

TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
May 7, 2020

A special meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Thursday, May 7, 2020. This meeting was held electronically, via Zoom, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 7:14 PM by the Council President. The Clerk took the roll followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mick McGarry	Dominque Baez
Harry Gagliardi	Justin Farmer
Marjorie Bonadies	Valerie Horsley
Berita Rowe-Lewis	Brad Macdowall
Austin Cesare	Betty Wetmore
Kristin Dolan	Kathleen Schomaker

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Colaiacovo; Athena Gary

PRESIDING: Mick McGarry, President

PUBLIC INPUT: There were 89 emails submitted and read by President McGarry.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT: Mr. McGarry said he would look into the easiness of accessing the website and try to make it more user friendly.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS: Finance Director Curits Eatman gave an update and said the April report would be coming to them soon.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL LIAISONS: None

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: Mr. McGarry requested a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of April 24, 2020. Moved by Mr. Gagliardi, seconded by Ms. Horsley and approved unanimously.

Mr. McGarry requested a motion to suspend their rules and approve all items tonight. Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Ms. Horsley and approved with 2 opposed (Gagliardi) (Farmer)

AGENDA:

- 1. Refund of property taxes collected between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020 – Overpayments On current Grand List – (27) totaling \$8,910.49**
-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Schomaker and approved unanimously.

**2. Order authorizing intradepartmental transfer 2019-2020 FY Budget
(Fire Dept. - Holiday Pay - \$50,000) FROM REG. SALARIES**

-- Moved by Ms. Bonadies, seconded by Ms. Clouse. DISCUSSION: Mr. Morton explained the vacancies in the department from December and January during the holiday cycle as well as some fireman being quarantined due to Covid-19 being the reasons this transfer is needed. He also said they're hoping to get some reimbursement from FEMA.

Ms. Horsley stated they still have yet to receive the plan that they have continuously asked for and she doesn't feel comfortable approving transfers until they have that so she will vote no.

Mr. Farmer said he shares her concerns, however he knows the Chief well and the Chief is thorough and always gives them more information than needed, so he'd like to know when this was submitted for them to act on and what was the earliest sign of this fund needing this money. Mr. Eatman said it was signed by the Mayor on April 27th and he received it April 28th. Mr. Farmer said he'd be supporting this transfer.

Mr. Gagliardi said he's with Ms. Horsley on this. They asked for a plan and they still have not received it and that the Town has known for a long time about this deficit.

Mr. McGarry said he understands, but they have to pay for contractual obligations and he understands the concerns are serious but they have to follow the law and live up to their obligations. He said they're all eager to receive that plan but they also have to pay their bills so he will be supporting this.

Mr. Macdowall said he will support it because it is their obligation but he also shares those concerns. He said last year they received shut off notices for electric and water and pulled that money from the pension but they cannot do that this year and so this year they need a plan. He said they are almost out of capital money to sweep so they have to be careful.

Ms. Dolan said she doesn't understand how they can approve transfers if they don't have money or know where they stand. She's not sure what she's missing.

Mr. Eatman said they'd be having a cash flow conversation at their next meeting. Ms. Dolan said they need an answer before approving this.

Mr. Cesare said they have to have a plan and to get that they'll need to play hardball and he's very concerned that some Council people aren't pushing harder for this.

Mr. McGarry asked what would happen if they postpone this. Ms. Gruen said she doesn't know what is in this particular contract for accrued benefits but that some contracts have a time period to pay or you get penalized. She said her bills are CIRMA bills for Liability-Auto-Property Claims. She said the bills go to finance and then come to her and she pays them and if not paid it's a contractual obligation.

Mr. Morton said he also doesn't know the effect of tabling this transfer. Mr. Eatman said the department or HR can better speak to the retirements. Mr. Morton said the Chief needs the money prior to the Memorial Day holiday for his payroll.

Mr. McGarry stated Ms. Gruen made a strong case for #4 and that maybe they should table #2 and #3.

Mr. Gagliardi moved a motion to table items 2 and 3, seconded by Ms. Horsley and approved with 1 abstention (Wetmore)

TABLED ITEM

- 3. Order authorizing interdepartmental transfer 2019-2020 FY Budget (Multiple Dept. (3) - Accrued Benefits - \$62,550) FROM E&C ACCOUNT**

TABLED ITEM

- 4. Order authorizing interdepartmental transfer 2019-2020 FY Budget (Town Attorney/Leg. Council – Settlement Reserve) - \$130,000 FROM OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits)**

-- Moved by Mr. Gagliardi, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis. DISCUSSION: Ms. Bonadies said she has a problem with this coming from OPEB. She said the auditors suggested this fund and now we're spending it. She said if playing hardball is the only way to get what they need then so be it. She said the administration is tying their hands in them making decisions.

Mr. Cesare said if they were provided the previous things asked for they wouldn't have to do this and table things, he supports Ms. Bonadies.

Ms. Schomaker asked Mr. Eatman his thoughts on taking money from OPEB. Mr. Eatman Said they were looking for accounts and this was the only line they were able to find the money. He said they checked with the auditor's to make sure they could do it and it's legal.

Mr. McGarry asked what if they don't approve this tonight. Ms. Gruen said the bills have to get paid it's contractual. She said it could wait until the next meeting but the bills are coming in.

Ms. Horsley said she doesn't understand how they can make these decisions without knowing how much money there is, she said it's their job and they don't have the information to do it.

Mr. Macdowall asked if we'd be delinquent. Ms. Gruen said the bills are due but she can contact CIRMA and provide them an answer tomorrow. She said she understands their position but she is also in a tough place and has to pay the contractual obligations which is the only thing money is being spent on. Mr. Macdowall asked if we'd lose CIRMA. Ms. Gruen said she would ask for a special meeting if needed.

Mr. Gagliardi moved a motion to table this item, seconded by Mr. Cesare and approved unanimously. **TABLED ITEM**

5. Order authorizing the Mayor to enter into the fifth amendment to an agreement with the Greater New Haven Transit District

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Schomaker. DISCUSSION: Ms. Burbage said this is a 3 year agreement, the hourly rate will remain the same as this year and they will be under budget due to the virus. She said it's still going to be used for food runs and medical appointments. She then explained how the services runs to the new Council people. Mr. Farmer thanked Ms. Burbage for all the work she does.

A vote was taken and this item passed unanimously.

Mr. Macdowall said he doesn't think moving to CMERS was the right decision and that we need to move away from it and go to the State to demand and fight for it.

Ms. Dolan said she'd like a date for information on wrapping up FY 2020 and asked if they could get that a week from tomorrow. Mr. McGarry said he'd check with the administration to see if they could get a solid date.

Mr. Cesare gave a reminder of contractual and non-contractual items for budget.

Ms. Bonadies stated taking money from OPEB is poor planning. She's also like a deadline for the request.

Ms. Rowe-Lewis said she stayed out of tonight's conversation but is now asking that the information is please provided.

Mr. Gagliardi said he agrees with everything said.

Ms. Schomaker stated that the fiscal crisis is as important as the health crisis.

There being no further business Mr. McGarry requested a motion to adjourn. Moved by Ms. Dolan, seconded by Ms. Horsley and adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta,
Clerk of the Council