

APPROVED
STATE OF CONNECTICUT
MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, January 27, 2022 11:30 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: 378 670 373

Members in Attendance: Kimberly Kennison (OPM Secretary designee), Christine Shaw (State Treasurer designee), Matthew Brokman, Patrick Egan, Sal Luciano, David Biller, Mark Waxenberg, Robert White

City Officials in Attendance: Jennifer Hockenhill, Leigh Ann Ralls, Superintendent Torres-Rodriguez, Phillip Penn, Natasha Banks, Tiffani Curtis, Melinda Kauffman (labor attorney), David Velez (Union president), Elizabeth Guerra (Union representative), Grace Figueroa (Union Vice President)

OPM Staff in Attendance: Julian Freund

I. Call to Order & Opening Remarks by Secretary Melissa McCaw and Treasurer Shawn Wooden

The meeting was called to order at 11:37 AM.

II. City of Hartford

a. Review, discussion and possible action: Labor Contract:

i. Federation of School Special Police Officers

This contract covers approximately 100 BOE employees and expired June 30, 2017. A tentative agreement for a successor contract with a term of July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2024 was signed and approved by both the union and the Board of Education. The MARB has authority to either approve, reject or take no action on the agreement. If the MARB chooses to take action, it has until February 3rd to do so. The Hartford Subcommittee met just prior to this meeting to review the proposed contract and voted to recommend approval by the full MARB.

Ms. Kauffman provided an overview of the contract provisions. The contract provides for general wage increases of 2% in FY 2023 and 2% in FY 2024. Step advancement is only provided in the current fiscal year (FY 2022) and includes an adjustment to the salary steps schedule resulting in increases of about 8% for members. Beginning July 1, 2022, members will be enrolled in the high deductible health plan. Premium cost share for members will increase from 12% to 12.5%.

Ms. Shaw asked why the expired contract took an extended time to negotiate. Ms. Kaufman explained that a previously negotiated agreement was rejected by the MARB. The Covid pandemic then delayed and slowed negotiations.

Mr. Egan asked about increases in the prior agreement. Ms. Kaufman said the FY 2013 – FY 2016 agreement provided increments of roughly 2% per year with steps. A one-year extension for FY 2017 provided 0% and no steps. Mr. Egan expressed concern with the stifling of wage movement and the number of years of 0% increases taken by this bargaining unit. Mr. Luciano noted other Hartford bargaining units that have taken multiple years of 0% wage increases.

Ms. Shaw asked if there are other contracts that have expired. Ms. Kauffman replied that there is a backlog that the district is currently negotiating. Mr. Luciano said that many of the contracts have taken extended periods of time to negotiate because members have sought a change to the State Partnership health plan.

Mr. Luciano made a motion to approve the contract with a second by Mr. Brokman. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Kennison noted that education on how members can best use the high deductible health plan will be provided in advance of the transition to that plan.

Mr. Brokman asked if the MARB's review of non-labor contracts will include contracts that are funded through ARPA or ESSER funds.

III. Adjourn

Mr. Luciano made a motion to adjourn with a second by Mr. Waxenberg. The meeting adjourned at 12:04 PM.