



STATE of CONNECTICUT
Office of Governmental Accountability
State Contracting Standards Board

Regular Meeting

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

Location: 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT

Conference Room G009F and *Virtual*

In Attendance:

Brenda Sisco, Serving as Chair on behalf of Chair Rochelle Palache
Keith Brothers (Virtually)
Roberto Fernandez (Virtually)
Lauren Gauthier (In Person)
Donna Karnes (In Person)
Salvatore Luciano (In Person)
Stuart Mahler (In Person)
James Marpe (In Person)

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

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Brenda Sisco called the meeting to order at 10:
 - A. Roll Call of Board Members was completed as noted above.
2. **Approval of Minutes**
 - A. Approval of the minutes of November 14, 2025, SCSB Regular Meeting
A motion to approve the minutes as written was made by James Marpe.
The motion was seconded by Salvatore Luciano.
The motion was unanimously passed.
3. **Communications and Petitions**
 - A. Sec. 4e-36 Contested Solicitations & Awards Subcommittee Report
– Chair Stuart L. Mahler had nothing to report.
 - B. **Privatization Contract Committee Report** – Chair Salvatore C. Luciano had 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 met in November. He thanked all those who attended and shared the

highlights of the meeting. Chair Fernandez thanked Staff Attorney Felman for the excellent legal memorandum that he presented regarding statutory compliance, Executive Director Daniels for his recommendations for audit process improvements and Accounts Examiner Lopez and Trainer Specialist Hufcut for their input on the audit program. Mr. Fernandez shared that the staff are currently working to improve the audit instrument and will be expanding it to include a component for open contracts. Again, he thanked staff for their time and patience working with him on this important project.

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

- a. Triennial Audit Compliance Report, Fiscal Years FY 2024–2026, Department Administrative Services (DAS-PSX)

Chair Fernandez recommended acceptance of the Audit Work Group’s recommendation to finalize this audit.

A motion to approve the audit as written was made by Brenda Sisco.

The motion was seconded by Donna Karnes.

Discussion: In response to inquiries from Mr. Mahler, Accounts Examiner Lopez clarified that the staff are continuing to improve the audit process with input from the Work Group and its Chair, Chair Sisco clarified that the first Triennial Audit covers the three years of 2024–2026, the original audit process was improved upon to create the current audit instrument, Attorney Felman has reviewed both instruments against the statute for compliance.

The motion passed unanimously with abstentions from Salvatore Luciano and Lauren Gauthier.

- ii. **Audit/Data Analysis Work Group Report – Budget Sub-Work Group:** Chair Brenda Sisco shared that the legislative session that begins in February. She anticipates that the Governor will open the session with a Budget Proposal. We are hopeful that our funding will remain as currently approved. She will report to the Board when information becomes available.

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

- i. **Statutes, Regulations, Policies and Procedures Work Group Report**

In the absence of Chair Thomas G. Ahneman, Staff Attorney Felman reported that the Work Group met and reviewed the draft Rules of Practice. He is now working to incorporate items from that discussion and will distribute a revised draft to the Work Group prior to the January 2026 meeting.

Ms. Gauthier reported that Executive Director Daniels drafted two Legislative Proposals that were elevated by the Work Group to the Board for approval. She discussed the details of both Legislative Proposals.

Mr. Mahler reported that he recently met with staff to gain clarification on how the legislative process works. He complimented Staff Attorney Felman on his efforts in

this area and is impressed by the plan that is in place. He stressed the importance of Legislative Proposal 1. A discussion followed.

Staff Attorney Felman clarified that he does not see the language in Legislative Proposal 1 as a penalty because vendors do not have the right to contract with the State. As such, this legislation does not take anything away from them that they were entitled to, instead, it prevents them from having an opportunity to do business with the State because of their past actions. Mr. Luciano agreed that this is an accountability issue, not a penalization issue. Ms. Gauthier believes that the legislative proposals are very well drafted and recommended voting on them. Additionally, the SRPP Work Group will be working on more proposals for discussion at the January 2026 Board meeting. Chair Sisco explained that these proposals will be brought before the GAE committee and public hearings may follow. If the Bill is passed, regulations will be created, promulgated, and adopted.

A motion to include Legislative Proposal 1 and Legislative Proposal 2 as written in the 2026 Legislative Package was made by Lauren Gauthier.

The motion was seconded Donna Karnes.

Discussion: Mr. Luciano noted that this has been an area of concern for ten years but until now, there was not a clear example.

The motion unanimously passed with one abstention by Roberto Fernandez.

ii. **Personnel Review Sub-Work Group** – Chair James S. Marpe has nothing to report.

E. **Training Work Group Report** – In the absence of Chair Thomas G. Ahneman, Trainer Specialist Hufcut reported that the Work Group met in November. The meeting previously scheduled for today has been cancelled. The members of the Training Work Group provided with a copy of the Training Handbook for review and discussion at the January 2026 meeting. Mr. Fernandez has agreed to work on the grievance area. Mr. Ahneman and Attorney Felman will work on the internal policies section, and Mr. Marpe will review the new Freedom of Information course.

Trainer Specialist Hufcut shared that she:

- Continues to work with the FOIA Commissioner to finalize the content of the FOI training course.
- Continues to work with DAS on developing three additional courses that will be included in our catalog.
- Continues to work with Accounts Examiner Lopez on development of an Audit training course.
- Has brought our agency up to date on compliance with the Federal accessibility mandates.
- Is working on the four Annual Reports that require completion for calendar year 2025. Since each requires inclusion of final data. She is working with Research Analyst Anderson to gather the data required.

Chair Sisco and Ms. Karnes both thanked Trainer Specialist Hufcut for all the work that she is doing.

Executive director Daniels and Staff Attorney Felman met with Training Work Group Chair Ahneman yesterday to review the Training Handbook. The results will be shared with the Work Group members.

- F. **Sec. 4e-34 Subcommittee** – Executive Director Daniels explained that this subcommittee was formed at the September 2026 regular board meeting. The subcommittee is comprised of Salvatore Luciano, Brenda Sisco, Lauren Gauthier and Stuart Maher. Although this subcommittee has not yet met, Executive Director Daniels has been working to develop a framework for this group. Along with Attorney Felan he is examining the procedures required to comply with Section 4e-34. He explained that these hearings are subject to UAPA, but this is not a typical process. This is a quasi-judicial process that requires due process standards. It will take time to ensure that the process adheres to the standards required and ensures that there are no legal exposure concerns for the agency. He is hoping to share a draft with the SRPP Work Group by March 2026; however, development of this process requires legal insight and cannot be delegated to Work Group members. With only Executive Director Daniels and Attorney Felman assuming this project in addition to the other work requirements, March 2026 is an aggressive agenda; however, he is hoping to create a draft for the Board's review at that time.

Executive Director Daniels reflected on a request that came to the Privatization Committee not long ago from an agency requesting permission to contract for hearing officers. The Privatization Committee supported the agency's request. The SCSB does not currently have the resources or infrastructure to conduct these hearings. In response to Ms. Gauthier, Executive Director Daniels explained that each section of the statute requires a different approach. Attorney Felman confirmed for Ms. Gauthier that the work that has been completed by the Work Group to date is very general but is required as a foundation on which to build the processes for each section. Executive Director Daniels provided the example that 4e-36 Subcommittee decisions cannot be appealed, which is not applicable to most other sections. Mr. Luciano clarified that not only does the 4e-36 section not have an appeal process, the subcommittee is not even required to bring their decisions to the Board for approval.

Executive Director Daniels reiterated his intention to produce a preliminary draft of 4e-34 in March 2026. After that time, the hearing officer training component would be examined. He also explained that hearing officers are generally accompanied by an attorney to hearings. Executive Director Daniels said that he has the beginning of a process in place that needs to be built out. Mr. Luciano understands that it is important to adhere to the procedures to ensure that it is supported by the court; however, he does not believe that this entire process applies when some of the vendors have already been ordered on by the court. A discussion into scenarios took place.

Chair Sisco stressed the importance of ensuring consistency in the application and it cannot be a subjective issue. Executive Director Daniels explained that, even if court testimony has been given, in accordance with UAPA, we are required to take our own testimony under oath and must make decisions based upon the information we have been given. In response to Mr. Fernandez's inquiry, Executive Director Daniels confirmed that we must consider the due process rights of the vendor. There was a lengthy discussion on specific scenarios involving criminal and civil cases and how the outcome of those hearings could affect the evidence on which we base our administrative findings are based.

Chair Sisco noted that this topic will warrant more discussion and recommended that the topic be continued in the SRPP Work Group with a focus on ensuring that a fair process is developed that meets our requirements.

Ms. Gauthier asked if the Work Group could receive the initial framework in January 2025. Executive Director Daniels will add this item to the next agenda of the SRPP Work Group.

Per Chair Sisco, discussion on this item was tabled.

G. Staff Reports

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

1. **2025 Report of Mandated Regulations** was submitted on November 26, 2025.
2. **2024 PSA-POS Annual Request for Waiver Justification by Agency Analysis Code** were supplied by OPM in response to an inquiry from Mr. Luciano. Executive Director Daniels invited that if there are questions from the Board, please send them to him in an email and he will seek answers from OPM.
3. **Diligent Software:** In response to Ms. Gauthier's inquiry, Executive Director Daniels explained that he and Accounts Examiner Lopez met with our liaison at DAS-BITS to determine the availability of audit software programs available for our use. He explained that the Diligent company has scheduled a demonstration later in the month. Accounts Examiner Lopez referenced artificial intelligence (AI) tools that may be available to assist us with collecting and tracking data and reporting findings. Ms. Lopez shared that DAS-BITS has several recommendations that are being examined. Executive Director Daniels explained that we do not currently have funding available to purchase software at this time; however, they are examining end-to-end cloud-based systems that would provide a method for documents to be downloaded securely. Ms. Sisco explained that if we decide to pursue this, we will need further discussion on funding. Mr. Luciano supports a closed AI system that would ensure security. Executive Director Daniels explained that the goal would be to have a software product that provides a dashboard of details.

- ii. **Chief Procurement Officer** – TBD: No report.
- iii. **Training** – Carmen Hufcut, Trainer Specialist: See earlier report.
- iv. **Audit Update** – Maritza Lopez, Accounts Examiner: See earlier report.
- v. **Legislation Process** – Samson Anderson, Research Analyst: See earlier report.
- vi. **Legal Update** – Aaron I. Felman, Staff Attorney: See earlier report.

4. **Old Business**

A. **Chief Procurement Officer Search Update**

Chair Marpe provided an update on the applicants for the CPO program. The 160 applications received have been reduced to 21 resumes that will be reviewed by the CPO Selections Committee in executive session after this meeting. The CPO Selections Committee intends on selecting a small group of qualified individuals to be interviewed. Chair Marpe has confirmed with Human Resources that since this is an appointed position, they have latitude in the selection practices. He shared that there are out-of-state candidates and the State does not provide reimbursement of relocation expenses. Chair Marpe anticipates scheduling interviews after the new year.

- ##### B. **Sherman School Building Project Update** – Aaron I. Felman, Staff Attorney reported that we received the original communication in August. He worked with Executive Director Daniels to create a memo for the September 2025 meeting. Although we do not have purview over municipalities, Executive Director Daniels sent a response shortly thereafter. This issue has been closed.

5. **New Business**

- ##### A. **Office of Correctional Ombudsman (OCO) recommendation to suspend Inmates' Legal Assistance to Prisoners (ILAP) Contract with Bansley Law LLC.** – Staff Attorney Aaron I. Felman explained that he and Executive Director Daniels reviewed the documents that were received from the OCO. Executive Director Daniels requested that the Board authorize the staff to approach the Department of Correction (DOC), Office of the Attorney General, Office of Correctional Ombudsman and any other involved parties to obtain more information regarding this issue.

Attorney Felman explained that the Bansley Law Firm is contracted to provide legal services to inmates. It is alleged that they are not upholding the expectations of their contract.

A motion to approve SCSB staff to reach out to involved parties regarding the OCO concerns was made by Salvatore Luciano.

The motion was seconded by Donna Karnes

Discussion: Staff Attorney Felman explained that the Ombudsman has brought this matter before the court. Bansley Law is required to provide these services and recently received an extension of contract.

In response to Ms. Gauthier's inquiry, Executive Director Daniels said that our agency has had informal contact with the OCO to acknowledge receipt.

Ms. Gauthier stated that if this is a 4e-7 issue, we should be formally acknowledging OCO as well as DOC. Staff Attorney Felman explained that there are three separate reasons for cause under the statute. We are required to gather more information before we can make that determination. After a lengthy discussion, Executive Director Daniels clarified his request to the Board.

Mr. Luciano clarified to Ms. Gauthier that the Board has been asked to give permission to the staff to gather information and it is far too premature to ascertain if this is an issue that would fall under the 4e-34 or 4e-7

Ms. Gauthier asked the staff to report on this issue in January 2026. Ms. Sisco clarified that an update only should be expected at the January 2026 Board meeting.

The motion to allow the staff to gather information from involved agencies and parties and send an acknowledgement to the OCO was reiterated.

The motion passed unanimously.

B. Draft Legislative Proposals – Gregory F. Daniels, Executive Director discussed this issue earlier. Ms. Sisco shared that more legislative proposals will be discussed at future meetings.

C. Statewide Initiative to Create a Comprehensive Excluded Contractors/Parties Listing – Executive Director Daniels and Staff Attorney Felman explained that they are having conversations with agency stakeholders regarding this issue, which relates to the Legislative Proposal 1 drafted by Executive Director Daniels and approved by the Board earlier in this meeting. A brief discussion on this topic took place. Executive Director Daniels wanted the Board to be aware that the staff are participating in these conversations. Chair Sisco asked that the staff continue to keep the Board posted as this initiative evolves.

6. Opportunity for Citizens to Address the SCSB: None

7. Point of Personal Privilege: Chair Sisco permitted Mr. Luciano to address the Board. He believes that even when there is a difference of opinion, people should be able to express themselves in these meetings. He would like to remove the restriction put in place by former Chair Michael Walsh, that continues to be upheld by Chair Rochelle Palache, that requires Board members to go through Executive Director Daniels rather than speaking directly to the staff. Mr. Marpe stressed the importance of the Executive Director being aware of contact between Board members and staff for management purposes.

8. Adjournment:

**A motion to adjourn was made at 11:34 a.m. by Salvatore Luciano.
The motion was seconded by Lauren Gauthier.
The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Aleshia M. Hall
Administrative Assistant

DRAFT