

**APPROVED**  
STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARD (MARB)

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Hartford Subcommittee of the MARB

**Meeting Date and Time:** Thursday, January 27, 2022 10:00 AM – 11:30 PM

**Meeting Location:** This was a virtual meeting. Meeting materials may be accessed at the following website:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Marb/Hartford-Committee-Meetings-and-Materials>

**Call-In Instructions:**

Telephone Number: (860) 840-2075

Meeting ID: 332 650 979

**Members in Attendance:** Kimberly Kennison (OPM Secretary designee), Christine Shaw (State Treasurer designee), Matthew Brokman, David Biller, Mark Waxenberg, Robert White

**City Officials in Attendance:** Jennifer Hockenull, Leigh Ann Ralls, Superintendent Torres-Rodriguez, Phillip Penn, Natasha Banks, Tiffani Curtis, Melinda Kauffman (labor attorney), David Velez (Union president), Elizabeth Guerra (Union representative), Grace Figueroa (Union Vice President)

**OPM Staff in Attendance:** Julian Freund

I. Call to Order & Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 AM.

II. Approval of Minutes:

a. December 16, 2021 regular meeting

Ms. Shaw made a motion to approve the minutes, with a second by Mr. Waxenberg. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Review and discussion: FY 2021 Audit

Ms. Hockenull and Ms. Ralls reported that the FY 2021 audit was completed on time with no findings and only one management comment. The Federal Single Audit has not been completed as the deadline has been extended to March 15. A full presentation of the audit and the City's financials will be provided by the auditor at the next Subcommittee meeting.

IV. Review, discussion and possible action: Labor contracts

a. Federation of School Special Police Officers

This contract covers approximately 100 BOE employees and expired June 30, 2017. A tentative agreement for a successor contract with a term of July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2024 was signed and approved by both the union and the Board of Education. The MARB has authority to either approve, reject or take no action on the agreement. If the MARB chooses to take action, it has until February 3<sup>rd</sup> to do so. Since the deadline for MARB action falls before the next regular meeting of the full MARB, a special meeting of the full MARB will immediately follow this meeting.

Ms. Kauffman provided an overview of the contract provisions. The contract provides for general wage increases of 2% in FY 2023 and 2% in FY 2024. Step advancement is only provided in the current fiscal year (FY 2022) and includes an adjustment to the salary steps schedule resulting in increases of about 8% for members. Beginning July 1, 2022, members will be enrolled in the high deductible health plan. Premium cost share for members will increase from 12% to 12.5%.

Mr. Waxenberg asked about how the premium is set since the plan is self-insured, and whether an allocated for fully insured rate is used. Ms. Kauffman explained that the contract specifies an allocation rate plus a 4% reserve.

Mr. Brokman asked about the process for selecting another health plan if all parties agree to a change. Ms. Kauffman explained that if all parties agree, there is no obstacle to changing the plan. The contract sets out a process for situations in which the parties do not agree.

Members discussed the importance of providing education to union members on how a high deductible health plan works prior to making the transition in July.

Mr. Waxenberg made a motion to recommend approval of the contract to the full MARB, with a second by Mr. Brokman. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Hartford Federation of Teachers

This contract covers approximately 1,600 BOE employees and will expire on June 30, 2022. A tentative agreement has been reached on a successor contract with a term of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025. The tentative agreement has been approved by both the union and the Board of Education. The MARB has authority to either approve, reject or take no action on the agreement. If the MARB chooses to take action, it has until March 3<sup>rd</sup> to do so.

Mr. Penn provided an overview of the tentative agreement. The contract provides a 0.35% general wage increase in the current fiscal year (FY 2022) with the exception of members at the top step who will receive an increase of 1.75%. No general wage increases are provided in the second or third years of the contract except for members at the top step who will receive increases of 1.75% in each year. Members of this bargaining unit are already enrolled in the high deductible health plan. Premium cost shares will increase from 19% to 19.5% in FY 2024 and to 20% in FY 2025. Other provisions in the contract include adjustments to tuition reimbursement, sick leave accumulation and stipends for specific assignments.

Mr. Brokman asked about the calculation of the health insurance premium. Mr. Penn explained that the contract mirrors the Special Police Officers contract by using the allocation rate plus 4%. The Administrators contract also uses the same formula. Mr. Brokman asked about the process for changing health plans. Mr. Penn said that this contract and the Administrators contract both include language similar to the Special Police Officers contract.

Mr. Waxenberg requested the turnover rate data for this bargaining unit similar to the data provided regarding the Special Police Officers group.

Mr. Waxenberg made a motion to recommend approval of the contract to the full MARB, with a second by Mr. Brokman. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Hartford Principals and Supervisors Association

This contract covers approximately 125 BOE employees and will expire on June 30, 2022. A tentative agreement has been reached on a successor contract with a term of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025. The tentative agreement has been approved by both the union and the Board of Education. The MARB has authority to either approve, reject or take no action on the agreement. If the MARB chooses to take action, it has until March 3<sup>rd</sup> to do so.

Mr. Penn provided an overview of the tentative agreement. The agreement provides 1.5% general wage increases in each year of the contract and also provides for range adjustment movement in each year. Members of this bargaining unit are already enrolled in the high deductible health plan. Premium cost shares will increase from 19.0 to 19.5% in FY 2023, to 20.0% in FY 2024, and to 20.5% in FY 2025. Other provisions in the contract include adjustments to the 403-b contribution for non-principals and the vesting period.

Mr. Waxenberg made a motion to recommend approval of the contract to the full MARB, with a second by Ms. Shaw. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Update: Special Education data and information response

Superintendent Torres-Rodriguez provided an overview of a compilation of information related to the district's special education programming and costs. Among the district's initiatives is an effort to provide more special education programming in-district. Several programs were described which have seen increase in participation in the few years since inception. However, Ms. Torres-Rodriguez noted that some of the factors needed to achieve scaling of these programs, notably staffing, are at risk. Members discussed the information provided noting that further discussion will continue at subsequent meetings. Mr. White suggested expanding on the information by providing action steps that would make progress on addressing some of the systemic issues that limit the district's ability to control special education costs. Mr. Waxenberg suggested a meeting to discuss legislative options. Ms. Torres-Rodriguez categorized legislative options as consisting of either increasing State funding for special education, fully funding excess cost grants, or allowing for greater district representation in PPT meetings in Open Choice settings.

VI. Other Related Business

None.

VII. Adjourn

Mr. White made a motion to adjourn with a second by Ms. Shaw. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.