

DRAFT

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARD (MARB)

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
West Haven Subcommittee of the MARB

Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, March 2, 2023, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Rescheduled from February 21, 2023

Meeting Location: Microsoft Team Meeting
[Meeting ID: 238 373 880 625](#)
[Passcode: Whm7Rs](#)

Call-In Instructions: Meeting participants may use the following telephone number and access code

[Telephone Number: \(860\) 840-2075](#)

[Meeting ID: 730 624 156](#)

Members in Attendance: Secretary Beckham, Andréa Comer (State Treasurer designee), Stephen Falcigno, Thomas Hamilton, Robert White

City Officials in Attendance: Mayor Rossi, David Taylor, Lee Tiernan, Neil Cavallaro, Rick Spreyer

OPM Staff in Attendance: Kimberly Kennison, Simon Jiang, Lori Granato, Michael Reis and William Plumber

I. Call to Order & Opening Remarks

- a. The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM.

II. Approval of Minutes: November 15, 2022, Regular Meeting

Mr. Hamilton made a motion to approve the minutes with a second by Mr. Falcigno. The minutes were approved 4-0-1 with Ms. Comer abstaining.

III. Discussion: OAG Research Legislative Language

There was a request made to the Assistant Attorney General at the last Full MARB meeting to research the legislative language for the Waterbury takeover in preparation for West Haven's consideration. Secretary Beckham reported that the AG's office is not in a position to undertake such research at this time. Furthermore, Secretary Beckham indicated that he does not support this request at this time as such a request is premature to the plan agreed to by the board for the oversight and reform of the city's governance and financial controls. The Secretary wants to see the conclusion of an ongoing financial assessment of the City by Whittlesey as planned. Whittlesey has been under contract for just over 3 months and the RFP Proposals for a Financial Manager is underway. If any research or drafting of language is needed, it will be completed by the Secretary's Office.

IV. Discussion: Process for West Haven Inquiries

As requested by a member of the board, the Secretary presented guidance for the public to report on fraud, waste, and abuse to the relevant authorities. This guidance will be shared at the March 9th Full MARB meeting and will be posted on the OPM website.

V. Review and Discussion: BOE Recommended FY2024 Budget

Superintendent Neil Cavallaro presented the BOE Proposed Budget for FY2024, indicating that they BOE is “in good shape” regarding the FY2024 Budget. The BOE’s budget focused on supporting students. The Mayor has made a commitment to provide additional funding to the BOE in the 5-Year Plan beginning in FY2025. The Superintendent discussed the need to attract and retain good teachers as they will be entering union negotiations. ARPA funding allowed the BOE to fund support reading and math positions. Discussion took place regarding ESSER II and III funds. The Subcommittee also discussed the city’s enrollment. Secretary Beckham asked the census of student and Mr. Cavallaro indicated it was down approximately 1,100 from 10 years ago. Mr. Hamilton questioned the funding for teacher’s salaries after the ESSER III fund are no longer available. Mr. Cavallaro said the City’s 5-year plan will provide the BOE additional funds beginning in 2025 that will increase to \$1 million. In responding to Ms. Comer’s question on the assumptions used to predict the number of special education tuition and transportation, Mr. Cavallaro said it was based on history and the number of students that are currently placed out.

VI. Review and Discussion: BOE Food Service for Public Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro updated this issue which Mr. Hamilton raised at the last board meeting. West Haven is participating in the Community Eligibility Provision Program. Mr. Hamilton was glad to see that BOE is taking advantage of that program.

VII. Review, Discussion and Possible Action: Non-Labor Contract:

i. Shoreline Wellness Center LLC. - Sales of William T. Blake Building

This is a purchase and sale agreement that was reviewed and discussed at the board meeting last month. The sales price is \$105,000 with an appraised value of \$114,000.

Mr. Hamilton made a motion to recommend that the full board approve the agreement with Mr. White seconding. Motion passed unanimously.

ii. Greenskies Clean Energy LLC. - Land Lease Option and Lease Agreement

This is a land lease option and lease agreement between the City and Greenskies Clean Energy LLC, to lease approximately 15 acres of City landfill property. The term of the lease is for 21 years with an option of 18 months. Lease income will be approximately \$35,000 annually.

Mr. White made a motion to recommend that the full board approve the agreement with Mr. Hamilton seconding. Motion passed unanimously.

iii. Elm City Materials, Inc. – Rockdale Road Sewer Construction Services

Mr. Taylor introduced Rick Spreyer, Procurement Director for the City. Mr. Spreyer indicated that this was bid publicly on January 5th. They received four bids. SLR Engineering, the firm currently designing City sewer lines, reviewed the lowest bidder and found them to be capable to complete the work. Elm City Materials is the City's current sidewalk construction contract holder as well. Contract price is \$579,400 for sewer construction services in the Rockdale Road area.

Mr. Hamilton made a motion to recommend that the full board approve the agreement with Ms. Comer seconding. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Update: FY 2021 Audited Financial Statements and Corrective Action Plan

Mr. Taylor reported that the Auditor, PKF O'Connor Davies completed the FY2021 audit. They were unable to attend the meeting but plan to present the audit at the March 9th Full MARB meeting. Ms. Kennison provided a few highlights of West Haven's Audited Financial Statements and Federal and State Single Audit findings.

IX. Update: FY 2022 Audit

City has provided an update of FY 2022 audit engagement and PKF O'Connor Davies will provide update to the Full MARB.

X. Update: MOA Action Plans

Mr. Taylor reported that two positions in the Finance Department have been temporarily filled by contract accountants. Several department have vacancies including HR, Building Dept and a new vacancy in the Finance department, as the Finance Director has recently departed. Ms. Kennison encouraged the City to continue recruitment efforts and cautioned lack of internal controls and segregation of duties, leaves the City vulnerable.

XI. Open Item List

City provided updates on the items that they have new information on:

- Firefighter Hazard pay: City council has passed an ordinance for firefighter hazard pay utilizing ARPA fund. A tentative agreement is expected to be presented at the April Subcommittee meeting.
- Five Year Plan: City will provide the 5-year plan with the Mayor's Proposed FY 2024 Budget at the March Subcommittee meeting.
- Budgeted and Vacancy Positions: City submitted the most recent budgeted and vacant positions list
- Fuel and Energy Contracts: City entered into an electricity contract with a fixed rate which is about 89% increase from previous year.
- E-rate Program: BOE provided the documentation of the E-rate funding and application as a board member requested information on BOE's due diligent to ensure they have secured all available funding.

XII. Other Business

There was no other business.

XIII. Adjourn

Ms. Comer made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m.