

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

May 15, 2023

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A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Monday, May 15, 2023. This was a hybrid meeting held both in person and electronically via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 8:28 P.M. by Council President Dominique Baez. The Clerk took the roll followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Sweet then read the Land Acknowledgement followed by a moment of silence.

Z= On Zoom P= In Person

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dominique Baez (P)	Abdul Osmanu (P)
Ted Stevens (P)	Jeron Alston (Z)
Lesley DeNardis (Z)	Paula Irvin (Z)
Laurie Sweet (P)	Adrian Webber (P)
Bob Anthony (P)	Cory O'Brien (Z)
Sarah Gallagher (Z)	Betty Wetmore (Z)
Justin Farmer (P)	Kristen Zaehring (Z)
Katie Kiely (P)	

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

PRESIDING: Dominique Baez, President

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Sean Grace, Chief of Staff; Curtis Eatman, Finance Director; Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; Carol Hazen, Manager of Grants & Capital Projects

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION: There was 1 speaker

(Written comments can be sent to LCpublicinput@hamden.com)

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT: None

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS: None

REPORTS OF COUNCIL LIAISONS: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: Ms. Baez requested a motion for approval of the May 1, 2023 minutes. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Osmanu and approved with 2 abstentions (Gallagher) (Wetmore)

CONSENT CALENDAR: Mr. Farmer requested numbers 3,4 and 5 be pulled to the regular agenda. Ms. Baez then requested a motion for approval of the consent calendar which includes items number 1 and 2. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Kiely and approved unanimously.

- 1. Capital Transfer – Public Works & Parks - \$37,750 (Purchase of asphalt hot patcher for street repair)**
- 2. Order authorizing intradepartmental transfer 2022-2023 FY Budget - \$56,692 (Public Works & Parks Building/Ground Maintenance)**

REGULAR AGENDA:

(Items pulled from consent)

3. Resolution approving allocations to public service agencies as part of a Program Year 49 (2023-2024) Community Development Block Grant
-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Osmanu. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer first thanked all the people who serve on our Boards and Commissions. He then asked Ms. Hazen for an update on CDBG. Ms. Hazen said we're relatively caught up in compliance with almost everything HUD pointed out, with the exception of timeliness, and that it's in a pretty good place at this moment. Mr. Farmer thanked her and said he's glad to hear we're on the right track.

A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

4. Resolution of support for the Hamden Homicide Memorial Botanical Garden
-- Moved by Mr. farmer, seconded by Mr. Osmanu. DISCUSSION: Mr. farmer said this is a great project and he knows as a body they will all be supportive in all that they can, and he's looking forward to seeing this come to fruition where people can heal and honors a way that we can reduce gun violence.

A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

5. Reapportionment Commission Plan and submission of Final Report
-- Moved by Ms. Baez, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. ARPA resolution adoption

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Sweet.

Ms. Baez moved a motion to put \$2,000 into the “Outdoor Living Room” on the Farmington Trail, reduce the CAN allotment to \$500,000, put \$50,000 towards “We are the Village” program, put \$99,000 towards Hamden’s small business community and non-profits, put \$145,000 towards the “Hamden Partnership for Young Children, and the remaining \$2,600,315 towards lost revenue. The motion was seconded by Mr. Webber.

Ms. Gallagher stated she doesn’t think the CAN money can be reduced and needs to be pulled out. Ms. Gruen said she would look into it.

Mr. Farmer moved a motion to divide the question and take out CAN. The motion was seconded by Mr. Osmanu and approved with 1 opposed (Baez) and 1 abstention (Kiely)

(The motion no longer includes CAN and reduces the lost revenue to \$2,100,315)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer asked how she came up with these numbers. Ms. Baez said from the things that were sent in. She then went over each line. Mr. Stevens stated he would like to vote separately on these and he’s not in a rush to vote on this now. He would like to hold back at least the money for the budget offset.

There was discussion on putting this 2.1 into lost revenue.

Mr. O’Brien asked if there are any requirements for the smaller allotments. Mr. Grace said there's been a couple of proposals for very small disbursements, and it probably wouldn't make sense to give any of that money directly to small community groups because of the reporting requirements. He said there may be other ways to go if this is what the Council wants to do to facilitate something, but in terms of cutting a \$2,000 check to someone in the community is probably not something they can do very easily, just the reporting loan and everything involved would largely eat up a good chunk of that money, so it's probably not the best way to go. There was then discussion on reporting and liabilities.

There was discussion on using ARPA for lost revenue. Mr. Grace said in speaking to rating agencies they have told them that it was not the intention to use any more of the ARPA funds for lost revenue because in general they don't look favorably on communities that use ARPA, or any other one-time source of revenue to supplement operating budgets. He said we should be able to pay for our operating budgets without these one-time revenue sources saying they are trying to get rating upgrades and he thinks we're in a good position to do that and doesn't want anything standing in the way of that. He then suggested that not everything needs to be voted on tonight and there could be some held back to see how things progress to make sure that both Council and the Administration are able to meet shared objectives for the month.

Mr. O'Brien said that gives him a little bit of pause and he needs to think about it more because the consideration with the rating agencies is a little concerning to him.

Ms. Kiely offered a friendly amendment to add wording HPYC that reads "private pre-schools and youth recreational employment." Both Ms. Baez and Mr. Webber accepted the amendment. Ms. Kiely then shared her concerns in shortfalls of future budgets.

Ms. Wetmore said she too has concerns with the lost revenue after hearing from the Administration and she's not sure they should be doing this. She also shared concern with the Social Worker funding and asked what happens after 2 years? She said she won't be voting for lost revenue, she's afraid we'll get in trouble with the bonding agency and ARPA.

Mr. Farmer moved a motion to put \$500,000 towards all PTA's for after school bussing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Osmanu and Ms. Wetmore. (Ms. Baez included it on her spreadsheet of changes)

Ms. Zaehring said she pulled up the presentation given by the ARPA consultant a couple months ago and our consultant did tell us that an appropriate use of ARPA is to replace public sector lost revenue loss.

Ms. Kiely asked Mr. Farmer if his motion included SEPTA. Mr. Farmer said he did not include it but is open to it. Ms. Kiely asked is it all transportation or specific? Mr. Farmer said he thinks the PTA's can figure out how to best spend the money.

Mr. Anthony said his purpose is to get to a flat mil rate to benefit all residents and all taxpayers. This has to be a zero-increase mil rate.

Mr. Stevens asked how this will be divided and did we have an ask from the PTA? Mr. Farmer said equally, and we know there are needs, we heard from the parents. There was discussion on Wintergreen funds.

Ms. Gallagher said she appreciates the \$500,000 for PTA's and she would want to be sure they include SEPTA. She said she doesn't know if that was stated in an amendment or if it can be added. She then said as far as lost revenue she thinks it's an absolutely acceptable use of funding but she wants to recognize that some of the items they're funding through ARPA are for people and parts of our community and some of the people in our community who may not benefit from a lower mil rate or who often may be forgotten and they need to think holistically about the community and make sure that ARPA is serving those who are the highest impacted by COVID-19, and are the our kind of most marginalized generally our community. She said she likes additions here and although the 1.6 in lost revenue isn't a mil it's a start to getting them there.

Mr. Farmer and Mr. Osmanu accepted the friendly amendment to include SEPTA. Mr. Osmanu said if the number is changed to \$550,000 it would allot \$55,000 to each school. Ms. Baez announced the makers of the motion are changing the amount to \$550,000 and now includes SEPTA.

Mr. Stevens declared a point of order and asked if the schools could be spelled out rather than just saying all. Mr. Osmanu said we have 8 elementary schools, the middle school, the high school and now SEPTA. That makes 11. He said he gave consideration to HCLC earlier but is not sure they have a PTA.

Ms. Kiely stated that if you're not a paying member of the PTA, a parent or a family member, you do not get a vote. She would like to make a friendly amendment to be specific and have this help parents pay for PTA membership who can't afford it. Both Mr. Farmer and Mr. Osmanu said okay to the friendly.

After some more discussion a vote was taken and the motion failed with 5 in favor (Farmer) (Osmanu) (Sweet) (Irvin) (Gallagher) – 9 opposed (Alston) (Baez) (Anthony) (DeNardis) (O'Brien) (Stevens) (Wetmore) (Webber) (Zaehringer) and 1 abstention (Kiely)

Ms. Baez announced they were back to the original motion and does not include the reduction of CAN. (CAN has not been added back in by motion)

Ms. Sweet asked if they would accept a friendly amendment to add \$20,000 to HYPC bringing it up to \$165,000. The friendly amendment was accepted.

After some discussion on training and cleaning supplies Ms. Kiely suggested a friendly to remove the cleaning and the CPR supplies. (Ms. Baez was speaking but the microphone was not on) Ms. Zaehringer stated Ms. Baez could not be heard. Ms. Baez said there is no separate motion and that this was a friendly to bump this up \$20,000 for this bucket of money which is included in her motion for private preschool services directly to those private preschools and youth recreational employment, and not CPR training that she knows can be provided everywhere elsewhere, and that's okay with the person who proposed it to me.

Ms. Baez said her motion is to put \$2,000 towards Artists Commission for the outdoor living room on Farmington Trail, \$50,000 towards We are the Village after school program, \$99,000 towards Hamden small businesses, \$165,000 towards HPYC, and the remainder towards lost revenue of the upcoming budget to lower the mil rate.

A vote was taken and the motion passed with 8 in favor (Baez) (Alston) (Anthony) (Gallagher) (Kiely) (Sweet) (Webber) (Zaehringer) – 5 opposed (DeNardis) (Farmer) (O'Brien) (Stevens) (Wetmore) and 2 abstentions (Irvin) (Osmanu)

Town Attorney Gruen reminded they still needed to vote on CAN.

Ms. Wetmore asked if they would be voting on the resolution as a whole. She doesn't like the community center. Ms. Baez said that was a previous amendment but once all amendments are done they will be voting on it as a whole.

Ms. Kiely said she noticed the CAN description doesn't have the warming center listed. Ms. Gallagher said she can clarify what should be listed according to her motion for that line.

There was then discussion on the process and the confusion being caused. After this discussion Ms. Kiely said she wants clarification on the exact things that was preapproved in the \$1,000,000 (to CAN)

Ms. Gallagher said there were 4 buckets within that motion of t\$1,000,000. One was to provide flexible funds to support diversion requests, landlords, incentives, and moving expenses for Hamden residents and that amount was \$83,000 a year for 3 years. Second bucket is to support individuals that are currently sleeping outside access housing, and ultimately sustain housing at \$75,000 per year. Third is to provide funds to continue the critical warming center to support

those in Hamden who are sleeping outside during cold weather months at \$100,000 per year. And the fourth was to establish one full time staff to help families at the door of homelessness, problem, solve and access flexible funds, \$75,000 per year. Ms. Gallagher said that was the motion that was made and was voted on by council. Ms. Baez then stated that that language includes the warming center which there was then a lengthy discussion on.

Ms. Zaehring moved a motion to divide the question and take the Community Campus out for a separate vote saying she wants that voted on separately. The motion was seconded by Ms. DeNardis and it failed with 4 in favor (Zaehring) (DeNardis) (Wetmore) (Anthony) – 10 opposed (Baez) (Farmer) (Gallagher) (Irvin) (Kiely) (O'Brien) (Osmanu) (Stevens) (Sweet) (Webber) and 1 abstention (Alston)

Ms. Baez moved a motion to include the 3 paragraphs to the bottom of the resolution.

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED that all subrecipients must comply with the American Rescue Plan Act, all Federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders, and any interpretive guidance by other parties.

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED that ARPA funds may be used for direct and indirect administrative expenses involved in administering the program and the Legislative Council hereby authorizes and approves funding for program management, administration, and compliance costs associated with each of the above-described ARPA funded project activities.

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED that program, funds must be used for costs incurred within a specific time period, beginning on or after March 3, 2021, with all funds obligated by December 31, 2024, and all funds expended by December 31, 2026. Costs for projects incurred by the recipient prior to March 3, 2021, are not eligible, as provided for in Treasury's final rule.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Zaehring and approved with 2 opposed (DeNardis) (Wetmore)

Mr. Farmer stated he'll be voting in favor of this. Mr. O'Brien stated he too will support this, there's a lot of good stuff in here. Ms. Wetmore stated she will be opposed, it's going down the same road as the last administration.

Mr. Anthony moved a motion to reduce line 14 (CAN by \$500,000 and line 24 (Library Social Worker) by \$200,000. Mr. O'Brien called for a point of order and clarification on the process. After speaking with Ms. Gruen about needing a motion to open it and reconsider first, Mr. Anthony withdrew his motion.

Mr. Anthony then moved a motion to reconsider, seconded by Mr. Alston. The motion failed with 3 in favor (Anthony) (Wetmore) (Baez) – 8 opposed (Farmer) (Gallagher) (Irvin) (O'Brien) (Osmanu) (Stevens) (Sweet) (Zaehring) and 4 abstentions (Alston) (DeNardis) (Kiely) (Webber)

Ms. Kiely expressed concern that they don't have the funds for the warming center and asked for the total cost. Mr. Grace said there's a line for \$40,000 yr. in Community Services which hasn't passed Council yet.

There was a lengthy discussion. Ms. Baez then stated they were ready to vote on the resolution as a whole as amended. Ms. Gruen reminded them that they divided the question and asked if

CAN was part of her vote. Ms. Baez said yes. Ms. Gruen suggested withdrawing the motion to divide. Mr. Farmer and Mr. Osmanu withdrew their motions to divide the question.

A vote was taken on the resolution as amended and approved with 4 opposed (Zaehringer) (Wetmore) (DeNardis) (Anthony)

Mr. Farmer moved and seconded a motion to adjourn and the meeting adjourned at 10:48 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta
Clerk of the Council