

**TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**February 16, 2021**

A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. This meeting was held electronically, via Zoom, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 7:07 P.M. by the Council President. The Clerk took the roll followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brad Macdowall	Dominique Baez
Mick McGarry	Jody Clouse
Valerie Horsley	Berita Rowe-Lewis
Justin Farmer	Adrian Webber
Austin Cesare	Kristin Dolan
Betty Wetmore	Marjorie Bonadies (after roll call)
Kathleen Schomaker	Jeron Alston (after approval of appt.)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**PRESIDING:** Mick McGarry, President

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Scott Jackson, Acting Finance Director; Rick Galarza, Deputy Finance Director; Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; Walter Morton, Director of Town and BOE Legislative Affairs; Adam Sendroff, Chief of Staff; Craig Cesare, Director of Public Works & Parks

**PUBLIC INPUT SESSION:** There was 1 speaker:  
Diane Hoffman thanked them for allowing oral input again.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT:** Mr. McGarry gave a quick run through the upcoming meeting schedule saying they will return to committees on March 15<sup>th</sup> with the following committees: Finance; Public Safety; Public Works; Recreation and Human Services. On March 22<sup>nd</sup> the following committees will meet: Municipal Planning & Properties; Economic Develop.; Administration; Personnel; Education; Environment & Conservation; and Settlement as needed. Those committee meetings will then be followed up by a regular meeting of the Council on March 29<sup>th</sup>. He then said on March 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> they will have mock meetings with no business conducted.

Mr. McGarry went on to remind everyone of their “first look” workshop for CivicClerk the following night at 6:00pm and then announced the Rules of Procedure Committee would be meeting the following week on February 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm and to send in any thoughts or changes you may have in mind.

Mr. Macdowall asked if the CCA Committee would be coming back as they left an item laying there. Mr. McGarry said yes, they would discuss that.

**REPORTS OF BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS:** Report given by Scott Jackson, Acting Finance Director. (Department reports (generated with the help of Rose Lion) can be found attached to the end of the minutes)

Mr. Morton gave a brief update on Equity saying they had to reengage members of the committee and that more people are offering their services. He said they are waiting on personnel changes that the Mayor was making and he would have more information for them soon.

**REPORTS OF COUNCIL LIAISONS:** None

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:** Mr. McGarry requested a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held February 1, 2021. Moved by Ms. Baez, seconded by Ms. Schomaker and approved unanimously. (Mr. Alston was not a part of this vote)

**REGULAR AGENDA:** Mr. McGarry requested a motion to suspend their rules for tonight's agenda. Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Ms. Baez and approved with 2 opposed (Farmer) (Macdowall) - (Mr. Alston was not part of this vote)

Mr. McGarry said without any objections he'd like to move item # 4 to the top of the agenda.

**4. Appointment of Jeron L. Alston to fill the vacancy in the Second District**

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Schomaker. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer welcomed Mr. Alston and said more help figuring out issues is always better. Ms. Clouse also welcomed Mr. Alston. Mr. Macdowall welcomed Mr. Alston and told him he has big shoes to fill.

Ms. Schomaker told Mr. Alston she looks forward to reaching out and having an introductory conversation and then welcomed him to the Council. Ms. Rowe-Lewis also welcomed Mr. Alston. Mr. McGarry welcomed him also telling him he had big shoes to fill. Ms. Gary welcomed him and Mr. Webber then welcomed him saying he was happy to see someone with his qualifications.

A vote was taken and the appointment passed unanimously.

Town Clerk Vera Morrison then swore Mr. Alston in as the Second District Councilman.

Mr. Alston said he knows he has big shoes to fill and he looks forward to trying to fill them and he looks forward to working with them all.

Mr. Alston then participated as a voting member for the remainder of the meeting.

**1. Refund of Property Taxes collected between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 – (21) totaling \$61,215.96**

-- Moved by Ms. Bonadies, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

**2. Refund of Motor Vehicle Taxes collected between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 – (19) totaling \$4,535.98**

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Macdowall and approved unanimously.

**3. Agreement for Tax Abatement of \$23,835 for Davenport-Dunbar Residence**

-- Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Ms. Bonadies. DISCUSSION: Mr. Jackson explained that this is an annual abatement allowed under the Connecticut General Statutes that we do every year. Mr. Farmer said he's thankful that we do this process for our elderly every year saying it's important to take care of them. A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

**5. Appointment of Jay Cruickshank as an alternate to the Planning & Zoning Commission for a term to expire January 31, 2023**

-- Moved by Mr. Macdowall, seconded by Ms. Bonadies. DISCUSSION: Mr. Macdowall thanked all those who serve for their service to our community. Mr. Farmer also thanked all those who serve, including the alternates. A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

**6. Appointment of Joshua L. Watkins to the Economic Development Commission for a term to expire January 31, 2026**

-- Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Mr. Macdowall. DISCUSSION: Ms. Schomaker said the Economic Development Commission is looking at great things for the Town under its new Director and she's excited to see this addition. A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

**7. Appointment of Christino R. Acosta to the Fire Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2021**

-- Moved by Mr. Cesare and Mr. Macdowall, seconded by Mr. Farmer. DISCUSSION: Mr. Cesare said he's happy to see this seat filled which has been vacant since he held it and left. Mr. Farmer thanked Mr. Cesare for serving on this and he thanked Mr. Acosta as well. Mr. McGarry said he echoes the importance of these people helping and he appreciates all of them. Ms. Bonadies he's fairly new to the Town and she's happy he's stepping up and getting involved and she's happy to vote for him. A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

**8. Order Authorizing Interdepartmental Transfers 2020-2021 Fiscal Year Budget  
Public Works & Parks - \$330,000 FROM E & C ACCOUNT  
(\$130,000 Snow Removal Supplies - \$200,000 Snow Removal Overtime)**

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Bonadies. DISCUSSION: Mr. C. Cesare went over the backup sent to them which reflected the costs over the last few weeks saying he's updated it since and is now in a deficit of \$17,064.05 since last week. He said they sent the BOE a bill for \$21,000 that they agreed to reimburse and also said they've saved over \$100,000 at this point doing the BOE themselves. He also said \$130,000 of this transfer covers an additional 2,000 tons of salt and sidewalk salt. He said they've had 198 events so far this year and the recent backup will show it all.

Mr. Farmer thanked Mr. C. Cesare and his crew for all the hard work they do. He then asked in terms of engineering if they've thought about ice in the North end of Town and in terms of capital budget of the trucks is there anything they need to do to deal with snow related issues. Mr. C. Cesare said they need major repairs to some equipment but there are no capital funds right now in Public Works and that concerns him. He then talked a little on some issues to date they've dealt with on icing.

Ms. Horsley thanked Mr. C. Cesare and his team for always being on top of things. She also said at budget season they need to put more money in this line so that Mr. Cesare doesn't have to come back and ask for more all the time.

Ms. Bonadies said she agrees with Ms. Horsley on that. She also said Mr. Cesare does an amazing job and she appreciates his hard work. Ms. Bonadies then pointed out that there was \$38,000 left in E&C and said that concerns her and they will need to look for other sources of revenue to cover some of these things.

Ms. Rowe-Lewis thanked Mr. C. Cesare and his team for their hard work and always getting it done. She also said she concurs with Ms. Horsley on everything she said.

Mr. Webber thanked Mr. Cesare for welcoming him to the Council and thanked him for his work.

Ms. Schomaker also thanked Mr. Cesare and went on to say that we have a lot of weather events and maybe they should consider a line that covers all types of weather events and call it "damaging storms" or something similar and not just all "snow removal". She said it's a future conversation she thinks they should have.

Ms. Gary said she too appreciates Mr. Cesare and his team for their hard work. She then expressed concern with getting complaints that some elderly people pay to get shoveled out and then the plows put it back. Mr. Cesare said he agrees it's a horrible situation and he wishes people would not pay someone until all the snow is pushed back but he understands some need people need to get out. He said he wished he could assist more but he can't so he can only advise to try and wait if you can.

Mr. Farmer said to add to Ms. Schomaker's point he thinks they do need to think about that type of line at budget time. He then asked if tree limbs fall because of snow or ice is that money for snow used for that too. Mr. C. Cesare said usually from the regular overtime account but during a storm it can be part of their snow overtime.

Ms. Wetmore said he does a great job and echoes what everyone says. She then said she sees private contractors put snow in the street and asked if that was okay or frowned upon. Mr. Cesare said it's frowned upon. He said the residents also do it but he understands that sometimes there are no options. Ms. Wetmore then mentioned cars parked on the side of the road when they're not supposed to be and asked if we can tow. Mr. Cesare said we don't want to and try not to but if they have to they will. He said they try to knock on doors first.

Ms. Bonadies asked how the one-way on Rocky Top was working out for plowing. Mr. Cesare said tremendously and that there hasn't been any issues.

A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

**9. UI agreement – Item to be postponed pending Streetlight Audit Process**

-- Mr. McGarry requested a motion to postpone this pending the street light audit process. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Macdowall. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer said he thinks this is important and that the audit will save us money down the line.

A vote was taken and approved unanimously.

Before adjournment Mr. Farmer said he wants to know about having a meeting or discussion on bullying. Mr. Macdowall said he'd like to see them start putting a drafted budget schedule together. Mr. Cesare asked to see the committee assignments.

There being no further business Mr. McGarry requested a motion to adjourn. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Macdowall and the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta  
Clerk of the Council

Meeting recording:

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/7DTHx38fdauZTQmQJyFSXDvNdZL-hskGn\\_wKKKziMVAAdQaiLTSp2YD7B-CM3b8mA.XjY7CMkCpJ\\_a-ILY](https://zoom.us/rec/share/7DTHx38fdauZTQmQJyFSXDvNdZL-hskGn_wKKKziMVAAdQaiLTSp2YD7B-CM3b8mA.XjY7CMkCpJ_a-ILY)

Access Passcode: 13iJfRH^

# **HAMDEN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

## **REPORTS OF BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS**

### **FINACE DEPARTMENT REPORT**

#### **BY ACTING FINANCE DIRECTOR SCOTT JACKSON**

Mr. Jackson began by saying that the Council should have received both a MUNIS run containing expenses and revenues, and a cover sheet which breaks things down into large silos. He continued, saying "We are in a unique time of the year" where we are dealing with three budgets at one time: closed year, current year and proposed year which is being worked on and that provides to you a full and honest budget that meets what he thinks the people of the Town of Hamden want to see.

Mr. Jackson said he was going to focus on the current year. We have projections and right now and they are pretty conservative. Mr. Jackson said he is a pretty conservative guy when it comes to budgeting and added that Mr. Galarza is as well. We are looking at about a two million dollar gap between expenses and revenue. That is, expenses over revenue which is a negative two million. He said the good news is we have a lot of irons in the fire that still have plenty of time to come to fruition. So, through additional expenditure controls, and recoument of items on the concession line specifically, and on the COVID line specifically, there is a chance for those to come in positive and not only erase that negative, but turn it positive. That is what we are working on for current year and still keeping an eye on expenditure control because that is the greatest tool we have available to us. Mr. Jackson said you can't make revenues happen but you can reduce expenses. So, we are working on a negative two today, but hopefully, by the time we meet again in a few weeks, he can provide information as to how that has moved forward and is starting to trend toward positive.

He said we also have last year's outstanding budget which the Audit Committee and our Auditor need to meet to discuss. He said this is his twenty eighth year in government and nobody has seen anything like we saw last year. We are prepared to take some losses on that, but the Auditor will be able to walk you through what it looks like. We need to make sure that the Audit Committee is prepared to meet with Clermont and walk through the Audit books which hopefully can happen relatively quickly. We are in a position where the Auditor has submitted to OPM, so we have met all of our statutory requirements, but we need to be able to talk right down to Earth in a language that people can clearly understand about what is in that book. So, we need the Audit Committee to meet with the Auditor and then maybe have some other conversations about what it means to our ability to provide services to the residents of Hamden.

On the upcoming year: we are working on putting together a Budget Book for Council. Hamden's budget book is one of the narrowest in the State of Connecticut. He does not want to make it 550 pages, but he would like to add a little bit more to it including things like: some org charts and a little bit more narrative. He will check with the Council Office on this. He thinks that the budget as it currently exists, which is just numbers, doesn't necessarily tell the story of what we are collectively trying to do.