

**TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
January 18, 2022**

**\*To view the recording, please click the following link and observe the instructions when/if prompted:**

[https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/djhNujkK\\_nsc9VtbBcI9qs\\_acsR9c-eZVQim4jZjer4bjlvMINY2hj-u8ZdDLvQj.S9Zikuu1LifZKhx](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/djhNujkK_nsc9VtbBcI9qs_acsR9c-eZVQim4jZjer4bjlvMINY2hj-u8ZdDLvQj.S9Zikuu1LifZKhx)

**\*\* 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](http://www.hamden.com/agendacenter) and click the MEDIA link found next to this agenda under the meeting date. OR download the digital version of these minutes and click the link above.**

---

A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Tuesday, January 18, 2021. This meeting was held electronically, via Zoom, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by the Council President. The Clerk took the roll followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Sweet then read the Land Recognition followed by a moment of silence.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dominique Baez	Jeron Alston (after roll call)
Marjorie Bonadies	Lesley DeNardis
Justin Farmer	Sarah Gallagher
Paula Irvin	Katie Kiely
Cory O'Brien	Abdul Osmanu
Ted Stevens	Laurie Sweet
Betty Wetmore	Adrian Webber (after roll call)
Kristen Zaehring	

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**PRESIDING:** Dominique Baez, President

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Sean Grace, Chief of Staff; Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; Curtis Eatman, Finance Director; Erik Johnson, Acting Town Planner/Economic Development Director

**PUBLIC INPUT SESSION:** There were 4 speakers (who can be heard on the recording at Time Code 00:16:45) and 35 written comments which can be read here:

<https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/5303/01-18-2022>

<https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/5264/01-18-2022-Duplicate-letters>

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Tonight's correspondence can be read here:

<https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/5266/Rose-Mentone-Statement--1-24-2020--letter>

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT:** Ms. Baez announced that the Council would be changing their meeting schedule going forward saying they will have both full Council meetings and committee meetings on the first and third Mondays of the month, beginning with the full Council meeting and then having the committees on the tail end of the evening. She said this is an effort to shorten their meetings and streamline business and still allow the administration to quickly bring items to the table. She then said their next meeting night is February 7<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Baez addressed some concerns that were written and brought to their attention and said that they as Council people need to be accountable to each other, have a level of respect and decorum. She said they hold this office and represent the residents and they should continue to represent the residents with a higher level of respect, a higher level of listening and trusting, and being good to one another and have respect for each other, our colleagues, within these meetings outside of the meetings, our volunteers. our citizenry and our Town employees. She said Council has gotten criticism in the past for their behavior and she will not have that behavior going forward. She said she will be re-instating a Rules Committee that will create parameters and boundaries that should not be crossed by Council people and if they are there will be discipline to follow.

Ms. Baez went on to say that during this meeting she will be shutting commentary short or redirecting discussion if it's not on topic or germane to the discussion at hand.

**REPORTS OF BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS:** None

**REPORTS OF COUNCIL LIAISONS:** None

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

November 9, 2021: Moved by Mr. Stevens, seconded by Ms. Wetmore and approved unanimously.

December 13, 2021: Moved by Ms. Zaehring, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:** Ms. Baez requested motion for approval of the consent calendar. Moved by Ms. Wetmore, seconded by Mr. Farmer. Ms. Wetmore then asked if items 10, 15 and 25 could be pulled to the regular agenda. Ms. Baez then called for the vote on the consent without items 10, 15 and 25 and it was approved with 1 abstention (Farmer)

Ms. Baez then announced those items would go to the bottom of the regular agenda.

- 1. Refund of Property Taxes collected prior to July 1, 2021 – (16) totaling \$4,404.73**
- 2. Refund of Property Taxes collected between to July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022  
Overpayments on current Grand List –(4) totaling \$12,127.82**

- 3. Refund of Motor Vehicle Taxes collected between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022 – Overpayments on current Grand List – (58) totaling \$23,797.04**
- 4. Appointment of Erin Fitch to the Human Rights & Relations Commission for a term to expire April 30, 2024**
- 5. Appointment of Elaine Dove to the Police Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2023**
- 6. Appointment of Vaughn Willis to the Police Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2023**
- 7. Appointment of Paul V. Fioretti as an alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term to expire January 31, 2026**
- 8. Appointment of Lisa Crutchfield Diggs to the Technology Commission for a term to expire July 1, 2023**
- 9. Appointment and reappointment of John R. Brantley to the Zoning Board of Appeals for an appointment to expire January 31, 2022 and a reappointment to expire January 31, 2027**
- 11. Reappointment of Matthew Fitch to the Town Center Park Commission for a term to expire November 1, 2024**
- 12. Reappointment of Gary Beard Jr. to the Technology Commission for a term to expire July 1, 2024**
- 13. Bid waiver for a full time Juvenile Review Board Case Manager and Administrative Costs – (Youth Service Bureau – Connecticut Violence Intervention Program) – \$37,500**
- 14. Order to approve amendment to agreement with Haley and Aldrich, Inc. Post Construction Phase Services Villano Park and Rochford Field**
- 16. Order providing for the appointment of a Mayoral Appointment – Sean Grace, Chief of Staff**
- 17. Order providing for the appointment of a Mayoral Appointment – Alexa Panayotakis, Deputy Chief of Staff**
- 18. Order providing for the appointment of Curtis Eatman as Director of Finance and approval of Employment Agreement**

- 19. Order authorizing the Finance Department to reclassify uncollectable taxes to the Suspense Tax Book – C.G.S. §12-165**
- 20. Order authorizing intradepartmental transfer 2021-2022 Fiscal Year Budget – \$300,000 Accrued Benefits/Retirement (from E&C acct)**
- 21. Order authorizing intradepartmental transfer 2021-2022 Fiscal Year Budget – Fire Dept. – \$75,000 for Garcia Overtime (from Reg. Salaries)**
- 22. Order to amend the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year Budget and authorization for interdepartmental transfer – (Police Dept.-Youth Services) - \$64,511.65**
- 23. Order to approve contract between Connecticut Violence Intervention Program, Inc. and the Town of Hamden Juvenile Review Board (JRB)**
- 24. Order to approve contract between Connecticut Violence Intervention Program and the Town of Hamden**  
  
**Bid Waiver associating with the contract agreement for Connecticut Violence Intervention Program (\$120,000)**
- 26. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – Project Balance Transfer \$53,610**

**REGULAR AGENDA:**

**1. Appointment of Rhonda Caldwell to the Police Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2023**

-- Moved by Ms. Gallagher, seconded by Mr. Webber. DISCUSSION: Ms. Wetmore said she will not support this nomination saying she has clearly shown and stated that she is anti-police with protests and has given out the home address of a police commissioner and encouraged people to protest there. She wanted to defund the police and reallocate those funds for the benefit of districts three and five. She said if a person cannot support the police department and wants to defund them and are anti police they should not be on the police commission and thinks Ms. Caldwell would be great for another commission, but not this one.

Ms. DeNardis said she concurs with Ms. Wetmore's remarks and is in agreement with how she stated them and for those reasons she too will not support this nominee to the police commission. She said our board and commission are important in carrying out the work of local government and we look for people who are going to uphold and advance the mission of the Commission they're looking to serve on and while she thinks we'd want them to come with constructive

criticism she believes that based on the statements made by this particular nominee she thinks they have to give this careful thought because constructive criticism is one thing, but not being supportive of the overall agenda she doesn't think is a suitable quality for any candidate that wants to serve on this given Commission.

Ms. Baez said she knows Ms. Caldwell is strong, she is brave, and she is in total support of her being on the police commission. She said Ms. Caldwell is critical with constructive criticism and the ability to analyze and create change that is better for our town and if we want our police department to be the best it can be we need to allow it to grow and change.

Ms. Gallagher said she will be supporting this. She said she has gotten to know Ms. Caldwell over the last year and is impressed with her resume and her passion for the community. She said Ms. Caldwell is a long standing and highly regarded advocate and community organizer with an impressive resume that she truly feels will benefit all of Hamden residents. She said she's a strong, clear communicator and able to communicate across multiple audiences and for many other reasons (stated) she thinks this appointment will restore some of the faith in our department and help them build a bridge between the public and our police department and many communities.

Ms. Sweet, after pointing out the functions of the police commission in the Town charter, said she believes that the most qualified person for this crucial appointment is Rhonda Caldwell. She said for the past three years she has worked tirelessly to make the commission more open and accessible to Hamden residents saying that before that the commission had no way of receiving complaints and due to Ms. Caldwell's actions they now have an email for residents to contact the commission. She said Ms. Caldwell is not anti-police she is pro accountability and pro community. After stating other reasons Ms. Sweet said she will be supporting this appointment to the police commission.

Mr. Osmanu said he'll be supporting the nomination of Ms. Caldwell. He said whether it's a resume or the actual work she's put in for the past three years it's really evident that she brings a diversity, not only in experience but ideas to this Council as we move forward as a Town. He said as we think of how we imagine public safety and how we want to reimagine public safety in this Town in creating a police Commission that's open, transparent and willing to interact with the community and overall build a safe Hamden.

Mr. O'Brien said policing has been a somewhat very divisive issue recently and while many people feel that the police deserve support and that the way they function works for them it's clear that it doesn't work for all, in particular people in black and brown communities and if it's not working for them, we should all strive to make sure that it does better. He said he believes that having people at the table like Ms. Caldwell will represent those communities and he has zero doubt that Ms. Caldwell is going to act with professionalism and have a sense of decorum and we're going to see a functioning body that's going to do well and helping our community into the next level of policing. He will support this appointment.

Mr. Stevens said Ms. Caldwell has proved to him that she's well equipped for what is an important and difficult position and he too will support this.

Ms. Kiely said she can completely respect that there are people who think that everyone on the police Commission should be pro police but she does not have that belief (and gave her reasons why) She said she knows Ms. Caldwell is qualified and that Ms. Caldwell is one of the few people who she has seen in action with communities, with law enforcement, with understanding government, housing and processes. Ms. Kiely said she will support this appointment.

Mr. Webber said after he listened to the public's input she's rooted and grounded in transparency and accountability and seems to be a good fit. He said her resume speaks for itself and he looks forward to working with her and applauds her for volunteering her time.

A vote was taken on the item and it passed with 3 opposed (Bonadies) (DeNardis) (Wetmore) and 1 abstention (Farmer)

**2. Appointment of Daniel Dunn to the Police Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2023**

-- Moved by Mr. Osmanu, seconded by Mr. Alston and approved with 2 opposed (Bonadies) (Wetmore) and 2 abstentions (DeNardis) (Farmer)

**3. Appointment of Frank LaDore to the Police Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2023**

-- Moved by Mr. Alston, seconded by Mr. Webber. DISCUSSION: Ms. Kiely said she thinks he will make a wonderful nominee. Mr. Farmer thanked all the people who serve saying it's deeply needed and appreciated. Ms. Wetmore said she supports this and thinks Mr. LaDore is fair and supportive of the Police Department.

A vote was taken and the item passed with 3 opposed (Osmanu) (Sweet) (Farmer)

**4. An order of the Town of Hamden, Connecticut authorizing the execution and delivery of a Government Obligation Contract and Schedules thereto for the acquisition, purchase, financing and leasing of certain police vehicles**

-- Moved by Ms. Zaehring, seconded by Mr. Farmer. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer asked for a list of all the vehicles with mileage and a maintenance schedule.

A vote was taken and the item passed with 4 opposed (Farmer) (Sweet) (Osmanu) (Irvin) and 2 abstentions (Kiely) (Bonadies)

## **5. Ordinance amending and restating §123.03 and adding §128.14 of the Town of Hamden Economic Development Incentive Policy**

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Zaehring. DISCUSSION: Mr. Stevens said he'll work with getting answers to some questions from earlier but thinks this should still move forward.

Ms. DeNardis said she thinks this will place a burden on businesses and said incentives don't tip the balance, there's ambiguity in the language how criteria is met and judgement about good faith measures and she would like to see it rewritten and reworded.

Ms. Zaehring, in referring to tonight's public comments, said maybe the administration can speak to first was with respect to smaller developments with units to five to seven units and the impact that this proposal might have on them and then also what the Economic Development Commission's position on this was or if they weren't consulted why they weren't consulted. Mr. Johnson said the Planning & Zoning Commission has made the requirement that any development that has five or more units has to have 20% of the units be affordable and he wants to point out that the Town has already established requirements concerning this that dictate some form of public benefit. Mr. Johnson said secondly, this matter was brought before the Economic Development Commission prior to submission to the Council for its review and approval.

Mr. Stevens said he thinks there are conversations to be had down the road with these incentives that we do want to offer, but the reason he's supporting this today is because we do have the incentives on the books and he thinks that adding the qualification standards to ensure the benefits of construction jobs to residents (unintelligible).

Mr. Farmer said we have an amazing, dynamic community nestled between two universities and that we're not going to please every developer but the people who want to be in partnership with us and the people want to buy into our community will find this attractive. He said this will attract not only other businesses but community members to our beloved community and so he's excited to vote for this.

Ms. Baez said she's so excited to see this come through and said Hamden should have done this before. She said our surrounding cities in Connecticut have the same and similar standards when it comes to construction industry and that these are very simple and very usual percentages to reach and best effort is defined by Connecticut as someone who is simply trying. That means advertising, reaching out to minority and local businesses, it means that you are vetting people and making sure that you're asking for folks to join your job site and giving them that opportunity. Ms. Baez said construction people across the region, and from New York to Florida, are all familiar with very similar standards and that they're very simple and achievable.

Ms. Kiely said she's been thinking about how to vote for this and she appreciates all comments and concerns shared. She said one, she thinks they need to be a little bit ambiguous because not

everyone is created the same, especially in Hamden, so we need to allow for interpretation and she has faith in the administration in making sure this runs well. She said going forward she does think they need to make sure they're collecting data and making sure that it is actually the case in what is happening, and she also thinks that they have to make sure that they don't let fear or "what if's" stand in the way of what they know is a solution and what we need right now, and what we need in this town, is to have options and to make it an attractive place for businesses and contractors, and to include more diversity in that. She said she will be supporting it.

A vote was taken and the item passed with 3 opposed (Bonadies) (DeNardis) (Wetmore) and 1 absent (Mr. O'Brien)

Mr. O'Brien is now absent from the meeting.

**(Pulled from Consent Calendar)**

**10. Appointments of Nancy Hill, Gary Tinney, Cherlyn Poindexter, Samod Rankins and Victor Mitchell to the Fire Commission for terms to expire December 31, 2023**

-- Moved by Ms. Wetmore, seconded by Mr. Alston. DISCUSSION: Ms. Wetmore said she supports Victor Mitchell. She said he has always had the best interests of Hamden's fire department in his mind and has always worked hard as a volunteer and so she urges her colleagues to vote for him.

A vote was taken and the item passed with 1 abstention (Farmer)

**15. Order extending the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan**

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Stevens. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer encouraged the community to add their input. Ms. Wetmore expressed her concern with Hamden having this.

A vote was taken and the item passed with 3 abstentions (Bonadies) (DeNardis) (Wetmore)

**25. Resolution to transfer appropriation and unexpended bond proceeds to Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment Project**

-- Moved by Mr. Webber, seconded by Ms. Wetmore. DISCUSSION: Ms. Wetmore thinks Hamden is in dire straits as far as money goes and she's like to know exactly where the money is going before voting yes. Ms. Baez asked the administration if they would be giving a report and Mr. Grace said yes, some of it includes the Council Chambers and getting it set for a hybrid system and another use is for replacing carpet at the Government Center where there are extensive stains and some tripping hazards.

There was back and forth discussion about getting a list of some items that this will be spent on and the cost for those things, as well as some discussion on the need of closing out this account and doing clean-up on the accounting side. Mr. Galarza explained how they're using unused capital funds in areas that need things. He also explained from an earlier comment that it could not be transferred into the general fund

After Ms. Baez suggested postponing this Mr. Alston asked for two things. For bond counsel to point out where it says it can't be transferred in the general fund and also, for a project that is underfunded there must be a list somewhere that says it's underfunded.

Ms. Baez then moved a motion to postpone this item until February 7<sup>th</sup>. The motion was seconded by Ms. Zaehring and approved with 1 abstention (Webber)

**Information item:** Bid waiver for the purchase of metal detectors for Hamden High School – Garrett Electronics, Inc. - \$1,250 (There was a brief explanation given on this item and then some discussion about bid waivers and metal detectors)

There being no further business Ms. Baez requested a motion to adjourn. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Webber and the meeting adjourned unanimously at 9:08 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta  
Clerk of the Council