

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 8, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Mike Marella, Co-chair; Lydia Martinez, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Patricia Swain

OTHERS: Council President Thomas McCarthy, Councilmember Melanie Jackson, Councilmember José Casco, Councilmember McBride-Lee; Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director; Andy Nunn, CAO

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m. A quorum was present. She introduced the Committee Members and other Council Members present at the meeting.

GENERAL BUDGET/CAPITAL PLAN DISCUSSION.

Council Member Brannelly said that the Mayor had presented his budget to the Council and the budget books were present for the Council Members. The budget has also been posted on-line.

Council Member Brannelly reviewed the proposed format, starting with a general overview of the budget in this meeting and the next one, the public hearing and the more specific department budgets. This year, the Committee will be reviewing the categories rather than departments. The departments will be asked to give an overview of the specific categories and other budgetary areas that may be of concern to the Council Members.

The first Public Hearing will be held on the General Budget on April 13th. Council Member Brannelly listed the upcoming meetings on the schedule. She said that the budget must be presented to the full Council for a vote on May 11th. She explained that the Police and Fire had been rescheduled to April 30th and the Health and Social Services have been switched to the 15th.

Council Member Swain said that last year, the Committee held a public hearing and no one came to it. She asked if these hearings had been posted. Council Member Brannelly said that the announcements had been submitted and were expected to be in the paper on the 9th. Council Member Swain asked if historically, the public had attended these hearings. Council Member Brannelly replied that in the past, the Committee only had one public hearing or maybe a second one. One year, the hearing was packed because the BOE was threatening to close schools. Council Member Swain said that it was sad that no one came to speak about the budget. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it was up to the Council Members to make their constituents aware of what was going on. Council Member Swain said that the public hearing notices appear to be lost in the legal notices. A brief discussion followed about possibly taking out an ad in the paper. Council President McCarthy suggested that the Council Members reach out to their constituents via Facebook pages and the like.

Mr. Nunn gave a brief overview of the budget. He said that the staff had worked hard during the year to produce the budget. Rather than waiting for the budget cycle to start, the Committee had continued throughout the year to contact departments, which Mr. Nunn found commendable. He said that this year's budget has no tax increase. The revenue numbers have been based on the State's number, which is what the City has done in the past. However, he cautioned the Council Members that there was some uncertainty with what the State administration was doing with the budget. The lobbyists have been in close contact with the City and the State government about this. Mr. Nunn said that he felt it was good that the Committee had scheduled multiple public hearings and would look into getting the public to attend them. He requested that if the Council Members had questions, to send them to the Committee Co-chairs, who would forward them to either himself or Mr. Sherwood for information. Mr. Nunn said that he appreciated the Committee's willingness to be flexible in terms of arranging the department meetings. He added that it was important for the Committee to be aware of what the Superintendent of Schools was planning and how their budget was being constructed, even though the City has no input on how they spend their funding.

Mr. Sherwood greeted the Commission and said that a great deal of what the City is able to do now is because the City has the largest swing of employee contributions for health care in the entire State. The budget contains the pending NAGE and Police union agreements. There are no more post employment benefits. There were four major unions that would have their health care stop when they retire. The smaller unions will also fall in line as their contracts are renewed. As the workforce that has the ongoing benefits ages out, the post benefits will continue to decrease.

Mr. Sherwood then spoke about the various parks and sports fields improvements. He said that since the City started to install splash pads in some of the parks, the vandalism on the fire hydrants had decreased greatly. The change to artificial turf on the sports fields has reduced maintenance costs. Everything in the budget has been based on a cost saving model. There are fewer fees to pay out because the City will not be requesting additional borrowing. The Finance Office would be only asking for one temporary loan request because they have been working on managing the cash flow more efficiently. The City will not be asking for any bonding this year.

Four regulatory positions have been introduced, but there are 31 City positions are vacant other than police and fire. He gave a brief overview of the posting process and how the position will be advertised. The Budget grew by 8.4 million, and it is currently about 54% for education and 45% for the general City budget. There was an increase in the grand list.

The Governor's figures were released and the City will not receive the same funding they did in the past. He said that there are more towns looking for relief on the NBR for education.

Council Member L. Martinez asked if the revenue and permits had been calculated into the budget. Mr. Sherwood said that the Building Manger had been monitoring this. Council Member L. Martinez asked about Downtown North. Mr. Nunn said that some of the permits had been drawn and others would be drawn.

Council Member Swain asked about the Land Value Taxation Pilot program, which she had been told that the City had missed the deadline. Mr. Nunn explained that the New London had decided to take advantage of the program, but then decided not to follow through due to the

amount of documentation involved. The deadline for this program was the end of the 2014 calendar, but the process takes between 8 to 10 months. The City representatives have spoken with Mr. Barnes of the State OPM about this and the City will be applying. It will involve hiring a firm for between \$40,000 and \$60,000 for the application.

Council Member Brannelly asked for clarification on the Land Value Taxation. Mr. Nunn said that the Committee had a presentation on this with a handout in October, but he would send the Committee members the handout. He then gave a brief overview of how the tax program would work. Discussion followed about the way that Connecticut allows tax revenue to be generated.

Council Member Brannelly asked Mr. Sherwood to review the layout and chapter content of the Budget. Mr. Sherwood said that on page 8, the revenue was laid out according to department, while page 9 contains a break out of revenue in different categories. The work force has been reduced by 12% since 2008. There is a cover page for each department, a personnel summary and the detailed line items. Page 11 lists the various groups that can move money around without Council approval.

The Committee then turned to the Purchasing Department cover sheet on page 43 for a review. Mr. Sherwood then gave an overview of the department budget layout. Council Member Martinez said that she appreciated the breakout of the expenses.

Council Member Brannelly said that one of the things that the Committee has tried to focus on in the past year is the goals.

Mr. Sherwood said that the Mayor would be having meetings at three of the high schools. He said that it was important to know that there were three areas in the budget. The first is Fixed Costs, the second is Essential Services (BOE, Fire, Police, EOC) and Operating Services (Parks and Rec, and Social Services)

Council Member Brannelly said that tomorrow, the Committee would be reviewing the fixed costs and the revenues.

Council Member Swain asked if the goal of the Committee was to cut the budget further despite the fact that as it stands, there would be no tax increase. Council Member Brannelly said that the Committee needs to understand how the administration arrived at the zero tax increase, and look to see if there can be further cuts. Mr. Nunn said that the budget was a snapshot in time and that there had been improvements over time in the union contracts. It is built on past successes and changes.

Mr. Sherwood reminded everyone that the Governor's budget would not be set when Bridgeport sends out the tax bill. He cautioned everyone against cutting the current budget too much so that there is still room to absorb with any cuts that the Governor may make. He said that the City was not asking for a bond authorization.

Council Member Martinez said that everyone would like to see the mill rate decrease, but at the same time, she said that the residents still had many needs that should be addressed. It will be important to think towards the future and giving the residents a tax break. Mr. Sherwood said

that if the Governor cuts some programs like ABCD or the Lighthouse program, the residents will feel it, despite the fact that Bridgeport may have funded its portion.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about getting hard copies of the documents. Mr. Sherwood made a note of this.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER L. MARTINEZ SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 9, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-Chair; Howard Austin, Council President
Thomas McCarthy, Patricia Swain, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia,
Lydia Martinez (6:17 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member Enrique Torres; Thomas Sherwood, OPM; Andy
Nunn, Mayor's Office; Council Member Robert Halstead; Council
Member José Casco

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. A quorum was present.

General Budget/Capital Plan Discussion

Council Member Brannelly said that last night Mr. Sherwood had highlighted the positive things in the budget, such as no increase in the taxes. She then asked Mr. Sherwood what areas were concerns.

Council Member Halstead joined the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Mr. Sherwood said that health care was a major concern. He said that the part time employees could only work 30 hours a week and there were significant penalties if there are any errors. Council President McCarthy reviewed how the measuring period is done and how the Federal Government will assess the penalties.

Council Member Martinez joined the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

Mr. Nunn said that insurance on the East Coast is very expensive and the City is looking for other like-minded communities to work on this issue. Council President McCarthy said that there was a 2016 Cadillac tax that will be 6 million the first year, 8 million the second year and then 14 million the third year. He reminded everyone that these Cadillac taxes are money from the City's revenue that they will not be able to use for City services or other City items. Discussion followed about the details.

Mr. Sherwood pointed out that the City has made several strides forward in health care co-pays.

The administration has no idea what the Governor's budget will be and the Governor's budget will affect the City's amount of State revenues. Council President McCarthy asked if there were any grant funded positions that the administration felt were necessary, but might lose State funding. Mr. Sherwood said that the Governor was proposed cutting the Lighthouse funding in half. There have also been discussions about cutting ABCD and possibly the zoo allocations. He said that he did not expect the PILOTS for the colleges and hospitals to be touched, but there

were a number of variables involved with the revenues from the gaming industry. The LOCIP funding appears to be untouched.

Council Member José Casco joined the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Council Member L. Martinez asked about Bridgeport's lobbying representatives and whether they have spoken up about this. Mr. Sherwood said that the Governor had gone directly to the individual line items that will impact the various municipalities.

Council Member Brannelly said that she would like to start with the value of the budget. Mr. Sherwood said that the Council Members should turn to pages 7 & 8. Council Member Brannelly said that it helpful to know what the mill rate is and what the revenues. Mr. Sherwood said that the total budget is \$532,066,279. He said that the Education budget looks skewed because the BOE may have added in the grant funding into the request.

The Mill rate currently is 42.9. The value of one mill is 6.289.089, which is the amount that the Library gets. The difference between last year's budget and this year is around 8 million.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia and Council Member Halstead left the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

The discussion then moved to the collection of delinquent real property and personal property taxes.

Mr. Sherwood also reviewed the details of the BOE revenue services. He explained that the bulk of the 8.3 increase in the revenue was the BOE paying for the City services, such as garbage collection, or plowing. If the BOE decides to use an outside contract, there will be savings to the City, Mr. Sherwood said.

He then reviewed the growth of debt on the Capital Budget school bonds, which are coming through, and the cost of the Police contract. All the provision that the City needs for the Police contract costs of approximately 1.8 million has been included in the Budget. He added that the Police contract would expire next year. The police contract expired in 2012 and the City asked for concessions of 2 million in the contract. Every union had a specific value they had to get to for the budget. The retroactive payments will be proportionally reduced by approximately \$800,000.

Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Brannelly asked why the Police Union contract would be expiring next year. Mr. Sherwood said that the unions don't like to have lengthy contracts. Council President McCarthy commented that the City had been involved with binding arbitration. He added that NAGE had just ratified the proposed contract earlier in the evening.

Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the major departments as listed on page 7. The discussion moved to the Board of Education. Their request is for \$226,513,895, however the MBR is set by the State after it is set. Now that the City is now part of the Alliance effort and it was 22% of the local share and it should be 23%. The numbers are based on operations that are still in motion. Mr. Sherwood said that they knew it would be increasing, but no one knew by how much. Mr.

Sherwood said that the Superintendent will explain to the Committee next week and their new budget will be going for approval in the coming days.

Council Member L. Martinez asked how many Public Facilities employees will be needed to provide service to the BOE. Mr. Nunn said that the City oversees their crews and that involves two employees. The biggest fees are for the tipping fees and the recycling.

Council Member Torres asked about the details of the mill rate. Mr. Sherwood directed him to page 48 and the lines that show the property taxes and the library tax line items. He said that by adding those two lines together, the total shows the entire amount that is expected to be collected by the Tax Collector.

Council Member Swain asked if the Board of Education would be happy with the budget. Mr. Sherwood said that the Superintendent came to the Committee with a plan. Council Member Brannelly asked how much they were requesting. Mr. Nunn said that it was approximately 12 million in State grants. The total figure is \$251,561,414, which includes City and State contributions, along with grant funding.

Council Member Austin pointed out that there were approximately 22,000 students. Mr. Sherwood said that the Superintendent would be highlighting the fact that Bridgeport is woefully underfunded. Discussion followed about the details. Mr. Nunn said that he had a March 2015 power point handout, which he would be sending to the Committee members. It states there was an average daily enrollment is 21,008. Per pupil spending for the budget year 2013-14 was \$13,891.

Mr. Sherwood said that the BOE staff had entered \$251,561,414 into the system and he could not give any further information. Council Member Brannelly said that she would send a number of questions about this in advance to the Superintendent of Schools.

Council Member L. Martinez asked why the Committee was discussing this since the BOE was not scheduled until April 22nd. She said she would like to focus on the departments that would be coming soon.

The Committee returned to page 7 to discuss Public Safety. This category includes Police, Fire, EOC and Weights and Measures. The budget for these departments will be \$155,212,604. Council Member Brannelly asked what the City was obligated to provide, Council Member L. Martinez pointed out that these departments actually generated revenue.

Mr. Sherwood reviewed the Police Department details. He reminded everyone that the Personnel for the Department were included. He said that the details were on page 123. There are 101 vacant positions, 65 of which are in the Police Department, 6 in Fire and the remaining are scattered throughout the remaining administration. He said that the City had entered into a Federal contract for the police officers and the City must hire the recruits. There are 39 new positions. There are 1341 City employees, which include Fire and Police. Council Member Brannelly asked how many employees were non-public safety employees. Mr. Nunn said that there were approximately 500 City positions that were not Public Safety positions. Mr.

Sherwood pointed out that when overtime is paid out to the Public Safety, it does not involve increases in benefits or pension.

Council Member L. Martinez pointed out that there were times when the Committee had eliminated positions. Mr. Sherwood said that these vacant positions were listed on page. He also cautioned everyone that the vacant positions were fluid and the number of employees were a snapshot in time. The next day, the figure could change. He went on to explain that currently there was at least one candidate involved in the hiring process.

Council Member Torres asked if Mr. Sherwood could move money about from the Payroll account. Mr. Sherwood said that he could not take amounts from one department and move it to another one. He gave a brief overview of the allocation process.

Mr. Nunn said that right now the chief building official retired, and the City is in the process of hiring a new official. He added that it was expected that the position would be filled within the next two weeks.

The discussion moved to the details of the Police budget starting on page 127 and Fire budget starting on page 140.

Council Member Torres asked for an executive summary and Mr. Sherwood said that he would provide this for the Committee. He added that he was required by Charter to provide the line by line breakout.

The discussion moved to the Public Facilities, including Roadways, Parks, Transportation, (Airport, Harbor & Other). The request \$51,368,225. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that 40 million of the Public Safety was for benefits, so the Public Facilities request is much lower. The Public Works debt is \$14,000,000 for the work done over the years. He then reviewed the various revenue streams and the expenses for these.

Council Member L. Martinez said that she had been approached by the various utilities about using different vendors that would save the City money and she refers these people to Mr. Garcia. Mr. Nunn said that the administration does meet with these different vendors and that it keeps the administration on their toes. He added that the City was working on changing out the street lights to LED lights. Council Member Torres said that he had compared Mr. Cottell's rate figures to his own electric rates and that the City was doing a phenomenal job in terms of controlling electrical costs. Discussion followed about the details.

The General Government departments are listed on the contents page and the major cost is in the pension and health care category. Other key expenses would include the City Attorney's office, which has a line item that is about 1.7 million for claims, litigation and legal service on page 71. The IT department has server costs, along with phone service and computer maintenance. The audit fees and the re-evaluation will cost about half a million. OPED has about 7.8 million in debt service with an overall budget of \$12,172,356.

The Library has a value of 6,829,089, which is the value of one mill. Council Member L. Martinez asked if the Library would be presenting. Council Member Brannelly said they were

scheduled but reminded everyone that the Committee has very little control over the Library and the BOE.

The Health Department represents \$5,400,697 with the Lighthouse program representing \$1.2 million, such as ABCD and Sacred Heart. There are 26 major contractors and additional minor contractors.

The Mayor proposed doubling to the relocation fund because of the number of catastrophic fires or other issues such as no heat in the City. The City will put the families up for one night so that the other agencies can begin assisting the family.

Council Member Torres left the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

The discussion moved potentially adding meetings after each public hearing. Council Member Brannelly said that she would contact the City Clerk's about this. Council Member Swain asked how much the ads cost. Council President McCarthy said that he would call Mr. Daley about this.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 13, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Lydia Martinez, Council President Thomas McCarthy, Patricia Swain. AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Michael Marella, Co-chair (6:24 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member Enrique Torres, Council Member Jack Banta, Council Member Melanie Jackson

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. A quorum was present. Council Member Brannelly introduced the Council Members seated.

A Public Hearing regarding the General Government and the Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED).

Mr. John Marshall Lee, of Beacon Street, Bridgeport, CT came forward and said that he would be reading his comments in to the record.

Council members and representatives of City governance present for the 2015-16 process, thank you for scheduling 3 hearings for this spring. I am willing to wager that most of your voters will not know about this hearing as it was less well made known than have either snow emergencies or cessation of snow emergencies in recent years.

The public really wants to understand where they stand fiscally. For most of the Finch years, based on the October 1, 2008 revaluation, Bridgeport homeowners have watched their property values decrease yet their assessments have not changed, but budgets have increased calling for higher taxes. For the most part you have watched that process, including the stifling of the revaluation, and because you have not offered sufficient disapproval, the administration has prevailed.

Not only have values decreased, but the cost of property taxes has increased in most years. So citizens who own property see their wealth decrease and their cost of services increase, except this year, where because of an upcoming election they have predictably sensed that taxes would not be increased this year.

Let's look back over the past seven years, the Finch years. The annual audits seem to tell us that each year the budget has shown a surplus. Isn't that a reason to cheer? But the Finch administration has not caused attention to rest on this balanced budget success has it? It is not one of the things pointed to when the statement is made that Bridgeport is getting better every day.

Why would that be? Well it could be that no one stands up to explain to the public how City finances work, how the City Council plays a strong part in determining what is set in motion and how it gets paid for. Who is that person, or persons? If it is not someone on Budget and Appropriation who can it be? Is there a meeting to discuss alternatives for Capital Funding? If the City operating budget of around \$290 Million (net of BOE) takes nearly 350 pages to explain, why is the next year's \$42 Million Capital budget shown on less than two pages? Where is the detail for this year? Where is the detail for past years to show what was approved, from where it was funded, and to provide a report on past projects and funds?

A finance board and better fiscal reporting would allow for this but we have neither. For two years, the City Finance Department has provided a June monthly report after auditing, a FINAL report, but little or no attention has been turned to the report. In 2013 we inquired as to the receipt of nearly \$500,000 of revenue as part of the Comptroller's Final report but no one has answered where that came from or where it was used. From that same report we noted that 15 members of the Council followed the lead of President McCarthy in spending almost \$30,000 of taxpayer funds two years ago as charitable contributions in an election year. Yet no one has explained the action, probably illegal, or how it came to be. There is no taxpayer whom I have met who feels that the Council is the right group to be making charitable donations with taxpayer funds.

And then you come together to hear from your constituents, but have you taken any action based on their observations, requests, or logic? These sessions are not respectful dialogues or conversations, yet they can be, but you maintain your rules that limit the few of us who take the time to observe and report, so that we do not have conversations. Is it any wonder that the public has more important things to do than involve it in sham conversations?

So, in summary, seven years of Finch budgets and everyone shows a surplus at year end. Is that really great news? Or is it a tribute to Tom Sherwood who has created a budget for you to approve that has more expenses placed into positions, full time and other, fringe benefits and other expenses and services than are ever intended to be spent. And if the final June reports are not used to look at actual expenses for several years in a row, are you sure that you have tightened up appropriations adequately? Perhaps this year by the question of Council person Swain ought to be a year where taxes are rolled back and lowered?

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for several years has shown public safety overtime to be excessive in the millions. Monthly reports have shown overtime in police, fire and emergency operations to be the only areas where variances are noted. When you know what is a problem, when that problem manifests itself, month after month and year after year, including five chiefs in the police department, where is the problem?

Council Member Marella joined the meeting at 6:24 p.m.

How will it be solved quickly? Perhaps the reporting of these three departments is in too much detail. Perhaps if each department only reported the six lines favored by OPM Director Tom Sherwood, we would be more aware of how we are wrestling with the problem?

A 20 page GREEN monthly fiscal report? Conversations with the public on fiscal matters? A listing of the Capital Budget process...approvals...changes...projects initiated...from where funded...completed...within budget...or in excess? Available on the Internet? And monthly financials as executive summaries available to all on the Internet, not just Council members? What do you think about providing taxpayers with some real information including correction of 20 or more errors in the CAFR-2014? Time will tell.

Council Member Brannelly thanked Mr. Lee and asked if there was anyone else who wished to address the Committee.

Mr. Peter Smith came forward and said that he was just present to hear the comments.

Council Member Brannelly asked if there was anyone else who wished to address the Committee. No one came forward. She repeated the question. No one came forward.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The public hearing portion of the meeting ended at 6:30 p.m.

RECESS

Council Member Brannelly announced a recess at 6:30 p.m. Council Member Brannelly called the meeting back to order at 6:37 p.m.

Council Member Brannelly gave a brief overview of the revenue, including the BOE's 2.3 million repayment of the funding given by the City for various services.

Council President McCarthy noted that the Chief of Police was listed on page 124 under Auxiliary Services.

The discussion moved to changes in the expenditures and the funding that will be given to the BOE, which will be then paid back to the City for the various services. Council President McCarthy then spoke about the MBR. Each year the State must ratify the MBR and at the time of the meeting, the State had not yet passed the 2015 MBR. Depending on how the State defines the MBR, the MBR may change. Council President McCarthy said that if the MBR increases, the City will receive less of the repayment funding. He added that the Governor had kept the major cities allocations level, but that there had talk of the legislature changing the figures for services, such as the Lighthouse. If a program like the Lighthouse is not fully funded, the City will have to make up the shortfall.

The discussion briefly moved to the CJEF court case.

Council President McCarthy reminded everyone about the changes in the Charter that moved the City's budget to a time before the State budget. Discussion followed about how the City

reconciles these State funding shortfalls. Council Member Brannelly said that it would be important to lobby in Hartford about various issues.

Council Member Swain said that it would be helpful to have the summary sheets that Mr. Sherwood gave the Committee members last year.

The Committee then reviewed the changes in the expenditures that had been discussed at the previous meetings.

The Committee then reviewed the pie charts on pages 7 and 9 in the Budget binders. Discussion followed about the details.

The Tax Collector's Department is responsible for approximately 55% of the total revenue. Intergovernmental accounts (grants, state funding) for 36.05% PILOTs represent 2.57%; charges for services (parking fees, etc.) generates 1.55%; reimbursements generates 1.3%; fines and penalties (ordinances) .97%; non-business license permits (beach passes. marriage licenses) 1.03%

Council Member Torres said that the dramatic increase is in the Tax Collector's Office. The department has started working on arrears collection. Council President McCarthy pointed out that the arrears collection was a diminishing pool. While there are always new properties being added in, once the bulk of the collection is collected, there will be a reduced amount of collections.

A brief discussion followed about the upcoming schedule and public hearings.

Council Member Torres said that he had several questions about the various items, so he would be sending an email about those items to the Committee co-chairs.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Budget and Appropriations
Public Hearing & Budget Hearing
April 13, 2015

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 14, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Michael Marella, Co-chair; Susan Brannelly, Co-chair;
Lydia Martinez, Patricia Swain, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
(6:24 p.m.); Council President Thomas McCarthy (6:24 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member Enrique Torres, David Kooris, OPED Director;
Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director; Council Member Michelle
Lyons (7:05 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:19 p.m. A quorum was present.

Council Member Brannelly said that this meeting was part of the general budget and would be focusing on the Office of Planning and Economic Development.

Mr. Sherwood said that he would like to submit some documents as Exhibits. Mr. Sherwood then distributed the various documents.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER L. MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADD HOUSE BILL NO. 6706 AS EXHIBIT #1-4142015.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO ENTER THE POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET BREAKOUT AS EXHIBIT #2-4142015 POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER L. MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO ENTER THE FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET BREAKOUT AS EXHIBIT #3-4142015 FIRE DEPARTMENT.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia and Council President McCarthy joined the meeting at 6:24 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER L. MARTINEZ MOVED TO ENTER THE BUDGET BREAK OUT BY DEPARTMENT AS #4-4142015.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Torres said that he had requested this information on the Police and Fire departments but had hoped to receive the line items compared to other departments. Mr. Sherwood showed him where the information was found in the Budget book. He explained that the documents show the total amount for personnel in the Fire Department and the Police Department. Council Member Torres said that he would email Mr. Sherwood with the specific questions.

Council Member Brannelly said that the Committee wanted to focus on OPED. Mr. Kooris then gave a brief overview and the goals of the Department. He said that the budget has been flat over the past years. This was done by attrition and re-staffing at a lower level. As the senior staff retires, the department is reorganized and the new staff is brought in at the lower level.

Council Member Brannelly asked if Bridgeport is a city that recent graduates would want to come and work. Mr. Kooris said that as the City has become more active in professional organizations, and there had been a number of articles about projects that have gone nation-wide, so Bridgeport is attracting more attention.

Mr. Kooris said that the staff has been receiving skills training and this makes the department more efficient. There has also been a move towards digitalizing the information. Recently, the department received a grant for a higher level scanner. Currently the four card catalogues for Zoning are being digitalized and compiled into a database.

Mr. Kooris said that it was important to revisit the goals, such as Steel Point. A second property has been sold on the parcel and construction should begin in late 2015. The Tiger grant was instrumental in jump starting the infrastructure work and now things are moving ahead. He then spoke about Downtown North and the various projects underway. Four of the six signature projects are underway, but most of that is inside the buildings, so not visible from the street. Discussion followed about the details.

Mr. Kooris said that construction will be starting on the Seaview Avenue project that has been stalled out for the last 15 years.

Council Member Torres asked if Mr. Kooris was in contact with Fletcher Thompson. Mr. Kooris said that he had been in touch with them. He added that the department had no reason not to believe that the company would not be able to remain viable and move forward. If Fletcher Thompson does not remain viable, the department will work with the property owner to find a new tenant. Mr. Kooris said that the tax agreement for that property would continue regardless of whether tenant remains in place or not.

Council Member Swain asked if the City should have vetted Fletcher Thompson. Mr. Kooris explained that the City is not responsible for vetting a tenant for a privately owned building. Council Member Swain asked if Fletcher Thompson was involved in any other City projects. Mr. Kooris said that he did not know. Council President McCarthy said that the City did not have an agreement with Fletcher Thompson but with the developer and property owner, Four Stone.

Mr. Sherwood directed everyone's attention to page 262, which shows the revenue for the Building Department. Mr. Kooris said that the City was looking forward to a number of development projects, but also added that there had been a number of permits pulled for larger projects that would not occur again, such as Longfellow School. Discussion followed about the details of the various projects that were included in the current budget.

Mr. Sherwood explained that there was construction around the water, the permitting process takes much longer because of the number of permits needed. Mr. Kooris said that in the larger projects, the contractor will probably pull three permits, a demolition permit, which includes remediation, construction and trade permits.

Mr. Sherwood then spoke about the Grand List growth. Council Member Torres had several questions about the formula used for the growth for the grand list.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the projects that will not be finished. Mr. Kooris said that there was a three story mixed retail/residential project that has not gotten off the ground. There have been some challenges in the former Stop N Shop location and the ABC building. Bridgeport is attracting attention and it is important to filter through the various interested parties to weed out the speculators.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Council Member Swain asked what would happen if there was a shift to the Land Use tax. Mr. Kooris said that the owners would be paying more on the actual property and less on the actual structure.

Council Member Torres asked about the debt service in the budget. Mr. Sherwood indicated where the Plan A and B benefits debt was and then reviewed where the line items were in the various departments. Council Member Torres asked why there was a 1 million dollar increase in one department. Mr. Sherwood said that the increase was most likely where the City has borrowed recently. Council Member Brannelly asked for a summary of the debt service broken out by departments. Mr. Sherwood said that he would provide this information to the Committee members. Council Member Torres said that he wanted to know what specific program caused the 1 million increase in debt service on page 260.

Mr. Kooris left the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Council Member Brannelly asked Mr. Nunn about the highlights of the general budget items. Mr. Nunn said that there had not been much growth in terms of the City. He reminded everyone that they had discussed the open positions. he said that the focus was to keep the playing field level and expenses down. He said that the Finance Department, the Legal Department and other departments have been kept constant. Each time a position is vacated, the administration analyzes the job responsibilities to determine whether to fill it or not.

Mr. Sherwood said that the health care had remained relatively flat and the administrative functions controls the expenses.

Council Member Lyons asked why the health care did not increase this year. Mr. Sherwood said that the cost containments were a result of the employee co-pays. There was a slight reduction in the pensions, due to the investments doing well. Some of the retirees that had no co-pays have passed away and Public Facilities have been managing the workers compensation well. With all the new programs that have been implemented, the savings are being realized. Mr. Sherwood then explained that next year, the health care costs may have to be reopened because the City has a Cadillac plan, just like the rest of the Northeast. Mr. Weiner will be addressing the Committee about the health care and insurance on the 16th.

Council Member L. Martinez asked where the salaries were allocated for those who might only work a half year. Mr. Nunn said that there had been an unfilled position discussed previously, the salary allocation for a staff member who leaves mid-year, depending on whether it is a union position or a clerical position, the administration decides how the funding will be held.

Council Member Lyons left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Discussion followed about the details. Mr. Sherwood said that if the retiring employee was top level and single with no dependents, but the incoming employee was level 1, yet has a family that requires family coverage, there may not be significant savings, if any at all.

Council Member L. Martinez asked about the blight issues. Mr. Sherwood said that he would provide a list of the revenue from the blight department. The department is basically self-sustaining. Mr. Nunn said the fines are used when a fire occurs and the building needs to be boarded up. The building is boarded up as soon as it can be safely done. He said that the blight department does not make the decision, but the CAO's office makes the decision.

Council Member Swain asked why if there was a budget surplus in the Council account, it doesn't stay in the same department. Mr. Nunn said that he would agree, but the accounting laws do not allow this. Mr. Sherwood said that it would be reflected in the CFIR. The budget is a plan, or an estimate of what the City expects to happen. A discussion about the role of the fund balance followed.

Council Member Torres said that he had a number of questions about where the funding for vacant positions goes. Mr. Sherwood reviewed how the funding was handled. Mr. Nunn reminded everyone that the day that the budget was printed, there were 101 vacant positions. However, he cautioned everyone that there were a number of police officers that were hired in 1983 and 1985 that are now eligible for retirement. He added that there were some vacant positions the day that they budget was printed which are now on the verge of being filled.

Council Member Brannelly said that there were 1,341 City positions, which is the base line number. Mr. Sherwood said that in terms of the police, hypothetically they need 22 officers on the street. Those have to be filled, whether they are regular shift employees or officers who are doing overtime. If it is an officer doing overtime, there are cost containment in terms of benefits, but not in terms of salary because of the overtime differential.

Council Member Torres said that he was confused by the fact that Finance was included in the General Government. Mr. Sherwood then indicated that there was a draft copy of Budget 101

and explained that the summary sheet breaks down the tax burdens by departments. However, he said that the document had not been finalized. He expected the document to be finalized by next week.

Council Member Torres said that there was a 45% increase in the "debt and other uses" on page 7. He said that he would like to have a break down on this. Mr. Sherwood said that in the current year, there was a 2 million negative in the line. In the contracts that are underway, the Labor Relations is achieving all the concessions. The 45% for the coming fiscal year is actually in "other uses". 2.7 million will be the debt interest payment on the general improvements not assigned to a specific department.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the Comptroller's Office on page 32. She asked for clarification on the revenue line. Mr. Sherwood said that this was the State grant that was the LOCIP funding.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the actuals for WPCA. Mr. Sherwood said that it was the increase for the bond interest. They can't borrow on their own, so they are repaying the City for the bonding debt.

Council Member L. Martinez asked about the revenues from the various departments. Mr. Sherwood said that he would provide the Committee members with a summary of the revenues. Council Member L. Martinez said that she felt that the departments could increase their revenues.

Council Member L. Martinez asked about the impact of the charter schools on the BOE. Council Member Brannelly made a note of this question to forward to the Superintendent of Schools.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER L. MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Budget & Appropriations
Budget Hearings
April 14, 2015

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
PUBLIC HEARING AND
BUDGET HEARING MEETING
APRIL 15, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Michael Marella, Co-chair; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Patricia Swain, Lydia Martinez

OTHERS: Council Member Jack Banta

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the Public Hearing to order at 6:14 p.m. She introduced the Committee Members present.

**A Public Hearing on Health and Social Services Department and
the Benefits Department.**

Council Member Brannelly reviewed the public speaking rules and asked if there was anyone present who wished to address the Committee. No one came forward. She asked again.

Mr. John Marshall Lee of Beacon Street, came forward. He said that he had been reviewing the 2013 and 2014 budgets along with the CAFR. One item he had a question about was a line item that has to do with the unused vacation pay. He said that if the figures were added up, it would equal about \$700,000. This was unaccounted for, particularly in the Police Department. He said that right now the amount reserve for retirements and payouts was \$125,000.

Council Member Brannelly asked if anyone would like to address the Committee. No one came forward.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.
** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The public hearing closed at 6:27 p.m.

RECESS

Council Member Brannelly announced a recess at 6:27 p.m. She reconvened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Council Member Swain reported that Mr. Lockhart had published the schedule for the Budget Committee on the front page of the Connecticut Post.

Council Member Swain said that she understood the frustration that the public might have in trying to understand the budget because of its complexity and level of details. She said that having the Executive Summaries would be helpful at the very beginning of the process. Council

Member Brannelly pointed out that each year, the Committee asks for the same type of Executive Summaries. She suggested that those summaries be included in the budget.

The discussion moved to the Blight revenue, which remains in the department. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked where it goes, and who signs off on it. She asked if there was any other department in the City that was generating income that remained in the department. Council Member Martinez said that sometimes residents were fined \$1,000 and others were being fined \$500. Some residents were forgiven the fine if they present their cases at the hearings.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the Treasurer's Office should collect the money so that there is some accounting for the funds. There needs to be a supervisory process for the revenues and expenses.

The Committee agreed that the revenues and expenses should have an Executive summary by department. Council Member Swain said that Mr. Sherwood provides more information than the Committee asked for. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the level of detail had been requested over the years, which is why the budget book was so detailed.

Council Member Martinez asked if the departments had been asked if they could increase their revenues. Council Member Brannelly said that department plans for increasing the revenues would be included in the department goals. Council Member Brannelly said that the Committee would like to have an annual report on how the departments have increased their revenues or decreased their expenses. Discussion followed.

Council Member Brannelly said that she would send these requests to Mr. Sherwood.

Council Member Martinez asked how much the City pays for the various special events, such as the Barnum Festival or the Puerto Rican Day Parade. The discussion moved to the Parade of Champions and how it provides a positive image of Bridgeport.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Budget and Appropriations
Public Hearing and Budget Hearing
April 15, 2015

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 16, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Patricia Swain, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Michael Marella, Co-chair (6:35 p.m.)

OTHERS: Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director; Teri Brown, Asst. CAO; Council Member Jose Casco, Michele Meade, Albertina Baptista, Richard Weiner, Benefits Manager; Monquencelo Miles, Benefits Dept., Frank Memoli, Tammy Papa, Lighthouse Director; Warren Blunt, Audrey Gains, Lead Free program; Iris Molina, Social Services Director; Kristin duBay Horton, Director of Health & Social Services

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. A quorum was not present. Council Member Brannelly explained that the meeting was basically for information and that no votes would be taken until a quorum was present.

Health and Social Services Departments and Benefits Department.

Council Member Brannelly gave a brief overview of the process and explained that the Committee members were looking for cost savings and other related changes.

Mr. Sherwood directed everyone to the appropriate page and said that there were no major changes. He reminded everyone that there had been two positions filled.

Council Member Marella joined the meeting at 6:35 p.m. A quorum was now present.

Mr. Sherwood said that with the State grants, the City has often advanced the funding for grants that the City knew they would be receiving, such as the Lighthouse. When the funding is released, the City then reimburses itself. However, this year, the Governor has been indicating direct cuts

Kristin came forward and said that there were concerns about the Healthy Start and the Light house programs funding being cut. She said that if the residents receive better pre-natal care, the babies will be healthier and have fewer problems in school.

One good thing is a change in the formula for PHGP, which will be more funding for the City, but will be restricted in its use.

There has been change in terms of job positions. However the job description has been updated for positions such as mini-computer operators.

Ms. Papa came forward and said that she expects about a \$350,000 cut in the program that previously went to the Board of Education. This could impact the programs at Waltersville, Barnum and another school.

Council Member Brannelly said that it would be important to be aware of this in order to lobby for the restoration of the funding. She asked what kind of impact that the cut would have. Ms. Papa said that it costs about \$1,000 per student and they would have to reduce the number of students from 24 schools down to 21 schools. This will be basically a loss of service to 350 students. She said that the staff will try to accommodate as many as possible, but it is not always possible.

Ms. Brown asked whether the program has to transport the students. Ms. Papa said that she tries not to.

Ms. Papa said that this cut was not grant funding, but direct funding. Every year, she expects to have two or three grants that are applied for and awarded. She then spoke about the various grants that may have major reductions. She said that she will be planning as cautiously as possible, but the programs must start on July 1, 2015. Kristin said that the most dangerous time in the day for the teens is between 3 p.m. when school lets out and 7 p.m. when their parents get home from work.

Ms. Papa said that the Youth Services Bureau funding may be cut by 30%, but the City provides matching fund through the CDBG funding.

Council Member Swain asked what would be sacrificed if the funding is cut. Ms. Papa said that the more quality summer programs that often include training or sports and music programs would not be offered. She said that she could ask people to take a pay cut, but that was not realistic since the instructors were being paid less than they would be from the BOE. The program runs from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the Discovery Magnet School has students from out of town and whether the towns provide funding for those students. Ms. Papa said that there were students from out of town and that the towns do pay for the students. It is about a 4 million dollar program and the City gives over 1 million in funding and the rest is covered by parent fees and grants. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked for a print out of the amount of out of town funding. Ms. Papa said that she would provide this.

Ms. Molina said that the Healthy Families grant was one of the potential cuts on the table. She said that Bridgeport covers Stamford, Norwalk and other towns. There are only 7 staff members to cover just Bridgeport. The other towns have one staff member each. She also spoke about the Veterans Department and the Disability Department. Ms. Molina then spoke about the Chore program and other services that the department provides in detail. All the staff members are cross trained to provide services to residents, including food vouchers, relocations services, transportation to veterans and similar programs.

Ms. Molina said that the biggest concern was about the Healthy Start program. Mr. Sherwood asked how much the Healthy Start grant was. Ms. Molina said that it was about \$275,000 to \$300,000.

Mr. Sherwood said the other issue was that the relocation services only had \$30,000 and with the number of fires that requires residents be relocated. The City covers the first 24 hours until the Red Cross can take over for the next three days and then it shifts back to the City.

Ms. Molina then gave a brief overview of the process but cautioned everyone that each case is individualized and there are many factors involved. Mr. Sherwood said that the various programs were listed on page 321-323.

Ms. duBay Horton said that the Committee had asked about increasing revenues. She said that there were discussions about increasing revenues for STD testing and housing code certifications, including the dorms that need to be inspected, including private residents functioning as dorms.

Ms. Molina asked what would happen if the Healthy Start program was cut. Mr. Sherwood said that in the past, the City couldn't just shut it off. There are options, however, it is difficult to know where the funding would come from.

Mr. Blunt then spoke about some of the innovations for revenue. He said that the department was working on increasing the fees for restaurant inspections. There are certain items on the inspection form that could be included, such as an open back door, or employees not having hair nets. There will be an advanced food handling course being launched, and may eventually include educational classes for nail salons.

Ms. duBay Horton said that the e-cigarettes are being smoked by a large number of students and are very addictive. This will need to be addressed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the food trucks and carts that are stationed all over the City. Mr. Blunt said that the vendors would be required to attend the advance food handling and they are also thinking about requiring vendors use gloves.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she was aware of some illegal hookah lounges. Mr. Blunt asked for the addresses and said that he would be looking into these.

Council Member Brannelly thanked the Health and Social Services staff members for their time.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO ADD REVENUE BY CATEGORIES AS EXHIBIT #1-4162015.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO ADD UPDATE ON AFFORDABLE CARE ACT AS EXHIBIT #2-4162015.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Sherwood said that Mr. Weiner would be updating the Committee in regards to the Affordable Care Act. Mr. Weiner said last year, the City paid a \$10,000 assessment fee for an analysis of medical treatment outcomes. Next year, the fee will be \$21,000.

Mr. Weiner then reviewed the temporary re-insurance program. He then gave an overview of the salient points of the Affordable Care Act as outlined on the summary. (See attached) Discussion followed about how the City will be monitoring the employee hours that would involve Affordable Care, such as seasonal park employees or snow plow drivers.

Mr. Weiner then reviewed the Excise Tax on High Cost Benefit, which will be starting in the calendar year 2018, which will be the next budget cycle for the City. If the law does not change in next year, there is a potential penalty of approximately 6 million. These health care plans are governed by union contracts. Ms. Brown said that the thinking was that the "rich" health care tax was untaxed benefit.

The discussion then moved to the fact that the City still has retirees that have full benefits that cannot be negotiated.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Brannelly adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S.L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
PUBLIC HEARING & BUDGET HEARING
APRIL 21, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Michael Marella, Co-chair; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia;
Patricia Swain, Council President Thomas McCarthy;
Howard Austin

OTHERS: Council Member Melanie Jackson, Council Member
Enrique Torres, Council Member Alfredo Castillo

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Marella called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. A quorum was present. He introduced the members of the Committee who were seated.

Council Member Marella turned the chairmanship over to Council President McCarthy and left the meeting at 6:12 p.m.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET AND THE
BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Interim Superintendent Rabinowitz came forward and said that she was pleased to address the committee. She said that having the MBR was completely allocated and was grateful for this. However, this is the minimum budget requirement and the actual budget calls for 12 million dollars. The State has flat funded the District and this will result in a 5 million dollar shortfall. This means that the District will be cutting services. She asked the Council members to join the District in petitioning the State for more funding. The District receives 9 million dollars less than Hartford with the same number of students. She said that the City needs to band together with the District about this. The flat funding means that the District can't provide more services.

Council President McCarthy briefly explained that he was chairing the hearing for Council Member Marella because Council Member Marella was needed for quorum in another meeting.

Ms. Eve Balistene came forward to speak about the positive impact that the interventionist in the school has had since September. The school administration is looking forward to having a full time interventionist. This is particularly important in the early grades for academic issues. This helps all the students.

Mr. Howard Gardner came forward and said that he would be have to disagree with the Superintendent. This is an election year and he felt this budget was an accounting shell game. He said that the in kind services, such as crossing guards and school nurses were things that the City should provide and should not be in the BOE budget. He said that the District could do a lot with the 2 million in cash rather than having the in kind services and went on to list a number of teachers and staff that the District could hire with those funds. When the City

changed the allocations with the in kind services, it was actually shortchanging the District. He spoke about the Memo of Understanding and said that he disagreed with it.

Mr. Hector Sanchez came forward and thanked the Committee for the MBR allocation but said that they have flat funding from the State. This will impact all the students, particularly in the schools that won't have full time nurses or interventionists. This is not the time to fall back, but to press forward.

Mr. Erick Haaakonsen, the Bridgeport Public School District Technology Officer, came forward to speak about equity in technology. While there are many grants, there needs to be a mechanism for planning to having equitable technology funding for the students and to have a plan to refresh the equipment.

Ms. Rebecca Caberra, of 28 Long Meadow, Hamden, came forward and said she was the principal of Madison School. There was a need to have full time nurses and interventionists in the schools. The students at Madison need interventionists. Since a part-time interventionists arrived, the achievement gap began to close.

Not having a full time nurse in the building is a struggle since there are students with asthma, sickle cell anemia and other serious conditions that require medication and monitoring.

Mr. Rob Taylor came forward to speak about the potential settlement that was reached between the City and the BOE. He said that he was a parent and now was the President of the Bridgeport Educational Association. There is no magic formula for solving the problems. Now that the City's doing its share, it will help with the case in Hartford. Having smaller classes, interventionists and full time nurses will be helpful. He said that the agreement that has been reached with the Board of Education will allow the District to go to Hartford with a united front.

Ms. Maria Pereria came forward to speak about the legacy of Mayor Finch and the MBR. She then reiterated the history of the BOE Budget allocations from 2007 to the present day. She said that over these years, the Mayor has cost the District 14 million dollars over these years. She said that Hartford and New Haven do not pay for their crossing guards.

Mr. John Marshall Lee of Beacon Street came forward. He said that this was the best attended public hearing so far and then thanked everyone for coming. He then spoke about the deficit between the CFIR for the last few years and the Operating Budget. Mr. Lee said that last year, the City spent 90 thousand on parks but the students don't have interventionists or nurses. He said that the Lighthouse program needs money, so the parents should think about this.

Council President McCarthy asked if there was anyone else who wished to address the Committee. No one else came forward. He repeated the question. Hearing none, Council President McCarthy closed the public hearing at 6:42 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT,
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 22, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Michael Marella, Co-chair; Council President Thomas McCarthy, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Patricia Swain

OTHERS: Council Member Enrique Torres, Council Member James Holloway, Maura O'Malley, BOE Nutrition Program; Scott Hughes, City Librarian; Interim Superintendent Fran Rabinowitz; Marlene Siegel, BOE CFO; Liz Maurer, BOE Budget Manager; Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director; David Hennessey, BOE Chair; Tom Errichetti, Bridgeport Public Library; Council Member Michelle Lyons (6:15 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Marella called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. A quorum was present.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ENTER BRIDGEPORT PS 2015 BUDGET AS EXHIBIT #2015-04-22-1.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Superintendent Rabinowitz greeted everyone and said that the handout was a brief overview. She said that it was important to have interventionists and other support staff in the schools to reduce expulsions and suspensions.

She then reviewed the Budget Overview for 2015-2016 on page 6 of the handout. Superintendent Rabinowitz said that the Alliance/ECS had been increasing but this year it was flat funded, which will result in a 5 million dollar short fall. She said that with the Priority Grants, there is no funding for summer school. She reiterated her request that the City go with the District to Hartford to appeal the short fall funding, since Hartford and New haven both get a great deal more in funding. She then reviewed the non-discretionary costs that have been cut by the State.

Council Member Michelle Lyons joined the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Superintendent Rabinowitz said that the District needs to have an Arts Education Director in order to qualify for a Federal grant. She added that she was very sad to come back to Bridgeport and find out that there were no school bands. She said that was important for the City to have the school bands.

Superintendent Rabinowitz said that if there was a way to obtain the additional 5 million, she would put a full time nurse into each of the schools because the number of students with diabetes or other serious medical issues is increasing. She then reviewed the various services that would be added back on the remaining pages if the school receives more funding.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that Superintendent Rabinowitz mentioned the bands were removed. She said that Choir, woodshop, Home-Ec and various other courses that had been removed from the curriculum. Superintendent Rabinowitz said that there were some tech ed. classes, art classes, and other electives in the curriculum, but that they are not as many as should be. The District is trying to bring whatever they can to bring that back.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the sports were fully funded and had enough equipment and uniforms. Superintendent Rabinowitz said that she believed that the sports were fully equipped, but it was the arts that took the hit. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the schools still had the rooms for culinary arts in the elementary schools. Superintendent Rabinowitz said that they were gone and only Harding had culinary rooms.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like to see the schools become involve with drum and bugle corps because it was a year round event. She said that it is important to be involved in this type of performance arts. Superintendent Rabinowitz said that there was a partnership with a group from Westport that did a summer musical camp last year.

Council President McCarthy said that the City was going to fully fund the MBR and that the Council has been informed of this. He said that in the past, he would have never gone for an agreement like this because there was very little confidence in the Board of Education. Now that has changed. The City gets 66 million less than New Haven and 90 million less than Hartford, both of which have fewer students than Bridgeport.

Superintendent Rabinowitz then spoke about the CJEF about the equity and funding for education. She said that she was a witness for CJEF and has been working on this for over 20 years. She said that she has been subpoenaed by the court, but the case has been delayed. Whenever there is money in the State budget, it is allocated to the Sheff vs. O'Neill districts.

Council Member Torres said that at the public hearing there was a suggesting about the crossing guards and snow removal that should be items that were carried in the general budgets of the other towns. Superintendent Rabinowitz said that in her former district of Hamden, the BOE did carry the cost of the crossing guards and snow removal. Mr. Sherwood said that the City looked at various cities and most of them do have the crossing guards and snow removal in their budgets. He said that the question was whether the City would have the expense if the schools were not there. In the case of the crossing guards and snow removal, the answer is no.

Council Member Torres said that the BOE budget was not very detailed. The District was asking for more money but he needed the details. Mr. Sherwood said that there was a financial report posted every two months on the BOE website. He then gave a brief overview of the process, but said that if Council Member Torres wanted a complete report after reading the financial reports, Mr. Sherwood would print out the full budget.

Council Member Swain said that she would be interested in going to Hartford, but wanted to know more of the details, such as who would schedule the trip and who would be the key people to speak to in Hartford. Discussion followed about how to arrange this and who should attend. There were also questions about the Alliance Grant in terms of funding.

Council Member Holloway said that last year there was an increase of 300 students, but that the population of the City has been dropping. He said that in the 139th District had an increase in taxes, which has resulted in more foreclosures. There are non-profits that are coming into the East End and they don't pay taxes. The residents of the East End are in their 70's and they cannot stand a mill rate increase.

Council Member Martinez said that she was a former State Representative and that it was important to speak with the City's legislators because they are on various committees. There are also non-Bridgeport legislators who would be willing to help.

Council Member Martinez said that in terms of the money that the Bridgeport District needs, she didn't know how much it would cost for a lawsuit, but the more the District and Council talk, the less money the City will get. She encouraged Superintendent Rabinowitz to look into it soon.

Council Member Lyons said that there was a serious need for Special Education. As the money is funneled down from D.C., somewhere the funding gets diverted and it is not reaching these children who need the services. She said that she was happy and proud that the BOE was moving forward on this. It is also important to have the nurses back in the schools. When they were moved out of the schools, the principals were then responsible for these children.

Council Member Lyons said that she agreed with Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia about the arts because music enhances math. It will be important to pull together for the educational aspect for Bridgeport.

Mr. Sherwood said that the City has been asking each department to compile any information on the various House bills to him so that he can pass the information along to the Council Members.

Mr. Sherwood asked about the new Commissioner of Education. Superintendent Rabinowitz said that she does know the new Commissioner, Dr. Dianna Wentzell, who is from Hartford and that has worked with Dr. Wentzell in the past. Superintendent Rabinowitz said that she reminds the Commission all the time about Bridgeport. If the group goes up, it will be important to have one or two legislators to speak to rather just speaking to the legislation. Discussion followed.

Council Member Marella yielded the chair to Council President McCarthy at 7:02 p.m.

Bridgeport Library

Mr. Hughes, the City Librarian, came forward and greeted the Committee members. Mr. O'Donnell distributed a number of handouts to the Council members.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ENTER A COLLECTION FIVE PAMPHLETS DESCRIBING BRIDGEPORT LIBRARY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS AS EXHIBIT 2015-04-22-2.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ENTER A DOCUMENT WITH STATISTICS AS EXHIBIT 2015-04-22-3.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ENTER THE BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY MASTER PLAN AS EXHIBIT 2015-04-22-4**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Hughes said that he wanted to highlight some of the programs that are outlined in the brochures. He said that anyone who wished to be a literacy volunteer should contact them. Nationwide, circulation has reached a plateau but the circulation at the library has increased. Mr. Hughes said that this was because there are now more books, computers and other resources. Many of the residents are using the library as a meeting space.

Mr. Hughes said that the main focus would be on the Library's Master Plan. Mr. O'Donnell said that one of the reasons that the libraries became a difficult issue for the City was because of the facilities.

Council Member Marella resumed the Chairmanship at 7:14 p.m.

He explained that in order to make space for some items at the Newfield branch, other collections were removed.

There were five options from the Master Plan, which considered on the demographics in the coming years. It is expected that the population of Bridgeport will increase from approximately 140,000 to 170,000 in the next few years.

The Master Plan focuses on the role of the library in the future. Mr. O'Donnell said that the library should be the springboard for curiosity. He said that if it hadn't been for the library in his home town, he would have been one of the statistics.

One problem that came up in the late 80's involved the maintenance of the buildings, particularly the roofs at Newfield and the old Sanborne branch. One model would be to have one major central location, or a second idea is to have a number of libraries throughout the City. Libraries are becoming computer and technology centers and hubs for the residents who do not have Wi-Fi.

There are 73 different languages spoken in the households. The library is working on building collections in about a dozen languages, including Polish, Vietnamese, Italian, and German.

Council Member Lyons left the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

If the buildings were between 9,000 and 10,000 sq. ft. range, the bulk of the collection could be kept at one location and then sent to the branch library for the patrons.

Mr. O'Donnell spoke about impact of the reduced library hours in previous years. Newfield and Old Mill Green have the most serious challenges for space. There are some possibilities for better space that are under discussion. If one of these is finalized, it would double the space available for the libraries. This is why \$800,000 has been retained for fit up for the new space.

Mr. O'Donnell said that it would be important for the Council Members to know that there were a number of possibilities, even though it seems like a slow process. He said that one key issue is to have the libraries all on the same floor to reduce staffing needs. Mr. Errichetti said that the focus has been on efficiency and having three copies of a DVD in a central location would be better than a copy of the DVD at each branch. If the books are at a central location, the resident might need to order the book and pick it up the next year.

Mr. Errichetti then spoke about the branch libraries and how they work. He said that there were a lot of stacks in Burroughs that were not being used and should be moved offsite. He suggested that the back wall could be moved out and the addition would be used as community space. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia thanked the late John Arcudi for his work on the North End. This would be part of the capital plan.

Mr. Errichetti went on to speak about the funding from the one mill allocation and the debt service. Mr. O'Donnell said that the library was now open 54 hours a week.

Council Member Martinez said that she was pleased to see the library open more and that the Board members were communicating with the Council more frequently. She said that she was pleased to that a new library was coming to her area. The parents also need help and training. She thanked them and said that she appreciated the work.

Council President McCarthy said that the Newfield and Old Mill Green facilities were long past being addressed. He said that he looks at them as community centers. He said that he had he did not like the first option. Mr. O'Donnell said that the best bang for the buck would be option 4. Discussion followed about the East Side and East End challenges. Mr. Errichetti said that there was some funding for distressed communities. The paperwork has already been started.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that if the library is thinking of a second floor, there needs to be a strong foundation so that they can go up a level if needed. Mr. O'Donnell said that this was part of the RFP.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there were a lot of grants and it often is better to check the grants late at night so that there are fewer people searching.

Mr. Sherwood said that the Council may have to amend the Capital Plan and asked if there were any additional modifications.

The Committee members thanked the Library staff for their presentation. Mr. O'Donnell said that the Bridgeport Library was an award winning website.

After the conclusion of the Library presentation, Mr. Sherwood then distributed a document with Board of Education Budget Details that had been previously requested.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN/MOVED TO ENTER BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET DETAILS EXHIBIT #2015-04-22-5.
** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council President McCarthy said that tomorrow night there might not be a quorum. He recommended that Thursday and Friday be rescheduled. Discussion followed about the various schedules and topics that would be covered at the hearings. It was decided that a session will be added to Monday night's public hearing and another one following Wednesday's public hearing in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
PUBLIC HEARING & BUDGET HEARING
APRIL 27, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Michael Marella, Co-chair; Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Lydia Martinez, Howard Austin, Patricia Swain (7:21 p.m.); AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (7:23 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member Melanie Jackson, Council Member Enrique Torres, John Marshal Lee; Jorge Garcia, Public Facilities Director; John Cottell, Public Facilities Deputy Director; Robert Kennedy, Public Facilities Assistant Director; Council Member Richard Salter, Council President Thomas McCarthy; Council Member Milta Feliciano, Council Member Robert Halstead

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:24 p.m. A quorum was present.

Public Hearing on Public Facilities and Parks

Mr. John Marshall Lee came forward to address the Council Members. He said that the accuracy of City recording.

Members of the Budget & Appropriations Committee, I have no certain knowledge of how well you read and digest the several fiscal reports from the City. I can guess from the very small reaction that my comments to you as a City Council two times per month, and the failure to come right out and say to me, "Hey John Lee, what are you saying here? I don't understand, or I disagree with you Lee. You are just a troublemaker or.....?"

You see I can deal with that type of response from each of you but when I point out to you at least 20 errors in the latest CAFR, the external audit and none of you are curious, I think it points out a real problem in the City. If the information that is published by the City about finances is in error, fails to be proofed or corrected and the watchdog body stays asleep, who is protecting the public? Do you think that you can defend your failure to respond to these errors?

When I spoke to you about the CAFR in early February I provided you with citations as to the 20 errors I found and where they were located in the report. Well, I am ready to let you know about more mistakes, inconsistencies and errors. You decide whether you need to do something about them for the public.

The Library provides an interesting example in that the CAFR indicated on page 98 that the Library had expended \$6,576,900 in FY 2014. Your budget book for 2015-16 report the actual 2014 as \$6,517,135, which is close enough for government work in my opinion. However, when I looked at the February and March 2015 monthly reports I see 2014 Actual listed as \$9,427, 419 (with a mysterious unbudgeted Line Item 56998 called Special Services Freeze in the amount of

\$2,910,284 that was actually an expense in 2014). Which report do you trust? And how can unbudgeted expense pop up in some reports and disappear in others when listing Actual 2014 totals? If you know, please tell me. It's almost \$3 Million!

Council Member Salter and Council President McCarthy joined the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

The Final Monthly Report for June 2014 began by titling the Revenue section containing seven pages as "Expense Report". Small error especially because fewer than 30 people even saw the report and I am certain that a much smaller number bothered to read the report. But it is another case of failure to proof what is coming from the City to you as material to be trusted.

What if you have entire departments where revenues are paid by some of those enjoying the services but the Revenue Summary for that department indicates "Not Applicable"? Would you have any concerns? What if you understood that this department purchased services outside of payroll in calendar year 2014 equal twice their City budgeted appropriation? When you make decisions, do you expect to have the entire picture or just assurance that it is OK?

The budget and financial reporting is not to be trusted. That is a hard truth. Were you to provide me with more than three or five minutes, I think I can prove grounds for you to be concerned and to do something real about it. Why not create such a session? You have to vote soon on a Capital Budget and the public has not been solicited for input. And you have one page listing over 30 items on which to spend \$42 Million. Time is getting short. Time will tell.

Mr. Lee concluded his remarks with the fact that he has been watching Mr. Garcia over the last three years and that Mr. Garcia provides general budget indicators for the Public Facilities Department. Mr. Lee said he felt these were accurate and a good practice.

Council Member Brannelly asked if there was anyone else who wished to address the Committee at this time. No one came forward. She repeated the question. No one came forward.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING ON PUBLIC FACILITIES AND PARKS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The public hearing was closed at 6:32 p.m.

RECESS

Council Member Brannelly announced a recess at 6:32 p.m. She reconvened the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

General Budget Plan and Capital Discussion

Council Member Brannelly then reviewed the approval process of the Capital Plan. The Committee then reviewed the five year plan. The discussion moved to BOE debt service as outline on page 349 of the budget book. Council Member Marella said that Mr. Sherwood would be bringing the amendment for the Library to the Capital Plan.

Council Member Brannelly asked if anyone had questions about the Board of Education and the Library.

Council Member Jackson said that at the public hearing, two of the residents stated that the City should pay for the maintenance services such as crossing guards or snow plowing. Council Member Brannelly explained that there were a number of municipalities that did include those costs in the BOE budget and others that did not. She reminded everyone that Mr. Sherwood had explained that the question was whether or not the City would have those expenses if the schools did not exist. It was also noted that Interim Superintendent Rabinowitz had not mentioned those two items during the public hearing and later said at the following meeting that her former Waterbury school district paid those costs.

Council Member Austin and Council President McCarthy left the meeting at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was no longer present.

Discussion followed regarding the details of the BOE budget and how the MBR is calculated. The Committee also reviewed the recent Memo of Understanding between the City and the BOE.

Council Member Martinez pointed out that if they gave the BOE more money, it would raise the taxes on the residents. Council Member Brannelly added that if the City gave the BOE more money, it would raise the MBR.

Council Member Swain and Council Member Halstead joined the meeting and Council Member Marella left the meeting at 7:21 p.m. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 7:23 p.m. A quorum was now present. Council Member Torres left the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

Council Member Halstead said that he had not been able to speak about his concerns during the public hearing because he was in another meeting. Council Member Brannelly said that he could tell his concerns about the vacant theaters downtown to the Committee. She also said that Mr. Garcia would be presenting to the Committee on the 28th. Council Member Halstead said that he would not be able to attend that meeting.

Council Member Halstead said that the City should have an alarm on the building where the two theaters are. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there was an alarm there. Council Member Halstead replied the alarms weren't working. Also the Downtown Theater has been storing old props in the building and it is a fire hazard. He said that there should be a monitoring system because people have begun to remove the balustrades from the balcony and the marble panels from stalls in the bathrooms. The burned out light bulbs need to be replaced, and the sump pump needs to be checked because of the high water table in the area.

Council Member Brannelly suggested that Council Member Halstead's concerns be memorialized in a memo to Mr. Garcia and also noted that the Committee would be speaking with Mr. Garcia at the next meeting. Council Member Halstead said that the concerns were operational items. He said that there was a community group that was forming regarding the historical preservation.

Council Member Feliciano and Council Member Austin joined the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Council Member Swain said that Public Facilities would be presenting at the next meeting and said that the Capital Budget had to be approved by May 5th. The Committee then reviewed the topics of the upcoming meetings.

Council Member Feliciano and Council Member Halstead left the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

The discussion moved to the fact that the meetings after May 5th may be held at the Council Chambers at 999 Broad Street to allow Mr. Sherwood to make the changes on his computer and provide the Committee members with updated information.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 28, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-Chair; Michael Marella, Co-chair; Lydia Martinez, Patricia Swain, Council President Thomas McCarthy, Council Member AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (6:50 p.m.)

OTHERS: Jorge Garcia, Public Facilities Director; Steve Ford, Bridgeport Airport, Jose Tiago, Public Facilities; Paul Cateno, Public Facilities; Rose Hoyt, Aging; Charles Carroll, Parks Director; Robert Kennedy, Public Facilities Asst. Director; Tom Sherwood, OPM Director; Gregg Dancho, Beardsley Zoo; Andy Nunn, CAO; Steven Rhodes, Fairchild Wheeler; Council Member Josè Casco; John Cottell, Public Facilities; Steve Hladen, Parks Department; Council Member Enrique Torres (6:17 p.m.); Council Member Michelle Lyons (6:22 p.m.), Council Member Melanie Jackson (6:45 p.m.); Council Member Milta Feliciano (6:50 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. She introduced those Commissioners seated and other Council Members in attendance. A quorum was present.

**Public Facilities/Parks Department and General Budget and
Capital Budget Discussion.**

Council Member Brannelly thanked the Public Facilities Department for all the works they do and their responsiveness to requests.

Council Member Torres joined the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

Aging - Ms. Hoyt said that the program has moved in to the new facility, but the seniors miss the pool and the gymnasium. There is still a major issue with parking because people going to the courthouse use it. Mr. Carroll said that the building is much brighter. He added that there has been an arrangement with the Sheehan Center for pool use. There are discussions about exercise equipment and programs. The new center has a bingo board and a variety of other new amenities. There is a good tracking program for the attendance.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the pool use agreement with Mr. Kuchma for use of the pool. Ms. Hoyt said that it had been working but then it was shut down and now the Sheehan Center is hosting the swimming program.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the parking issue. Ms. Hoyt said that in the past, the Seniors were given passes for using the City lot, but now since the BOE moved in, the parking

has been limited. There are a number of police cars parked in the lot also. She said that in the past they were able to park on Elm Street and come in the back door, but now there is no entrance back there and the seniors can't climb the steps from Elm Street.

Council Member Martinez asked for clarification on the agreement with Kuchma for the use of the pool. Mr. Carroll said that he pays for the seniors to use the pool at the Sheehan Center. There was mention of the work going on at the Kuchma building.

Council Member Marella asked why the police cars were parking in the lot. Mr. Garcia said he didn't know but would check into it.

Council Member Martinez asked if some of the activities and programs at the other Senior Centers. Mr. Carroll said that he would look into that.

Golf Course - Mr. Carroll said that last year, the course brought in revenue, but not this year because of all the ice. Mr. Rhodes said that the Course now has a 'non-resident pass' and the person will have access to the course at the resident rates. The new passes were just introduced and 10 have been sold already.

The work on the new cart barn has started. The grass is starting to turn green and the maintenance crews are back. Mr. Sherwood said that the cart barn was funded by the LOPCIP funds.

Mr. Sherwood said that the black course traps have been replaced and now work is starting on the red course. Mr. Carroll said that a lot of work was being done in house on the tee boxes. Mr. Sherwood said that the course tries to be self sustaining, but due to the long winter, things are a bit back logged.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the driving range. Mr. Carroll said that he had a meeting with the First Tee staff about the driving range and potentially increasing the size of the range in order to increase revenue.

Council Member Swain asked what was being done to promote more golfers to come to Bridgeport from Fairfield and Trumbull. Mr. Sherwood said that there is a strong word of mouth tradition among the golfing community. Mr. Rhodes said that he has a database of customers and the course also has a Facebook page, which the golfers know about. Mr. Carroll said that Mr. Rhodes has also increased the number of outings.

Council Member Martinez asked if there was enough rooms to accommodate the Bridgeport residents plus the people who are from the neighboring towns. Mr. Carroll said that before Fairfield and Trumbull had courses, Bridgeport was doing about 100,000 rounds, so right now the course is seeing 60,000 rounds. He felt there was more than enough room for all the Bridgeport residents.

Sikorsky Airport. - Mr. Ford said that the Airport just completed two phases of LED lighting and it will be paid off with the savings from the electric rates.

The Raybesto materials have been removed and Route 113 is in the process of being moved. The bids on the runway constructions have just been opened. It is a 140 day project and needs to be done.

Council Member Jackson joined the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Aviation sustainability will increase with the new runway. There may be a decrease in revenue during the construction. Once the construction is completed, there will be an increase in planes, particularly from Westchester.

Council Member Brannelly asked if the reduction in revenue had been factored into the budget. Mr. Sherwood said that it has been factored in as much as possible.

Mr. Ford said that right now, other airports are full and the Airport may need a new hanger in the near future after the runways are finished.

The Federal grant is due by May 1st. Discussion followed about the details of the grant and the turnaround for the response for the money.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia and Council Member Feliciano joined the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Mr. Nunn then spoke about the construction agreement between Stratford and Bridgeport.

Council Member Marella asked about the Police and Fire support. Mr. Ford said that both Stratford and Bridgeport will cover, but the Airport is required by the FAA to have a Level A truck.

Council Member Brannelly asked if there was space for a new hanger. Mr. Ford replied he had the site all picked out.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia thanked Public Facilities staff for their response to her requests and emails.

Council Member Brannelly asked whether the commercial airlines would come back. Mr. Ford said that it was market driven. He said that the top level management in companies don't fly commercial airlines because of the difficulty.

Zoo - Mr. Sherwood said that the Zoo was back in the budget. Mr. Dancho said that the pampas plains project was almost completed. Fence lines and containment are almost completed. Giant anteaters will be coming in along with a number of other animals for the exhibit. This was done with private donations.

Mr. Dancho said that the Zoo has hit all the goals from last year. He mentioned that the zoo had received an award as one of the best zoos in the country. There have been consultant services working on the zoo. He also spoke about an endangered species of salamanders that will be on exhibit in the future.

The winter was very rough but there were the no animal deaths or major damage. The Andean bear will be coming back to the zoo. There is the possibility of a spider monkey exhibit also.

Council Member Torres asked about the admissions fees. Mr. Dancho said that the zoo was private and the admission fees were used by the zoo. Mr. Sherwood said that when the zoo agreement was made, the zoo was put in with the tourist attractions, but the Governor has been zeroing out that budget line in recent years. Mr. Sherwood said that he hoped to get the zoo out of the Tourism group and into the Parks category because it would be easier to deal with.

Council Member Torres asked about the details of the subsidy. Discussion followed about the how the subsidy is processed and Capital project costs.

Council Member Martinez said that there were some legislators from Fairfield County that should be supporting the zoo more. Mr. Dancho said that there were many people who were supporting the special projects but that operational funding is harder to come by.

Council Member Martinez asked about the parking for the residents. Mr. Dancho said that there was now parking on Noble Avenue. The consultant calculated that there were about 15 days a year when the parking is at a premium. The staff has started parking cars on the grass when there was a high volume of visitors.

Mr. Dancho said that the area around the Hanson Building parking lot would have a system to prevent the water from going into the sewer system.

Council Member Martinez said that there were residents who were going into the water and swimming by the highway. There is no lifeguard there and the water wasn't clean. Mr. Carroll said that the water was clean and that the swimmers were actually in Trumbull. Several of those present recounted how they had swum in the same location during their youth.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she wanted to give kudos to Mr. Dancho and the staff for all that they do. The staff has worked to give the zoo much more exposure.

Council Member Casco said that last year he had a complaint from someone because they couldn't park inside the park. Mr. Dancho said that he agreed there have been parking problems in the past and that the park staff try the best to park people in the park.

Council Member Jackson asked about the consultant's recommendation. Mr. Dancho said that the consultant had suggested a number of things, such as where the menus were posted and making sure the pedestrian traffic flows smoothly. He added that the new website is up and running.

Council Member Swain asked if the carousel was a money making ventures. Mr. Dancho reviewed the details and said that about 60% of the visitors use the carousel and it is used for birthday parties and weddings.

Council Member Torres left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Sherwood said that Mr. Carroll would update the group on the parks and the projects underway.

Mr. Garcia gave a brief overview of the park amenities. There are three new fields at Blackham and there is now a special needs field. The nearest special needs field is in Pennsylvania. He then talked about the school security grant and how the new lighting system was working.

Mr. Garcia said that the children need a place where they feel safe. New basketball courts have been installed with special turf and plexiglass backboards. It will be important to make the material low maintenance.

There have been splash pads installed, and two baseball fields and a football field are being installed. The drainage issues have been addressed. Veteran's field will have two soccer fields with the proper drainage. Mr. Garcia said when there was a school security system available, the department is leveraging that. Bridgeport will be one of the leaders in terms of turf fields.

Mr. Carroll said that the new synthetic fields will help with the maintenance. There are not enough fields between soccer, lacrosse and football.

There will be about 13 splash pads in the City and that had dropped the number of open hydrants has dropped 75%. The parks are being prepared for the opening season. He listed where the new esplanades are along with the repair and replacement of garages. All the equipment is being stored inside, which helps with the life of the equipment.

He spoke about the new parks that have been opened and how that has helped the neighborhood.

A number of Federal grants to repair damaged done by Hurricane Irene and Sandy have been approved.

Mr. Sherwood and Mr. Carroll listed a number of improvements that will be done in the coming months including improvements to Pleasure Beach.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the Capital Plan line items. Mr. Carroll said that the equipment was for replacement of worn out equipment. He said that the department is working on a rotating replacement plan for the trucks and other equipment.

Mr. Sherwood said that there were a number of phases for Pleasure Beach. He added that there were some ideas that were placeholders. Mr. Carroll said that the department was focused on working on putting turf into the baseball infields so the school students will be able to play. There are limited time for the baseball games to be played. He said that they were also working on the little parks throughout the City.

Mr. Sherwood said that the department was looking at the parks in a bigger view, in terms of sidewalks, or lighting.

Council Member Lyons asked about the amount of trees that residents were cutting down on their properties and the sidewalks. She wanted to know if there was a permit process that the

residents should go through to cut trees. Mr. Garcia said that UI had been cutting back the trees. Resident have been cutting back trees for safety issues. Insurance companies are also requiring the residents to cut back trees on private property. Mr. Garcia said that the Tree Warden has been working UI on this. He pointed out that UI has the right to cut branches back to 8 feet on either side of the power lines.

Council Member Marella said that he had visited a condo unit that a municipality that had two soccer fields, eight basketball courts and numerous other amenities. He said that he would get more information on this for Mr. Garcia.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the water in the splash pads was recycled. Mr. Carroll said that it was not cost effective and the water is funneled into a rain garden. He listed the steps and cost for recycling that water. It is not financially feasible since the pads are only used a few months a year.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the security cameras on the public buildings. Mr. Garcia said that they have been very careful to make sure there is no spill over from the cameras.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the bathrooms at Kennedy Stadium. Mr. Carroll said that that the bathrooms were redone. The fencing was recycled from Longfellow and another school.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the State road maintenance. Mr. Garcia said that the City was maintaining the roads simply because the State takes too long.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the liability issues regarding the trees that the City plants. Mr. Carroll said that the City doesn't plant trees near the wires. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that trees had been planted previously and were causing problems. She also mentioned the sprinkler heads on the esplanades.

Council Member Jackson asked about the park near Pearl Harbor and asked if there were any projects planned. Mr. Carroll said that he would like to know what the neighbors would like there.

Council Member Jackson asked about one of the buildings at Seaside. Mr. Carroll said that the building had an RFP out on it.

Council Member Swain said that she was pleased with the response of the Parks Department with a concern about a particular park. The lighting was done and the greenery was cut back.

Council Member Swain asked about the Vibes contracts. Mr. Carroll said that the local merchants have a good revenue time during the Vibes. Council Member Swain said that there would also be a Frisbee festival.

Council Member Martinez asked about the Tree Warden. Mr. Carroll gave her the name of the staff member who was the Tree Warden and briefly described the responsibilities of the job.

Council Member Martinez asked who she should contact if there was a UI light out. Mr. Cottell said that he would email her the information.

Council Member Casco asked about the prioritizing of the various projects. Mr. Carroll reviewed the process and how the projects were proposed.

Council member Casco asked about a wooded park near Reid School. Mr. Hladen said that he would be there on Saturday for a clean-up. Council Member Casco said that there were a number of trees down where the children walk to school. Mr. Hladen said that the staff would keep working on the trees and clearing it out.

Council Feliciano asked about bathroom facilities at one of the parks. Mr. Carroll said that there were bathrooms at the back of the fire house. She then asked about maintenance. Mr. Carroll said that the staff checks these on a regular basis.

Council Member Feliciano asked about Knowlton Park. She asked if the Motorcycle group across the street work on the park and wanted to know if they could be recognized for their work.

Council Member Martinez asked if there was funding for the Washington Park bathroom. Mr. Carroll said that it had been included and the bathroom would be fixed in the upcoming weeks.

Council Member Swain said that she had been involved in a volunteer serva-thon effort for a park near a school. She asked if it was a cost saver. Mr. Garcia said that the department always has a problem with finding funding for beautification. Having the volunteers working allows the City to expand the scope of the project.

Council Member Casco asked about the recognition of the group for the park. Mr. Carroll explained the process.

Mr. Garcia then spoke about the Public Facilities. The last two winters have been long, harsh season with a lot of ice. He said that they never seemed to demobilized. Be Connected was where the residents put in their concerns. There are now iPads in the truck and the supervisors are on the road rather than behind a desk.

He then explained that there was new technology and a program that allowed the department to contact the Police or Fire or EOC. The snow mounds turned into ice bergs and the equipment started to come back twisted from this.

Now the Department is dealing with the potholes. Mr. Kennedy said that he's worked for the City for 33 years and these were the worst potholes that he's seen. He had talked about stabilization of the roads, which addressed the biggest potholes. Now the City has an asphalt reclaimer. With that investment, there has been 250 tons of hot asphalt. The millings are being reduced with recycled vegetable oil for the hot asphalt. The department is able to make substantial repairs all year long. He then explained how the pothole killer fills the potholes and a Durapatch machine.

He then spoke about the road maintenance program with the hot in place method, micro-sealing and striping. The department has a small milling machine. There is now a sweeping program with a MadVac crew.

Mr. Garcia said that now the department needs to incorporate more anti-blight. There are also Neighborhood Fridays when the Joint Inspection Committee and Public Facilities go into various neighborhoods with flyers listing the private residents' responsibilities.

Mr. Garcia said that the recycling program had been successful and some residents are filling their bins weekly. Extra bins are being delivered to these residents because the City cannot afford to do weekly recycling pick-ups. The department is working on reducing the amount of garbage and tipping fees but increasing the recycling.

Council Member Lyons asked why the Durapatch was only used in some potholes. One of the staff said that the operators were pulling up to a pothole, but not realizing that there was another pothole underneath the truck. Mr. Garcia said that originally the crews were focused on the biggest pot holes and later tried to go back for the smaller holes.

Council Member Swain asked about vehicles parked on the side of the street. Mr. Garcia said that one of the problems was to get an alternative side of the street of parking year round. This would allow for better plowing and street sweeping.

Council Member Marella thanked the Public Facilities staff for their work. He said that Kennedy Stadium was repaired and a week later the kids were destroying it again.

Mr. Garcia said that the Transfer Station was still being worked on. Another issue was a change for the Ordinances for contractors.

Mr. Kennedy said that it seems that the utilities companies do not respect Bridgeport as they do with other towns and the permit fees are lower. Mr. Tiago said that there is an effort to review the ordinances from Norwalk and Stamford. He said that he has stopped some jobs because the contractors haven't been following the regulations. He said that permit fees need to go up, along with the contractor's licenses and a bond on the repairs. Mr. Sherwood said that pulling a bond was a serious thing because there was a high interest rate attached.

Mr. Garcia said that the department was working on the language for the bond and would be presenting this to the City Attorney's and then to the Committee.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about compacting the pothole the day it is repaired. Mr. Tiago said that the day of the repair, it is a temporary patch. The contractor is supposed to come back 45 days later for a permanent patch. He then gave the details of the process.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia suggested that the department check with CCM for the ordinances for the language. She said that in St. Paul's Minnesota, they pave in sections, so when something happens, it is just one section to replace. Discussion followed.

Council Member Marella asked about the timeframe for compacting on dig sites. Mr. Tiago said that he knew that they were not compacting the soil on major digs. The discussion moved to the WPCA.

Council Member Lyons said that the utilities were tearing up newly paved streets. Mr. Garcia said that he was aware of this.

Council Member Brannelly said that there had been a concern about the theaters expressed by Council Member Halstead at the previous meeting. Mr. Sherwood said that he would be talking to OPED because it was building management and that the expenses were operational expenses. Council Member Martinez said that there was a group that was forming about the theaters.

Council Member Brannelly said that there were so many amazing things that Public Facilities was doing and the residents need to know. She said that it would be important to get the word out. Mr. Garcia said that the department has been working on getting the word out. The website needs to be updated. The department is looking to create a YouTube channel so that people could see the pot hole killer in action. Council Member Brannelly said that residents don't know about the UI reporting for lights that are out.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
PUBLIC HEARING & BUDGET HEARING
APRIL 29, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Michael Marella, Co-chair;
Patricia Swain, Lydia Martinez; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia

OTHERS: Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director; Andy Nunn, CAO;
Police Chief Joseph Gaudett; Assistant Police Chief Nardozzi;
Police Lt. Cueto; Council Member Enrique Torres

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Public Hearing on the Public Safety Departments: Police, Fire and
The Emergency Operations Center**

Mr. Lee came forward to speak to the Committee. He drafted his comments in the form of a resolution.

Public Safety Budget – Police – 2015-16

Whereas most City department budgets are presented as an entirety, Police and Fire Departments are presented with 10 or more repetitive Line Item Sections that are ignored throughout the year for oversight purposes.....

Whereas that some separation of Line Items, for example 51000 representing Full Time Earnings might better be understood if all Earnings throughout the department were reported in a single line rather than forcing a reader to independently total the ten different sub-sections.....

Whereas the first subsection deals with Police Administration that the public may believe would contain the compensation of top officers, it shows less than \$1,000 appropriated for any year, so where does one go to source Chief, Deputy and Assistant compensation as well as appropriate fringe benefits for this group, if one were to suspect that the Department may be top-heavy with administration.....

Whereas such divisions may have been helpful to some City Council at a time in the past, the Budget & Appropriations Committee minutes for recent years indicate no reference to the monthly financial reports with this data for the past two years, thus leading one to criticize the extra ink and paper wasted for no reason.....

And leadership personnel including Captains, Lieutenants, Sergeants and patrol officers are not identified and totaled that leads further to a suspicion that management group is too large.....

Whereas the Police Department has seen large number of officers retire in recent years, a consequence of their action is a draw down of “Unused vacation Payout” Line Item 51156 that is seen in the sub-sections of monthly reports as well as in the Pension/Benefits Department in 2014, a question must be raised as to why patrol 51156 is \$141,000 one year and \$0 another year? For instance, in 2014 the separate reporting of 51156 in all department budgets exceeded \$700,000 although it was unbudgeted in departments in the first place thus creating a major negative variance, perhaps unreported specifically in the 2014 CAFR or perhaps to be covered only partially by Pension/Department Benefits?

Council Member Torres joined the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

What are the grounds for current estimates for 2015-16? In light of the 2014 reports and the February 2015 monthly report indicating no reported payouts for Department 01088 Other Fringe Benefits for Line Item 51156 listed as \$0 through 8 months with \$271,875 budgeted?

Be it resolved that consolidation of the entire Police Department budget first into a master budget without subsections including consolidation of all current line items; and second a consolidation in just six categories (1-6) as presented in the Office of Policy and Management budget each year for Executive Summary purpose, so that the entire City Council will be in a better position to understand Public Safety ‘big picture’ issues so that they may dig into them and make appropriate decisions where curiosity leads them.

Council Member Brannelly asked if there was anyone else present who wished to address the Committee. No one came forward. She repeated her request. No one came forward.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.
** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The public hearing on the Public Safety Departments was closed at 6: 37 p.m.

RECESS

Council Member Brannelly announced a recess at 6: 37 p.m. She reconvened the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

Mr. Sherwood said that the Police budget was on pg. 121. He noted that the Chief of Police was listed just above the Crossing Guards on page 124. The Asst. Chief of Police was included in the Patrol. The summary includes all the Police employees. He reviewed the details of pension plans, which are now all closed. The biggest debt is the Pension Plan A. All of the pension plans are closed and the City will only be making contributions for active employees.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ENTER A DOCUMENT SUMMARIZING THE DEBT AS EXHIBIT 2015-04-29-1.
** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Torres asked about the details of the refinancing of the pensions. Mr. Sherwood gave an overview and assured everyone that there was no new debt being added.

Chief Gaudett introduced Asst. Nardozzi and Lt. Cueto to those present.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ENTER A DOCUMENT A BRIDGEPORT POLICE TABLE OF ORGANIZATION AS EXHIBIT 2015-04-29-2.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chief Gaudett said that the department has seen some real tragedies this year and the detectives are working hard to deal with the crimes.

There had been an 11.95% decrease in Part 1 Crimes in the City. A recruit test has been launched and oral interviews are being scheduled. Polygraphs and background checks will follow. A Detectives Test was given and the results are pending because of an appeal. There are five detective vacancies and three have been filled with officers acting as detectives. There are 3 Sgt. vacancies and these are expected to be filled in the near future. There are 7 Captains and a test will be scheduled in the future for this position.

Council Member Marella asked how many applicants came forward. Chief said that after the physical test, 1,000 applicants were able to qualify for the test.

Chief Gaudett then reviewed the department goals. There is a potential for a class of 32 officers, which is the limit that the Academy can have in one class. Promotions will continue within the ranks. He asked if the Committee was familiar with the Family Justice Center and said that this partnership had worked well. While the violent crimes like shootings and other major crimes is a top concern, domestic violence would be number 2. This will be the first one in the State of Connecticut. Chief Gaudett said that he hoped that this will turn the corner for the residents.

Council Member Martinez asked about the staffing. Chief Gaudett said that Fairfield, Bridgeport, Easton, Stratford, Monroe and one other department would have a rotating law enforcement officer at the Center for taking initial complaints from residents. There will be bi-lingual assistance there, also.

The Mayor has a traffic calming initiative and the police are working with this to create safer streets for bicycles and pedestrians. The Distracted Driving initiative is underway and there have been 700 tickets have been issued in the last month. 75% of the cost of the officer is being reimbursed by the State. Chief Gaudett said that the Complete Streets initiative is working on planning for handicapped ramps being installed where the curb cuts are.

Because of the new union contract, Asst. Chief Nardozzi will be providing individualized training to the officers regarding the changes on interfacing with the community. Council Member Martinez said that it will be important to have the trust of the community. Chief Gaudett agreed.

Chief Gaudett said that the State DOT now requires the department to submit their accident reports digitally. There are interns who are currently inputting the information from the paper forms. The information will be compiled into a records management database.

Council Member Torres asked about the bottom line for the police department. Mr. Sherwood said that he had been asked to give totals for the personnel, which he gave to the Committee, and would present the totals for the department. In the Police Department, the divisions were separated out. Council Member Torres said that he wanted to know if the funding from vacancies remained in the Police Department. Mr. Sherwood said that he was not allowed to move money from one department to another without have approval from the Council. He directed everyone to page 128 and gave an overview of how this would be done. Mr. Sherwood said that the police promote from within, so the majority of the vacancies are in Patrol. He also cannot transfer funding from salaries to any other category without approval from the Council.

Chief Gaudett said the department was continuing Project Longevity and were happy with the results. The number of shootings that have happened when the victims survive the shooting has increased because of gang activities. He said that the department is trying to interrupt this cycle and putting them in jail does not help because the perps just come out with the idea of revenge. Project Longevity is working well with the rival gangs, but the Chief said that there are cycles.

The duty manual is being revised and procedures are being updated. Chief Norwood started the process and got about 1/3 of the way through. Now Assistant Chief Nardozzi is working on this and forwarding the updates to the Police Commission in small pieces. When a policy is revised or created, the group is very conscious of the accreditation in case the department has to interface with either the State or Federal groups.

Chief Gaudett said that the Police Department needs a new building. The current one was constructed in 1964. He said that he knew this would not happen in a short span of time. The discussion moved to potential locations and significant considerations in relocating. Chief Gaudett said that they were proposing a 'needs assessment'. Asst. Chief Nardozzi said that the department would have to do a feasibility study first.

Council Member Torres asked about the mounted police unit. Chief Gaudett said that the mounted police unit is used 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The parks patrol is a seasonal assignment. The specialized units are the ones that have the biggest shortages. There also has been a major effort to get the sworn officers out from administration and back on to the streets.

Council Member Torres said that there was a flat funding for the fuel. He said that there had been a price drop of about 1/3. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that the cost per gallon has increased in the last week by about .18¢ so the fuel costs will increase.

Council Member Torres asked about unused vacation days. Mr. Sherwood said that there was no way to know who would be retiring. He said that when someone retires, the City is required to pay out for the unused vacation days. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Swain asked where Animal Control was. Mr. Sherwood said that it was on page 124.

Council Member Torres asked about the number of vacancies. Mr. Sherwood said that there were 67 vacancies that were uniforms. The civilian staff are not included in the vacancies. He said that when he does the summary, he will break out the civilian staff from the sworn officers.

Council Member Martinez asked when the first hiring would be and how many positions will be filled. Chief Gaudett said that the training academy can only handle 32 officers at one time. Theoretically the department can send two classes, but each training session takes about six months.

Council Member Martinez asked how many minorities were in the ranks. Asst. Chief Nardozzi said that he would forward the information to the committee.

Council Member Torres said that he was not comfortable with the notion that if there was funding left over from an account that can be used for other things. If there are savings from fuel because the price goes down, the money should come back to the City. Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the process and pointed out that the CAFR lists the budget allotment and the actual expenses. Discussion followed. Mr. Sherwood said that he would generate a report on fuel usage for the entire City.

Council Member Swain said that the budget book was daunting. Mr. Sherwood then directed to page 28, Grants. He said that there was no Charter requirement to give the details. He said that he could do a summary book, but in order to answer questions, he needs the line item details.

Council Member Brannelly thanked the Chief Gaudett and the others for coming in.

Mr. Sherwood said that he had been requested to amend the Capital Plan to include the changes for the Library. He said that the Seaview Avenue project was not included.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ENTER THE AMENDED CAPITAL PLAN AS EX 2015-04-29-3.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

RECESS

Council Member Brannelly announced a recess at 8:06 p.m.

Council Member Martinez and Council Member Torres left the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting back to order at 8:11 p.m.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the five year Capital Plan and how projects migrate forward. Mr. Sherwood said that item and the Airport foam truck was on the plan last year, but the road paving were generally new projects. He also reviewed the process for authorizing the various projects. He pointed out that for the purchase of fire equipment requires almost a full year's lead due to the fact that they are custom built to specification.

Mr. Sherwood reminded everyone that the City acts as a borrower for the library, but the library is responsible for the debt.

Council Member Swain asked about raises. Mr. Sherwood said that all the raises are contractual. The unaffiliated staff are govern by ordinance and will follow the contractual raises.

Discussion followed about a particular job where the employee is now doing the original job responsibilities plus the responsibilities for a totally different position.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there had been a request about the Majestic Palace Theater from another Council Member and Mr. Sherwood said that property management comes under OPED and that Mr. Perez would be looking into the details of this request.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services.

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 30, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Lydia Martinez, Council President
Thomas McCarthy; Council Member AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia,
Patricia Swain

OTHERS: Brian Rooney, Fire Chief, Scott Appleby, EOC Director; Fire Department
Asst. Chief Robert Petrucelli; Council Member Mary McBride-Lee;
Council Member Michelle Lyons

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. A quorum was present.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO HAVE THE DOCUMENT TITLED
MONARCH NOTES APPROPRIATION ANALYSIS ENTERED INTO THE RECORD
AS EXHIBIT 4-30-2015-1.**

COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO HAVE THE DOCUMENT
TITLED POLICE ROLL UP REPORT ENTERED INTO THE RECORD AS EXHIBIT 4-
30-2015-2.**

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO HAVE THE DOCUMENT
TITLED FIRE ROLL UP REPORT ENTERED INTO THE RECORD AS EXHIBIT 4-30-
2015-3.**

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO HAVE THE DOCUMENT
TITLED CITY AND BOE GASOLINE/DIESEL HISTORY REPORT ENTERED INTO
THE RECORD AS EXHIBIT 4-30-2015-4.**

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Public Safety Department: Fire and EOC Departments

Mr. Sherwood gave a brief overview. He noted that the major variances and reminded everyone that the biggest issue was the benefits, but the contracts were closed. Council Member Brannelly asked about MERS budget. Mr. Sherwood said the MERS payment amount is determined by actuaries each year.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

Chief Rooney greeted everyone and thanked them for their dedication to the budget. He said that Chief Petrucelli would be reviewing the goals listed on page 126. Chief Rooney said that the department was expecting 12 vacancies by the end of the year. Another issue will be the potential replacement of a ladder truck on Boston Avenue that is now about 20 years old. The vehicles are used every day. One pumper truck in Black Rock and another foam truck on Central Avenue are also 20 years old and will have to be replaced soon.

Chief Rooney said that the Safe Sleep program was going well. There have been numerous fires in Bridgeport and the smoke alarms have saved lives. However, he said that there was still a large number of people who did not have working smoke alarms. The department is working on the motto of "Attention to Prevention".

Chief Petrucelli said that there was also an issue with the communications system that goes from the stations to the EOC. He hopes to replace it with a wireless system.

Asst. Chief Petrucelli said that there were some exams coming up to fill the vacancies due to retirements. Chief Rooney said that it takes about 6 months to get a candidate into the station from the CPAT (Candidate Performance Ability Test). This is a nationally recognized test and is administered by the State of Connecticut.

Asst. Chief Petrucelli said that the Safe Sleep program has worked well and there are countless testimonies of how families were saved. One family was waiting out on the sidewalk when the trucks arrived and they thanked the fire department for the fact that everyone got out safely.

There have been 45,000 smoke detectors installed. The units that were installed in 2005 and the department is now starting to replace those older units.

This past winter, the month of February was exceptionally cold and there were between 12-14 serious structure fires. People were using the appliances that were illegal, such as kerosene heaters and after consulting with the Fire Marshals, it was determined that these fires were mostly accidental and due to the cold temperatures.

Mr. Appleby spoke about Virtual Shield project and how it is being used at Pleasure Beach. Another program called VEOCI, Virtual Emergency Operations Center Interface. The department has been conducting the most successful CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) program. The instructors come in and present and the fees are reimbursed. Training is going on in the school system for STEP - Student training for Emergency Preparedness. Over a students have been targeted already.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Mr. Appleby said that they were still waiting for FEMA reimbursement from Irene and Sandy. His department searches for grants for programs all the time.

Mr. Appleby said that the department was working on a grant for Heart Ready, which is a program to have residents training in hand on CPR and have AEDs in the public buildings.

Chief Rooney said that there was a recent meeting with the DEEP about a parcel where the owner took off and left the area contaminated. The City Attorney's Office has also been involved and the area will be cleaned up by the owner at no cost to the City.

Chief Rooney said that his department would be able to live within the Mayor's budget.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia spoke about a commercial building on Jewett Avenue with 55 gallon drums on the property. The blight charges area piling up. She wanted to know if the department was working with the Health Department on issues like this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) program and said that the fingerprinting costs money. Mr. Appleby said that CERT nationwide has a strict requirement about eligibility. The Police Department has been handling the finger printing.

Mr. Appleby then spoke about the regional grant process from Homeland Security. Mr. Sherwood then pointed out that Federal grants are very touchy. He said that there had been instances where the Federal review claimed the scope of the project changed when new pilings were put in for a damaged dock.

Council Member Martinez asked for notification when the CERT program was going to start. Mr. Appleby said that he would send an email. Council Member Martinez said that her community was not always fluent in English. Mr. Appleby said that there were some CERT volunteers who were fluent in sign language.

Council Member Martinez said that she was grateful to the Fire Department because she has seen how they reach out to the community.

Council Member Lyons asked how many Fire Marshals there were. Chief Rooney said that there were 12 and they usually work with the Building Department to review the building plans.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the Joint Inspection Team. Council Member Lyons asked what the requirements would be for the Inspection of a residence. Chief Rooney said that they were required to inspect the three family residences. Discussion followed about the certification for the firefighter who reviews the plans.

Council Member Brannelly said that one issue from last year was to change the requirement for annual inspections of (3) family residents. Chief Rooney said that it was impossible to annually inspect all the (3) family residents. Council Member Brannelly asked if the Budget & Appropriations Committee could receive the report on the number of inspections so they could support this legislation in Hartford. Discussion followed.

Council Member Lyons asked about the details of the inspection and Chief Rooney gave an overview. He also said that if someone knew about an illegal apartment, they could call the department and report it.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she missed being on the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Council Member Brannelly thanked Chief Rooney, Asst. Chief Petrucelli and Mr. Appleby for their time.

General Budget Discussion

Council President McCarthy said they could have a 2/3rd vote on adding the Capital Plan for the agenda.

Council Member McBride-Lee left the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the roof projects listed on the Capital Plan. Mr. Sherwood explained that the Bassick Roof project was in its second year, since it started last year, and the other items were new to this year.

Council Member Lyons asked if there was work planned for John Winthrop School. Mr. Sherwood said that there was no work planned for that school at this time.

Council Member Brannelly asked about asbestos removal. Mr. Sherwood said that there was a grant from the State of Connecticut for this. Council President McCarthy said that the abatement is only required if construction is going on at the site. Otherwise, the asbestos is fine.

Council Member Swain asked why there was no funding listed for the out years. Mr. Sherwood said that the BOE only gives him the figures for the current year. Council President McCarthy commented that up until two years ago, the City never even received any Capital Plan projects. It was suggested that the BOE be encouraged to project the figures for the 5 year plan in order to aid in planning.

Council Member Swain said that last year, there had been a great deal of discussion about Bassick and that this year, it wasn't mentioned at all. She also wanted to know what the status of Harding and Central was. Mr. Sherwood suggested a quarterly meeting with the BOE for a general status and Capital Plan update. Council President McCarthy suggested that it would also be worthwhile to have Mr. Garcia from Public Facilities in that meeting since he is very familiar with the buildings.

Council Member Lyons asked about the downtown improvements. Mr. Sherwood said that the current funding and authorizations should be sufficient to cover those projects.

A discussion followed about the Capital Plan authorizations and how the funding can be used.

Council Member Lyons left the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the previous year's Capital projects that were still underway with the Committee. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Mr. Sherwood explained that the Capital Plan is submitted for authorization by the Council. Then the Mayor will select projects from that list. After that is done, the City can then borrow funds for the projects.

Council Member Brannelly wished to know how the borrowing would affect the debt service. Council President McCarthy stated that Ms. Kelly-Lenz and Mr. Sherwood spend significant amounts of time reviewing the bond rates for refinancing. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that 18 million of the current debt service was from the Board of Education. After the high school projects are completed, 20 million of the debt will be from the Board of Education. He added that the State of Connecticut excludes this debt amount from the MBR.

Council Member Brannelly wished to know where the BOE debt was listed in the budget. Mr. Sherwood directed the Committee to page 329, where the debt is listed. He also repeated the fact that the City repays that debt. The fact that it is not part of the MBR could be a good thing, since if the starting amount is 20 million and the City pays the debt down to 18 million, it does not mean that the City owes the BOE the difference of 2 million.

Council Member Brannelly expressed concern about the extensive bonding and debt service, but was more comfortable about the issue since there is a second step to the authorizations.

Council President McCarthy then asked about the downtown theaters because Council Member Halstead had expressed concerns about their conditions. Mr. Sherwood said that the issue had been brought up at the last meeting and he explained that the concerns would be handled by OPED and that they were part of the Operating Budget, not the Capital Budget.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY THEN MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD A VOTE ON THE CAPITAL PLAN TO THE AGENDA.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT OF THE CAPITAL PLAN WITH THE ADDITION OF THE LIBRARY PROJECT.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE CAPITAL PLAN AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

A discussion followed regarding the upcoming meetings being switched to the Council Chambers at the Margaret Morton Government Center, along with a brief discussion about canceling the meeting scheduled for May 1st.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARING
MAY 5, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Patricia Swain, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Council President Thomas McCarthy (6:30 p.m.) Denese Taylor-Moye (6:39 p.m.); Lydia Martinez (6:53 p.m.)

OTHERS: Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director; City Attorney Mark Anastasi, Arthur Laske, City Attorney's Office; Atty. Molree Williams-Lendor, City Attorney's Office; Council Member Enrique Torres,; Council Member Richard Salter (6:34 p.m.); Council Member Melanie Jackson (6:34 p.m.); Council Member Jack O. Banta (6:39 p.m.); Council Member Eneida Martinez (6:48 p.m.); Council Member Jose Casco (7:04 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:19 p.m. A quorum was present.

City Attorney's Department

Mr. Sherwood said that the budget was on page 68 and that the City Attorney's Office had returned some surplus to the City. Atty. Anastasi was then asked to review the pending litigation with the Committee.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PENDING LITIGATION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Committee members, Council Member Torres, Mr. Sherwood, Atty. Anastasi, Atty. Laske and Atty. Williams-Lendor entered into Executive Session at 6:23 p.m.

Council President McCarthy joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Council Members Salter and Jackson joined the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

Council Members Banta and Taylor-Moye joined the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Council Member E. Martinez joined the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Council Member L. Martinez joined the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

Council Member Jose Casco joined the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

The group returned to public session at 7:17 p.m. No action was taken during Executive Session.

Council Member Brannelly asked if anyone had any additional concerns about their budget.

Council Member Torres asked if an attorney had been added to the Department. Mr. Sherwood said that the office had become more aggressive with real estate property taxes, so a part time attorney had been added. It is listed on page 68 on the bottom. Mr. Sherwood said that the Assistant Attorney was listed but had appeared in the wrong line. He said that he would correct this. Atty. Anastasi said that Atty. Williams-Lendor had been added to his budget with the administration. Council Member Torres asked about the details, which Mr. Sherwood and Atty. Anastasi reviewed with the Committee.

Council Member Brannelly thanked the City Attorneys for their time.

Council Member Martinez asked about the relationship between the WPCA and the City in terms of collections. Mr. Sherwood said that it was listed on page 32 and it also included the reimbursement for their debt. He said that Ms. Kelly-Lenz sends them a debt service list. Council Member Martinez asked how much Ms. Kelly-Lenz bills them and how much they have paid back on the debt. Mr. Sherwood said that he would ask Ms. Kelly-Lenz about this.

Council President McCarthy suggested that the Committee review the timeline. Council Member Swain said that it would be important to clarify the Committee's goals for this budget.

Council Member Brannelly said that there was a budget timetable on page 6 of the budget book. She then reviewed the various milestones for the budget. Council President McCarthy said that a meeting had been scheduled for Tuesday if there is a problem. Mr. Sherwood reminded everyone that if there were any increases in the budget, it would require a 2/3rd majority (14 votes) for the increases to pass. Council President McCarthy cautioned everyone that to remember any decrease from one area needs to be balanced with an increase in another area.

Council Member Brannelly said that a key issue for her was understanding the value of a mill. After talking with the various departments, the Committee should have an idea of the department's needs and how the money is used. Council President McCarthy reminded everyone that if a job is eliminated, it only eliminates 50% of the costs due to payouts. He added that if an employee is eliminated, if it is a union position, there can be a bump up of another employee into that position.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that any questions should be asked here in committee rather than trying to make adjustments on the Council floor. Mr. Sherwood said that in his 28 years with the City, there has never been a budget amended on the Council floor. Council President McCarthy said that the Council Members have a fiduciary obligation to present a real budget to the full Council.

Council Member Torres said that there were some significant changes in the departments, while others remained almost flat. He mentioned changes in the Tax Assessor's Office. The discussion then moved to the previous Tax Assessor's method of evaluating a property versus the way it was currently being done. Mr. Sherwood said that in the Finance Department had transferred two people in from Benefits because the staffers worked in Finance.

Council Members Banta and Taylor-Moye left the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Mr. Sherwood pointed out that in 2013, NAGE did not have a settled contract and there were contractual raises involved. Council Member Torres pointed out that this year's budget was 9 million more than last year. Mr. Sherwood said that the City has been averaging less than 1.5% growth in the past years and wondered how the administration could do better than that. 60% of the City positions are Police and Fire employees. There is a 15% staff decrease over the past years. He reminded everyone that the increase money was basically in service because there are fixed costs that can't be changed. If the Committee cuts the police positions, the Federal Government will be claiming the grant funding was used to supplant the grant and sending the City a large bill for repayment.

Council Member Swain pointed out that she had reviewed all the raises given to the staff. Mr. Sherwood said that those raises were negotiated and previously approved by the Council. Council President McCarthy said that Connecticut was a pro-union state and there were times in the past when the unions took a 0% raise for a period followed by increases later in the contractual time period. Council Member Brannelly also pointed out that while the unions were getting raises, they were now paying 50% of the premium cost shares for health share. Council President McCarthy added that the City would no longer be responsible for post employment benefits.

The discussion then moved to the State PILOT payment. Mr. Sherwood said that Bridgeport was losing out on tens of thousands of dollars because the State is only obligated to give the City 70% if they have it. However, the City only receives approximately 30% of the taxes. There are two colleges, two hospitals, a jail and a courthouse that are all State owned properties. That is approximately 6 to 7 mils worth of revenue the City is losing.

Council Member Salter left the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Discussion followed about the PILOT revenue. Copies of revenues by categories were distributed. Council President McCarthy and Mr. Sherwood gave an overview of the current State budget in terms of education and other allocations.

Council President McCarthy, Council Members E. Martinez and Torres left the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Council Member Martinez asked the Committee to get together after the budget is passed to work on lobbying in Hartford about the PILOT payments.

Council Member Swain asked about the fees for Planning and Zoning. She asked what the Mayor was planning on with an increase in the Zoning Fees. Mr. Sherwood said that it was the anticipated fees for construction.

Council Member Swain said that she would encourage everyone to read the Executive Summaries because it helped give an overview. She said that one of her goals was to be able to

give the BOE more money for the school nurses. Mr. Sherwood said that in the back of the BOE handout, there was a projected cost for those nurses.

Council Member Casco left the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the BOE interventionists. She said that they never had that position before unless it was a social worker. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would send an email to Interim Superintendent Rabinowitz about this.

Council Member L. Martinez said that because the City was working with some of the CDBG funding for programs, such as sidewalks for the seniors. Mr. Sherwood said that they can't move the money across the categories for projects like that.

Council Member Brannelly said that one mill was equal to just under \$700,000. She said that it was important to understanding. Mr. Sherwood said that the best way to decrease taxes would be to expand the tax base.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that Weights and Measures had two staff members and asked if there could be any reductions because the revenue of \$67,000 was low. Mr. Sherwood said he would check to see if it was mandated by ordinance or by the State.

Discussion then followed about the transfer station and charging a fee. Council Member Brannelly reminded everyone that Public Facilities said that they were working on improving the transfer station so that the traffic would flow through more easily and it would be more efficient.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER L. MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARING
MAY 6, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Michael Marella, Co-Chair;
AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia; Lydia Martinez, Howard
Austin, Patricia Swain; Council President McCarthy

OTHERS: Council Member Melanie Jackson, Council Member Robert
Halstead, Council Member Richard Salter, Council Member
Eneida Martinez, Council Member Jose Casco, Council Member
Milta Feliciano, Council Member Michelle Lyons

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:52 p.m. A quorum was present.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Council Member Brannelly said that the current mill rate was 42.9 mills and the value of a mill is currently 6.829. In order to reduce it by one mill, the Council would have to reduce the budget significantly.

Council Member Brannelly said that last night; the discussion was about the lack of school nurses and reading and math interventionalists. The Committee then reviewed the pie chart on page 9 of the budget book.

Council Member Austin said that he was very impressed with the Parks and the Public Facilities. He said that he had been working on the budgets for a long time and that the BOE had over 40% the budget and the remaining revenue is what the rest of the City works with. He said that there had been a lot of waste in the BOE and that the argument was it was "for the kids".

Council Member Brannelly said that she wanted to review the Police and Fire Roll up documents.

Council Member Marella said that he was not pleased with the idea that a principal was making \$900 a day. Council Member Austin agreed and said that the superintendents can retire and then come back as a consultant. He said that he does not grudge anyone a worthwhile salary, however these administrators have degree and yet the students are failing.

Council Member Brannelly said that she wanted to know what the Council could do to partner with the BOE. Council Member Austin said that there was going to be a point where the budget just could not stand anymore. There comes a time when you have to be firm. Discussion about the issues followed.

Council Member Marella said that right now the Police Department is short 65 officers. They handle all the major events in the City and that requires the overtime for coverage.

Council Member Lyons said that every year, there are the same arguments. The Mayor's Office is now hiring more people as aides for aides. The people who feel this are the union members who are barely making ends meet and the residents who pay the taxes. Discussion followed.

Council Member Brannelly said that she fully respects this, but the Committee needs to realize that they don't have control over the BOE budget.

Council Member Salter asked about the overtime and whether it can be capped. Council President McCarthy said the two big areas of overtime are in Fire and Police. With the Fire Department, there is a staffing requirement for firefighters in a station. When someone is out sick, then someone who is on overtime has to come in for coverage. With the Police, there have been issues with lawsuits when the tests are administered. Now the department is down 65 officers. Right now there are 32 officers that will be coming on and a new test was just administered. Discussion followed.

Council Member Lyons said that in the past, the budget was much more detailed. In the past, the departments would come before the Committee and tell them all the details. If there were shortages in a department, the Council Members would know about it. Council Member Brannelly explained that when she and Council Member Marella discussed this and decided that if a smaller department had a request, they could come before the Committee and present the issue. The larger departments have been before the Committee with their budgets. Council Member Lyons said that there had been new positions added in the Mayor's Office.

Council Member Brannelly then distributed copies of the Budget Monarch notes, which has the actuals from 2013, 2014 and 2015. She said that in order to reduce the budget, they had to find significant dollars.

Council Member L. Martinez said last year, she had asked ITS to do a study and other information, but that she had not seen that information. The Committee members then turned to section with the ITS department. She said that it would be important to see what the departments could give back to the City.

Council Member Casco said that the community would like to have a certain amount of funding for municipal IDs like the City of Hartford has. Council Member Martinez said that it cost New Haven around \$300,000, which would include a staff person. The IDs would have a cost. Council Member L. Martinez said that New York and New Haven suggested that it be handled through Vital Statistics.

Council Member Austin then asked Council President McCarthy about the fact that the Police and Fire members used to be required to live in Bridgeport. Council President McCarthy said that the State Law changed a number of years ago. Council Member Feliciano asked if there was an incentive for those who were City residents.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked how many people had emailed the Co-chairs requesting information in advance. She said that there had been no new information brought forward. She suggested that the Committee go through the budget book department by department. She said that it would be important to encourage recycling because that generates revenue. Council Member Brannelly said that Public Facilities were giving out more green bins for those who need them.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it was important to remember that not every employee could be easily moved into or out of a position because of contractual obligations. Council Member Lyons disagreed.

Council President McCarthy said that it would be important to know what the tax collection rate and how it compares to previous years. Council Member Brannelly said that the administration had added \$500,000 because they are pushing on the personal property taxes that were in arrears. Discussion followed.

Council Member Brannelly said that having a comparative report on the projected tax rates and the actual collection percentages for the last few years helped. Council President McCarthy said that the grand list had grown in the last year, which generates more revenue. This is how the budget increased without increasing taxes. In past years, the administration has been very conservative in their estimates for tax collection. In the past, the estimates were too high and that required withdrawals from the fund balance. Presently, the fund balance is too low.

Council Member Halstead said that he was receiving a number of calls about the downtown theaters and that OPED was overwhelmed and did not have a staff member to supervise the buildings.

Council Member Halstead asked about the municipal IDs. Council Member Feliciano said that the undocumented workers do not have any kind of identification and because they could not open a bank account, they end up carrying large amounts of cash. Council Member Feliciano said that these people want documentation because they have nothing when the police pull them over.

Council Member Jackson asked about the assessment being pushed back and pointed out that when it goes through, the taxes will increase. Council President McCarthy said that when the last re-evaluation was done, the property values were high. The values of the properties have not rebounded since the crash. He pointed out that depending on the valuation of the property, the mill rate could increase but a resident's taxes could remain the same. The City requested more time from the State to allow the values to become realistic. The amount of property doesn't change, but who pays for the property will change. He said that the last re-evaluation, most of the tax bills had a variation of \$50 either up or down.

Council President McCarthy said that it was important to work on revenue, which would yield a full dollar increase rather than cutting a staff position, which would only yield about .50¢ because of post employment payments.

Council Member Lyons asked about the worker's comp. Council President McCarthy said that for the Police and Fire have been reducing the Comp, but there was no change in this area for the BOE. Council Member Lyons said that often work requests are put in by the teachers, but it takes weeks for the request to be done. The staff gets frustrated and end up doing the task themselves. Some of them are injured doing it and pointed out that it wouldn't have happened if there had been a more rapid response. She said that this could be controlled in a better manner. Council President McCarthy said that since Mr. Garcia took over, there had been a big change.

Council Member Swain asked if it was the Contracts Committee was the Council group that approves the raises. She then cited a raise listed in the budget book. Council President McCarthy said that often if an employee left, sometimes one of the employees will take over the responsibilities of the vacant position with financial compensation. Discussion followed about the contracts and the fact that many of the contracts were negotiated over a number of years.

On page 9, they reviewed the pie chart showing revenue. The Council discussed the various amounts listed on the Monarch Note Appropriations.

The discussion moved to the Health Department. Council Member Brannelly said that the Director of Health is listed as a .3 employee because .7 of that salary is from grant funding. Council President McCarthy illustrated that Mr. Garcia and Mr. Cottell do a great deal for the BOE but being paid by the City.

There were a number of questions regarding the handling of the grant funding. Council President McCarthy reminded everyone that the budget is generated by the payroll system, which is MUNIS. A detailed discussion followed. Council President McCarthy said that the grant funding might be a full evening meeting for the Committee in the future.

Council Member Marella suggested that the Committee request Mr. Sherwood to comb through the budget to identify any areas that could be reduced without harming a department for the municipal identifications.

Council Member Swain said that if the Committee found funding for the nurses, it could be two birds with one stone, since it would be restoring a relationship, and it would put the nurses back in as many schools as possible. Council Member Marella reminded everyone that if the City gave BOE more money, it might become part of the MBR. Council President McCarthy also pointed out that the State might cut the District by 5 million because the Alliance Grants. If this happens, the BOE will have to fill the gap and nurses would not be funded. Discussion followed.

Council Member Lyons then asked if Zoning had increased the revenues. She wanted to know what happened to the Night Time Zoning Official. Council President McCarthy said that one employee had been out on compensation. He said that the position was filled now and working out. The discussion moved to the increase that the Zoning Department. Council Member Lyons said that she wanted to know how much revenue the Night Time Zoning Office generated. Council Member Brannelly made a note of this.

Council Member L. Martinez asked how much revenue the anti-blight department had generated. Council Member Brannelly made a note of this.

Council Member Austin reminded everyone of his earlier statement regarding the BOE and their lack of accountability.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that Council Member Brannelly and Council Member Marella should check into these issues.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER L. MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARING
MAY 7, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Patricia Swain, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Council President Thomas McCarthy

OTHERS: Council Member Enrique Torres, Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director; Council Member Michelle Lyons (7:02 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. A quorum was present.

Council Member Brannelly asked Mr. Sherwood about the employees who were partially paid through grants. Mr. Sherwood said that the City was running the pension checks, so as soon as he had access to MUNIS again, he will run the report.

Council Member Brannelly asked about past years tax collections. Mr. Sherwood directed the Committee to the CAFR report, which has a chart of the actual collections for the last ten years. Discussion followed.

Mr. Sherwood directed everyone to page 48 of the budget book, where the arrears taxes are listed. Discussion of the collection rates followed. Mr. Sherwood also pointed out that the reason the collection rate will never be at 100% is because of the vehicle taxes.

Council Member Brannelly said that the Committee would like to know what the State funding might be like. She asked if the Committee could review the key State allocations. The Committee then turned to page 72 in the budget book in order to review the topics. Mr. Sherwood said that the Municipal Revenue Sharing Aid (MRSA). This may be cut, so should be monitored. The ECS grants and the Alliance Grant are the next two major grants. Mr. Sherwood said that the ECS (Educational Cost Sharing) grants were expected to remain the same but the Alliance Grant had run its course of three years.

Council Member Swain asked about the \$700,000 that the BOE mentioned. Mr. Sherwood reviewed the details. He said that in 2013-14, the City assumed the responsibilities worth \$2,300,000 for the BOE. The State kicked in \$1,200,000 that year.

In 2014-15, the State did the MBR calculations. In 14-15, the City has been compliant with providing \$2,200,000.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

The State announced that the \$700,000 was part of the ECS funding.

Council Member Lyons asked about the productive report. Mr. Sherwood said that Mr. Nunn was working on it.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER THE REPORT ON THE ANTI-BLIGHT FINES AS EXHIBIT 1-5-7-2015.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Sherwood said that the goal was to have blight fines support the costs of boarding up burned out building. The figures only reflect the amounts collected, not those that are tied up in legal or ones that are pending. As time goes on, Mr. Sherwood said that the administration will get a better handle on collection effort and be able to project the revenues. Council Member Torres said that he did not think it was right for the Anti-blight Department to keep their revenue while the others could not. Discussion followed about potentially moving the budget into the general fund. Mr. Sherwood said that moving the budget into the general fund could be done but would slow down the response of the Joint Inspection team.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the Small and Minority Business Department that also keeps their own budget, which they use for their business fairs. She wanted to know if the various departments involved in the Joint Inspection Team were sharing the costs. Council Member Brannelly said that all of the departments involved in the Joint Inspection Team have said that it is really working well. Council Member Torres said that there were contractors who were complaining that they hadn't been paid in over 60 days and felt that having the other contractors paid quickly through Anti-blight was not right. Discussion followed.

Mr. Sherwood said that the problem with the general fund is that it takes time to approval. He added that the buildings need to be dealt with immediately. Having the account in the department allows it to remain open over the budget years. Council Member Lyons asked if the Anti-blight fines and the Lighthouse program submit monthly reports to the Budget & Appropriation Committee. Council Member Lyons said that she would contact Mr. Kooris about this and said that it should be presented to the Public Safety and Budget.

The discussion briefly moved to the theater monitoring, provide security and protect the asset.

Mr. Sherwood said he wanted to confirm what the priorities were in order to start wording the resolutions.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia left the meeting at 8:00 p.m. A quorum was no longer present.

The discussion then moved to setting up a municipal ID program. Mr. Sherwood suggested that it be added to the budget in reserve until all the details of the program have been clarified. Council Member Brannelly said that there had been a meeting at Rev. Castillo's church that had been very well attended. Mr. Sherwood suggested that it be included in the budget as \$200,000, so it would be revenue neutral.

Mr. Sherwood said that he would include the theaters in the budget. He added that he would include a new copier/scanner for Purchasing and City Clerk's.

Council President McCarthy said that he had a strong feeling about starting up a lawsuit against the State regarding the educational allocations. Mr. Sherwood suggested that the best thing to start would be a resolution. Council Member Brannelly suggested a consultant. Mr. Sherwood said that the people working with CJEF because they already have the data and the City has been paying into this. He said that this would also get the administration, the BOE, the Council and the Superintendent all on the same page.

Council Member Torres left the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Council Member Lyons asked if the schools were reporting on how much money was being saved through recycling. Mr. Sherwood said that Mr. Garcia in Public Facilities would know. On page 191, it is listed in Public Facilities. He noted that the tonnage of garbage was going down, but did not have a figure for recycling immediately available.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Brannelly adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARING
MAY 8, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-chair; Michael Marella, Co-chair; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Denese Taylor-Moye, Howard Austin, Patricia Swain (6:12 p.m.) Lydia Martinez (6:32 p.m.)

OTHERS: Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director; Council Member Mary McBride-Lee, Council Member Michelle Lyons, Council Member Jack Banta, Council Member Milta Feliciano, Council Member Jose Casco, Council Member Melanie Jackson, Council President Thomas McCarthy

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. A quorum was present.

BUDGET DISCUSSION AND VOTE

Council Member Brannelly reviewed the previous meetings' discussion including the desire for school nurses, school interventionist, and municipal identification cards for undocumented Bridgeport residents.

Council Member Swain joined the meeting at 6:12 p.m.

Mr. Sherwood then started a review of the General Fund Budget.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked why the blight fines were being moved back into the General Fund. Council Member Brannelly explained that their proposed budget figure was an average from the last three years. Several Council Members had expressed concerns about the fact that the Council Members did not have control over the funding at the previous meetings. Mr. Sherwood then reminded everyone that any money left in department accounts at the end of the year would roll into the General Fund. He suggested that the Council consider adjusting the ordinance to include a phrase such as "have a fund up to" a certain amount to prevent the program from running out of funds.

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

Council Member Brannelly then gave an overview of the addition of the Poli-Majestic Theater security and the municipal identification cards for undocumented workers.

Council Member Martinez joined the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Council Member Martinez said that there had been a meeting about the municipal identification earlier in the day. She said that the group had decided it was better to have the funding available than not to have it authorized. She said that New Haven spent \$300,000 on the program.

Council Member Banta joined the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

A discussion followed about the amount of proposed allocation.

Council Member Feliciano joined the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that the city needs this because of the number of undocumented residents. Mr. Sherwood said that the money would be in the reserve administration would be looking at potential grants or for matching grants. Council Member Martinez said that the City Attorneys would be helping draft the documents.

Council Member Casco joined the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the request from Interim Superintendent Rabinowitz. Council President McCarthy said that he had received an email from Interim Superintendent Rabinowitz confirming that the money would be used for the nurses and interventionists. Council Member Brannelly said that she had gotten an email from the BOE Chairman to say that he would support Interim Superintendent Rabinowitz. A lengthy discussion about the details and the impact of this on the MBR followed.

Mr. Sherwood said that the first vote that would be taken would be General Fund 71-14 -a Revenue Increases This will require a 2/3 affirmation of the entire membership of the Council (5 votes in Committee, 14 for full Council).

Mr. Sherwood said that the second vote that would take would be the General Fund 71-14-b, which will only require a simple majority of those present in Committee and the Council.

Council Member Lyons left the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

The third vote will be on Appropriations Increases, 71-14c. This will require a 2/3 affirmation of the entire membership of the Council (5 votes in Committee, 14 for full Council).

The fourth vote is for the Appropriations Decreases, which will require a simple majority of those present.

The fifth vote is on the entire budget as approved.

Council Member Jackson joined the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that the May 11th Council meeting and that it is a Special Meeting that will start at 7:30 p.m. Only the items listed on the agenda can be discussed and nothing can be added to the agenda. Council President McCarthy cautioned everyone that a

second meeting had been scheduled for the following night in case the budget failed to pass at the first Council Meeting.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 71-14 a – BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE VOTE OF GENERAL FUND REVENUE INCREASES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 71-14 b – BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE VOTE OF GENERAL FUND REVENUE DECREASES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 71-14 c – BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE VOTE OF GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION INCREASES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 71-14 d – BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE VOTE OF GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION DECREASES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 71-14 e – BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE VOTE OF GENERAL FUND BUDGET.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council President McCarthy said that the Council Members did a great job working on the budget. The Committee thanked Mr. Sherwood and the stenographer for their work.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service

City of Bridgeport
Budget and Appropriations
Budget Hearing
May 8, 2015