

DRAFT
STATE OF CONNECTICUT
MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, June 10, 2021 10:00 AM –12:00 PM

Meeting Location: This was a virtual meeting. Meeting materials can be found at <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Marb/Full-Board-Meetings-and-Materials>

Call-in Instructions: Telephone 1 860-840-2075
Meeting ID: 129 083 617

Members in Attendance: Secretary McCaw, Christine Shaw (State Treasurer designee), Patrick Egan (joined at 10:15), Stephen Falcigno, Thomas Hamilton, David Biller, Mark Waxenberg, Robert White

Municipal Officials in Attendance: First Selectman Cheryl Blanchard, Michelle Demicco, Mayor Rossi, Frank Cieplinski, Mayor Bronin, Jennifer Hockenhull, Rich Pokorski, Kim Oliver, Claudio Bazzano, Kristina Baldwin, Carmen Chaparro

OPM Staff in Attendance: Kimberly Kennison, Michael Milone (OPM Liaison), Julian Freund

- I. Call to Order & Opening Remarks by Secretary Melissa McCaw and Treasurer Shawn Wooden
Secretary McCaw called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM and noted the passage of the State budget by both chambers of the General Assembly. The budget provides an additional \$180 million in aid to municipalities and has a direct impact on the work of this board. When coupled with the resources being made available by the Federal government, this represents a tremendous opportunity for municipalities to strengthen themselves financially. Ms. Shaw commended OPM for its role in passing the State budget.
- II. Public Comment Period
There was no public comment.
- III. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. May 13, 2021 Regular Meeting
Ms. Shaw made a motion with a second by Mr. Hamilton, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.
- IV. Town of Sprague
 - a. Subcommittee Update

The Subcommittee met earlier in the morning to review and take action on the Town's 5-Year Plan. The Subcommittee voted to recommend approval by the full MARB.

b. Review, discussion and possible action: Five Year Plan FY 2022 – FY 2026

An overview of the 5-Year Plan was provided. The Plan is based on assumptions for revenues and expenditures that are consistent with previously approved plans. Fund Balance is projected to grow gradually throughout the five-year period reaching 4.8% of expenditures by the final year. The plan also includes transfers to eliminate much of the deficit in the Capital Non-Recurring Fund.

Members discussed the timeline and process for the Town potentially coming out of oversight by the board. Based on the projections, it appears the Town may be eligible to end oversight in FY 2024.

A motion was made by Mr. Waxenberg with a second by Mr. Hamilton to approve the 5-Year Plan contingent upon approval by the Sprague Board of Selectmen. The motion was approved unanimously.

c. Review and discussion: Monthly Financial Report: April 2021

First Selectman Cheryl Blanchard reviewed the monthly financial report. The Town's revenues are trending similar to prior years, as are expenditures. The Board of Education is projecting an end of year balance of about \$175,000 primarily driven by savings in salary accounts.

V. City of West Haven

a. Subcommittee Update

A written update was provided in the meeting materials. The Subcommittee also met earlier in the morning to review and take action on the City's 5-Year Plan. The Subcommittee had requested an analysis of the possible impact on Fire Pension ADEC requirements of making changes to certain actuarial valuation assumptions in the upcoming valuation report. The Subcommittee reviewed the City's analysis and voted to recommend approval of the 5-Year Plan by a vote of 5-1.

b. Review, discussion and possible action: Five Year Plan FY 2022 – FY 2026

The Plan has been reviewed over several meetings. Secretary McCaw noted the Plan is sound with regard to its assumptions surrounding State Aid. The State budget provides an additional \$3 million in non-Education aid through the tiered PILOT payment. The fire districts will also be receiving additional aid. Fund Balance is projected to reach 6% of expenditures. Grand list growth assumptions are also conservative. The analysis of the Fire Pension assumption changes indicate that the pension contributions built into the 5-Year Plan could accommodate the impact of a discount rate change. If the amortization period were to be extended from 12 to 15 years, the net effect of both changes would be to reduce projected ADEC requirements.

Mr. White asked about the possibility of accelerating contributions to the OPEB liability. Mr. Cieplinski noted the line item in the Allingtown Fire budget. The City intends to incorporate the OPEB fund into the overall investment strategy that the City is working toward. Mr. Hamilton asked whether the additional revenue from the tiered PILOT could be directed toward these long term liabilities. Mr. Cieplinski replied that any additional funding could potentially be allocated toward internal service fund deficits. In response to a question from Ms. Shaw, Mr. Cieplinski explained that an RFP for an investment advisor has been re-issued.

A motion was made by Mr. White, with a second by Mr. Biller, to approve the 5-Year Plan contingent upon approval by the City Council. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0-1 with Mr. Egan abstaining.

c. Review and discussion: Monthly Financial Report: April 2021

Mr. Cieplinski provided an overview of the monthly financial report. Revenues are at 97% of target, consistent with prior years. An end of year surplus in the General Fund of approximately \$958,000 is projected, before taking into consideration unused Contingency of \$400,000. The Sewer Fund is also projected to end the year with a surplus. The Allingtown Fire Fund is projected to end the year at a break-even point. Mr. Cieplinski also provided a brief update on the City's corrective action plan. Mr. Waxenberg raised concerns about the fire districts and rising costs of health insurance. Mr. Cieplinski noted that efforts are being made to transition the Allingtown Fire employees to the State Partnership Plan.

VI. City of Hartford

a. Subcommittee update

A written update was provided with the meeting materials. The Subcommittee in May voted to recommend that the full MARB approve the City's 5-Year Plan and the proposed Police Union agreement.

b. Review, discussion and possible action: Five Year Plan FY 2022 – FY 2026

An overview of the proposed update to the 5-Year Plan was provided. The Subcommittee has reviewed the Plan and a number of mitigation measures proposed to close projected budget gaps in the out years of the Plan. Uncertainty around the level of State Aid in the Plan has been resolved with the adoption of the State budget. The revenues in the Plan are supported by the State budget recently approved, which provides the City with approximately \$22 million in tiered PILOT funding. The Plan is based on very conservative assumptions regarding the upcoming revaluation and includes energy efficiency measures and other initiatives to control expenditures through the five year period.

Mr. White made a motion, with a second by Mr. Biller, to approve the 5-Year Plan contingent upon City Council approval. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Review, discussion and possible action: Labor Contract

i. Hartford Police Union

Mayor Bronin explained that this is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been approved by City Council in response to the City's retention challenges in the Police Department. The department's salary schedule is not competitive in the state or regionally. The department has lost close to forty officers. The collective bargaining agreement is not open until next year, but the City and union agreed to the MOU to increase Officer pay to bring the pay scale more in line with other municipalities. Members discussed wage comparison data that was provided.

A motion was made by Mr. Egan with a second by Mr. White, to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Hartford and the Police Union.

d. Review and discussion: Non-Labor Contracts

- i. Aetna Parking Agreement (Hartford Public Schools)
- ii. Cigna Medical Third Party Administrator
- iii. Capital Workforce Partners: Summer Youth Employment
- iv. Hispanic Health Council: Maternal Infant Outreach Program
- v. Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford: Hispanic Senior Center
- vi. Parkville Senior Center, Inc.: Parkville Senior Center
- vii. Renewals:
 - 1. Blue Hills Civic Association: North End Senior and Wellness Center
 - 2. Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford: South End Senior and Wellness Center

City staff provided descriptions of each of the contracts provided for review.

e. Review and discussion: Monthly Financial Report: April 2021

Mayor Bronin reported that the City is projecting an end of year surplus of \$8.5 million, which is approximately \$2 million higher than projected in the prior month. This does not include the anticipated payment of a significant tax delinquency which is expected to generate an additional \$3.9 million.

VII. Other Business

VIII. Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. Falcigno to adjourn, with a second by Ms. Shaw. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:33.