

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, December 19, 2024, 10:00 AM - Rescheduled from December 12, 2024

Meeting Location: This was a Virtual Meeting.
Meeting materials can be found at the following website:
<https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Marb/Full-Board-Meetings-and-Materials>

Call-In Instructions: Telephone: 1-860-840-2075
Meeting ID: 747 105 949#

Members in Attendance: Secretary Jeffrey Beckham, Kevin Alvarez (State Treasurer's-Designee), Thomas Hamilton, Sal Luciano, Susan Weissenberg, David Biller, and Robert White.

Municipal Officials in Attendance: Julian Freund, Leigh Ann Ralls, Paul Foster, Mayor Dorinda Borer, Michael Gormany, Rick Spreyer, David Taylor, Paul Dorsi, Michael O'Brien, and Ken Carney.

Staff in Attendance: Kimberly Kennison, Gareth Bye, John Mehr, Simon Jiang, Rachel Moser, Bill Plummer, Michael Reis, and Lori McLoughlin.

OAG Staff in Attendance: James Caley, Assistant Attorney General

Whittlesey Staff in Attendance: Edward Engberg, Stacey Curran, and Matthew Burry.

- I. Call to Order & Opening Remarks by Secretary Jeffrey Beckham and Kevin Alvarez (State Treasurer's Designee).

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM.

Secretary Beckham started the meeting by sharing that MARB member, Mark Waxenberg, had passed away. He found Mark's counsel and advice quite informative, and he had contributed significantly to the work of the MARB. MARB members held a Moment of Silence.

- II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

- III. Approval of Minutes

- a. November 21, 2024, Special Meeting

Mr. Biller made a motion to approve the November 21, 2024, Special Meeting Minutes, seconded by Ms. Weissenberg. Motion carried.

- IV. City of Hartford

- a. Review and Discussion: Labor Contract

- i. Board of Education (BOE) and The Hartford Federation of Teachers, Local No. 1018, AFT,

AFL-CIO

Mr. Foster updated the MARB with news that the Hartford Public Schools (HPS) had hired a new Chief Financial Officer, Caitlin Richard, who was unable to attend this meeting. He also acknowledged HPS's appreciation of Mr. Waxenberg as a tireless advocate for education.

This redline copy of the contract is for 1,452 members with the term starting July 1, **2025**, through June 30, 2028. As a Tier 2 municipality, the City of Hartford does not need the MARB to approve the contract.

Mr. Foster stated the labor contract was negotiated between September and November with the teacher's union. In terms of the starting pay, the contract was the lowest in Hartford County. This contributes to the vacancy challenge.

Mr. Foster provided some highlights of the labor contract: the workday schedule was reduced to 7 hours from 7 1/2 hours; the teachers work year was increased to 190 days from 187 days; the premium share health insurance benefits will go up to 21% by the third year; sick days are reduced to 17 days from 20 days; and a 2% General Wage Increase (GWI) grid increase in each year. Also, adjustments were made to the steps that will allow increasing the starting salaries for new hire teachers from \$47,464 to \$54,552. This should improve the ability to recruit and to fill vacancies.

The Board of Education approved the labor contract at its Tuesday, December 17th meeting and the Union ratified it with a 98% yes vote. Secretary Beckham asked about the labor contract's impact on the BOE's 5-Year Plan. Mr. Foster said that the financial impact of this labor contract over the next three years is \$19.6 million. The MARB and Mr. Foster discussed the BOE's yearly deficits and ways of addressing the deficit problem.

b. Review and Discussion:

i. City and BOE Financials – Monthly Financials - October 2024

Mr. Freund provided an overview of the City's financials. Mr. Freund stated that they are projecting an end of the year deficit of under \$5 million. Total budget revenues collection is at 50.1% through October. On the expenditures side, the City is at 31.9% compared to 31.7% last year. The City is projecting that overtime will be unfavorable over the 12-month period being offset by vacancy savings. Legal expenses are projected to be over budget by \$800,000 due to a large settlement.

Mr. Foster provided an overview of the BOE's financials through the first quarter. Spending is up \$2 million this October compared to the same period last year. This relates to salaries, fringe benefits, vacancy savings, utility costs and transportation costs. The BOE is monitoring the risk of a \$15 million deficit gap due to two failed revenue assumptions for FY25. The first is access to the non-lapsing funds and the second is COVID relief funds that were spent in FY24 leaving no unspent funds for FY25. He mentioned that BOE staff is supposed to have 50% of their line items either expended or encumbered by the end of the week. Finance will be looking at the unspent funds that can be pulled back to start addressing the remaining deficit. The MARB and Mr. Foster discussed Special Education, excess cost analysis, and the \$15 million budget shortfall.

ii. Status of FY 2024 Audit

Ms. Ralls reported that the City received the draft audit report last week and are in the final stages of review. They have until tomorrow to submit all final comments. The report will be issued by the end of this month. Ms. Ralls indicated that there were no audit findings.

c. ARPA Funding Update

Ms. Ralls reported that they are in the final stages of ARPA funds being obligated. The City received a total of \$112.2 million and expects to carry forward \$3.3 million as obligated funds to be spent by December 2026.

V. City of West Haven

- a. Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Sections 1-200(6), Section 1-210(b), Section 1-225(f), and 1-231 for the purpose to review the Whittlesey Consultants' Draft Reports for the City of West Haven, and to discuss the settlement of a personal injury claim.

Secretary Beckham stated that the MARB members will be going into Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes section 1-200(6), 1-210(b), 1-225(f), and 1-231 for the purpose to discuss the Whittlesey consultants' draft reports for the City of West Haven. Also joining the Executive Session are Attorney James Caley, Attorney Gareth Bye, Mayor Dorinda Borer and Michael Gormany from West Haven, Edward Engberg, Stacey Curran, and Mathew Burry from Whittlesey, and OPM staff.

Mr. Luciano made a motion to go into Executive Session with a second from Mr. White. Motion carried. The MARB went into Executive Session at 10:48 AM.

Mr. Luciano made a motion to leave the Executive Session with a second from Mr. Alvarez. Motion carried. The MARB returned to the Special Meeting at 11:57 AM.

The MARB discussed the Whittlesey Consultants' draft reports.

MARB was in Executive Session from 10:48 AM to 11:57 AM.

- b. Mayor's Executive Summary

Mayor Borer reported that the City, working with the insurance company, received \$1 million on the fraud claim. The City is working with the auditors to close out FY 2024, however, Milliman asked for a 30-day extension to complete the OPEB section. Mayor Borer updated the MARB on economic development projects. The Mayor reminded the MARB that the City put in sewage connection fees of \$3,500 per unit as a new revenue source. The City is continuing to work on policies and procedures.

- c. Review, Discussion and Possible Action:

- i. City and BOE Monthly Financials – October 2024

Mr. Gormany noted that the City is projecting a small surplus and is continuing to monitor overtime expenses.

There was no report given for the West Haven Board of Education due to the current transition of the Chief Financial Officer position. The new CFO will be starting in January 2025. MARB members can direct questions to Mr. Gormany in the meantime.

ii. Status of FY 2024 Audit

Mr. Gormany stated they are working on the auditors' checklist and plan to meet with the auditors tomorrow. He noted that the actuary, Milliman, requested additional time to complete the OPEB valuation. The City has filed an extension to January 31st to file the FY2024 audit report.

d. ARPA Funding Update

Mr. Gormany stated that they are keeping track of balances and regularly communicating with the ARPA Committee to ensure that the funds are obligated. The City is using interagency agreements to obligate some of the ARPA funds. The City Council approved a resolution, for any unobligated ARPA funds up to \$750,000, be used for street paving.

e. Tier IV Action Plan Update:

i. Finance Manager Summary – Protiviti

A copy of the City of West Haven's Status Report prepared by Protiviti was included in the packet. Secretary Beckham directed any questions to OPM staff.

f. Review, Discussion and Possible Actions: Non-Labor Contracts:

With twelve (12) non-labor Contracts remaining on the agenda for MARB approval, Secretary Beckham, in the interest of time, recommended taking one vote for approval for the twelve (12) non-labor contracts. MARB members had time to review the contracts and there were no questions.

With that, Secretary Beckham read into record each contract and asked for a motion to approve the following non-labor contracts:

i. Stryker Sales, LLC - New EMS Stretcher Power Load System for Rescue Vehicle for Allingtown Fire District – ARPA Funds

(Description - The Allingtown Fire District is looking to purchase a new EMS Stretcher Power-load System for the refurbished rescue vehicle from Stryker Sales, LLC of Chicago, IL for \$61,013.25. The vendor Stryker has a Sourcwell contract, a purchasing type co-op used by the City of West Haven.)

ii. UHY Advisors N.E. LLC – For ARPA Budgeting, Compliance and Reporting Services through April 2027 – ARPA Funds

(Description - UHY Advisors have been providing various services that include budgeting, compliance, and financial management relating to the City of West Haven ARPA Grant. UHY Advisors was selected after a 2021-2022 RFQ selection process. The City is now requesting approval to obligate an additional \$75,000 to the master service agreement.)

iii. Bahr Sales, Inc – WPCA Pipe Camera for Water Pollution Control Authority – Sewer Operating Funds.

(Description - The Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) is looking to purchase cameras that will allow access to monitor all size pipes including those 15 to 18 inches in diameter. WPCA is

looking to purchase CUES, Inc. brand of camera which is compatible with its current CUES camera system. The City is seeking approval to purchase these cameras from Bahr Sales of Wallingford, CT for \$55,997. Bahr is the only licensed dealer for these cameras in CT. The vendor has a Master Agreement with the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), a national purchasing cooperative that allows local governments to utilize its contracts. These cameras are being purchased through the Sewer Operating Fund.)

- iv. Omni Data – Change Order relating to the Installation of Video Surveillance on the Boardwalk - ARPA Funds.

(Description - This video surveillance and call stations project was bid out by the City and approved by the MARB in September 2023. The City is seeking to issue a change order to increase the funding of this project to purchase more cameras to provide additional coverage of the beach, City Green, and the perimeter of City Hall. The City is seeking approval to increase the contract amount with Omni Data LLC of West Haven, CT by \$93,391.23.)

- v. Dant Clayton Corporation – Materials for Bleachers Repairs at Veterans Memorial Field - ARPA Funds.

(Description - The City is looking to fabricate, deliver, and install materials to repair the bleachers at Veterans Memorial Field. The City is requesting approval to award the contract to Dant Clayton Corporation of Louisville, KY for \$125,000. Dant Clayton is the original manufacturer that owns the engineering specifications of these bleachers that were donated by Yale to West Haven.)

- vi. C – White Electric LLC – Electrical Improvements at West Haven City Green – ARPA Funds

(Description - The City went out for bid seeking proposals from contractors for electrical improvements to the West Haven City Green. Three (3) bids were received. A committee of employees from the Public Works Department and the City Hall Facilities Manager determined that C-White Electric was the lowest responsible bidder. Therefore, the City is seeking approval to award this bid to C-White Electric LLC of Guilford, CT for \$189,053.12.)

- vii. American Waste (formerly Murphy Road) – To provide Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Containers (Dumpsters) Collection throughout the City – City Public Works, Board of Education, and Housing Authority Funds

(Description - The City went out for bid seeking proposals from qualified private contractors to provide Municipal Solid Waste Container (dumpster) collection services for the City of West Haven, the Board of Education, and the West Haven Housing Authority. One bid was received. The City is seeking approval for a two-year contract for service that ends on September 30, 2026, with an option to extend for a third year, to All American Waste LLC of Enfield, CT for \$800,000. The cost is based on a per pick-up charge based on the size of the container. This will be funded out of the General Fund – Public Works budget for \$385,000, the Board of Education budget for \$350,000, and by the Housing Authority for \$65,000.)

- viii. Ivy League Landscaping LLC – Restoration of Eco Park Boardwalk Resiliency Project – A DECD Grant and ARPA Funds

(Description - The City went out for bid seeking professionals with ecological restoration and resiliency expertise and experience maintaining NATIVE shoreline plants to help create the West Haven Eco Park including maintaining the Park for two years. Two (2) bids were received

and reviewed by the City. The City is seeking approval to award the bid to Ivy League Landscaping LLC of West Haven, CT for \$250,000.)

ix. Carmody Law – Provide Legal Services related to ARPA Projects – ARPA Funds

(Description - Carmody Law has been providing legal services relating to the City's ARPA Grant. The City is requesting approval of an additional \$55,000 to cover the estimated costs for legal services through calendar year 2025.)

x. All Traffic Solutions - Security Camera Trailers – ARPA Funds

(Description - The City is looking to purchase and install two (2) mounted security and mobile camera units to be located adjacent to the pedestrian bridge at Cove River to monitor activity in the area. The City is seeking approval to purchase the security camera units from All Traffic Solutions Inc. of Chantilly, VA for \$90,614.49. The vendor has a Sourcewell contract, a purchasing type co-op used by the City of West Haven. This purchase is being funded by a Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) grant for the Cove River Tide Gates project that was awarded in 2019. With the remaining grant funds, the project is now being extended 12 months to November 2025.)

xi. National Water Main Cleaning Company - Sewer and Manhole Rehabilitation Contract – CT DEEP Clean Water Fund

(Description - The City went out for bid seeking a company to perform sewer and manhole rehabilitation work associated with the Dawson Avenue area contract. Two (2) bids were received and reviewed by the City. The City is seeking approval to award the bid to National Water Main Cleaning Company of Canton, MA for \$1,187,224. This work is being funded through the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Clean Water Fund (CWF) Program. DEEP reviewed the materials submitted for this work and authorized the National Water Main Cleaning Company to perform the work in the amount of \$1,187,050 and confirmed this work is eligible for Clean Water Fund financing.)

xii. RTR Hospitality Group LLC – A Proposed Lease Agreement between The City of West Haven and RTR Hospitality Group – To lease the Savin Rock Conference Center property.

(Description - The City advertised an RFP for the development of the Savin Rock Conference. Two (2) proposals were received and reviewed. The proposal from RTR Hospitality Group, LLC was recommended to the City Council who approved the lease agreement on December 9, 2024. This proposal is to lease the property and use the premises exclusively for a first-class restaurant and a banquet facility with outdoor and rooftop dining. The City is seeking approval of an initial twenty (20) year lease between the City of West Haven and the RTR Hospitality Group, LLC with options of two consecutive periods of five years each. The initial base rent is \$9,000 per month. Also, the West Haven Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) had a referral from the City Council to perform an Sec. 8-24 review regarding the lease that the PZC approved at its November 13, 2024, regular meeting.

Ms. Weisselberg made a motion to approve the twelve (12) Non-Labor Contracts (Agenda items V.f. i-xii) with a second by Mr. Alvarez. The motion was approved unanimously.

VI. Review, Discussion and Possible Action: MARB Meeting Calendar for 2025

The proposed schedule of 2025 MARB Meeting dates was presented. Secretary Beckham noted that the MARB would hold special meetings, if necessary. The first regularly scheduled MARB meeting February 27, 2025.

Mr. Luciano made a motion to approve the MARB Meeting Calendar for 2025, with a second by Mr. Alvarez. Motion carried.

VII. Adjourn

Before the motion to adjourn, Ms. Weisselberg shared that she had worked with Mr. Waxenberg throughout the years and had tremendous respect for his passion, his knowledge and his hard work. He will be greatly missed, not only on this Board, but throughout Connecticut. She offered condolences to his family.

Ms. Weisselberg made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Luciano. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 12:18 AM.

DRAFT