

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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JOHN DESTEFANO, JR.
Mayor



*The vision of New Haven's children
is our city's greatest resource.*

November 6, 2013

Mayor Elect Toni Harp
560 Whalley Avenue
New Haven, CT 06511

Dear Mayor Elect Harp,

Toni

Congratulation on your election as New Haven's 50th Mayor. My own years in office have been an extraordinary experience and more than I could have ever hoped for. It is my wish that you find the years ahead to be as full of satisfaction as I have.

Please find under cover of this letter my Administration's Transition Report to the Mayor-Elect ("the Report"). The Report and the attached appendices have been prepared by the appropriate Agency Directors under the coordination of Chief Administrative Officer Robert Smuts and Deputy Chief of Staff/Legislative Liaison Rebecca Bombero. I am transmitting the Report as it has been assembled.

I have asked the Directors to assemble a Report that is frank and that identifies deficiencies as well as those efforts that are going well. I have also asked that any issues requiring attention in the first 90 days of the new Administration be called out.

Sean Matteson, my Chief of Staff, is the principal contact for any matters requiring attention during the transition period. I will instruct all Agency Directors to be directly accessible and available to the incoming Administration as you might require. Obviously I have also instructed the Directors than any interaction with the incoming Administration between now and the close of business on December 31 will be for information purposes only.

While the Report is extensive, I thought it appropriate to add a few comments of my own on some of the matters for your consideration as well.



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**This creative impression is the work of Sanja Benak, a student at High School in the Community.*

1. **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS.** I would suggest that as a first matter that a full emergency operations exercise be held as soon as reasonably possible. The City has experienced several natural disasters of long duration over the last few years. Once you have established the chain of authority for EOC operations, I would strongly urge that your team table top an exercise. I would also suggest a brief exercise for moderate snowfall removal as well.
2. **FISCAL POLICY.** Over the last several years the City's finances, especially in the General Fund, have been a challenge. I would suspect that this will be no less so in future years. Included with the Report are audits, bargaining unit agreements and the two pension fund actuarial valuations. I would urge consideration of a five year projection of revenues and expenses along with a review of current and prior year financial operations as the new Administration thinks best. Such an analysis would provide a useful framework against which to measure future labor negotiations, policy initiatives, service resetting, cash flow management, pending litigation and legislative initiatives.
3. **SCHOOL REFORM.** From my perspective this is the most critical effort underway to positively affect the future of the people of New Haven. I see the Mayor's role to see that the tactical activities of school reform – that it be collaborative, comprehensive and persistent in its design and execution – be adhered to. Keeping everyone on board, engaging community and institutional partners and providing a focus is a role that the Mayor is uniquely equipped to play. New Haven School Reform has a long way to go and one need only to look to Hartford and Bridgeport to see how school reform efforts can get tangled up.
4. **VIOLENCE.** This area, more than any other remains troubling to me. Many valuable efforts are underway and will further curb violence. However they are principally of the 'here and now' in their nature. For the most part they are not efforts that, based upon predictive indicators, focus on interrupting behavior that precurse activities that years from now will result in violence. There are many thoughts in the community as to how to accomplish this.
5. **TECHNOLOGY.** Information technology is an area of the government that will require meaningful attention and about which I am less than pleased with the systems I am turning over. Systems and hardware are stretched to their operational limits. Redundancy on critical systems are not at acceptable levels. Productivity and service to citizens is poorer due to limits on City capabilities. Attention will be required to systems and support structure.

6. **SEA LEVEL CHANGE.** While of longer term consequence, as a coastal city New Haven would be well served to launch an effort to determine the potential consequences of global climate change. Such an effort should also consider investments and activities that would be appropriate in consideration of findings.
7. **LITIGATION.** As part of your briefing on pending litigation, I would be sure to understand the standards of the law as it relates to personal liability for elected and appointed officials and the standard of indemnification for these officials that the Administration will impose.

I would also like to summarize the activities that I have been personally involved in on a regular basis.

1. **CCM BOARD OF DIRECTORS.** I have found this useful for the self evident reason of shaping municipal lobbying activities at the State Capitol. I presume that CCM will offer a Board seat.
2. **SCRCOG.** Meeting monthly, SCRCOG is the place where Greater New Haven communities come together to discuss mutual concerns, opportunities, to allocate transportation priorities and to mutually chart economic development strategy through REX and the EDC. I found it most useful to sit on the Executive and Transportation Committees. The SCRCOG is about to launch a year long effort to 'ENVISION GREATER NEW HAVEN'. This an important basis for further collaboration in the region.
3. **REX and EDC.** REX is greater New Haven's economic development partnership. EDC is the New Haven development entity that supports the City's EDA. It is jointly staffed.
4. **NEW HAVEN WORKS.** This is the jobs pipeline initiative.
5. **RWDB.** The 'CEO Committee' of the two COG's in our RWDB approves the budget and all Board appointments to the RWDB. New Haven is the largest recipient of RWDB resources and as such ought to be represented on the CEO Committee.
6. **USCM and NLC.** These are the two national organization of CEO's I expect you will receive an invitation from USCM to attend their "New Mayors" course at the Kennedy School. I urge your attendance. USCM tends to attract and be driven by the very large cities in the country. Bill Finch is very active in USCM. NLC is affiliated with CCM and all the other State leagues. It is more grass roots and constituency driven. Check both out.

7. **CITYWIDE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE ("CWSC").** CWSC was created by Ordinance in 1995. The Mayor is a member and I have chaired CWSC since its inception. It next elects officers in January. Participation is critical especially as the City proceeds to audit and close out projects.
8. **PROMISE.** The Board is chaired by Peter Salovey and meets quarterly.
9. **BIG CITY MAYORS.** Always Hartford and Bridgeport. Increasingly Waterbury and sometimes Stamford and the inner ring suburbs. This is not a formal group. The point is we meet informally to discuss and act on issues of mutual concern.

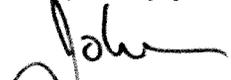
I might mention a few other matters:

1. **PUBLIC SAFETY NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL.** Set with both Chiefs, the protocol determines notification for public safety activities for the Mayor and senior staff.
2. **DOCUMENT SIGN OFF.** Under Charter the Mayor signs off on hundreds of documents each year. I found it useful to establish a protocol under which Corporation Counsel and the originating Agency signed off on all documents BEFORE they are received at the Mayor's Office.
3. **GEAR.** Finally, keep rain gear and boots in the car. You'll need them.

The Report touches on most of these areas, so much of what I have included is for emphasis. I look forward to your success and the continued well being of our City.

If there is any way I might be of assistance during the Transition period or thereafter, please do not hesitate to contact me - and every best wish.

Very truly yours,


John DeStefano, Jr.
Mayor

Enclosure