

TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING

September 21, 2020

A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Monday, September 21, 2020. This meeting was held electronically, via Zoom, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 7:06 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 (@ 8:55pm)
	Valerie Horsley	Berita Rowe-Lewis
	Harry Gagliardi	Justin Farmer (@ 7:15pm)
	Betty Wetmore	Marjorie Bonadies
	Kathleen Schomaker	Austin Cesare (@ 7:10pm)
	Athena Gary	Kristin Dolan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vacant 7th district seat

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Curtis Eatman, Finance Director; Rick Galarza, Deputy Finance Director; Sue Gruen, Town Attorney; Craig Cesare, Public Works and Parks Director, Walter Morton, Director of Town and BOE Leg. Affairs; Pat Perrotti, Risk Manager; Adam Roszkowski, IT Manager; John Sullivan, Acting Chief of Police; Mark Austin, Town Engineer

PRESIDING: Mick McGarry, President

PUBLIC HEARING: Opened at 7:10pm closed at 7:11pm. There were no comments.

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION: There were 2 comments sent in. Mr. McGarry recessed from 7:11pm to 7:17pm to allow time for them to be read.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT: Mr. McGarry reminded everyone that the Public Hearing for Charter Revision is tomorrow at 7:00pm. He also mentioned he's putting together a working group of Council and the Administration to investigate making the Council section of the website friendlier and he said we have some options with our current vendor. He said they're also looking to get a smooth transaction to get back to committees and if anyone is interested in helping to let him know.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS: Mr. Eatman gave a quick rundown saying they collected 93.5 million in revenues or 38%. In July \$5,000,000 in TAN was used to pay salaries. He has concerns with the \$6,000,000 Covid line in the budget which is still outstanding as well as concerns with the 2.5 million in concessions. He said the cleanup costs for the past two storms are still be added up and finalized and lastly, the budget book will go to press this week.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL LIAISONS: None

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: Mr. McGarry moved a motion to approve the minutes of the August 31, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cesare and approved unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA: Mr. McGarry took a vote on suspending their rules with 1 opposed (Farmer)

Mr. McGarry then said he'd be pulling item #15 as Council people had asked for more time to speak to the candidates.

1. Refund of property taxes collected prior to July 1, 2020 – (15) - \$2,483.58

-- Moved by Mr. McGarry, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis and approved unanimously.

2. Refund of property taxes collected between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 – Overpayments on current Grand List - (61) totaling \$10,491.13

-- Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Mr. Macdowall and approved unanimously.

3. Reappointment of Carol Noble to the Retirement Board for a term to expire June 30, 2022

-- Moved by Mr. Macdowall, seconded by Ms. Schomaker. DISCUSSION: Mr. McGarry said Ms. Noble is very knowledgeable and will be good in this position. Mr. Gagliardi asked for a copy of the retirement ordinance. A vote was taken and it passed unanimously.

4. Order authorizing the Mayor to accept and expend a grant from the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood and to enter into agreements for a Child Day Care Program for the period July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022

-- Moved by Mr. McGarry, seconded by Ms. Wetmore. DISCUSSION: Mr. Morton explained this item saying it is a 2 year grant in the amount of \$515,798.40 and it's for the non-profit day care center at the Keefe Center. A vote was taken and it passed unanimously.

5. Bid waiver associated with Town excess liability policy extension – Smoko Insurance Agency LLC - \$82,307

-- Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Ms. Wetmore. DISCUSSION: After an explanation of this item by Mr. Eatman, Mr. Perrotti said they don't want to lose this or have it lapse by going out to bid so they're just looking for some extra time. Mr. Eatman said this would carry them until June 30, 2021 and they will then go out to bid.

Mr. Macdowall said this is the second time we did this to avoid a relapse. He then expressed his concern with police accountability law and asked how it exposes the town to more liability. Mr. Perrotti said he can't answer that, it's an unknown.

Mr. Farmer asked if this is to extend the contract again. Mr. Perrotti said yes. Mr. Farmer asked what is special about this coverage that isn't competitive with other vendors. Mr. Perrotti said nothing, it's more to the degree of the coverage we have giving an extra \$5,000,000 on top of the \$25,000,000 we have. He said it's very unique and there is only one other municipality that has it.

Mr. Galarza also explained this item and promised going out to bid in the spring.

Ms. Dolan asked if they'd be bidding with different agencies or only have Smoko take it out for you. Mr. Perrotti said only Lexington was interested in writing this policy in the past. He imagines Smoko would

do it. Ms. Dolan said she'll vote for this on two conditions. One, make sure you go out to bid by March at the latest and two, bid out to brokers and not just use Smoko.

Ms. Schomaker said she'll also be voting yes on this. She thinks it's important to have extra liability and thinks \$80,000 is a good price for an additional \$5,000,000, and she agrees with Ms. Dolan's number two.

Ms. Gruen said she did some background on this and is pretty sure you cannot place this directly without Smoko and that it's be a RFP or quote and not a bid.

Mr. Gagliardi said he will support this. Mr. Farmer said he will also support this.

Ms. Dolan said she heard what Ms. Gruen said but would still like Mr. Perrotti to approach different brokers.

A vote was taken and the item passed with 1 opposed (Macdowall)

6. Bid waiver – IT Dept. - 5 year contract for Internet Service Provider (ISP) services – (Crown Castle \$60,000) – (Postponed from the 8-31-2020 meeting)

-- Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis. DISCUSSION. After Mr. Eatman explained this item Mr. Gagliardi said he will not be supporting this because he thinks it should go out to bid saying there are other internet providers.

Mr. Macdowall echoed Mr. Gagliardi's concerns and said there are too many bid waivers. He said he has met over the last couple weeks with Mr. Eatman and Mr. Roszkowski and asked Mr. Roszkowski to give a brief on infrastructure costs. Mr. Roszkowski said first off our current vendor is on a State contract. Secondly, if we change vendors we'll have to change a lot of our firewall settings and then we'll have to change a bunch of our network equipment in order to do that and if changing to another vendor we'll also have to have (unintelligible) costs because we'll have to run both vendor's side by side in order to change it and then once the IT department works through all the bugs and gets all the public stuff like the Hamden.com email working etc. is all up and running smoothly then we can walk away from the other vendor, so there certainly are some costs and extra spending of money. Mr. Macdowall said the State vendor already went through the bid process so he agrees with this bid waiver only because of that.

Ms. Schomaker said she too spoke with Mr. Roszkowski about the expenses they would pay to change so she strongly supports this to avoid the excess costs. She said she thinks we have a good system for indicating the reason for every particular bid waiver and we need to look carefully at the rationale for bid waivers versus going to bid and we need to remember it's the background as the reason for why a bid waiver is being chosen over going out to bid that's important and that's how she looks at the approach to a bid waiver and they need to look carefully at each on their own.

Mr. Farmer said he also talked with Mr. Roszkowski and Mr. Eatman and he will support this tonight but he thinks we need to make long term plans.

A vote was taken and the item passed with 3 opposed (Gagliardi) (Horsley) (Gary) and 1 abstention (Cesare)

7. Bid waiver for the lease/rental of three (3) vehicles - Acme Auto Leasing LLC - \$22,860 (Police Dept.)

-- Moved by Ms. Wetmore, seconded by Mr. Farmer. DISCUSSION: Mr. Morton explained this item saying the total contract price is \$22,860 which comes to about \$635 per month each vehicle. He said this goes back to June of 2008 and they're looking to continue with this great service.

Chief Sullivan said this contract has been extended every year since 2008 and are used by the Street Interdiction Team for sensitive investigations and rotated out almost daily. Mr. Gagliardi asked if any of them were take home vehicles. Chief Sullivan said the Lieutenant that runs the division has a take home car. Mr. Gagliardi said he doesn't have a problem with that if he's the only one.

Mr. Farmer asked how officers are staying safe from Covid if they're switching cars. Chief Sullivan said in addition to them having a contract to have the cars cleaned between the switching, they also have their own supplies for daily cleaning. Mr. Farmer asked when the last time this went out to bid. Chief Sullivan said he didn't know but it was before 2008.

Mr. Macdowall asked if we secured this contract in 2008 through a bid. Chief Sullivan said he didn't know but would look into it. Mr. Macdowall said he made his concerns with bid waivers clear and then asked how often do we have 3 vehicles out. Chief Sullivan said he'd have to check with the Lieutenant. Mr. Macdowall said he thinks this is worth going out to bid so he'll be a no. Chief Sullivan said this is the same price since 2008 and they looked into other prices and none came close, plus none did 12 months.

Ms. Dolan said she wonders if this makes more sense to lease as opposed to purchasing these cars.

Ms. Bonadies said she thinks the fact that the price hasn't changed in 12 years and the fact that they can switch them daily is invaluable.

Ms. Schomaker asked if buying these cars instead of leasing would be better. Chief Sullivan said changing them out daily is critical.

A vote was taken and approved with 2 opposed (Macdowall) (Farmer)

8. Order to approve Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Hamden and UPSEU/COPS (Police Union) – Police Officer Enrique Rivera-Rodriquez

-- Moved by Mr. McGarry, seconded by Mr. Cesare and Mr. Farmer. DISCUSSION: Mr. Morton explained this item saying this is to give him the same amount of income while away. Mr. Cesare thanked Officer Rodriquez for his service. Mr. Farmer also thanked him and everyone who serves in the armed forces. A vote was taken and it passed unanimously.

9. Order authorizing interdepartmental transfer 2020-2021 Fiscal Year Budget - \$100,000 (Public Works Dept. – \$30,000 Overtime for Cleanup - \$70,000 Contractual Cleanup) FROM E&C ACCOUNT

-- Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis. DISCUSSION: Mr. C. Cesare explained this item saying an original request asking for \$100,000 was sent down but more accurate accounting was done this morning and what was expended was \$114,095.75 so he needs this transfer to be an additional \$14,095.75. He said in addition to that he also needs another \$300,000 to begin the debris removal process and that is just an estimate, he won't know the cost until it's finished.

Mr. McGarry **moved a motion** to increase this to \$114,095.75, seconded by Mr. Macdowall. After some discussion on what account this should go to and where the extra \$14,095.75 should go, Mr. McGarry moved a motion to increase the \$100,000 request to \$114,095.75 and changing the \$30,000 to \$44,095.75, seconded by Mr. Gagliardi and approved with 1 abstention (Clouse)

Mr. McGarry then asked Mr. Cesare about the other \$300,000 he needed for stump grinding. After a brief explanation by Mr. Cesare Mr. McGarry **moved a motion** to increase the transfer by \$300,000, seconded by Mr. Gagliardi and approved unanimously.

After some discussion on FEMA reimbursements and bulk pick-up Mr. Cesare told them Saturday hours at the Transfer Station would be offered mid-November thru December so to watch out for that.

After multiple Council members thanked Mr. Cesare and his department for their hard work a vote was taken and the item passed unanimously as amended.

**10. Order authorizing interdepartmental transfer 2020-2021 Fiscal Year Budget - \$372,191
(\$300,000 Accrued Benefits/Retirement - \$72,191 into E&C ACCT)
FROM POLICE DEPT. SALARIES**

-- Moved by Mr. McGarry, seconded by Mr. Farmer. DISCUSSION: Mr. Eatman explained how during the budget calculations they found an additional \$372,191 in the Police Department salary line and that they wanted \$300,000 of that in accrued benefits for pending retirements and the rest into E&C.

Mr. A. Cesare asked how he came up with the \$300,000 number. Mr. Eatman said based on the calculations of retirements coming up. Mr. Cesare said he thinks we need to be cautious with this money because there will be more retirements.

After some discussion on how this error happened Ms. Wetmore asked if the E&C money was earmarked for anything because she thinks it all should go into accrued benefits. Mr. McGarry said nothing is E&C is earmarked.

Ms. Wetmore **moved a motion** to put the whole \$372,191 into accrued benefits and it was seconded by Mr. Cesare. DISCUSSION: Mr. Cesare said he thinks we'll have more retirements and this is a good way to make sure we have money for those and he thinks it's fiscally responsible.

Ms. Dolan said money is tight this year and we still have an \$8,000,000 deficit in this budget and she thinks the money should stay in E&C because we could get hit from anywhere and said it hasn't even snowed yet.

Mr. Gagliardi said he thinks the extra should stay in E&C.

A vote was taken on the amendment and it failed with 5 in favor (Wetmore) (Cesare) (Schomaker) (Rowe-Lewis) (Horsley) and 8 opposed (Baez) (Macdowall) (McGarry) (Dolan) (Farmer) (Clouse) (Gagliardi) (Gary)

A vote was taken on the item as originally sent down and it passed unanimously.

11. Order authorizing the Mayor to file the 5 Year Consolidated Plan and apply, accept and expend a Program Year 46 Community Development Block Grant for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 in accordance with the Annual Action Plan for year 2020-2021 - \$478,628

-- Moved by Ms. Schomaker, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis. DISCUSSION: Mr. Sendroff explained things such as why this is the lowest allocation this year, how we get people involved by using things such as online survey's, round table discussions, door to door survey's and the help of the Community Development Citizen's Advisory Commission.

After multiple Council members thanked Mr. Sendroff for what he does a vote was taken and the item passed with 1 abstention (McGarry)

12. Order authorizing the Mayor to apply for, accept and expend funding in an amount up to \$100,000 in State of Connecticut Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP) funds for sidewalk repairs and improvements

-- Moved by Mr. McGarry, seconded by Ms. Rowe-Lewis. DISCUSSION: Mr. Austin explained this was to continue repairing sidewalks on the claims list.

Mr. Cesare asked if the list was broken up by district. Mr. Austin said strictly by condition. Mr. Cesare asked how we assure we're fixing all over Town and not just of those the loudest. He said he wants to make sure all of the Town is being addressed. Mr. Austin said the claims list is based on condition.

Mr. Farmer said this is an investment we need to make and he wants to make and he wants to visit the capital budget and he wants to make sure all communities are getting fair treatment. He then asked if they could get an infrastructure update in the capital budget.

Mr. McGarry said there's an audit being done. Mr. Morton said it's not finished yet but he will get it to them when it is, hopefully in October. Mr. McGarry asked if they could set a goal of October 5th. Mr. Morton said he'd check tomorrow.

After some discussion on outside contractor work for sidewalk repair and who the contractors are and how they are chosen, Ms. Baez stated she would love to see how many Hamden residents get work and their dollars back.

A vote was taken and the item passed unanimously.

13. Order authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the United Illuminating Company – Streetlight Conversion Project – (Postponed from the 8-31-2020 meeting)

-- Ms. Schomaker moved a motion to postpone this item until their meeting on November 2nd, seconded by Mr. Macdowall and approved unainmosuly.

14. RFP for streetlight audit – (Postponed from the 8-31-2020 meeting)

-- Moved by Ms. Baez, seconded by Mr. Gagliardi and approved unanimously.

15. Nominations and vote to fill the 7th District vacancy

THIS ITEM WAS PULLED BY THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

There being no further business Mr. McGarry requested a motion to adjourn. Moved by Ms. Rowe-Lewis, seconded by Ms. Baez and unanimously the meeting was duly adjourned at 10:52 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta
Clerk of the Council