



STATE of CONNECTICUT
Office of Governmental Accountability
State Contracting Standards Board

Regular Meeting Minutes

Friday, June 14, 2024 - 10:30 A.M.

Location: 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT

Conference Rooms G006D and G007E

And *Virtual*

This meeting was recorded and posted to the [Connecticut State Contracting Standards Board](#) website.

Board Members in Attendance:

Rochelle N. Palache, Chairperson (in person)

Thomas G. Ahneman, Board Member (virtually)

Alfred W. Bertoline, Board Member (in person)

Keith R. Brothers, Board Member (in person)

Bruce H. Buff, Board Member (in person)

Lauren C. Gauthier, Board Member (in person)

Albert G. Ilg, Board Member (in person)

Donna M. Karnes, Board Member (virtually)

Salvatore C. Luciano, Board Member (in person)

Stuart L. Mahler, Board Member (in person)

James S. Marpe, Board Member (in person)

Daniel S. Rovero, Board Member (virtually)

Brenda L. Sisco, Board Member (in person)

Gregory F. Daniels, Esq., Executive Director, ex-officio Board Member (in person)

Staff Members in Attendance:

Jonathan M. Longman, Chief Procurement Officer (virtually)

Aaron I. Felman, Staff Attorney (in person)

Maritza Lopez, Accounts Examiner (in person)

Samson Anderson, Research Analyst (in person)

Carmen Hufcut, Training Specialist (virtually)

Aleshia M. Hall, Administrative Assistant (in person)

MINUTES

On the above date and time, a regular meeting of the State Contracting and Standards Board was held; the following business was discussed:

1. Call to Order and Welcome: Chair Rochelle N. Palache called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m.
 - a. Introduction of Chair Rochelle N. Palache: Executive Director Greg Daniels introduced and welcomed Rochelle Palache, the new Chairperson of the State Contracting Standards Board. Chair Palache shared her background with the attendees.
 - b. Introduction of New Board Members: Executive Director Greg Daniels also introduced and welcomed two new Board Members:
 - i. Keith R. Brothers
 - ii. James S. Marpe
 - c. Introduction of Current Board Members: Each of the board members introduced themselves to the group.
2. Approval of Minutes from the February 9, 2024, SCSB Regular Meeting
 - a. Action: Bruce Buff moved to approve the February 9, 2024, SCSB Regular Meeting minutes as written, which was seconded by Al Bertoline. The motion was passed unanimously without discussion.
3. Amendments to the June 2024 Agenda
 - a. Stuart Mahler recommended eliminating agenda item 3, “Amendments to the Agenda”, stating that both agenda items 3 and 8 give come from the Town council form of government where circumstances warrant citizens to requests changes to the meeting agenda in such a manner. During the discussion, Mr. Mahler also clarified that he was requesting the change be effective for future meeting agendas.
 - b. Action: Lauren Gauthier moved to eliminate agenda item 3 from future meeting agendas, which was seconded by Stuart Mahler. After additional discussion, the motion passed unanimously.
 - c. c. Lauren Gauthier inquired whether the SCSB would receive a report from Mr. Longman under the Staff Report agenda item. Chair Palache noted that, due to the shortened meeting and time constraints, Mr. Longman’s report would be included in next month’s meeting.
 - d. Lauren Gauthier also asked whether the draft Ethics policy discussed during the February 12, 2024, regular meeting would be discussed at the current meeting. Director Daniels informed Ms. Gauthier that due to the shortened meeting and time constraints, the policy was added to the July 12, 2024, regular meeting agenda.
 - e. Sal Luciano requested that the Old Business section of the July 2024 agenda include evaluations of Jonathan Longman and Greg Daniels. Mr. Luciano shared that upon discussion of that item, he plans to make a motion to delay the evaluation for three months thereafter. There was some discussion in which he clarified for Lauren Gauthier that the date for the evaluations would be set at the July meeting. There was no opposition by the Board to adding this item to the July 2024 agenda for the purpose indicated.

4. Opportunity for Citizens to Address the Board on June 2024 Agenda Items: No citizens requested to address the Board.
5. Communications and Petitions
 - a. Sec. 4e-36 Contested Solicitations and Awards Subcommittee Report – Bruce H. Buff
 - i. Bruce Buff reported that there were no actions before the Subcommittee at this time.
 - b. Audit/Data Analysis Work Group – Alfred W. Bertoline
 - i. Pending Audits: Al Bertoline reported that the workgroup activity has been robust. He reported that 11 agencies were selected to be audited and are in process. Mr. Bertoline also reported that, overall, five agencies are close to completion and the other six are in process, including those agencies from which we have received all the data but have not yet been reviewed. He noted that three more agencies are working on submitting their paperwork. Mr. Bertoline stated that the workgroup originally hoped to have the audits completed by June 30, which will not be possible; however, work is progressing. Some agencies have minor issues, and some have more significant issues. Agencies requiring mitigation are given 60 days to submit a plan in response to the audit. This information will be used to identify the areas of concern which will be used as a platform for training development.
 - ii. Stuart Mahler initiated a discussion regarding the percentage of the State’s budget that is allocated to purchasing. Al Bertoline referred to his recommendation to initiate a Centralized Purchasing Unit to help control costs.
 - iii. Bruce Buff reinforced that OPM does not have oversight on many of the contracts, so you can focus on specific issues that may not reflect the larger picture. Lauren Gauthier stated that she wants to focus on results-based accountability issues.
 - iv. Sal Luciano referenced Bruce Buff’s recommendation about Centralized Procurement. He recommended that this be placed on future agendas for discussion.
 - c. Privatization Contract Committee Report – Salvatore C. Luciano
 - i. Sal Luciano reported that there are two issues before the Committee. The Office of Higher Education (OHE) requested assistance with the Stone Academy school closing that affected 900 students. A year later, the business continues. OHE has requested a six-month extension and is concerned that there is a gap between the current contract and the initiation of a new contract that covers the gap. This issue will be revisited under New Business.
 - d. Statutes, Regulations, Policies and Procedures Work Group – Chair Rochelle N. Palache
 - i. Chair Palache reported that SCSB Staff are resuming work on various Board regulations, policies, and procedures. She encouraged SCSB Members who wish to assist the Staff in the process to contact Director Daniels.
 1. Sal Luciano stated that she is the Chair of all the subcommittees, and he recommended that Bruce serve as Chair for those committees to lessen her workload. Chair Palache will take this into consideration for discussion.
 - e. Staff Report:
 - i. Administrative and Operations – Gregory F. Daniels, Executive Director
 1. Director Daniels reported that for the first time in the history of the Board, beginning in March 2024, the SCSB staff instituted written monthly staff reports

for the purpose of transparency and building trust with the public. These reports are posted on our website at <https://portal.ct.gov/scsb>.

2. Website Updates – Director Daniels has been continually updating SCSB website. BITS is scheduled to assist with recreating the website in the future. In the meantime, Director Daniels has been adding information to the site including updated organizational charts, a new page for Biographies for Board Members has been created, and dormant website sections are being updated and reviewed. Pages have been updated and populated appropriately and will reflect the audits and reports. This is all an initiative to be transparent to the public.
3. Status of 23 C.G.S. CT SCSB Deliverables: Deliverables 1 – 6 are almost completed from the 23 Chapter 62 that were identified during the December 2023 Regular Meeting.
 - a) Deliverables 1-2: Prepare for the annual performance plan and evaluation of the Executive Director and Chief Procurement Officer
 - i. Director Daniels reported that on February 9, 2024, Al Ilg, with the assistance of David Guay, completed this task. This item is still pending.
 - b) Deliverable 3: Secure an Executive Branch list of all designated procurement officers.
 - i. Director Daniels reported that he completed this task on January 12, 2024. The list will be continually modified as needed.
 - c) Deliverable 4: Determine who is the minority “certified procurement” appointment?
 - i. Director Daniels reported that he completed this task on January 12, 2024.
 - d) Deliverable 5: Convene four times annually, the Contracting Standards Advisory Council
 - i. Director Daniels reported that the SCSB Staff, led by Jonathan Longman, with inter-agency collaboration from the Governor’s Office, OPM, DAS, UConn, DOT, DPH, DSS, and the State Insurance Risk Management Board, have established Connecticut’s first [Contracting Standards Advisory Council per C.G.S. §4e-8](#). The first meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2024, and the council plans to meet four times annually per the statute.
 - ii. Director Daniels directed newer SCSB Members to the February 9, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes, specifically to Bruce Buff’s discussion of the proposed centralized Procurement organization. During the February meeting, the SCSB recommended referring the proposed centralized procurement organization to the Contracting Standards Advisory Council. Director Daniels detailed how Mr. Buff expressed the importance of this initiative, requiring a broader discussion with stakeholders from myriad areas across government. Bylaws for this committee have been drafted. The February 2024 meeting minutes include Bruce Buff’s presentation which summarizes this initiative.
 - e) Deliverable 6: Review SCSB’s ability to send statutory changes after July 1, 2012 – Attorney Felman completed this task on January 12, 2024.

4. SCSB Budget Update: A biennium Budget was submitted prior to Greg Daniels' appointment as SCSB Executive Director. We received funding for staff but not for operations, which puts us in a difficult position financially. Over the past months, the staff and Greg have been working diligently to attempt to secure operational funding or carry over the FY'24 surplus. Despite repeated requests to OPM for operational funding or surplus carryover, approval has not been granted. The impact is dire and may force us to be creative in how we reduce expenses. Just a couple of days ago, we made our last request to carry over funding into the next fiscal year. We will not know if we are given consideration until after the new fiscal year is underway.
 - a) Al Ilg asked for examples of what we require funding for. Director Daniels explained that the State guarantees state employee salaries. Everything else is operational expenses.
 - b) Jonathan Longman clarified that there are two funding categories, salaries and operational expenses. Brenda Cisco noted that we are under OGA. All the OGA agencies share a \$25,000 operational expenses budget. Director Daniels confirmed that he requested a fiscal adjustment for operating expenses during the Legislative session through OPM to no avail. A carry forward request for \$30,000 is still pending.
- ii. Legislative Update – Samson Anderson, Research Analyst
 1. Research Analyst Samson Anderson reported that SB 391, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE CONTRACTING STANDARDS BOARD (which can be viewed at [CGA - Connecticut General Assembly](#))
 2. Sal Luciano shared that ‘several of them’ went to the Legislative Assembly to get their bills passed and thought it may have been discussed if we were meeting. Discussion followed to include Brenda Cisco reminding the Board that they were not aware that the Chair was about to step down and that going forward, we need to be a cohesive board and act collectively going forward. She continued to share that there were a lot of factors in the proposed bills that caused them not to pass. Stuart Mahler confirmed that the legislation passed in the Senate but did not get taken up by the House.
 3. Chair Palache reaffirmed Brenda Cisco’s statement that we need to act together to move forward.
- iii. Legal Analysis – Aaron I. Felman, Staff Attorney
 1. Sal Luciano referenced the legal opinion received from Aaron Felman and requested all legal opinions and memorandums that have been written by him. Aaron Felman confirmed that his job is to give legal advice in the form of formal written advice all the way to quick chats and discussions regarding current business topics. His work may or may not require research and may not necessarily be reduced to writing in all instances. At present, there has been only one written opinion and that has been shared with the Board.
 2. Greg stated that our staff members have spent an inordinate amount of time responding to various requests from certain members and asked if those members would consider if they feel this is the best use of resources on behalf of the citizens of Connecticut.

3. Chair Palache interjected that off-the-record conversations may be beneficial going forward.
 - iv. SCSB Training Plan Update – Administrative Assistant Aleshia Hall reported on behalf of Training Specialist Carmen Hufcut:
 1. SCSB continues efforts to become accredited and be able to offer Continuing Educational Units (CEU's) to participants. The International Accreditors for Continuing Education and Training has granted SCSB an extension to file its initial application before December 31, 2024.
 - a) Category 1, which refers to Organization, Responsibility, and Control was completed earlier this month.
 - b) There are eight (8) additional categories required.
 - c) A new Curriculum Management Plan has been developed.
 - d) We are collaborating with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to research the implications and application of the State Intellectual Property Policy.
 - e) The staff will continue to meet regularly to further these efforts until completion.
 2. In response to Lauren Gauthier's inquiries, the accreditation process was discussed. Jonathan Longman will meet with Carmen Hufcut and send the updated Training Plan to the Board.
 3. Chair Palache confirmed that everyone has access to email.
6. Old Business
- a. Consideration/Action of the Proposed Settlement from the Privatization Contract Committee on the *Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and Diverse Computing Matter* – Salvatore C. Luciano
 - i. Sal Luciano referenced a Memorandum of Understanding, which the subcommittee recommended approving. He recommended that the approval be attached to the complaint so it sets a precedent and can be used for future reference.
 - ii. Action: Lauren Gauthier moved to accept the offer with prejudice was made, and Stuart Mahler seconded the motion.
 - iii. Discussion: Executive Director Daniels inquired if the words "with prejudice" had been discussed with the involved parties. Brenda Cisco expressed concern about changing language that had not been discussed with the involved parties.
 - iv. In response, Sal Luciano recommended that the motion be amended to withdraw the words, "with prejudice".
 - v. In response, Laura Gauthier agreed to make a motion to accept the offer as discussed with the parties.
 - vi. Action: Lauren Gauthier moved to accept the offer with prejudice was made, and Stuart Mahler seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.
7. New Business
- a. Consideration/Action on Privatization Committee Recommendation regarding the Office of Higher Education's Privatization Request for a six-month contract extension in support of the Stone Academy Closing – Salvatore C. Luciano

- i. Action: Lauren Gauthier moved to allow approval of the extension, and Brenda Sisco seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.
 - b. Consideration/Action on Request to Reconstitute the Training Workgroup was requested by Director Daniels. After discussion with the Accreditation Program, Carmen Hufcut feels that training development would benefit from the expertise of Board members.
 - i. Jonathan Longman shared that the Accreditation Program requires oversight by an Oversight Committee.
 - ii. No action was required to reconstitute the workgroup
 - iii. Volunteers were solicited: Lauren Gauthier volunteered to participate.
 - iv. Brenda Cisco recommended that we consider charging agencies fees for the employees who participate. James Marpe referred to the benefit of absorbing those costs to not impede participation in the courses in which we want to encourage participation.
 - c. Consideration/Action on [Acceptable Use of State Systems Policy](#) – Gregory F. Daniels
 - i. In accordance with the Ethics training offered to the SCS Board and staff on April 5, 2024, the importance of using state-issued emails must be the new standard. Director Daniels is raising this issue again and requesting that we use ct.gov email to securely access files that are related to the public’s business. This is required by State policy and may involve attorney-client privileged information as well as confidential information. As public officials and employees, it is our duty to adhere to State mandates. The Executive Director of State Ethics stressed that Board members adhere to this important mandate. Board members are encouraged to reach out to Carmen Hufcut if anyone requires assistance with accessing ct.gov emails. Bruce Buff shared that he has had difficulty logging into ct.gov and accessing files. He is concerned that many members of the Board are technically challenged and do not have access to IT support. Brenda Cisco said that she thinks from an ethical perspective, it is important that the Board members should take the implications seriously and attempt to move forward. Al Bertoline agreed that all email communications should be through ct.gov emails. James Marpe emphasized the concern that you do not want to be called upon to grant access to your personal email because it was being used for State business.
 - ii. Director Daniels understands the frustrations but shared that it is his duty to share the importance of this with the Board members and Carmen Hufcut is a resource available to assist.
 - iii. Shared email addresses are not acceptable when sending confidential information.
 - iv. State-issued devices continue to be available to all Board members. If you wish to have a device configured for your use, please direct your request to Director Daniels at Greg.Daniels@ct.gov with a copy to Carmen.Hufcut@ct.gov.
 - v. Organizational Chart update: Stuart Mahler referenced Jonathan Longman’s requirements and placed them on the Board. Mr. Mahler stated that Jon should be reporting to Greg for Administrative purposes. He also stated that under C.G.S. Sec. 4e-2 (g) the Board appoints a Chief Executive Officer. Director Daniels clarified that changes to the organizational can be revisited at a later meeting at the request of the board through the Chair.
8. Opportunity for Citizens to Address the SCSB
- a. Chair Palache invited public comment; no one requested to speak.

9. Adjournment

- a. Action: Sal Luciano moved to adjourn the meeting, and Lauren Gauthier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Aleshia M. Hall
Administrative Assistant