

# DRAFT MINUTES

**President Curtis called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m.**

President Curtis read the call of the meeting: I, Jeff Curtis, President of the 31<sup>st</sup> Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford, Connecticut, and pursuant to Section C2-10-4 of the Stamford Charter, hereby call a Special Meeting of said Board of Representatives at the following time and place:

**Wednesday, February 5, 2025  
7:00 p.m.**

*Legislative Chambers of the Board of Representatives  
Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, 4th Floor,  
Stamford, Connecticut 06904*

**and**

*by computer, tablet, or smartphone at:*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81781926473> or [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com) – Webinar ID - 817 8192 6473

*or by phone 1-646-558-8656 – Webinar ID - 817 8192 6473*

to consider and act upon the following:

1. [OC31.007](#) **PRESENTATION AND REVIEW**; of the report from Attorneys Steven Mednick and Richard Roberts. 01/27/2025 – Submitted by President Curtis
2. [OC31.008](#) **RESOLUTION**; of Censure against Representative Anabel Figueroa. 01/27/2025 – Submitted by President Curtis, Majority Leader Sherwood, Clerk Cottrell, Deputy Majority Leader de la Cruz and Deputy Minority Leader Watkins.

## AGENDA

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG: Led by President Jeff Curtis.

ROLL CALL: Conducted by Clerk of the Board Megan Cottrell. There were 36 members present and 4 member excused at the time of the roll call (Reps. Adams, Blank, Boeger, Campbell, Camporeale, Cottrell, Curtis, de la Cruz, Fedeli, Figueroa, Gilbride, Goldberg, Graham, Grunberger, Kuczynski, Ley, Matheny, Mays, Morson, Patterson, Pavia, Pierre-Louis, Pollack, Roqueta, Sandford, Shaw, Sherwood, Stella, Strain, Summerville, Tomas, Vandervoort, Walston, Watkins, Weinberg, and Williams were present; Reps. Baines, Berns, Moore and Saftic were excused)

COMMUNICATION: Read by Clerk of the Board Megan Cottrell.

1. All votes at tonight's meeting will be conducted by roll call.

# 31<sup>ST</sup> BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVES CITY OF STAMFORD

President  
JEFF CURTIS

Clerk of the Board  
MEGAN COTTRELL

Majority Leader  
NINA SHERWOOD

Minority Leader  
MARY L. FEDELI

2. If you need assistance with Zoom you can call IT at [REDACTED]. Please do not call other members of the Board or the Board office staff. If you are having problems speaking or hearing with your computer, you can always access the meeting through a telephone by dialing the phone number on the Agenda - [REDACTED], and using the Webinar ID on the agenda: [REDACTED]. Please call or text IT at [REDACTED] or text the Clerk at [REDACTED] to let us know you are coming on, with the phone number you are using, and we will make sure you are able to speak during the meeting.
3. If you decide to leave the meeting, you must text the Clerk when you leave. If you need to leave the meeting for a short period, text the Clerk when you leave and return. Members who do not text the Clerk when they leave the meeting will be presumed to be present for all consent items.
4. If you do not respond during a roll call vote, your name will be called 2 more times after the conclusion of the vote. If you do not respond, you will be assumed to have left the meeting and your name will not be called on the next roll call vote.

PRESENTATION: by Attorneys Steven Mednick and Richard Roberts

Attorneys Mednick and Roberts summarized the sections of the legal report and opinion. The summary provided the full context of the background and facts regarding the series of antisemitic statements Rep. Figueroa made during her primary campaign for re-election to a full term in the State Legislature, and were directed at her opponent in the primary, then-Rep. Jonathan Jacobson. Also reviewed were prior recent censure cases of the Board of Representatives, dating from 2019 and 2020. Attorney Mednick discussed what is outlined by the City of Stamford Charter Section C1-90-1 "Removal of Elective Officers" and how alternative sanctions against Rep. Figueroa were researched, including censure and the removal of her committee assignments (as occurred at the State Legislature for the duration of her now expired term). The Rules of Order give the President appointing power but aren't clear on removal. There, you would rely on precedent and past practice.

Attorney Roberts spoke about the rubric by which the information in this matter regarding possible removal by the Board of Representatives was measured. Relevant Board of Ethics cases were mentioned, as were of the standards that are in the Charter which allow for an elected official to be removed were mentioned [in that "the general character clause" of the Charter does not provide an alternate legal foundation for the removal of Rep. Figueroa on the basis of Board of Ethics rulings]. He also reviewed the legal precedents regarding First Amendment protection from removal for politicians unless their hate

*Anyone requiring an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in this meeting, should contact the City's ADA Coordinator as soon as possible:  
Carmen Hughes, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, (203) 977-7993,  
Email: [CHughes1@StamfordCT.gov](mailto:CHughes1@StamfordCT.gov).*

speech rises to the level of “fighting words” [defined by the attorneys as words that directly incite violence and/or physical hate crimes]. The attorney cited some case examples of politicians filing lawsuits against legislative bodies due to statements they made, such as Julian Bend vs the Georgia State Legislature due to his anti-Vietnam War statements (1960s).

At the conclusion of their presentation, the attorneys held a question-and-answer (Q&A) session with the Board members. Clarification questions were asked regarding the legal opinion and the report, which included:

- Clarification regarding the crafting/wording of the Resolution of Censure (Item OC31.008);
- If the Resolution is open for amendments [it is not recommended by the attorneys]
- Clarification on the definition of “fighting words/hate speech” versus permissible speech for politicians;
- Does the Charter provision on removal of an elected official remain valid in the face of the Supreme Court case decisions on First Amendment protections from removal [yes it does, as there are multiple reasons for removal]

The Q&A session ended at 8:23 p.m.

Clerk Cottrell read the Resolution (Item OC31.008) into the record. The item was moved and seconded by multiple Board members. During the discussion (began at 8:27 p.m.):

1. Rep. Goldberg: submitted a minor amendment to the Resolution to also urge Rep. Figueroa to resign. After this motion was seconded (Rep. Blank), there was a call from Majority Leader Sherwood for a brief Democratic caucus. President Curtis granted 15 minutes for the caucus, to reconvene the meeting at 9:20 p.m.
2. Motion to amend the Resolution was withdrawn by Rep. Goldberg after caucus, as was the second of the motion (Blank).
3. Additional Board members spoke regarding the Figueroa issue of antisemitic statements and the legal opinion. There was support for the censure, feedback on how the incident affected them, their districts, and Stamford as a whole. A call for not just ethics and sensitivity training was made, but also for training regarding diversity and cultural awareness/sensitivity be made mandatory for all Board members, both at the start of the term and again on a regular, recurring basis.

Discussion session closed and the item (OC3.008) was approved by a vote of 34-0-1. (Reps. Adams, Blank, Boeger, Campbell, Camporeale, Cottrell, Curtis, de la Cruz, Fedeli, Gilbride, Graham, Grunberger, Kuczynski, Ley, Matheny, Mays, Morson, Patterson, Pavia, Pierre-Louis, Pollack, Roqueta, Sandford, Sherwood, Stella, Strain, Summerville, Tomas, Walston, Watkins and Williams in favor; Rep. Figueroa abstained; Rep. Walston chose not to vote)

**ADJOURNMENT:** President Curtis adjourned the meeting at 11:20 p.m.

This meeting is on [Video](#)