

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 11, 2016**

**ATTENDANCE:** Scott Burns, Co-Chair; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Aidee Nieves,  
M. Evette Brantley

**OTHERS:** Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director;  
Dan Braccio, Career Resources; Alma Maya, Mayor's Office;  
Scott Wilderman, Career Resources; Tom Gaudett, Mayor's Office

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council Member Burns called the meeting to order at 6:10. A quorum was present.

Each of the Council Members introduced themselves, along with the City official present.

**Approval of Committee Minutes: April 28, 2016 (Special Meeting)**

**Approval of Committee Minutes: June 13, 2016 (Regular Meeting)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 28, 2016 SPECIAL MEETING AND THE JUNE 13, 2016 REGULAR MEETING.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NIEVES SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 28, 2016 SPECIAL MEETING AND THE JUNE 13, 2016 REGULAR MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**147-15 Proposed Budget Transfer to Fiscal Year 2016-2017 General Fund Budget to Accommodate the FY 2016-2017 Second Chance Initiative Program From: State Budget Contingency Account #01610000-57017 (\$50,000) To: Police Department "Other Services" Account #01250000-56180 (\$50,000).**

Mr. Nkwo said that the City had gone out for a bid for insurance and then later the agent notified the City that the bid was being lowered by \$50,000 and so this extra funding was being used for the transfer to the Police Department. He distributed a document titled "City of Bridgeport Office of Policy and Management Justification Document, Budget Modification/JD #3".

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "CITY OF BRIDGEPORT OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT JUSTIFICATION DOCUMENT, BUDGET MODIFICATION/JD #3" AS EXHIBIT # 7.11.16.1.**

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

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Nkwo explained that the Exhibit listed the account numbers that would replace the State Budget Contingency Account listed as the source of funding in the Agenda Item.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 147-15 BY SUBSTITUTING THE ACCOUNT NUMBERS LISTED ON EXHIBIT 7.11.16.1 FOR THE STATE BUDGET CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT AS THE SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR THE PROPOSAL.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Brantley said that she was concerned that some money had been taken from the Police Department and now the money was given back. She asked who would be administering the funding and monitoring the program. Mr. Gaudett explained that the Second Chance Program would be involved and Ms. Maya and Dr. Stallworth would be overseeing the program. The office is in the process of being set up.

Ms. Maya said that this was a seed grant to start the program. She added that the program would be under the CAO's Office and there would be two staff members. It is expected that they would be able to service 50 clients with various resources available.

Mr. Nkwo said that the City was also looking for grants that offered matching funding. Ms. Maya said that Career Resources will be helping with the administration of the program because they have experience in this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she was concerned about the fact that the City was struggling financially but this proposal would actually be starting a business. She said that she did not think that the City should be acting as a Big Brother when there were other existing programs and resources already addressing this problem in the City. She pointed out that they had originally discussed this as a "grant", but the City should not be in the grant business or starting a new business. Discussion followed.

Council Member Nieves pointed out that last week during the Economic and Community Development and Environment meeting, there was a grant for the Bridgeport youth for job trainings that was approved. Her concern was that while she empathized with those who are coming out of jail, she felt that the program should be established under the Social Services Department. She asked whether the City could afford the overhead when they were also laying people off.

Council Member Brantley said that she understood what the Mayor's intention was but would rather be working on long term programs. She said that if they focused on prevention more, then the number of felons coming back to Bridgeport would decrease. She said that she would prefer to see the resources for the youth and would also like to do something for the taxpayers and help them, too. There are more important issues to deal with such as working with the youth.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that there was a Connecticut grant for \$4 million for workforce grants. Mr. Nkwo said that he would check into it.

Mr. Gaudett said that there was no number that one could call at Social Services for help with these issues. He said that the Re-entry Collaborative had pushed the Mayor to address these issues. This is money to leverage more funding. At the end of the day, this population costs the City money through recidivism. Council Member Brantley asked Mr. Gaudett if he had ever been involved in a prison ministry. Mr. Gaudett said that he had not. Council Member Brantley said that she had.

Council Member Burns asked how the funding would be used. Ms. Maya said that the funding can be used for leveraging other grants and gave the details.

Council Member Burns asked why this was the City's initiative. Ms. Maya said that the Re-entry Collaborative has challenged the City to put their money where their mouth was. Council Member Brantley said that she would like to attend the Re-Entry collaborative meetings. Mr. Wilderman gave her the meeting dates and times.

Mr. Nkwo said that at this point, he would suggest tabling the item so that the group could get the information because the Committee has been presented with a one line item without backup. Both Council Member Brantley and Council Member Nieves agreed. Council Member Nieves pointed out that this had happened repeatedly in the past when the Committee is expected to make decisions with very little information in a short time.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 147-15 - PROPOSED BUDGET TRANSFER TO FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017 GENERAL FUND BUDGET TO ACCOMMODATE THE FY 2016-2017 SECOND CHANCE INITIATIVE PROGRAM AS PREVIOUSLY AMENDED IN ORDER TO DO MORE RESEARCH.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NIEVES SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**General Discussion re: Review of the Monthly Financial Report.**

Mr. Flatto said that the financial report was filed with the City Clerk. He said that there had been two major sales recently, one of which was the Sacred Heart parcel and the second sale was one of the parcel at Steel Point.

He said that he was hopeful that the forecast for June would come in lower than projections in order to reduce the deficit. He gave the details.

Council Member Brantley asked for the details of the parcel at Steel Point. Mr. Flatto gave her an overview and noted that the parcel was located directly across the street from Bass Pro Shops.

Mr. Flatto said that the UI easement was paid before the fiscal year closed.

Mr. Nkwo said that every requisition over \$1,000 had to be approved by him and that by monitoring it closely, they have reduced the amount of office supplies. He cautioned everyone that once these surpluses are used up, the departments will need more supplies.

Mr. Flatto said that he would attempt to produce a report for the general public with simplified totals.

Council Member Brantley asked if there were any recent hires. Mr. Nkwo said that there were some positions that need to be filled such as a vacancy in Payroll. Council Member Brantley said that they had asked about updates for new hires on a monthly list. Mr. Nkwo said that there were some School Resources Officers that had been retained due to union concessions. He gave the details of how this would affect the budget.

Council Member Burns asked if they had heard anything about the bill that was sent to the Presidential Campaign Managers for the costs of the rallies. Council Member Brantley asked how much it was. Mr. Nkwo said that they had sent a bill for \$70,000. There has been no response so far. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the City should send another bill. Mr. Nkwo said he would and made a note of it.

Council Member Burns asked if there were any net savings from early retirements. Mr. Nkwo said that he had project about 37 early retirements, but the total number of retirements was 58, most of whom were from the Library. The checks will be cut on July 15th. He said that the breaking point for the basis of 37 retirees would be about 7 months before the City would realize the savings from those retirements. Mr. Flatto said that once the City is out of this fiscal year, the savings will be over 2 million dollars a year.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked for an update on the Blue Fish negotiations. Mr. Nkwo said that the issue would have to be discussed with the Legal Department staff.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if there had been any projections for the Building fees that the City would collect for the Steel Point development. Mr. Nkwo said that he could run the numbers again. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like to know what projects were coming down the road and what kind of fees would be collected. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the fee increases were posted where the residents and developers will be aware of the increases. Mr. Nkwo said that he believed the filing costs were posted in the Building Department.

Council Member Burns asked about the Blight Program and the \$200 rewards for reporting blight. He wanted to know where that money would come from. Mr. Flatto said that the Blight Program now has their own self-contained funding. Mr. Nkwo said that they had just set up the funding earlier in the day. He said that the fine would most likely break even with the \$200 reward payments. Mr. Gaudett said that in order to receive the award, there had to be a successful report. Mr. Nkwo explained that the City would have to catch the offender, collect the fines and then pay the reporter out of the fine money.

Council Member Brantley asked about cameras that were supposed to be trained on hot spots where there is a lot of illegal dumping. Mr. Nkwo said that he thought it might go through Public Facilities. The discussion moved to issues regarding privacy and recording people who live nearby these areas.

Mr. Flatto pointed out that there were thousands of unpaid fines, so he felt that if the fines were paid, the City would end up in a positive cash flow.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she was concerned that people might think that for every picture that they took of blight, they would get \$200. Mr. Nkwo said that when there was a blight report, the violator would have to be convicted before a reward was issued. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia added that she was concerned about the invasion of privacy with the new cameras going up.

Council Member Burns asked if there was an update on Captain's Cove. Mr. Nkwo said that they would be getting the update from the IRS soon. Mr. Flatto said that Captain's Cove was being very cooperative and had made a recent payment.

Council Member Burns thanked Mr. Flatto and Mr. Nkwo for providing the actuals on the report.

Council Member Burns asked what the situation with the fund balance. Mr. Flatto said that once the audit process was completed, the fund balance final total will be known. He expected that this figure would be given in late September.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the payment from the Jewish Senior Services. Mr. Flatto said that the department was researching this to verify the payments. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that since non-profits have no property taxes, the Jewish Senior Services had agreed to make yearly payments for their new facilities similar to the PILOT payments. She said that the new development was a positive thing because many Bridgeport residents were employees and the facility was located on the bus line.

Council Member Burns asked if there was a list of those who had been doing furloughs. Mr. Nkwo said that the unaffiliated employees were taking furloughs. Since there were some union concessions, the subject of furloughs had been taken off the table. Mr. Flatto said that they could compile a list for the Committee. Discussion followed about this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like to have the reports from Labor Relations with an Executive Summary, including the concessions, the furloughs, and new hires. She said it would be important to have the staff attend the meetings. This has been repeatedly asked for over a long period.

Council Member Burns asked about the tax revenue appears to exceed the projections. Mr. Flatto said that the current collections were above the projections. The arrears figure will change because there is interest from prior years. All the older tax liens were sold and this will be reflected in this year's Arrears total.

Council Member Burns said that the Police overtime was increasing again. Mr. Flatto said that there have been quiet weeks and then there are other weeks with many events. When there is a parade or a march, it affects the overtime budget. Mr. Gaudett said that the CAO's was tracking this along with Captain Stoltz.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services