



Valerie Horsley <hamdenfiscalstability@gmail.com>

FW: Approaches and options for approaching austerity in Hamden.

2 messages

sclark@stockyclark.com <sclark@stockyclark.com>

Mon, Sep 28, 2020 at 10:57 AM

To: Valerie Horsley <vhorsley@hamden.com>, hamdenfiscalstability@gmail.com

Cc: Christian McNamara <christian.m.mcnamara@gmail.com>, Curtis Eatman <ceatman@hamden.com>

Dear Fiscal Stability Committee.

Thanks for your valuable work. Here are some of the ideas and policies which I have submitted to the Legislative Council and the Mayor over time. I hope they are helpful as you begin the task of harnessing the out-of-control spending and lack of budget controls in Hamden.

With the long term indebtedness of over \$1.1Billion (\$18,000 per resident) ; the ever-increasing annual payments to service the debt and pay into pension; our close-to-junk bond status; and very high taxes, we face a 15-25 year future of austerity. We will have to have a cutback in services including staffing in the order of 15-20% to have a balanced budget far into the future . That will mean opening up the collective bargaining agreements (CBA) or union contracts and reducing benefits and the size of the workforce. Each shift will have to be smaller.

I would add that this is a time to adopt innovations in delivery of services. Timing is critical in order to reduce layoffs. This moment in the history of Hamden is critical because there are so many retirements from the three main departments (police, fire and public works) . Now is the time to make the cutbacks and innovations by letting people retire and not fill their positions. Layoffs are painful and unnecessary if you can plan far enough ahead.

I believe that the combination of short term austerity measures combined with a sensible long term Plan of 5 years will help Hamden end its reckless ways and develop fiscal prudence.

Christian McNamara has developed all the Trend Analyses that a committee such as yours should require...and they are accurate. If you start with those charts and plot out the shortfall each year for the next 5 years, you will be able to develop budget recommendations.

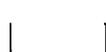
For the near-term, a budget freeze on spending, hiring and purchasing must go in to place to have any chance of avoiding a yearend deficit. I encourage you to work directly with the Finance Dept to achieve accurate projections for this year. Further taxation as the default option has begun to alienate increasing numbers of citizens, especially when other communities are making the cutbacks now.

I am available to discuss any of the attached docs at any time with individuals or the group.

Good luck and thank you , Stocky Clark .

Notes:

- Hamden Pledge deals with prudent fiscal policies that should be adopted .
- The other docs represent ideas I have shared with the LC and cc Mayor's Office

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----- Forwarded message -----

From:

To: BS Clark <sclark@stockyclark.com>

Cc:

Bcc:

Date:

Subject: Ideas for saving money in Hamden and Fiscal policies to adopt (Hamden Pledge)

- Hamden Pledge deals with prudent fiscal policies that should be adopted .
- Hamden Scope of Services Strategic Plan 2025 is a Plan I sent to the Mayor in Nov 2018! after a forum in which I explained the idea of forming a Committee (Taxpayers, Admin, LC) and retain a firm to assist in developing a Strategic Plan and restructuring services . Mayor said to set up a meeting with his secretary. I tried over Dec and Jan and gave up when I got no responses . Was told by other citizens that that was typical of the Mayor.
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To: <cleng@hamden.com>, <dgarretson@hamden.com>, <mmcgarry@hamden.com>, <hgagliardi@hamden.com>, <agary@hamden.com>, <vhorseley@hamden.com>, <jfarmer@hamden.com>, <kschomaker@hamden.com>, <mcolaiacovo@hamden.com>, <kdolan@hamden.com>, <mbonadies@hamden.com>, <browe-lewis@hamden.com>, <dbaez@hamden.com>, <acesare@hamden.com>, <jclouse@hamden.com>, <btmacdowall@hamden.com>, <ewetmore@hamden.com>, <LCpublicinput@hamden.com>

Cc: "Curtis Eatman" <ceatman@hamden.com>, "Patrick Donnelly" <pdonnelly@hamden.com>, Judy Clark <jlclark13@comcast.net>, Christian McNamara <christian.m.mcnamara@gmail.com>, Sam Julier <sjulier@gmail.com>,

Sarah Clark <sarah.f.clark@gmail.com>, Elaine Dove <elainedove@gmail.com>

Bcc:

Date: Tue, 12 May 2020 10:14:13 -0400

Subject: FW: Open note to LC members and the Mayor

I want to commend you for your efforts and would like to add some thoughts.

In order to make decent decisions, you need to know financial status.

Deficit and Cash- The Mayor must release the information, **Immediately**, on projected year end deficit , even if it is a range of numbers. He also should disclose cash on hand plus receivables by June 30, to the extent known now. These numbers should be (and probably are) calculated regularly and you should have access regularly as time goes on.

2021 Budget- You cant make good decisions until you get some estimate of anticipated Revenues . The only way to do it is to go by past history of Actuals on hand , 2019 Actuals , then apply some estimate of lost revenues due to the pandemic.

Again, both these numbers are at hand.

Line Item Revenues- Christian McNamara has calculated those for the Proposed 2021 Budget, which are out of whack and need further justification by the Mayor. Impact of the coronavirus- The State has forecasted multi-billion dollar shortfalls through FY 2024. Hamden has to do the same. It can be calculated from the increase in the projected deficit in Feb vs Now. Regardless, it is very large and has to drive your budget decisions because of lack of borrowing power.

Process- I believe it is next to impossible to try to understand how departments really run and therefore who is crucial and what can be cut. That is why it is imperative that the Mayor and the Superintendent lead the 10/15/25% cutback exercise with staff because they know how their departments run and they will have to live with whatever cuts are actually made. They can make recommendations and the LC can then decide what the Revenue picture will be and thus, what level of cuts are required.

If you do it by yourselves with some input from the Dept heads, you will open yourselves up to **justifiable resentments by staff** . Make the department heads and the Mayor own their restructurings and cuts. If a fire engine has to be mothballed or a fire station closed, or if a department's programs need to be moved into the nonprofit sector or just dropped, or if a certain rearrangement of police patrols has to occur, or restructuring of the schools and programs- Make them think it through-the implications and sacrifices. We are at Mile 2 of this marathon.

Likely, they will have to keep doing this exercise several times in the coming years to balance the budget, so I hope we establish a thorough and inclusive process.

If Departments or the Mayor refuse to do the exercise, you will have no choice but to make the cuts. That is too bad, but they will only have themselves to blame for not doing their job.

Unions and Contracts- We are all in this together. I urge you not to fight with the unions, but to invite them to work with you . In most cases, unions favor cuts of staff over giving back salary and benefit gains. So be it. Again, invite them to participate, but if they stonewall you, you have no choice.

Contracts can be renegotiated, but generally are difficult unless the other side truly understands the predicament (That is why you need estimates of deficits).

In the first stage of this difficult series of cutbacks, you may be left with no choice but to cut staff because the unions will not offer to giveback anything. Again, so be it.

In preparation for contract renewals, the Mayor's staff will have to do "comparables" with other CT cities to determine if our salaries and benefits are out of whack. If so, you have something to stand on at that time.

The tone you set of opening up dialogue and keeping it open, I believe, is key to this multi-year endeavor of restructuring how our government delivers services.

The public will appreciate the effort.

Keep up the good, and exhausting work.

I am happy to chat at any time.

Stocky Clark 914-474-3270



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19 attachments

-  **Restructuring services in Hamden .docx**
20K
-  **Some Options for How to Approach Austerity.docx**
18K
-  **Specific budget cuts examples sc .docx**
16K
-  **Specific ideas for cutting Hamden's Costs 1.docx**
17K
-  **Hamden Strategic Plan 2025 Scope of Services.docx**
19K
-  **Issues re HAMden Services.docx**
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-  **Key features of Responding to Fiscal Challenges.docx**
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Preliminary List of Items to be Justified.xlsx

 524K

 **Proposal by Chairman McGarry re. Fiscal Challenges 5.7.20.docx**
16K

 **Ideas for saving money in Hamden and Fiscal policies to adopt (Hamden Pledge).eml**
996K

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Hamden Fiscal Stability <hamdenfiscalstability@gmail.com>
Draft

Wed, Sep 30, 2020 at 5:20 PM

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