

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

**July 8, 2021**

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

**<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/MEvD8umRCDDyf3iYq8VNfPZQIazVwYWbeLE8tEpGj1zC4xJsqwOI7np9WfkCDqcW.HsSgv-Kd3Yq5LH8M>**

**\*\* If prompted for a password, enter: +p@gx@8R**

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A special meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Thursday, July 8, 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:**

Mick McGarry	Dominique Baez
Berita Rowe-Lewis	Marjorie Bonadies
Kathleen Schomaker	Brad Macdowall
Justin Farmer	Jeron Alston
Austin Cesare	Valerie Horsley
Athena Gary	Adrian Webber
Jody Clouse	Betty Wetmore (approx.. 8:30pm)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Kristin Dolan

**PRESIDING:** Mick McGarry, President

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; Steve Mednick, Counsel to Council; Frank Dixon, CRC Chair; Jackie Downing, CRC Vice-Chair

**PUBLIC INPUT:** There were 3 written comments which can be read here:

**<https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/4375/PUBLIC-COMMENT-07-08-2021>**

**§7-1 C (4):**

Mr. Mednick said he reviewed the CRC minutes of May 25<sup>th</sup> along with the language in the review draft copy of the charter before the commission. He said back on June 8<sup>th</sup> he thought there was a consensus on protecting minority party representation provisions in §7-1 C (4) and after watching the meeting this morning he can say that he was mistaken and the language that would have rectified the violation and should not have been included in the transmittal letter and as a result the transition provision should reflect that the Board members may complete their entire term and the Board/Commission can be expanded to accommodate such members whether or not the alteration violates the MPR or not. He said as incongruous as that sounds that is the language that is adopted by the commission. The corrected language should not have been in there, there was a vote on the amendment and the amendment went down. As he advised the CRC back in May the language adopted creates inconsistencies in the Charter. Commissioner Olson's amendment would have fixed the problem but the amendment failed so accordingly he

will delete the provision as an errata item and add it to the list of recommendations and ask the CRC to take a look at the grandfather provision and make sure it complies with the minority party provision.

Mr. McGarry wanted to clarify his understanding of it. The CRC made a slight error in the transmittal? Mr. Mednick said no, in the transmittal letter he included language that shouldn't have been there.

Ms. Schomaker asked if we needed to just strike some language and Mr. Mednick said yes. **Ms. Schomaker then moved a motion** to remove the language as suggested by Mr. Mednick of the conferred non-voting status if there were a violation of minority representation clause from §7-1 C (4). The motion was seconded by Mr. Cesare and approved unanimously.

#### **§7-2 D: (Resolution #18)**

After a lengthy discussion on this Ms. Downing said the changes they made here were strongly for better communication, transparency and accountability for ALL commissions and electronic means dialogue established between commission and groups.

After some more discussion **Ms. Horsley moved a motion** that the Police Commission has the authority to create policy that governs the Police Department and receive insight from other citizen groups to make those policies. She said she thinks it should be clear who creates the policy. The motion was seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis and approved unanimously.

There was then discussion on emails and communication. (7-1 B (7) (a) “electronic access” Mr. Mednick said the principle is direct communication with the Boards/Commissions and the Town decides what that is. There was then a lengthy discussion on ways to do this and discussion on creating web pages for commissions.

**Mr. Macdowall moved a motion** to send a recommendation to devise a reasonable mechanism by which commissions get Town email addresses. The motion was seconded by Mr. Farmer. DISCUSSION: Ms. Downing said they looked into this and were told it was a security issue and they could not do it. She said they would also have to watch over these folks for FOIA reasons and the Town may pay fines if violations happen that they don't know about and that it's easier to ask for a uniform application across all commissions.

Ms. Horsley said she thinks more clarity is needed on electronic access. Mr. Mednick stated he took out electronic access and put in public access. Ms. Bonadies asked if the BOE gets direct access and Mr. Mednick said yes, they're included. Mr. Macdowall said he feels strongly that they should have emails.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion and it failed with 5 in favor (Baez) (Farmer) (Gary) (Macdowall) (Webber) – 9 opposed (Alston) (Bonadies) (Cesare) (Clouse) (Horsley) (Rowe-Lewis) (Schomaker) (Wetmore) (McGarry) and 1 absent (Dolan)

#### **§7-2 D (2) (c) (ii): (Resolution #19)**

Ms. Horsley moves a motion to for this to say “direct communication should be made for members of the public to communicate” and eliminate dedicated emails. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alston and approved unanimously.

**§7-2 D (2) (j) (Resolution #20)**

Mr. McGarry requested a motion to send the recommendation to correct this error and correct the decimal to reflect “four-tenths of one percent”. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Baez. DISCUSSION: Ms. Downing said the intent was to give the commission a way to bring in experts and consultants when needed since there’s no Traffic Engineer experts in town. She said sometimes the commission needs help with answers and investigations, and there are no restrictions on what it can be spent on. She said this year’s funding at the 4/10 of 1% would be about \$68,000 and that’s above the Police Dept.’s regular budget.

Ms. Bonadies said she wonders about the CRC’s ability to do this and also thinks the spending would need restrictions. She’s not in favor of this.

Mr. Cesare said he’s also opposed to this. He said Council sets the lines in the budget and that means every budget it would be increased. He also said this may set a precedent for other departments to start asking for these types of things so he won’t support it.

Ms. Horsley said if they are going to give money she’d rather set an amount rather than a percentage of the PD budget and she too is concerned about what it can be spent on.

After some more discussion and Ms. Gruen explaining how her office provides Counsel to the commission Ms. Rowe-Lewis said she thinks the voters should vote on this on the ballot. Mr. Farmer said he agrees. Ms. Schomaker said she isn’t comfortable with the percentage of an annual budget and also like the idea of it going on the ballot.

A vote was taken on the motion to correct the decimal and it passed with 2 opposed (Wetmore) (Bonadies)

**Mr. Cesare moved a motion** to eliminate the yearly 4/10 requirement and create a budget line to be designated for Professional/Technical Services for the Police Commission in the yearly budget. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bonadies. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer asked if he would take a friendly to add \$50,000 to this line. Mr. Cesare said no, he wants the council to decide each year what it is during the budget process.

Ms. Baez said she won’t vote in favor of this motion. She thinks they should trust them with the level of dollars they’re given and said as the commission changes and evolves it needs the tools to grow.

Ms. Schomaker said she’d support a line item in the budget but having it in the Charter doesn’t make sense to her.

Ms. Bonadies said she wonders if the current commission was going to remain as it is if they would be fighting this hard for the funding. She said she’ll support funding it through Council in budgets but not in the Charter for 10 years.

Ms. Rowe-Lewis said she has a problem with only the Police Commission getting funding saying she doesn’t agree with excluding anyone, she’s for inclusion.

Mr. Farmer said he thinks the Police Commission should be professionalized and wants this to be a ballot question.

Ms. Schomaker moved a motion to call the question, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis. They both withdrew their motions.

A roll call vote was taken on Mr. Cesare's motion to eliminate the 4/10 and require funding in the budget and it passed with 7 in favor (Bonadies) (Cesare) (Horsley) ((Rowe-Lewis) (Schomaker) (Wetmore) (McGarry) – 6 opposed (Alston) (Baez) (Farmer) (Gary) (Macdowall) ((Webber) and 2 absent (Clouse) (Dolan)

Mr. McGarry then called the meeting in recess at 10:23 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta  
Clerk of the Council