



Legislative & Rules Committee – Board of Representatives

Phil Berns, Chair

Sean Boeger, Vice-Chair

Committee Report

Date: Tuesday, October 24, 2023
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: *This meeting was held remotely.*

The Legislative & Rules Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Berns, Vice-Chair Boeger, and Committee Member Reps. Fedeli, Matheny, Miller, Pierre-Louis, and Sherwood. Reps. Cottrell and Jacobson were excused. Also present was Rep. Summerville; Matt Quinones, Director of Operations; Michael Fernandes, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support; Chris Dellaselva, Legal Dept.; and members of the public.

Chair Berns called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. LR31.058	RESOLUTION <u>and public hearing</u> ; Approving a License and Use Agreement by and between the Boys & Girls Club of Stamford and the Stamford Public Schools (Use of Classroom Space for SPS' STEPS Program). 09/19/23 – Submitted by Ryan Fealey 09/26/23 – Approved by Planning Board 10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0	Approved 7-0-0

Chair Berns opened the public hearing. Kieran Matthew Edmondson spoke on this item. There being no other members of the public wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Assistant Superintendent Fernandes explained that STEPS is a therapeutic program for high school students with social, emotional, and mental health challenges. It helps students who are transitioning back from hospitals or outpatient facilities. The students receive intense clinical services along with an academic program. The goal is to eventually transition back to their comprehensive high schools.

A motion to approve Item #1 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Berns, Boeger, Fedeli, Matheny, Miller, Pierre-Louis, and Sherwood in favor).

2. LR31.059	RESOLUTION <u>and public hearing</u> ; Approving a Lease by and between the Honorable James A. Himes and the City of Stamford for 996 ft ² of Office Space on the 10 th Floor of the Government Center. 09/22/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons 10/10/23 – To be Considered by Planning Board 10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 4-1-0	Approved 7-0-0
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Chair Berns opened the public hearing. Kieran Matthew Edmondson spoke on this item. There being no other members of the public wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Director Quinones summarized the proposed lease agreement:

- This is a two year lease renewal for the same space the Congressman currently occupies. It is 966 square feet on the 10th floor.
- Year one is \$2,094.52 monthly (\$25,134.00 annually).
- Year two is \$2,390.05 monthly (\$28,680.54 annually).
- This represents a 33% increase overall from the current monthly amount of \$1,796.47.

A motion to approve Item #2 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Berns, Boeger, Fedeli, Matheny, Miller, Pierre-Louis, and Sherwood in favor).

3. [LR31.060](#) REVIEW; Potential Ordinance to Stop Loud and **Held**
Excessive Exhaust Pollution (SLEEP).
09/27/23 – Submitted by Rep. Jacobson

Item #3 was held due to information not yet being available.

4. [LR31.048](#) APPROVAL; Amending the Rules of the Board to **Approved 4-3-0**
Allow the Public Comment Period prior to the Filing of
a Vacancy.
02/09/23 – Submitted by Rep. Sherwood
03/29/23 – Recommitted to Steering 6-0-0
04/25/23 – Recommitted to Steering 8-0-0
05/23/23 – FAILED in Committee 4-4-0
06/05/23 – Recommitted to Committee by Full Board
06/26/23 – Held by Committee 9-0-0
07/10/23 – Held at Steering
08/14/23 – Held at Steering
09/28/23 – Recommitted to Steering by Committee
7-0-0

Rep .Sherwood gave an overview of this item and there was discussion.

This proposed rule change came about after the February 2023 Board meeting to vote on a BOE vacancy. Current BOR rules do not allow for the public to speak before the filing of a vacancy. There was a large number of people who came to the meeting to speak but they could only speak after the vote was taken.

This proposed change would make it so that if there is a vacancy to be filled at a Board meeting, the vote would take place after the public participation session.

Vice-Chair Boeger stated that some Representatives had expressed concern at the February 2023 Board meeting that this was a way for constituents to attempt to influence the vote. The public has the right to express their opinion on any item at any full Board meeting provided there has not previously been a public hearing. They have the right to encourage Representatives to vote one way or another, and Representatives have a duty to listen to their constituents.

Rep. Fedeli expressed concern that she is not sure anyone in any district should be able to voice their opinion over a district candidate, since everyone citywide does not get to vote for a district seat. She fully supports the public speaking on a citywide vacancy.

Chair Berns asked what would happen if a member of the public made a claim so serious about a candidate that it would give pause to the BOR about voting at that meeting without further investigation. It was clarified that the BOR has 60 days to vote on a candidate to fill a vacancy after the vacancy has occurred, so there would be time for the BOR to hold the vote and look into the matter.

Chair Berns stated that not having the public speak before a vote might incentivize people to come forward earlier to voice their opinion on a serious issue about a candidate, instead of doing so right before the vote.

Rep. Sherwood stated that this proposed change is similar to when the public can speak at the Board meetings before the Appointment Committee candidates are voted on.

A motion to approve Item #4 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 4-3-0 (Reps. Berns, Boeger, Matheny, and Sherwood in favor; Reps. Fedeli, Miller, and Pierre-Louis opposed).

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| 5. LR31.040 | APPROVAL; Amendment to the Board of Representatives Rules of Procedure re: Use of Virtual Meeting Licenses by Representatives.
11/29/22 – Submitted by Rep. Cottrell
12/12/22 – Moved to Pending
03/29/23 – Recommitted to Steering 6-0-0
04/25/23 – Recommitted to Steering 8-0-0
05/23/23 – Recommitted to Steering 8-0-0
06/26/23 – Held by Committee 8-0-0
07/10/23 – Held at Steering
08/14/23 – Held at Steering
09/28/23 – Recommitted to Steering by Committee 7-0-0 | Recommitted to Steering 7-0-0 |
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A motion to recommit Item #5 to Steering was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Berns, Boeger, Fedeli, Matheny, Miller, Pierre-Louis, and Sherwood in favor).

Chair Berns adjourned the meeting at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Philip Berns, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).