ended July 2021 and now they're asking for a 3 month extension until October 22, 2021. He mentioned the site maintenance is being addressed and they investigated the site for existing piles of soil or materials as reported and there's nothing out of the ordinary. He also said if this is re-extended a new contract would include local job positions.

Ms. Catino then gave the whole history of the contaminated over the last 20 years and how RWA took responsibility for remediating it.

Mr. Farmer asked who has responsibility for the building if the project doesn't go through. Ms. Catino said the Town, but they always did, it was never RWA's responsibility. Mr. Farmer asked, including the foundation? Ms. Catino said yes.

There was then discussion on the 86 units to be developed and whether or not it's feasible for development. Mr. Johnson said its part of the reason for this extension.

Ms. Bonadies asked if this project was on the front burner for the October deadline. Mr. Hoffman said it is on their front burner and they have been in constant conversation with Mr. Johnson since they received the letter from the Mayor. He said he's excited to get on with this project now that remediation is done. Ms. Bonadies asked what the purchase price was. Ms. Catino said there is no dollar value, instead the Town wanted long term access for athletic fields and public space for community recreation and public use in the gymnasium. Ms. Bonadies said she thinks a food co-op there would be a great addition to the community.

Mr. Alston asked if there's a schedule to get to the agreement. He'd like to see something with deadlines to get to October. Mr. Johnson said no, not today, but with this amendment they would put one together and after working out the details come back with all that.

There was then some discussion on sharing the plans with the community. Mr. Johnson said they'd have those discussions whether it's neighborhood meetings or P&Z but they first have to figure things out so maybe September? Mr. Johnson said they will work hard through August to get this done. Mr. Alston suggested they follow up in a month. Mr. Johnson proposes an update during the September Council meeting and still a month in advance of the deadline. Mr. Hoffman said he'd be happy to come back in September with an update.

Ms. Baez thanked Mr. Johnson for addressing issues and also thanked Mr. Hoffman and Ms. Catino and her colleagues who pointed out things that may have been missed.

A roll call vote was taken and the item passed with 10 in favor (Alston) (Baez) (Bonadies) (Cesare) (Clouse) (Horsley) (Rowe-Lewis) (Schomaker) (Webber) (Wetmore) – 2 opposed (Farmer) (Maddowall) – 1 abstention (Dolan) and 1 absent (Gary)

1. Refund of Motor Vehicle Taxes collected between to July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 – (8) totaling \$3,008.96

-- Ms. Schomaker requested a motion to amend this refund amount to \$2,575.20. Moved by Ms. Baez, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis and approved unanimously.

15. Order authorizing the Town of Hamden to accept and expend the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program FY 2019 from the U.S. Department of Justice - \$25,563

-- Moved by Ms. Wetmore, seconded by Ms. Bonadies. DISCUSSION: Chief Sullivan went over some of the things this grant will be used for such as a scanner, a portable generator, traffic safety supplies, a digital recorder, and a portable shed.

Mr. Farmer asked about capital and Chief Sullivan said nothing of this comes from capital, it's all grant money. Mr. Farmer asked what the recorder is used for. The Chief responded for interviews and investigations.

Ms. Gruen mentioned the issues they had to not accept the grant have been remedied.

A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

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A roll call vote was taken and the item passed with 10 in favor (Alston) (Baez) (Bonadies) (Cesare) (Clouse) (Horsley) (Rowe-Lewis) (Schomaker) (Webber) (Wetmore) – 2 opposed (Farmer) (Maddowall) – 1 abstention (Dolan) and 1 absent (Gary)

13. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Order authorizing the Mayor to apply, accept and expend a Program Year 47

Community Development Block Grant for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 in accordance with the Annual Action Plan for year 2021-2022 (\$514,148.85)

-- Moved by Ms. Bonadies, seconded by Ms. Wetmore. DISCUSSION: Ms. Smith gave a summary of the plan. Mr. Farmer asked how much longer do we have funded at the current time and how to apply for the process. Ms. Smith said the funding is determined each year by HUD and that it varies and has been in the high 400's to low 500's the last few years. Mr. Farmer then asked about issues if they run out or need more funds. Mr. Jackson said the Town has received this funding for a long time and it's one of the most successful in history so the expectation is it will continue for the length of the program.

There was then some discussion on community outreach. Ms. Smith then went over the application process saying how the grants are targeted by the census track and once funding is determined they reach out to non-profit agencies who have to demonstrate that they are serving the low to moderate income in target areas.

A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

2. Executive Session: Discussion regarding potential settlement in a pending legal matter

-- Ms. Schomaker moved a motion to go into an Executive Session which includes the entire Council, Town Attorney Sue Gruen and Assistant Town Attorney Brendan Sharkey to discuss a potential settlement on a legal matter. The motion was seconded by Mr. Macdowall and approved unanimously.

In Executive Session at 9:03 PM

Out of Executive Session at 9:55 PM

3. Vote on settlement matter

-- Ms. Schomaker requested a motion to accept the settlement in pending legal matter with Covanta. The motion was moved by Mr. Cesare, seconded by Ms. Baez and approved unanimously.

There being no further business Ms. Schomaker requested a motion to adjourn. Moved by Ms. Baez, seconded by Ms. Bonadies and the meeting adjourned at 9:57 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta
Clerk of the Council