

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

**June 30, 2021**

**\*To view the recording, please click the following link and observe the instructions when/if prompted: [https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/QkRetPaQ2t3ZF5xezs2VmejDPon0hqkHF-QAE-ar\\_W-d2QAEhmu-l4Uvkub\\_ZprH.89NckacyrSOxKn5](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/QkRetPaQ2t3ZF5xezs2VmejDPon0hqkHF-QAE-ar_W-d2QAEhmu-l4Uvkub_ZprH.89NckacyrSOxKn5)**

**\*\* If prompted for a password, enter: e4d2L@jT**

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A special meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Wednesday, June 30, 2021. This meeting was held electronically, via Zoom, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 7:13 P.M. by the Council President. The Clerk took the roll followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mick McGarry	Dominique Baez
Jeron Alston	Brad Macdowall
Betty Wetmore	Berita Rowe-Lewis
Justin Farmer	Valerie Horsley
Athena Gary	Marjorie Bonadies
Austin Cesare	Jody Clouse (approx..10:00pm)
Kathleen Schomaker (approx.. 7:50pm)	

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Kristin Dolan; Adrian Webber

**PRESIDING:** Mick McGarry, President

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

**PUBLIC INPUT SESSION:** None

After an explanation from Mr. Mednick per his conversation with the Finance Director, Mr. **McGarry moved a motion to remove §4-4.** The motion was seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis and approved with 1 abstention (Farmer)

**Chapter V:**

**Mr. McGarry then moved a motion to add §5-2 D (1)** to the recommendations, seconded by Ms. Horsley. DISCUSSION: Ms. Horsley asked if they could do this by resolution rather than have it in the Charter. Mr. Farmer said he has concerns about changing it without asking department heads their thoughts. Ms. Gruen asked to please make sure this section is clear as it's a very well used section. After some discussion on language and CPI and contracts **Ms. Bonadies moved a motion to table this section,** seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

## **§5-2 D (1) – TABLED ITEM**

### **§5-6 B: Minimum Qualifications (COO)**

Mr. Mednick explained this section and the recommendations for it and said it should be pared down to address the issues raised by the Fire Chief and Town Attorney.

**Ms. Horsley moved a motion** to pare down the language in this section as suggested by Mr. Mednick. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cesare. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer said he thinks we should stay in accordance with employee concerns and asked if changing language would avoid any CBA issues. He said he also thinks this should be staggered with the mayor and not end with his cycle.

Ms. Wetmore said she thinks this is just another layer but thinks they should report to the Mayor. Mr. McGarry said he thinks that will be part of paring down due to MERA concerns. Ms. Wetmore asked if this was a Mayoral appointment. Mr. Mednick said yes, with approval of the Council. Ms. Wetmore said he has Chief of Staff, Mr. Donnelly, as well as others and he doesn't need another appointment and that it would be 2 supervisors for department heads.

Mr. Cesare said he doesn't like stagger. He doesn't think a new Mayor should have a leftover from someone else and thinks the term should be the same as the Mayor's.

Mr. Macdowall said he agrees with both Ms. Wetmore and Mr. Cesare saying it seems to him this is the same as the Chief of Staff and agrees that it now seems department heads would have 2 supervisor's and suggested they just solidify the Chief of Staff in the charter.

Ms. Bonadies asked if this position can be removed for cause only and Mr. McGarry answered yes. She then said this charter doesn't give a price tag and that's a concern of hers. She too would rather see the Chief of Staff position solidified in the charter.

**Mr. Macdowall then asked if they would accept a friendly motion** to recommend to the CRC to eliminate the COO and codify the roles and responsibilities of the Chief of Staff and that the Mayor shall hire one. **Both Ms. Horsley and Mr. Cesare accepted the friendly motion.**

There was then some discussion on language and Ms. Gruen mentioned language and comments sent in by the Chief and others and asked if they'd be carried over. Mr. Mednick said yes. Mr. McGarry wondered if they should add in "with consideration to the commentary".

**Ms. Horsley made a friendly motion to** add the yellow box language. Mr. Macdowall and Mr. Cesare both accepted. A vote was then taken and approved unanimously.

## **Chapter VII:**

### **§7-1 B: (Eliminate district representation)**

Mr. Mednick went over all the sections within the resolution #6 and explained things. There was the discussion on district to geographic. Mr. Farmer suggested putting it in as a suggestion, not a requirement. Mr. Cesare said he would support geographic but not by district. Ms. Wetmore said she agrees with Mr. Cesare. Ms. Bonadies also concurs with Mr. Cesare. Ms. Horsley said she too agrees with everything said but she would prefer specific language about geographically and diversity. Mr. Mednick then pointed out that the diversity provisions are laid out in §7-1 G.

Ms. Horsley said she'd also like to have in the charter that a body evaluates this periodically.

Ms. Schomaker asked if the Charter Revision Commission discussed clustering geographics. Mr. Dixon explained the rational of voting districts and spoke to equal representation from identified voting districts.

**Mr. Cesare moved a motion** to eliminate the district requirement and have the CRC look at

geographical clusters. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bonadies. After a brief discussion Mr. Cesare said he wanted to include in his motion a recommendation to review this periodically. Ms. Bonadies agreed adding this to her second saying she thinks they can do this with geographical areas.

Mr. McGarry said he's in support of clustering if it works. He said his experience in doing this with the Charter Revision Commission is that it was difficult due to the low responses and some on the CRC were put there because they were the sole person to apply for that area.

Mr. Farmer said he thinks clustering is different because different communities have different needs. There was then some discussion on equity.

After some discussion on recruitment Mr. Mednick pointed out §7-1 K (4) with recruitment requirements.

A vote was taken on sending this recommendation to the CRC and it passed with 1 opposed (Baez) and 1 abstention (Farmer)

#### **§7-1 B (4): (frequency of meetings)**

Mr. McGarry moved a motion to send to the CRC recommendation of 7-1 B (4), seconded by Ms. Schomaker. DISCUSSION: Ms. Gruen said one, she just wants to make sure it complies in accordance with law and two, for the cancellation of meetings if you don't have a quorum you can't have a meeting. She said she doesn't want the charter to box a commission in if they can't meet and that there are laws as to how meetings work and if you have no quorum you have no meeting.

A vote was taken to send this recommendation to the CRC and take into account that we don't want to put them into the issue of having illegal meetings with no quorum. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **§7-1 B (5): (board and commission assignments)**

Mr. McGarry said this recommendation would change since we are changing the COO position and mentioned the recommendation is presently the responsibility of the Town Clerk. Mr. McGarry then requested a motion to send this recommendation to the CRC. The motion was moved by Ms. Horsley, seconded by Ms. Schomaker. DISCUSSION: Mr. McGarry said it seems to him since they are changing the COO position and since the Town Clerk is in charge of the clerks this seems to be the place. A vote was taken and it passed unanimously.

#### **§7-1 B (6):**

Ms. Gruen suggested for this a general motion that wherever posting requirements may be in the charter this apply. Mr. McGarry then moved a motion for the CRC to make sure all posting provisions in the charter abide by law. The motion was seconded by Ms. Schomaker and approved unanimously.

#### **§7-1 B (7) (b): (public comment prior to and following meetings)**

Mr. McGarry moved this recommendation, seconded by Mr. Webber. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer said he thinks the public should be heard. Ms. Horsley said she too heard from constituents that they'd like to have more comment after debate and is wondering if they can make this optional rather than get rid of it all together. Ms. Schomaker said she too heard from a lot of people and thinks there are suggestions to this and thinks this should go to the working group.

After some discussion on this Mr. McGarry said sometimes post meeting comments could be helpful, but other times they could prolong meetings and he thinks there are other ways.

Ms. Schomaker moved a motion to send this to the working group to look at the information and come up with something the public is asking for.

Mr. McGarry said maybe they can recommend to the CRC to look at this and address those concerns. **Mr. McGarry then suggested a friendly to the motion** to read “the CRC re-exam the post meeting requirement.” Ms. Schomaker and Mr. Webber both accepted the friendly.

A vote was taken and it passed with 1 opposed (Horsley)

**§7-1 B (7) (a): (electronic access and email addresses)**

Ms. Gruen said she wants to be sure they can do this. She said we have union people who do this work and asks if this impacts them. Mr. Mednick asked to create email addresses? Ms. Gruen said she’s just throwing it out there. Mr. Farmer suggested the commission look at tis to see if it’s bargaining work. Mr. Mednick said he would talk to labor counsel but he doesn’t see why it would be an issue.

Mr. Cesare moved a motion to have a public hearing on July 6<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Ms. Horsley.

While discussing the option of having another public hearing Mr. Mednick said you can have one up until next Wednesday and if you do you can have another 15 days for this process but that takes away from the commission’s time.

There was some discussion on having another public hearing and the process going forth under the Governors new meeting requirements which go into effect the next day.

Ms. Gruen then went over her memo of the 3 meeting options per the Governor’s order. There was a lengthy discussion on the options in front of them with Mr. McGarry saying for now remote is best and it will need to be discussed further in the morning.

Mr. McGarry suggested they could have a public hearing on the 7<sup>th</sup>, a workshop on the 8<sup>th</sup> and vote on the 13<sup>th</sup>. He said tomorrow they will figure out how to do this.

Ms. Horsley asked if there was a way Leadership preferred to get comments for how they should meet. Mr. Alston agreed with Ms. Horsley and also wondered how do they voice their desire to meet and if they’re leaning towards hybrid when do they discuss preparing Town Hall. Mr. McGarry said it’s remote for upcoming and hybrid as soon as possible.

Ms. Gruen mentioned the meeting notice/agenda should tell the public how to email for participation location and all things needed. Mr. McGarry said it will be remote and tomorrow they would work out the room for the public.

There being no further business Mr. McGarry requested a motion to adjourn. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Schomaker and the meeting adjourned at 10:19 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta  
Clerk of the Council