

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

August 1, 2022

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A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Monday, August 1, 2022. This meeting was a Hybrid meeting held both via Zoom (due to the Covid-19 Pandemic) and in person. The meeting was called to order at 7:08 P.M. by Council President Dominique Baez. 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	Kristen Zaehring
Katie Kiely	Jeron Alston (after roll call)
Sarah Gallagher	Paula Irvin
Abdul Osmanu	Adrian Webber
Laurie Sweet	Ted Stevens
Justin Farmer	Betty Wetmore

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lesley DeNardis; Cory O'Brien; VACANCY

PRESIDING: Dominique Baez, President

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Sean Grace, Chief of Staff; Curtis Eatman, Finance Director; Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; Jeffrey Naples, Acting Fire Chief; Joe Colello, PW&P Supervisor

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION: None

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

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT: Ms. Baez read her following written statement:

“We as a Council make hard decisions across the Town – across all sections of municipal government and we leave education and working within the bounds of their budget to the BOE. We in this last budget cycle worked so many nights to not only cut our budget as much as legally possible but also look for efficiencies into the future. This fiscal year leading into our next budget season we are tasked with executing any efficiencies discovered and work with the administration to make sure we don’t have to bump the mil rate not one more point. Hamden can’t handle it. The Board of Education has their own task at hand and we as the council will continue to work to balance their requests and the load the taxpayers in this Town have.

When the Wintergreen building was sold after the close of our budget deliberations, the Council asked for a meeting that consulted all leadership in Town: Council, Mayor’s Office, Board of Education and their Administration. Because the sale of Wintergreen funds were being requested as monies to go back into BOE occupied buildings there was the desire from Council to be abreast of future plans from the BOE regarding our buildings and the funds that would be necessary to achieve those plans.

During that first meeting we were asked to use \$250,000 from the Wintergreen sale to pay for before school care due to the consideration of start times. The Council representation saw that this solution was expensive without truly solving this issue for our most vulnerable families, children and teachers. In that meeting and in subsequent meetings we requested to know the amount of money it would require from the Wintergreen sale to keep the start schedule unchanged from their previous year. This amount was shared with us on Monday of last week, \$585,000. During that meeting I let them know that if their BOE voted on a request and had the unchanged start time as their official plan then I would place it on our next agenda for the Council to vote on. It has been placed on our next agenda, it will go through our Finance Committee as a request for transfer from the funds of the recently sold Wintergreen School building to then pay for the transportation costs associated with keeping school start times unchanged. This item will be discussed, deliberated and voted upon tonight, Monday, August 1st.

I was disheartened to hear such harsh statements from the BOE on Tuesday. I don’t believe many members grasped the timeline of our Town budget and the Wintergreen sale that triggered the conversation that has led to this vote tonight. This is not an attempt to control the BOE but to solve a problem that has been created for our families and teachers. This movement from the Wintergreen monies, that were not available to us at the time we voted on the Town wide budget, allows us to fix their own shortfalls without effecting our mil rate this year. We wish we knew the cost earlier than Monday of last week, but the LC has worked to both communicate that we wish to help them through this crisis and execute doing so speedily.”

Mr. Farmer said he has been a harsh critic of the BOE in terms of having a plan and his colleagues on the Council will tell you he will probably vote no on anything that doesn't have concrete plans. He said the \$600,000 they’re talking about would not have saved everything and that he’s glad the BOE took up their suggestion to talk to the Community, and now we have a real opportunity to have a year of somewhat stability in these crazy times of Covid and potentially come back next year with a plan and maybe some options that the Community really want worked on. He talked about having meetings and said they have to share the information that’s being shared in these meetings with our colleagues and we have to empower them and trust them with the knowledge. He said they have really tough choices to make in Hamden probably for the next decade and that's going to require being honest with each other, and it's going to require them to be transparent with

the public.

Ms. Kiely thanked Ms. Baez for her words and also thanked the BOE members and the Administration that's been willing to have dialogue across the aisle. She said she thinks that what is really important here though is that we all have the same core values with an extremely tight budget, and we know the choice should never be families keeping their home or families having a well-run school, and they are working hard to make sure to find that balance. She said she also thinks it's important for people to have their different opinions and share thoughts and ideas. She appreciates the fact that the Administration and the Board of Education were willing to go back and take a look at what that actual cost was and she appreciates the Council being able to want to actually fix it. She said she definitely has respect for the Board members, the Administration and them as a Council, all did a good job.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS: The Reapportionment Commission gave the following report: <https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/6432/REPORT-OF-THE-REAPPORTIONMENT-COMMISSION>

REPORTS OF COUNCIL LIAISONS: None

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

July 12, 2002: Moved by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Mr. Farmer and approved with 1 abstention (Wetmore)

July 14, 2022: Moved by Mr. Osmanu, seconded by Mr. Webber and approved with 1 abstention (Wetmore)

July 18, 2022: Moved by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Ms. Zaehring and approved with 1 abstention (Wetmore)

July 19, 2022: Moved by Ms. Kiely, seconded by Ms. Sweet and approved unanimously.

July 25, 2022: Moved by Mr. Webber, seconded by Mr. Alston and Ms. Sweet and approved with 4 abstentions (Wetmore) (Osmanu) (Zaehring) (Stevens)

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

CONSENT CALENDAR: Ms. Baez requested a motion for approval of the consent calendar. Mr. Farmer asked that numbers 1 and 7 be pulled to the Regular Agenda. Ms. Baez requested a motion without those items. Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Osmanu and approved unanimously.

2. **Order authorizing interdepartmental transfer 2022-2023 Fiscal Year Budget (LC Legal Lawyer - Engineering Dept. Stipend) \$15,000**
3. **Order authorizing the Mayor to apply, accept and expend a Program Year 48 Community Development Block Grant for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 in accordance with the Annual Action Plan for Year 2022-2023 (\$518,856.95)**

- 4. Order authorizing the Mayor to apply for, accept and expend funding up to \$341,000 in State of Connecticut Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP) Funds for Pavement Repair and Maintenance Program**
- 5. Order authorizing the Mayor to apply for, accept and expend funding up to \$400,000 in State of Connecticut Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP) Funds for Sidewalk Repairs and Improvements**
- 6. Order authorizing the Mayor to accept and expend grant funds and to sign an agreement with the State of Connecticut, Connecticut State Library Board for Fiscal Year 2023 Historic Document Preservation Grant Program**

REGULAR AGENDA:

(from consent calendar)

- 1. Reappointments of Charlotte K. Lefland (D) and Siobhan Carter-David (U) to the Arts Commission for terms to expire May 31, 2025**

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Ms. Sweet and Mr. Webber. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer thanked all those who serve on the Boards and Commissions. A vote was taken and the item passed with 1 abstention (Gallagher)

(from consent calendar)

- 7. Order authorizing intradepartmental transfer 2021-2022 Fiscal Year Budget – \$131,581 (Street Lights)**

-- Moved by Mr. Farmer, seconded by Mr. Osmanu. DISCUSSION: Mr. Farmer asked when the update was coming to them. Mr. Grace said they aren't ready to give an update they are still exploring options. Mr. Farmer asked will they see this transfer again. Mr. Grace said no, he thinks they budgeted accordingly this year. A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

1. Capital Budget presentation and approval – Fire Department, Purchasing Department, Public Works

Fire Dept:

Acting Fire Chief Naples went over his capital items stressing the need for the fire truck. Mr. Eatman explained how they're looking to reallocate unexpended monies and what's being asked for now. He said the previous amount was 10.4 and now the ask is 13.9 minus whatever is left previously. There was then discussion on fleet vehicles and discussion on the cost of servicing apparatus 2. Mr. Alston asked for more information on Engine 2 compared to the rest of the fleet. Mr. Naples said he'd send an itemized list of Engine 2 costs tomorrow.

Ms. Gallagher asked if any of the old vehicles would be traded in and will it offset the costs if so. Mr. Naples said both apparatuses being replaced will be used as spares. Ms. Gallagher then asked for any future capital asks he may have so she can start planning.

There was the discussion on the math being off from the 10.4 to the 13.9 and Mr. Eatman said the 13.9 is the correct amount and he'll redo the document and send it to them. Ms. Gallagher asked what the bottom line was for unused capital to put towards this and not have to bond for.

Mr. Eatman said roughly 6.1 million. Ms. Gallagher asked the difference between 4.8 and 6.1. Mr. Grace said the 4.8 is the encumbered amount. Ms. Gallagher then asked for updated spreadsheets to vote on any items.

Ms. Baez explained how the Fire Department was moved forward due to the safety of Engine 2 and **requested a motion to approve the Fire Departments Engine - \$675,000**. Seconded by Ms. Kiely. DISCUSSION: Mr. Stevens asked about inflation. Chief Naples said there's a 22% increase and it's also important to get now due to the turnaround time. Mr. Farmer encourages everyone to pass this portion of the budget. Ms. Kiely also encourages the vote for this saying she doesn't think this should wait. Mr. Webber said he also thinks it should move forward, it's around public safety and we want to have our Town protected and the Chief provided us with a good plan. Ms. Zaehring said she thinks they should move forward with the Engine and Squad tonight and wait on the rest until they get Ms. Gallagher's request. Ms. Gallagher said she thinks this is important and will be supporting it. She said she doesn't think it's necessary to wait on the Fire Department's other items, her questioning was about the capital budget as a whole.

A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

Squad - \$750,000:

-- Moved by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Mr. Osmanu and approved unanimously.

ASHER PPE - \$55,000:

-- Moved by Mr. Webber, seconded by Ms. Wetmore. DISCUSSION: Chief Naples gave an explanation of this saying it provides ballistic protective gear for hostile environments. Mr. Farmer said he's glad we're moving forward on this and asked if they need additional money for training with the equipment. The Chief said he's hoping they can do some internal training.

A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

Fleet vehicles - \$90,000:

-- Moved by Mr. Osmanu, seconded by Ms. Kiely and approved unanimously.

Station Domestic Improvements - \$80,000:

-- Moved by Mr. Osmanu, seconded by Ms. Sweet and approved with 1 abstention (Zaehring)

Public Works Dept.

Mr. Colello went over the tub grinding and explained how they have multiple fires saying it's worse than ever. He said they stopped selling permits to commercial companies to slow it down but it's still coming in like crazy. Ms. Baez asked about the difference between the \$300,000 previously asked for and the now \$500,000. Mr. Grace said the Transfer Station said the \$500,000 will more closely address the full problem.

Ms. Baez moved a motion to amend this to \$500,000. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kiely. DISCUSSION: Mr. Stevens asked if this was for equipment or for someone to do the work. Mr. Colello said it's for a subcontractor to haul out. Mr. Stevens asked a onetime fix? Mr. Colello said that's correct, to maintain the equipment ourselves would be astronomical. Ms. Gallagher

asked what the \$500,000 covers. Mr. Colello explained how it went out to bid per cubic yard and this company won the bid. Mr. Grace said this will not be an annual cost.

A vote was taken and the item passed as amended with 1 abstention (Gallagher)

Ms. Baez then announced they won't be doing the purchasing capital tonight and that the Public Works and Public Safety Committees would be recessed until the 22nd.

Ms. Baez announced the meeting closed at 9:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta
Clerk of the Council