

APPROVED
STATE OF CONNECTICUT
MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARD (MARB)

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
West Haven Subcommittee of the MARB

Meeting Date and Time: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Meeting Location: This was a virtual 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: 613 530 064

Members in Attendance: Kimberly Kennison (OPM Secretary designee), Christine Shaw (State Treasurer designee), Patrick Egan, Stephen Falcigno (joined after approval of minutes), Thomas Hamilton, Robert White

City Officials in Attendance: Mayor Rossi, Frank Cieplinski, Matthew Cavallaro

OPM Staff in Attendance: Michael Milone (OPM designee), Julian Freund

I. Call to Order & Opening Remarks

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

II. Approval of minutes:

a. October 19, 2021 Regular Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Shaw with a second by Mr. Hamilton. Grammatical corrections were noted in section V and section VII of the draft minutes. The minutes were approved with the noted corrections by a vote of 4-0-1 with Mr. White abstaining.

III. Update: CohnReznick audit

Ms. Kennison provided an update on the CohnReznick audit, reporting that an anonymous call about specific areas of concern related to alleged misuse of CRF was received by OPM. The information has been provided to federal authorities as part of the State's cooperation in an ongoing investigation. Mr. Cieplinski was asked about the status of documents requested by Cohn Reznick. He reported that he has provided organizational charts. The City does not have written policies and procedures he could find. The last two financial audits, and the interim report and its related attachments have been provided. He offered to write procedures as currently followed and provide those. Ms.

Kennison advised that he document existing processes. Mr. White suggested that an audit of departments that push back against policies and procedures be added to the CohnReznick scope of work. Ms. Kennison asked the City to provide a list of those departments. Mr. Hamilton asked about the timeframe for CohnReznick to complete their work. Ms. Kennison replied that the contract term is through March, but the report could be completed sooner. Mr. Hamilton asked if the report would be released when completed, or would be held back pending completion of the FBI investigation. At this point, it does not appear that the report would need to be delayed. Mr. Egan suggested that the MARB could give the City direction on how to amend procedures even while investigations are ongoing. He reiterated a request for historical data regarding payouts for compensatory time to exempt employees over the last five years.

IV. Review and Discussion: FY 2021 MOA

A letter was sent from the Secretary to the City regarding MOA compliance. The Board has been waiting for the City to prepare plans for complying with the MOA. Several open items relate to Purchasing. The City has submitted a plan for addressing Purchasing related requirements. The City will need to report out each month on the tasks in the plan. Similar plans are still needed for the other open items.

Ms. Kennison noted longstanding vacant positions in Purchasing and in Accounts Payable. Mayor Rossi reported that the Accounts Payable Analyst position has been filled and the collective bargaining issues regarding the position have been resolved. The filling of the Accounts Payable position with an internal candidate has resulted in a vacancy for another position in the Finance office. A consultant has been assisting in the Purchasing area.

Mr. Cieplinski has proposed to City Council the creation of a Procurement Director position. He also recommends adding another Junior Accountant position in the Finance Office. He is putting together the costs related to those positions and job descriptions to present to City Council for funding approval. Mr. Hamilton asked if the resulting Purchasing office would be a two-person office. Mr. Cieplinski replied that it would initially be a two-person department. His research shows that similarly sized departments typically are staffed with three full-time employees. Mr. Hamilton said the individual hired as the Purchasing Director should be a true procurement professional, from outside the organization and should be an exempt position.

Mr. White asked about any asset sales that have taken place in the last year and how the proceeds have been used. Mayor Rossi said she would check on whether any sales have taken place.

V. Update: Corrective Action Plan

Mr. Falcigno raised frustrations with the length of time taken to address structural issues in the City and cultural obstacles to making improvements. Subcommittee members discussed concerns with the pace of progress in building the policies, procedures and infrastructure to manage City operations.

VI. Update: Open Positions

Open positions were discussed during a previous agenda item. An organizational chart was requested from the City.

VII. Other Business

Ms. Kennison asked about the status of the City's ARPA funding and plans for use of the funds. Mr. Cieplinski indicated that the funds received are held in a separate fund in the City's accounting system. A survey requesting input from the citizens has been posted on the website. The CT Conference of Municipalities will be presenting at the next City Council meeting on eligible uses and other aspects of the ARPA funds. He described the City's plans for ensuring transparency in the use of the funds.

VIII. Adjourn

Mr. Egan made a motion to adjourn with a second by Mr. White. The meeting adjourned at 11:16 AM.