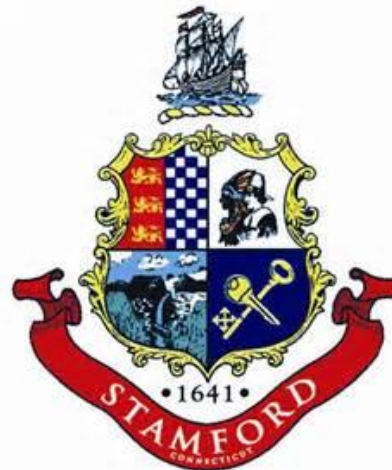


City of Stamford  
Office of Legal Affairs  
March 18, 2019

FY 2019-20  
Fiscal Committee  
Budget Presentation





# *Office of Legal Affairs*

The Office of Legal Affairs is comprised of the Law Department and the Human Resources Department. This presentation will cover the Law Department. A separate presentation will be made by the Human Resources Department.

## ■ **Mission**

The Office of Legal Affairs provides legal services to all City officials, departments, boards, commissions and agencies. The Office of Legal Affairs also provides the professional human resources administration for the City of Stamford.

# Services Provided

*(to citizens or departments)*

Programs	Services Provided
<b>Critical and Mandated</b>	
Legal Services	Provide all required legal services to City officials, departments, boards, commissions and agencies
Litigation	Represent City officials, departments, boards, commissions and agencies in litigation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 361 pending lawsuits as of March 15, 2019</li> <li>• 70 lawsuits were filed in 2017/2018</li> <li>• 211 tax appeals were filed in 2017/2018</li> </ul>
Claims	Manage claims against the City (i.e., pothole, City vehicle hit parked car, slip & fall): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 224 claims were filed in 2017/2018</li> </ul>
Property Damage Collection & Other Collection	Collect damages on behalf of the City for damage to City property: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$43,533 in 2017/2018</li> </ul> Collect damages for illegal tipping and unpaid dumping fees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$88,000 collected in 2017/18</li> </ul>
Delinquent Tax Accounts	Collect delinquent tax revenue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1,432,040 in 2017/2018</li> </ul>
Freedom of Information Requests	Respond to Freedom of Information requests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 365 requests in 2014 up by 35% over 2013/14</li> <li>• 718 requests in 2015/2016 up by 103% over 2014/2015</li> <li>• 863 requests in 2016/2017 up by 20% over 2015/2016</li> <li>• 966 requests in 2017/2018 up by 12% over 2016/2017</li> </ul>

# Services Provided

*(to citizens or departments)*

Programs	Services Provided
<b>Critical and Mandated – Continued</b>	
Legal Opinions	Respond to requests for legal opinions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12 formal written legal opinions in 2017/2018</li><li>• hundreds of informal legal opinions</li></ul>
Contracting Process	Prepare, review, negotiate, approve and process hundreds of contracts, agreements, RFP'S & bid waivers annually
<b>Other</b>	Conduct training on legal issues including: freedom of information, police practices and contracting procedures. Draft ordinances/resolutions, policies & procedures – e.g. use of City facilities, use of technology policies, etc.



# Department Management

## Key Program/Department Challenges

- Continue to identify and address areas of legal risk where the need or opportunity exists to forestall or reduce the City's exposure to claims – e.g., continue work on developing, with the involvement of Risk Management, an internal formal review process for employee involved accidents
- Investigate, identify and manage insurance coverage for past liabilities
- Investigate and identify potential claims for losses suffered by the City
- **Include factors that drive program / department costs**
  - Number, type and level of exposure of claims made against the City
- **Include factors that might impact productivity**
  - The primary factor impacting the productivity of the Law Department is the constant necessity of adjusting priorities based on the needs within the City. These needs are often emergent and are difficult to plan for but must be managed along with the day to day work load.
  - Limited support staff



# *Department Management*

## *Budget Scenarios*

- What budget line items can you control
  - The Law Department's budget is primarily driven by contractual obligations such as salaries, leases for equipment & law department database and on-line legal research. These obligations are largely fixed or not within the Department's control.
  - The Professional Consultant line item is driven by the need for specialized or not conflicted legal services, expert witnesses and private investigators. The amounts incurred are dependent on the nature and timing of claims and lawsuits filed against the City.
- If additional funding could be realized how would department services be expanded or enriched?
  - The Department is not seeking additional funding. If additional funding were obtained, the response and/or completion time of department work could be shortened.



# *Department Management*

## *Budget Scenarios - continued*

- In the event of significant budget reductions describe the impact the reduction would have?
  - Risk of increased damage awards against the City and reduced claim recovery on behalf of the City
  - Significant decrease in response time to Departments & Boards
  - Reduction in City's effectiveness in Court enforcement actions
  - Increased cost of City services and projects generally due to increased time required to negotiate and finalize City contracts



# ***This is what is coming***

## ***Major changes planned for the department***

- Include new or improved services (or processes) the department will provide to citizens or to other City departments or personnel
  - Undertake and complete planned projects including, review, update and improve Purchasing Ordinance
  - Identify opportunities for enhanced procedures for land use policy implementation and improve enforcement
- Describe what management is doing or could do to reduce department costs or reduce/eliminate services that are no longer critical
  - Provide training to staff in high risk areas
- What investments, increased spending, or other changes could you make this year that would have a long term positive impact?
  - Increase efficiency and accuracy of contracting process





# ***2018-19 Highlights***

- Achieved \$400,000 settlement of claim against CIGNA
- Our Lady Star of the Sea Lease
- Springdale Arbitration success
- Five Doe cases settled, insurance coverage obtained
- Worked with Board of Representatives and involved City Departments on initiatives such as plastic bags, ghost guns, fracking waste, citation process for zoning violations, car booting for scofflaws
- Review and updating of pension plans – police pension plan completed, CERF plan in process
- Acquisition of RBS/Mill River Properties
- Conveyance of Cubeta Stadium to City of Stamford
- Soundkeeper appeal dismissed
- Woodland appeal dismissed
- Murphy v. ZB appeal dismissed
- Obtained Summary Judgment in “suicide by cop” shooting
- Litigation of 200 plus tax appeals; 10% resolved to date, 5 withdrawn and 2 pending summary judgment motions
- Initiated and pursued litigation against zoning scofflaws



## Benchmark Against Other Towns

	<b>Stamford (pop 131k)</b>	New Haven (pop. 131k)	Hartford (pop 123)	Bridgeport (pop 146k)	Waterbury (pop 108K)	Greenwich (pop 63K)	Norwalk (pop 89k)
Corporation Counsel	<b>1</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1
Deputy Corporation Counsel	<b>1</b>	2		1	1		1
Assistant Corporation Counsel	<b>6</b>	7		9	8	5	3
P/T Assistant Corporation Counsel	<b>1</b>			1.5			1
Executive Assistant	<b>1</b>	1		1	1	1	
Paralegal (Senior and standard)	<b>2</b>	5		3	3	1	
Legal Secretary		1		2	2	3	3
Other Staff	<b>1*</b>	1		2	1		1
Total	<b>13</b>	18	17 full time	20.5	17	11	10
Budget for outside Profesisonal Legal services	<b>\$581,000 (FY 18/19)</b>	\$720,000 (FY 18/19)	(FY 2019)	\$750,000 (FY 18/19)	\$530,000 (FY 18/19)	\$1,000,000 (FY 18/19)	\$244,000 (FY 18/19)
*19 hour secretary							