

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS  
PUBLIC HEARING  
APRIL 22, 2013**

**ATTENDANCE:** Angel dePara, Jr. Co-chair; Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Carlos Silva, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (6:20 p.m.)

**OTHERS:** Council President Thomas McCarthy; Council Member Steven Stafstrom, Jr.; Council Member James Holloway, Council Member Andre Baker, Jr., Council Member Michelle Lyons

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council Member dePara called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. He introduced the Committee member and the Council members present and stated that this was the second of three public hearings.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Mr. Michael Smith came forward and greeted the Committee. He said that he was interested in knowing what actions the Committee was doing to reduce the impact the of the governor's budget. He also wished to know how the Committee was handling the Mayor's Budget and the current inflation rate. As a taxpayer and resident, he stated that that not all the city's laws were being enforced. Mr. Smith said that on his street, were numerous vehicles registered in N.Y.

Ms. S. J. Stromm came forward and said that she was librarian at Houstanoc Community College. She said that she agreed with Mr. Smith's statements. In the five years that she has lived here, the one topic that has come up over and over is property tax. Ms. Stromm said that when the property taxes go up, people just get to a point where they say enough and move to Stratford.

Ms. Helen Olga Losak came forward and said that she expected the Mayor and her Council Members to be present. She then read a children's story about the Bridgeport budget situation.

*Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.*

The story recounted how during 2012, there were concessions by the unions and many other issues, but the taxes still went up by \$500. The story line noted how there were other staff hired by the Mayor without taking the Civil Service exam. The story also commented on the fact that there were two City Halls, while businesses were leaving the City and homes were for sale. Now there is a repeat of the City's deficit.

Ms. Losak concluded by saying that the residents cannot afford Mayor Finch's administration.

Mr. James Fox of Seaside Avenue came forward and said that there were a number of points that he wished to say. He said that right now all the industry Bridgeport has right now is school based - the construction and the services provided by the schools. Every thing else has moved to Shelton. The streets are full of potholes along with the sidewalks. He spoke about a giant pole that was near P.T. Barnum that had been on the ground for months.

*Council Member Michelle Lyons joined the meeting at 6:28 p.m.*

Mr. Fox pointed out that there was no shopping in Bridgeport, not even a big box store. Other than constructing schools, there is not much going on in Bridgeport.

Mr. John Marshal Lee came forward and said that the Council Members from Black Rock recently had held a "conversation" with their constituents. He said that there had been a number of people who had mentioned that they did not have this in their district.

Mr. Lee said that there had been a loss of the watchdogs. He and Mr. Fardy had a conversation about this and concluded that the Council Members had failed miserably. The current Council takes the Mayor's budget as gospel. He claimed that the Charter was being ignored and mentioned the vacant positions that were being funded annually. Mr. Lee held up a sign with eight blindfolded dogs on it.

Mr. Lee said that this morning, the Connecticut Post had an article on the amount of Police overtime. This did not become an issue until 2011, when there was a rather high amount of overtime. He said that there was no report on the Fire Department overtime. He said that this might be because the City has new contracts that allowed overtime to be added to their retirement benefits.

Mr. Lee said that the Council members talk about the grand list, but they don't talk about the net grand list. He went on to mention the Steel Point project.

Mr. Lee said that there was a local share of the education expense and it is the lowest in the area. He said that City funding for this coming year was flat. Mayor Finch claimed he was the Education Mayor. Mr. Lee said that Mr. Sherwood's figures were not accurate and suggested an RFP for a professional to monitor these issues and report monthly to the Committee.

Mr. Todd Zarosis came forward and said that he lived in Black Rock for 10 years. His property taxes started at \$4,200 and now are over \$9,000. He said that he would like the Council to consider the fairness of how the properties were assessed. He said that he can't afford to move and can't afford to pay more. He said several people had discussed not paying their taxes, which would mean no revenue for the City.

Council Member dePara asked if there was anyone else who wished to address the Committee Members. No one else came forward. Council Member dePara asked if there was anyone else

who wished to address the Committee Members. No one else came forward. He repeated the request. Hearing none, Council Member dePara closed the public hearing on the budget.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services