



STATE of CONNECTICUT  
Office of Governmental Accountability  
State Contracting Standards Board

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**Regular Meeting**

Friday, November 14, 2025 - 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon

Location: 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT  
Conference Room G006D & G007E and *Virtual*

**In Attendance:**

Rochelle Palache, Chair (in person)  
Thomas Ahneman (virtually)  
Keith Brothers (virtually)  
Roberto Fernandez (virtually)  
Lauren Gauthier (virtually)  
Al Ilg (in person)  
Donna Karnes (in person)  
Salvatore Luciano (virtually)  
Stuart Mahler (in person)  
James Marpe (in person)  
Jean Morningstar (virtually)  
Brenda Sisco (virtually)

**Staff in Attendance (in person):**

Gregory Daniels, Executive Director  
Samson Anderson, Research Analyst  
Aaron Felman Staff Attorney  
Aleshia Hall, Administrative Assistant  
Carmen Hufcut, Trainer Specialist  
Maritza Lopez, Accounts Examiner

**Guest Presenters in Attendance:**

Kimberly Kennison, Office of Policy and Management  
Kevin Meakum, Office of Policy and Management

**MINUTES**

1. Call to Order: Chair Palache called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.
  - A. Roll Call of Board Members as noted above.
2. Approval of Minutes
  - A. Approval of the minutes from the October 10, 2025, SCSB Regular Meeting  
A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Al Ilg.  
The motion was seconded by Brenda Sisco.  
The motion passed unanimously with abstentions from Tom Ahneman, Stuart Mahler, and James Marpe.

### 3. Communications and Petitions

#### A. Sec. 4e-36 Contested Solicitations & Awards Subcommittee Report

Chair Stuart L. Mahler stated that there was nothing to report.

#### B. Privatization Contract Committee Report

Chair Salvatore C. Luciano stated that there was nothing to report.

#### C. Audit/Data Analysis Work Group - Chair Roberto C. Fernandez

##### i. Audit Work Group Report

Chair Roberto C. Fernandez reported that the Audit Work Group recommends forming a subcommittee to detail the procedures and responsibilities of our audits. He believes that Board members' experience could be helpful in the development of these procedures. The subcommittee would work with Executive Director Daniels, Staff Attorney Felman, and Accounts Examiner Lopez to formalize the audit process of what an audit truly looks like. Mr. Fernandez requested that Chair Palache approve creation of this sub-work group.

Mr. Luciano supports the recommendation in anticipation of the arrival of the new CPO who will resume quarterly meetings of the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Ahneman, chair of the SRPP Work Group, recommended that we create a joint task force between the SRPP Work Group and the Audit-Data Analysis Work Group that will establish guidelines that accomplish the goals of both committees. Both Chair Ahneman and Chair Fernandez agreed; Mr. Luciano has no immediate concerns about that recommendation. In response, Chair Palache supported the recommendation to create a joint task force. Mr. Fernandez invited and encouraged all Board members to join this joint endeavor even if they are not already on one of these work groups. Both Work Group Chairs Fernandez and Ahneman agreed that all Board members are welcome and that this should be a priority.

#### 1. Consideration of the following Recommended Audit Reports for Approval:

Chair Fernandez reported that the Audit Work Group has approved all these audits, so they are being elevated to the Board for final approval:

- a. Triennial Audit Compliance Report, Fiscal Years 2024-2026, Office of Policy and Management (OPM)
- b. Triennial Audit Compliance Report, Fiscal Years 2024–2026, Department of Administrative Services (DAS-ITZ)
- c. Triennial Audit Compliance Report, Fiscal Years FY 2024–2026, Department of Social Services (DSS)

A motion to approve these audits as written was made by: Roberto Fernandez  
 The motion was seconded by: Thomas Ahneman  
 The motion was unanimously passed with abstentions from Salvatore Luciano and Lauren Gauthier.

Chair Fernandez requested that Executive Director Daniels organize the Joint Task Force meeting as soon as possible.

- ii. Audit/Data Analysis Work Group Report – Budget Sub-Work Group  
 Per Chair Palache, there is nothing to report.

D. Statutes, Regulations, Policies and Procedures Work Group – Chair Thomas G. Ahneman

- i. Statutes, Regulations, Policies and Procedures Work Group Report  
 Chair Thomas G. Ahneman reported that we are in the process of scheduling the next Work Group meeting He asked Aleshia Hall to determine members' availability for a December 2, 2025, meeting.
- ii. Personnel Review Sub-Work Group  
 Chair James S. Marpe will report later in the meeting.

E. Training Work Group Report – Chair Thomas G. Ahneman

Chair Thomas G. Ahneman reported that the Work Group will be meeting immediately after this meeting. He welcomed Donna Karnes to the Work Group and appreciates her sharing her real estate expertise.

F. Sec. 4e-34 Subcommittee Report

Per Chair Palache, there is nothing to report.

G. Staff Reports

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

- 1. Final APA Audit Report - OGA FY22 and 23.

Executive Director Daniels reported that, after receiving information from other OGA agencies, the Auditors of Public Accounts have finalized their report and will be issuing it on November 18, 2025. Executive Director Daniels signed the management letter yesterday which is dated November 18, 2025. In response to Mr. Luciano's inquiry, Executive Director Daniels confirmed that the report was shared with the Board prior to this meeting.

- 2. 2025 Report on Mandated Regulations is due December 1, 2025. The report was completed and will be submitted timely. The list was discussed with the SRPP Work Group to ensure that our timelines are aligned with the priorities. Mr. Luciano requested that the Board members see it as soon as possible to which

Executive Director Daniels stated that he will share this report with the Board Members later today.

Ms. Gauthier referenced a request received from the Office of Legislative Research (OLR); Executive Director Daniels will share that response with the Board.

- ii. Chief Procurement Officer – TBD Nothing to report.
- iii. Training – Carmen Hufcut, Trainer Specialist  
Trainer Specialist Hufcut shared that the work group did not meet last month. She just completed the FOIA training module and has shared it with Russell Blair, Commissioner of FOIA, who has agreed to serve as the Subject Matter Expert (SME). After Commissioner Blair has reviewed and completed the course, it will be finalized.

Next, Trainer Specialist Hufcut will begin creating the real estate training course.

- iv. Audit Update – Maritza Lopez, Accounts Examiner  
Chair Palache thanked her for doing an excellent job with the audits. Nothing more to report.
- v. Legislation Process – Samson Anderson, Research Analyst  
Nothing to report.
- vi. Legal Update – Aaron I. Felman, Staff Attorney

Staff Attorney Felman discussed 4e-34 as it relates to Acranom Masonry, a vendor involved in an active litigation and prosecution. Together with Executive Director Daniels, Staff Attorney met with the Office of the Attorney General (AG). They confirmed 4e-34 contested cases can be appealed to the Superior Court; therefore, there is a high level of scrutiny in any contested case. In consideration of Acranom Masonry itself, there is active litigation that we need to remain cognizant of. DAS has denied Acranom Masonry's prequalification application, so it will be very difficult for them to gain a new state contract at this time. The new ownership clause that exists in 4e-34 is a consideration. The AG recommended that we develop a better infrastructure before we take on anything to do with this case. Staff Attorney Felman clarified that Acranom Masonry is a contested case; however, SCSB lacks the staffing to handle this matter and would need to be careful of all procedural steps that we take because it can be appealed to the Superior Court. The AG recommended that we have better structure before we move forward on any Contested Case. Taking that into consideration, there are alternatives to 4e-34 that we should be aware of, and it is ultimately the discretion of the Board.

Attorney Felman clarified to Mr. Mahler that this report to the Board was in response to Mr. Luciano's previous inquiries regarding this matter and that no one has

approached us regarding this matter. Mr. Mahler offered that OLR may have research that is helpful to us; Attorney Felman thanked him for his recommendation.

Mr. Luciano said 4e-34 should be up and running. It is our responsibility. Although DAS has said that Acranom Masonry cannot be used, it should be our responsibility, not DAS to ensure that. He noted that there were other companies also involved in the corruption that we should be looking at. Although we lack resources, he believes that we should move forward.

Chair Palache shared that the staff offered the challenges of resources and she is also hearing that we need to move forward. She believes that the staff is moving forward in accordance with the challenges. Mr. Mahler offered his experience to assist. Attorney Felman shared their discussion with the Attorney General's Office there were suggestions on how to move forward under our resource and process deficiencies and continue internal discussions including Board members that can be discussed on the subcommittee level. Chair Palache understands that there is agreement and we will move forward accordingly.

Mr. Ahneman reinforced that it is premature to launch a 4e-34. DAS is reportedly handling this, and the AG believes we are not prepared; therefore, he agrees that we should not proceed.

Ms. Gauthier believes we have come far with current procedures and wants to know the specific remedies and a timeline for us to proceed with the work we are tasked with. Chair Palache said that Executive Director Daniels and Attorney Felman can develop a response to this inquiry.

Mr. Luciano said that whether we are qualified or not, we are tasked with it and need to move forward. We believes we can leverage this situation with Acranom Masonry as a specific example to bring to the legislature to fix this problem.

Mr. Mahler stated that this Board was created in response to "bad actors". He shared the Waterbury/Cheshire DOT drainage scandal that brought this Board into being. Mr. Ilg also worked on this effort under Governor Jody Rell's tenure. Again, he noted that there is material relating to that event that is available for our reference.

Mr. Brothers stated that this is a conflict for him because Acranom Masonry employ hundreds of his union members. The original company was kept in place to do business with the private sector; that company is called Monarca. When the company endeavored to do business with the state, they spelled the name backwards and changed it to Acranom Masonry.

Mr. Marpe is assuming that DAS is aware of that. He said that we need to work toward the statute. Mr. Mahler supports what the staff are doing.

#### 4. Old Business

##### A. Chief Procurement Officer Search Update

Chair of the Personnel Sub-Work Group, James Marpe reported that 125 applications were received for the position of Chief Procurement Officer, which closed on November 3, 2025. Of the 125, one withdrew, 58 responded unsatisfactorily, 44 did not respond to all the questions, leaving 22 qualified candidates to be further analyzed further. Chair Marpe explained the process which requires a three-person interview panel that must minimally be comprised of one male, one female, and one minority. He wants the Board to understand how complicated this process is, as he had originally thought that the Human Resources Department would present a smaller number of candidates. There are five major evaluation categories which collectively contain 28 subcategories. He has been working with Human Resources Associate Brittany Besaw regarding this process. In an effort toward consistency, Chair Marpe will be developing a process by which the applicants can be compared and asked Chair Palache to appoint a committee to review the applications. He will be requesting that every member of the committee evaluate every application to identify a manageable number of candidates to interview.

Ms. Gauthier said that we are not hiring an employee in the traditional sense, but are appointing an official, so she is not sure that we have to follow that process Chair Marpe described. She does not know why the personnel committee cannot review, interview several candidates, and appoint the individual through the Board as not to slow the process. Ms. Gauthier repeated that SCSB can just appoint the official. Chair Palache clarified that she was recommending to using the sub-work group to review the applications. Ms. Gauthier again asked why we are using the state processes to hire the person rather than just appointing someone because we do not need to follow it. Chair Palache explained that Mr. Marpe explored that avenue but received push back from Human Resources.

Mr. Fernandez shared his experience utilizing key performance measures to compare candidates and narrow down the number of those to be interviewed by using interview questions based on key performance indicators.

Mr. Marpe explained that Ms. Gauthier's and Mr. Fernandez' ideas are included in this strategy. He pushed back on the Human Resources requirements, but they believe that there are 28 Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that need to be considered. Mr. Fernandez' spreadsheet is a method to track these, but we need to ensure that there is consistency. Mr. Marpe shared examples of the *shades of grey* within the application narratives along with details as presented by Human Resources. While he thought this could be simplified, it was clarified to him that it needs to be brought to the granular level, or we risk it being returned to us. Executive Director Daniels explained that they have gone through this in the past and it is a process that needs to be followed.

Mr. Luciano agrees with Ms. Gauthier and Mr. Fernandez that this is an appointed position. Regardless of how many are qualified, the work group can pick out five that stand out as impressive, interview those five, and pick from there. Mr. Marpe explained

that the process he shared is how this will move forward and get to the point of hiring. Mr. Luciano believes that a knowledge of procurement is the main factor that we are looking at regardless of the individual's familiarity with the State systems. He explained that the Board and staff members can assist the person with other areas.

Mr. Fernandez agreed with everything said and stated that every person hired into State service is a \$1 million commitment of State funding.

Mr. Marpe confirmed that the final candidate will be presented to the Board for approval.

Chair Palache solicited volunteers to participate in this Committee. She volunteered to join Mr. Marpe in this process. Brenda Sisco also volunteered to participate, which met the minimum requirements. At the urging of Mr. Mahler to include additional Board members in the process, Chair Palache requested that Mr. Luciano participate in the committee. The Board members on the interview committee will consist of James Marpe, Rochelle Palache, Brenda Sisco, and Salvatore Luciano.

#### B. Office of Policy and Management 2024 Annual Request for Waiver Report Update Presentation

Chair Palache invited OPM representatives, Kimberly Kennison Executive Financial Officer Kimbely Kennison, who leads the finance division that oversees procurement, and Policy Development Coordinator Kevin Meakum to present to the Board. Ms. Kennison thanked Chair Palache and Executive Director Daniels for inviting them to present today. She shared a PowerPoint presentation that will be distributed to the Board members after this meeting.

After conclusion of their presentation, Ms. Kennison opened the floor to questions.

- Mr. Luciano thanked them for the presentation and asked for specific information regarding the amount of people in each agency and what the codes were used. He would like to identify the areas of highest use. Ms. Kennison will attempt to gather that information.
- Mr. Fernandez referenced a previous incident of state agencies contracting with an agency that required mail to be returned to an out-of-state address, which led many to question the credibility of the request. He recommended that, going forward, we require out-of-state agencies to have an in-state return address. Ms. Kennison was not prepared to speak to the specificity of a particular contract; however, from a high-level perspective, the process would need to be looked at in more depth and the criteria within the statement of work could be examined.

Mr. Fernandez also asked how this Board could be helpful to them. Ms. Kennison would like to take time to consider the offer for assistance and offered that said that she meets monthly with the Executive Director Daniels and strives to build a partnership with the Board.



- Ms. Gauthier thanked them for the presentation. She said that history has shown that agencies have self-reported that they were short staffed. Ms. Kennison explained that she does not see the audits and clarified that staffing shortages is not a justification code for a waiver.
- Mr. Mahler thanked them for their presentation. He was concerned about agencies saying that they did not have the time and asked what the response would be to that. Ms. Kennison clarified that they are not hearing those concerns. They look at comparing waiver reports and requests to their three-year plan. They work with agencies to adhere to those three-year procurement plans. Mr. Meakem shared that he reviews everything in detail and that they do not take staff shortages as a reason for lack of competitiveness. They evaluate the situations as they come forth and examine their limitations as well as the law. They have good relationships with agencies.

Chair Palache thanked both Ms. Kennison and Mr. Meakem for the presentation.

Since Ms. Kennison reported that they are meeting regularly with Executive Director Daniels, Mr. Mahler requested that he regularly report on that.

- C. Sherman School Building Project Update – Aaron I. Felman, Staff Attorney  
In the interest of time, this subject was tabled.

## 5. New Business

- A. Proposed 2026 Meeting Schedule – Chair Palache  
Chair Palache discussed the proposed 2026 meeting schedule for consideration. She noted that the February 2026 meeting falls between two State holidays; however, the meeting will stay as scheduled at this time.

A motion to accept the proposed 2026 meeting schedule made by: Donna Karnes  
The motion was seconded by: Salvatore Luciano  
The motion passed unanimously.

- B. Office of Correctional Ombudsman (OCO) recommendation to suspend Inmates' Legal Assistance to Prisoners (ILAP) Contract with Bansley Law LLC. – Aaron I. Felman  
In the interest of time, this subject was tabled.
- C. Statewide Initiative to Create a Comprehensive Excluded Contractors/Parties Listing – Gregory F. Daniels and Aaron I. Felman

In the interest of time, this subject was tabled.



In closing, Mr. Fernandez stated that he wants to work collaboratively with the staff to accomplish goals. Processes need to be developed and moved forward, and he would like to have clarification on the points that he continues to be concerned about.

Ms. Gauthier asked that the Board be provided with a timeline for these objectives. Executive Director Daniels will share that information.

6. Opportunity for Citizens to Address the SCSB: None

7. Adjournment: Having no further business to discuss,

A motion to adjourn at 11:38 a.m. was made by: Salvatore Luciano.

The motion was seconded by Al Ilg.

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Aleshia M. Hall

Administrative Assistant