

City of Stamford Budget Presentation FY 2017-2018

Office of Legal Affairs
March 20, 2018





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**

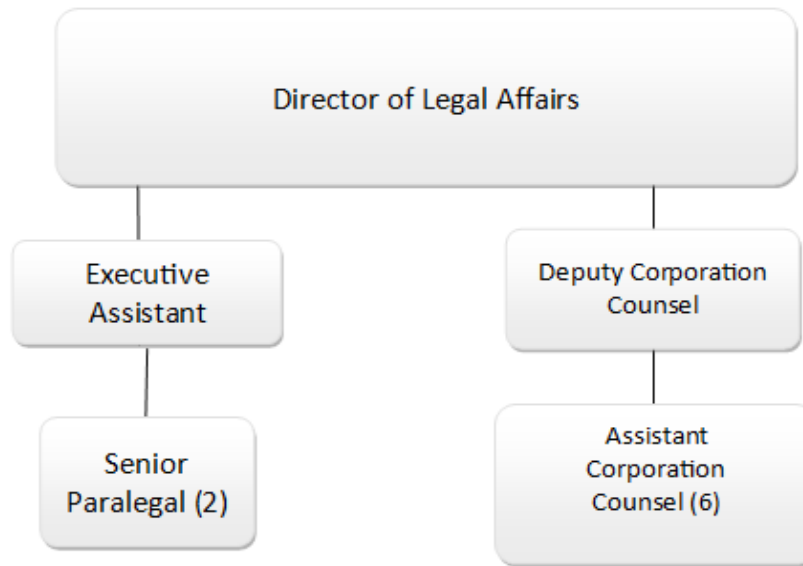
The Office of Legal Affairs provides legal services to all City officials, departments, boards, commissions and agencies. The Office of Legal Affairs also provides the professional human resources administration for the City of Stamford.

Services Provided

(to citizens or departments)

Program	Services Provided (include Volume - if applicable)
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"> • 170 Pending lawsuits as of June 30, 2017 • 133 lawsuits were filed in 2015/2016
Claims	Manage claims against the City (i.e., pothole, City vehicle hit parked car, slip & fall): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 Claims were filed in 2016/2017
Property Damage Collection & Other Collection	Collect damages on behalf of the City for damage to City property: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$62,679 in 2016/2017 Collect damages for illegal tipping and unpaid dumping fees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$189,750 collected in 2016/17
Delinquent Tax Accounts	Collect delinquent tax revenue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2,208,790 in 2016/2017
Freedom of Information Requests	Respond to Freedom of Information requests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 365 requests in 2014 up by 35% over 2013/14 • 718 requests in 2015/2016 up by 103% over 2014/2015 • 863 requests in 2016/2017 up by 20% over 2015/2016
Legal Opinions	Respond to requests for legal opinions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 written legal opinions in 2016/2017 • hundreds of informal legal opinions
Contracting Process	Prepare, review, approve and process hundreds of contracts, agreements, RFP'S & bid waivers annually
Other	Conduct training on legal issues including: freedom of information, police practices and contracting procedures. Draft ordinances/resolutions

Law Department Organization, Personnel and Resources



The Law Department utilizes outside counsel when conflicts exist or when the need arises for counsel with specialized expertise in a particular area of law (e.g., labor negotiations, education law for Board of Education, complex contracting and land use).



2017-18 Highlights

What are the most significant accomplishments made or challenges faced by the department in the last FY?

- Implemented amended Blight Ordinance provisions giving City greater ability to cure blight conditions
- Worked with Land Use Bureau to develop strategies and tools to improve enforcement of zoning requirements, including initiation of injunction action to obtain court order against serial zoning violator and assistance to BOR in drafting ordinance giving ZB new tools to more effectively review applications
- Developing a Process Manual for the Board of Education to guide school administrators in situations involving the following: bullying, harassment, Title IX, FOIA and FERPA
- Worked to limit City's exposure through investigation and preparation of cases and coordination with insurance carriers in large claims
- Managed various employee issues, including negotiating Body Worn Cameras agreement with Police union, conducting investigations of complaints and providing department training in sensitive areas



2017-18 Highlights

What are the most significant accomplishments made or challenges faced by the department in the last FY?

(Continued)

- Represented City in arbitrations and mediations, including Springdale Volunteer Fire Company's complaint against the City
- Managed audit and claim for resolution against Cigna for incorrect Medicare Primary coding
- Created data sharing agreements with BOE community partners to provide support and services to our community
- Resolved complex cases, including Doe and Christmas fire cases
- Represented Zoning Board in appeals, including complex Soundkeeper Appeal



2018-2019 Goals, Challenges & Changes

Goals

- Review, update and improve Purchasing Ordinance
- Continue to identify and address areas of land use policy implementation and enforcement that can be improved

Challenges

- Continue to identify and address areas of legal risk management 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 and manage insurance coverage for past liabilities

Changes

- Change Paralegal position to Senior Paralegal
 - Total hours per week to be increased to maximize productivity
 - Change to more accurately reflect level of responsibility of the position
 - Superior qualifications of current paralegal



Performance Measures

Law Department Performance Measures

Performance Data	FY 11-12	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17
Litigation Pending	523	557	582	310	289	170
Claims filed	133	92	140	235*	167	200
Property Damage collection	\$ 105,470	\$ 59,931	\$ 15,853	\$ 67,946	\$ 57,235	\$ 62,679
Delinquent Tax Collection	\$2,408,507	\$2,711,706	\$2,657,602	\$2,214,661	\$1,479,998	\$2,208,790
Freedom of Information Requests			264	355	718	860
Review, prepare & draft contracts				500	500 +/-	500 +/-
Legal Opinions	17	7	10	18	17	18
*78 pothole claims in 2014/2015						



Benchmark Against other towns	Stamford (pop 129k)	New Haven (pop. 130k)	Hartford (pop 124K)	Bridgeport (pop 146k)	Waterbury (pop 108K)	Greenwich (pop 62K)	Norwalk (pop 88k)
Corporation Counsel	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Deputy Corporation Counsel	1	2		1	1		1
Assistant Corporation Counsel	6	7		9	8	4	3
P/T Assistant Corporation Counsel	1			1.5	1		1
Executive Assistant	1	1		1		1	
Paralegal (Senior and standard)	2	5		3	3	1	
Legal Secretary		1		2	2	3	3
Other Staff	1*	1		3	2		
Total	13	18	17 full time	21.5	18	10	9
Budget for outside Profesional Legal services	\$571,000 (FY 17/18)	\$525,000 (FY 17/18)	(FY 2018)	\$750,000 (FY 17/18)	\$530,000 (FY 17/18)	\$1,352,000 (FY 17/18)	\$234,000 (FY 17/18)

*19 hour secretary