

Feb. 6, 2024 BOE Meeting - Building Usage Fee increase for non-profits

Jun <cosjcn@yahoo.com>

Sun 2/4/2024 2:50 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear Board of Education member,

My name is Jun Nable, a resident of Hamden residing at 106 Tanglewood Dr. in Hamden. I am writing to comment on the proposed building usage fee increase. I received news from The Whitney Players organization that there will be substantial increase of the building usage fees. If this news is accurate, I am urging the BOE members to strongly reconsider the nearly 10 fold increase of building usage and kindly provide a fee waiver to non-profit organizations like The Whitney Players. This issue impacts me not because I am an officer of the organization but rather this impacts me because I am a parent of children who participate in The Whitney Players music and drama theater programs. Such a fee increase would be cost prohibitive for non-profit organizations like The Whitney Players to carry out their mission of educating our children through the arts, and music. My daughter found her love of music, theater and drama through The Whitney Players program; it's what brought her out of her shell and encouraged her to be more involved with her peers and the community. I've seen the children and the youths being so happy to be on stage, giving their performances. Again, I strongly urge the BOE members to consider providing fee waivers for building usage to non-profits like The Whitney Players organization. The nearly 10 fold fee increase would be unconscionable and would prevent The Whitney Players to continue their programs; practically eliminating the opportunity for these talented children and youths from participating and experiencing theatrical arts.

I can understand that the BOE needs to implement fair and equitable rules and policies for resource usage within your jurisdiction. However, I urge you to reconsider this fee increase for non-profit organizations like The Whitney Players whose mission will be jeopardize and will negatively impact our children. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jun Nable

February 6 Board of Education Meeting

Makaela Kingsley <makaelakingsley@gmail.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 7:06 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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To: Hamden Board of Education

From: Makaela and Amelia Kingsley

Date: February 5, 2024

RE: Request to waive the facility rental fee for the Whitney Players upcoming winter/spring musical and summer camp program.

Hello! This testimony comes from both of us-

- **Makaela** – 13-year Hamden resident with two kids who both attended Hamden Public Schools since kindergarten. My in-laws have lived in Hamden for 50+ years. I am an involved community member, including a stint as a substitute teacher at Hamden High.
- **And Amelia** – HHS senior, 4-year member of the esteemed HHS Dance Team, top student, and member of the Whitney Players since 2018. *(that's me performing in Matilda in 2019, top right in the photo below)*

We are writing to ask you to waive the facility rental fee for the Whitney Players upcoming winter/spring musical and summer camp program. Past fees were already a big stretch for this lean nonprofit. But the newly increased fees will literally put us out of business.

This is not a drill! This is a pivotal moment to step up for the arts and for the young people of Hamden. If you are not able to accommodate the Whitney Players this year, you will end a long tradition that has benefitted so many Hamden families and brought tremendous pride to this town.

Part of Hamden Public Schools' mission statement is "to ensure all our students learn to the best of their potential each and every day." If you choose to support the Whitney Players by providing them with space, you will in fact be serving your own mission. This organization measurably boosts Hamden students' learning and helps them reach their potential.

The Whitney Players Theatre Company is a town treasure. Please choose to make it possible for them to continue producing value and make us all "richer" through the arts and through community. Thank you.

Feb 6 Board of Ed Meeting

Denise Terry <terry.df@gmail.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 10:03 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Denise Ann Terry

42 Brookside Dr., Hamden, CT 06517

Hamden deserves access to public spaces for community gatherings because a town is a place to come together!

I support Whitney Players where young and old watch neighbors and family members perform, a beautiful and wholesome activity!

Please DO NOT RAISE USAGE FEES for community groups.

WP's recent show, Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," demonstrates diverse individuals honoring a home-town author with a low-cost, high-quality production.

Decide to support rather than to exclude Whitney Players and other local groups.

Public Comment for Hamden BOE - Action Item XV. and XVI on Agenda 2/06

Jennifer Alzona <jenniferalzona@gmail.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 10:30 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Cc:Jarrod Ruby <jarruby@yahoo.com>

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RE: Action Item XV. and XVI on Agenda 2/06

My name is Jennifer Alzona Ruby. I am writing on behalf of our family: Jarrod Ruby, Claire Ruby and Adrian Ruby. We live at 176 Broadway, Hamden, CT.

I am writing to urge the Hamden Board of Education to waive the usage fee for use of the Hamden Middle School auditorium and facilities for Whitney Players, a cherished, local theater organization that has been supporting our community for over 20 years. Whitney Players is a home to our family and opens up the world of theater to children in Hamden, allowing them a free space to acquire skills and build confidence. The WP community provides an open, loving and accepting environment for children of ALL abilities. Their programs have been a critical part of our daughter's development, helping her to find her voice and step outside her comfort zone, while also meeting her where she is. Their programs have been critical to her emotional and mental health.

The current usage fee of \$4,500/day is cost prohibitive for any theater or creative organization, much less a community-funded company. By setting such an impossible financial bar for programs like this, the town of Hamden is all but ensuring that they cease to exist, or remain in our town – or even worse, cease to be accessible to those who rely on the essential community Whitney Players provides. It's not only that Hamden kids could miss out; the absence of Whitney Players in Hamden could cause real harm. Now more than ever, we must support and invest in the creative arts for our children.

Whitney Players has done right by the people of Hamden for over 20 years. We ask you today to do right by Whitney Players by waiving the usage fee entirely.

Thank you for accepting our comment.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Alzona Ruby & Jarrod Ruby

Feb 6th BOE Meeting

Cynthia <cynthiathat@gmail.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 10:38 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Hello

My name is Cynthia That and I live at 146 Pelham Avenue Hamden 06518, with my family.

I am writing to request that the fees for Hamden School rentals be lowered. The prices have become something that no organization can afford. I am also requesting that rental fees be waived for Whitney Players. They provide incredible services for our community. We have been a part of Whitney Players for less than a year and I am amazed how much of an impact they have made on my kids.

My 14 yr old son and 11yr old daughter are bonding by participating in musicals together.

We are lucky to have Whitney Players in Hamden!

Thank you,
Cynthia That

Sent from my iPhone

For Hamden BOE Public Comment - Action Item XV and XVI on Agenda 2/6/24

Theresa Allgood <theresa.allgood@gmail.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 11:47 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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My name is Theresa Allgood and I am a current Hamden resident as well as being born and raised here in Hamden. My family consists of my husband, Christian Allgood, and our two children, Evangeline (age 12), and Alexander (age 10).

Last Spring, my daughter, Evie, became interested in theater and performing arts. After making inquiries about various theater organizations in and around Hamden, I was repeatedly told that Whitney Players was a fantastic organization and that Evie would thrive within the Whitney Players community. She participated in the Whitney Players Spring Cabaret, and loved it so much that she committed to the two week WP Summer Camp and performed in Seussical, Jr. To say we were impressed would be a massive understatement! Evie would tell you that her two weeks at Whitney Players Summer Camp were the best two weeks of her summer, and that would not be an exaggeration.

We were distressed when we learned that Hamden has raised their usage fees for Hamden Middle School auditorium to \$4,500 a day. This is an increase from \$500 a day in the past. How offensive! Whitney Players has been supporting Hamden's thespian community for over 20 years. More importantly, they have always provided affordable theater opportunities, thus making this incredible organization available to a range of residents and providing a safe, healthy, nurturing environment through which our children can thrive. This increase in price will effectively dismantle a program that has served so many, and provided our town with an unparalleled creative outlet.

We are asking that you waive the fee for Whitney Players, allowing it to continue to serve our community, and the people who rely on such a valuable creative arts experience. Watching Whitney Players crumble due to exorbitant usage fees would truly be a tragedy.

Sincerely,

Theresa, Christian, Evie, and Alex Allgood

17 Quarry Lane, Hamden, CT

Feb 6 meeting, 7:00 PM Board of education RE building usage

Jacqueline LaBelle-Young <jlabelle@hopkins.edu>

Mon 2/5/2024 12:05 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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To whom it may concern,

The exorbitant proposed rate hike for the library auditorium would seriously limit some public programs that are invaluable to the Arts scene in Hamden. Participating in live theater is a transformative experience, good for the soul as well as providing entertainment to the broader public. As a Hamden taxpayer and art teacher, I want to see town policy that **SUPPORTS THE ARTS** rather than policies that would make it prohibitive.

I and two of my three children have participated in the Hamden Whitney Players program. It has been a place of camaraderie, growth, and challenge. It's a setting where older children see vividly the effect they have on the younger cast members. It's a place to be yourself, be accepted, be seen, be heard, and feel safe taking emotional risks. The theater is a unique place that provides such valuable life experience to all ages- I sincerely hope that the rate hike being considered takes all this into account and waives fees for Whitney Players, regardless of the final decision regarding the rate hike.

Respectfully submitted,
Jacqueline LaBelle-Young
195 Bear Path Rd
Hamden, CT

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Jackie LaBelle-Young
she/her/hers
Art department
www.hopkinsarts.com

FEB 6 - HAMDEN BOE MEETING - NON PROFIT FEES IN OUR TOWN COMMENT FROM HAMDEN RESIDENT

Helen Cameron <helen@southpaw.co>

Mon 2/5/2024 12:26 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Cc:melissa.diaz@ct.gov <melissa.diaz@ct.gov>;Elizabeth.Shapiro@ct.gov <Elizabeth.Shapiro@ct.gov>

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Dear BOE Committee,

My Name: Helen Cameron Barajas: 5 Brook Street, Hamden, CT 06514

I am writing to the Board to PLEASE re consider the exorbitant rental fees at ALL of our town's school's facilities for non profit groups. My daughter is in 9th grade and has been a member of the WHITNEY PLAYERS THEATRE group since she received a scholarship when she was 10 years old. The ARTS are essential for our children in HAMDEN, where we know children have increased anxiety and depression. Chloe has flourished because of this group and is now an assistant to the Middle School Plays with Cindy Simell- Devoe, the Director. This NON-Profit cannot afford the town's fees and needs a place to put on plays. It seems very cruel when there is no places for this group to practice and perform.

Thank you for your attention to this unsettling matter,
Helen and Chloe Barajas

February 6th meeting - Whitney Players

Whitney Vitale <whitney@directadvantagemail.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 2:12 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

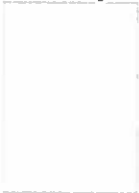
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Dear Town of Hamden,

I Whitney (Naumann) Vitale, born and raised in Hamden - attended all Hamden Public Schools and participated in several town activities in my youth, will continue to advocate for the activities that bring such joy to our community and to our children. Activities that allow our children to learn and grow, be creative, learn skills not otherwise taught in school, in a fun, safe environment. It is an absolute shame to be charging an astronomical and unattainable amount of money to utilize a space that is funded by the tax payers (current and past). Whitney Players and Mrs. Cindy have brought something to this community that can not be replaced. Spaces that can hold the number of children she is engaging in her program are limited, to almost none. Our children will suffer from this, and it is an absolute shame. Please reconsider your fee for the use of the public spaces so that she can properly run these programs without going bankrupt.

Regards,

Whitney Vitale



Whitney Vitale - SVP Sales & Marketing

(203) 671.8217 | [Connect on LinkedIn](#)

Proud Recipient of the 2023 Hamden Distinguished Alumni of the Year Award

Helping Businesses Grow, One Mailbox at a Time Since 2004

Request Reduction of Costs for Rental of Venues to Local Art Organizations

Ellis, Janna <janna.ellis@yale.edu>

Mon 2/5/2024 2:18 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear Hamden BOE,

After all the tears and upset children/parents from last year's meeting regarding the decision to cut off rentals to arts organizations in Hamden, I am shocked to find out that instead of listening and working with these organizations the BOE has decided to increase the cost to the point that it is unattainable. My children are involved in 2 separate organizations that use the Hamden Middle and Hamden High School stages totaling over \$50K a year in revenue for the BOE so the decision is not financial or the BOE would not risk losing such a large amount of revenue from these organizations. While we assumed a rise in cost- this was astonishing. I would ask that we find a way for all of the organizations that support our children in Hamden to work together and no longer apart.

Let our Children use the stages,
Janna Ellis
90 Victoria Ct
Hamden, CT

February 6, 2024 Board of Education Meeting

Bethany Zemba <bethanyzemba@hotmail.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 2:22 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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February 5, 2024

Town of Hamden
Board of Education
60 Putnam Avenue
Hamden, CT 06518

Dear Board of Education Members:

As a community neighbor, I share a love, pride, and ongoing support for the Town of Hamden. I work in Hamden, do my weekly shopping in Hamden, have a daughter who attends St. Rita's school in Hamden, and support local not-for-profits, such as Hamden's the Whitney Players, and I thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts.

I am writing to request that you review the increased cost and use policy for Board of Education buildings. It has been shared that usage fees have increased by a factor of nine, from \$500 a day for the auditorium to \$4,500 a day, plus charges for usage of classrooms, cafeteria, dressing rooms, etc. These fees are devastatingly crippling to small not-for-profit organizations, such as the Whitney Players, who are looking to provide affordable community programming. It would be 100% cost preventative to offering these much-needed programs in these buildings.

In the Hamden Board of Education goals, it states, "... goals are presented with the full realization that the school is only one of several social institutions or influences affecting the child. Its contribution is modified by the intellectual, social, emotional, and affective potentialities that each child brings to the school environment." The Whitney Players, along with other youth-centered programming, provide this wrap-around intellectual, social, emotional support that is in direct alignment with the Board of Education's goal of educating a whole child both in and outside of the classroom.

In a November 28, 2022 HQNN article entitled Juvenile crime in Hamden, what are the root causes? both Mayor Garrett and (then) Chief Wydra "expressed their desire to have programs and more extracurricular involvement to keep adolescents busy". The Whitney Players is an organization that is highly committed to providing the kind of affordable programs and extracurricular involvement the mayor and former police chief reference. The director, Cindy Simell-Devoe, along with her staff, through their directing, impart love, kindness, compassion and a true appreciation for theater, music, dancing, and a celebration of what it is to be alive and a positive part of the surrounding community. The Whitney Players provides an environment that is welcoming to people of all ages, races, abilities, religions, and backgrounds. It is a supportive environment that allows the participants to be a part of a community family. The workshops and classes offered are in direct alignment with the town's goals and the BOE is well-poised to pave a path to allow the flourishing growth of this kind of programming.

2/6/24 BOE meeting

Darby Wasserman <darby_wasserman@sbcglobal.net>

Mon 2/5/2024 2:22 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Cc:Cindy Devoe <cindysdevoe@comcast.net>

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Good afternoon!

I am writing to you on behalf of the wonderful Whitney Players community theater in respect to the fees you intend on increasing for the use of our town facilities. Quite frankly, this astronomical fee increase would kill this amazing theatre company completely. That would be a travesty not only to its longtime members, but to the dedicated volunteers who run the organization and most importantly, to the community as a whole.

My son Jonah (14) discovered his interest in the back stage workings of theater life and subsequently joined the WP camp last summer after a good friend highly recommended the organization. As new members, we quickly saw the "magic" happen right before our eyes. My son came out of his shell and finally found his peeps, if you will. He loved working with Cindy and all the crew members so much that he stayed on to help work backstage for the summer show. Furthermore, Cindy even somehow managed to convince my very hesitant son to try his hand at acting ON stage. Even though acting was ultimately not his cup of tea, Jonah still insists on making himself available for any and every stage crew opportunity for WP, because that is how much he loves it.

My son is just one example of how WP has impacted and procured the love of theater in so many community members of ALL ages, really. It would be such a shame to let this amazing organization die after 20 years of wonderful productions that have benefited so many in so many ways due to unfair fee increases.

Please reconsider your fee increases or even better, waive those exorbitant fees so that WP can continue to thrive in Hamden.

Sincerely,

Darby (mom) and Jonah Wasserman

184 Mather Street

Hamden CT 06517

Sent from my iPhone

February 6 BOE meeting

Lisa Urless <lisa.urless@gmail.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 4:10 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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I am writing to ask you to waive fees for the Whitney Players summer program. Arts education is vital for our young people, and we should be doing all that we can to nurture them into well rounded students.

My daughter Eleanor, nine years old, looks forward all year to her summer theater camp experience. She is extremely shy, but the Whitney Players has given her the confidence to get on stage in front of hundreds of people and do things that scare her. She has a deeper understanding in her music, PE and reading classes at Helen St. School because of the music, dance, and acting lessons she's received in summer camp. Please make it possible for her to continue receiving these valuable lessons.

Lisa Urless

170 Circular Ave, Hamden, CT 06514

February 6th Board of Ed meeting

Joanne Guthrie <JoanneGuthrie@whschools.org>

Mon 2/5/2024 5:39 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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To Whom It May Concern:

While I am not a Hamden resident, I am a proud and committed supporter of Whitney Players. Whitney Players is an incredible organization. My son thrives at WP. Through his involvement with WP, he has gained self-confidence and leadership skills as well as new friends. He has been able to expand his acting and singing skills. The summer program is a wonderful opportunity for children from 5-18 years to get involved in theater. Ms. Devoe allows students to not only act but also get involved with costumes, scenery, etc. Recent "graduates" are involved as mentors to the younger students and to develop leadership skills.

WP is also needed as a community resource. It is difficult to find places for individuals to shine who love the arts. It is important that students who love creativity have places to grow and learn.

Thank you for your time.

Kindly,

Joanne Guthrie

Joanne Guthrie, LCSW

School Social Worker at Pagels School

For those who wish to make Public Comments:

Time will be allotted for public comments at the beginning of the meeting. There will be time set aside for public input during this meeting. We ask that public comments be limited to no more than 3 minutes in length. You may also submit your comment in writing. Public comments should be sent to PublicInput@hamden.org, with the message's subject stating the meeting's name and date (for example, "May 12 Operations Committee Meeting"). Public comments will be accepted up to 1 p.m. the day of the meeting. Please note the following:

- The name and Hamden address of the person submitting public comment must be included in the message.
- Remarks should be brief and concise, with a maximum length of three minutes (about 450 characters).
- Comments should start with a 2-3 sentence summary. The summary will be read instead of the entire message if there is a large number of comments and reading each of them in their entirety would extend beyond the time allotted for public comment.

BOE meeting 2/6

Ellie Fung <elliefung228@gmail.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 7:35 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hi, my name is Eleanor. The last two years I have been going to the summer camp runned by the Whitney Players. I have been told that the prices have been going up to rent the middle school. I really hope that you decide not to charge them for using the middle school. I think the theater camp is a great opportunity.

Eleanor Fung

Grade 4

170 Circular Ave, Hamden, CT 06514

February 6, 2024 meeting

Holli Wargo <holliwargo@gmail.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 8:13 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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My two children (12&13 years of age) perform with Whitney Players. Performing with Whitney Players has given my children a sense of belonging within the Hamden community. Please do not increase the rental fees for Whitney Players as it would be detrimental to the Whitney Players program.

I am a Hamden resident and a Hamden business owner.

Residence:

96 Flower Drive, Hamden, CT 06518

Business:

--

Holli B. Wargo, Esq.
Law Office of Holli B. Wargo, LLC
3074 Whitney Avenue
BLDG 1, FL 2
Hamden, CT 06518
203-444-2079
203-444-2079

Feb 6th BOE Meeting

Stefanie Leng <scleng71@gmail.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 9:22 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

My name is Stefanie C. Leng and I live at 31 Smith Dr, Hamden.

I am writing on behalf of Whitney Players. I have received notification that the Whitney Players Summer Camp is in jeopardy of not happening because of the increase in fees that are now being charged to Whitney Players by the Hamden BOE.

My son has been doing this camp since he was 8 years old and has loved every single minute of it. He is now a freshman in high school and has become a part of the high school theater family. This is now his 2nd theater family. I say family because that is exactly what this group of young people and their directors are... family. They have a bond like no other. My son has formed an amazing bond with the other campers. He has maintained his friendships with them throughout the years, not just at camp time. This program has been giving young people a place to be creative and tap into some very talented individuals over the years. My son loves being on the stage with his friends. It is truly an enjoyable 2 week time for him, in which he looks forward to every summer. It would be an absolute shame if the Whitney Players Camp did not happen this year due to the outrageous fees being charged.

I am asking that the rental fees be waived for the Whitney Players and allow the young people their 2 weeks of camp.

Respectfully,
Stefanie

February 6 meeting re: Whitney Players

Elaine Carroll <ecarroll@newhavensymphony.org>

Mon 2/5/2024 10:37 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

📎 1 attachments (48 KB)

Outlook-elaine car;

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To the Committee,

I am writing in support of the Whitney Players, who need reduced rental rates at City of Hamden theaters if they are to continue their excellent work serving the theater community.

My child has been a member of the company for over five years. The love and support they have received has been an essential component of their social and emotional growth. In the darkest days of COVID, they could really on Cindy Simell-Devoe and her talented team to find creative ways to keep our children connected.

In addition to the person and artistic merit of the company, Whitney Players is an economic driver in Hamden. As a Whitney Players parent from another town, most of the money I spend in Hamden is related to Whitney Players activities. Each show is an opportunity to bring friends and family to a Hamden restaurant. Many rehearsals find me stopping in a Hamden coffee shop, filling up the gas tank, or shopping for groceries until pick up time.

Please do whatever possible to keep this important arts and education program running in Hamden!



Elaine C. Carroll (she)
30 New Street, West Haven
203.931.1776

February 6th BOE Meeting

Melissa Langdon <melissaannlangdon@yahoo.com>

Mon 2/5/2024 11:00 PM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear Board Members,

I would like you to please waive the fees for The Whitney Players theater organization for using the Hamden Middle School and Hamden High School. This group has been a staple of the Hamden community for 20 years and has always respected and maintained the space and equipment. Charging \$4500 per day plus fees for renting the auditorium and classrooms is making it so this organization cannot afford to provide affordable theater education to the children in the Hamden community. My 4 children have benefited greatly from this program and especially my son, who was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and my daughter, who has diagnosed anxiety. This is a group that welcomes and celebrates all people, regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. They come together to create something special to perform for the entertainment of the Hamden community. Hamden kids deserve to have a quality theater program located within reasonable driving distance. If you drive away their opportunities by charging unreasonable fees, Hamden children and families, especially those in lower income brackets, lose their chance to learn the valuable skills that theater programs provide. Please, please, waive the fees for this group and please consider lowering the cost of renting the auditorium to all groups so that kids in our community have more enrichment experiences. Who is benefitting from having fees so high? If the auditorium sits empty, the Hamden tax payer is paying the opportunity cost. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Melissa Langdon
120 Braeside Dr.
Hamden 06514

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Reference: Funding operations for Whitney Players

Christine W <cgw57227@gmail.com>

Tue 2/6/2024 7:34 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Gentlepersons:

The Whitney Players are celebrating 20 years of providing education, entertainment, companionability and enrichment to hundreds of Hamden children through their summer camp programs. Please help to maintain this important enrichment and opportunities for our children and grandchildren, some who may never have these wonderful experiences to fill their summer days. Please provide the adequate funding for maintenance operations of the facilities where they hold camps. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Christine G. Whitten

www.businessimagecounts.com

Justice of the Peace, State of Connecticut

203-887-9483

BOE meeting 2/6/24

liz reynoso <lizzyleww@gmail.com>

Tue 2/6/2024 7:35 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Good morning,

My name is Liz Reynoso and I reside at 54 Hillcrest Ave.

I am a lifelong Hamden resident growing up in the Spring Glen neighborhood and now raising a family in Hamden. I am writing to request that rental fees for the Whitney Players Theater Company be waived. This program has been detrimental to not only my youngest child but to many children in the Hamden community. I have seen first hand the impact it has had on my youngest who has special medical needs including building his confidence and providing him with a sense of belonging. I have also observed the positive impact it has had on many other children in our community as well. The ridiculous fees proposed would eliminate this program that is essential to Hamden. Whitney Players is an asset to Hamden and has been detrimental to the mental health and well-being of the children in Hamden. I urge you to waive these exorbitant fees and allow this program to continue to be a huge part of what Hamden is about -diversity, inclusivity, and a welcoming environment that promotes positive and healthy skills for the children in our town.

Thank you,

Liz Reynoso

Sent from my iPhone

February 6th BOE Meeting

Jonathan Langdon <jonathanlangdon@hotmail.com>

Tue 2/6/2024 8:41 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Board Members,

I write to you today in support of the Whitney Players Theater Company. As a resident of Hamden, I believe that having quality extracurricular activities is of vital importance for the growth of our children into well-adjusted community members. To accomplish this, our town needs programs that are welcoming and inclusive to all our children and teach them the critical social skills for our collective success. The Whitney Players is one such community program. Speaking from my personal experience with the group, I can attest to their commitment to building an inclusive community for Hamden residents of all backgrounds. Unfortunately, the decision to raise rental fees for access to the school district facilities (in my opinion, a community resource) is an existential threat to this community. This change markedly increases the operating costs of the program, necessitating increases in participation fees, putting these activities further out of reach to the less fortunate in our community. I believe that we, as a community and town, want to make activities, such as theater, as accessible as possible to all of our members. Therefore, I humbly request that the board consider waiving the venue fees for this organization.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Jonathan Langdon

120 Braeside Dr.

Hamden, CT 06514

February 6th BoE Meeting

Claire Langdon <ClaireJeanLangdon@outlook.com>

Tue 2/6/2024 9:55 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear Board Members,

I'm writing to you today to ask you to please consider waiving the fees for the Whitney Players organization. As a teenage girl living in Hamden, it is absolutely no lie when I say that the Whitney Players has been a staple in my life ever since I performed in my first play with them. The Whitney Players have provided a sense of community for me that many teens don't have, and I honestly don't know what my life would be without them. Through participating in various Whitney Player plays and performances, I have learned not only a ton about acting and performing, but also about teamwork and respect. The Whitney Players have helped me to overcome anxiety and become more confident and comfortable onstage and off. All in all, the Whitney Players is very important to me. They've made my life fuller, and they are such a welcoming community. Please waive the fees for the fees for the auditoriums.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Claire Langdon

120 Braeside Dr.

Hamden CT 06514

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device

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February 6 - Whitney Players Meeting

Ace Anderson <cecilia.c.anderson@gmail.com>

Tue 2/6/2024 10:02 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Throughout hard times, happy times and healing, the people at the Whitney Players have stood by and supported their participants. They have been sharing their theatrical teachings with the youth of Hamden for over 20 years. Many other people will benefit from the love and teachings that the Whitney Players provide, but they need an affordable space to share their love and teachings with the people of Hamden. Please help to provide them with that space.

Thank you,

Ace Anderson

30 New Street, West Haven, CT, 06516

Hamden Board of Education - February 6, 2024

Amy Terry Sheehan <amy.sheehan@gmail.com>

Tue 2/6/2024 11:40 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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I am writing in response to the planned increased fees for Whitney Players to utilize Hamden Middle School and Hamden High School. The proposed fees are absolutely exorbitant and would force a beloved theater camp and summer theater production for all ages to either cease to operate or operate outside of Hamden which would negatively impact so many children, teens and adults and truly break our hearts.

As a Hamden resident and mother of three children ages 7-15, I have been involved with many activities over the past 15 years - sports, Girl Scouts, and the arts. Nothing has had such a meaningful impact on my family as the Whitney Players. There is no other activity or organization that we have been involved in that brings children, teens and adults together in this way. My teenager began when she was 9 and now at 15 she is already acting as a mentor to the younger children like her 7 year old sister. They have learned a great deal about theater, but more importantly they have experienced being part of something bigger than themselves. The director always emphasizes that you should "give up" your performance for someone else - always thinking about how theater and community can raise others up.

In addition to my children thriving in the Whitney Players programs, my parents and grandmother (all Hamden residents as well) have gained a sense of community by attending Whitney Players productions. And my family members from other parts of Connecticut, as well as Massachusetts, Washington D.C and New York City have all come up for the Whitney Players shows at Hamden Middle School and all ages shows at Hamden High School. The audiences love coming to Hamden, enjoying an affordable show and often have a meal and do some shopping before or after the show.

The Whitney Players is a Hamden TREASURE and a community builder. And our town and community should be doing everything to work with this organization to bring this life changing art to as many as possible. I ask that the fees be waived and or kept the same as in past years. We need to work together to keep positive outlets like this in our town.

best,
Amy Sheehan

17 Briar Lane
Hamden, CT 06517
(917) 848-8553

Board of Education February 6, 2024

Colin Sheehan <colinsheehan@gmail.com>

Tue 2/6/2024 11:48 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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For several years, our daughters have thrived in their home away from home - the Whitney Players. They have been embraced as part of this group and have gotten to know people of all ages from across Hamden. It is hard to articulate the positive impact this has had on our family especially for our 15 year old. She has never liked camps in general, but the Whitney Players camp at Hamden Middle School is something that she anticipates and looks forward to each year. It is a highlight of the whole year and I know a lot of other people feel the same way. It is way more than just a camp.

Raising the fees to a completely untenable number will harm this community now and for years to come.

Colin Sheehan

17 Briar Lane, Hamden CT 06517

Board of Education February 6, 2024

Colin Sheehan <colinsheehan@gmail.com>

Tue 2/6/2024 11:48 AM

To:input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Raising the fees to a completely untenable number will harm this community now and for years to come.

Colin Sheehan

17 Briar Lane, Hamden CT 06517

February 6 Board of Education Meeting

Ted Whitten <tedwhitten68@gmail.com>

Tue 2/6/2024 12:27 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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From: Ted Whitten, Sonya Hals, and Esme Whitten
42 Mather St, Hamden, CT 06517
Regarding the Whitney Players

We are writing in support of the Whitney Players. We call on Hamden to support in every way this valuable group, especially with regard to the proposed fee increases for use of the schools for performances and rehearsals. The Players are exactly the sort of thing a town should wish to have: a group of people who volunteer their time and resources to create a welcoming space for community engagement. Hamden needs community theater and all it brings--activities for kids and teens, artistic outlets for adults, and a place to meet our fellow townspeople. Please support the Whitney Players!