

TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING

November 20, 2023

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A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on Monday, November 20, 2023. This was a hybrid meeting held both in person and electronically via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 7:15 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)	Bob Anthony (P)
Katie Kiely (P)	Jeron Alston (Z)
Abdul Osmanu (Z)	Paula Irvin (Z)
Laurie Sweet (Z)	Adrian Webber (Z) – after roll call
Ted Stevens (Z)	Sarah Gallagher (P)
Kristen Zaehring (P)	Lesley DeNardis (Z)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Betty Wetmore; Cory O’Brien; Justin Farmer

PRESIDING: Dominique Baez, President

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Sean Grace, Chief of Staff; Curtis Eatman, Finance Director; Sue Gruen, Town Attorney

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION: There were 6 speakers in person and 2 speakers on Zoom.

(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 to approve the minutes from the meeting held October 23, 2023. Moved by Mr. Osmanu, seconded by Ms. Sweet and approved unanimously.

CONSENT CALENDAR: Ms. Baez requested a motion for approval of the consent calendar. Moved by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Ms. Zaehringer and approved unanimously.

1. **Appointment of Hannah M. Tyce to the Commission on Disabilities for a term to expire October 31, 2026 (D-5)**
2. **Appointment of Susan L. Neitlich to the Tree Commission for a term to expire July 1, 2024 (D-6)**
3. **Appointment of Diane E. Hoffman to the Tree Commission for a term to expire July 1, 2025 (D-2)**
4. **Appointment of Elizabeth B. Hayes to the Inland Wetlands Commission for a term to expire April 30, 2026 (D-5)**
5. **Appointment of Patti Sirulnick to the Library Board for a term to expire January 31, 2028 (D-1)**
6. **Reappointment of Helen D. Ward to the Civil Service Commission for a term to expire August 31, 2029 (D-5)**
7. **Order authorizing interdepartmental transfer 2023-2024 Fiscal Year Budget – Community Services Relocation - \$60,000 (FROM E&C ACCT)**
8. **Order authorizing the Mayor to accept and expend a donation from Quinnipiac University - \$215,249**

Ms. Baez called for a recess at 7:53pm – Out of recess and back in session at 8:13pm

REGULAR AGENDA:

1. Standing Rules amendment to committee names and corresponding departments, boards and commissions - **TABLED ITEM**
-- Ms. Baez requested a motion to take this item off the table. Moved by Mr. Osmanu, seconded by Ms. Sweet. DISCUSSION: Mr. Osmanu reinstated his motion of creating an Education, Recreation & Culture Committee comprised of the Arts Council, Parks & Recreation Commission, Recreation & Culture Dept., Public Schools, and the BOE. He said his amendment is made out of the desire to ensure that while they're consolidating committees they're not overwhelming committee chairs. It kind of creates a system where they are ensuring that folks are going to be limited in what they're doing because they have too much to cover, but trying to realign the amount of committees, commissions and boards, as well as dept. chairs that folks are dealing with to make sure things are more streamlined. Mr. Osmanu said they're not only lumping things together but thinking about some of the most efficient, impactful ways to do so and ensure that the mission of consolidation is able to ring true to its intent.

After some discussion on this a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed with 7 in favor (Alston) (Anthony) (Gallagher) (Irvin) (Osmanu) (Sweet) (Zaehringer) – 3 opposed (Kiely) (Stevens) (Baez) and 1 abstention (DeNardis)

Mr. Anthony moved a motion to remove the Retirement Board from all these committee referral lists. The motion was seconded by Ms. DeNardis. DISCUSSION: Mr. Anthony said nobody except for the elected and appointed representatives to the Hamden Town Employees Retirement Pension Fund have a right to make any kind of fiscal or monetary investment in a non-judiciary responsible way. That is their task, their goal, and what they're assigned to do and it belongs no where on a committee referral list. They are autonomous to the Town of Hamden.

Mr. Stevens asked Ms. Gruen to weigh in on this. Ms. Gruen said you're not doing their business but accepting business from them. She said she doesn't think anybody disagrees with Mr. Anthony but there are things/items that could come before the Council as an example an amendment to the pension plan which we've before. She said it's the only example she can really think of, and it comes at the recommendation of the Retirement Board. She doesn't see a conflict and doesn't see any Council committee that administers anything, you're not charged with that responsibility, and she doesn't think that's what the intent is here.

There was a lengthy discussion on this.

Mr. Alston asked if they don't have this where will they receive information from the Retirement Board and who's going to receive it? Mayor Garrett said as the Chair of the Retirement Board she could be the point person. She said it's usually a financial matter and could go under the Finance Committee but thinks it's up to the Council to decide where they want items to come through. Ms. Baez said if they have any kind of vote to be had over pension, they'll figure out where that goes within their committees when that comes to them but if the Retirement Board comes off tonight, it'll be fine because we still have our regular committee structure, they still exist, just no kind of name for the Retirement Board.

Ms. Baez stated this amendment is to take the Retirement Board off of the Administration and Settlement Committee. She then took the vote and it passed with 1 opposed (Stevens) and 1 abstention (Zaehringer)

Ms. Baez moved a motion to change the Public Works and Education Committee to just Public Works Committee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kiely. DISCUSSION: Ms. Baez said the reason she made this change is she believes that the items that are now within it which are the Policy Board for the Water District, the Public Works Dept., Solid Waste and Recycling Commission, the Transfer Station and beautification are all a part of Public Works now and added is Farmington Canal Commission, Inland Wetlands Commission, Natural Resources & Open Space Commission, Energy Use & Climate Change Commission, Tree Commission, Town Buildings, Laurel View Property, West Rock Ridge State Park Advisory, and the Historic Properties Commission. She said the reason for this is because this is all work done by the Public Works Department.

Ms. Sweet said she doesn't know if they'll take a friendly amendment but she would like to have the word sustainability in the title. Ms. Baez asked Public Works & Sustainability Committee? Ms. Sweet answered whatever is accepted. Ms. Baez and Ms. Kiely both said yes to the friendly amendment. The title is now Public Works & Sustainability Committee.

Ms. Irvin thought they should add the word facilities in there too and offered Public Works, Facilities and Sustainability Committee. Ms. Baez and Ms. Kiely both said yes to that as a friendly amendment. Ms. Sweet was okay with it too. Ms. Baez took a vote on it as the Public Works, Facilities and Sustainability Committee and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Kiely moved a motion to amend and change the name of the newly created Arts & Recreation Committee by Mr. Osmanu to Public Works and Parks and Recreation. Ms. Baez said she thinks Mr. Osmanu's was Arts and Education Committee. Mr. Osmanu said it was Education, Recreation and Culture and that he'd be okay with adding arts. After some more discussion Ms. Kiely withdrew her motion.

Ms. Gallagher asked about Yale and the Hamden Partnership and if they've been added to Human Services at the last meeting. The Clerk confirmed they were. There was then some discussion on parks.

Ms. Kiely moved a motion to keep the Public Works and Sustainability title and add into the Education, Recreation and Culture Committee Public Works. She said she knows it's a long name and if anyone has a problem with it she's okay with making it Public Works and Culture with the understanding that recreation and education are a part of that. After discussion it was mentioned (by an unknown speaker) that the name Public Works is now in two places. Ms. Baez said how about Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee? After a lengthy discussion Ms. Gallagher stated she was confused as to where in the process we were and asked if there was a second to the motion. Ms. Baez asked Ms. Kiely if she had a motion for discussion.

Ms. Kiely said she's amendable to changes but she'll restate her motion which was to change it to Public Works, Recreation and Culture Committee. Ms. Baez seconded the motion. Mr. Osmanu asked we're cutting the education name and supplementing public works? Ms. Baez said that's the motion unless there's a friendly amendment. Ms. Irvin asked why the PW name twice and why add it here when nothing there relates to Public Works? Ms. Baez said they could take a friendly.

Ms. Kiely withdrew her motion and moved another motion to change the name to Culture Committee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Baez. Ms. Zaehring said it's odd to her to not have something important like the education name in a title. Mr. Alston stated he agrees with Ms. Zaehring and said he thinks Culture and Education makes sense. Ms. Kiely and Ms. Baez both agreed. A vote was taken on the title of Culture and Education Committee and approved with 3 abstentions (Zaehring) (Sweet) (Gallagher)

A vote was then taken on the rules as amended and approved with 1 abstention (Zaehring)

2. Appointment of Michael Martin to the Finance Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2026 (D-4)
 - Moved by Ms. Kiely, seconded by Ms. Baez and approved unanimously.
3. Order for approval of on-call Architectural Services Agreements
 - Moved by Ms. Gallagher, seconded by Mr. Osmanu. DISCUSSION: Ms. Zaehring said she will be a no for both of these items. They are both with 4 different vendors and have high dollar amounts. She also feels Council would be giving up oversight.
 - A vote was taken and the item passed with 2 opposed (Zaehring) (DeNardis) and 2 abstentions (Osmanu) (Sweet)
4. Order for approval of on-call Engineering Services Agreements
 - Moved by Ms. Baez, seconded by Ms. Kiely and approved with 2 opposed (Zaehring) (DeNardis) and 2 abstentions (Osmanu) (Sweet)

After some farewell speeches and goodbyes to those leaving, Ms. Baez announced the next meeting would be November 27, 2023 and is an organizational meeting of the new Council.

There being no further business, Ms. Baez ended the meeting at 9:47 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta
Acting Clerk of the Council