



Town Clerk Candidate Questionnaire

Email questions to hamdendtc@gmail.com or submit your question at [Contact the DTC](#).

Submit your responses by April 5, 2021

Read the [HDTC Code of Conduct](#) Read the [HDTC Platform](#)

Upload Your CV (Optional)

Karimah Mickens Resume .pdf

Upload Another File (optional)

Name

Karimah Mickens Webber

Address

32 Building Brook Rd., Hamden, Connecticut 06514

Email

karimahmickens@gmail.com

Cell Phone

(973) 222-3287

Home Phone

(973) 222-3287

1. Will you commit to upholding the HDTC Code of Conduct in your professional and personal life while you are running for and, if elected, while you are serving as Town Clerk?

Yes

2. Will you commit to the HDTC platform while you are running for and, if elected, while you are serving as Town Clerk?

Yes

3. How long have you lived in Hamden?

17 years

4. What are the five most important responsibilities of the Town Clerk?

The preservation and safekeeping of all official records and documents for the town of Hamden.

As the Registrar of Vital Statistics, the Town Clerk has oversight of all births, marriages and deaths which occur and are recorded in the Town of Hamden.

Provides guidance and assistance to our residents, attorneys, title searchers, local businesses and state agencies.

Administrates oaths of office for elected officials and appointed members of Hamden's Boards and Commission. The Town clerk receives and processes absentee ballots and oversee multiple duties for general and special elections.

Responsible for posting agendas for commission meetings; filing and maintaining minutes of Hamden's

public meetings as mandated by the State of CT Public Records Administrator and by state regulations regarding the Freedom of Information Act.

5. What are your first five priorities if elected or re-elected?

- Execute a successful transition plan with the outgoing Town Clerk. Identify key deliverables due within the next 90 days and issues that need immediate attention (Compliant)
- Schedule and complete all required trainings.
- Meet one-on-one with all office staff to better understand their day to day tasks, their skill sets and any immediate concerns they may have.
- Identify and engage key stakeholders (i.e. new Hamden leadership, Technology team)

6. What are the five most critical challenges that the Town Clerk needs to address?

- COVID response – We need to determine how will we navigate in this new normal. Ensure the community can safely access the critical services we provide.
- Leverage Technology - Continue to digitize records. Enhance the Hamden website (Town Clerk's page). Make it more 'user friendly' and inviting. For many residents it is the first place they will go to interact with our office.
- Organize FOIA training for all town clerks to ensure we are aware of rules/guidelines for compliance.
- Ensure we are properly staffed to support Hamden Boards & Commissions
- Stay up to speed with ever changing legislation and election laws.

7. What qualifications including education, life experience, work experience and management experience do you have that will help you be an effective Town Clerk? How will you know if you are successful?

I hold an MBA with a concentration in management from Southern Connecticut State University.

As a leader at a Fortune 20 company for 20+ years, I have extensive experience leading programs/projects as a Lean Six Sigma Blackbelt. If elected your Town Clerk, I will leverage my skills to identify process improvement opportunities, develop solutions based on the voice of the employees and the voice of the community to ensure the successful implementation of innovative solutions.

I am skilled in planning and facilitating effective meetings. I know how to achieve consensus. I have experience creating stakeholder communication plans, leading cross-functional teams and fostering a culture of collaboration, achievement, and excellence.

My key qualifications include program and project management, organizational development , process improvement, relationship building and diversity, equity and inclusion.

I currently serve as the treasurer for the Hamden DTC. I am responsible for handling all contributions and expenses and for maintaining an accurate accounting of all financial transactions/records of the town committee.

Measurements of success will include:

- Increased engagement with the community (website utilization, office visits)
- Increased digitization of Hamden's permanent records
- Less waste, improved processes and meeting deadlines
- Compliance – i.e. providing and posting the Board/Commissions agendas and meetings in the required timeframe.

8. What have you done to understand the time commitment and energy commitment required to be an effective Town Clerk?

I have reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the Town Clerk and I recognize that the Town Clerk must

be accessible and interact with all levels of government in CT. This will sometimes require handling town business and supporting local government after normal work hours.

9. How will you ensure Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in all aspects of staff hiring, staff onboarding, staff evaluations and staff promotions in all of the Town Clerk's responsibilities?

Hamden is becoming increasingly diverse and includes community members of many religions, languages, economic groups, and other cultural groups. As town clerk I will be committed to fostering an inclusive environment and will promote diversity across all spectrums, including but not limited to race, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, veteran/military status, and age. We strengthen the Town Clerk's office and Hamden's local government by establishing a diverse and inclusive workforce.

- Target sources where diverse candidates congregate.
- Develop a brand that showcases Hamden's growing diversity.
- Promote pay equity.
- Provide staff with the education, training, resources and systemic processes they need to deliver an equitable and inclusive experience.
- Understand the various cultures that make up the Hamden community and their need by assessing our current level of resident service and inclusion. I will use the results to develop an action plan for future change.
- Leverage my knowledge of diverse communities and develop methods of engagement.
- Reduce language barriers. Communicate in ways residents can understand. Translate critical information, use bilingual staff, teach basic phrases in other languages to staff, make a multilingual dictionary or picture guide available, use visual displays and provide information in writing. When necessary, use professional interpreters or translators.

10. How will you ensure accountability, transparency, trust within the Office of the Town Clerk, between the Office of the Town Clerk and other Hamden Government offices and between the Office of the Town Clerk and the community?

Team

- Align on our core values
- Set expectations and ensure everyone has clear roles and responsibilities
- Establish a measurement system and define our key performance indicators
- Make the connection that everyone's roles contribute to the overall goal.
- Provide feedback/status of how we are performing as a team.
- Create a culture of continuous learning
- Celebrate our progress.
- Verify appropriate internal controls are in place to ensure we safeguard financial transactions.

Community

- Ensure we are meeting our commitments. Deliver the quality of service, we promise with in the timeframes promised.
- Attend all required meetings
- Submit all required reports
- Share the story of Hamden. Leverage the information we collect to engage our community and tell the story of Hamden.

Maintain Transparency/Integrity

11. How will you ensure timely and complete communication with all Hamden stakeholders?

Develop a Communication Plan

- Utilize the stakeholder plan to determine the required and preferred ways to communicate with all stakeholders.
- Develop processes to ensure we meet promised /required timelines.

- Establish checks and balances to ensure we are meeting requirements/timelines. If something breaks fix it quickly and develop actions to prevent it from occurring again.
- Benchmark - Determine if there are other offices who are doing very well with their communication to all stakeholders
- Attend meetings, provide minutes, include tasks, next steps and timeline.

12. Describe your experience related to handling, collecting, maintaining, filing, safekeeping, and keeping up to date municipal documents.

I currently serve as the Hamden DTC treasurer:

- Prepare Qualifying Contribution Documentation
- Make and Authorize Expenditures
- Deposit All Monetary Receipts
- Retain All Records and Receipts
- Maintains Service Agreements
- Files Periodic Financial Disclosure Statements

13. How will you encourage innovation and experimentation with new approaches that engage employees and stakeholders to develop new approaches that improve productivity and community services and/or reduce cost?

Innovation: We will continuously ask ourselves how we can make the customer experience better.

- Leverage Benchmarking
- Clear understanding of the existing processes vs. what should be happening
- Create and nurture a collaborative work environment. Leverage collaboration tools (i.e. Microsoft teams, Slack)
- Simplify, simplify and simplify
- Run pilots – (scale change)
- Spend time creating a Change management plan

14. Which state and national Town Clerk associations will you actively participate in?

CT Town Clerk Association

15. Have you taken or how soon after your election will you take the State of CT exam for Town Clerks?

No, I will take the exam immediately following the completion of the required training.

16. How would you engage, receive input from and update all stakeholders (The Hamden Community, Department Heads, Quinnipiac University, The Governor and State Legislators, The Hamden Democratic Town Committee, Others?) on Hamden policy work and initiatives?

- The Town Clerk is nonpartisan and serves all of Hamden.
- Customer facing – improve website/increase social media presence.
- Engage with stakeholders based on the required /preferred methods of communicating (Communication Plan)
- Attend council meetings/required meetings
- Submit required reports to the town/state agencies
- Develop regular meetings to disseminate information from the Town Clerk's Office

17. What practices of the Office of the Town Clerk are effective and are important to continue

- Preservation and safekeeping of all official records and documents for the town of Hamden.
- Oversight of all births, marriages and deaths which occur and are recorded in the Town of Hamden.
- Provides guidance and assistance to our residents, attorneys, title searchers, local businesses and state agencies.
- The Town Clerk administers oaths of office for elected officials and appointed members of

Hamden's Boards and Commission. They issue, receive and process absentee ballots; Oversee multiple duties for general and special elections.

- Provide Notary Service

18. What practices of the Office of the Town Clerk are ineffective and need to be improved or replaced?

Areas of opportunity include:

- The Town Clerk's office remains closed, making it difficult for our community members to engage with us.
- The Town Clerk's office is responsible for posting agendas for commission meetings; filing and maintaining minutes of Hamden's public meetings as mandated by the State of CT Public records Administrator and by state regulations regarding Freedom of Information Act.
- Modernize how information is shared between town departments, the town's legislative council and the community.

19. What advisors and subject matter experts are most important to your success as a Legislative Council member?

All

20. Do you have members of your family or close circle of friends who work or consult for the Board of Education or the Town of Hamden?

Yes. Adrian Webber is a legislative council member for the 7th District (Husband)