

Town of Hamden  
**Fire Commission Regular Meeting**  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.  
Memorial Town Hall at 2372 Whitney Avenue, Hamden

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A regular meeting of the Hamden Fire Commission opened on February 15, 2023 at the Hamden Memorial Town Hall, located at 2372 Whitney Avenue.

Commissioners in Attendance: Nancy Hill, Cherlyn Poindexter, Samod Rankins, and Gary Tinney, Chair; Victor Mitchell. Also in Attendance: Mayor’s Chief of Staff, Sean Grace; Town Attorney, Sue Gruen; Chair of the Civil Service, Andrea Lobo; Fire Chief, Jeffrey Naples; and Clerk for the Commission, Patrice A. LeMoine.

Members of the Public: Russell Quick, Mark Bascetta, Eric Chester, Legal Counsel for the Hamden Fire Department’s Union; Robert Mordecai, Hamden Fire Lt. Raymond Pouncey, Harold Wrangler

- 1. Call to Order:** Mr. Tinney called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. A roll call was taken, confirming a quorum was present.
- 2. Public and Media Comments regarding the Agenda:** In a few moments the residents of the town will be given an opportunity to come forward and speak to the Commission or share a message.

Mr. Tinney requested a motion to add the following agenda item, which will become 5e. A motion to appoint Mr. Russell Quick to the position of Fire Inspector. Mr. Rankins motioned in favor of adding this item under new business as item 5e. Mr. Mitchell seconded. The chair called for a vote:

N. Hill	yea	S. Rankins	yea
V. Mitchell	yea	G. Tinney	yea
C. Poindexter	no		

The vote carried (4 in favor, 1 against, no abstentions).

Members of the public were given the opportunity to speak (for a maximum of 3 minutes) to the Commissioners.

Robert Mordecai – Mr. Mordecai requested the Commission support the decision to appoint R. Quick to the position of Fire Inspector. He asked the Commissioners four questions.

Harold Wrangler – Mr. Wrangler, who is a retired volunteer firefighter gave his history regarding the hard work of any emergency rescue person who has to endure fighting a fire or saving a life. Many firefighters experience many injuries with a having to be taken him off the job; maybe become disabled, but when there is an opportunity of a

firefighter being qualified of filling another position within the department, that person should not be denied. He thanked the fire department for their great work for the Hamden community and then asked that the Commission to please review and consider appointing Mr. Quick the position of Fire Inspector.

Eric Chester is the attorney for the union of the Hamden Firefighters and he noted that Mr. Quick passed the appropriate tests and is considered qualified to fill the position of Fire Inspector, therefore, he should not be denied the position.

Hamden Fire Lt. Raymond Pouncey – Lt. Pouncey noted he was formerly the Fire Inspector and recently promoted to Fire Lieutenant, which led to the opening for Mr. Quick to apply for the position. He said his experience as Hamden Fire Inspector had its moments where he felt safety was of a concern and gave a few examples. Lt. Pouncey then noted that as much as he knows Mr. Quick is a hardworking and intelligent person, he does not believe the position is a good fit for him; and may not be capable of handling some of the situations that come with the role of Fire Inspector. He also recommended Mr. Quick fill an administrative position, like a “desk job” perhaps “answer the phones” for the department.

- 3. Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Tinney requested a motion to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2023 meeting. Mr. Rankins motioned to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2023 minutes as presented. Mr. Mitchell seconded. The chair called for a vote:

N. Hill	yea	S. Rankins	yea
V. Mitchell	yea	G. Tinney	yea
C. Poindexter	yea		

The vote passed unanimously (5 in favor, 0 against, no abstentions).

Mr. Tinney requested a motion to approve the minutes of January 26, 2023. Mr. Mitchell motioned to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2023 meeting as presented. Mr. Rankins seconded. The chair called for a vote:

N. Hill	yea	S. Rankins	yea
V. Mitchell	yea	G. Tinney	yea
C. Poindexter	abstain		

The vote passed (4 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstention).

Mr. Tinney requested a motion to approve the minutes of February 2, 2023. Ms. Poindexter motioned to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2023 special meeting as presented. Mr. Mitchell seconded. The chair called for a vote:

N. Hill	yea	S. Rankins	yea
V. Mitchell	yea	G. Tinney	yea
C. Poindexter	yea		

The vote passed unanimously (5 in favor, 0 against, no abstentions).

**4. Old Business:**

- a. Capital Budget update: Fire Chief Naples provided a five-year capital plan for 2023-2025 with the Commissioners. He noted the vehicles and emergency equipment that are in need of replacement or repairs, the equipment that is required to order including an emergency vehicle, which will arrive close to the end of this year. The total cost of the plan is \$675,000, which was presented to the mayor for her support.
- b. Volunteer Firefighter update: Mr. Mitchell said the training is ongoing; and there was a brief recess due to the holiday months, but have resumed training sessions this month.
- c. Promotional Testing and Current Staffing update: Fire Chief Naples gave a report on those openings. The testing for Fire Lieutenant will be completed by Personnel. He noted a company called Mission CIT gave a presentation to the Fire Chief and Personnel, he believes the validity behind this process is exceptional and looks to utilizing this company for future exams for all levels of hiring for the Fire Department. After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Rankins recommended looking to other companies for the testing and Ms. Poindexter questioned if the Town should go out to bid for other companies to propose their bids. Fire Chief Naples feels very confident with the current organization. At this time, the company will place the testing for the upcoming Fire Lieutenant vacancy. Fire Chief Naples added that the primary concern is to hire the highest qualified applicant to work and protect the town.

**5. Old Business:**

- a. Department materials – Fire Chief Naples summarized two letters complimenting the department for their splendid work and support. One letter was from David Tetmar from Mix Avenue who thanked the department for their services in a recent fire emergency. The next letter was from the Town of North Haven where Hamden provided services while the personnel at North Haven attended the funeral services for Firefighter Mathhias Wirtz.

The Commissioners inquired if the Fire Department needs assistance with supplies for those individuals and families who are without their home due to a fire. Fire Chief Naples gave a summary of the service provided by the Keefe Community Center and the local Red Cross. Mr. Tinney and the Commissioners asked that they be included in the communication for upcoming emergencies and they offer their assistance.

The ESO report reflects the emergency calls from January 1 to the present. At this time, 70% of the calls are EMS.

For the 2022-23 FY budget, a budget transfer of \$225,000 will be presented to the Legislative Council. The transfer is to cover FLSA – sub-straight and medical expenses. The medical increase is approximately \$25,000 and the sub-straight is \$100,000. The Fire Chief went further to explain the reasoning behind the expenses and that the Mayor supports the transfer.

The budget for FY 2023-2024 was drafted and forwarded to the Mayor’s office. The budget total is \$15,281,098, an increase of \$455,481 or 3%. The proposal does not include salary increases, and the contract negotiations reflect a zero increase, or flat level funding.

- b. Assistant Fire Chief vacancy – The Mayor has not forwarded any updates to the department.
- c. Request demographics of the Fire Department based on gender and race – What information that was available was provided by Fire Chief Naples.
- d. Discussion regarding possibility of a female fire campus – Mr. Mitchell would like to invite a program director who sets up summer camps for young women to maybe utilize one of the stations in Hamden. He will look to he will invite her to speak at one of the upcoming meetings.

At this time, Commissioners confirmed receipt of Mr. J. Spenser’s letter of support regarding R. Quick, which was part of the correspondence.

- e. A motion to appoint Mr. Russell Quick to the position of Fire Inspector- At this time. Mr. Tinney requested a motion. Mr. Rankins motioned to appoint Russell Quick to the position of Fire Inspector and was seconded by Ms. Hill. The chair then called for a vote:

N. Hill	yea	S. Rankins	yea
V. Mitchell	yea	G. Tinney	yea
C. Poindexter	nay		

The vote carried (4 in favor, 1 against, no abstentions).

- 6. Mr. Tinney requested a motion to remove agenda item 6 – Executive Session. Ms. Hill motioned to remove agenda item #6 – Executive Session: To discuss the removal from employment of a member of the fire department (Russell Quick). Mr. Rankins seconded the motion. The chair called for a vote:

N. Hill	yea	S. Rankins	yea
V. Mitchell	yea	G. Tinney	yea
C. Poindexter	nay		

The vote carried (4 in favor, 1 against, no abstentions).

- 7. **Agenda item #7** was tabled from the special meeting held January 26, 2023 meeting. The Commissioners do not need to present his item.

- 8. **Executive Session** to discuss the employment status of the new entry-level Firefighter/Paramedic candidate – Mark Bascetta. A request to go into executive session was motioned by Ms. Hill and seconded by Mr. Rankins.

N. Hill	yea	S. Rankins	yea
V. Mitchell	yea	G. Tinney	yea
C. Poindexter	yea		

The vote carried (5 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

At 7:14 p.m. the following withdrew from the meeting to go into executive session with the Fire Commissioners: Captain Lopes, S. Gruen, A. Lobo, B. Cogswell, Fire Chief Naples.

At 8:16 p.m., the group returned to the auditorium and Mr. Tinney requested a motion. Mr. Mitchell motioned to end executive session at 8:16 p.m. and was seconded by Ms. Hill. The chair then called for a vote:

N. Hill	yea	S. Rankins	yea
V. Mitchell	yea	G. Tinney	yea
C. Poindexter	yea		

The vote carried (5 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

9. The following agenda item was tabled at the February 2, 2023 special meeting: **Discussion and Vote** to rescind the conditional offer of employment to Mark Bascetta (candidate for the entry-level Firefighter/Paramedic). Ms. Hill motioned to return the agenda item for a vote and was seconded by Mr. Mitchell. The chair then called for a vote:

N. Hill	yea	S. Rankins	yea
V. Mitchell	yea	G. Tinney	yea
C. Poindexter	yea		

The vote passed unanimously.

**Discussion and Vote** to rescind the conditional offer of employment to Mark Bascetta (candidate for the entry-level Firefighter/Paramedic). Mr. Tinney requested a vote:

N. Hill	yea	S. Rankins	abstain
V. Mitchell	yea	G. Tinney	yea
C. Poindexter	nay		

The vote passed with a 3 in favor, 1 against, and 1 abstention.

Fire Chief Naples added that Mr. Quick's swearing-in ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Friday, February 17 in the afternoon. Confirmation will be sent on Thursday.

**Adjournment.** With no further business, Mr. Tinney requested a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Poindexter motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. and was seconded by Mr. Rankins.  
All were in favor.

Submitted by:

*s/Patrice A. LeMoine*  
Clerk for the Commission