



TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT

Memorial Town Hall
2372 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, CT 06518

Finance Commission Minutes

Regular Meeting

6:00 PM, October 1, 2026

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1. CALL OF THE MEETING AND TAKING OF THE ROLL

The meeting was called to order by Chair Commissioner R. Scolnic at 6:02 PM.

The Clerk called the roll, and the following members were:

Present:

Commissioner Rabbi Benjamin Scolnic, Chair
Commissioner Michael Martin
Commissioner Arnold Margolis
Commissioner Thomas Fortuna

Absent:

Commissioner Myles Carter-Solomon, *Youth*
Commissioner Bethany McCluster

Also in attendance were Director of Finance Myron Hul and Dr. Mario Ciccarini, Hamden Board of Education Member; Briana J. Belton-Robinson, Boards and Commissions Clerk; and 5 members of the public joining in person and 4 members of the public joining virtually.

2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Chairman R. Scolnic requested a motion to adopt the minutes from Thursday, September 6th, 2026.

The motion was made by A. Margolis and seconded by Commissioner M. Martin.

Vote by Roll Call:

Yes

Commissioner R. Scolnic
Commissioner A. Margolis
Commissioner M. Martin
Commissioner T. Fortuna

No

Absent

Commissioner B. McCluster
Commissioner M. Carter-Solomon, *Youth*

The motion passed.

- **Roll Call Vote Summary:** Yes 4, No 0, Abstentions 0, Absent 2

3. PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Kathy Mulo, District 7, asked about the Town's current dealings with Clairmount, the former auditor, including whether communications with the Finance Department and Hamden Board of Education were occurring primarily by telephone rather than through meetings in Hamden. She also raised concerns regarding the Legislative Council's understanding of the Town's financial situation.

Chris Sherk, District 2, referenced comments made by Mr. Morton and expressed concern that the Town was approaching three overdue audits. He referenced discussion at the June meeting regarding a fund balance of approximately \$40 million and questioned whether the Town would have sufficient financial resources to complete future capital projects.

Chris expressed concern regarding the Town's overall financial condition and the level of assistance being provided by the State of Connecticut and the Municipal Finance Advisory Commission (MFAC). He advocated for greater outside assistance and requested consideration of a three-year financial plan to address the Town's financial condition. He also questioned whether the Administration was adequately reviewing the Town's finances and budgets and expressed concern that the Town may ultimately need to replenish its fund balance.

Chris encouraged the Finance Commission and Finance Director Myron Hul to pursue additional assistance from the State.

Elaina Sherk, District 2, echoed the concerns expressed by Chris.

Commissioner T. Fortuna asked about the CLA audit. Chairman R. Scolnic stated that the CLA matter would be discussed later under the Regular Agenda.

4. REPORT FROM EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

1. Public Official or municipal employee representing the Mayor, designated by the Mayor

No report was provided by a representative designated by the Mayor.

2. Representative of the Board of Education, designated by a majority vote of said Board

The Board of Education representative reported that the BOE had held its first Finance Subcommittee meeting and was currently projecting approximately \$1 million in budgetary overages.

Approximately 145 students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) entered

the Hamden school district for the 2026–2027 school year. The students are entitled to appropriate educational services under law. It was reported that some out-of-district placements, including transportation and related services, can result in six-figure costs.

The BOE will review other areas of its budget to determine whether reductions can be made to offset these additional expenditures.

The representative explained that an outplacement may occur when a student is identified as requiring services beyond those that can be provided within the school system. Such placements involve agreement among the school district, the student's parents or guardians, and the receiving educational program. It was noted that the addition of 145 students with IEPs represents a significant consideration for a highly mobile school district.

Discussion followed regarding state education funding. The BOE plans to participate in a legislative forum at Cross High School to discuss cost-sharing and disparities in education funding among Connecticut municipalities.

The BOE and its Special Education Department have also requested an external audit/review of special education services being provided by the district. The anticipated cost was reported to be approximately \$60,000 to \$100,000. Concerns were expressed regarding the services currently being provided and opportunities to evaluate their effectiveness and associated costs.

Commissioner T. Fortuna discussed comparative per-student expenditures among school districts, noting that some districts spend approximately \$60,000 per student, compared with approximately \$30,000 per student in Hamden and approximately \$20,000 per student in New Haven.

The BOE representative discussed the importance of communication among the Board of Education, Legislative Council, Mayor's Office, and Finance Department. The BOE emphasized its intention to communicate emerging budget pressures as they occur rather than waiting until the conclusion of the fiscal year and subsequently facing criticism for expenditures that could not have been anticipated.

Commissioner T. Fortuna asked Director M. Hul whether the Finance Department maintains a similar level of communication and transparency with the Legislative Council and Mayor's Office.

3. Chair of the Legislative Council committee of jurisdiction over the budget or a member of said committee designated by the Chair

Legislative Council member S. Gallagher reported that the Council's Audit Committee meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2026, at 6:00 pm. The meeting is open to the public (<https://zoom.us/j/96032210583>).

The Audit Committee's initial objectives will include reviewing the Finance Department organizational chart and receiving an update regarding the outstanding audits.

Chairman R. Scolnic questioned why an Audit Committee had only recently been reestablished and had not remained in place, noting the financial oversight

responsibilities of the Legislative Council and its Finance Committee.

The Commission asked whether Finance Commissioners could attend the Audit Committee meeting.

Council Member S. Gallagher said an Audit Committee existed when she first joined the Legislative Council. Council Member S. Gallagher further reported that the Legislative Council plans to develop a schedule or process to improve communication between the Finance Department and the Legislative Council.

Discussion followed regarding the Legislative Council's available recourse if required audits are not completed by the Administration. Gallagher stated that the CLA review should help identify deficiencies and determine what is needed so the Commission can develop a plan moving forward.

The Commission also discussed whether the Legislative Council would authorize funding for additional personnel or other resources needed to address identified gaps.

During discussion of the Legislative Council's responsibilities, Gallagher objected to placing responsibility for the entire Legislative Council solely upon her. Chairman R. Scolnic stated that he stood by his previous comments.

Director M. Hul stated that he was aware of Legislative Council communications and participation in discussions involving CBIZ, Clairmount, and CLA concerning completion of the Town's outstanding audit work.

Chairman R. Scolnic stated that he believed the Mayor was working with the State of Connecticut on the Town's financial and budgetary issues. He noted that, as he understood it, additional steps would be required before the State could intervene more extensively or impose financial oversight.

5. UPDATE REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMISSION CHAIR

Chairman R. Scolnic said he believes the Mayor is working with the State of Connecticut on the Town's finances and budget. Chairman R. Scolnic noted that, based on his understanding of the process, additional steps may be required before the State would undertake a more extensive intervention or assume greater financial oversight of the Town.

6. UPDATE REPORT FROM THE MUNICIPAL BOARD AND COMMISSIONS, INVITED GUEST

No additional reports were presented.

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

(if recommended by the town attorney)

No Executive Session was held.

8. REGULAR AGENDA

1. Review of CLA Financial Operations Organizational Assessment

Commissioner T. Fortuna noted that the CLA contract contemplated an approximately six-week process.

Director M. Hul stated that the overall process was expected to take approximately 10 to 12 weeks to produce results. He further reported that a separate group would be reviewing tax collection operations, including labor, contracts, organizational charts, and related matters. Requested information had been provided several weeks earlier, and the kickoff was scheduled for *November 13, 2026*.

Commissioner T. Fortuna asked whether Finance Commissioners and other key outside stakeholders should be permitted to participate in the kickoff meeting. He noted that the contract contemplated the involvement of key stakeholders prior to the kickoff and discussed his understanding of how the assessment process should proceed.

Director M. Hul stated that CLA would begin with interviews.

Director M. Hul confirmed that the assessment would include the Town's computer software systems, tax roll, payroll, and related processes. He acknowledged that the Town currently relies on numerous manual processes, including pen-and-paper procedures, that could benefit from automation to reduce inefficiencies and errors.

Commissioner T. Fortuna raised concerns regarding the extent to which Legislative Councils have historically been briefed and engaged on financial and budgetary matters.

Director M. Hul stated that the level of financial knowledge and engagement among Legislative Council members has varied over the years. Some Council sessions developed expertise in municipal finance and were highly engaged in financial and budget matters, while other sessions were less engaged. He recalled instances in which individual Council members indicated that they had not campaigned on finances or the budget and therefore did not intend to vote on those matters.

2. Information Item RE Former Auditor

Chairman R. Scolnic asked whether the Town requested that Clairmount, the former auditor, help resolve outstanding audit-related matters.

Director M. Hul stated that the Town had requested assistance. He explained that the Finance Department could not locate certain Town financial records from 2023.

Commissioner A. Margolis asked how long the Town is required to retain such documents.

Director M. Hul stated that Clairmount had provided the documents requested from the firm; however, the Finance Department had been unable to locate certain internal Town records, including items such as bank reconciliations. Discussion continued regarding the availability of documentation needed to complete the Town's outstanding audit work.

3. Creation of a Commission work group

The Hamden Finance Commission, whose authority is prescribed in the Hamden Town Charter, is forming a work group (of no more than two commissioners) to provide the Full Commission with details on the Town's fiscal policy matters.

The Budget Working Group will gather information and report to the Full Commission on matters including but not limited to:

- Budget Preparation and Oversight
- Financial Reporting
- Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Pensions
- Long-term Financial and Capital Planning
- Standards and Policies
- Best Practices and Standard

The agenda called for consideration of creating a Finance Commission work group consisting of no more than two Commissioners to gather information and report to the full Commission regarding Town fiscal policy matters.

The proposed Budget Working Group's areas of review include budget preparation and oversight, financial reporting, collective bargaining agreements, pensions, long-term financial and capital planning, standards and policies, and municipal financial best practices.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business was discussed.

10. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Commissioner A. Margolis and seconded by Commissioner T. Fortuna.

The motion passed unanimously.

The Finance Commission meeting was adjourned at approximately **7:15 PM**.

https://hamden.zoom.us/rec/share/ZukV-LcA7CUPNcR0UWQRF-p9nDRk613ityZrC14uU6-o21vB3O54_Yz0gfqqTexR.ZyEo_oqQpkZuUqPo?from=hub