

**COMMITTEE ON MDC GOVERNMENT  
SPECIAL MEETING**

555 Main Street  
Hartford, Connecticut 06103  
Wednesday, January 28, 2026

**PRESENT:** Commissioners John Avedisian, John Bazzano, Peter Gardow, Maureen Magnan, Christopher Tierinni, Calixto Torres, James Woulfe and District Chairman Donald Currey (8)

**REMOTE**

**ATTENDANCE:** Commissioners Kyle Anderson and Gary Johnson (2)

**ABSENT:** Commissioners Avery Buell and James Healy (2)

**ALSO**

**PRESENT:** Commissioner William DiBella  
Commissioner John Gale  
Commissioner Dominic Pane  
Commissioner Edwin Vargas  
Citizen Member Awet Tsegai  
Scott W. Jellison, Chief Executive Officer  
Christopher Stone, District Counsel  
John S. Mirtle, District Clerk  
Kelly Shane, Chief Administrative Officer  
Christopher Levesque, Chief Operating Officer  
Jonathan Perugini, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Finance  
Jamie Harlow, Director of Human Resources  
Sue Negrelli, Director of Engineering  
Dave Ruddy, Director of Operations  
Robert Schwarm, Director of Information Systems (Remote Attendance)  
Tom Tyler, Director of Facilities (Remote Attendance)  
Victoria Escoriza, Assistant Administrative Officer and Special Assistant  
Julie Price, Executive Assistant  
Kevin Sullivan, IT Consultant (Remote Attendance)  
Matt McAuliffe, IT Consultant (Remote Attendance)  
Elizabeth Tavelli, Independent Consumer Advocate (Remote Attendance)

**CALL TO ORDER**

District Counsel Christopher Stone called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

**ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON**

District Counsel Christopher Stone called for the election of the Chairperson. Commissioner Woulfe placed Commissioner John Bazzano's name in nomination, the nomination was duly seconded by Commissioner Anderson.

There being no further nominations, the nominations were closed. Commissioner Bazzano was elected Chairperson of the Committee on MDC Government for 2026 and 2027 by unanimous vote of those present. Chairperson Bazzano assumed the Chair and thanked the Committee on MDC Government.

***Commissioner Johnson entered the meeting remotely at 5:04 PM***

### **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Chairman Bazzano called for the election of the Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Torres placed Commissioner Peter Gardow's name in nomination, and the nomination was duly seconded by Commissioner Avedisian.

There being no further nominations, the nominations were closed. Commissioner Peter Gardow was elected Vice Chairperson of the Committee on MDC Government for 2026 and 2027.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS RELATIVE TO AGENDA ITEMS**

No one from the public appeared to be heard.

### **INDEPENDENT CONSUMER ADVOCATE COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS RELATIVE TO AGENDA ITEMS**

Independent Consumer Advocate Elizabeth Tavelli did not have any comments or questions relative to agenda items.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

***On motion made by Commissioner Magnan and duly seconded, the meeting minutes of October 7, 2025 and public hearing minutes of December 1, 2025 were approved.***

### **APPOINTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE CONSULTANTS**

To: Committee on MDC Government

January 28, 2026

Over the past year, the firms of Gaffney, Bennett and Associates Inc. (Attorney Brendan Fox), Strategic Outreach Solutions, LLC (Janice Flemming) and Levin, Paolino and Christ Government Relations Consulting, LLC (Michael Christ) have provided exemplary service in the area of government relations and advocacy within state government on behalf of the District, and the same holds true for Squire Patton Boggs (William Schuster) and SJB Strategies, LLC (Attorney Stephen Bonafonte) on the federal level. Staff recommends the appointment of the same lobbying team for 2026. With the

exception of Levin, Paolino and Christ Government Relations Consulting, LLC, the term of the appointments would be from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026. As to Levin, Paolino and Christ Government Relations Consulting, LLC, the term of its appointment would be from February 1, 2026 to May 31, 2026, all subject to Board approval.

Furthermore, in the event the Committee on MDC Government forwards the appointments to the District Board, District staff recommends the following annual fees for state legislative/administrative consultants: (1) Gaffney, Bennett and Associates, Inc., \$69,000.00, (2) Levin, Paolino and Christ Government Relations Consulting, LLC, \$14,000.00 and (3) Strategic Outreach Solutions, LLC, \$66,000.00.

On the Federal level, in the event the Committee on MDC Government forwards the appointments to the District Board, District staff recommends the following annual fees: (1) Squire Patton Boggs, \$150,000.00; and (2) SJB Strategies, LLC, \$95,000.00.

It is therefore recommended that it be:

**Voted:** That the Committee on MDC Government recommends to the District Board passage of the following resolution:

**Resolved:** That the firms of Gaffney, Bennett and Associates Inc. and Strategic Outreach Solutions, LLC be retained to perform state lobbying services for a period commencing on January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026, and the firm of Levin, Paolino, and Christ Government Relations Consulting, LLC, shall be retained for the period from February 1, 2026 through May 31, 2026. Gaffney, Bennett and Associates, Inc. fee will receive \$69,000.00, Levin, Paolino and Christ Government Relations Consulting, LLC will receive \$14,000.00, and Strategic Outreach Solutions, LLC will receive \$66,000.00, all subject to the execution of a written agreement prepared and approved by District Counsel as to form and content, reflecting the scope of services, reporting requirements and such other terms and conditions as District Counsel, may specify.

**Further**

**Resolved:** That the firms of Squire Patton Boggs and SJB Strategies, LLC be retained to perform federal lobbying services for a period commencing on January 1, 2026 and terminating on December 31, 2026. Squire Patton Boggs will receive \$150,000.00 and SJB Strategies, LLC will receive \$95,000.00, subject to the execution of a written agreement prepared and approved by District Counsel as to form and content, reflecting the scope of services, reporting requirements and such other terms and conditions as District Counsel may specify.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Mittle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John S. Mirtle  
District Clerk

***On motion made by Commissioner Tierinni and duly seconded, the report was received and resolution adopted by unanimous vote of those present.***

### **2026 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES**

District Counsel Stone led a discussion on 2026 legislative initiatives.

***On motion made by Commissioner Tierinni and duly seconded, the discussion on 2026 legislative initiatives is referred to the District Board.***

### **OPPORTUNITY FOR GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No one from the public appeared to be heard.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 PM

ATTEST:

John S. Mirtle, Esq.  
District Clerk

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Date of Approval

**\*\*Video of the full January 28, 2026 Committee on MDC Government meeting is available at <https://www.youtube.com/@MetropolitanDistrictCommission> \*\***