

DRAFT

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARD

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
West Haven Subcommittee of the MARB

Meeting Date and Time: Tuesday, July 25, 2023, 10:00 AM –1:00 PM

Meeting Location: In-Person Only Starting at 366 Elm Street, West Haven, CT 06516

Members in Attendance: Kimberly Kennison (Secretary of OPM Designee), Susan Weisselberg, Thomas Hamilton and Steven Falcigno.

Tier IV Members in Attendance: Colleen O'Connor and Ronald Quagliani

Fire Officials in Attendance: Commissioner John Carew, Commissioner Robert Bruno, Chief James O'Brien (First Fire/Center), Chief Michael Terenzio (Allingtown), Chief Stephen Scafariello (West Shore) and Fire Marshal Michael Esposito.

Municipal Officials in Attendance: Ken Carney, David Taylor, and Rick Spreyer

Staff in Attendance: John Mehr, Lori McLoughlin, Lori Granato, and Noah Lansing

Agenda

I. Call to Order

The meeting/tour was called to order at 10:00 a.m. in the back parking lot of the First Fire/Center Fire Station located at 366 Elm Street.

II. Tour and Needs Assessment Discussion – City of West Haven Fire Districts

- a. 10:00 – 10:30 a.m. - Tour of First Fire/Center Fire District Station
– 366 Elm Street, West Haven, CT 06516
- b. 10:45 – 11:15 a.m. Allingtown Fire District
– Minor Park, 318 Fairfax Street, West Haven, CT 06516
- c. 11:30 – 12:00 p.m. West Shore Fire District
– 860 Ocean Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516

III. Review and Discuss - Draft Fire Districts Financials and Development of Strategic Plan

Ms. Kennison recommended that a Fire Service Feasibility Study be performed for the City of West Haven's three fire districts. A review of operations, with a focus on the strategic locations of fire departments within the City, which would provide the best fire response to the residents of West Haven.

Mr. Carney, Chairman of the ARPA Committee, handed out ARPA Project update as July 5, 2023. He stated that each of the three fire districts would be allocated \$1.025 of ARPA funds for use on immediate needs.

The ARPA funds would have to be committed to projects by December 31, 2024, with the funds being spent by December 31, 2026.

Chief James O'Brien discussed the needs of the First Fire/Center Fire District. The fire station, located on 366 Elm Street, is running out of space for its equipment. An opportunity exists to purchase two lots with houses on Savin Avenue behind the fire station. The acquisition of these two properties would allow the Elm Street fire station to expand its parking lot and create more storage space.

Chief Michael Terenzio discussed the needs of the Allingtown Fire District. The Minor Park Fire Station located 318 Fairfax Street is looking for additional storage space for its vehicles, boats, and equipment.

Chief Stephen Scafariello discussed the needs of the West Shore Fire District. The Ocean Avenue fire station has a drainage problem that results in water collecting in the basement. The district is looking to use ARPA funds for waterproofing the fire station basement and for creating separate sleeping quarters, gender bathrooms and changing quarters at the District's two fire houses.

There were discussions about attracting and retaining full-time firefighters and volunteer firefighters. Noting that West Haven has various types of public safety situations that the fire districts need to respond to. Those include responding to situations at a college campus, to using fire boats for the calls on the Long Island Sound and shallow lakes, to the railroad that travels through the city, and to calls on the I-95 interstate highway.

A motion was made by Mr. Falcigno and seconded by Ms. Weisselberg to accept and recommend to the full MARB the following three fire district projects, in conjunction with a Fire Service Feasibility Study being performed for the City of West Haven:

1. First Fire/Center Fire District – the acquisition of two properties on Savin Avenue behind the 366 Elm Street Fire Station
2. Allingtown Fire District – additional storage building in the back of the Minor Park Fire Station
3. West Shore Fire District – waterproofing the basement of the Ocean Avenue fire station, and creating separate sleeping quarters, putting in separate gender bathrooms and improving changing quarters at both district fire stations.

Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Hamilton with a second by Ms. Weisselberg. The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

BIOSOLIDS DISPOSAL

Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCF) generates biosolids during treatment of wastewater that need to be disposed off. WPCF has an incinerator that has been shut down since August 2017 because EPA issued a violation notice to the City that it does not comply with the new EPA air pollution emission requirements. City has been looking at alternative disposal since then . After shut down City has been sending biosolids to Naugatuck. Cost of disposal has increased from \$ 667,000 in 2019 to \$1,200,000 expected in 2023. These costs will keep increasing and in 5 years this option may not be available anymore as vendor has indicated. There are no other disposal options available in Connecticut or adjacent states. Only option available will be either to upgrade the incinerator to meet current standards or send them to other states with high transportation costs and uncertain acceptance over 20 year horizon. City engaged a consultant to look at various disposal options and recommended option is to upgrade the incinerator or gasify the biosolids. City has requested the consultant to look at these options in detail which is in progress.

It will take 2 years to implement the project on a decision is made to go ahead. Urgency is that the current permit from the state will expire by January 2024 and if a schedule to implement is not given permit will be cancelled and upgrade option will be gone.

OUTFALL PIPE

Original outfall was installed in 1967 and was installed 2 ft higher than the original design for reasons unknown. Over the years it has suffered many breaks and City has expended close to \$ 3 million to fix it. Now around 300 ft pipe is exposed and experiences frequent leaks as it is made of steel and subject to corrosion and erosion in a salty environment. Any major coastal storm will most likely damage this section requiring major emergency repairs and possibly fines as well. Almost 1600 ft section of pipe out of 5300 ft of total pipe has broken off or non functional. This section of pipe is under water in the harbor. City has been evaluating this outfall for rehabilitation since 2017 and looking for funding. Due to high costs no funding source has entertained the City's application. State DEEP has now accepted this outfall for CWF which will only provide 20% grant and 80% loan @ 2% for 20 years. City is still trying to seek FEMA funding that will provide 75% grant but has not succeeded yet. City has to move forward soon otherwise CWF funding may not be available in the future.

HARDENING

WPCP and Main pumping station are vulnerable to flooding and need to be protected with flood walls. City has done a study to look at different options to protect these assets and best option costs are reflected here.

City of West Haven, CT
Estimated Capital Projects Spending

	Estimated Budget ³	FY 2024:	FY 2025:	FY 2026:	FY 2027:	FY 2028:	FY 2029:	FY 2030:	FY 2031:	Total
		July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024	July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025	July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026	July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027	July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2028	July 1, 2028 to June 30, 2029	July 1, 2029 to June 30, 2030	July 1, 2030 to June 30, 2031	
Wastewater Treatment Plant										
Biosolids Disposal ¹	\$25M to \$30M	\$ 500,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 27,000,000	\$ 500,000					\$ 30,000,000
Outfall Pipe ²	\$50M to \$70M	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 35,000,000	\$ 29,000,000					\$ 70,000,000
Hardening ³	16	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 9,500,000						\$ 16,000,000
Future Projects ⁴	TBD		\$	\$	\$					\$
Sewer Rehabilitation										
Dawson Rehab - C4 ⁵	\$1.6M	\$ 82,000	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 290,000						\$ 1,632,000
Dawson Rehab - C5 ⁵	\$2.1M	\$ 100,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 340,000					\$ 2,140,000
High Priority Rehab - C2 ⁶	\$0.4M	\$ 50,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 50,000						\$ 400,000
High Priority Rehab - C3 ⁶	\$12.8M	\$ 200,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 2,100,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 1,100,000			\$ 12,800,000
High Priority Rehab - C4 ⁶	\$3.2M			\$ 300,000	\$ 700,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 200,000			\$ 3,200,000
Sewer Pump Stations⁷										
Oyster River	\$6.5M	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 500,000						\$ 6,500,000
Dawson and East ⁸	\$17M to \$21M	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 400,000				\$ 21,400,000
Main	\$8M to \$12M	\$ 700,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 300,000					\$ 12,000,000
Trumbull and Savin	\$4.8M		\$ 350,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 700,000	\$ 200,000				\$ 3,750,000
Front, Morrissey, Woodmont, Jones, Baybrook, Woodcrest	\$8.7M		\$ 650,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 500,000			\$ 8,650,000
TOTAL	\$156m to \$189m	\$ 4,932,000	\$ 20,360,000	\$ 85,790,000	\$ 56,790,000	\$ 12,100,000	\$ 8,100,000	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 189,000,000

Notes

- 1) Ongoing study funded by grant to evaluate biosolids disposal options. To be completed by end of year including DEEP/EPA approval on path forward.
- 2) Per B&B study/report
- 3) Per B&V study/report
- 4) Facilities Plan (covered under operations budget) will be completed in FY26 to identify any additional WWTP projects in future FYs
- 5) Dawson Area (V) study required by DEEP/EPA Consent Decree. Dawson Avenue Area Sewer System Evaluation Survey Report (December 2017) identified sewer rehab to meet CD. Contract 5 is the last project
- 6) Sewer system inspection of entire system required by DEEP/EPA Consent Decree (CMOM program). Repairs identified through inspections and require rehabilitation.
- 7) Recommendations for each pump station as summarized in West Haven Pumping Station Evaluation Report (August 2017), which was DEEP approved study/report
- 8) Excludes \$2.1M grant for bathroom and site/architectural improvements
- 9) The costs presented herein represents best engineering judgement. However, actual costs are largely dictated by market conditions at the time of bidding. Accordingly, the budgets cannot be guaranteed that bids and actual construction costs will not vary from the estimates presented herein.

CITY OF WEST HAVEN OPEN ISSUES

September, 2023

List #	Issue	Required Response	Status
1	Brewery Development Agreement	Copy of agreement: lease, assessment cap, pilot, other commitments	Vendor Withdrew. CLOSED
2	Firefighter Hazard Pay Stipend	Status of City revisiting amount - original request of \$10,000 per firefighter	<p>City status response in 10/6/22 MARB meeting package: "City administration and City Council believe that this is fair compensation for the unprecedented hazards encountered by the Fire Service."</p> <p>Pending</p>
3	Firefighter Hazard Pay Stipend	Status of revision to MOU with union - FY 2022	<p>City response in 10/6/22 MARB meeting package addressed MOU related to Partnership transition. No change to MOU regarding hazard pay stipend.</p> <p>Pending</p>
4	Firefighter Hazard Pay Stipend	Analysis of whether stipend creates liability when negotiating with other bargaining units	<p>City response in 10/6/22 MARB meeting package: "City contends that the hazards encountered by Guardians during the initial stages of the pandemic are unique..."</p> <p>Pending</p>
7	5-Year Plan: Mitigation Measures	Detailed plans/opportunities to enhance revenues or reduce expenditures FY 24-FY 28	FY24-28 5 Year Plan was presented in June meeting with mitigation measures. The 5 year plan was not approved due to further information needed on Allingtown Fire District.
8	Consolidation of Fire District pension plans. Separate pension investment management services and pension investment advisor services	Detailed tasks and timeline for reviewing options and proceeding with consolidating services. Incorporate fire districts into timeline.	City held preliminary meeting 9/26/22 with follow-up anticipated in October 2022 - districts not interested. One district has declined.

List #	Issue	Required Response	Status
10	Fuel and energy contracts	Summary of contracts including: Current rates, indicating floating vs. fixed, contract term. Include bus fuel indicating whether company or district carries price risk.	Electricity contract signed in December 2022. Gasoline/diesel fuel will be sent out to bid. Ending. Partial information distributed 11/3/22. follow-up request from T. Hamilton at 12/1/22 meeting. Matrix pending
15	Cohn Reznick report - 4/1/22	Section V lists several companies and/or individuals that received monies from the city and are listed as questionable. Have any of those companies and/or individuals received any monies from the city since the date of the report? If so, for what purpose?	Requested 3/30/23
16	Cohn Reznick report - 4/1/22	Exhibit A of that report lists several expenditures that are questionable. Specifically, why were independent contractors given bonuses for work? Ernie Chiarelli and Louis Faugno. Who are they and what specific work did they do?	Requested 3/30/23
17	Cohn Reznick report - 4/1/22	Baybrook Remodelers received \$7850 for a shower remodeling that was testified to as being incomplete. Is that completed? If so, attestation that it has been completed with appropriate documentation. If not, has the town tried to recoup any of that costs?	Requested 3/30/23 Picture of the working shower has been sent to OPM. All work has been completed. CLOSED
18	Cohn Reznick report - 4/1/22	Several hundred thousand dollars of CRF funds were given to the independent fire districts for overtime and other non descriptive expenses. Those districts already budget for overtime, so is this allocation for additional overtime or to supplant dollars of those existing budgets? If it's for additional, unanticipated overtime due to COVID, can you provide specifics?	Requested 3/30/23
19	Cohn Reznick report - 4/1/22	Has the City Council been presented with both Cohn Reznick reports and did they discuss them in open session with an agenda item for such presentation?	Requested 3/30/23

List #	Issue	Required Response	Status
20	Recover CRF funds - misuse	Has the city taken steps to attempt to recover CRF funds from fraudulent/misuse activity? FY 24 proposed budget	Pending legal counsel
21	IRS code for personal use of city vehicles	Review IRS rules regarding personal use of city vehicles to determine if taxable benefits	3/30/23 sub-committee request
22	Fleet cars	List of cars in the fleet and who is provided a car	3/30/23 sub-committee request. List form City side was provided 4/13 within meeting materials. Waiting for the list form BOE.
23	Fire Districts	Fire districts benchmarking -Timeline of looking at fire districts	On 7/25 Subcommittee meeting, members had a tour of 3 fire districts.
26	Contracts over 50k	Backup of contracts not provided to MARB for approval.	List was provided. Back-ups Pending
27	Special Benefits	City and BOE employees with special benefits. i.e. cars	Pending
29	Fire District pensions	What is the compensation for the investment managers and advisors. Are gratuities given from these managers to district officials. If so, what are they. Please go back three years	Pending
30	Parking of city owned vehicles	Does the DPW or any other department sub lease or rent property for the purpose of "parking" city owned vehicles? If yes, who is the property owner and what is the annual cost of such rent?	Acting Finance Director repoded on 5/24/23. no leased space for City owned vehicles. CLOSED
31	Fire Districts Relationship	Documents that West Haven has that formalizes a "relationship" between the city and its independent fire districts. Any policies or procedures establishing some requirements on the City regarding any funding or the like. City has given significant money to all these districts from CRF and ARPA funds. Who initiated the funding request and was it approved by the council?	Confirmed by UHY Advisors - the audit firm and Legal on 6/15/23. CLOSED
32	Budget Transfers	Budget transfers between City and BOE, and other inter-fund transfers over \$50,000 need to be presented to MARB for approval	Pending, City will provide after BOE or City Council's approval

**** numbers 5 ,6 ,9, 11, 12 ,13, 14, 24 25 and 28 were previously closed**