

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 8, 2013**

ATTENDANCE: Angel dePara, Co-chair; Susan Brannelly, Co-Chair; Carlos Silva, Lydia Martinez

STAFF: Anne Kelly-Lenz, Finance Director

OTHERS: Council Member Steven Stafstrom, Council Member John Olson

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member dePara called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Committee Minutes: May 1, 2013; May 2, 2013; May 4, 2013; May 6, 2013; May 7, 2013 (Special Meeting); May 8, 2013; May 9, 2013; May 11, 2013.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA MOVED THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:
MAY 1, 2013; MAY 2, 2013; MAY 4, 2013; MAY 6, 2013; MAY 7, 2013 (SPECIAL MEETING); MAY 8, 2013; MAY 9, 2013; MAY 11, 2013.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**GENERAL DISCUSSION REGARDING THE REVIEW OF THE MONTHLY
FINANCIAL REPORT**

Ms. Kelly Lenz came forward and greeted the Committee. Council Member dePara asked for a status update on the year end report for 2012-2013. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that there were some accruals being entered and finalized. A final number will be available after the audit. However, she said that unless something unexpected happens, it appears that the City will end up on budget.

Council Member Stafstrom asked if she anticipated any surprises for the annual budget. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that compared to last year, she did not think that there were any major surprises. Overtime has been reduced. The Police overtime was expected to be about five million, but it currently appears that their overtime will be around three million. This has been a major cost containment. The Fire Department has staffing issues so the overtime is harder to reduce.

Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that she has been working on getting the bills from the third party legal consultants in a timely manner.

Council Member Martinez asked about how the furloughs were going. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that she was not sure where the unions were in terms of this. She said she did not know what the bargaining terms were and she would find out the status for Council Member Martinez.

Council Member Stafstrom asked what would happen with any surplus from the budget. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that any savings would go towards the fund balance. She said that she was trying to keep the fund balance steady, but the reserves were being used up by the overtime.

Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that she was working on the May financial report and hoped to have it out to the Committee within the next week.

General Discussion pertaining to FY2013-2014 Adopted Budget

Council Member Stafstrom said that the Committee had finalized the budget with some assumptions about the State allocations of the Pequot fund, the transportation allocation, and other State allocations. He asked if the Finance Department had reviewed the various allocations. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that she would have to check with OPM to determine what funding had been approved. The Pequot funding, and PILOT allocations have been restored, but she was unsure whether the transportation funding had been restored.

Council Member dePara thanked Ms. Kelly-Lenz for her input.

Council Member dePara said that he and Co-Chair Brannelly felt that these on-going discussions would result in the Committee being better prepared to deal with the budget.

Council Member Brannelly said that the Committee had wanted to insure that some of the action items that had been suggested during the most recent budget cycle were not put aside. One issue was the technology overview and inventory of all the fax lines, phone lines and various computers.

Council Member Olson said that there had been a discussion regarding inviting the various non-profits to make a donation. He added that there was also a request to have an investigation into whether the non-profits were fulfilling the non-profit requirements.

Council Member Martinez asked if the park fees have been raised. Council Member Brannelly said that the golf course fees had increased. A member of the public said that the fee at Seaside had gone up to \$10.00 on July 1st.

Council Member Olson said that there were some complaints that people were parking along the side streets and walking into Beardsley Park rather than paying the fee. A brief discussion followed.

Council Member dePara said that the Committee should have quarterly mini-Budget hearings to make sure that the assumptions that were made when the budget was set were still holding true.

He said that it was important to have timely information. Council Member Stafstrom pointed out that the projection on the overtime had been reduced by 2 million dollars once the Deputy Chief had been hired and started monitoring the overtime. Discussion followed about the key budget drivers then followed.

Council Member Olson said that the Committee had spent a significant amount of time discussing the need for an in-house staff member to assist in getting the quarterly reports. Discussion followed about the various options such as: having a City staff member, having an outside firm or what would be the best way to do this. Council Member Brannelly said that she thought the Committee should start a process for getting a consultant. There is funding allocated for professional consultants. Discussion followed about what the goals would be for the consultant.

Council Member Stafstrom suggested that the Committee start to look at what other municipalities do. Council Member dePara agreed.

Council Member Silva said that it would be important to have a firm that is used to working with municipal governments and know about the best practices. He said that he like the idea of doing a quarterly review. He said that this needs to be a priority because that the Committee needs this assistance in order to make good decisions.

Council Member dePara said that he would like to see a better implementation of technology to aid the Council Members in the budget process.

Council Member Martinez said that she would like to know where the funding that was transferred from CDBG or a Capital project to anti-blight and then nothing happens. She said that she felt the Committee did not have enough detail about how the money will be spent. Discussion followed.

Council Member Stafstrom reminded everyone that during the Budget process, there had been a number requests about raising fees. She said that she would like to have a progress report from the various departments. Council Member Stafstrom said that it would be good to have a periodic review of where the City stands in relationship to other communities.

Council Member Stafstrom suggested that the Benefits Department should be part of a quarterly review to get an overview of what the department is doing.

Council Member Brannelly mentioned that there should be more cooperation between the Library and the City. Each year that they had one mill allocation, they had a surplus. She suggested that perhaps suggesting they work more closely with the schools and provide more support to the schools with the surplus funding. Many of the projects would integrate nicely with the schools.

Council Member Brannelly then suggested the Committee choose a point person for the various projects.

She suggested that Andy Nunn should be the point person for the technology project. The assessment of the non-profits needs to be checked with Mr. Nunn regarding a pending Citistat report.

Regarding the request for voluntary contributions from non-profits, Council Member Stafstrom pointed out that when the developers come for projects, this would be the best time to work with the developer.

The discussion moved to the numerous storefront churches in the City. Council Member Brannelly said that this would be part of an audit.

Council Member Brannelly suggested perhaps having some kind of contribution campaign for the existing non-profits. Council Member Stafstrom suggested that when the campaign is created, that there is some kind benefits for the businesses and residents. An example of this might be saying if the campaign raises two million dollars, one million will be used to hire more police or more sanitation workers or something else the City needs.

Fees - report from the various departments.

Library cooperation - The focus is to provide better services to the residents. This will be discussed with Mr. Nunn.

Updates on the police overtimes; the benefits; and other big ticket items.

Start the discussion on hiring a consultant. This will be allocated to Council President McCarthy.

RECESS

Council Member dePara announced a five minute recess at 7:40 p.m. He called the meeting back to order at 7:45 p.m.

Discussion cont'd

Regarding the Capital budget and current spending, this will be allocated to Tom Sherwood.

Council Member dePara said that if there are any additional suggestions, they should be emailed to Co-chairs dePara and Brannelly.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Budget and Appropriations
Regular Meeting
July 8, 2013