

APPROVED
STATE OF CONNECTICUT
MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARD (MARB)

REGULAR MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA
West Haven Subcommittee of the MARB

Meeting Date and Time: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

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

Call-In Instructions:

Telephone Number: (860) 840-2075

Meeting ID: 778 040 839

Members in Attendance: Kimberly Kennison (OPM Secretary designee), Christine Shaw (State Treasurer designee), Stephen Falcigno, Thomas Hamilton, Robert White

City Officials in Attendance: Mayor Rossi, Frank Cieplinski, Lee Tiernan, William Ryan (City labor attorney), West Shore Fire Chief Scafiarello, First Taxation District Chief O'Brien, Allingtown Chief Esposito, City Council Member O'Connor, City Council Member Hoskie, City Council Member Bruneau (also West Shore District Commissioner), First Taxation District Commissioner Carew, Representative DiMassa

OPM Staff Attendance: Mike Walsh, Michael Milone, Julian Freund

I. Call to Order & Opening Remarks

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

II. Approval of minutes: July 21, 2020

A motion was made by Mr. White with a second by Ms. Shaw to approve the minutes. All voted in favor with Mr. Hamilton abstaining.

III. Review, discussion and possible action: AFSCME Local 681 Tentative Agreement

An overview of the proposed contract was provided. The contract covers about 100 public works and non-managerial City Hall employees. The term of the contract is July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2023. The MARB has until October 15 to take action if it wished. The contract provides 0% general wage increases for the first four years, followed by an increase of 1% in FY 2022 and 2% in FY 2022. It increases the employee cost share for health insurance premiums by 1% for FY 2022 and another 1% for FY 2023. The group's move to the State Partnership Plan, which took effect in January 2020, is codified in the agreement. Mr. Ryan provided additional details in the agreement. After discussion of the fiscal impact and other aspects of the contract, a motion was made to approve the contract.

A motion was made by Mr. Falcigno to recommend approval of the contract by the full MARB, with a second by Mr. Hamilton. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Discussion: Fire Districts

a. Status of Actuarial Reports

The West Shore District has an updated pension actuarial report, but has not yet received the OPEB valuation. The First District has not received either the pension or OPEB actuarial report. Both are anticipated in October.

b. Fire/EMS Expenditure Benchmarking

Mr. Walsh provided an overview of the benchmarking data. The information illustrated the high cost of Fire service in the City of West Haven compared to two comparable sized municipalities. The disparity in expenditures is primarily attributable to employee and retiree benefits costs. In particular, the legacy costs of defined benefit pension plans and retiree health insurance drive up fire expenditures in West Haven's three fire districts. In each case, the districts have taken steps to bring these costs under more control by closing defined benefit pension plans, and more recently, by increasing mill rates and budgeting for additional contributions to pension and retiree health liabilities in FY 2021. Members discussed employee benefits and contributions toward benefits with the district's representatives.

c. Tri-District MOU Update

Chief O'Brien said that the approval of an MOU is anticipated in October by each district. Certain functions, particularly administrative functions such as investment advisory services and audit services, could be merged and made consistent among the districts in the tri-district commission model. Members expressed interest in seeing a multi-year plan for managing or moderating the impact of legacy costs on taxpayers.

V. Discussion: Allingtown Fire Chief appointment

Mayor Rossi advised the Subcommittee of a plan to fill the Allingtown Fire Chief position. The Assistant Chief, who also serves as the district's Fire Marshal, has been serving as an Acting Fire Chief while the position has been vacant. The current arrangement is not sustainable. Funding for the position is included in the FY 2021 budget. Members asked whether the plan to fill the position is consistent with the plan to create a Tri-District Commission. The City indicated that the intent will be to enter into a short term contract of one to two years for the Fire Chief in order to preserve some flexibility.

VI. Update: Corrective Action Plan FY 2019 Audit Findings

Mr. Cieplinski provided an update on the status of the corrective action plan, referring to the written status report provided in the meeting materials.

VII. Update: Status of FY 2020 Close and Audit Process

Mr. Cieplinski and Mayor Rossi reported on progress on the audit. Weekly open item meetings are being held. The auditors will be on site the week of October 19th.

VIII. Update: Status of HR Corrective Action Plan

a. ADP implementation

Mr. Cieplinski updated the subcommittee on the project implementation. Weekly calls are held with ADP on the overall project. ADP provides a checklist updated weekly depicting the status of individual tasks. The City is currently working on data transfers and dual system maintenance. Plan benefits information is one item on the status report that appears to be off schedule. Mr. Cavallero indicated he would follow-up to make sure the information gets to ADP. Ms. Kennison advised the City to confirm with ADP that any delays will not have a project cost impact as well.

IX. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. White with a second by Mr. Falcigno. All voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 11:35 AM.