

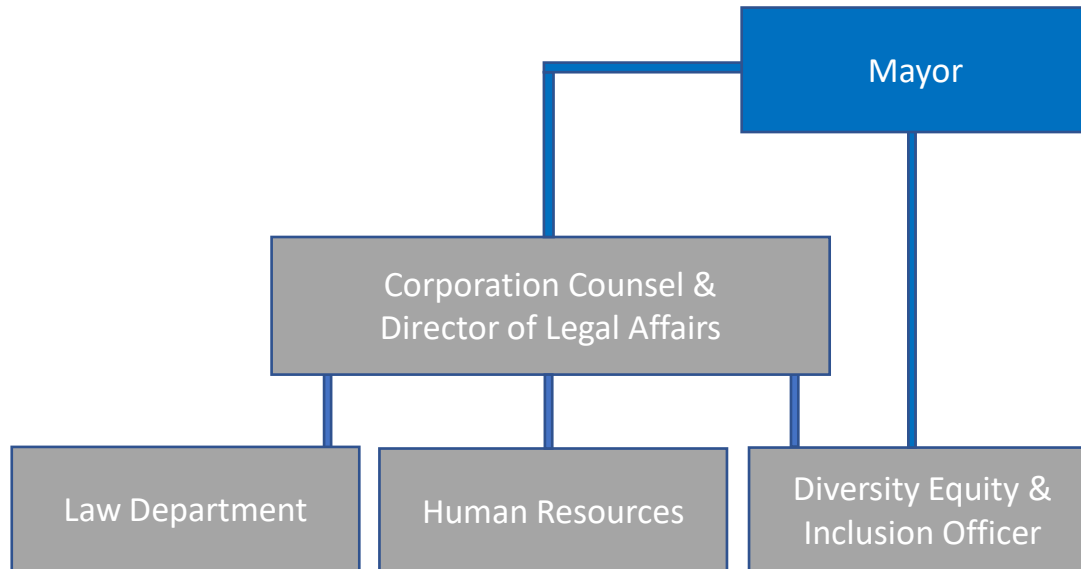
CITY OF STAMFORD OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

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Board of Finance March 21, 2023 7:00 p.m.
Board of Representatives Fiscal Committee
April 11, 2023 6:30 p.m.



Office of legal affairs

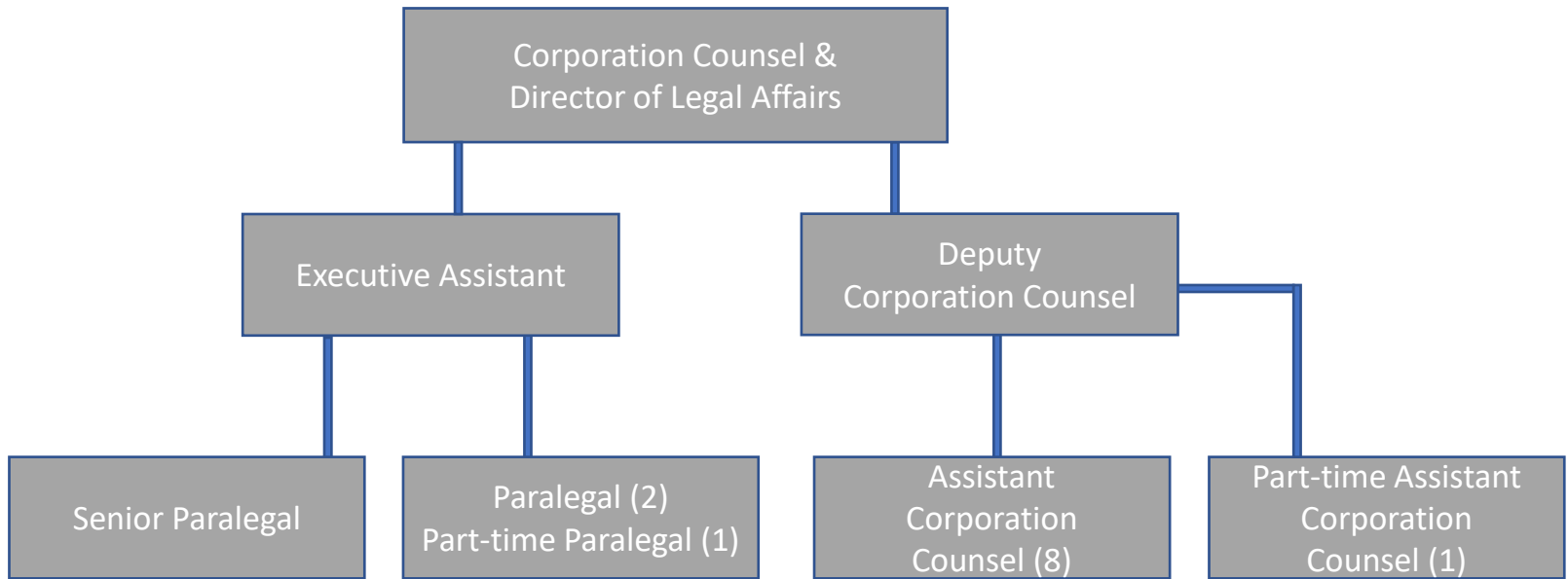




Department Introduction & Brief History

- *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.*

Law Department





Representative Duties of Legal Staff

- **Assistant Corporation Counsel**

- Represent City, employees, and boards and commissions and their members in litigation
- Negotiate and draft contracts, purchase orders, agreements
- Advise on procurement, competitive bidding and potential partnerships
- Advise all City boards and commissions on procedure, FOIA, charter compliance, ethics, case law and statutes
- Negotiate real estate transactions (sale, purchase, lease, easements, etc.)
- Draft ordinances and other legal and legislative language
- Represent City before CT FOI Commission, CHRO and other state agencies
- Defend City in tax appeals
- Represent Board of Education in litigation, special education and other matters

- **Paralegal**

- Process claims brought against the City and Board of Education
- Manage collection of fees, fines and damages on behalf of City and Board of Education
- Manage document review and discovery in litigation and enforcement matters
- Legal administrative support to attorneys in litigation and other matters



Law Department Highlights

- Negotiations with major telecom companies for installation of 5G small cell equipment on City utility poles
- Created Ethics Handbook and video ethics training to be used citywide
- Created and presented to many Boards & Commissions: FOI Basics for Board and Commission Members
- Settled 20 tax appeals and had 17 tax appeals withdrawn
- Summary judgment awards and multiple favorable rulings at CHRO and FOI Commission
- Settlement of several litigation matters which had the potential to expose the City to substantial damage awards
- Settlements in blight and land use enforcement cases favorable to neighborhood residents' quality of life



Examples of use of Outside Counsel 2021/2022

- Litigation involving mold in school buildings – seeking to recoup 10s of millions in \$ damages
- Affirmative litigation
- Matters of special expertise
- Employee claims against the City
- HR investigations and other special investigations
- Conflict of interest (e.g. contractual duty to represent police officers, etc.)
- Out-of-state legal matters
- Land use enforcement, including defense of enforcement actions
- Labor negotiations and other labor matters



Statistics FY 21/22

- 425 pending litigation matters & 61 pending tax appeals as of June 30, 2022
- New: 50 lawsuits, 8 tax appeals, 3 zoning appeals
- 168 Claims filed (i.e., pothole, vehicular incidents, slip & fall)
- 18 formal public legal opinions, hundreds of informal legal opinions
- \$187k collected for damage to City property





Changes for the next fiscal year

- Majority of salary increases are driven by contractual obligations
- \$2K increase in equipment rental – increased cost of new copy machine rental
- \$222K increase for Professional Consultants (i.e. outside counsel) from approved budget of \$878K to \$1.1m. Actual expense has exceeded approved budget 4 of the last 5 years

	Department Request	Adopted Budget	Additional Appropriation	Actual
FY 2018/2019	600,000	550,000		693,557
FY 2019/2020	600,000	575,000		1,049,520
FY 2020/2021	700,000	625,000	475,000	1,415,818
FY 2021/2022	950,000	900,000	350,000	1,440,313
FY 2022/2023	1,100,000	893,076		
FY 2023/2024	1,100,000			



Benchmark against other towns

	Stamford	New Haven	Hartford	Bridgeport	Waterbury
Population*	136,309	135,081	120,576	148,333	113,811
Land Area	37.6	18.7	17.3	16	28.5
Total Attorneys	10.5	12	9	11	10
Residents per Attorney	12,982	11,257	13,397	13,485	11,381
Total Staff	15	20	15	19	17
Budget for outside Professional Legal Services	\$893,076 (FY 22/23)	\$1,000,000 (FY 22/23)	\$1.5M (FY 22/23)	\$800,000 (FY 22/23)	\$590,00 (FY 22/23)

*www.census.gov