



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
Office of Governmental Accountability  
State Contracting Standards Board

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**Regular Meeting Minutes**

Friday, October 11, 2024 - 10:00 A.M.

Location: 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT  
Conference Rooms G006D and G009F  
and *Virtual*

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Rochelle N. Palache, Chairperson (in person)  
Thomas G. Ahneman, Board Member (in person)  
Lauren C. Gauthier, Board Member (in person)  
Donna M. Karnes, Board Member (virtually)  
Stuart L. Mahler, Board Member (in person)  
Jean M. Morningstar, Board Member (virtually)  
Daniel S. Rovero, Board Member (virtually)  
Brenda S. Sisco, Board Member (virtually)  
Gregory F. Daniels, Esq., Executive Director, ex-officio Board Member (in person)

**Staff Members in Attendance:**

Aaron I. Felman, Staff Attorney (in person)  
Carmen Hufcut, Trainer Specialist (in person)  
Maritza Lopez, Accounts Examiner (in person)  
Aleshia M. Hall, Administrative Assistant (virtually)

1. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Palache at 10:02 a.m.
  - a. **Roll Call of Board Members** – Chair Palache conducted a roll call of all members present in person and participating remotely via Microsoft Teams.
  - b. **Board Membership Update** – Chair Palache announced the resignation of Bruce H. Buff from the board effective September 30, 2024, thanked him for his contributions throughout the years and hoped to celebrate Mr. Buff with a lunch or dinner in the near future.
  
2. **Approval of Minutes**
  - a. **Approval of the minutes from the September 20, 2024, SCSB Special Meeting**

A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by: Thomas Ahneman

The motion was seconded by: Donna Karnes

Stuart Mahler noted his concern about Director Daniels' use of the word *improper* in reference to past audit findings in the budget process. While Mr. Mahler has no problem with the use of the word, he wanted to point out that there are multiple agencies that comprise the Office of Governmental Accountability, and they do not all have as much contact with other agencies as ours does. He closed his comments by stating that he has no problem with the use of the word *improper*.

Having concluded the discussion, the motion passed unanimously with abstentions from Donna Karnes (who was not in attendance at the September meeting), Jean Morningstar and Lauren Gauthier.

### 3. **Communications and Petitions**

#### a. **Sec. 4e-36 Contested Solicitations and Awards Subcommittee Report –Stuart L. Mahler**

Stuart Mahler stated that by statute, the 4e-36 subcommittee must have three members: the resignation of Bruce Buff leaves them with only two. He shared that this Subcommittee has existed since the Board was created and it has reviewed approximately 12 cases to date.

On September 4, 2024, Common Cents EMS LLC, located in Old Saybrook, filed a complaint in accordance with the prescribed timeline. Mr. Mahler reviewed the decision based upon the procedural portion under our purview and found that the contest had no merit. That is the decision of the Subcommittee. There may be more discussion to follow between the vendor and DAS, but the work of the 4e-36 subcommittee is completed.

In reference to the decision above, Ms. Gauthier asked the status of an FOI request from the vendor related to that discussion. Director Daniels said that Gene Burk has confirmed that the FOI is directed to the Department of Public Health (DPH), so we are not the stewards of the records. Mr. Ahneman confirmed that this is part of the Minnesota multi-state contract, and it is meritless. Chair Palache appreciated their good work on the decision rendered on the Common Cents EMS Supply LLC Complaint against DPH's Use of Multi-state Contract for Purchase of Miscellaneous Medical Supplies, Contract #24PSX0106.

#### b. **Privatization Contract Committee Report – Chair Salvatore C. Luciano**

On behalf of Salvatore Luciano, who was not in attendance, Chair Palache stated that there was nothing to report.

#### c. **Audit/Data Analysis Work Group**

##### i. **Audit/Data Analysis Work Group Report**

On behalf of Al Bertoline, who was not in attendance, Chair Palache stated that there was nothing to report.

##### ii. **Budget Sub-Work Group Report – Chair Brenda L. Sisco**

Chair Brenda Sisco deferred her presentation.

d. **Statutes, Regulations, Policies and Procedures Work Group** – Chair Rochelle N. Palache

i. **Statutes, Regulations, Policies and Procedures Work Group Report** – Chair Rochelle N. Palache

Chair Palache announced that she will be appointing someone to replace her as chair on this Work Group in the near future.

ii. **Personnel Review Sub-Work Group Report** – Chair James S. Marpe

Chair Palache announced that she has appointed James Marpe as chair of the Personnel Review Sub-Work Group.

e. **Training Work Group Report** – Chair Rochelle N. Palache

Chair Palache is working with staff to reschedule a meeting date for the Training Work Group. Carmen Hufcut will be the staff lead in managing the training work group initiatives and meeting agendas.

f. **XL Center Work Group Report** – Chair Lauren C. Gauthier

Lauren Gauthier reported that the issue can be closed, and no further action will be taken. The work group was disbanded at her recommendation.

g. **Staff Report**

i. **Administrative and Operations** – Gregory F. Daniels, Executive Director

In addition to his responsibilities, Executive Director Daniels reported that, in the absence of the CPO, he is fulfilling additional duties including Contested Cases and Audit work. Our staff members are stretched and may need more time to meet their timelines. Presently, the agency is still getting the work done and meeting our goals and responsibilities.

ii. **Legal Update** – Aaron I. Felman, Staff Attorney

Attorney Felman reported that we received an inquiry from Giovanni Masoni regarding: CPA RFP No. CPA0024-CM (Connecticut Port Authority) which includes some areas under our purview related to communications and marketing. The inquiries included:

a. Seeking clarification on the criteria and definition of *experience or significant knowledge*.

b. A definition of the geographic preference for this contract was requested.

Attorney Felman shared that this generally requires a mileage standard to or from

a particular location. This inquiry is not under our purview. CPA is quasi-public agency; therefore, it has specific governance.

- c. Seeking clarification on how an out-of-state contractor can ensure fairness and consideration. Attorney Felman explained that this is outside the legal scope of the State Contracting Standards Board.

Mr. Ahneman asked how geographic preference was considered and believes this inquiry was a misunderstanding by the vendor.

Attorney Felman will provide a written response to the contractor which requires no action from the Board.

#### 4. Old Business

- a. **Consideration/Action on the draft Proposed Personnel Evaluation Criteria and Instrumentation for the Executive Director and Chief Procurement Officer positions** – Lauren C. Gauthier

i. **Evaluation Criteria:**

Lauren Gauthier reported that she made substantial revisions to reduce the length of the evaluation criteria and eliminate repetitiveness. She hopes the Board members are satisfied with the revisions as she did not get any specific feedback from the Board about it.

Ms. Gauthier made a motion to accept the proposed evaluation criteria as written for the current evaluation period.

Discussion:

- Ms. Gauthier clarified that there are *two moving parts here*, referring to the evaluation criteria and the evaluation instruments. She did receive input on the instrument, so her intent was to move to accept the criteria and then discuss the instrument separately.
- Mr. Ahneman clarified that the criteria is the backstop for the evaluation form. Ms. Gauthier said the evaluation process is required under statute and then the evaluation instrument goes further into the *soft skills*.
- Mr. Ahneman confirmed that once this is codified, it can be modified as he is sure that, with time, they will need *elbow room* for this to be an instrument for discussion and a working document throughout this process.
- Ms. Gauthier responded that the goals matrix should be part of the evaluation instrument. For the next evaluation period, the instrument will include the agreed upon goals going forward through the evaluation period. Mr. Ahneman said that this references the February and September 2024 meetings so goals over time would have to change.
- Ms. Sisco asked the Board was expecting those being reviewed (referring to the Executive Director and CPO) to have retroactively complied with these criteria. Ms. Gauthier stated that they (referring to the Executive Director

and CPO) confirmed agreement with the statute when they took the job. Ms. Sisco stated that there is more in these criteria than in the statute. Ms. Sisco asked if we (the Board) is saying they (the staff) should have retroactively complied with these criteria, although the Board is just looking at this now.

- Ms. Sisco asked if the criteria was verbatim from the statute. Ms. Gauthier replied that the format is *pretty much* the same and that sections one and two were a copy and paste from the statute. The other two items were from meetings that we all participated in, including the executives, where we set objectives for the Board. That is what the Board decided we wanted to focus on. Ms. Sisco recommended removing the items that are not directly taken from the statute. Ms. Gauthier agreed to remove those two items.
- Chair Palache said that she has been clear from the beginning, as the Chair coming into this role, the items that we are putting on the criteria are looking forward and not based upon criteria set forth prior to the arrival of her and other board members. As she has stated many times, she is interested in going forward to set up the directives, set up the criteria, so that we can evaluate fairly and use the evaluation process to ensure the staff has the right resources to do their jobs. It is not a punishment; that is not the goal.
- In agreement with Mr. Ahneman and Ms. Sisco, Chair Palache is hearing feedback and does not feel *that we are there yet* and wants to allow more opportunity for feedback on this instrument.
- Mr. Ahneman also said these evaluations should provide Board members recommendations on how they can do their jobs better.
- Ms. Sisco said that moving forward, we can make it clear what is expected of staff and then evaluating if they met or went beyond these requirements. Chair Palache understands the statute, but the Board sets the priorities.
- Ms. Gauthier referenced the priorities set in February 2024. Chair Palache said that is in the past. Ms. Gauthier said there has to be a baseline, for sure.
- Mr. Ahneman confirmed that they would strike the last two items and the last sentence that also goes back to February 2024. It was agreed that these criteria would be removed from the Executive Director's and Chief Procurement Officer's evaluations.
- Daniel Rovero expressed that he is against this entire process. He stated that the last two meetings were talking about evaluations on staff, and he kept asking himself if they were going to kill this process. The discussions sound like we are evaluating the Chairman of General Motors as they are getting into so much detail that it does not make sense to him. He is against all of this process as it stands.
- Ms. Gauthier stated they would strike unnumbered paragraphs on page two and page three, the last paragraph, and limit it just to the statute. In response to Mr. Ahneman's inquiry, Ms. Gauthier confirmed that the sections referencing investigations and auditing are directly from the statute.
- Ms. Karnes thanked Ms. Gauthier for taking the lead on this.

A motion to approve the proposed evaluation criteria for this evaluation period as amended was made by: Lauren Gauthier  
 Motion was seconded by: Stuart Mahler  
 Motion was passed with one nay vote from Daniel Rovero.

**ii. Evaluation Instrument:**

- Ms. Gauthier reviewed the evaluation templates that were distributed including the evaluation scale.
- Ms. Gauthier explained that this came out of an amalgamation of the nonprofit evaluation template. The form was reviewed and discussed. Chair Palache asked about a definition of the community relations component. Ms. Gauthier said that this was like stakeholder relations, but after looking at it she thinks it got missed and could be removed. After some discussion, the categories and line items were eliminated.
- Ms. Gauthier said she would make the edits and resubmit them. She recognized changes that need to be made to the scale and that she did not match the edits that James Marpe added, but she will fix that as well.
- Ms. Gauthier will also update the summary rating. Mr. Ahneman provided input on the Qualitative Questions and recommended revision or elimination because it does not meet the recommended summary rating.
- There was a discussion about adding *in our opinion* to rating sections since everyone on the Board will have an opportunity to offer different feedback.
- Chair Palache stated that how we capture the vision of the Board is the most important goal of the evaluation instrument and recommended that additional time be taken to work on this tool.
- Mr. Ahneman noted that the summary rating section did not match the Qualitative Questions being asked and recommended that that it be eliminated.
- Ms. Sisco raised questions about Qualitative Question #3 (i.e., What are our organization's priorities in the coming year?) and asked how that would apply to the person being evaluated. After much discussion, it was determined that this question was not a benefit to this evaluation. Chair Palache believes the question will require additional time to work out. It may be reworded to allow for positive discussion.
- Ms. Karnes believes the question should be eliminated or revised to ask if the priorities of the staff member and Board are aligned. Both she and Chair Palache believe that we can only include the question if the Board's goals are defined and clarified from the onset.
- Mr. Ahneman shared his concerns about 14 different people weighing in on these evaluations and how it speaks to the relationship between Board members and the staff member.
- Mr. Ahneman referred to the section entitled Feedback on Management to be a lengthy process that is not conducive to having 14 different evaluators, so we will need to find a process to work through that area of the evaluation.

- Chair Palache announced that James Marpe will be the Chair of the Personnel Review Sub-work group and will take the lead on the evaluation process moving forward.
- Mr. Ahneman volunteered to join the sub-workgroup as well.
- Ms. Gauthier reviewed the Goals Matrix area. The details in this area will be agreed upon by Board members and employees in advance of the evaluation beginning. Mr. Ahneman referenced outside influences such as software, etc.
- Ms. Gauthier will add signature lines to the form, and at the recommendation of Ms. Sisco, it was agreed that the Chair would sign the acknowledgment on behalf of the Board.

Ms. Gauthier requested to make a motion as they did on the criteria to adopt the evaluation instrument with edits. Those present agreed that the edits should be completed before this form is adopted.

**b. Committee and Work Group Assignments – Chair Rochelle N. Palache**

- Chair Palache reported that Mr. Ahneman has just joined the Personnel Review Sub-work group.
- Chair Palache confirmed that the XL Center Work Group was disbanded earlier in the meeting.
- The Training Work Group purpose and need was discussed in response to Mr. Ahneman’s inquiry. Training Specialist Carmen Hufcut explained the training process and the progress that has been made to date. She shared the need for Board member participation in this committee and emphasized the need for those with procurement, teaching, or training expertise. Ms. Hufcut has independently created an online training program that is up and running and available to State Agencies. The work group currently consists of Chair Palache, James Marpe and Lauren Gauthier. Bruce Buff was the chair of the work group prior to his resignation. Mr. Ahneman volunteered to serve on the Training sub-work group.
- 4e-36 Subcommittee statutorily requires that an additional person be added. Jean Morningstar volunteered to participate on the subcommittee and Chair Palache accepted her request.
- Director Daniels confirmed that he updated the organizational chart prior to this meeting and will do so again after this meeting is concluded. Chair Palache thanked everyone for their participation.

**5. New Business**

- Giovanni Masoni Letter Re: CPA RFP No. CPA0024-CM Questions & Answers

Attorney Felman reported on this in his legal update earlier in this meeting.

**6. Opportunity for Citizens to Address the SCSB**

No citizens requested to address the Board.

**7. Executive Session**

A motion to go into executive session to obtain legal advice regarding a pending claim before the Office of Public Hearing at 10:59 a.m. was made by: Brenda Sisco.

The motion was seconded by: Jean Morningstar

The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to invite Associate Attorney General Colleen Valentine to participate in the executive session to provide legal advice on the pending claim was made by: Brenda Sisco.

The motion was seconded by Jean Morningstar

The motion unanimously passed.

Staff members were instructed to leave the room and Executive Director Daniels explained how the Board members online would remain in the meeting and that the session would not be recorded. Upon completion of the Executive Session, the Board will reconvene to make a motion to adjourn the meeting.

The Board came out of the executive session and resumed the regular meeting at 12:17 p.m.

**8. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn at approximately 12:17 p.m. was made by Lauren Gauthier.

The motion was seconded by Jean Morningstar.

The motion unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Aleshia M. Hall  
Administrative Assistant