


STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARD (MARB)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the MARB

FROM: Robert S. Dakers 

SUBJECT: City of Hartford: Fiscal Year 2017-18 Budget; Five-Year Recovery Plan

DATE: May 2, 2018

The Ad-Hoc Hartford Committee has met on two occasions to review the status of City's current year budget (fiscal year 2017-18) and the City's Five-Year Recovery Plan. The committee is currently in the process of scheduling a meeting next week to review the Mayor's Proposed Fiscal Year 2018-19 Budget. The results of these meetings to date are reflected in the attached April 19, 2018 letter sent by OPM Secretary Barnes to Mayor Bronin.

Fiscal Year 2017-18 Budget

Based on the adopted State budget, the plan to balance the City's fiscal year 2017-18 budget included the city's ongoing cost savings efforts, the Contract Assistance Agreement, and the Municipal Restructuring Funds (Restructuring Funds) in OPM's budget. Contract Assistance for this year involved a debt service payment in April of approximately \$12 million. In its March monthly report, the City was projecting a \$23.9 million deficit, proposed to be covered by Restructuring Funds. In his letter, Secretary Barnes requested that the City take steps to reduce the need for Restructuring Funds in the current year to no more than \$20 million. The attached updated monthly report from the City reflects a deficit of \$20.0 million, which projection will be discussed at tomorrow's meeting.

Five-Year Recovery Plan

As indicated in Secretary Barnes' letter, the committee found that the plan's assumptions appeared reasonable from a projections standpoint. How the assumptions related to health care, pension and other labor savings get translated into individual line-items in the proposed budget for fiscal year 2108-19 will need to reviewed, among other items. The projected shortfall in the education budget was also discussed and will need additional scrutiny.

The committee discussed the need for continuing efforts to be undertaken by the City and the board to ensure balance in the out-years of the plan, in which modest operating deficits were projected. In response, the City has submitted the attached revised page 12 for the recovery plan that reflects positive, albeit modest, balances in the out-years, along with a list of potential revenue and expenditure initiatives in this regard. The revised page 12 also reflects previous budget cuts and savings achieved to date.

Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2018-19

MARB members have received a copy of the Mayor's proposed budget for fiscal year 2018-19, which reflects and incorporates the first year of the five-year recovery plan. The City Council is scheduled to act upon the budget by about May 21. The Mayor will be providing an overview of the budget at tomorrow's MARB meeting. The MARB Hartford committee will be meeting next week to review the budget in greater detail.

Please contact me with any questions you may have in this regard.

Attachments

Cc: Larry Wilson, State Treasurer's Office
Mayor Luke Bronin, City of Hartford
Melissa McCaw, Interim CFO, Director of Management and Budget, City of Hartford
Mike Sullivan, OPM
Alison Fisher, OPM
Riju Das, State OTT



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

April 19, 2018

The Honorable Luke Bronin, Mayor
City of Hartford
525 Main Street
West Haven, CT 06516

Subject: City of Hartford Recovery Plan; State Municipal Restructuring Funds

Dear Mayor Bronin:

The purpose of this letter is to discuss and follow-up on issues raised at the recent meetings of the Hartford Committee of the Municipal Accountability Review Board's (MARB) regarding the City's five-year recovery. In addition, expectations with respect to OPM's awarding of the restructuring funds will be outlined below.

Fiscal Year 2018 Budget

At the MARB Hartford committee meeting on April 12th, the committee reviewed the City's March monthly financial report and projections, which currently estimate a \$23.9 million deficit for fiscal year 2018. The committee reviewed the report in detail. While recognizing the efforts made to date, the need for continued and focused efforts to reduce the size of the deficit during the balance of the year are critical.

As I indicated at the meeting, it appears that OPM will receive more requests for restructuring funds for FY2018 than the \$28 million that was included in the bipartisan state budget for the biennium. In addition, as indicated in the guidelines required by statute for the restructuring funds, priority will be given to municipalities whose plans include meaningful and achievable local actions when awarding funds. Therefore, the City is being requested to submit, prior to the MARB's May 3rd meeting, a detailed plan, containing specific amounts, action steps and dates, to further reduce the current project deficit of approximately \$23.9 million to no more than \$20 million.

Five-Year Recovery Plan

At the April 12th meeting, the committee again reviewed the proposed five-year plan in detail, both in terms of revenues and expenditures and its impact on the City's fiscal sustainability. The committee found that the plans and assumptions appeared reasonable from a projections standpoint, although the property tax and other assumptions will bear watching. As discussed, the City's benefits consultant and actuary will be translating the projected labor savings for health and pension costs for these line-items in the Mayor's proposed budget. The potential for reductions and the existing shortfalls in the upcoming education budget was also discussed and will need greater scrutiny by the committee and full MARB.

The projected deficits in the plan starting in fiscal year 2021, while typical of any plan of this nature, but now more manageable in nature, would impact the City's ability to undertake needed capital projects, build its depleted fund balance and make the mill rate more competitive. As discussed by the City and the committee, continuing efforts to enhance efficiencies, involving both the City and education sides of the budgets, need to be identified and implemented going forward. These include operational changes, consolidations, addressing long-term liabilities involving pensions, health and other areas, regional service sharing and in other areas. As allowed by Public Act 17-2, the plan is to use a portion of the restructuring funds identified in the table provided above to help implement needed changes.

City's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget

The MARB is in receipt of the Mayor's proposed fiscal year 2019 budget and will be reviewing the budget in detail, including in regard to its consistency with the five-year plan that will part of the City's request to the MARB and OPM for municipal restructuring funds. According the terms of the contract assistance agreement, review and approval of the City's budget by the MARB is required.

In addition to consistency with the plan, MARB action on the City's FY2019 budget will be based on the following criteria outlined in the Board's adopted policies and procedures:

- a) The reasonableness of the assumptions utilized with respect to expenditures and revenues, including assumptions included in the recommended budget related to state revenues and property tax revenues and a mill rate;
- b) the overall balance and imbalance of expenditures and revenues;
- c) the achievability of efficiency measures included in the recommended budget;
- d) its impact on the municipality's long-term liabilities and the municipality's most current three-year financial plan; and
- e) any other issues or matters that would impact, in the MARB's opinion, the municipality's financial sustainability and vitality.

For planning purposes, the table below shows a summary of recommended Municipal Restructuring and Contract Assistance payments for the two communities currently under MARB supervision. OPM will offer this distribution of the Municipal Restructuring funds to the MARB for their recommendation in May, 2018. These amounts are subject to change based on that recommendation, and are subject to all the requirements outlined in this letter.

Conclusion

The members of the MARB appreciate your assistance in regard to these matters and look forward to working together with the City to achieve short and long-term budget balance and fiscal stability for Hartford and its residents.

\$ millions					
Hartford		Municipal Restructuring	Contract Assistance		Total
	FY 18	\$ 20	\$ 17	*	\$ 37
	FY 19	\$ -	\$ 40	**	\$ 40
West Haven					
	FY 18	\$ 8	\$ -		\$ 8
	FY 19	\$ 8	\$ -		\$ 8
Total					
	FY 18	\$ 28	\$ 17	***	\$ 45
	FY 19	\$ 8	\$ 40		\$ 48

* \$5m of 2018 debt service payment will apply to 7/1/18 payment
 ** Final amount estimated, subject to OTT restructuring
 *** FY18 Municipal Restructuring Funds has \$700,000 holdback

Sincerely,



Benjamin Barnes, Secretary

cc: Members of the MARB
 Larry Wilson, Deputy State Treasurer-Interim
 Robert Dakers, OPM
 Alison Fisher, OPM
 Riju Das, State OTT

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