

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date and Time: Friday, March 21, 2025, 10:00 AM

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: 453 955 863#

Members in Attendance: Secretary Jeffrey Beckham, Kevin Alvarez (State Treasurer's Designee), Stephen Falcigno, Thomas Hamilton, Lisa Hammersley, Sal Luciano, Susan Weisselberg and Robert White.

Municipal Officials in Attendance: Mayor Dorinda Borer, Michael Gormany, Rick Spreyer, David Taylor, Neil Cavallaro, Craig Thompson, Matt Masek, Paul Dorsi, and Diane McManus.

OPM Staff in Attendance: Kimberly Kennison, Gareth Bye, John Mehr, Simon Jiang, Bill Plummer, Michael Reis, Rachel Moser, and Lori McLoughlin.

OAG Staff in Attendance: James Caley, Assistant Attorney General

Whittlesey Staff in Attendance: Edward Engberg and Chris Wisneski.

Protiviti Staff in Attendance: Charles Dong, Zachary Unger, and Sharon Chun.

I. Call to Order & Opening Remarks by Secretary Jeffrey Beckham

The Special Meeting was called to order at 10:01 AM.

Secretary Beckham remarked that today's meeting is for MARB members to hear from the attorneys concerning the litigation that the Board is involved with the West Haven Police Union regarding the pension plan. Also, this will be an opportunity to receive confidential information from our consultants regarding preliminary matters that need to be discussed with the Board.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. February 27, 2025, Regular Meeting

Mr. Falcigno made a motion to approve February 27, 2025, meeting minutes with a second from Ms. Weisselberg. Motion carried.

III. Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-200(6), Section 1-210(b) and Section 1-225(f), and 1-231 for the purpose of having an attorney client privileged discussion and for the purpose of reviewing Whittlesey Consultants' Draft Reports for the City of West Haven.

The MARB members went into Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes sections 1-200(6), 1-210(b), 1-225(f) and 1-231 for communications privileged by the attorney-client relationship and for reviewing Whittlesey Consultants' Draft Reports for the City of West Haven. Also attending the Executive Session were Attorney James Caley, Attorney Gareth Bye, Mayor Borer, Michael Gormany, Craig Thompson, and Matt Masek from the City of West Haven, Edward Engberg and Chris Wisneski from Whittlesey, and OPM staff.

Mr. Luciano made a motion to go into the Executive Session with a second from Mr. Falcigno. Motion carried. The MARB went into Executive Session at 10:06 AM.

Mr. Luciano made a motion to leave the Executive Session with a second from Mr. Falcigno. The MARB returned to the Special Meeting at 11:23 AM.

After returning to the Special Meeting, Secretary Beckham stated that the MARB discussed communications privileged by the attorney-client relationship and the Whittlesey consultant reports. The MARB is taking up item IV. A. i. on the agenda

IV. City of West Haven

a. Tier IV Action Plan Update:

i. Whittlesey Organizational Assessment Presentation

The Phase 2 and 3 reports were finalized by Whittlesey and were emailed to the MARB members. The reports relate to Governance, Tax Collector and Tax Assessor, Tax Filings, Hiring / Employment Practices, Grants Management, and Expenditure Analysis. Mr. Engberg provided an overview of the reports and stated that the City has made significant progress with internal controls.

Mr. Wisneski stated that Whittlesey was tasked to perform an Informational Technology (IT) assessment, and to evaluate the overall security risk for the City of West Haven, the Board of Education (BOE), and for the Public Safety and the Animal Control area. He provided a high-level overview of the IT valuation reports and acknowledged the City and the BOE for making rapid and effective security enhancements. He also praised the Public Safety department for maintaining a strong security posture. The written reports will be released next week.

Mr. Engberg said that the IT assessment was part of Phase 4 of the engagement. Therefore, Whittlesey has completed their engagement. Secretary Beckham thanked the Whittlesey team for their hard work and effort which resulted in a valuable contribution to the City's improvements.

ii. Protiviti - Financial Manager Trackers

Mr. Unger from Protiviti provided an update on Audit Tracker onto which the FY2024 audit findings were added. While there are significant improvements in closing these findings, he emphasized the progress that needs to be made in addressing control weakness and risks, and the importance of continued assistance in preparation for the FY2025 audit.

Secretary Beckham mentioned he planned to extend Protiviti's contract for a few months to address a number of outstanding policies, such as grant management and debt service. Mayor Borer expressed her concerns over the additional costs, stating the City's leadership team is capable of drafting policies. Secretary Beckham acknowledged the Mayor's concerns about the additional costs but believes the additional resources focused on drafting policies and resolving deficiencies in the audit will ensure continued progress and controls are in place. The Secretary will consider whether the City will be required to reimburse OPM for the added costs.

b. Mayor's Executive Summary

Mayor Borer said that since the last MARB meeting, the City has received an upgrade of its credit rating from Moody's which is the third upgrade within a year. The City announced a partnership with the University of New Haven that will be more financially equitable to West Haven.

The Mayor was looking forward to getting information from the Board on the status of West Haven. Secretary Beckham stated that members expect to discuss the City of West Haven's status under the MARB designation at the April 25, 2025, meeting.

c. Review, Discussion and Possible Actions: Non-Labor Contracts:

i. Ideal Group, LLC – Sale of Stiles School

The City went out to bid seeking proposals from qualified developers to purchase and redevelop the former Stiles School. Three (3) proposals were received. The review process included evaluation of the proposals, a site tour, and interviews with the bidders. The City selected Ideal Group, LLC from Stamford, CT at a sales price of \$423,000.

Mr. Dorsi negotiated the purchase and sale agreement with the Ideal Group to construct 30 apartments in this historical building built in 1930. Mr. Hamilton asked if it was determined that this site might be needed for future school purposes. Mayor Borer said that the building is unusable for any purpose without remediation.

Mr. Hamilton made a motion to approve the sales contract for Stiles School with a second from Mr. Falcigno. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Adjourn

The next West Haven Subcommittee Meeting, scheduled for March 27, 2025, has been postponed. The next regularly scheduled MARB meeting will be held at the Legislative Office Building on April 24, 2025, at 10:00 AM.

Mr. Luciano made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Alvarez. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 AM.