



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

MUNICIPAL FINANCE ADVISORY COMMISSION

DRAFT MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

Meeting Location:

Telephonic Meeting

Date/Time:

November 19, 2025, at 10:00 A.M.

Members Present:

Mr. Michael LeBlanc, Commission Chair
Ms. Kimberly Kennison
Mr. Anthony Genovese
Mr. Glenn Rybacki
Ms. Marcia Marien
Ms. Rebecca A. Sielman
Mr. Edward Sullivan
Ms. Diane Waldron

Others Present:

William Plummer, Michael Reis, John Mehr, Rachel Moser, Kathy Dempsey, Simon Jiang, Lori McLoughlin - OPM Staff
Kurt Miller, Budget Director, City of Ansonia
Kim DeStefano, Acting Comptroller, City of Ansonia
Joseph DiBacco, Superintendent, Ansonia Public Schools
Richard Bshara, President of the BOE, City of Ansonia
Kenneth Flatto, Finance Director, City of Bridgeport
Daniel Shamas, Chief of Staff, City of Bridgeport
Constance Vickers, Deputy Chief of Staff, City of Bridgeport
Frank Magneri, City OPM Director, City of Bridgeport
Royce Avery, Interim Superintendent, BOE, City of Bridgeport
Joseph DiMartino, Mayor, City of Derby
Brian Hall, Finance Director, City of Derby
Dr. Matthew J. Conway, Jr., Superintendent, Derby Public Schools
Robert Trainor, Business Manager, Derby Public Schools
Dan Cunningham, First Selectman, Town of East Lyme
Kevin Gervais, Finance Director, Town of East Lyme
Mitchell Nixon, Deputy Finance Director, Town of East Lyme
Lauren Garrett, Mayor, Town of Hamden
Rick Galarza, Deputy Finance Director, Town of Hamden
David R. Porter, Town Manager, Town of Marlborough
David Sekorski, Mayor, Town of Plymouth
Vijay Dora, Finance Director, Town of Plymouth
Frederick Presley, Town Manager, Town of Wethersfield
Michael O'Neil, Finance Director, Town of Wethersfield
John Accavallo, Accavallo & Company
Kyle Connors, CBIZ
Leslie Zoll, Michael Popham, Vanessa Rossitto - CLA
Kimberly Masson, Kimberly Mooers - State Treasurer's Office

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Commission Chair LeBlanc.

2. Approval of the meeting minutes of September 10, 2025

The September 10th minutes were unanimously approved by all Commissioners except for Commissioner Ryacki, who abstained as he was not in attendance for the September 10th meeting.

3. City of Bridgeport -P.A. 25-147: Plan to eliminate reliance on supplemental State grants-in-aid

Commission Chair LeBlanc commented that several Bridgeport officials were in attendance today to provide a presentation to the Commission on the City's strategic plan going forward to ensure it does not continue to rely on the Supplemental Grant-in-Aid to be provided by the State to the City in FY 2026 and 2027 is a requirement under P.A. 25-174. At Commissioner's LeBlanc request, each Commissioner introduced themselves to the City with a brief description of their professional role on the Commission.

Finance Director Kenneth Flatto introduced himself and several other Bridgeport officials in attendance. He and Deputy Chief of Staff, Constance Vickers indicated that Mayor Ganim was attending a Conference in Washington D.C. The Mayor is hoping to get an opportunity to call in to today's meeting but in the interest of time, Mr. Flatto and the other City officials in attendance will be making the presentation.

Note: Mayor Ganim did not join the meeting.

Mr. Flatto indicated that as presented in the 5-year plan, the City does have financial challenges, similar to every other big City in Connecticut. He referenced information the City provided to the Commission to assert the City's belief that the City is being financially short-changed regarding state aid when compared with other large population sized municipalities in the State. He explained the City had previously implemented several measures to achieve cost savings such as shared service projects with other communities and the building up of fund balance from approximately three percent to 8 percent to achieve a more appropriate rainy-day fund. The City has no cash flow challenges and pension liabilities are being reduced through additional pension contributions. The improved practices have led to the City's credit rating being upgraded over the past three years.

Frank Magneri, the City's Budget Director, described the 5-year plan assumptions and the mitigation plan including several assumption changes that the City would implement if actual results were not in line with the plan projections. Mr. Magneri referred Commissioners to the separate 5-year plan that the Board of Education (BOE) had developed. Mr. Flatto acknowledged that the City's BOE is facing serious financial challenges and is hoping that the Commission can be of assistance in this area.

Interim Superintendent Avery introduced himself to the Commission. He referenced the BOE's 5-year plan (FY 2026–FY 2030) which projected growing deficits. Mr. Avery indicated that the City and BOE is working with the State Department of Education's Technical Assistance team to implement a valid plan to address the projected deficits.

It was confirmed that OPM staff had not received the documents referenced by Superintendent Avery. Therefore, Commissioners were not provided with the BOE's 5-year plan and projections. During the meeting, Ms. Vickers transmitted the BOE information to OPM which was subsequently forwarded to Commissioners.

Commissioners expressed their concerns regarding the BOE FY 2026 through FY 2030 projections which indicate that without taking mitigating actions, the BOE will incur annual deficits in each year of the 5-year plan. The BOE projections indicate a FY 2026 deficit of \$22 million. The annual deficits over the 5-year period accumulate to approximately \$82 million as of June 30, 2030. As the BOE documents had not been shared with the Commission for today's meeting, Commissioners indicated their desire to receive and

review the BOE information in detail for possible additional questions. Questions were also posed regarding several of the City and BOE assumptions including their health insurance assumptions.

Commissioner LeBlanc indicated that after hearing the City and BOE plan/strategy for ensuring that supplemental grant-in-aid proceeds will not be relied upon in the future, the plan in some respects leads to the opposite conclusion. Barring additional measures, the plan information provided today indicates that additional state aid would likely be needed to finance future budgets. He is recommending that the City and BOE continue to have a dialog with OPM regarding its 5-year plan and strategy. Commissioner Kennison indicated her agreement with Commissioner LeBlanc's remarks. She would like to see a merger of the City and BOE 5-year plan rather than the two separate plans. It is beneficial that the State Dept. of Education is working with Bridgeport's BOE to resolve the projected deficits. It is also obvious that the 5-year plans provided appear to still be a work-in-progress and will need to be revised.

Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the City and BOE's presentation.

4. FY 2023 and 2024 Municipal Audit Reports Update

Commissioner LeBlanc noted that the final outstanding FY 2023 municipal audit report was submitted by the Town of Wethersfield to OPM on November 14th. He requested that Mr. Plummer provide an update regarding the FY 2024 municipal audits.

Mr. Plummer indicated that as to the FY 2024 municipal audit reports, there were 20 municipalities with delinquent reports as of July 1, 2025. Since then, from July to October, six municipalities submitted their delinquent audit reports. To date in November, the Town of Marlborough has submitted its FY 2024 financial, and State Single audit reports and the City of Danbury has submitted its FY 2024 financial audit with the State Single audit report still outstanding. To summarize, there are still 12 and a half delinquent FY 2024 municipal audit reports that remain outstanding. OPM has met with the five municipalities that could not provide a definitive projected date for submission of their delinquent reports. OPM will continue to monitor the remaining municipalities with outstanding FY 2024 audit reports and has already scheduled additional meetings with several.

Commissioner LeBlanc noted that officials from East Lyme, Marlborough and Wethersfield were in attendance to update the Commission on their delinquent audit reports.

a) Town of East Lyme:

Commissioner Marien noted for the record that she is not independent with respect to East Lyme.

First Selectman Dan Cunningham and Finance Director Kevin Gervais introduced themselves. Mr. Gervais provided a brief history of the delinquent report submissions for the past several years. He noted that the FY 2023 audit report was not submitted until thirteen months of becoming delinquent. He is projecting submission of the FY 2024 audit report within six to seven months of becoming delinquent. The shortened time frame would represent significant improvement. He noted that he had not provided the information requested by OPM for today's meeting in the timeframe requested by OPM and had only sent the information over to OPM this morning so it was unlikely that the information had been transmitted to the Commission.

Mr. Gervais described several new systems the Town has implemented in the past several years that would be of benefit to the Town, including a new accounting system, a new fixed assets software system, and a new utility billing program.

Commissioner LeBlanc inquired with Leslie Zoll of CLA, the Town's independent auditor, whether she was in agreement with Mr. Gervais projection that the FY 2024 audit report would be issued by the end of January 2026. Ms. Zoll indicated that the January projection may be overly optimistic since the audit firm was provided with East Lyme's trial balance only last week and the firm would need to

review to ensure its accuracy and completeness. Mr. Gervais indicated that he would schedule a meeting with the audit firm to agree upon a target date for completion of the FY 2024 audit. He indicated that OPM is welcome to participate in the meeting.

First Selectman Cunningham indicated his understanding of the need for timely audit submissions and for the Town to catch up on its late audit submissions. He plans to work diligently towards this important goal.

Commissioners expressed their appreciation for today's presentation from the Town.

b) Town of Marlborough

Marlborough's Town Manager, David Porter, indicated that Interim Finance Director, Linda Savitsky, was unable to attend today's meeting. He is happy to report that the FY 2024 audit report was submitted to OPM in November. The Town will be holding a call with its audit firm, CLA, on December 2nd to initiate the start of the FY 2025 audit. The Town will likely need to request a couple of extensions, but he expects the FY 2025 audit report to be issued well before the June 30, 2026, deadline. Commissioner LeBlanc congratulated Marlborough on its FY 2024 audit completion and indicated that submission of the FY 2025 audit report during the first quarter of calendar year 2026 would represent a significant improvement.

Commissioners expressed their appreciation for today's presentation from the Town.

c) Town of Wethersfield

Commissioner Sielman stated that the Town of Wethersfield was a client of her firm.

Finance Director Michael O'Neil introduced himself and indicated that Town Manager Fred Presley was in attendance earlier but may have been called away to attend to another matter

Mr. O'Neil acknowledged the submission in November of the FY 2023 audit report. The Town has met with OPM and CLA on a tentative timeline for the FY 2024 audit but the timeline has not yet been fully developed. The Town is preparing to work with its auditor on an audit plan for the FY 2024 audit in January of 2026. Commissioner Kennison acknowledged the work that Vanessa Rossitto and her team at CLA had made to prioritize and complete the FY 2023 audit. Ms. Rossitto indicated that Leslie Zoll would be taking over future audits for East Lyme, Marlborough and Wethersfield due to her upcoming retirement. Commissioners congratulated her on her upcoming retirement from the audit firm.

Mr. O'Neil believes that 75% of the work needed to be completed by the Town for the FY 2024 audit has been completed. One of the few remaining significant open items is the Tax Collector's Report. The Town is currently working on medical and OPEB accounting and reporting matters as well as capital assets and compensated absences.

Commissioner LeBlanc indicated his desire for the Town to develop a plan and timetable for returning to timely audits. Mr. O'Neil indicated that the Town is highly motivated in completing its FY 2024 and 2025 audits as quickly as possible as the Town intends to go out to the bond market in the summer of 2026. He is targeting completion of the FY 2024 and 2025 audits by the end of June 2026.

Commissioners expressed their appreciation for today's presentation from the Town.

5. City of Ansonia

Commissioners Rybacki and Sielman noted for the record that Ansonia was a client of their respective firms.

Budget Director Kurt Miller introduced himself to the Commission. He indicated that a new administration would be taking office in December with the election loss of Mayor Cassetti. The status of some staff members such as he and Mr. Bshara are unknown at this time as he has not had a chance to discuss with the Mayor-elect.

Mr. Miller indicated that Ansonia is no longer listed as a distressed municipality. The Town was previously listed as a distressed municipality for the past 15 years. He believes that the underlying demographics of the City have strongly improved. The FY 2025 audit has been progressing and currently, based upon communication with the City's audit firm, he is projecting completion of the audit by the end of December. Mr. Miller indicated that the FY 2025-26 budget vs. actual results to date have been good. Expenditures are in line with projections and the initiatives implemented, such as the energy efficient projects are having a positive impact on the City's budget. Kim DeStefano, the City's interim Finance Director, indicated that she could not provide a specific dollar amount for the estimated fund balance as of June 30, 2025 but she does believe that there will be an increase to the FY 2024 fund balance.

Commissioner Genovese indicated that he is aware of the City's intent to run the WPCA sale and the various projects and the related transfers in and out through the General Fund. Nevertheless, by doing this, it creates some difficulties in following the transactions and in comparing the budget vs actual results provided. He therefore posed a series of questions to Mr. Miller and Ms. DeStefano. The questions were answered by the City. Mr. Miller acknowledged that the revenue stabilization funds that were set aside were anticipated to constrain tax increases are anticipated to be extinguished by the end of FY 2028. Commissioner Marien indicated that in the September meeting of the Commission she requested that the City provide a 5-year plan that depicted the spend down of these set-aside funds to determine its impact on taxes. She also suggested that the City consider the bond transactions as due to/due from balance sheet transactions to avoid those transactions from being presented in the General Fund budget vs actual results. Mr. Miller indicated that he would provide the information requested by Commissioner Marien to OPM. Several other questions were posed by Commissioners and answered by the City.

Commissioners expressed their appreciation for today's presentation from the City.

6. City of Derby

Commissioner Rybacki stated that Derby was a client of his firm.

Mayor DiMartino commented that he believes his recent re-election as Mayor is a clear message from Derby residents of their preference for continued fiscal discipline and the City's financial progress over the past two years. The FY 2025 audit is well underway, and the City has submitted all requested information to its new audit firm on time. Regarding staffing, the Finance and Tax offices are fully staffed as well as the BOE. The core functionality of the City's new financial accounting system is working well and the City plans to use more of its features going forward. Although the reconciliation process with the BOE has improved, additional work needs to be done in this area. A consultant has been retained to assist with fixing the issues.

Finance Director Brian Hall indicated that the City is still projecting an \$800,000 operating surplus for FY 2024-25. It is somewhat early to project results for FY 2025-26, but at this point the City appears to be on track for a positive operating result. The City has started preliminary work on its FY 2026-27 budget, which will also reflect the results of the revaluation. Mayor DiMartino and Mr. Hall are evaluating the possibility of exemptions to assist with the property tax burden on certain City residents.

Commissioner LeBlanc stated that Commissioners have noted the progress the City has made regarding its fiscal condition. He pointed to the requirement that the City, as a designated Tier I municipality under the oversight of the Commission, is to develop and provide the Commission a 5-year plan regarding its financial projections and restoration to fiscal health. With the start of the FY 2026-27 budget development process, this would be an ideal time for the City to begin work on the 5-year plan. He suggested that Mr. Hall reach out to OPM on this matter and to call upon Commissioners should he have questions or seek samples of a 5-year plan.

Mayor DiMartino commented upon the great work Mr. Hall has done in assisting to improve upon the City's fiscal condition and practices and that the City was fortunate to have him on board.

Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the City's attendance at today's meeting.

7. **Town of Hamden**

Mayor Garrett introduced herself and other members of her staff in attendance. She also indicated that Kyle Connors of CBIZ, the Town's independent auditor, was in attendance. She indicated that although the Town has been working diligently on the FY 2023-24 audit, the audit is still incomplete. To assist with the FY 2024 audit, the Town has retained its former auditor to assist with the FY 2024 audit. This would include work on FY 2024 beginning balances and work at the BOE. As to the FY 2025 audit, she believes that the Town's records are in much better condition and therefore there should not be a need for the additional work as compared to FY 2024.

Commissioner LeBlanc inquired whether any of the balances as of June 30, 2023 were changing or was it a matter of getting certain entries to agree? Mayor Garrett indicated that balances at June 30, 2023 were not expected to be changed and that it would be the latter caused by not making the adjusting entries for FY 2023. There is no definitive projected date for completion of the FY 2024 audit. Mayor Garrett believes that the Town side is in good shape but she is unsure as to the BOE side as the former auditor has yet to review and work on the BOE side. Commissioner LeBlanc expressed his desire for BOE officials to attend the next meeting of the Commission.

Commissioner Rybacki expressed his concerns with the current staffing in the Finance Office and the Finance Director vacancy. He indicated that without additional help for the Finance Office he is concerned as to when the FY 2024 audit will be completed as well as the FY 2025 audit which is due at the end of December. Mayor Garrett indicated that a request had been made to the Legislative Council for an additional accountant and the Council has approved. The Town is working with the Union on the job description. She does recognize the need for additional staffing in the Finance Office. Commissioner Sullivan asked if the Mayor could confirm that there would be no changes to June 30, 2023, ending fund balances from the work being done by the former auditor. She confirmed that this was her understanding and that the changes were to the City's MUNIS accounting system and would not impact fund balance.

Several Commissioners expressed concerns with the fund balance projections provided by the Town. It appears that the Town is projecting a significant operating surplus for FY 2024, but for FY 2025 and 2026, the Town is projecting a significant drop in fund balance. Questions were posed by Commissioners regarding the Town's continual practice of using fund balance towards balancing its budgets including in FY 2025 and 2026 where the use of fund balance amounts appear to have increased. Concerns were also made regarding the seven million in cost savings the Town had budgeted as a negative expense in order to balance the FY 2026 budget.

Assistant Finance Director, Rick Galarza, walked Commissioners through the fund balance analysis he had developed. The analysis indicated that for FY 2024, Hamden is projecting a \$9.8 million addition to fund balance that would bring the fund balance to approximately \$46.3 million. However, the Town is projecting annual operating deficits of \$17.9 million and \$16.0 million for FY 2025 and FY 2026, respectively. Culminating with a cumulative fund balance of approximately \$12.3 million as of June 30, 2026. As Mr.

Galarza's analysis information was only provided to OPM this morning by the Town, Commissioner Kennison indicated that the document would be transmitted to Commissioners after today's meeting.

Commissioners agreed that OPM should meet with the Mayor-elect to advise him of the Commission's concerns with the projected significant erosion of Hamden's fund balance as the Town will soon be developing its FY 2026-27 budget. Commissioner Kennison indicated that she will be scheduling a meeting in the near future with the Mayor-elect regarding the Commission's concerns.

On behalf of Commissioners, Commissioner LeBlanc thanked Mayor Garrett for her continued attendance to each MFAC meeting since she took office and her work in implementing the recommendations of the Commission towards improving Hamden's financial condition.

8. Town of Plymouth

Commissioner Selman stated that the Town of Plymouth was a client of her firm.

Finance Director, Vijay Dora, announced that the newly elected Mayor, David Sekorski, was in attendance for today's meeting. Mayor Sekorski introduced himself to Commissioners and indicated that he will be working with Mr. Dora and his staff, the Town's independent auditor, Kyle Connors of CBIZ as well as the MFAC to ensure that the Town gets back to producing timely audit submissions. Commissioner LeBlanc welcomed Mayor Sekorski and indicated that Commissioners are available as a resource to assist with any questions or concerns he may have regarding audit matters or other financial and budget matters related to Plymouth.

Mr. Connors provided an update on the status of the FY 2024 audit report. The Town was provided with a draft of the FY 2024 financial audit report and the report is making its way through his audit firm's quality control review process. The auditor is working on the FY 2024 State and Federal Single Audits. He expects the FY 2024 audit reports to be issued by the end of the calendar year. Mr. Connors is projecting that the General Fund will have an operating surplus for FY 2023-24 of approximately \$1.0 million. Mr. Dora stated that for FY 2024-25 the Town is still projecting a \$1.7 million operating surplus. FY 2025-26 is incomplete but currently he is expecting the Town to have another surplus. He expects the surplus to be over \$1.0 million.

Commissioners thanked Mayor Sekorski and Mr. Dora for attending today's meeting.

9. Other Business

Commissioner LeBlanc referred Commissioners to the draft MFAC guidelines included in today's packet. He will be delaying the approval vote for adopting the guidelines until the new year which should provide ample time for Commissioners to review.

Commissioners agreed that the September 9, 2026, Commission meeting should be changed from a virtual to an in-person meeting. The proposed calendar year 2026 meeting dates were unanimously adopted.

10. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Kennison
Commission Secretary