

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 7, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-Chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-Chair; Aidee Nieves, Anthony Paoletto, Council President Thomas McCarthy; Jose Casco, M. Evette Brantley, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (6:22 p.m.)

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ken Flatto, Finance Director

OTHERS: Angel dePara, Chief Administrative Office; Council Member John Olson, Council Member Jack Banta; Council Member Milta Feliciano, Council Member Eneida Martinez; Council Member Mary McBride-Lee

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Burns called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. A quorum was present. Council Member Burns gave a brief overview of the process and said there would be four public hearings scheduled.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that if the Council Members asked for information; they would like to receive the information within 48 hours. In the past, the information has taken too long.

Council Member Burns said that the Committee would like to enlist the assistance of a Financial Consultant. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she and Council Member Burns had discussed this with Council President McCarthy. She added that this was something that the constituents had been looking for this in the past. Council President McCarthy said that this project has been underway for a long time and they hoped to have someone who was qualified on board soon.

GENERAL BUDGET/CAPITAL PLAN; REVALUATION.

Mr. Nkwo said he had created a summary of the budget for the Committee members. As everyone knows that when the current administration took office, there was a \$20 million dollar shortfall. He then reviewed the details of the Executive Summary with the Committee.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview of the changes in the State motor vehicle taxes. He then noted that the staff had been receiving COLAs, but the cost of the fees had remained flat for the last nine years. Council Member Brantley asked about which fees would be changed. Mr. Nkwo said that it would be the park fees, golf course fees, parking meter fees, and building permits fees. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said any increase in the parks fees has to go through the Parks Committee. Mr. Nkwo said that the Parks Committee had already approved the fees. Council

Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked for a fee schedule. Mr. Nkwo said he would get this information to the Committee.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADD THE DOCUMENT TITLED "CITY OF BRIDGEPORT OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT AS EXHIBIT 4-7-16-1**

****COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Nkwo reminded everyone that the Governor's Budget has not been completed, so the State figures are not firm. He added the reason that the building permit fees had decreased was because the City will not be building new schools every year. He said the reduction in the building permit fees will be made up by the increase in the City fees. Mr. Nkwo said that the proposed resident I.D. Program had \$200,000 allocated but the program was not going to be done at this time.

Council Member Banta left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

The Committee then turned to page 44 in the budget book where the PILOT payments were listed. Mr. Nkwo said that the figure was from the State Budget, but there is always a possibility that the State could reduce the PILOT payment.

Council President McCarthy asked if there was a list of projects that may require building permits during the coming year. Mr. Nkwo said that he would ask for a listing from the Building Department.

Council Member Feliciano asked what happened to the \$200,000 for the Resident I.D. Program. Mr. Nkwo said that the \$200,000 was the amount the Resident I.D. Program expected to realize in revenue. Since the program was never initiated, there was no revenue.

The Committee then reviewed the expenditures. Mr. Nkwo gave an overview of the various salary increases and the union contracts that were not settled at this time. Mr. Flatto then gave a brief summary of how the MERF plan works and announced that the City's share of the MERF payment was about \$1.2 or \$1.3 million a month.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked what would significantly reduce this number. Mr. Nkwo said if the Police and Fire reduced their overtime, it would come down.

Council Member Olson asked if the current retirement plan was sustainable. He said he had heard that the plan was unsustainable. Mr. Nkwo said that for the next 27 years, the City was obligated to pay the State \$8 million for MERF because the Police and Fire included the overtime. In the past their pensions were not based on their overtime, just their base salary. When the City moved the Police and Fire over to MERF, the City owes the back overtime for the employees who were already enrolled.

Mr. Flatto said that this year will be the worse year in terms of MERF payments because last year, the MERF payment was not allocated. He went on to give an overview of the issues

involved with the three Pension Plans and stated that Plan A was only funded to about 30%, which is a problem. One factor is that the longevity for the individuals in Plan A has increased. Another factor was the recession in 2008. Last year, the City did not include payments for the Plan A pensions.

Mr. Flatto said that Board of Fire Commissioners sent a letter to OPM to remind them to fund the pension. He added that when the Pensions Bonds matures, the interest payments will decrease. Mr. Nkwo said that when the City bonded for Pension Plan A, the interest on the rate of return was about 9%. However, the interest rates dropped significantly.

The discussion then moved to the police and fire payouts. Mr. Nkwo said that these items have been part of the union contracts for years. The Health Insurance costs will be increased by \$1.7 million this year. Due to the fact that the number of claims this past year remained low, the increase is modest. However, the prescription program has increased dramatically nationwide.

Mr. Nkwo said that currently, the City Attorney's Office has depleted the budget for City Claims already.

While the City had a good winter, the cost of the utilities has been reduced, but the cost of the water and electricity has increased.

The Fund Balance was the next topic that the Council considered. Mr. Flatto summarized the reasons for the Fund Balance and how it was used. He explained that there were no payments put into the Fund Balance for the last few years. The Fund Balance was being used to balance the City's Budget.

Council Member Brantley said that her taxes has increased over the years and it seems that the tax increases were in vain. She asked to see the reasons why the payments weren't made. Mr. Nkwo said that the reasons were outlined in the City's audits.

Mr. Nkwo then said that the Library is allocated 1 mill of the City budget. Previously, that was \$6.9 million but it is now \$5.8 million. So the library was forced to cut their budget and the different goes back into the City Fund. Mr. Nkwo then pointed out that the Debt Service was decreasing by \$1 million dollars.

Mayor Ganim is planning to reduce the FY 17 budget by \$5 million dollars through union concessions, re-organizations and attrition. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the \$5 million is not a firm number because the contracts negotiations.

Council Member Martinez left the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked for clarification on the line items where it involved FY16. Mr. Nkwo indicated where those items were located and explained the reasons.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked why the BOE budget was not included in the City Budget and wanted to know how much the City would be allocating the BOE. Mr. Nkwo said that the

City was obligated by State Law to give a certain amount of money to the BOE. The ECS funding comes from the State and passes through the City to the BOE.

Council Member Casco left the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the in-kind services. Mr. Nkwo then gave a summary of those types of arrangements, such as School Crossing Guards.

Council Member Olson said that the BOE needs \$15 million dollars to maintain the level of service that they currently have. Mr. Nkwo said that the City only has so much money. Council Member Olson said that he was deeply concerned that the educational services will suffer with these budgets.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there was no set amount of personnel in the book for the School Crossing Guards because they come and go.

Mr. Flatto then gave an overview of the upcoming Re-evaluation that was outlined on page 10 of the Budget Book. He then distributed copies of a document titled "Reassessment Grand List Summary Information".

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADD A DOCUMENT TITLED "REASSESSMENT GRAND LIST SUMMARY INFORMATION (2 UNSTATED PAGES) AS EXHIBIT 4-7-16-2**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Flatto gave an overview of the re-evaluation process and said that municipalities that have already done re-evaluations have actually seen a drop in the value of the real estate, but the market is firming up. The grand list in 2003 was much lower than it was in 2008. He explained that there were no major swings in the Citywide amounts. Mr. Flatto said that he had asked for a listing of the properties that dropped more than 5%, 10%, 15% or more. He said that he would supply the Committee members with this information. He then explained how this would affect the mill rate.

There are two items on the Grand List that are assessed every year, which are the car taxes and the personal property. During the recession, many people did not purchase new cars. However, the used car market has remained stable. The State legislation will reduce the amount of car taxes, but the State will reimburse the City for this.

Personal property is business property, such as machines, and even the pipes in the building. That has increased to about 12% this year. This is because some of the utilities have significantly upgraded their facilities. The mill rate change will be offset because the City raised a major portion last year.

The five factors for the mill rate are:

- The grand list

- The Tax Collection rate (historically about 97.5%)
- Senior Tax Relief
- The adjustment of the two tier car tax
- The re-evaluation

Council President McCarthy asked if Mr. Flatto has a sense of what the percentage that would be the middle ground. Mr. Flatto said that the break even percentage would be about 15%.

Council Member Brantley asked how a homeowner could find out how much their property was worth. Mr. Flatto said that right now because the State Budget was such a wild card it was hard to tell, but in two or three weeks, the figures will be firmer.

Mr. Nkwo pointed out that there were two factors that changed. The 32 mills for vehicles is State mandated. The re-evaluation will be different.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that the Mayor was going to ask for concessions from the unions. She said that she was not pleased that the people who make very little were going to be losing their jobs. Mr. Nkwo said that the City does not negotiate with the BOE unions.

Mr. Flatto said that Board of Assessment Appeals was holding their hearings with home owners who think their assessments are incorrect.

Council Member Brantley asked how the businesses that are not documented are assessed. Mr. Flatto said that he and the Assessor's Office have been discussing this issue. Mr. Flatto said that Atty. Liskov was working on this and also working on helping business owners pay their delinquent taxes.

Council Member Burns asked for a list of the jobs that have been eliminated. Council Member Brantley said that there had been a request for a list of the new hires. Mr. Nkwo made a note of this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about business vehicles that have parking on the street. She said that during the day, the businesses use magnetic sign and then take them off at night. There are also vehicles that have out of state plates parking on residential streets. Mr. Flatto said that there was a company that working on this.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the booting practices. Mr. Flatto said that when the vehicle taxes drop, it take a higher amount of delinquent taxes due before a vehicle is booted.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 11, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-Chair; Scott Burns, Co-Chair; M. Evette Brantley, Anthony Paoletto, Jose Casco; Council President Thomas McCarthy, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (6:20); Aidee Nieves (6:25 p.m.)

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; John Gomes, CAO; Angel dePara, CAO's Office

OTHERS: Council Member Richard Salter, Council Member Jack Banta, Council Member Milta Feliciano; Tammy Papa, Lighthouse Program; Albertina Baptista, John Marshall Lee, Beth Lazar

CALL TO ORDER

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

**HEALTH/SOCIAL SERVICES; GENERAL BUDGET/CAPITAL
PLAN DISCUSSION.**

Ms. Baptista came forward and presented an organization chart for the Committee's review. She spoke about the Mosquito Control Program and its relationship to the community's health and safety. There were over six case of West Nile virus reported in Bridgeport.

The Lighthouse Program is working on a mosquito bite prevention educational program for the parents and the students. The WPCA and the DEEP have a larvicide program for the catch basins.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER THE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART AS EXHIBIT 4-11-16-1.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Brantley asked about the differences of the salary for Housing Code and Environmental Department figures on page 286. Mr. Nkwo replied that the difference was due to extra duty pay. Ms. Baptista added that a Master's in Public Health was required for the Public Health Director while other positions in areas such as Housing Code required experience in the trades rather than degrees.

Mr. Nkwo pointed out that the \$46,000 in the Mayor's proposed budget was significantly different from the recent past.

Council Member Brantley asked about the Environmental Health Revenue projections on page 290 compared to the payment of the employees of various departments. The Committee would like to have a comparison of the positions with Fairfield, New Haven, etc. in order to make sense of the positions vs. the salaries.

Council President McCarthy noted that there had been a loss of the Public Health nurse, but it was not clearly noted on page 282.

Mr. Nkwo said that the Vital Statistics position had been moved from Archives on page 67. The salary for the Archivist position has been reduced and the position moved from the Personnel Summary.

Council President McCarthy said that there were certain salaries that had been reduced already and these salaries are not among the \$5 million dollars in anticipated concessions that the unions will need to weigh in on.

Mr. Nkwo said that he had used the same format as in the past for the purpose of comparison, but planned to change the format in the future.

Council President McCarthy requested the co-chairs to get a list of the personnel/departmental changes from OPM.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the previously request at the last meeting for a list of personnel changes.

Council President McCarthy pointed out that two years ago, the administration had placed a similar \$2 million dollar anticipated savings/concession in the budget. Mr. Nkwo pointed out that Labor Relations would be responsible for negotiating with the unions.

Council Member Brantley asked whether or not the budgeted salaries had already been changed. Mr. Nkwo stated that this had not been done yet and the “extra duty agreements” were intended to balance work of the assigned duties. Council President McCarthy pointed out that the “extra duty agreements” can be terminated and have been in the past; as they have with grant related work. There was a concern that the salaries were being reduced without union agreement. Council Member Taylor-Moye asked if the salaries could be reduced before the Labor Relations discussions with the various labor unions.

Mr. Nkwo pointed out that the salary for Vital Statistics is \$67,000 per the job title requirements but the \$75,000 salary includes Archival work. Council Member Feliciano asked whether the staff member had agreed to the \$75,000 salary. Mr. Nkwo replied that the employee hadn't because this will be negotiated. Council Member Feliciano asked if the figure would change. Mr. Nkwo said that it would.

Council Member Casco asked how many staff members were in this type of position. Mr. Nkwo said that there were probably 8 or 9 employees affected. He pointed out that the administration reduced salaries and that it will be important for the Committee not to maintain the salaries that are \$100,000 or higher. Discussion followed.

Council Member Brantley asked if the salary changes have taken place. Mr. Nkwo said that the extra duty position has been enacted per the changes. He pointed out that NAGE, LIUNA, and the Supervisor's Unions all have different positions linked to them.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked if enough cuts had been made. Mr. Nkwo said that the City still needed \$5 million dollars.

Copies of a list for the Building Fees from Bruce Nelson were then distributed to the Committee members.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVE TO ENTER THE LIST OF BUILDING FEES AS EXHIBIT 4-11-16-2.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council President McCarthy pointed out that there was a nursing position cut in Environmental on page 282 and asked for the rationale. Mr. Nkwo said that this was a result of the attempt to reduce the \$20 million dollar deficit. Council President McCarthy asked if it was loss of grant funding or a reason for a change. Ms. Baptista said that she would look into this and get the information to the Committee.

Mr. Nkwo said that Blight had been moved into Housing Code to conform with "One call can do it all" goal and since both Blight and Housing Code both have to respond to the complaints. Council President McCarthy had several detailed questions regarding the changes in the budget on page 290 due to the transfer of Blight from Public Facilities and OPED to Housing Code and which Blight positions were currently filled. Mr. Nkwo said that he would get a list of the personnel positions for the Committee.

Council Member Feliciano asked where the revenue from Blight went and where it was noted in the Budget. Council Member Brantley asked if the fines were turned into credit. Ms. Baptista explained that Housing Code did the work and that some appeals were granted. Mr. Nkwo explained that the funds were put in a fund for Housing Code costs and that Housing Code had the final authorization along with OPED. It is expected that \$500,000 should be in the fund in a few years.

Council Member Vizzo-Panicca said that in the past few years, the funds went into the General Fund with the understanding that it would be available to Blight when needed.

Council Member Feliciano had many questions regarding the Assistant positions on pages 300, 302, 310. It was noted that the Deputy CAO position was removed, along with the position of Deputy HRD. Mr. Nkwo explained that the position had been funded this way for this budget year and the last year for reasons that he did not know. Council Member Feliciano wished to know why the HRD was listed under Social Services and not under Human Service on page 300. Ms. Baptista said that the HRD position was via the courts and a union position. Discussion followed.

Council President McCarthy said that there were 2 positions on page 302 and wished to know if they were filled. He also asked about the discrepancy in the salaries. He also wished to know why the Director of Social Services position was not filled for a city the size of Bridgeport.

The discussion moved to the possibility of covering that salary with grant funding and what additional grants were handled under Social Services. Council President McCarthy said that he was all for centralized growth but the Social Services Department does a lot of great work. Mr. Nkwo said that the grants were being pursued and that information on the grants available for Social Services would be provided. Council President McCarthy reiterated that the City needs a Social Service Director.

Council Member Brantley asked who was helping with the Social Services needs now. Ms. Baptista said that the Relocation Specialist is covering the job right now and Human Services will be working with the Veterans.

Council Member Feliciano asked about a vacant position on page 310. Ms. Papa confirmed that the position was indeed vacant. A discussion followed about the details including the “extra duty agreement” and the impact it had on the department along with the projected salaries.

Council Member Feliciano also expressed concern about the potential loss of grant money because of the vacant position.

Council President McCarthy asked if all the “extra duty agreements” had been eliminated. Mr. Nkwo said that he believed they had, but that the Committee needed to check with Labor Relations about that.

Council President McCarthy had some questions regarding the Deputy CAO that was associated with the Lighthouse Program and the possible link to the educational budget. He was told that the current employee had no link to the education budget and has been moved to the CAO office.

Ms. Papa confirmed that the position did not tie into the education fund. Council President McCarthy asked if the Deputy CAO position was filled. Mr. Nkwo said that it was. Council President McCarthy then asked what the purpose of the Deputy CAO position was. Mr. Nkwo said that this would be determined by the CAO.

Council President McCarthy requested clarification on the Assistant Special Project Manager as listed on page 310. This position is now in the Small Minority Business Office. A discussion followed about that position along with the Director of GOD as listed on page 107. Ms. Papa said that she had wanted these two position transferred out of the department because the staff were not working on Lighthouse programs or functions.

Council Member Paoletto said that the Youth Program Manager was not a City employee. Ms. Papa replied that this was correct and added that there were only two people, an administrator and herself. There are also two other positions that are not paid with City funding.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVE TO ENTER TWO DOCUMENTS AS EXHIBITS 4-11-16-3 AND 4-11-16-3.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Papa said that the State wants to make sure that the function of the Youth Program Manager is fulfilled. The position is currently not filled. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the employee had been laid off.

Council President McCarthy pointed out that the Lighthouse Program has received national awards and was recognized by the NLC Cities program after the audit for the program was completed. This program is the best in the nation, but it would be counterintuitive to cut positions in a program that literally save lives. Council Member Brantley agreed and said that the Committee should see what they could do to fill the positions and restore the program.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that it would be important not to jeopardize the State or Federal funding or create negative publicity.

Council Member Feliciano asked how quickly the Committee would receive responses.

Council Member Brantley asked about fees for the Lighthouse. Ms. Papa said that there was a Special Revenue Account for the funds and the City does not have access. Each week, the account is balanced through MUNIS. Mr. Nkwo said that this was the best way to run the program.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 12, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-Chair; Scott Burns, Co-Chair; M. Evette Brantley, Anthony Paoletto, Jose Casco; Council President Thomas McCarthy, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia; Aidee Nieves (6:25 p.m.)

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ken Flatto, Finance Director

OTHERS: Council Member Jack Banta, Council Member John Olson; Joe Tiago, Public Facilities; John Ricci, Public Facilities Director; Steven Hladen, Parks Department; Luanne Conine, Daniel Roach, CAO's Office; John Gomes, CAO; Angel dePara, CAO's Office; John Urquidi, Paul Catino, Council Member Eneida Martinez (6:51 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Burns called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m. A quorum was present.

Council Member Burns said that before the Committee started the work on the agenda, Mr. Flatto wished to update them on some late breaking news regarding the State budget. Mr. Flatto came forward and said that Governor Malloy had proposed a second round of revisions to the State budget. There has been talk about cutting the ECS funding to 139 towns. The larger cities such as Hartford, Stamford, New Haven, and Bridgeport may receive ECS funding but it was unclear as to what that amount would be. There was also mention of a potential cut in the PILOT payments and car taxes to the tune of \$18 million dollars. Mr. Flatto said that there were still many uncertainties about these proposed cuts and that the legislature had not yet reviewed the changes and proposed cuts.

Council Member Nieves joined the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked Mr. Nkwo for a large print edition of the Budget book for Council Member Taylor-Moye. Mr. Nkwo said that a staff member was working on producing it but that it involves a great deal of re-formatting.

Council President McCarthy said that regarding the proposed cuts that Mr. Flatto had just spoken about, it would be important to remember that legislature had not yet reviewed the proposals.

PUBLIC FACILITIES/PARKS

Mr. Ricci said that when he took over the Public Facilities Department following the change in administration, he restructured the department. He said that they restructured personnel to the

level where they could still function and provide services at the existing level. He said that the document that was before the Committee outlined their efforts to do that.

Council Member Brantley asked Mr. Ricci to list what positions were eliminated. Mr. Ricci said that the Director of Parks was eliminated, the two Deputy Directors, the Superintendent of Operations at the Airport, the Airport Foreman, the Supervisor for the Runway, and a Data Coordinator that was replaced with a grant funded position for \$32,000. Council Member Brantley asked when that would start. Mr. Ricci said that it would start on July 1st, the same as the Finance Coordinator for the Parks Department. He said that the department has saved \$53,000 by using grant funding which has already kicked in. Council Member Brantley asked where the grant funding was coming from. Mr. Ricci said that it was a CDBG grant. Mr. Hladen then gave the details for the PY42. This is listed on page 218. The CDBG funding has not gone through the public hearing process yet, but they fully expected that the grant application would be approved.

Council Member Brantley asked what would happen if the CDBG grant funding was not approved. Mr. Ricci said that the backup plan would be to move the employee to a vacant Parks position of Golf Course Manager listed on page 230. Mr. Ricci said that the employee was a Yale graduate and losing him would be a great loss to the City. Council Member Brantley asked how long the City employee had been in the position of Financial Coordinator. Mr. Ricci checked and said that it was since June of 2015.

Council Member Brantley pointed out that the grant funding would only be for a year. Mr. Ricci agreed that this was so. Council Member Brantley asked if this was the only grant funded position. Mr. Ricci said that it was and that the other positions that he would be mentioning would be eliminated.

The discussion then moved to the elimination of a Custodian IV position on pg. 162. Council Member Brantley wished to know what the difference was in the various levels of Custodial positions. Mr. Ricci explained that a Custodian IV was a supervisor's position. Custodian I, II and III have different levels of responsibility. Mr. Nkwo pointed out that these were union positions and would get union wage increases as of July 1st. Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the positions that were being kept. Mr. Ricci said that most of the City buildings don't need to have a Custodian IV supervisor. Maintainer IV positions are for the schools.

Council President McCarthy pointed out that the Department had massive cuts and that most of the public interacts with Public Facilities. They were eliminating the Parks Director and Parks Assistant Director. Mr. Ricci explained that every Deputy Director position eliminated would save 2 or 3 lower positions. The staff has stepped up to fill the gap.

Council President McCarthy commented that when Mr. Carroll had taken over the Parks Department, he had increased the revenue significantly by plugging the holes. He asked if the current revenue that the Parks Department had brought in would continue. Mr. Ricci said that Mr. Carroll had done a good job of plugging the holes and that he had left behind the formula to continue to do so. It was pointed out that many of the previous seasonal workers have re-applied for positions.

Council President McCarthy said that one of the positions that had been eliminated was that of Senior Office Manager on page 148. Mr. Ricci said that he would like to have that position reinstated.

Council Member Martinez joined the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

Mr. Ricci said that eliminating this position was a tremendous loss because the employee supervised between 8 and 10 employees and help him manage routine tasks. A discussion followed regarding the details of this position in relation to Civil Service and the union.

Council President McCarthy asked about the Maintenance Supervisor and wanted to know who was managing the issues regarding energy use. Mr. Ricci said that the Data Coordinator will be taking on some of the responsibilities and that Mr. Flatto, as the Finance Director, will be responsible for purchasing the blocks of energy. Mr. Nkwo said that he had also had experience in purchasing futures. Council President McCarthy said that this was what he was concerned about.

Council President McCarthy also wished to know what the future was for Pleasure Beach. Mr. Hladen replied that the staff was busy preparing for the season with the water taxis and hours of operation. Most of the staff for this are seasonals.

Council President McCarthy said that the City didn't want to charge people for the use of water taxis. Mr. Ricci said that they would be charging out of towners and Mr. Nkwo has been working on developing the fees.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the former employee who had been working on the energy issues had saved the City significant amounts of money. He had also established contacts with the various energy companies, so that when street lights went out, they were repaired quickly. Mr. Ricci said that this was true and that a monthly meeting had been established to discuss utilities. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked for a chain of command listing so that when there were requests, they would be routed to the right staff member. Mr. Ricci said that he would post this on the website. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia requested that it be given directly to the Council Members. Mr. Ricci made a note of this.

Regarding Pleasure Beach, Ms. Conine pointed out that the City has two life guards out at the beach. Council Member Paoletto commented that the first year that Pleasure Beach was open, both water taxis were heavily used. The second year, there was not as many people going out there. He then asked if they should continue to run two boats. Mr. Hladen made a note of this.

Council Member Brantley asked about the Golf Course Manager. A discussion followed about the details of the job and the use of CDBG funding. Mr. Ricci said that he could transfer the employee right away.

Council Member Brantley asked if all the schools had Custodian IVs on staff. Mr. Ricci said that the larger schools did but those positions were handled by the BOE.

Council Member Brantley asked if the Department had started hiring local youth for the summer positions. Ms. Conine explained that they were re-hiring many of the people from last year but said that they had been taking in applications since January. Mr. Ricci said that anyone interested in seasonal work should apply to Civil Service.

Council Member Olson said that these massive cuts addressed the situation left by the previous administration that was very top heavy. Mr. Ricci explained that the massive cuts were done in response to the \$20 million dollar deficit.

Council Member Olson pointed out that the State budget problems won't be going away and wondered if the City should continue to maintain the golf course, the zoo, the airport and Pleasure Beach. Mr. Ricci said that the Airport Commission had just appointed a new manager for the facility, and eventually may let the State take it over. He said that there had been some discussion regarding selling Pleasure Beach.

The Golf Course will be raising their fees and since Mr. Hladen has managed it, the revenues have increased. Mr. Steve Roach, who is with First Tee, gave an overview of that program and how it will work with the City.

Council Member Martinez said that she would like to give credit to the administration for putting this budget together and that she had not seen the previous Council members grilling the various Departments about the finances like this. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia disagreed and said that the past Council Members had asked for similar information and worked very hard on the budget. She also stated that she was not in favor of the City selling its assets.

Council Member Brantley said that she had always asked questions in the Budget & Appropriations Committee and that she was also very passionate about the parks. She said that Pleasure Beach had historical value, particularly to the African American community. She added that the African American community used Pleasure Beach a lot and that when the bridge burned, it affected the African American community. Council Member Brantley concluded her remarks by saying that she was not in favor of selling the beach.

Council Member Casco asked about potentially raising the fees for the parks. Mr. Ricci said that once the repairs are completed at the Airport, the fees will be raised. It would not be wise to do so now, with one of the runways shut down since September. Mr. Nkwo said that all of the fees were increased in 2008. There is a lot of work involved because the changes have to go through various committees for approval.

Council Member Casco asked about the public services such as Seaside Park. Mr. Nkwo said that the Parks Committee had approved raising the fees from \$10 to \$15. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the Committee did not have a copy of this information. Mr. Nkwo handed out copies of two documents: the City of Bridgeport Parks and Recreation Fees and the Golf Course Proposed Rates.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED CITY OF BRIDGEPORT PARKS AND RECREATION FEES AS EXHIBIT # 4-12-16-1.
** COUNCIL MEMBER NIEVES SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED GOLF COURSE PROPOSED RATES AS EXHIBIT # 4-12-16-2.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Martinez wished to know how much money the City saved by using the Construction Manager Services listed on page 148. Mr. Ricci said that the Construction Managers were given office space and were actually billing the City. This office was shut down in December and the work was brought in house. The outside firm billed the City for \$119,000, but the Department is refusing to pay the bill because there is no evidence of work that has been done. Discussion followed.

Mr. Ricci said that demolishing a building costs about \$90,000, but that the City can do it for \$15,000 to \$20,000 per building.

Council President McCarthy asked for more information about the proposed driving range. Mr. Roach explained that most of the revenue pays for his salary. He added that the driving range in Stamford pulls in about \$700,000/yr. Discussion followed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that getting approval for the driving range would have to also go through Fairfield. Mr. Roach said that if the project was approved, the company would be responsible for obtaining the permits.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked how the Senior programs were going. Ms. Conine said that there was good participation. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the programs were being advertised all over the City. Ms. Conine replied that they were. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the program was still providing transportation to events. Ms. Conine said that they were and added that recently the seniors had attended a speed dating event.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the Chore program. Ms. Conine said that this had been handled through the Department of Aging and that it had been cut from the budget three years ago. Mr. Ricci said that he would like to have it noted that Ms. Conine and the other staff spend a great deal of time, including week-ends, making sure that the programs run well.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that the programs were great and that she would be joining shortly since it was her birthday. Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the Downtown Thursday program and if the BBQ event was still going to be held. Ms. Conine said it was because she didn't want a riot on her hands. The Downtown Thursday program was handled by another organization. Council Member Paoletto said that the Department was doing a great job with the youth, the seniors and the veterans.

Council President McCarthy asked Mr. Urquidi about the eliminated Engineer position. Mr. Urquidi said that the position had been funded for last year. He added that there were several large projects coming through and his department would be involved.

Council Member Nieves asked for clarification on the Seasonal Maintainers I and II. Mr. Nkwo said that these were part time employees and that Grade I was basically a helper, while Grade II required a CDL. Council Member Nieves had several other questions, which Mr. Nkwo explained were union issues.

Council Member Burns asked about parking meters. He was told that a RFQ has been completed and a vendor has been selected. There are a number of decisions about the type of technology that have to be made. Another consideration is whether the City wants to set aside some of the revenue for a parking garage. The parking meters will cost more. The City can definitely do better in terms of dealing with violations, but there are other factors that will continue to be variables, such as if the City steps up on violations, fewer people may use the meters.

Council Member Martinez asked who receives the revenue. Mr. Nkwo said that Dunbar collects the money and it is then credited to the General Fund. Council Member Martinez said that she had been told that the Police Department receives that revenue. Mr. Nkwo said that the Police Department receives the revenue from traffic violations.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked where the new meters would be installed first. She was told that the vendor would determine that. Some towns change out all the meters at the same time, others do it section by section. It's up to the contractor. The meters are not free but the City wants the convenience.

Council Member Olson asked if the City could do a matching fund program with the homeowners who have sidewalks needing replacement. Mr. Ricci said that he was not sure how the program will be done, but it will be done fairly and equitably.

Council Member Olson said that he was still working on getting potholes repaired. Mr. Catino said that the Department was still determining how much funding was in the budget for paving. Mr. Ricci asked all the Council Members to compile a list of the streets that the department needs to review for repairs.

Council Member Burns thanked the staff for coming to the meeting and answering questions.

RECESS

Council Member Burns announced a recess at 8:12 p.m. He reconvened the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

CAPITAL PLAN DISCUSSION

Mr. Nkwo distributed copies of a document titled "Fiscal Year 2017 Proposed Capital Plan" to those present and gave a brief overview of the document.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "FISCAL YEAR 2017 PROPOSED CAPITAL PLAN" AS EXHIBIT # 4-12-16-3.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council President McCarthy said that the City is required by law to have a 5 year Capital Plan regardless of whether they ultimately authorize of the items in the future. When the various projects are authorized, the City can go out for bonding. When the bond is approved, the City receives the amount bonded and then can use the funds for any approved and authorized project listed on the Capital Plan. The administration can also combine approved and authorized projects, but they cannot use the money for any project that has not been approved and authorized. Mr. Ricci commented that it would be important to remember that some of the various projects only have part of the cost of the project listed. Discussion followed about the details.

Council President McCarthy asked if the items on the BOE Capital Project list were from the BOE. Mr. Nkwo said that the BOE had expanded the design of the project for extra capacity. He added that hopefully, those projects will be useful for 25 years. The projects are in compliance with the State guidelines.

The discussion then move to the details of the Bassick High School project.

Council President McCarthy then asked about the Public Facilities Vehicles and Equipment. Mr. Catino said that the requests were not a wish list but a listing of vehicles and equipment that will need to be replaced within the next three years.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED “CAPITAL BUDGET REQUEST AND FIVE YEAR PLAN” AS EXHIBIT # 4-12-16-4.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Olson left the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Council President McCarthy asked for information on the Ballpark and the Arena. Mr. Ricci indicated where that information was located in the documents.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia had some questions about the parks in general and Veteran’s Park in particular. Mr. Hladen said that the trails always need improvement. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the park needed some kind of emergency call system and that the wall should be repaired.

Council Member Paoletto asked if the ferry terminal was for the Port Jefferson ferry or the high speed ferry. Mr. Ricci said that it was designed to handle both ferries. He explained that the permits for the dock were underway and that the dock that is being proposed will handle both types of ferries. Once the dock is in place, an RFQ will be issued for the high speed ferry. Council Member Burns asked if that would happen in the next two or three years. Mr. Ricci said that the group is moving ahead at its own pace and that both the DEEP and ACOE would be involved in the project.

Council Member Nieves said that it had been her understanding that once Steel Point was developed, that the ferry would move there. Mr. Ricci explained that there were two different projects going on and that the one being discussed was a project involving the ferry company.

Council Member Burns asked if the City was bonding for 20 years on police vehicles. He said that he could understand long term bonding on something like a fire engine but not on something like a patrol car. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details with him.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the NRZs and pointed out that her district did not have one. She asked if there were any improvements planned for her district. Mr. Ricci asked to her give him an idea of what her district needed. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there were sections of Districts 133 and 135 along with a few other Districts that had several different types of lighting fixtures. She said that they should all be consistent.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the comments she had heard indicating that the NRZs were supposed to become independent of the City. Mr. Roach said that was the original goal for them. Mr. Nkwo said that Ginne-Rae Clay is responsible for overseeing the NRZs. He made a note to check with Ms. Clay about the status of the NRZs.

Council Member Burns asked how much paving work should the Council Members expect would be done. Mr. Ricci said that they would be asking each Council Member for a list of streets that need attention in each of the Districts. The staff will review each street for potential paving. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the City could use some airport grade asphalt on the City streets. Mr. Ricci explained that the airport grade asphalt is designed to withstand the impact of large objects landing on it. It does not work as well on regular city streets. Mr. Tiago pointed out that many of the problems were because the streets no longer have good bases and that often the deep base cracks were simply paved over rather than repaired. Unless the base issues are addressed, it won't matter what kind of asphalt is used on the surface.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 13, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-Chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; José Casco, Aidee Nieves; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Council President Thomas McCarthy

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Angel dePara, CAO's Office.

OTHERS: Council Member John Olson, Council Member Richard Salter, John Marshall Lee; Council Member Michelle Lyons (6:19 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Burns called the public hearing to order at 6:12 p.m. A quorum was present. He introduced the Council Members and staff members present.

Capital Plan Hearing

Mr. John Marshal Lee came forward to address the Committee about the Capital Budget.

Council Members, Charter Chapter 9 covers Budget and Fiscal controls. Section 6 addresses the Capital Budget where Section 6 instructs you: “*The city council shall solicit suggestions, comments and recommendations from city officials and the members of the public regarding the proposed capital budget and shall conduct at least one public hearing.*” Historically, there has not been such a meeting annually in the past eight years. Look at the old records to assist your memories. When did you formally “solicit suggestions” through legal notices, comments to constituents or in social media? If you think you have done so, where are the people of Bridgeport tonight? Who is failing whom? How do you restore trust in this Council body?

On Monday evening I attended your Budget session for its duration and raised my hand to ask one question. I was informed that as a group you have decided not to allow public input on any evening at which you hear from Departments, enter into broader discussions, receive additional information from departments including Finance and OPM that you mark as exhibits, and begin to form impressions of what your response will be. Instead, as in past years you will channel all public comment into one, two or three sessions to “hear” your public. And at those meetings you will make no response for reasons that only you know in your hearts and heads. But I suggest that it is patently disrespectful and the public feels it.

Perhaps your concerns are about saving time, but I believe that you purposely wish to maintain barriers to facts as to better practices, information about City miscues, and exposure to concepts other than those that you already hold. How will you extend the competency of this body? How will you keep your collective eyes on all of the revenues the City receives? How will you focus

on how many dollars are used to pay for old services including debt repayment and retirement funding for former City employees that covers no current needs?

Listening to the discussions for most of the past two evenings indicates to me that you would be assisted by:

- A listing of all departments as structured in the approved current budget with employee headings used in past budget proposals (though not last year) like FILL, VACANT, Unfilled, NEW with totals and summary including for full time pay per department would have been a helpful starting point. A “cheat sheet” if you will. A second listing would show Mayor Ganim’s budget reforms in the same fashion. Compare and contrast off the listing and use the budget book for more detail. Footnotes explaining complexities, for instance the removal of extra pay for additional duties used in the past to get around salary levels, would be used. Such a listing whether offered to you initially or requested by you subsequently would show the actual “shrinkage” or “expansion” of City payroll relative to past years.
- An addendum to the “Departmental employment listing” that would indicate where Grant revenues are used in the current year as well as contemplated in the next year to fund personnel, full time, part time or seasonal, with an indication of which Federal, State or other grant source is actually providing revenue and for what time period if other than a full fiscal year. Since Grant revenues at this time are not shown at Operating budget time or on monthly financial reports though we receive over \$200 million of such funds annually, isn’t an exhibit of their role in the City important for understanding? Why does this revenue become secret?
- A statement that you may have received but I have not seen showing where the proposed budget expenses have been projected at \$250,000 or more increase or where revenues are projected to reduce by \$250,000 relative to last year. This would keep the big picture goal in mind when it comes to budget cutting and warn you of changes that you can easily question. When the budget increases faster than the taxable grand list as has happened in past years, we go deeper into the red, with both higher overall property taxes as well as with real estate values reduced in the marketplace.
- Since tonight is intended to focus on your decision to approve more than \$40 million added debt, can you explain why you are supporting debt repayment periods longer than the “public work of a permanent nature” or “purchase of equipment of a lasting character” language of the Charter suggests? What alternatives of shorter term funding can be used to mirror the ways you purchase cars for your family? If you do not waste money on 20 year borrowing instead of 5-6 year financing, why make that decision for the City? Another information request for regular public disclosure would be that each department conducting any capital project with borrowed money will supply an Executive level summary of the funding status at least quarterly to the Budget and Appropriations Committee for monitoring. Why vote on new funds when you have no clue as to what has been happening to existing projects and funding? (Think about the illegal transfer of Capital funds from OPED last November? What have you initiated as a body to research that issue? What exists of your power to vote on transfers of funds? Do you know? Have you had such discussions for the record?

- Where is the detail for the listed Capital additions to Education, OPED, Public Safety, etc. presented in a form with quantity, time lines, nature of gain or loss from doing or ignoring for the public to consider before 20 years of debt is approved?
- For several years I have seen that the Lighthouse program spends a total amount of funds, from the City, from parent fees and from State and Federal grants on fewer than 3,000 of City youth, though there are 22,000 in the public school system. (More than \$4 Million annually for 15% of City youth is a separate question that needs an answer, but when you cannot see all the revenue sources with the Department presentation, no one would know to ask such a question.) Specifically I was concerned that the department continues to show the receipt of NO REVENUE in their department budget though their own reports indicate that parents and families pay \$850,000 of fees each year. When I pay a fee to the City Clerk office I can see that my check shows up as revenue in a monthly financial report. Why are significant amounts of fee revenues from families treated differently? It was disclosed that the fee income goes into a “special fund” rather than the General Fund so that they remain dedicated to the program, but who monitors the Fund and are there variances from year to year?
- (I have read the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report each year in recent years and can recall no specific mention of a “Lighthouse special fund”. What other accounts are used to reserve fees, fines or non-tax revenue and why is there no public accounting to B&A on a regular basis? Is this what the City is encouraging action on for “blight revenues”? The purpose in that instance seems reasonable, but where are the financial results shown for watchdogs to see?)
- Where is the June 30, 2015 FINAL monthly financial report? In the period of the past 25 years we have only seen such a report in 2013 and 2014.

Council Member Michelle Lyons joined the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

It was this document that revealed the behavior of 15 Council members who without notice, or a scheduled meeting, or minutes for their gathering, used nearly \$30,000 of taxpayer funds to personally reward local charities in an election year from the Other Services fund, though no services were received by the taxpayers, the City Council or the City itself. A final report should be automatic and it needs to follow the release of the appropriate CAFR-15 released in mid-February. Who will request the release of such report today?

- The City is underwater in its operating budget this year. Has the Council bought a bill of goods from City finance officials for years while enjoying pizza and cokes with them but shutting out any disagreeing messages from outside? As the taxable Grand list has reduced (but when does the Council reference it), the City budget continues to increase, and you will now have to wrestle with the issue of BOE 2017 operating budget shortfall of \$15 Million as you represent 10 districts with all of the 22,000 youths. What will you do? Where will you stake out territory to cut budgets? How have you bothered to inform yourselves over the years when you attend conferences that must include “budgeting” as a subject? Where can you demonstrate your learning of best practices from these stipend-funded junkets? Where are your reports posted on the City website?

The “red boots” are symbols of a City governance system that has lost its financial way. Personally I have a sense that the new administration budget has stripped away some forms of compensation, some personnel who were unnecessary to certain tasks, and eliminated some supervisory or management personnel without compromising department missions and those types of changes have been required for some time. However, the Council behavior has failed in its responsibilities:

- The lack of executive level regular reports coming to you for monitoring;
- The way you have sat for more than three years without any formal legislative assistance after the termination of your former legislative assistant (yet the City still pays someone in the City Clerk’s office who bears that title);
- Your failure to monitor existing ordinances to see where they call for specific behavior that is not happening, Ex. Stipends, purchasing, etc. Are revisions required?
- Reports at least annually, perhaps at budget time, by all Council members who have liaison responsibilities to Departments, Boards and Commissions. Why have liaisons otherwise?

The “red boots” symbols are not the fault of politics, as we have only one party in operation in the City. The fiscal failings and fault are to be blamed on people seeking an easy way at each turn, to be loved by all, and by ignoring the tough analysis for and firm representation of those who elect you, the taxpayers. Evidence some cutting behavior of your own as you compare the many “needs” in the City. State your priorities and see how the community responds. Get more people out to see you working and producing a reversal in our financial flameout. Get tired in doing the public work if you wish to gain respect as public servants. Time will tell.

Mr. Ken Flatto, the Finance Director came forward to briefly speak about the details of the bonding issue that they have to do later in the year.

Council Member Burns asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak to the Committee. He repeated his request two more times. Hearing none, Council Member Burns announced that the public hearing on the Capital funding was closed at 6:32 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NIEVES SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Budget and Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing
April 13, 2016

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 14, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-Chair; Anthony Paoletto, José Casco, M. Evette Brantley, Aidee Nieves, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (6:15 p.m.)

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ken Flatto, Finance Director (7:07 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member John Olson, Angel dePara, CAO's Office, Council Member Jack Banta, Daniel Roach, Council Member Michelle Lyons (6:30 p.m.); Council Member Jeanette Herron (7:07 p.m.), Council Member Eneida Martinez (7:07 p.m.), Council Member Milta Feliciano (7:07 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Taylor-Moye called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. A quorum was present.

CAO/OPM General Budget/Capital Plan

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "COB OPM LIST OF POSITIONS UNFOUNDED AND RE-PROGRAMMED IN FY 17 BUDGET. AS EXHIBIT #4-14-16-1**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Nkwo reviewed the budget and indicated that OPM was cutting positions to save a total of \$92,776.

Council Member Brantley asked about the different in the Managers Positions. Mr. Nkwo said that one of the staff members managed the City website to upload the budget documents in order to insure that they load properly and performs other financial duties.

Council Member Paoletto left the meeting at 6:14 p.m.

The other staff handles tasks like financial analysis or tracking requisitions.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details of the position that was re-programmed.

Council Member Olson asked about the OPM Director as listed on page 96. Mr. Nkwo explained that there were three years of increases that had not been budgeted. With the 2017 wage increases that were not included, and the changes to the Supervisor's Union contract, the figures were significantly inaccurate.

Council Member Paoletto rejoined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

The discussion then moved to how the plus and negative signs are used in the adopted budget. Mr. Nkwo said that this would be changed next year.

Council Member Brantley asked what the qualification was for the Project Managers. Mr. Nkwo said that everyone in the department had a Master's degree.

Council Member Nieves asked for more details about a new financial system on page 96. Mr. Nkwo said that MUNIS had new module. There is also a new program called "ENERGOV" that will allow the Housing Authority to photograph violations on the job site and it loads immediately into the database. He said that this would allow some positions to be eliminated by attrition.

Council Member Casco asked for clarification on the difference in the figures that were on page 96 and the changes in the job titles. Mr. Nkwo explained that the Executive Assistant had been renamed.

Council Member Paoletto left the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details with the other positions with the Committee members.

Council Member Paoletto rejoined the meeting at 6:24 p.m.

Discussion followed about the various positions that were funded and those that were not funded, along with the positions that were re-programmed.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

****COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADD COB OPM OF POSITIONS UNFUNDED AND RE-PROGRAMMED IN FY17 BUDGET AS EXHIBIT #4-14-16-2**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADD A SPREADSHEET WITH JOB TITLES LAID OFF/TERMINATED AS EXHIBIT #4-14-16-3**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Olson asked what the difference between the positions that were Laid Off and those that were terminated. Mr. Nkwo said that there were some positions where the person had left because of the change of administration, there were others where the employee had been laid off due to budget issues and others where the employee had been fired for reasons. He said that Ms. Hawkins in Labor Relations would be able to address the issue properly.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that Ms. Hawkins, the Labor Relations Director, should be present if the Committee was going to discuss job terminations or lay-offs.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS COUNCIL BUSINESS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NIEVES SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Committee Members and all Council Member present entered into Executive Session to discuss Council Business at 6:47 p.m. They returned to Public Session 7:07 p.m.

Council Member Herron, Council Member Martinez, Council Member Feliciano and Mr. Flatto joined the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that the Committee would like to have Ms. Hawkins present on April 21st. Mr. Nkwo made a note of it.

Council Member Lyons asked how many people were in the OPM. Mr. Nkwo replied that there were six employees. He reviewed the details with her.

Council Member Martinez asked for clarification on some of the positions on page 96. Mr. Nkwo explained the details.

Council Member Feliciano asked why there was an OPM manger in OPM and one in the Grants Department. Mr. Nkwo said that he did not know why the position in grants was called that. Council Member Feliciano asked whether the grant Funding OPM Analyst was working for OPM. Mr. Nkwo said that he did not know who the employee was and that employee does not report to him. Mr. Gomes explained that the Financial Analysis in Grants oversees the Grant funding and insuring that the City has the matching funding along with insuring the funding is handled correctly. Council Member Feliciano said that she wanted to make sure that OPM Analysis in Central Grant was not being overpaid and that the salary was justified. She said that it would be important to make sure that the City was not paying a OPM Budget Analyst in Central Grants on a lower scale than an OPM Analysis the OPM. The salary was \$37,000. Mr. Nkwo said that the position was Part Time. Council Member Lyons pointed out that the employee had been laid off. Council Member Feliciano repeated her concern. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that the Full Time would be \$74,000. Mr. Gomes both pointed out that there were other factors such as education. It was also pointed out that the position was in Central Grants, not OPM. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that Council Member Burns had sent in two questions via email. The first one was regarding the impact on Operations with the change in Personnel where there was the loss of two positions and but adding in an Office Specialist and also whether or not this was the current status. Mr. Nkwo said that this was something that the Labor Relations Department would have to address with the unions.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that Council Member Burns' second question had to do with page 86 and referenced Item 6. There was a reference to a Finance System in the narrative, and Council Member Burns wished to know what the details were; if the system was operational; whether there would be any impact for the public on written documents and if there was any cost or relation to the Open Bridgeport Project. Mr. Nkwo said that the system was the ENERGOV program that he had talked about earlier. It does support Open Bridgeport. The administration is looking at different vendors to see what they have to offer. Once a vendor is selected, the Council Members will be informed. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it should be open to all 20 Council Members and it should come to the Committees, so that it be released as a proper vendor. Mr. Nkwo said that all the vendor will most likely be just doing a demo on one day.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she would like Mr. Nkwo to relay the questions to Labor Relations.

Council Member Martinez said that she was confused about the listings on the lay-offs and terminations and the positions that were reprogrammed. She asked whether there were new positions on the list. Mr. Nkwo explained The Executive Secretaries had been re-programmed with lower salaries. The titles have changed, but it is contingent upon an agreement between the labor unions and the administration.

Council Member Lyons said that this had been a continual issue in the past with the administration and this was not supposed to be happening with this administration. It always comes back to the unions. She said that there were negotiations that had not been concluded with the unions and there were no set decisions before the budget was done. This is why she had not voted on the budget for the last five years. There are no solid answers and frequently the union members did not even know about the different positions that had been promised. She said that as far as Union 1522, there were no negotiations set for them until after the budget. Not having the negotiations completed has been a problem.

Council Member Feliciano asked how the City would justify an Office/Specialist making \$66,000 with an Office Specialist/Executive at \$53,300. Mr. Nkwo said that the administration was doing things unilaterally. Council Member Feliciano said that not according to the document, so they were not making things unilateral. Mr. Nkwo said that there were different step increases. Council Member Feliciano said that they were all in LIUNA. Mr. Nkwo said that there were some employees that were in different unions. Council Member Taylor-Moye pointed out that Mr. Nkwo was not part of the Labor Relations Department, so he would not know many of the details. She said that Labor Relations would be coming to the Committee later and that was when the questions should be asked.

Council Member Brantley pointed out that when the Budget Committee does speak to the Labor Relations Department, she would like to address the position she had spoken about earlier where someone had a Master's Degree and that Mr. Nkwo had indicated that his staff had both their undergraduate Degree and a Masters. She said that these employees were getting their salaries based on their education, but other salaries had been reduced, the salaries for individuals who had worked a long time for the City and have the seniority; who came up through the ranks and obtained their Master's for their field. That particular department is actually bringing more

revenue for the City than many others, but the salaries are now incomparable. Council Member Brantley said that she wanted the other Council Members to be aware of this. If there is going to be a discussion about transparency, then all the positions across the board needed to be reviewed. It will be important to look at this situation closely to make sure people are not being treated unfairly.

Mr. Gomes said that the administration was trying to bring a budget that was fair and equitable. He said that the administration does recognize the disparity and that there have been conversations with OPM about this. Once this budget is passed, the administration will be reviewing the figures to make sure that the salary that the administration provides reflects both the experience, the education and the qualifications. The administration also wants to make it a permanent basis because part of the impact is that many employees took on extra responsibilities, it was not done on a permanent basis.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that it was a sad scenario when the negotiations are not completed.

Council Member Lyons asked about the figures on pg 98. She wished to know what was being paid for in Travel and Catering in 2016. Mr. Nkwo said that he would get the details for the Committee.

Council Member Lyons asked unused vacation payroll for 2015. Mr. Nkwo said that he was not in the department at that time. Council Member Lyons objected because the 2017 year was 0. Mr. Nkwo said that it was paid out on a City wide account through Benefits. Mr. Flatto said that when someone retires, there was a pay-out. Mr. Nkwo indicated where the account information was on pg 87 and when someone retires, it was charged out to the individual department in 2005. However now it paid out of a general account. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that Council Member Burns had some questions for Mr. Gomes about the changes in Personnel regarding the loss of 1 1/2 positions but there were also four new positions including Deputy Chiefs CAO; a Project Manager; an Assistant Project Manger; and an Office Specialist. The CAO is listed as a currently as vacant.

Mr. Gomes said that the CAO office had nine positions and one vacancy. He then reviewed the details of each position with the Committee Members.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia requested that all the changes should be documented and copies provided to the Committee Members.

Mr. Nkwo explained how two of the positions that were moved and the reasoning for these moves. He added that when the COLA increases were calculated, the City was saving \$33,000. He said that three or four years of wage increases were not included and now they are being accounted for, it looks like a major salary increase.

Council Member Brantley said she did not know that co-chairs could email questions to their Chairs to have them asked at the meeting.

Council Member Brantley asked about a position that was in the Lighthouse that was moved from the program to the CAO. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that Ms. Papa had not wanted that positions in her program and it needed to be moved.

Council Member Brantley asked about the other positions that were moved. Mr. Nkwo said that it was a Conservation Corp and it was moved at Ms. Papa's request to the Small Minorities Businesses Department. Council Member Brantley asked if that program would be continued. Mr. Gomes said that it would be continued.

Council Member Olson said that the public has always complained that the Mayor's Office was spending too much money. It is increasing to nearly \$1 million dollars. Mr. Gomes said that there were positions such as Citistat, the Lighthouse program and other positions that were located in other departments. By relocating these positions, it resulted in savings of \$33,000. Mr. Gomes said that give much more clarity to the various positions. Mr. Gomes said that he would be creating a single sheet showing the savings. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked that the information of what the positions were and the page numbers associated. Mr. Gomes made a note on it.

Council Member Brantley said that she would like to monitor the Lighthouse Program to make sure that Ms. Papa's workload doesn't get too heavy because the program is nationally recognized for its excellence. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she would like to have Ms. Papa confirm that the positions could be moved. Mr. Nkwo made a note of it.

Council Member Lyons asked what other services were on page 102. Mr. Gomes said that this line time covers the City lobbyists, who are representing the City in Hartford.

Council Member Lyons asked what the travel expenses covered. Mr. Gomes said that it had to do with conferences. Mr. Nkwo explained that the CAO belongs to national organizations and they need to attend conferences. He added that the travel expenses also is for the entire department and when the staff has to go to Hartford or other out of town meetings, they can request mileage reimbursement.

Council Member Olson left the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

Council Member Lyons asked what the catering covered. Mr. Gomes said that it covers coffee for meetings or food for programs. Council Member Lyons said that she understood the expenses for the Mayor's Office and the CAO, but would question the line item was in other department. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that due to the MUNIS program, the line item titles were pre-programmed. Therefore Catering covered not only luncheons, but any other food items. Mr. Gomes said that with line items like this, the departments are being very cautious and the monitoring is ongoing.

A question was asked regarding an update on Citistat. Mr. Gomes said that they would be updating the data and creating metrics that would be measurable. The department is looking to

integrate Citistat into a larger program. There is also follow ups making sure that tickets are being closed properly.

Where does the Office of Governmental Accountability fit and where will it be located. Mr. Gomes said that it was still a work in progress and it would most likely be a single person. It is still in development. It depends on the approval of Ordinance. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that if there was an expense, it should be supervised by a co-committee with Budget.

A question was asked whether Open Bridgeport fit under the CAO. Mr. Gomes said that it Open Bridgeport was an application that would be maintained by the IT department would be a useful resource for Citistat to interface with and most likely would be part of the CAO's office.

The narratives in the budget book is not very informative and needs more detail. Mr. Gomes said that there were key phrases, like strategically planning that covered something like 65 different departments.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that hopefully Council Member Burns questions would be reflected in the minutes.

Council Member Nieves asked about the breakdown on page 100, with two project managers, which was re-programmed from Citistat. Mr. Gomes and Mr. Nkwo reviewed the information and Mr. Gomes said that he would provide a breakdown for the Committee. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that the information should be sent to the City Clerk's Office for distribution.

Council Member Lyons asked about two positions that were converted to a part-time position. She wished to know why these employees were not part of the staff count for the department. Mr. Nkwo explained that payroll does not recognize a part time employee as a fraction. It can only calculate the amount of hours. This is also true of seasonal employees.

Council Member Casco said that he would like to state for the record that there had been discussion about salaries and positions that had been reduced but the CAO's salaries had increased, along with Special Services. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details with the Committee. Every requisition over \$100,000 has to go through OPM for approval.

Council Member Feliciano asked how the calculations for reductions in the various positions were calculated. Mr. Nkwo said that in the monthly reports, the City is projected that there would be about a \$4 million dollar saved with the vacancies. Those savings will be used to reduce the \$20 million shortfall. The vacant positions have no medical expenses, MERF costs or other benefit costs.

Council Member Feliciano asked where the total savings would be found. Mr. Nkwo said that whatever the deficit at the end of this fiscal year would be \$5 million, the administration would have saved \$15 million dollars.

Mr. Gomes said that he would give the copies to the City Clerk's office the following day. He said that they reviewed all of the department in the City and tried to be fair with allocating the resources in the City. The administration tried to get rid of the obscurity that had been in

previous budgets. Some of the different changes such as changes in personnel will allow the administration to move forward in union negotiations. The administration is not trying to do things without the Council's consent. The administration appreciates the time that Council Members take with the budget.

Council Member Herron said that there were a number of Union positions that need to be negotiated. If the unions do not agree, she wished to know what will happen. Mr. Gomes said that the unions understand the situation and are trying to work with the administration. There is constant communication between the unions and Labor Relations.

Council Member Herron asked about the part time employees were not accounted for in the budget. Mr. Nkwo explained that the program could not provide a head count, but the funding is accounted for.

Council Member Brantley asked Mr. Gomes about the union negotiations. Mr. Gomes said that the Mayor put out a letter regarding furloughs to the unaffiliated employees. Council Member Brantley asked when the negotiations would be completed. Mr. Gomes said that the union negotiations would be completed after the budget.

Council Member Lyons asked about the status of one of the Unions currently in litigation with the City. Mr. Gomes said that it would be better to ask Ms. Hawkins.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 19, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-Chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Anthony Paoletto, Jose Casco, Aidee Nieves (7:26 p.m.); Council Member M. Evette Brantley (7:28 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council President Thomas McCarthy, Superintendent Frances Rabinowitz; Rob Traber, Maria Pereira, Albert Benejan, Karen Jackson, Chaila Robinson, Susan Powley, Rebecca Cabrera, Ellen Stewart, Giovanna Ramos, Mary Tracy, Crystal Mack, Jon Galimi, Ms. Walker-Jones, Melaysha J, Antoinette Ford, Beth Lazar; John Marshal Lee, Council Member Mary McBride-Lee; David Echeverri, Fernando Echeverri, Victoria Echeverri, Nicole Wilson, Liz Moyse, Hector Sanchez, Jim O'Donnell, Joseph Sokolopic, Dasha Spell, Tammy Boyle, Jamieca Brown, Cynthia Infante, Joanne Kennedy

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Burns called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. A quorum was present. Council Member Burns called the first speaker forward.

Superintendent Rabinowitz came forward to address the Committee. She said that the loss of teachers aides in the schools is devastating and cutting the transportation budget is unsafe. The Mayor's proposed budget was difficult to work with. She asked the Committee to help the schools with more funding. She said that the City was getting an extra \$25,000 and hoped that some of it would make its way to the District. In school suspensions and absenteeism have decreased.

Mr. Rob Traber who resides on Hale Terrace then came forward. He said that he was experiencing Deja vu all over again. He said that when his daughter was in school and he was here all the time asking for more funding. Now his daughter is grown up and he is the president of the Bridgeport Education Association. He said that the property value depends on the school systems. He said that they have never gotten the support from the City or the State. The Council needs to lead the City and the State by supporting the schools.

Ms. Maria Pereira came forward and said that former Mayor Finch and his accomplices had under-funded the BOE. She said that some of the current Council Members were also complicit. Ms. Pereira said that she had lead the campaign to identify the Council Members who did not support the funding of the school and those members were not re-elected. She then said that keeping campaign promises was important. Ms. Pereira said that the residents had voted the various Council Members into their position and could vote them out just as well. Ms. Pereira

said that she had started meeting with Mayor Ganim back in 2014 and had explained to him during the meetings about the need for more funding, but he had flat funded the schools.

Mr. Albert Benejan came forward and said that he was a Bassick graduate. He said that there had been many people who wanted to fight for the parents and that the schools needed more money to do their job.

Ms. Karen Jackson came forward and said that she had a child in the schools. She said that they needed services like snow removal, garbage removal and crossing guards. She wondered why they were being punished again and having the money taken from them. Punishing the children is terrible. Ms. Jackson said that there had been discussions about getting rid of the parent center, the paras in the classroom and various other services.

Ms. Chaila Robinson came forward and said that she was the mother of two and said that the children of Bridgeport were short-changed already. There are classes with 22 children, they are sharing workbooks and other supplies. She wanted to know how is the budget going to be cut even more when it is already low. The money is needed, but they are being told that it is needed elsewhere. The children in Stratford, Milford, Fairfield and other cities have more resources and Bridgeport's children deserve the same. It takes a village to raise a child. Do not cut their funding. She then gave an illustration of how the hand has five fingers that work together to accomplish tasks and likened the fingers to the students, the parents, the BOE, the Council and others.

Ms. Susan Powley came forward and said that she was a Bridgeport resident. Her children went through the district and now she works in the school system. She said that the changes that Superintendent Rabinowitz had made were astounding. When cuts like this happen, what happens to one happens to all. Tomorrow is lobby day in the State Capital. She said that as elected officials, she asked the Committee members to go up and represent the city.

Ms. Rebecca Cabrera, the principal of Madison School, came forward. She asked for a fully funded budget not only for her school but for the District. The school suffered the loss of seven staff members and this will start a snowball effect. It will be difficult to meet the needs of the students when the paras are eliminated. She said that the paraprofessionals are needed in the kindergarten because the children are coming to school with many needs. Her students are mainly Spanish and Latino. Many of the parents have limited English. Some of the staff are critical because the staff help with translation.

Ms. Ellen Stewart, a Special Education teacher came forward and said that she had 21 Special Education students to provide for in 32 hours a week. The paraprofessionals help to provide services to the students. Many of the resource teachers don't have a room to work in and have to find a spot in the cafeteria, or some other corner. The Board needs more funding and the teachers have 29 students in the classroom. This means that the teachers have to work harder. The younger children need more support and instruction.

Ms. Giovanna Ramos came forward and said that she was the assistant principal at Madison School. If the cuts go into effect, then they will lose a valuable staff member who speaks English, Spanish and Portuguese. Mental health issues are on the rise and the staff does not

know how they will be able to meet this need. Many of the students need to learn skills such as tying shoelaces and putting their jackets on. She wanted to know how the staff would meet those needs.

Ms. Mary Tracy came forward and said that her daughter is going to Harding High. The students need the social workers and the 504 plan, the students will suffer. She added that her children went to Edison. If the social workers are cut, then the kids will turn to the streets.

Ms. Crystal Mack came forward and said that everyone needs to be re-educated. She said that Governor Grasso made the budget for the schools and things were fine. However Lowell Weicker introduced a state tax for one year but we're still paying it. She wanted to know where the money is going. Governor Malloy promised money. She wanted to know where that money was going. The parents need to get rid of the top administration and bring the control of the schools back to the City. She asked again where the money was for building the schools and educating the schools.

Mr. Clyde Nickleson was the next speaker called. There was no response.

Mr. Jon Galimi came forward and said that he was a parent and a teacher. He works with a paraprofessional, who was with him tonight. He said that he had high expectation for the students, but it was hard to meet those expectations with limited resources. Many of the new students in kindergarten are coming in with limited skills and the parents have limited language skills. Losing the paraprofessionals would be a tragedy.

Ms. Alfreda Stewart came forward and said she was a parent and had children in elementary through high school. She said that for too long the schools have been under funded. The children are entitled to the right to learn in the least restrictive environment and that isn't where the teachers are underpaid and don't have the resources they need. The system is broken. She went on to speak about how the students are angry and unable to learn because they are in overcrowded schools. She said that they were not trying to produce students that can achieve because the City was under funding the schools.

Ms. Walker-Jones, the Edison principal, came forward and said that flat funding was the same as cutting the budget. It is important to make sure that the students have what they need. There was a projected savings of \$350,000 by closing Edison and Hall school. She said that she was a resident and raised her children in the city. \$350,000 compared to a 15 million dollar budget was nothing. The students who have heard about this are losing sleep and crying over it. She asked the Committee members to remember that it's not just the students, but the parents and families who pay taxes. There are 85 homes right next to Edison and it is a neighborhood school.

Ms. Melaysha J came forward to speak about her time at Edison. She said that she knows the school is old because her dad went to it. She then spoke about the various things that the school does for her. She wanted to know what would happen to the jobs if the school closed. She would also like to know what would happen to her because she would be graduating from Edison next year.

Ms. Antoinette Ford came forward and said that she was speaking as a Bridgeport educator. The students are the future of the City and it is impossible to education when there are no resources. The kindergarten students are arriving with social and emotional issues. Right now the paraprofessionals are only there for half a day. The students are coming to school in crisis, but if it is the wrong day, there is no guidance counsel, social workers or paraprofessional to help them. Without this extra support, the students are being set up for failure. She added that Hall School was working on a play with help from professionals in the theater industry.

Ms. Beth Lazar came forward and read a statement into the record. (See attached)

Ms. Anna Montalvo asked all classical support staff present to please stand. She said that she was representing AFSCME as their president. She said that in the past, she had suggested that every single District member take three day furloughs to make up the shortfall. In the past the union members have brought in food so that some families would not go hungry. The staff gives up a lot for the students. If the Schools sink, the property value will go down and there will be an exodus from the City.

Mr. John Marshall Lee came forward and addressed the audience with an apology to the Council members seated in the well of the Chamber for his back. He then shared with them a story about "red rubber boots" that shows the City has a current operating budget and balance sheet, each in the RED. Mr. Lee explained how the Board of Ed and Superintendent Rabinowitz with their own Finance Committee, created a FY 2017 budget and then requested \$15 Million inclusion in the City budget as a single line item.

Council Member Mary McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

That request has been ignored by Mayor Ganim and his advisors so far. Interim Supt Rabinowitz must review her current budget to see what reformation had to occur to make up for \$15 Million of unavailable revenues from the City. The loss of transportation, teachers, paras, closing of schools etc and a dozen other touched areas have been shared with staff and teachers with alarm and concern. Mr. Lee suggested that the public needs to get out to all of the public hearings and if they wished to know more on this fiscal subject, he would be happy to visit and talk on how to supply necessary dollars to education of 22,000 youth.

Mr. David Echeverri came forward and said that everyone wants to have their child educated. He said that he wants to be a President and believed that the schools should be fully funded so that the students can live out their dreams.

Mr. Fernando Echeverri came forward said that the previous speaker had been his son. He then read from the Declaration of Independence preamble. He said that the committee were public servants and needed to listen to the residents and tax payers. He said that the staff has the right to express their concerns over the education the students are getting.

Council President McCarthy joined the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Ms. Victoria Echeverri came forward and said that she used to live in Fairfield and had a business in Bridgeport. Now she lives in Bridgeport where her business is and wants to support the students. She said that they needed to pray for more funding.

Ms. Nicole Wilson asked where the current funding was going and wanted to know where the 15 million in shortfall came from. She said that she was raising her children in Bridgeport and was an artist. Her children needed services as do other students.

Mr. Hector Sanchez, the president of Administrator's Union and the principal of Cesar Batalla School came forward to speak. He said that he was a Bridgeport resident. He said that if someone's car stalled, the driver will struggle to push the car by himself. But if a few neighbors come along side him, it becomes easier. He said that the Bridgeport teachers and staff have spoiled the Council because they have done so much with so little for so long, that they are used to it. Last year, the District has interventionists and now they will be cut down to one. He concluded his remarks by asking what the Committee's legacy was.

Ms. Liz Moyse came forward and said that the best educational practices was to have the teachers teaching the students and without the paras and other supports, it violates State and Federal Law. The Bridgeport Aquaculture School will not be able to attract students without having smaller classes and more funding.

Ms. Dasha Spell asked how the BOE fits into the picture of the overall City budget. She said that the magnet schools were working well and Bridgeport placed second ahead of Fairfield and numerous other communities in competitions. She said that the Committee was doing the same process over and over and over again. She said that the students in Bridgeport had the right to education and go to college. She asked what the Committee members stood for.

Council Member Nieves joined the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

She concluded her remarks by saying she was a resident and a taxpayer.

Mr. Jim O'Donnell came forward and said that his kids were born and raised in Bridgeport and he was the president of the Library Board. They are working to open a Newfield branch. One of the challenges is to prepare for the reading and writing or digital resources. He said that a year ago, the Council had approved the funding, but there were still things that needed to be done.

Council Member Brantley joined the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Mr. O'Donnell then explained the details of the various projects and the need for more librarians. He said that the Committee needed to establish priorities.

Mr. Joseph Sokolopic came forward with his young son and said that this was the reason that everyone was here. These children were the future and the Committee should not be penny wise and pound foolish. The remainder of his remarks were drowned out by the audience chanting Fund Our Schools.

Ms. Tammy Boyle came forward and said that the students expected an education and the Committee should not punish the children. She said that most of her children were Special Education students and without the social workers, the IEPs would be very difficult. The residents elected the Council Members and the Council Members need to give the students what they need. She said the cuts in transportation may mean that her children are on city buses. If something happens to her children on those buses, she said that she would be on the Council Members cases very quickly.

Ms. Jamieca Brown came forward and said that she was here to speak about Edison. It is a small school and the teachers paid attention to her. She said that she was a perfect product of the Bridgeport education and was a Bridgeport business owner. If the Budget and appropriations want checks, they should keep the schools open.

Ms. Cynthia Infante came forward and said that she was a parent and distressed that this conversation was needed. She said that the voters put the Council Members in their seats and could take them right back out again.

Ms. Joanne Kennedy came forward and quoted Proverbs that there is a way that seems right to a man, but at the end of the road is death. She then spoke about how the Council Members should have a Higher Power and if they don't, they should go find one. The people have been speaking and the Committee members need to listen, listen, listen. She then suggested that the Committee members wrap a mill stone around their necks and jump in a lake.

Council Member Burns announced that Ms. Kennedy was the last speaker that signed up.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA 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 & APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 20, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Scott Burns, Co-chair; Anthony Paoletto, Jose Casco, Aidee Nieves (6:12 p.m.); M. Evette Brantley (6:56 p.m.)

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director

OTHERS: Council Member John Olson, Council Member Nessah Smith, Council Member Milta Feliciano, Council Member Jeanette Herron, Council Member Michelle Lyons; Angel dePara, CAO's Office; Tom Gaudett, Mayor's Office, Frances Rabinowitz, Superintendent of Schools; Council President Thomas McCarthy, Council Member Michelle Lyons (6:22 p.m.); Council Member Eneida Martinez (6:54 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Taylor-Moye called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. A quorum was present.

BUDGET HEARING FOR THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Ms. Rabinowitz came forward and distributed a document to the Committee and Council Members present.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT FEBRUARY 2016 DRAFT BUDGET PLAN 2016-17" AS EXHIBIT 4-20-16-1.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASCO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

Ms. Rabinowitz said that the school enrollment in Bridgeport is increasing, whereas many of the smaller towns have had a declining enrollment. She pointed out that 14% of the enrollment is Special Education. The SPED enrollment is rising in the entire State. The current SPED enrollment costs account for just over 25% of grant funding, and 28.6% of the General Fund.

Ms. Rabinowitz said that Hartford has a much larger educational budget than Bridgeport. She then gave a brief overview of the various different terms, such as SPED (Special Education) and ELL (English Language Learners). Ms. Rabinowitz said that there had been a significant increase in the SPED enrollment and the District had to cut back on other items to cover the SPED expenses.

The District has moved to a School Based Budgeting Model, which includes Operating Allocations for the individual schools, teacher and allocations for Parent Involvement.

Ms. Rabinowitz talked about the cost of legal costs, transportation (which is now at \$19 million), absence coverage and Enrollment Growth. She then reviewed the various facets of School Improvement Priorities.

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

Last year, the Council allocated additional funds for a FT nurses in every school and interventionists. She said that currently, there have been a number of teachers who have left and taken positions in Fairfield. She also pointed out that the pool of grant funding has decreased.

Last year, the City gave the BOE \$1.4 million as the MBE, the Council also gave an additional \$1 million for the nurses and \$.3 Million in grant funding (Alliance). Ms. Rabinowitz said that she expected the grant funding to remain the same. This year's funding request is for an additional \$15 million for a total of \$266.7 million. She then reviewed the details of the various items included in the non-discretionary Costs along with the funding required for opening the new Geraldine Claytor School.

Ms. Rabinowitz said that she would like to have a Behavioral Support program because there has been an increase in K-2 students entering the system who have witnessed trauma and are angry. By taking these students into a program that will assist both the students and teachers with intervention, the District would reduce the number of SPED students. Currently there is no intervention for the High School students. There are a number of students who are not reading on grade level. She said that this year, there would be a drop in the graduation rate because the administration is not allowing the students who are not ready to graduate to graduate.

Ms. Rabinowitz then outlined what she would do with budget increases of \$1.5 Million, \$2.5 Million, \$4.5 Million, and \$6 Million. She said that she would be leaving the Committee members with a list of the cuts that would be made if the additional funding was not supplied.

Council President McCarthy said that the Mayor's budget had a flat budget with no increase. Ms. Rabinowitz said that she realized that the Committee and the Council Members had just been presented with the budget. Council President McCarthy said that he would like to give them more money, but the funding would have to come from raising fees and taxes for revenue.

Hartford gets approximately \$126 million more than Bridgeport. That is a result of the number of magnet schools and Sheff vs. O'Neill case. She said that New Haven receives approximately \$66 million more than Bridgeport. Council President McCarthy said that he was really concerned about the fact that Hartford and New Haven receives so much more than Bridgeport. He said that he was yelling at Hartford with Ms. Rabinowitz. This is unfair, unethical and wrong.

Council President McCarthy asked what was driving the SPED costs. Ms. Rabinowitz said that in her opinion, they were identifying far too many children as SPED. While having the interventionists is good, it's simply not enough. She said that if the intervention was available at

an early level, the number of SPED students will go down. Council Member Olson asked for clarification on the intervention, which Ms. Rabinowitz outlined for the Committee. If the students don't get the intervention, often the only way they do received the additional help is through the SPED program.

Council President McCarthy asked for more detail about the Alliance Grant. He said that he thought that there was a requirement that the City had to meet. Marlene then spoke about the general scope of the Alliance Grant.

Council Member Eneida Martinez joined the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

Council Member Herron congratulated Ms. Rabinowitz on graduating students who were ready to graduate. She asked if Ms. Rabinowitz had spoken to the unions about shortening the school day. Ms. Rabinowitz said that the District had the students in school 182 days. By shortening the school year to the legally required 180 days, it would save a great deal of money.

Council Member M. Evette Brantley joined the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Council Member Herron asked about what's it would cost if the paraprofessionals were eliminated and then brought back. Marlene reviewed those numbers with the Committee.

Council Member Herron said that she would like to thank Ms. Rabinowitz for the fact that she was acknowledging the role of paraprofessionals in the classroom. Ms. Rabinowitz said that she was a teacher and knew all too well what the paras contributed to the classroom teachers and the students.

Council Member Olson has several questions about the percentages that the City gave the BOE. The discussion moved to the amount last year the City had given the BOE along with the funding from the Alliance Grant.

Council Member Lyons asked how much would be saved by shortening the school year. Ms. Rabinowitz said that it would save \$1.7 million.

Council Member Lyons said that there were times when retired teachers came back to fill in positions as principal and were very expensive. Ms. Rabinowitz said that the retirees actually cost less than an administrator. She said that she would like to empower the teachers to become administrators, but they are more expensive. Discussion followed about the role of assistant principals and potential cuts. She said that when there are more than 400 students in a school, it is important to have two administrators in a school.

Council Member Casco said that the Committee had received the budget from the Mayor. He asked about the details about the grants and the work of the City's delegation. Ms. Rabinowitz said that the State has to take a look at the different towns with more property tax. She said that the CJEFF case and that while she believed that the judge would rule in favor of the city, it will be years before a decision is handed down.

Council Member Feliciano thanked Council Member Taylor-Moye for acknowledging her. Council Member Feliciano asked if there was a way to split the paraprofessionals between classes. Ms. Rabinowitz said that the District was working with college interns now, but the paraprofessionals have specific training. Many of the instructional paraprofessionals have been cut. If the money is not available, then the level of intervention will go down. Marlene pointed out that most of the paraprofessionals were involved in Special Education. She then gave a list of the various tasks that the paraprofessionals perform in the classrooms.

Council Member Feliciano asked about transportation costs. Mr. Rabinowitz said that one suggestion was to have bus passes for Bridgeport Military Academy and another one was to have some student walk up to a mile and a half on City streets.

Council Member Martinez expressed concern about the potential closing of Edison School and wondered where the students in that school would go. She said that when Crescent Crossing is completed, there would be more students coming into Edison.

Council Member Martinez asked about the \$1 million for the nurses last year. Ms. Rabinowitz said that the nurses were still in place. Council Member Martinez said that she was very concerned about this. Ms. Rabinowitz said that she did not want to close Edison and Hill Schools, but she couldn't find anywhere else to cut. There is a plan for where the students will go if the schools are closed, but she would rather not close the schools. She said that she did not she was not happy to make these cuts. Council Member Martinez said that she would be fighting for Hall and Edison staying open and that these cuts were too much.

Council Member Brantley asked what would happen to the teachers at Hall and Edison. Ms. Rabinowitz said that the teachers would be assigned to different schools. Council Member Brantley asked how much money would be saved. Ms. Rabinowitz said that after the transportation costs, the savings would have been \$360,000. If the State had allowed a magnet school, the two schools could have been combined into intra magnet school. The discussion moved to the details of the support schools and possible solutions.

Council Member Brantley said that there had been a number of parents concerned about students that would be using bus passes. Ms. Rabinowitz said that the only students that would be using City buses were high school students. Council Member Brantley said that if there was only one of the two schools that could be saved, she would like it to be Hall School.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she had been listening closely to the information that Ms. Rabinowitz had been making and the public needed to know the correct information. She said that it would be important to take care of the schools so that the students can continue to go there safely. She said that she had concerns about putting high school students on city buses.

Council Member Lyons asked about the funding for the magnet schools. Ms. Rabinowitz said that the intra magnets only receive BOE funds. The other magnet schools, such as Fairchild Wheeler, receive grant funding apart from the City funding. Marlene then gave a brief overview of the financial obligations that the City had towards the magnet schools.

Council Member Lyons asked what was covered under Title 1 funding. Marlene listed the various services, including the Home School coordinator; the paraprofessionals such as resource paraprofessionals; literacy and mathematic coaches and other administrators.

Council Member Lyons asked whether the salaries and staff on the BOE were in unions. She said that on the City side, many positions have been eliminated and others have lost their jobs. Ms. Rabinowitz said that most of the employees were part of the Union. There were not many at will employees. She said that if there was a furlough, it goes from Ms. Rabinowitz all the way down.

Council Member Olson said that this was a turning point in his experience. He said that in the past there has always been an adversarial situation but now he felt that everyone was on the same page. He said that the City schools have been starved for decades. He said that some other way has to be found from the Mayor on down. The suburbs own the General Assembly and they will fight to keep their portion and control.

Council Member Burns asked about teacher retention. Each teacher that leaves is a loss of experience and talent. He asked if there was a projection of those who were leaving. Marlene said that there were an expected 30 or so retirements and currently there are 20 members that would be retiring. Ms. Rabinowitz said that the District was losing too many teachers. The resignations concern her tremendously and that they were hiring about 200 teachers a year and about 120 of those positions are serious losses because of the working conditions. The teachers are leaving because they are frustrated because they can't meet the needs of the students in the classrooms. She said that if the working conditions improve, the number of teachers who are leaving would slow down. Having a Teacher Appreciation Day would be wonderful thing, but there are no funds for it.

Council Member Burns asked for clarification on the Ruler program. Ms. Rabinowitz said that the schools are in the business of educating the student intellectually, emotionally and socially. This program is a partnership with Yale and works on behaviors of the students. It acknowledges the students' emotional states. It also addresses about moving individuals from angry to peaceful. It is all funded privately. In the 14-15 school year, there was a decrease in out of school suspensions and also in chronic absenteeism. If a student does not feel safe, they won't achieve what they need. Council Member Burns asked if Ms. Rabinowitz would be able to fund it next year. Ms. Rabinowitz said that she has been begging and things that she is almost there.

Council Member Burns asked about the Charter Schools. Ms. Rabinowitz said that the Charter Schools cost the District about \$2-3 million dollars for SPED and transportation.

Council Member Herron asked about the out of district transportation. She was told that the District pays for the transportation. The State reimbursements for Out of District Transportation is not enough to cover the cost.

Council Member Nieves asked about the health insurance program. Marlene said that there was a high deductible HSA that applies to the unions. The rate of growth is lower than the other plan that applies to employees. The State is currently considering further reductions in the various

reimbursement plans such as ECS. Mr. Nkwo said that the BOE was self-insured just like the City.

Council Member Taylor-Moye thanked Ms. Rabinowitz for her time. Ms. Rabinowitz distributed a document titled Budget 2016-2017 listing all the educational cuts.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER THE BOE BUDGET 2016-2017 AS EXHIBIT 4-20-16-2.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

LIBRARY

Mr. Hughes said that this was his ninth budget season in the City. In 2008, the Library budget was about to be cut by 2/3rds. In 2009 the process changed to the Library Referendum allowing one mill to go directly to the Library. While the library has increased their budget, it was just making up lost ground. This year, the grand list dropped. He said that the Library has been aggressive in recovering lost ground. The Library is now in the design phase for a full service Library in the East End. The Library has purchased a number of buildings as branch libraries. He said that he was asking for a flat budget despite the fact that the grand list is less than it was. Mr. Hughes said that the staff was doing all they could to cut costs. He asked the Committee to honor the bonding approval that was passed last fall.

He said that he looked forward to working with the Council Members. Frequently, the newcomers ask, "How are the schools, how are the taxes and where are the libraries?"

Mr. Hughes introduced Mr. Jim. O'Donnell, the head of the Library Board. Mr. O' Donnell said that he had some back up material and passed out a packet of information to the Board Members.

Mr. O'Donnell said that due to a mis-communication, the bonding funds for the three buildings was not included in the bond request. At this time, the planning for the expansion is stalled until the bonding is approved. He reviewed the details of the debt service and the impact that this would have on the current services. He also reviewed the details of the trust fund that has been reduced investments. This is the time to purchase bonds is now when the bond prices are low.

He said that he was not certain why the Mayor's proposed budget allocation was lower than the certified grand list.

Council Member Lyons left the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

Council Member Martinez said that she had been told that the current library has mold issues and had contacted Mr. Kooris about this. The East End has been a dumping ground for many years. She said that she would be working on placing a library on the East End.

Council Member Brantley said that she had spoken to Mr. O'Donnell about the Newfield Library and the potential of renovating the original building. She asked Mr. O'Donnell what would happen if it was renovated. Mr. O'Donnell said that the Library Board's position that the original building is not sufficient to provide enough space for the community. There is also a need for digital literacy and this requires professional staff. The consultants have stated that their previous experience has been that making a older building fit a new purpose ends up being more expensive. He said that he would like to sit down with the Council Members after Budget season and review the details. Since the building has two floors, it would require an elevator and extra staffing. Keeping it on one floor will reduce the costs. He reviewed the several potential options.

Council Member Brantley asked if there building on Central Avenue was open. Mr. O'Donnell said that they were working on it. She had several questions about some broken glass on the upper floor. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Brantley said that she would like to have the Library building re-assessed in terms of safety. Mr. O'Donnell said that they have been and will continue to do so.

Council President McCarthy said that the Council had been totally in support of the bonding for the Library. Mr. O'Donnell said that there was a mis-understanding on this issue. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details of the situation and explained that the City moved quickly on the last bonding because of pensions. When the City goes out to bond again in the spring, the library project will be included.

Mr. Nkwo explained that the mill rate was split into two pieces, the real estate amount and the motor vehicles. A discussion followed about the value of the mill and whether the State would cut the funding for motor vehicles.

Council President McCarthy asked about the Mayor's Proposed Budget and where the figures were created. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details.

Council President McCarthy said that he was not in favor of zeroing out the library staff.

Council President McCarthy said that on pg 136, it lists 13 filled positions. A discussion followed about the staff positions and salaries involved with the budget.

Council Member Martinez said that Mr. Nkwo's earlier statement that Mr. Flatto being new to the position and not knowing about the Library's bonding request was unacceptable because it has to do with the education of the children.

Council Member Paoletto asked for the details about the different Librarian ranking. Mr. Hughes reviewed the details of the job descriptions.

Council Member Nieves said that she would like to reiterate what Council Member Martinez said because the children need the library and right now it's a store front on a busy street corner.

Council Member Herron asked if the City had called Mr. Hughes to talk about the Library budget. Mr. Hughes said that he had been contacted.

Council Member Olson left the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Council Member Herron asked about the previously planned collaboration between the Tisdale School Library and the community. Mr. Hughes said that they were working on it.

Council Member Casco said that he had been asked about after school meetings. The Library has been doing a good job. The residents that don't have computers come to the library. The residents that can't read go to the library to learn how to read. He said that the Council would be fighting to keep the Libraries open.

Council Member Burns said that it doesn't make sense to put the librarians with experience aside for something that was more cost effective.

Mr. O'Donnell said that there had been an air test done at Newfield Library two weeks earlier and no problems had been detected.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER THE PACKET OF LIBRARY INFORMATION AS EXHIBIT #4-20-16-3.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NIEVES SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council President McCarthy announced that there had been a Budget Consultant, Mr. Spenser Cain, who had been hired. Mr. Cain will remain with the Council through June. He is open to anyone for questions, but all questions need to go through the Co-chairs. Mr. Nkwo and Mr. Flatto will still be the main source of information.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER THE SPREADSHEET TITLED LIST OF NEW HIRES SINCE 12/01/15 - AS EXHIBIT #4-20-16-3.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NIEVES MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 21, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-Chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Aidee Nieves, Jose Casco, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (6:14 p.m.); Anthony Paoletto (6:14 p.m.); M. Evette Brantley (6:15 p.m.)

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ken Flatto, Finance Director

OTHERS Angel dePara, CAO's Office; Mr. Bottine, John Marshal Lee.

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Burns called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC HEARING - GENERAL CITY BUDGET AND LABOR RELATIONS

Mr. Bottine came forward and said that the mill rate could not go up. He said that the Mayor was elected to keep the taxes down and that was all he had to say.

Mr. John Marshal Lee came forward to address the Committee. Mr. Lee thanked the Budget and Appropriations Committee for scheduling four public hearings. He then spoke about how the City funding could be better allocated and how the process could be improved. Mr. Lee asked if the Committee members knew where all the City funds were being used. He asked about the building improvements that had been done in the past 18 months and proceeded to list some of the costs of various projects.

Mr. Lee then asked about a list of positions that were filled and those that were vacant. He wished to know about the Police Chief and Deputy Chief positions in the budget and how they were listed in the Executive Summary, despite the fact that there were 478 other filled positions listed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

The Police budget was flat. Mr. Lee went on to speak about the details of the proposed departmental organization. He had several questions about the Civil Service process. Mr. Lee cautioned the Committee that ignoring these facts will cost the City \$13 million this year and cost the City an additional \$13 million next year.

Council Member Paoletto joined the meeting at 6:14 p.m.

He spoke about the fact that the City had not paid their share of the Police retirement costs and the administration had received a letter from the Police Union regarding this.

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

He asked why an across the board budget cut was not being done. The boat is sinking. Mr. Lee concluded his remarks by thanking the Committee for their time and attention.

Council Member Burns asked if there was anyone else present that wish to address the Committee at this time. No one came forward. He repeated the question. Hearing none, Council Member Burns closed the public hearing on the General City Budget at 6:17 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NIEVES MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASCO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 21, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-Chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Aidee Nieves, Anthony Paoletto, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Jose Casco, M. Evette Brantley (6:48 p.m.)

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Spencer Cain, consultant

OTHERS: Richard Weiner, Benefits, David Dunn, Personnel Director; Deborah Brelsford, Council Member Nessah Smith, Council Member Jeanette Herron, John Gomes, CAO; Richard Weiner, Benefits Director; Monquencelo Miles, Benefits; Janene Hawkins, Labor Relations; Council Member Eneida Martinez (8:27 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Burns called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. A quorum was present. Council Member Burns introduced Mr. Spencer Cain, who gave a brief overview of his job as a consultant to the Committee.

Mr. Dunn, the Personnel Director came forward and introduced his staff to the Committee and gave a brief overview of the various duties that each member of the staff perform. Mr. Dunn pointed out that his department handles twice the amount of work, simply because they handle the hiring of the employee and any employee that is leaving the City's employment.

Mr. Dunn said that he had an overview of the various exams that the City was required to offer according to Federal law. These include police and fire exams, along with custodial exams. For the police and fire exams, it costs the City roughly \$100,000 and the list of candidates that pass is good for two years.

Mr. Dunn handed out copies of pages from the Budget Book from pages 71-74. Mr. Nkwo said that the administration had eliminated all the Executive Assistants positions across the board. Mr. Dunn said that cutting both the Executive Assistant and Testing Specialists would impact the testing. He reminded everyone that the City was obligated by Federal law to administer the test. In the past, there were at least 5 judgments against the City for not conducting the promotional exams in a timely and equitable manner according to the Federal guidelines.

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

There is a long history of litigation against the City around this. Council Member Burns asked for details. Mr. Dunn suggested that the Committee speak to the City Attorney's staff about the details of the cases. In the past five year, there have been no suits filed against the City.

However, Mr. Dunn said that he was fairly certain that the Fire and Police would file suits against the City.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that the Commission does not like to use the employee's names. Mr. Dunn said that the job titles don't describe the functions that the employee performs. Mr. Nkwo said that if the department was reorganized, the functions would still be done. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that regardless of what the job was called, if the department was doing their job and keeping the lawsuits from being filed.

Mr. Gomes said the budget did not include the reorganization. He said that the administration had taken into consideration of the testing requirements. However, the job has been reorganized with a new title and the salary was reduced. Therefore the testing functions will continue. Mr. Nkwo said that it would become a Human Resource Generalist. There would also be a clerical assistant who would be able to provide help.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that this was under the assumption that these changes would be allowed by the unions. Mr. Gomes said that the administration was looking at the function of the department and how the resources could be reallocated. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked Mr. Gomes for a written copy of the changes and how the changes would work for the Committee.

Council Member Nieves asked about whether the staff in HR could do all the tasks. Mr. Dunn said that there were confidentiality issues involved. The City has been sued in the past that the City had released the questions on the tests in advance. There are security issues involved. Council Member Nieves asked if the department would lose their integrity with these changes. Mr. Dunn said that regarding the consolidation, that there had been a suggestion to consolidate Labor Relations, Civil Service, and HR back in the 1980's. The Civil Service is covered extensively in the Charter. In order to consolidate the departments, it would have to be done carefully.

Council Member Brantley asked if the unions had been notified about this reorganization. Ms. Hawkins came forward and said that the Labor Relations Department has been in contact with the unions and reorganizations. She stressed that the budget is a proposed budget. She said that she has made it her business to make sure the unions are aware of the reorganization and the major unions are willing to work with the union. The administrations trump card is lay-offs and in order to keep the budget in the black will take concessions.

Council Member Brantley said that if Mayor Ganim is so committed to saving jobs, why are there so many new hires. Ms. Hawkins said that when the administration changed, there were people who were unaffiliated positions that left the City's employment. Those employees served at the Mayor's pleasure and he needs to fill those positions with people who he can trust. She said that the idea was to conserve the employees and their families such as an early retirement offer. It's an unfortunate situation.

Mr. Dunn then gave a handout about the testing procedure.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED CIVIL SERVICE PRESENTED BY DAVID J. DUNN, PERSONNEL DIRECTOR, APRIL 21, 2016 AS EXHIBIT 4-21-16-2.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Dunn then reviewed the information with the Committee.

Council Member Herron joined the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

The discussion moved to the background checks and the use of a professional background firm as opposed to having the work done in-house. Mr. Dunn said that the firm has the employees searching the records where the department does not have the time or the resources to do this. Council Member Brantley said that she thought that it would be good to look into having someone in house doing it. She said that she had been trained to do finger printing at her job and it has saved a large amount. Mr. Dunn said that they had asked about using the newer technologies and it was something that the Police Department would have to approve.

Mr. Richard Weiner came forward and said that his department was composed of just himself and Ms. Miles. The department handles all the benefits for 1,600 employees and also for their families. Ms. Miles is the Employee's Services Coordination. He said that when someone is hired, it requires orientation, statutory documents given, and handling the benefits when someone leaves the City employment. He said that the Affordable Care Act has had a major impact on his department.

Council Member Paoletto left the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

There was recently a major mailing regarding the benefits. He said that part time employees cannot work over 30 hours without significant Federal penalties to the tune of 8 million dollars. The department handles six different types of benefits and there are twelve different unions.

Council Member Paoletto rejoined the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

The worker's compensation had dropped dramatically since Labor Relations eliminated unlimited Worker's Compensation. There is also Light Duty program, which brings someone back to work with light duties until they can assume their regular duties. The department meets with Worker's Compensation once a month. Most of the Light Duties happen in Public Facilities. Right now there are about eight or ten employees on Light Duty.

Mr. Weiner then gave a brief overview of the insurance program and the prescription and dental plans are a self insured plan.

Mr. Weiner said that the department does the budget for both the City and BOE and it comes to about \$125 million dollars. Mr. Nkwo said that the department was flat funded. He explained how this system works and said that being self insured was one of the best things the City did. Mr. Nkwo said that Mr. Weiner has saved the City millions of dollars through his diligent work.

Council Member Nieves left the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Mr. Weiner said that when the City wants to change their insurance carriers, there is a very complicated process for the RFP. The City belongs to a purchasing consortium with Stamford, New London and various other municipalities. This has been done with prescriptions, dental and life insurance. This allows the department to leverage the cost of the benefits.

Council Member Nieves rejoined the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

He said that the cost of insulin is now about \$500 a month for those who do not have insurance. Mr. Weiner said that there had been a number of meetings about reducing the health care costs. He said that the Mayor is looking at restarting a Health Benefits Committee to help control the costs.

Council Member Herron asked about the mail order prescription plan. Ms. Miles said that if the employee opts not to participate, it will cost them twice as much with the co-pay.

Mr. Flatto said that Finance was working closely with Benefits. He then gave a brief overview of the self-insured funding process. On page 87, the figures are laid out for the Committee members. He said that the administrators believed that there were some savings this year and this will affect next year's budget. He thanked Mr. Weiner for all the hard work that was done in containing benefits.

Council Member Burns asked about 12 positions that were listed for next year. Mr. Nkwo said that the three departments of Labor Relations, Civil Service and Benefits were combined on this page. He reviewed the details of the proposed budget with the Committee.

Ms. Hawkins came forward to address the Committee. She said that Labor Relations is responsible for negotiating labor contracts, disciplinary matters, arbitration, and the Personnel and Labor Relations have assumed the duties of the Human Relations Director since that employee was laid off. She said that the Police contract was coming up and the current contract expires in July. The unaffiliated will be taking 10 days of furlough by June 2016 and an additional 10 days of furlough in 2017.

The department is meeting with the unions to discuss for the issues. This is a proposed budget. The bargaining agreement does not allow the administration to make changes in the contracts. The Mayor, CAO, OPM and Finance are all aware of this and meeting with the unions regarding how the City can deal with the current financial crisis.

Ms. Hawkins said that her department was reviewing the policies and procedures. The department is also holding a number of training sessions on MUNIS in house and just completed a unit on sexual harassment in house. The department is also dealing with a great deal of restructuring focused on the functionality of the departments along with the financial crisis.

Council Member Brantley asked if Ms. Hawkins had documents for the Committee. Ms. Hawkins said that she did have a list, but it included the names and she would get copies that did not have the names on it by the next meeting.

Regarding the actual figures for employees, there are 44 new hires that were people who were appointed by the Mayor to various positions. Overall, there are 155 new hires and that includes the seasonals. There have been 96 changes in Personnel that have to do with layoffs and bumps. There have been 60 layoffs by resignations or terminations. Ms. Hawkins said that there were 100 layoffs, resignations, deaths and others. She said that the change in Personnel report is fairly detailed and will state the date of separation, the status, and what the salary was.

Council Member Brantley asked how much Labor Relations had saved. She also asked about the Deputy Director's position which is currently vacant. Ms. Hawkins said that she would get that information. The discussion moved to the details of the position.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the overall picture after all the terminations, resignations, retirements, lay-offs and other issues, how much this saved the City. Ms. Hawkins said that Mr. Nkwo would have the actual figures in terms of savings.

Council Member Herron asked about the union positions that are still in negotiations and have not been finalized. She asked what would happen if the unions doesn't agree. Ms. Hawkins said that Mr. Nkwo would have to create a cushion to absorb any costs that were not reduced.

Council Member Brantley then asked about the increase of the salaries. Ms. Hawkins said that when the unaffiliated positions were increased, all the positions were increased. Ms. Hawkins said that the secretaries across the City are in three different unions. She said that moving forward she would like to see if they could organize it so that everyone is in the same step process. Because this was not done in the past, there are secretaries that make almost \$90,000 due to their length of service and union increases. Mr. Nkwo gave the Committee a brief history of how all the job titles came about.

Council Member Casco asked about the details of the chart on page 84. Ms. Hawkins said that her department works well with Labor Relations. Mr. Dunn confirmed this. Discussion followed.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked if there were grants that could be written to cover the various positions. Mr. Nkwo said that he did not know but that they would look. Mr. Flatto said that most grants were program driven.

Council Member Eneida Martinez joined the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Mr. Dunn said that the Grants Department was fairly aggressive in looking for various grants. Discussion about the various grants followed.

Council Member Brantley said that she commended everyone for all the work they have done and the Committee has work to do on the budget.

Council Member Burns asked how many unions the department handles. Ms. Hawkins said that there were 12 unions. She said that her department was a facilitator and taken her directions from the CAO and the Mayor. Mr. Dunn said that regardless of what his personal opinion was,

Civil Service was dictated by the Charter. Mr. Dunn said that his supervisors were the Civil Service Commission as according to the Charter.

Council Member Burns asked about the various lay-offs that were proposed and whether the sick days and vacation days have been calculated. Ms. Hawkins said that there was no current list for potential lay-offs. Mr. Nkwo said that when a layoff occurred, the person who is laid off is usually the one who has the least seniority and benefits.

Council Member Burns asked about the proposed early retirement program. Ms. Hawkins said that the union is currently reviewing it. Until a person actually files their retirement papers, they cannot predict who it will be. Ms. Hawkins said that there were some people that had been in the City for 42 years. Ms. Ferreira said that the department has to average the number out. The terms of service is 15 years of service at age 55 or 25 years of service. Mr. Nkwo said that they were assuming 25 people will retire, but they don't really know. Mr. Flatto pointed out that the year following a retirement would be when the City absorbs the cost and the savings happen the following year if the position remains unfilled.

Council Member Nieves asked about if the Committee could be supplied with a restructuring flow chart of where the positions would be moved. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia reminded everyone that Civil Service is separated out by Charter.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 23, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Scott Burns, Co-chair; Anthony Paoletto; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, M. Evette Brantley (9:40 a.m.); Aidee Nieves (10:30 a.m.); Jose Casco (10:37 a.m.)

OTHERS: Spencer Cain, Consultant; Council Member Kathryn Bukovsky, Council Member John Olson, Council Member Nessah Smith, John Marshal Lee, John Ricci. Public Facilities Director; Council Member Mary McBride-Lee (9:36 a.m.); Council Member Michelle Lyons (10:08 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Taylor-Moye called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m. She introduced the members present.

Mr. Lee said that the front doors of the building were not opened and that the location of the meeting had been changed. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she would make a note of this and check to verify the issues.

Mr. Cain commented that he had been able to enter the building through the front door. Mr. Cain then gave a brief overview of his career and experience to those present.

Council Member Burns said a few emails had been sent out to the Council Members regarding decorum and added that the Council Members had been elected to work on the Budget. He said that the Council Members had to agree to disagree on various issues. Council Member Burns also said that the Mayor's Budget had a 5% increase when the State was cutting their budget. He said that he did not feel that the flat line BOE budget was necessarily the right thing to do.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that if the Committee found that they had some funding at the end of the process, they could direct it to the BOE. She reminded everyone that the BOE had the right to spend the money that the City gives them in whatever manner that it chooses. In the past, the City had given the BOE \$1 million for books but that hadn't worked out well.

Council Member Taylor-Moye reminded everyone that the Committee members should not mention employees' names, only the positions.

Council Member Burns handed out a number of documents for the Committee members.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES, LIGHTHOUSE" AS EXHIBIT 4-23-16-1.
**COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "REASSESSMENT GRAND LIST SUMMARY INFORMATION" AS EXHIBIT 4-23-16-2.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "2015 REAL PROPERTY COMPONENTS" AS EXHIBIT 4-23-16-3.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "RESULTS ANNUAL FUND BALANCE" AS EXHIBIT 4-23-16-4.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Burns said that the Capital Plan had to go before the full Council by May 3rd. He thanked Mr. Ricci for attending the meeting.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there were some Council Members that did not receive copies of the Capital Plan. She said that it was very important that when people came forward with documents, they bring 25 copies. The extra copies are given to the City Clerk for distribution to the rest of the Council members.

Council Member Olson said that all the projects listed on the Capital plan appear to be important. He wanted to know how the City could handle this additional debt.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 9:36 a.m.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she was very happy that she had received the larger print copy of the spreadsheets.

Council Member Burns said that most of the Bassick plans were for 2018. He said that there had been a number of revisions made to the school plans for Central and Harding and each plan would be an additional 8 million to the budget.

Council Member Brantley joined the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked if there could be something added to the Capital Project list for the Community Center at Trumbull Gardens. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that there had been some issues about funding at that location. She suggested that any of the requests for additional projects be sent to the Co-chairs before the meetings, so that the information can be prepared in advance. Council Member McBride-Lee said that she had presented a Black History program at the Center in the past and 200 people had turned out for it. One of the young program attendees pointed out that the Center was closed and that there was nothing to do.

Mr. Ricci said that some of the salaries in his department are not accurate. Some of his employees have contacted him after seeing the budget online and came to him to say the figure was not correct. He said that the budget figures that been done by the Mayor's Office. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that at the other meeting, the Committee members had been told that what was submitted in the budget was not what was the department heads had submitted. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she had been shocked when she found out that the department heads did not know where the salary figures came from.

Council Member Brantley asked why the Committee was reviewing this if the numbers were incorrect. How could the Committee vote on something that was not accurate. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she didn't know how to answer that.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia repeated her earlier statement that all the questions needed to be submitted to the co-chairs in advance because there is so much work to do and there is not much time to do it in. She said that the co-chairs have to ask where the flow charts and other information was. Unfortunately, if the Council needs to vote on the budget, they would not have all the information available to make decisions.

Council Member Burns said that it would be important to review the Capital projects and determine what was a top priority for 2017. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia suggested that since Aquaculture was a regional school, the other towns should be asked to contribute.

Council Member Olson asked about the restoration of the Perry Arch. Mr. Ricci said that the project costs were high because it was a historic restoration. The discussion then moved to the details of how this would be done.

The discussion moved to the Pleasure Beach Bridge. Mr. Ricci said that the bridge was a obstruction to navigation and that the barges are now bigger and longer. This has resulted in only 12 feet of clearance. There have also been several strikes and the barges are escorted through the passage only during daylight hours. Council Member Brantley asked if the bridge could be replaced. Mr. Ricci said that the original bridge could not be replaced. However putting a new bridge out to Pleasure Beach would cost approximately \$40 million.

The Downtown Streetscape was the next item reviewed.

Council Member Michelle Lyons joined the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

Council Member Burns asked about the Police Capital Project. Mr. Ricci said that there was a building in the back of the Transfer Station where the Police Department would like to have a shooting range.

Council Member Burns asked about the NRZs request. He asked if that would have to be handled through OPED. Mr. Ricci said that the NRZs were working on clean ups and that there was one underway as the meeting was being held.

Council Member Burns said that there were a number of vehicle replacements requested and wondered if there was anything to be gained by leasing. Mr. Ricci said that previously, the carts had been leased, but then the course purchased the carts.

Council Member Burns asked about the specialized tires for a particular vehicle. Mr. Ricci said that this was the only way they could get new tires because they were not able to be in the Operational Budget.

Council Member Lyons asked about a project for Edison School. She said that since the BOE Was considering closing Edison and Hall, she did not understand how this could be included in the Capital Budget without a note regarding the \$123,000.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the Bassick project. Council Member Burns said that it was included in the Capital Plan.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the funding for the NRZs clean ups. Mr. Ricci said that it was residual funding for the NRZs, not the District.

Council Member Lyons asked about the \$250,000 asbestos removal in the Capital Plan for 2018. Mr. Ricci said that this was a reserve account because there was asbestos in the glue used for the tiles in the schools.

Council Member Burns asked about whether the City would be buying hybrids. Mr. Ricci said that they were looking at hybrids, but the City would not be buying any more propane or fully electric vehicles because they simply do not work well.

Council Member Burns asked about the water truck. Mr. Ricci said that it was used at the golf course.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked how many golf carts were purchased. Mr. Ricci said that the City spent \$755,000 on the carts, but he did not know many carts that covered. He said that he would get that number for the Committee.

Council Member Lyons asked about Knowlton Park and said that the renovations had been completed. Mr. Ricci said that there had been some safety issues with the walk out over the water. Council Member Lyons asked about the 90 Acres and the dog park. Mr. Ricci said that it was an issue of fencing.

The discussion then moved to the backup generator for the Annex. A discussion followed about the various other repairs needed to the building and whether the Annex should be put on the market and consolidation of the administration at Lyon Terrace.

Council Member Aidee Nieves joined the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she had some concerns about the Annex and who it might be sold to in terms of keeping in style with the downtown manner. Council Member Paoletto said that there were a number of water leaks in the Annex.

Council Member Brantley asked where the rumors about selling the Annex came from. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that it had been in the newspapers. Council Member Brantley said that Mayor Ganim was the one that originally moved the offices from Lyon Terrace to the Annex.

Council Member Brantley asked about the NRZ funding. Council Member Nieves said that the NRZs have been told that they have to spend the funding by a certain time or lose it. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that there had been some funding allocated to the NRZs in the past that the NRZs had never received. Now the administration wants the NRZs to do their own fund raising and grant applications. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that this was a wish list. Discussion followed about the NRZ funding allocated.

Council Member Casco joined the meeting at 10:37 a.m.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that regarding the rumors about consolidating the two buildings, because there are many factors. She pointed out that there is no room at Lyon Terrace and that if the Annex was offered to the public, it would have to be a for profit group or the City could lose the tax revenue.

Council Member Paoletto left the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the Committee needed to go through the book page by page and line by line. She reminded everyone that Council Members that they have to submit requests for information to the Co-chairs in advance.

Council Member Lyons said that she had discovered that the salaries in the book were not lining up with the salaries that she knew that people were making. Combining all the departments in the budget is wrong because the Committee can't make a decision on what might happen with union negotiations.

Council Member Lyons said that she had strong concerns about the CDBG funding for the NRZs. Council Member Brantley said that she agreed and that the NRZs can't be fiduciaries for the grant funding. Discussion followed.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that Council Member Taylor-Moye had made a point about cutting down the salaries from the top down. She said that she had a problem with department heads who don't live in Bridgeport and don't pay taxes to the City. Discussion followed about the previous union negotiations.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked if there was any way to get the correct figures on the salaries. She said that she was suspicious that they weren't being given the accurate information. Council Member Bukovsky said that she agreed with Council Member McBride-Lee and felt that without accurate information, it was pointless to work on the budget.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia left the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

RECESS

Council Member Taylor-Moye announced a break at 10:55 a.m. She reconvened the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Council Member Lyons said that she felt that the budget should not be finalized until there were some settlements.

Council Member Burns then reviewed the details of the Building Improvements for the Capital Projects. Council Member Burns said that the Fire Headquarters needed repairs that would be covered by 3P funding. He said that he did not know what that entailed.

Council Member Burns asked about the cost of the boiler for the Black Rock Senior Center. He said that the amount appeared to be high and that they should be asking about the details.

Council Member Burns said that he would like to know which building was being painted at Seaside Park. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she would also like to know about what would be done with the bath houses.

The discussion then moved to the Wonderland of Ice and the PILOT payments. Council Member Brantley suggested that Wonderland of Ice might be able to ask the various municipalities that use the facility for more financial support. Council Member Burns explained that the City had agreed to make some upgrades, and the owners ended up making the repairs and did not make the PILOT payment.

The discussion then moved to Harbor Yard and the Arena, both of which have also submitted a Capital requests.

Council Member Burns said that he would like to hear the details on the Deco lights that have to be dug up and retired. Council Member Brantley pointed out that there was a portion of Fairfield Avenue that was a State Road and suggested that they check with the State for funding.

Council Member Burns said that they would ask OPED about the Crescent Bridge issues. He also said that in 2020, the Zoo was asking for 3 million for a parking lot expansion. The State should also be asked if they would contribute to that project.

Council Member Olson said that all the lights were on in the Annex even though most of the building was not occupied. Mayor Finch turned the escalators off, but Mayor Ganim turned them back on. Both of those things could save money and not put it in UI's pocket.

The discussion moved to the Capital Projects for Sacred Heart University. Council Member Lyons said that the dog park would only involve fencing, and she would check with the University about the other projects.

Council Member Brantley asked about the Knowlton Park security. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that Mr. Ricci had explained the project was not quite finished yet and there were still some safety issues.

Council Member Burns asked about the park fees. The discussion moved to charging the Out Of Town attendees.

Council Member Casco said that Manigo Park was not listed in the Parks Improvement. He asked if NRZ funds can be used to improve the park. Council Member Burns pointed out that it does say various park improvements.

Council Member Burns asked who does the work on the golf course. Council Member Lyons said that she would check but she thought it was City Staff.

The discussion then briefly moved to Airport. Council Member Lyons said that the Airport should be closed because it was not earning money since it there has only been one working runway. The budget should have projected earnings included when the airport is fully functional.

*Council Member Taylor-Moye and Council Member Olson left the meeting at 12:02 p.m.
Council Member Burns then took over as chair.*

Council Member Lyons said that the Committee should find out what arrangements is being made for the back taxes for the Arena.

Council Member Bukovsky said that the City does not have the luxury of spending money to spruce up parks and other areas. She asked whether places like the Barnum Museum would have access to State revenue.

Mr. Cain said that Governor proposed his budget in February and then recently issued a supplementary budget. The legislature has two weeks to settle this. There is about \$140 million deficit for this year. He then reviewed the details with the Committee.

Mr. Cain suggested the Committee think about where the services were being provided and whether the fees would cover them.

He also suggested that the Committee members look at the areas that have increased the most over a period of years. He said that Education represented 41% of the total budget for the City.

Council Member Lyons said that she was in agreement. Mr. Cain pointed out that 80% of the budget was personnel. He said that the City's budget was probably the largest budget in the State. He also pointed out that the Committee were citizens not accountants.

Council Member Burns said that there were a number of questions to ask. He said that next Saturday, the Committee members have to vote on the Capital Plan. There is a public hearing on Wednesday followed by a discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER NIEVES SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 25, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Aidee Nieves, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ken Flatto, Finance Director

OTHERS: Council Member Kathryn Bukovsky, Council Member John Olson, Council Member Richard Salter, Council Member Nessah Smith, Council Member Jack Banta, Ed Lavernoich, OPED Director; Angel dePara, CAO's Office; Tom Gaudett, Mayor's Office, Council Member Mary McBride-Lee

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Burns called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. A quorum was present.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Flatto then came forward and said that he would give an overview of the six different divisions of the Finance Department. He then distributed copies of the Fund Balance. The document was sent to the Committee members via email earlier. The Current Fund balance as of June 30, 2015 was \$13,713,461. The general rule of thumb is to have 5% of the total budget for the City, which would be to have \$25 million in the Fund Balance.

He directed everyone's attention to page 321 in the budget book and the line item where the Contingency fund was. He said that the Department was asking that the \$2 million in the Contingency not be used and later added to the Fund Balance.

Council Member Burns asked what the rating agencies would be looking for in the Fund Balance. Mr. Nkwo said that when there was a good fund balance the interest rates are better. Mr. Flatto said that the City of Hartford used their entire Fund Balance to balance the budget for the coming year. This means that their bond rating is very, very low.

Mr. Flatto said that there would be a slight shift in the tax burden from residential to Personal Property and motor vehicles. He gave an overview of what this means to the various property owners in terms of their property.

Council Member Olson said that he admired Mr. Flatto's attempt to be honest and asked for clarification on some of the figures. Mr. Flatto said that there was some flexibility in the figures, which would remain somewhat fluid until the Board of Assessment Appeals concludes their hearings.

Mr. Flatto said that he had a document on pensions titled City of Bridgeport Notes to the Financial Statement. The document is composed of pages from the actual audit for the City.

Council Member Banta joined the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Mr. Flatto said that five years ago, the City had asked the State to allow the City to delay paying the pension plans. Now the payment is due.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT CITY OF BRIDGEPORT NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS EXHIBIT 4-25-16-2.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Flatto added that the handwritten figures at the bottom of the page were for the payments that would need to be made. He also reminded them that the debt service chart would change if the City goes out for additional bonding, but pointed out that there would not be another significant payment the same size as this year's. Discussion about the details followed.

Council Member Brantley asked how long a surviving spouse would receive benefits when a City employee died. Mr. Nkwo said that they would receive it until the surviving spouse dies. However, the payments that the retiree receives during their lifetime would be smaller than if there was no survivor's benefits.

Council Member Brantley asked how this would affect the Social Securities payments. Mr. Nkwo said that the City does not pay Social Security.

Mr. Flatto then directed everyone to page 27 in the budget book.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADD A DOCUMENT CONTAINING A BREAKOUT OF THE COB FINANCE DEPARTMENT AS EXHIBIT 4-25-16-3.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Flatto said that there had been a steady reduction of staff over the last ten years, but the staff has daily tasks to keep the City going. This includes bank reconciliations, posting revenues, capital project accounting and a variety of other tasks.

He then reviewed the various department positions listed on page 32 with the Committee. Mr. Flatto indicated which positions that were vacant and which ones might be filled in the coming months. He said that the non-personnel costs were minimal with the exception of doing the annual audit. The City absorbs the cost for both the City and the Board of Education. He said that there were numerous areas where the City was providing in kind services that they do not charge the Board of Education for.

Council Member Brantley asked for a brief review of the savings that were made in each department. Mr. Flatto did so. He then pointed out that one position had been making around

\$80,000 in the coming year, but they have been requested to take a cut in pay down to about \$60,000.

The Print Shop on page 36 handles all the printing for both the City and the BOE. The budget for this department has remained fairly stable. The Purchasing budget has also remained stable for the past few years.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that as a reminder the savings were not finalized because they have not been negotiated yet. Mr. Flatto said that where the positions were eliminated, the management is allowed to do this. However, the positions where the salaries are being reduced are still subject to negotiations.

The Committee then reviewed the Tax Assessor's budget. Mr. Flatto reminded everyone that there was a large increase in the budget this year because of the re-evaluations. Also there is \$100,000 being held in reserve in order to cover an audit of the various businesses. It has not been done in a long time. He said that he would like to have at least \$80,000 but \$100,000 would be better.

Council Member Bukovsky asked about the new position in the department. Mr. Flatto said that there had been three positions that had been combined into two. Also the new position will help with the audits. There are two levels of appraisers, one that would appraise new construction, and the second level has additional training that allows them to assess personal property.

Mr. Flatto then gave an overview on the Treasury Department. The department handles all the interactions with the banks.

Council Member Salter asked about the Pension Plans and the total amount that the City will have to pay. Mr. Flatto and Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details with the Committee. Mr. Flatto said that the pension payments are basically a fixed cost.

Mr. Flatto then said that the Post Retirement Benefits. All the City contracts require that the City also pay into the fringe benefits post employment, which are OPEB payments. Mr. Flatto said that there was no flexibility in the health benefits or the pensions. While the City only puts in the minimum amount that they need, the accountants encourage the cities to put in some more funding for liability. Each year that this is done builds up a reserve.

Mr. Nkwo said that on page 87, there was a line item about sick time. He said that some employees hold on to those days as chips for when they leave. Mr. Flatto said that Bridgeport was the only one that paid employees for unused sick days upon separation. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that back in the 70's she knew teachers who had banked over 100 sick days.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the line items for OTB and the casinos. She asked if there would be any revenues from Keno. Mr. Flatto said that all the revenues from the lotteries go into the State General fund and the State allocates a portion out to the cities.

Mr. Nkwo said that the sick days were contractual and that when the union contracts come up for negotiations, the City can cap it going forward. However, they cannot take away any sick days that have been banked.

Council Member Nieves asked about the increase in the Tax Assessor's Office for Special Services. Mr. Nkwo said that the amount was being put in the budget for hiring a company to do audits. Mr. Flatto gave a few of the details of what the audits encompasses.

Council Member Burns asked about the LOCIP revenues on page 28. He wished to know if that was a hard number that the City could count on. Mr. Nkwo said that it was not part of the budget that the Governor had cut.

Council Member Burns asked about the Municipal I.D. Fee. Mr. Nkwo said that originally there had been \$200,000 set aside for issuing the I.D.s, but the City would have charged a fee, which would have covered the cost. However, the Mayor is not interested in pursuing this program.

Council Member Burns had some questions about the numbers for PILOT programs. Mr. Flatto said that he believed the figures were fairly accurate.

Council Member Banta left the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

The City Attorney's Office is working it out with the various groups.

Council Member Burns asked about the sale of City property. Mr. Flatto said that it was hard to tell what a property would sell for, but OPED had three or four properties that will be going up for sale.

Council Member Nieves asked about line item Other Financial Uses, contracted salaries on page 321. Mr. Flatto said that these were reserve funds for adjusting the salaries for the COLA payments. Discussion followed about the potential increases due to union contracts that have pending negotiations.

Council Member Bukovsky asked for clarification on the Required Reserve. Mr. Flatto said that this was the Contingency fund. Mr. Nkwo explained that it was a result from the Police and Fire pensions for overtime. This is a MERF payment. He then gave a brief summary of how MUNIS calculates certain characteristics, such as "married" or "salary".

OPED

Council Member Burns welcomed Mr. Lavernoich and noted that he had just been appointed to the position. Mr. Lavernoich said that it had been four years almost to the day since he left the City and five years since he was last before the Budget & Appropriations.

Mr. Lavernoich said that there were a number of outside services, such as title searches that have to be done in order to sell property. He said that his request was that he would answer what questions he could and would get back to the Council Members on the things he did not know.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the Anti-Blight department. Mr. Lavernoich said it was moving to Housing Code and the Health Department. Mr. Nkwo said that the departments were all interconnected when there is an unoccupied residences. Mr. Lavernoich said that combining the department has been discussed for many years and it has finally been there.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the Relocation Coordinator. Mr. Lavernoich explained that the Relocation Coordinator is required by State law to help the residents find a place to live when units are deemed uninhabitable.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the Design review coordinator position. Mr. Lavernoich said that the staff member reviews all the submitted plans for their best practices, and to insure they are in compliance with the City codes.

The discussion then moved to the positions that were occupied and those that were vacant.

Council Member Burns asked for clarification on the Deputy Director of Land Use and Management. Mr. Nkwo gave a brief summary of the job responsibilities. He said that there were requirements for Inland Wetlands in Zoning.

Council Member Brantley asked about the Condemnation and Blight positions that was zeroed out. Mr. Lavernoich said that the line item was the one that was being moved to Housing Code. He gave a brief overview of the job responsibilities for the two positions. Mr. Nkwo directed everyone to look at page 290 where the two positions were listed.

Council Member Brantley asked about the Relocation Coordinator. Mr. Lavernoich explained that the Coordinator was responsible for Emergency relocations for residents that were forced out due to fire or unlivable conditions.

Council Member Olson asked if the Housing Code would remain under the Health Department. Mr. Nkwo said that this was so.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the salaries increases for the Condemnation and Anti-Blight.

Council Member Olson left the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

Mr. Nkwo explained that there were four years of unaccounted pay increases. Discussion followed about the salary adjustments. Mr. Nkwo said that the goal was to pay the staff the same salaries.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the positions that were being zeroed out. Mr. Nkwo said that the zero represented the transfer of the employee from one department to the new department. They are not being laid off. She was concerned that they were being laid off when they were still needed.

The discussion moved back to the Anti-Blight positions. Council Member Brantley said that she only knew of two people who worked on blight issues and apparently there were two more employees. She added that the Anti-Blight was a revenue source.

Council Member Casco asked what "Lamar" was. Mr. Lavernoich explained that Lamar was an advertising company that does the billboard signs around the City.

Council Member Casco asked about Special Services Executive Summaries. Mr. Lavernoich indicated where the detailed break outs were.

Council Member Bukovsky asked about the anti-blight transfers and the revenue generated by the department. Mr. Nkwo said that he wanted to put the funds into an account where the money would accumulate for demolitions. Otherwise, the Council members would have to bond to bond to do a demolition. Mr. Lavernoich said that he really likes and would support that plan. Mr. Nkwo said that the Committee could ask Mr. Lavernoich for an accounting every six months if they wanted.

Council Member Burns asked about the NRZs and their relationship to the City. Mr. Lavernoich said that about a dozen years ago, the State passed a special act that would allow the municipalities to develop groups that would enhance their neighborhood's. The Council has adopted ordinances for the City NRZs to allow them to speak as a unified voice. It was never part of the plan to have the NRZs to be the direct recipients of funding. If they do accept funding, they should be set up as non-profits. He suggested that the NRZs approach the non-profits to act as their fiduciaries. There are many administrative details and costs involved in non-profits.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked what the State had to say about this proposal. Mr. Lavernoich said that the State level the OPM department wants the NRZs to adhere to the City and local OPM guidelines. Council Member Taylor-Moye asked where the City was standing on this. Mr. Lavernoich said that the City thought it was great that they were putting peer pressure on the neighbors to follow the pack in terms of the projects.

Council Member Bukovsky left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Council Member Brantley said that the City has acted as the fiduciary agent, but the NRZs haven't been able to follow through. Mr. Lavernoich said that there is a capacity issue and the individual NRZs would have many administrative costs if they became 501(c)3s. Council Member Brantley pointed out that the NRZs are applying for CDBG funding and also filing for projects with the City. Discussion followed.

Mr. Lavernoich said that he had received emails from his staff after 7:00 p.m. At night. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the Council Members were not paid and also working after 7:00 p.m. She said that she has sent out emails at 3:00 a.m.

Mr. Lavernoich said that he thought there would be more projects at Steel Point in the next building season. He said that the site had over \$100 million dollars of issues that had be changed before any construction could start there. This included 8 major contaminated sites, riprap

instead of bulkhead, 150 year old pipes, and a street grid that didn't work. He said that the proposed movie theater and hotel would bring people from out of town to Bridgeport.

One project that is in front of the Council is the heating loop project. This could create revenue to the City and improve the economics of several million buildings in the immediate area. There are also things happening in the Eco-technology Park. The bio-diesel plant has been moving forward. The plant takes the grease from restaurants and recycles it into fuel.

Mr. Lavernoich spoke about a business that just started construction and will handle medical waste and the employer will be hiring former convicts.

Council Member Brantley asked about O&G. Mr. Lavernoich said that O&G had made a commitment to the former administration that they would move the pile of debris and that they would be using new technology.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 27, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Scott Burns, Co-chair;
Aidee Nieves, Jose Casco, Council President Thomas McCarthy
(6:05 p.m.); AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (6:11 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member Kathryn Bukovsky, Council Member Jeanette
Herron, Council Member McBride-Lee, John Marshal Lee, Crystal Mack,
Mary Tracey, Angel dePara, CAO's Office; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director;
Council Member Eneida Martinez, Council Member Nessah Smith

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Taylor-Moye called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE GENERAL CITY BUDGET

Ms. Beth Lazar of Main Street came forward and read the following statement into the record.

Martin Luther King said budgets are moral documents. A city expresses its morality by funding those items that best serve it's priorities and values. An educated, informed public is essential to a democracy. Education and access to information should be a top priority of our city. We should demonstrate that we value education and access to information by funding the institutions that provide educations an access to information, our public schools and our public libraries.

The proposed library budget allocated zero dollars to librarians. Libraries are crucial to inner cities such as Bridgeport, where many citizens cannot afford to buy books, newspapers, CDs, DVDs, computers or have internet access. The library offers access to all these things free.

Trained, skilled, qualified librarians are essential to the running of the library. Librarians know how to help patrons with research, how to archive materials, how to put on innovative, educational and cultural programs. They know how to acquire and catalogue materials for the library.

We Bridgeporters need librarians to operate our libraries. I think some council members realize how important the library and librarians were to their development.

Re-instate funding for the Librarians now. Ganim's current proposed school budget means closing two schools, increasing class size, cutting programs and getting rid of many of the counselors and paraprofessionals. I oppose Ganim's flat-lining the Education budget. Fully fund Bridgeport Schools now.

Council President McCarthy joined the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Ms. Crystal Mack came forward to speak on the budget. She said that one of the questions that people have not asked since the laws went into effect in 1977 such as where the money was going. There are many problems in the schools, such as lead poisoning and asbestoses. Why aren't the schools being repaired? The lead and asbestos affect everyone, the students, the teachers, and staff. She said that she has been retired but still was not receiving the appropriate amount of retirement. Ms. Mack said that there were other issues about the lawyer's fees and that the WPCA was taking the homes of people illegally. She said that if the children are not educated, they can end up in slavery. Over the past 30 years, skills like sewing, cooking, music and art have been taken from the schools. She wanted to know why no one was teaching the children about black history.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

Ms. Mary Tracey, 175 Message Street, came forward and said that the without funding the schools the students will be at risk because the schools have lost social workers, nurses, psychologists and paraprofessionals.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined at 6:15 p.m.

Ms. Tracey said that the Council should save the children by funding the schools. She spoke about how Edison should be saved and there were no problems there. By combining the schools, the classes will be much larger.

Ms. Mack asked about how the Council could care about the children and do this to them.

Mr. John Marshall Lee came forward and said that the seven members of Budget & appropriations Committee had to approve the Operating and Capital Budget. The Budget is over 350 pages. He said that what failed to be included in the budget was the grant revenue and it should be included.

Council Member Martinez joined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Ms. Megan, the next speaker, then came forward and yielded her time to Mr. Lee.

Mr. Lee spoke about the 3 million more and less that was expected from the tax payers. He suggested that the proposed budget be sent back to the Mayor's with more funding for Education and more cuts on the City side.

Mr. Lee suggested that the Committee get more Capital project spending details. The Capital projects are listed on two sheets with projections for five years ahead, but no past history on the Capital projects completed.

Mr. Albert Balle came forward to speak about the teachers and the education funding.

Council Member Nessah Smith joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Balle said that there were many things that needed to change. He said that he would support the Council in making changes in the budget for education. Parents will be happy. He said that each class had about 28 students. It will be important to work together.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked if there was anyone else that would like to speak.

Ms. Crystal Mack came forward for the second time to speak to the Council. She said that this was a tragedy and a travesty for the Bridgeport students. She said that the students were not being given emotional, physical or intellectual support. She thanked God for Hall Neighborhood House and ABCD for their support of the community. She mentioned the Holocaust and said that she did not want to see this happen in the schools. Teaching a child to fish will help them through the rest of their lives. She said that she had taught 23,000 students during her time and they were all her children.

Mr. John Marshall Lee came forward and said that there had been some questions about the NRZs at a previous Budget & Appropriations hearing. He was not allowed to speak at that time. Mr. Lee said that he was involved in the NRZs and would be willing to give them the information that they wanted.

Council Member Taylor-Moye pointed out that he had already spoken twice when Ms. Megan yielded her time to him. Council Member Taylor-Moye had given Ms. Mack a second opportunity to address the Committee because of that.

Council Member Taylor-Moye announced that since there was no one else present who wanted to speak that had not already spoken, she was closing the Public Hearing at 6:35 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 28, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-Chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Aidee Nieves, M. Evette Brantley, Jose Casco, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Anthony Paoletto

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ken Flatto, Finance Director

OTHERS: Fire Chief Brian Rooney, Council Member Richard Salter, Council Member Kathryn Bukovsky, Angel dePara, Council Member Jack Banta, Spencer Cain, Consultant; Scott Appleby, Council Member McBride-Lee; Asst. Fire Chief Robert Petrucelli, Police Chief A.J. Perez, Captain Straubel, Captain Phillips, Thomas Gaudett, Mayor's Office

CALL TO ORDER

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

PUBLIC SAFETY GENERAL BUDGET DISCUSSION

Fire Department -

Fire Chief Rooney said that he was comfortable with the budget and felt that they would be able to stay in within the overtime allocation because they are hiring 20 new firefighters. He said that the Safe Sleep program has continued and there have been 50,000 smoke alarms installed in the last 10 years. Fire Chief Rooney said that they were waiting on a \$2.5 million dollar grant that would allow them to pay for 17 firefighters. When the grant funding was applied for, there were 17 vacancies. However, since then there have been more retirements and now there are 22 vacancies.

Council Member Brantley asked about the details of the grant funding. Mr. Nkwo said that the department must maintain the number of the staff until the grant runs out. However, when the grant ends, the City cannot lay off the firefighters that were hired with this program.

Council Member Brantley said that she authorizes Foster homes and does home inspections for DCF. She said that the department has done a wonderful job and she often hands out flyers to people when she does site flyers. Chief Rooney said that there have been at least 120 incidents where the smoke alarms got the residents out in time.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the increase in the fees and what kind of revenues the fees would generate. Mr. Nkwo explained that the fees that the FD collects and are responsible for were on the spreadsheet. They have not been increased in the last eight years. He indicated where the recommended fees were on the information sheet, along with the amount of fees that have been collected.

Mr. Nkwo said that there have been many instances where the developer drops off floor plans for the Fire Marshal to review. It takes several hours to review and then no one ever came to pick it up. By having the department charge a fee, it will pay for the cost of the time.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that when she had first started teaching, the fire fighters had come to the classes and taught the students about what to do when there are fires. Deputy Chief Petrucelli said that the Stop, Drop and Roll program was part of the Save Sleep program.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT NON-TAX FEE REVIEW AS EXHIBIT 4-28-16-1
** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT DATED APRIL 25, 2016 FROM DENNIS BUCKLEY WITH A FEE SCHEDULE FOR PLANNING AND ZONING AS EXHIBIT 4-28-16-2
** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT DATED MARCH 10, 2016 FROM ELLEN GERRITY TO NESTOR NKWO FOR THE PROPOSED PARKS FEE SCHEDULE. AS EXHIBIT 4-28-16-3
** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT COB OPM 2016 PROPOSED PARKING VIOLATION FEE CHANGES AS EXHIBIT 4-28-16-4
** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT DATED APRIL 22, 2016 FROM BETH ROYER ON SOLAR INSTALLATION RATES AS EXHIBIT 4-28-16-5
** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Brantley asked about banking sick time. Chief Rooney said that the firefighters have unlimited sick time. They can bank only holidays, but when they retire, they don't get to take the sick time with them.

Council Member Bukovsky asked about some of the details having to do with the overtime on page 133. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details of the figures with her.

Council Member Casco asked about the six month projections. Mr. Nkwo explained that six months would be a benchmark for the budget.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she missed seeing the firefighters because she was a Fire Commissioner. She learned a great deal about firefighting and has a great deal of respect for the firefighters. She thanked them for the great job that they do to keep people safe.

Police Department -

Police Chief Perez came forward and greeted the Committee. He said that the Department was down a number of officers but that the department was holding their own. He pointed out that you can't un-ring a bell or call back a bullet. He said that there had been a recent incident where someone was walking down the street firing a gun into the air in the East End. The police responded quickly and apprehended the person. He also said that the shooting of the young man at Christmas time still haunts people. The Department is working hard to protect people.

Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details of the budget and said that starting July 1st, the City will be holding the Department's feet to the fire to make sure they don't have a budget overrun because no one has an extra million dollars lying around.

Mr. Nkwo said that there was a shortage because there was not enough budgeted for expenditures and that had resulted in a \$1 million dollar overrun. He also reviewed the details regarding the Pension A, B and MERF plans.

Council Member Brantley said that she was concerned about the large number of sick days banked and wanted to know how to change this. She said that she was willing to take some furlough days so that others don't lose their jobs. Captain Phillips said that last year, the department had given up five days and he had lost \$2,000 of income from that. Mr. Nkwo said that it would have to be negotiated with the unions.

Council Member Brantley asked if the new hires were being presented with scaled back contracts. Captain Phillips said that his class had been at 25%, the new hires would be 37% and eventually the new hires would not have post retirement benefits.

Council Member Taylor-Moye thanked Captain Phillips for all the service he has rendered to her district over the years.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she would like to clarify some of the details of the agreement between the Bridgeport Housing Authority and the Police Department. She wanted to know if the patrols were underway now and whether or not it would happen on overtime. She said that the Housing Authority was in need of financial assistance, also.

Chief Perez said that there was an active detail that covers various projects, such as Marina, P.T. And Stratford Avenue between 10 a.m. To 6 p.m. There will be precincts at various sites such as Marina. Chief Perez said that the department wants to go back to community policing where the same officers are located in the same neighborhoods. That will allow the residents to get to know the officers. Someone would be much more likely to call an officer they know because they trust the officer.

The officers started in March on overtime and a bill was sent to the Housing Authority. In the first three months of the year, the number of crimes have decreased because of this.

Council Member Taylor-Moye thanked Chief Perez for the work. She said that she had concerns about the program, particularly if the money was being used up but there was no back up services provided. Programs come in and then six months later, it is gone.

Council Member Salter left the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Captain Straubel came forward to speak about evidence based policing and how it was working at one of the housing projects. Sacred Heart is donating some funding towards this type of program at Trumbull Gardens. He said that once the Housing Authority sees that the crime drops, they should be able to get more funding. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that it was critical to make sure that all the various youth are brought together because right now they are pitting themselves against one another. Unless the same programs are done in all the housing complexes at the same time, the problems will simply shift from one housing complex to another one.

Mr. Flatto said that he had attended a HUD meeting and that HUD was totally behind the security issues for the Housing Authority.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there were additional issues around furloughs and there were issues with retirements.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there had been problems with the Bridgeport Housing Authority in the past and wanted to know how it would be handled. Captain Perez said that he had the same concerns and had submitted a bill to Mr. Byers. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that verbal agreements and handshakes were nice, but she wanted to know that the contracts had been sent to them, approved the contracts and signed off. Chief Perez said that he had presented the contract for approval. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there were some issues with the proposed contract in terms of dates, and also included two projects that had not been mentioned previously. Discussion followed.

Council Member Lyons thanked Captain Straubel for the work that was done in the North End. She went on to speak about the amount of overtime that was being used up because of the students in the North End. When the students set off the fire alarms, they should be fined, just like the police fine people for the residential false alarms. She suggested that there should be some kind of ordinance to bring some revenue back to the City when the police, fire and EMS have to respond to the same location multiple times because of the students.

Council Member Brantley asked if Sacred Heart was a wet campus. Chief Perez said that it was a wet campus. Council Member Brantley suggested that perhaps they should try to get the campus to become dry. She said that when she goes to various campuses and the ones that are dry have fewer problems. Some campuses have police precincts right on campus. Captain Straubel said that Sacred Heart was actually located in Fairfield.

Council Member Brantley said that there had been an ongoing issue about illegal dumping in the City. She said that there has been a site on Grove Avenue that has been a continual problem. She wanted to know if there were any plans to put up cameras on sites like that.

Council Member Burns asked what they were looking at this in terms of budget. Mr. Appleby said that they were trying to work with Homeland Security to use the cameras to move around to different locations. There is also discussion about putting cameras near the underpasses, which seem to be very attractive for illegal dumping. He also spoke about creating a Real time Crime Center.

Council Member Brantley asked if it would be possible to get blue lights in various locations such as the Housing Authority projects. She said that she thought that it would help deter crime because people could call the police quickly when things happen.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the school policing (SROs) and whether it was creating a budget problem. Mr. Nkwo said that the BOE would be paying the Police for those officers.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked how likely it would be that the grant funding from Sacred Heart would be received. Captain Phillips said that he thought it was about 50/50.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that it would be important for the children in Trumbull Gardens and P.T. Should be able to think of the police as their friends. When the students get to know the officers because the officers interact with the kids, then things go smoother. Students can't pick where they live, they live where their parents live.

Council Member Burns asked how many SROs there were and what department they were from. Captain Straubel said they were regular officers and assigned to various schools.

Council Member Bukovsky asked about the details of overtime and whether there was any consideration given to the salaries of the officers. Captain Straubel explained that the various ranks only replaced those of similar rank. When the officers work for an outside company, the rate is the same for all.

Council Member Casco asked if the department was aware of various businesses that open up close to schools and churches. Chief Perez said that they do look at things and try to keep on top of things.

Council Member Lyons asked if it was realistic to say that with the new 100 officers that the City is trying to hire, that at the end of the process, the City will have 100 officers. Chief Perez said that there is a running list and Civil Service keeps moving forward. Mr. Nkwo said that the first batch of 29 candidates from the first exam had just been processed. There are still more testing applicants to draw from.

Council Member Brantley asked if the City needed those 100 officers. Chief Perez said that if the City wanted to keep the overtime down, they need the new officers. There will be 187

officers that will be eligible for retirement in the near future. Captain Phillips said that often the other towns poach from the pool.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about Personnel Services listed on page 110. Mr. Nkwo said that the page was the Executive Summary and that the details for the \$1 million dollars was listed on 117. Discussion about the details followed.

Council Member Lyons asked about the Personnel issues and whether there were staffing levels in the different ranks. Chief Perez said that this was so. Captain Phillips then gave a brief overview of the internal structure of each department.

Council Member Casco asked Mr. Nkwo about how many vehicles that the City was planning on purchasing. Mr. Nkwo said that he did not know. Captain Phillips explained the details of bulk purchasing vs. piecemeal purchases for vehicles. Council Member Burns asked Captain Phillips to forward the data for the vehicles. Each one costs about \$30,000 per vehicle. He said that New Haven purchases the vehicles piecemeal while the bulk purchases averages 42,000 and that the vehicles that had been purchased nine years ago, are still on the road, but need to be retired and traded in. With the trade in value, it reduces the cost of the new vehicles.

Council Member Casco asked how many of the Bridgeport officers live in Bridgeport. Chief Perez said that he did not know off hand. Council Member Casco thanked Chief Perez for answering his phone calls and his willingness to come to meetings.

Council Member Nieves asked about 117 on Personal Services and had to do with retirement payments. She asked about the details for retirements and payouts. Mr. Nkwo directed everyone to page 118 and the line item for personnel payouts, retirements. The FY 2015 data for the payouts is there on line item 51318. Discussion followed.

Council Member Burns said there were 352 uniformed officers. Captain Phillips said that he expected that they would lose 10% by the end of the union. Presently there are 80 people in the Department that are eligible to leave. He gave an overview of the various groups that would become eligible in the coming year.

Council Member Burns asked about a proposed new headquarters, and the shooting range. Chief Perez said that shooting range was on hold. There are proposals for a study to bring the Fire Department and the EOC out of the flood zone and closer to the Police Department. Captain Phillips then gave the details of the difficulty of locating a shooting range.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the equipment for the shooting range. Captain Phillips said that the equipment was sealed in containers and have not been touched.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked what the costs were associated with using a private shooting range. Captain Phillips explained that using Monroe would cost not only fees, but also half an hour each way, plus preparation time, so an officer would be off call for about 2 1/2 hours, which depletes the staff.

Chief Perez thanked the Committee for their time.

Council Member Bukovsky left the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Public Safety and Communalizations.

Mr. Appleby said that his department was taking a comprehensive approach to all the different aspect of the public safety. There is a lot of technology that is coming to the end of its life. He said that his department feels comfortable with the budget.

Mr. Nkwo said that the rate of turn-over has been high. Mr. Appleby said that there is a lot that contributes to that and listed several of them.

Council Member McBride-Lee left the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

These included retirements, contractual issues, and people going to other municipalities. He said that they were looking to fill the vacancies, which reduces the overtime. There are 44 dispatchers needed and there are nine vacancies. Mr. Nkwo said that these dispatches had steps and that they were Civil Service positions. Discussion followed about the range of dispatch salaries.

Mr. Appleby said that by streamlining some of the positions, they were able to save about \$78,000. The Center handles over 427,000 calls a year.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the Public Project Manager position was eliminated on page 142. Mr. Appleby said that the position was for the IT staff member. The City IT staff will be covering the position. The employee that occupied it at \$78,000 left and the position was transferred to the main IT office. Mr. Nkwo said that they are trying to consolidate various offices.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked if there was an organizational chart. Mr. Nkwo said that he had been working on the ordinance, but would have the chart ready for Saturday.

Council Member Nieves asked about the Other Services under Organizational Expenses on page 146. Mr. Nkwo said that the Special Services line was the total of a number of line items.

Council Member Burns said that shaping up 9-1-1 was a primary goal. Mr. Appleby said that the staff have hit the goal set by the State of Connecticut for 9-1-1. There has been a strong effort to make calling 9-1-1 a smoother experience.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that there were numerous lines labeled supplies. Mr. Appleby said that each of the key departments like the police and fire, have their own portable radios that use different types of batteries. The goal is to get all the departments using the same type of portable radios. Council Member Taylor-Moye agreed and said that by having the same type of radio, the batteries could be ordered in bulk.

Council Member Burns asked Mr. Appleby if he felt that he was able to secure the different areas. Mr. Appleby said they would like to have more portable cameras that are self sufficient.

Another goal is to have the cameras all tie in together. He added that the department was finishing up a grant that has been used to get them into their center and once that is completed, the department will be looking at getting a technology grant.

Council Member Burns asked how many cameras are operating in the City. Mr. Appleby said that when all the cameras were installed, it would be just under 2,000. The department is looking to get about a dozen mobile cameras that could be moved around.

Council Member Burns Lyons left the meeting at 9:07 p.m.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked whether the department uses UI's poles. Mr. Appleby said that UI does not allow the City to put up any camera on their poles. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she had contacted UI about various lights. Mr. Appleby said that the City has to do a better job about reporting lights that are out.

Council Member Brantley left the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked Mr. Nkwo if he knew how much the UI electric bill was. He said that it was about \$8 million dollars.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASCO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
APRIL 30, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-Chair; Scott Burns, Co-chair; Anthony Paoletto, Aidee Nieves, M. Evette Brantley; Council President Thomas McCarthy, Jose Casco

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ken Flatto, Finance Director

OTHERS: Spencer Cain, Consultant; Council Member John Olson, Council Member Kathryn Bukovsky, Council Member Jeannette Herron, Council Member Mary McBride-Lee; Council Member Michelle Lyons

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Taylor-Moye called the meeting to order at 9: 22 a.m. A quorum was present. She then introduced all the Committee members present.

Council Member Burns reminded everyone that next Saturday was the State Democratic Convention and several people are obligated to attend that meeting. Council President McCarthy said that the final vote on the Budget should be done on Saturday. Monday and Tuesday have been reserved for full Council Meetings. Following a discussion, it was determined that there would be a quorum present on Saturday for a final vote.

Council Member Burns said that he had some documents that had been received via email. He then distributed copies of those documents to those present.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER DOCUMENT DATED 4/27/16 FROM PAUL CATINO TO COUNCIL MEMBER BURNED WITH ANSWERS FOR THE BAC REGARDING CAPITAL PROJECTS AS EXHIBIT 4-30-16-1.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER UNION LIST OF EXTRA DUTY AS EXHIBIT 4-30-16-2.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NIEVES SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER DOCUMENT TITLED PROPOSED RE-ORGANIZATION LABOR RELATIONS, CIVIL SERVICE, HUMAN RESOURCES/BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION AS EXHIBIT 4-30-16-3.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER DOCUMENT TITLED COB. FISCAL YEAR 2017-2021 PROPOSED CAPITAL PLANS AS EXHIBIT 4-30-16-4.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

GENERAL BUDGET DISCUSSION

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked if there were any additional questions for Mr. Nkwo or Mr. Flatto.

Council Member Burns said that he had some questions about the Arena as listed on 4-30-16-4 and how it was listed on the Capital Budget. Mr. Nkwo said that they had combined the amounts so it equals \$1 million dollars. Discussion followed.

Council Member Herron joined the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO AMEND EXHIBIT 4-30-16-4 ON PG 2 BY ELIMINATING THE \$1,000,000 FOR THE ARENA IN FY2018 (COLUMN 3) AND CHANGING THE TOTAL FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES FROM \$19,292,150 TO \$18,292,150.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO AMEND EXHIBIT 4-30-16-4 ON PG 2 BY REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF \$2,500,000 FOR THE ARENA IN TOTAL CAPITAL PLAN (COLUMN 7) AND CHANGING THE TOTAL FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES FROM \$89,941,958 TO \$88,941,958.00.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council President McCarthy said that Council Member Lyons was en route and had questions about Veteran's Park and a proposal from Sacred Heart about a dog park. Mr. Flatto said that there had been an original request was drafted that there was no mention of a dog park or Sacred Heart. He said that the City had recently started discussions with Sacred Heart about a variety of issues, but did not include the dog park. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it had been included in the plan and she had not known about it until she read about it. Mr. Nkwo said that the City would most likely build the dog park. Mr. Flatto said that he thought perhaps the Parks Committee had decided to include the dog park. He pointed out that while there may have been open ended discussions, there has been no request to date and it is not listed in Capital Budget Project List.

Council President McCarthy said that Council Member McBride-Lee had requested that a project be added to the Capital Budget for FY 17, \$300,000 for Playground Equipments and Parks Improvements at Trumbull Gardens. Council President McCarthy explained that there had been numerous problems at Trumbull Gardens and that the sports fields had fallen into disrepair.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 9:57 p.m.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked when the Capital List was last updated. She said that she had read something that there had been a previous request to open the community center. Council President McCarthy said that the Housing Authority's focus was the Community Center and the Council should focus on the adjacent fields. There is still a faint outline of a baseball diamond, but it is not usable.

Council Member Brantley asked about whether the City should be working with Public facilities to clear the land. She said that there were many, many pressing issues. She said that they had already committed to the Community Center. Council President McCarthy said that both the BHA and the City had responsibility for maintaining the field. Right now, Trumbull Gardens is a hot spot. Discussion followed.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that the whole City of Bridgeport was a hot spot and that this was just one small request.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Discussion followed about the various details and other parks that need improvement. Council Member Herron asked if there was any security planned for the Trumbull Gardens Park. She said that Trumbull Gardens was decimated. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that Trumbull Garden Community Multi-use Center had been used for a number of different events for all the children from all over the City. She said that Social Services had programs there but they no longer did them there.

Council President McCarthy reminded everyone that this was actually a wish list and that projects that are on the list are there to potentially be approved for bonding by the Council.

Council Member Lyons asked if the comments about Sacred Heart be removed from the Plan. Mr. Nkwo made a note of this.

Council Member Lyons said that Veteran's Park is heavily wooded and there are many different species of animals living in the park. It is one of the few undeveloped parks in Bridgeport. The students leave the Discovery School every day and go to John Winthrop.

Council Member Lyons then listed a number of suggested improvements for security and protection of the park. The introduction of the zip lines in the back has reduced the size of the untouched park. There are also no sidewalks, and the students are walking along the streets when they leave.

Council Member Lyons said that her mission was to make sure that the 90 Acres Park was not developed and there was no building on that park land. She said that there were discussions about the park and that there may be a proposal about using the park land, but she was requesting that the park remain in the control of the City. Mr. Flatto said that when he first saw the language on the document, it was back in February. He said that to the best of his knowledge, no one was trying to do any development on that land.

Council Member Lyons said that she would like to have it stated on the Parks Improvements that improvements be made for Memorial Park just like the other parks. She said that others had requested that City money was being allocated for other parks, she wanted Memorial Park to receive the same thing.

Council Member Brantley asked Council Member Lyons to clarify what she was requesting. Council Member Lyons said that there was a small area by the flagpole that the veterans use and this should be beautified.

Council Member Brantley asked about the Police fix up facility line item. Council Member Burns said that this has been discussed on Thursday and it had to do with a retrofit.

Council Member Brantley asked for more money for sidewalk repair. She said that many trees have pushed up the sidewalk and that the City should not saddle the residents with the cost of replacing the sidewalks. Mr. Nkwo said that the Council Members should call Public Facilities about this. Council Member Burns said that the bond modification had included additional funding for the sidewalks.

Mr. Nkwo explained that frequently, when the roads are replaced, the sidewalks need to be repaired as part of the re-paving job.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked if \$1.5 million could be earmarked for sidewalks because with the beautification efforts, the sidewalks need attention. Council President McCarthy said that the Council could request the extra money for the beautification, but it would still have to be approved by the Council. He said that he thought they could add some money to the beautification because there was already an error that had taken out \$1 million dollars.

Council Member Brantley asked about the \$2.8 million for the street paving. Mr. Flatto said that the reason that there was roadway paving that often involved replacing or repairing the sidewalk, but that the administration had requested a separate line item for sidewalks.

Council Member Herron pointed out that the Fairchild Wheeler golf course had been given money for improvements in the past few years. She wanted to know why they were getting more money. Council Member Burns said that this has been covered very thoroughly by Mr. Ricci.

Council Member Bukovsky asked for clarification on the Lincoln Boulevard project. Council President McCarthy gave a quick overview of the proposed project.

Council Member Olson said that the Council Members needed to be specific when talking about the parks, so that the individual projects don't get lost in the overall budget.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the \$500,000 for Lincoln Boulevard should be eliminated because it was already done and the money can be used elsewhere in the City.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO REMOVE THE \$500,000 FOR LINCOLN BOULEVARD ON EXHIBIT 4-30-16-5.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX IN FAVOR (TAYLOR-MOYE, BURN, BRANTLEY, NIEVES, VIZZO-PANICCIA AND CASCO) AND ONE OPPOSED (PAOLETTO).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO AMEND THE 2017 CAPITAL PLAN WITH THE FOLLOWING FOUR CHANGES:**

- **INCREASE THE LINE ITEM "CITY/RESIDENTIAL BEAUTIFICATION" IN FY 2017 TO \$1,000,000.**
- **ADD THE LINE ITEMS UNDER PUBLIC FACILITIES IN FY 2017: "PLAYGROUND & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AT TRUMBULL GARDENS - \$300,000".**
- **"DONNELLY MEMORIAL PARK - \$25,000"**
- **REMOVE THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE IN THE CAPITAL PLAN FROM VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK - "SUGGESTION TO LOOK FOR PARTNERSHIP ON IMPROVEMENT COSTS WITH SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY".**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

RECESS

Council Member Taylor-Moye declared a recess at 11:04 a.m. She reconvened the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER DOCUMENT TITLED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT 2015-2017 AS EXHIBIT 4-30-16-6.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER DOCUMENT TITLED REVENUE FOR THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT 2015-2017 AS EXHIBIT 4-30-16-7.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Cain said that on Exhibit 4-30-16-6 the overall total percentages for FY16 (Column 7, Total) should read 5.3%. This will be corrected. He proceeded to review the figures on the sheet with the Committee members. Discussion followed. He indicated that the two largest portions of the budget were the Board of Education and Public Safety.

The discussion then moved to how the re-evaluation would affect the taxes on residences.

Council Member Bukovsky suggested that they make a flat percentage cut across all departments. She asked why there was a \$3.5 million allocated on something that had never been included in the budget before. Discussion followed.

Council Member Bukovsky and Council Member Lyons left the meeting at 12:17 p.m.

Mr. Cain said that the State has not finalized their budget yet and that the City was projecting \$202.5 million in intra governmental funding. Council Member Burns then reviewed the various sources of revenue including property taxes, PILOTS, Reimbursements, and Licenses. A detailed discussion followed about why the fines and penalties had decreased.

Council Member Brantley, Council Member Herron and Council Member McBride-Lee left the meeting at 12:34 p.m.

The discussion then moved to the expense side of the City. Council Member Burns listed the contractual obligations including the MERS payment, Pension A & B and other fixed costs. He noted that there were 352 sworn police officers and added that there were new recruits coming onto the force. If the 60 new recruits are added, that will equal 412 sworn official. A question was raised regarding the value of holding off the 3rd recruitment class if it was moved to FY18. Discussion followed about the trade off of hiring a new officer vs. overtime; holiday time and sick time pay outs on page 118.

Council Member Casco left the meeting at 1:22 p.m.

The discussion moved to page 321 and the \$51,322 payout that is required by the union. Mr. Nkwo said that if the City did not receive a \$5 million concession from the unions, the City would have a deficit. The City currently owes the unions \$3.7 million. He also pointed out that when the contracts negotiations are delayed, the City is obligated to pay the employee the back pay differential for the time along with additional overtime, holiday, and sick time wage increases.

Council Member Nieves left the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

Council Member McCarthy asked about Contingency on page 321. He asked about the reserve that the Mayor wants to put in the Fund Balance and why the Mayor put it in Contingency. Mr. Nkwo said that the required reserve is to cover the cost of benefits (MERF, Medicare, and Social Security) when an employee works overtime.

Council Member Burns encouraged everyone to review the material and prepare questions for Tuesday night with the City Attorney's Office. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia encouraged people to email their questions in advance so that the proper documentation can be prepared for the Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
MAY 3, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair;
M. Evette Brantley, Aidee Nieves, Anthony Paoletto, Jose Casco,
AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (6:18 p.m.)

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director

OTHERS: Council President McCarthy, Council Member Jeanette Herron,
Council Member Richard Salter; Council Member Mary McBride-Lee;
Council Member Kathryn Bukovsky; City Attorney R. Christopher Meyer;
Atty. Mark Anastasi, Atty. John Bohannon, Daniel Roach, Tom Gaudett,
Mayor's Office; Council Member

CALL TO ORDER

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

City Attorney Meyer said that the previous administration was fairly hostile to the lawyers. When he took over on Dec 1st. Several attorneys resigned or left. Atty. Meyer said that previously there were hundreds of cases that were reviewed. Atty. Meyer said that Atty. Anastasi was a very fine lawyer. in the past, there has not been depositions, and case preparation. The staff has not been up to the number of support staff needed. He noted that the best work doesn't happen when people are pushed to the limit. The office has been doing defensive litigation rather than offensive litigation.

The support staff has been moved to a general work area. When the general manager left years ago, the support staff was not supervisors. A paralegal has been promoted to Office Manager and is now overseeing the support staff. Now Atty. Meyer receives oversight through the Manager.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Atty. Meyer then gave an overview of all the changes. The office files are being purged and old files removed. He said that there is now a monthly lunch for the Attorney Staff that he pays for from his own pocket.

Atty. Meyer said that when he left the City he was handling about 30 cases, which is a full time load, but he was only a part time attorney. His position was never filled. He said that the request was for some Associate City Attorney's, a paralegal and another position. He said that there was an increasing amount of litigation and the work load will increase.

Atty. Anastasi said that historically, the department has always requested an appropriate number of staff, but those requests have not been approved.

Mr. Nkwo gave a brief description of the items that the personal property claims account would cover.

Council President McCarthy joined the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

Mr. Nkwo said that Atty. Meyer has come to his office and told him that there was no money left in one of the accounts. He said that the extra money was already accounted for through various settlements.

Atty. Bohannon said that the settlements that were cases where the settlement amounts were gone by early in the fiscal year. He gave the details of the judgments.

Council Member Brantley asked for the difference between the Associate City Attorney and an Assistant City Attorney. Atty. Meyer said that an Associate City Attorney cannot practice law on the side, while an Assistant City Attorney is a part time Mayoral appointment and can have a private practice.

Atty. Bohannon said that there was a problem with unfunded mandates, because the office handles FOI requests. If there is a request for information on a police officer, the records have to be reviewed for social security numbers and other personal information.

Council Member Brantley asked about the collecting agents. Atty. Meyer said that they are supervised by the WPCA. Mr. Nkwo said that the WPCA reimburses the City for the collector, who is supervised by a City Attorney. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that there were no notes to indicate that the collecting agents were reimbursed for by the WPCA. Mr. Nkwo made a note of it.

Council Member Burns asked about the current staff. Atty. Meyer reviewed the current staffing situation and listed who left the City's employment when the administration changed. Council Member Burns asked for details on all the positions, which Atty. Meyer reviewed with him.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

Council Member Brantley asked about the legal assistant to the City Attorney. Atty. Meyer said that the staff member now has supervisory functions. This allows Atty. Meyer to have someone that the attorneys can check in with. The discussion moved to the rearrangement of the work area for the paralegals and the location of the collection agents.

Council Member Nieves asked about the fringe benefits on page 66. Mr. Nkwo said that the number on the page was the total of all the benefits. The line marked Personal Property is for claims and the larger amount is for lawsuits. Atty. Meyer said that in addition to the lawsuits, the office handles the claims when property is damaged by vehicles or accidents.

Council President McCarthy asked about the large increase in the settlements. Mr. Nkwo said that if the settlements are too large, then the City has to request that the City defer the money. It becomes a rolling snowball that gets bigger and bigger over time. Atty. Anastasi reminded everyone that a budget and projections are a snapshot in time. They have no way to know what

kind of major litigation may happen. The attorneys have no control over the workload. Atty. Meyer explained that right now, the funds were encumbered already.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked how many cases were in litigation right now. Atty. Meyer said that there were 170 cases and while the office did not plan on settling those cases, they are already under funded because as of December 1st, the settlement fund had already been depleted. Mr. Nkwo said that there had been some reservations that had been set aside for some cases that the City knew it would have to pay out settlements.

Council Member Salter, Council Member Bukovsky and Council Member Herron joined the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Council Member McBride-Lee had a question about the why the Office might have outside attorneys involved. Atty. Meyer explained that there were many different reasons that the City might hire an outside attorney. Sometimes it is someone who is an expert in a particular area. Council Member McBride-Lee said that she thought that the City Attorneys should be handling the cases. Atty. Meyer explained that there are three attorneys and they are already working to the max. He said that he had an excellent staff in whom he had full confidence.

Council Member Casco asked about the difference between the claims and personal injuries line items. Atty. Meyer reviewed the difference. He explained that there were situations where agreements were entered into without the attorneys knowing about the contracts. Council Member Casco asked about the various contracts. Atty. Meyer said that he would not be able to discuss the specific contracts. He added that some of the City owned facilities were not in great shape.

Mr. Nkwo said that the Captain Cove's was no longer in arrears. This was done by the Cove giving up 2.2 acres of land for the digester plant. He said that the Council had approved the contract agreement.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that the Captain's Cove was paid in full. The other two entities are still in arrears.

Council Member Bukovsky asked for clarification on the difference between what the Mayor's proposed budget and what the Attorney's Office was requesting. Mr. Nkwo gave an overview and said that lawyers tended to be chronically late filing their budget. Atty. Meyer explained that this was his first time doing the budget. He then pointed out that the funds were spent by November and December and the increased funds were already encumbered. The amount of litigation is increasing. Discussion followed.

The discussion then moved to the outside attorneys who work in specialized fields. Mr. Nkwo listed some of the various fields that the attorneys may work in, such as utility law. Atty. Anastasi noted that often there are needs for lawyers who specialize in environmental work.

Council Member Smith joined the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about which line the cost of some types of litigation would have been drawn from. Mr. Nkwo pointed it out in the budget book. Atty. Anastasi explained that the City Attorneys also represents the Registrar's Office and the Town Clerk.

Council Member Burns asked about the increase in the City Attorney's salary. Mr. Nkwo said that one of the Deputy Attorneys positions converted into a City Attorney. Atty. Meyer said that on the scale, it was a low salary.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PENDING LITIGATION.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Council Members, the City Attorney's staff and Mr. Nkwo entered into Executive Session at 7:20 p.m. They returned to public Session at 8:17 p.m.

Council Member McBride-Lee and Council Member Salter left the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

RECESS

Council Member Burns called the meeting at 8:17 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:27 p.m.

Council President McCarthy said that now was the time for the Committee members express their thoughts on what they would like to see in the budget. He reviewed the process for making cuts and additions.

Council Member Brantley said that on page 286, there was a salary that was cut for the Sanitarian, who has a Masters degree. That position generates revenue. She pointed out that on page 290, the Housing Code Department had generated over \$100,000 in the past under the former director but last year, the Department only brought in \$14,600. Mr. Nkwo said that the Sanitarian had been receiving Extra Duty pay and that has been removed. She said that she did not think it was right to cut the salaries, Discussion followed.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked for a list of the various union contracts that had been settled and which ones were still pending.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the BOE could be discussed at the end and also suggested that if there was any funding discovered that had not been allocated, that it be given to the BOE.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the increase in Central Grants Office. Mr. Nkwo said that they were looking to expand.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had expected to see decreases in the office equipment because they were supposed to be consolidated and the costs were supposed to decrease, but they were increasing. She said that she would like to see the costs cut by a percentage.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like to see a 25% decrease on Personnel Services. She said that this was a bogus budget book and that the administration has not given the Council Members accurate information. Some positions have been eliminated or transferred and there are other positions that have been added that are not listed in the budget.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked why the Police Department had an outside consultant and pointed out that since the former police chief is working in the EOC and there is an Acting Chief, the position should be Unfunded. Mr. Nkwo said that the position was on page 146 on Line Item 56810. Discussion followed.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked about the Library funding, which is one mill. Mr. Nkwo said that the value of a mill is 5.8 and the revised budget is 6.6 mills. He said that Mr. Hughes had emailed him and said that the Library Board would be making up the difference from their Library Fund. Mr. Nkwo said that if they hire personnel with that funding, there may be a problem in the following year. Mr. Nkwo said that he did not have to do anything with the budget since they would make up their own shortfall.

Council Member Herron asked if anyone had heard whether or not Ms. Rabinowitz had reached out to the unions to shorten the school year by two days.

Council Member Bukovsky said that with the straight numbers, if a 10% cut is done across the board, it would bring the budget down and possibly allow for more money for the BOE. She thanked the members of the Committee for all this hard work.

Council Member Bukovsky left the meeting at 9:08 p.m.

Council Member Brantley asked about the two positions that had been in the Lighthouse and were now being transferred back to the CAO's Office. Mr. Nkwo explained that Ms. Papa had requested the positions be moved back to CAO's Office.

Council Member Brantley asked if the Office of Accountability could be eliminated. Council President McCarthy said that the position did not exist right now. Mr. Nkwo said that the Mayor can decide how his office is run. He is in the current year's budget.

Council Member Brantley expressed concern about the fact that there were contracts that were still pending. Mr. Nkwo pointed out that there were always contracts pending, and some of them took years to settle. The City makes accommodations for those situations.

Council Member Brantley Said that the Mayor had run on the idea that he would not increase taxes but he was not following through.

Council Member Nieves said that she understood that there needed to cuts, and did not want to cut services. She suggested that the Committee look at things like Mr. Appleby suggested such as the uniformity of the radios and other small changes. She said that it would important to cut where there needs to be cut.

Council Member Paoletto said that Council Member Nieves had mentioned that Public Facilities had cut a number of items and that Mr. Ricci had asked for one position and he should get it because the department gave up a lot.

Council Member Casco asked about the Deputy CAO. Mr. Nkwo said that the information was on page 100. He said that when he looked at the budget, the position was transferred.

Council Member Casco said that he would like to support the BOE and the Library. He added that support for the Lighthouse would be important for the students. He said that Civil Services needed all their positions because they handle the testing and the hiring of many of the employees.

Council Member Nieves asked how much the City saved by taking back the Extra Duty pay. Mr. Nkwo said that is was approximately \$275,000. He then gave an overview of the debt.

Council Member Nieves said that she had asked for a list of the jobs that were changed and a list of the jobs that were eliminated. Mr. Nkwo said that he had given the Committee members the list of new hires and a list of jobs that were eliminated.

Council Member Nieves said that she would like to know what are current budgeted vacancies that will make it into the upcoming fiscal years. Mr. Nkwo said that he thought it was on the next year's table.

Council Member Herron asked if there could be a list of the jobs that were reclassified. Mr. Nkwo made a note of it.

Council Member Herron said that one employee was fired and that person was responsible for entering the Federal information and that the computer training is intensive. She said that it would be critical to maintain the position because of the Federal funding.

Council Member Burns then spoke about pages 319-321 which deals with debt service. He said that the Council Member needs to make some decisions on these figures and what they want to do.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service

City of Bridgeport
Budget and Appropriations
Budget Hearing
May 3, 2016

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
MAY 4, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Scott Burns, Co-chair; Kathryn Bukovsky; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia; Jose Casco

OTHER: Angel dePara; John Marshall Lee; Beth Lazar; Nessah Smith; Michelle Lyons; Jeanette Herron

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye called the public hearing to order at 6:05 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING

Barbara Lazar

OPPOSE GANIM'S LIBRARY BUDGET

I oppose Ganim's Library budget because he allocated ZERO dollars to Professional Librarians. Ganim is trying hard to eliminate the position of Professional Librarians altogether from the city budget. Ganim's budget also gives the Library only \$5.8 million when they need \$6.8 to maintain their current levels of service and staffing.

The Library is a great resource for me and thousands of Bridgeport residents. The Library offers free access to books, newspapers, CDs, DVDs, computers and the internet. They also offer free classes from yoga & Tai Chi to cooking and poetry.

Trained, skilled, qualified Librarians are essential for the running of the Library. Librarians know how to help patrons with research, how to archive material, how to acquire and catalogue materials for the library.

Reinstate funding for Professional Librarians. Do NOT eliminate the position of Professional Librarians. Give the Library the \$6.8 million dollars they need to continue to be a great service and resource to the Bridgeport community.

From: Beth Lazar, 1241 Main St. Bridgeport.

Tara Smiley (105 Harbor Avenue)

Ms. Smiley came forward and stated that she is a teacher at Black Rock School. She stated that being a teacher is her second career, and that her first was in the business sector, and that she has taught Kindergarten, First and Second grade. She stated that for the first twenty days of school, they teach the children how to be students and assess them to determine where they are. She stated that she has 20 students to look after, 5 of which have disruptive tendencies such as self-harm, and running out of the class, building and playground. Ms. Smiley stated that she is responsible for keeping these children safe and educating them, and that she is unable to do so alone. She stated that her paraprofessional changed the world for the children, and made it possible to address most of their needs. She stated that the paraprofessional's presence has allowed them to raise expectations as high as possible, and feel comfortable keeping the students safe and on task. Ms. Smiley asked that the Council support funding for the schools, as they need people in class, not in middle management. She stated that the future lies in education, and that she does not feel heard by the union. She stated that teachers and administrators are told that giving up days is not an option, but paraprofessionals are being mandated to do so. She asked that the Council keeps the funding for the children, as it is the most important thing they can do in the City.

Ashli Giles-Perkins (2612 North Avenue #G-5)

Ms. Giles-Perkins came forward. She stated that she was raised in Bridgeport, went to Central Magnet High and graduated from the University of New Haven with a double major in criminal justice and psychology. She stated that she is an activist and is involved with CT Corps, Progressives and the NAACP.

Ms. Giles-Perkins stated that she knows what it is like not to have everything she needs in a classroom, and can remember books being taken off of the school curriculum, as well as uniforms for the girl's basketball team never being delivered. She stated that she feels as if things are getting worse and that children are getting less and less each year. Ms. Giles-Perkins highlighted the following planned cuts:

1. Cutting the school year from 182 days to 180 days.
2. Providing City bus passes rather than service to certain schools.
3. Extending bussing distance from 1 mile to 1.5 miles.
4. Closing two schools.
5. Cutting the talented and gifted program.
6. Cutting special education coordinators, paraprofessionals and homeschools coordinators.

Ms. Giles-Perkins stated that this is only half the list of intended cuts, and even if the changes do take place, they don't address the larger problems. She stated that this is just a bandaid to break even and that it will negatively impact 22,000 students. She stated that their funds have been cut due to budgetary circumstances beyond their control, and coupled with state cuts, the average

family is already looking at a serious decline in several quality of life factors. She stated that the students and constituents suffer, and that the City needs to be investing in education. Ms. Giles-Perkins stated that while it was difficult for her, she can't imagine what it was like to be part of a family without her level of support system. She stated that there is a lack of investment in schools, and that they keep offering students the short end of the stick and expecting them to prosper. Ms. Giles-Perkins asked the council members for suggestions of what the community could do to help alleviate this situation.

John Marshall Lee (30 Beacon Street)

Mr. Lee thanked the Council members for the increase in time due to the number of participants. Mr. Lee expressed his concern regarding the lack of funding for the Board of Education and implored the Council to consider reallocating other unnecessary amounts towards school funding.

ADJOURNMENT

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye closed the Public Hearing at 6:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Ramos
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
MAY 4, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia; Tom McCarthy, Council President; Aidee Nieves; Kathryn Bukovsky; Jeanette Herron; Michelle Lyons

OTHER: Angel dePara; Tom Gaudett; Nestor Nkwo

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye called the meeting to order at 6:44 PM.

Council President McCarthy stated for the record that he had to leave the meeting due to a prior commitment to another meeting.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye directed those seated to turn to page 321.

Council Member Paoletto, Mr. Gaudett, and Council Member Feliciano entered at 6:47 PM.

Council Member Casco entered at 6:48 PM.

Council Member Brantley entered at 6:50 PM.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the proposed \$100,000 noted any specified information about where it will originate from in the revenue summary, and if it is movable to increase. Co-Chair Burns stated that he didn't believe they received anything, but that there is property and land around steel point that still needs to be dealt with and sold off to developers. Co-Chair Burns stated that the City seems to have been in the process of selling different parcels fairly regularly, to the point where the projection of \$100,000 seems to be low.

Council President McCarthy asked if there were other spots in the budget that account for the sale of City property revenue. He stated that if the amount is only \$100,000, it wouldn't be unreasonable to drive that number up if there is no other line accounting for said sales. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia suggest, if it is in fact the sole line relating to sale of City property, that the amount should be increased to \$500,000.

Council President McCarthy asked what the amount was for the last full year, and Co-Chair Burns stated that it was \$877,000, but that this year it was \$275,000. Council President McCarthy suggested that they consult Mr. Nkwo and follow his suggestion. Co-Chair Taylor-Moye suggested that amount be \$275,000. Council President McCarthy stated that unless they can identify a property that will bring in substantial income, \$500,000 may be a bit aggressive. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia suggested that they change the amount to \$350,000 to split the difference.

Council Member Bukovsky asked if there was definitive information on the properties, and if there was a possible buyer for the Whittier School property. She stated that the City also has the bank building in Black Rock that has yet to be sold.

Council Member Feliciano suggested they look in the Public Facilities line for additional properties.

Council Member Bukovsky directed those seated to the revenue sheet Mr. Spencer prepared for the committee, appendix 442-016 #7. She stated that there is a sale of property line item that shows some numbers, and that there is a little more than indicated in the book, though she is unclear where it aggregated from.

Mr. Gaudett stated that page 10 features a revenue summary that may be helpful.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye asked Council President McCarthy to speak on the appropriation funds.

Council President McCarthy stated that the City always has roughly \$1.5 million in contingency, which is effectively the City's emergency money.

Co-Chair Burns directed those seated to the item marked Appropriation Detail. He stated that the Mayor appears to be seeking \$5 million in attrition and concessions. He stated that those amounts are reserved for contracted salaries, which is a net to the City's benefit of about \$1.2 million. He stated that the contingency goes to their fund balance, which at present is about \$13 million. Co-Chair Burns stated that the contingency is a last ditch savings account for events such as catastrophic weather events and other out of the normal instances. He stated that, at ideal standard, there should be about \$40 million in the fund, and that their fund is at roughly 30% of that. He stated, for this budget year, that there was a proposed \$1.5 million that did not go in due to shortages.

Council President McCarthy stated that under Public Facilities, Item 148- Sale of Scrap Metal, may be where the additional property sale amounts may be.

Co-Chair Burns stated that contingency funds are a feature of good fiscal management, and that he would suggest they boost their fund balance to get the amount up to a reasonable level that

looks good to the credit rating agencies to borrow at an optimal rate. He stated that these are not normal or optimal times, and that while they hopefully don't have to use their fund balance this year, he would like to do the responsible things and put some money in the budget. However, he stated that this may not be the year to put in the requested \$3.5 million.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye suggested \$1.5 million be put into the fund, and \$2 million be taken away. Co-Chair Burns stated that they should have a frank discussion with Mr. Ken Flatto to determine whether or not they need to use their fund balance this year. If the City does, they should try and replenish it, and if it does not, then it can stay flat.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia expressed her support for the \$1.5 million recommendation, and suggested that they ask Mr. Flatto to present the next night regarding that matter.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye stated that once they discuss the matter with Mr. Flatto, they will have a definitive answer about the correct course of action for the fund.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked Co-Chair Burns about the properties at Steel Point, as she was under the impression that the developers own whatever is over there. Co-Chair Burns stated that he did not believe this was the case.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia stated that the land development agreement the City has is sectioned out so different portions are developed at different times. She stated that the only revenue source would involve the application to zoning and zoning permitting.

Council Member Feliciano asked if the amount could relate to Seaview Avenue, and Co-Chair Burns stated that it was possible, but that he didn't know for sure. Council Member Feliciano stated that the sale of the Waltersville School may also be accounted for as well, and Co-Chair Burns stated that they would inquire about this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia stated that, as long as the Board of Education has deeded the property back to the City, the City could turn a profit. However, she stated that on any given school, they have only received a maximum of \$350,000.

Co-Chair Burns directed those seated to the line titled Required Reserve. He stated that Mr. Nkwo told the committee that this line includes MERF, Social Security, unbudgeted overtime, Medicare and other costs. He stated that his feeling was that these items are covered elsewhere by department, and that this looks to be a large cushion. He stated that this item was not a line for the past 2 years, that it feels superfluous and thinks it is a place they could save money.

Council Member Nieves stated that Mr. Nkwo stated that the MERF payments were budgeted into that that line because spousal payments are included in the MERF payments, just in case someone dies.

Council Member Herron stated that they passed an item in Hartford to delay MERF payments.

Mr. Nkwo entered at 7:17 PM.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye asked Mr. Nkwo to explain item 57-010. Mr. Nkwo stated that this amount is a required reserve, and that between the overtimes, the City is supposed to contribute to MERF. He stated that they are currently going to be over by \$3.5 million in MERF, and that he can generate a report of all MERF per department.

Council Member Brantley asked what the item passed in Hartford has to do with their current MERF situation. Mr. Nkwo stated that the two items have nothing to do with one another, and that their relation to MERF is strictly on current salaries being drawn on a weekly basis.

Mr. Nkwo stated that the Police Department always has overtime, and that the allotted amount is what the City hopes to contribute to the State and pension fund. He stated that this is merely based on salaries and overtime, and that this is the effect of making police overtime pensionable. He stated that this was a very expensive move.

Council Member Brantley asked how the City could prevent this expense in the future. Mr. Nkwo stated that they could attempt to negotiate with the Police Union, but the likelihood of them wanting to give up this aspect of the contract is slim. He stated that the Council can pick 2 members to sit in on their contract negotiations in June.

Council Member Lyons stated that previously, Chief Nardozi was hired specifically to cut down on overtime expenses and asked who is in charge of this at present. Mr. Nkwo stated that the Police Department had an entire annual budget of \$4.3 million when the new administration took over, and that as of December 1st, they only had \$600,000. He stated that if they had continued with that overtime trend, the department would have spent \$10.2 million by the end of the fiscal year. He stated that they have tightened their belts significantly, but that only so much damage control can be done at this point. He stated that the department does have vacancies, and that all things being equal, if you hire a police officer, the overall department overtime costs are supposed to go down proportionately to the level of that officer, but recently this has not been the case.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if Mr. Nkwo could get a list of where and why overtime was used, and stated that there are a lot of factors that go into overtime, including unforeseeable situations involving weather, fire and political visitation.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye stated that she would like to see if it would be possible to cut down on overtime.

Council Member Lyons suggested that the specifics requested by Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia could help the council members to identify patterns that may be exacerbating overtime costs.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked for comparable overtime statements for Emergency Services, Fire, and Public Facilities as well, organized by code item and department for this fiscal year. Mr. Nkwo stated that he would request the information, as well as reasoning for the overtime, as he typically receives the raw numbers.

Co-Chair Burns stated that his feeling, for the item regarding the Reserve, would be that it could be reduced due to MERF payments throughout the budget, and asked why MERF appears in this item. Mr. Nkwo stated that the reason it appears in this item is because when a salary is calculated, it subsequently calculates MERF on that salary and not overtime. Co-Chair Burns expressed his concern that the item is also to cover any number of other costs. Mr. Nkwo stated that the other things it covers are overtime related fringes, and that they have to pay MERF regardless. Co-Chair Burns stated that the overtime is effectively killing the budget, and Mr. Nkwo stated, as in the past overtime was not pensionable, it now is and the City has to contribute to it as well as the State. Mr. Nkwo stated that they could cut the item, but it will build the deficit outright, as the City will still have to pay.

Council Member Feliciano directed those seated to the Probate & Barnum Museum under 54-450. Mr. Nkwo stated that the City has an obligation under state law to fund a probate court, and that the amount for Barnum is the City's annual supportive contribution. Council Member Feliciano asked if the museum needs the contribution, and Mr. Nkwo answered in the affirmative, stating that the money goes towards annual operating expenses and paying the docents.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye directed those seated to the item marked Supportive Contributions (59-500), and Mr. Nkwo stated that Barnum has money specifically earmarked, separate from the other contributions. Mr. Nkwo stated that this item accounts for the City's contributions to different organizations, such as the Cancer Institute, Red Cross and other non-profits. Co-Chair Taylor-Moye requested a list of those organizations.

Mr. Gaudett stated that this line is at the Mayor's discretion, for the purpose of supporting non-profits. He stated that the administration is looking at ways to impose procedures that make sure the funds are not used frivolously.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye asked if it would be feasible to cut some of the Supportive Contributions funding this year and bring it back next year, and Mr. Gaudett stated that it would be at the committee's discretion.

Council Member Feliciano note that the \$93,000 allotted for the contributions item is the same amount as their stipends. Mr. Nkwo stated that this is purely coincidental.

Council Member Lyons asked for a list of the supportive contributions made with these funds. Mr. Nkwo stated that he would procure this information, and that the committee will see some of those payments are made prior to this administration.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye asked Mr. Nkwo about concessions. Mr. Nkwo stated that he is not in a position to discuss that matter, Labor Relations is.

Co-Chair Burns stated that the Mayor is looking for \$5 million in furlough days, contractual givebacks and pay freezes from unions. He stated that two years ago, a similar move was made through the budget process and it was difficult. He stated, on the flip side, they are budgeted for \$3.7 million for contracted salary increases, and that they have a schedule of pending contracts, including the Nurses' Union (which has not been paid yet) and the Police Union. Mr. Nkwo stated that the Printer's Union is up again, but that those individuals number only 5 or 6 employees.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye asked how raises are given to employees. Mr. Nkwo stated that they are negotiated through the unions, and the fact that union contracts haven't been settled for 5 years doesn't mean the problem has gone away. He stated that once the City settles, retroactive payments are required regardless of leaving the job or retirement.

Council Member Herron stated, regarding concessions and union contracts, that if they don't place money in this item, the ramifications of not paying out will be worse as a whole. Mr. Nkwo stated that the situation with the LIUNA supervisors stands as an example of this, and that it is part of the current year's deficit.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye inquired about the section marked Financing Uses. Mr. Nkwo stated that it is a summary of the previous line items.

Council Member Feliciano asked if the committee has projected budgets for each department if they were to decrease their expenses by 10% and 15%. Mr. Nkwo stated that they just did this today. Council Member Feliciano requested the numbers, and stated that her department handed in two budgets- one uncut and another decreased by 10%. Mr. Nkwo asked that Council Member Feliciano send him the email requesting that the department do this. Council Member Feliciano stated that she would, and that it could be helpful for departments to do this. Mr. Nkwo stated that he would check and ask Labor Relations. Co-Chair Taylor-Moye stated that they touched on this issue a bit last night.

Council Member Brantley asked if the CAO office did some cuts today. Mr. Nkwo answered in the negative, and stated that there was a meeting with major department heads asking them to be

prepared or to turn in their gap closing measures, possibly into next year. Mr. Nkwo stated that they are already working simultaneously, and that administrative negotiations are ongoing on a daily basis. Council Member Brantley asked if the Council would have that information by Saturday, and Mr. Nkwo stated that CAO called a meeting today. Mr. Nkwo stated that the CAO's office is preparing for the worst case scenario regarding the State's budget.

Council Member Brantley asked why some supervisor's salaries were reduced if the unions were granted an increase. Mr. Nkwo stated that everyone received their agreed upon increases, and that the City gave people \$5,000 - 20,000 raises for extra duty that were then taken away. Council Member Brantley asked why some of the salaries were changed. Mr. Nkwo clarified that those were two separate issues, and what the union was requesting was a constant living increase, distinct from the signed agreements, which say the City can retract the extra duties. Mr. DePara stated that there is a certain level of subjectivity to the signed agreements.

Council Member Nieves stated, regarding item 115, that the committee has been going back and forth regarding the same thing, but that the Building Department hasn't been looked at yet. Co-Chair Burns stated that they need to decide as a Council whether or not to go along with the \$5 million concessions as anticipated salary changes or not. Co-Chair Burns stated that if they accept the budget as it stands, they are telling the unions of the City that they need to step up to provide \$5 million in some way or another to be negotiated through the Mayor's Office. Mr. Nkwo stated that his practical recommendation is for the committee to approve the built in concessions as is, as they are ultimately for the City's benefit. Mr. Nkwo stated that the City needs to set a precedent with the smaller unions, which makes it easier for the City to do the same during arbitration with the larger unions, such as Police.

Council Member Nieves stated that the Building Department does bring in revenue, and asked if the building permit fees are included in the total. Mr. Nkwo stated that the Building Department accounts for \$741,000, so a chunk of the fee increase is attributed to the Building Department.

Council Member Feliciano expressed her concern that some unions will engage in concessions while others will not. She stated that her own union was forced to give 6 days while NAGE, a much larger union with over 700 employees, gave 0. She stated for the record that she wants to see the concessions take place across the board, and that every union will be asked for said concessions.

Mr. Nkwo stated, for clarity, that he met with the Labor Relations Director and 5-6 unions as a group twice. He stated that even if the contract is agreed and settled, they are still talking and progressing.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye stated that they cannot wait for negotiation, and have to go forward with the information they have. Mr. Nkwo stated that the administration is taking the risk and they

have to be confident that they are going to prevail, and one way or another, they will get to their goal.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye thanked Mr. Nkwo for negotiating, and Mr. Nkwo stated that he hopes he is being as helpful and direct as possible.

Council Member Nieves directed the committee members to page 253, and stated that she had thought some other departments were consolidating members into the Health Department. Mr. Nkwo clarified that employees of the Building Department have to possess certified expertise in their trade, and thus are too specific to qualify.

Council Member Lyons directed the committee members to page 254 and the section addressing new single family house permits. Mr. Nkwo stated that, in aggregate, you do not generally look at the Building Department budget by individual line item. Mr. Nkwo stated that if they are not making money in one line, they make it in another.

Council Member Lyons asked for a further explanation on item 41-528, regarding follow-up information sent to single family homes with more than 4 individuals in the occupying family. Council President McCarthy stated that this relates to the housing code, which is separate from the Building Department. Mr. Nkwo stated that the Building Department has inspectors who will go to the home and make sure it is in accordance with code, but that it has nothing to do with permits. Mr. Nkwo further stated that the inspector can erect a sign to tell someone to stop construction, and Council Member Lyons asked if there could be revenue made off of that action. Mr. Nkwo stated that it would require an ordinance change.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye directed those seated to the section regarding the City Attorney's Office budget.

Co-Chair Burns stated that they have to make some hard decisions, and that the consensus was that the committee wants to move some money to the Board of Education budget and save some money for the taxpayers. He stated that City Attorney Meyer came in the previous day and made the case for the budget, stating that there are currently 13 lawyers on staff, 8 of whom are full-time with one vacancy for an associate city attorney. At present, there are 8 full-time associate city attorneys, 1 city attorney and 1 deputy city attorney, which is a part-time job at 20 hours a week for \$100,000 a year. The assistant city attorney slot is budgeted for 5 positions, and there are currently 3 employees with that title. Co-Chair Burns stated that the assistant city attorney position is a part-time role, and is effectively contracted work. The addition of a legal assistant would replace the vacant office manager position. There are 2 legal secretaries at \$35,000 each, 2 collection aids paid by the WPCA and 2 paralegals, though the City Attorney's Office would like a third. The Office additionally requested 1 more associate attorney and a clerical assistant for the front office. Co-Chair Burns stated that there are currently 4 department vacancies.

Council Member Brantley commented that the assistant city attorneys are appointed by the Mayor, and have their own private practices. She suggested that the committee examine those individuals. Mr. Nkwo stated that though those positions are appointed by the Mayor, this does not mean that they were appointed by the new administration, and some have been on staff for over 20 years.

Co-Chair Burns asked for more detailed information regarding the collection aids. Mr. Nkwo directed those seated to page 28 and Object Code 45354. Mr. Nkwo stated that this relates to WPCA Collection reimbursement, and for the City spending \$104,000, they pull in \$650,000 and a percentage of what the employees collect. Mr. Nkwo stated that the aids' job is to collect the late WPCA fees, and that the City collects a fixed percentage of those collections. Co-Chair Burns asked if the salaries for the collection aids (\$84,000) for the next fiscal year come out of the general fund. Mr. Nkwo answered in the affirmative, and stated that they have to incur some costs, and that the money the City receives is to offset the costs.

Co-Chair Burns asked, in terms of the personnel side, if they have any sense of anything changing or if the current costs look as if they will remain flat. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia stated, in regards to the request paralegal, that the previous night Atty. Meyer stated that sometimes the office's paralegals miss several of their legal wordings and that this then becomes an issue for FOIS. She then asked what duties the new paralegal would perform, and why the role would be important if they cannot do the specifically required work.

Council Member Paoletto stated, in response to Co-Chair Burns' questions, that he personally did not think they should be looking to cut the positions for the City Attorney Office, as Atty. Meyer stressed last night how overworked the attorneys are. He stated that the concentration of the paralegals would be better if the work were more well-distributed, and that this will in fact save money in the long-term.

Council Member Brantley stated that Atty. Meyer stated that several of the attorneys working are technically part-time positions, but that they work full-time hours. She then asked if those attorneys receive overtime pay, and Mr. Nkwo answered in the negative. Mr. Nkwo stated that a deputy city attorney puts in an immense number of hours beyond what he is paid for. Council President McCarthy stated that the City is probably getting more free overtime and aggregate from this department than any other.

Council Member Lyons stated that a number of departments are overworked, and that the problem the committee is facing is that every department has a justification for more funding. She stated that everyone is working for double in this day and age, and while it is difficult, they still have a budget to consider.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye stated that they must do their budgetary due diligence in spite of the difficulties. She asked that the Mayor sit down and discuss the efficacy of their proposed cuts and the departmental needs, and Mr. Nkwo stated that he could ask and that this is a good idea.

Council Member Feliciano stated that if they intended to start cutting positions and people, they should look closely at the OPED budget, as their requested funds increased from \$194,000 to \$235,000 to account for one position. Co-Chair Taylor-Moye stated that they would first need to finish with the City's Attorneys.

Council Member Herron expressed her concern and stated that she found it odd that when it comes to the City, there are no mandatory concessions, when union concessions are mandatory.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia stated that the Council has time to hold an informational session if they so desire to glean specifics from each department. She stated that the questions being asked are constructive, but that they need to finalize suggestions and cuts in the next few days and that they need to stay the course by going department by department, making notes, and sending suggestions back to the City side in order to find a way to least negatively impact the constituents. She suggested that they do not fund one of the requested paralegals, and that they choose not to fund the vacant assistant city attorney position at this time.

Co-Chair Burns stated that they could likely shave \$50,000 off of the personal property claims line item, as this fiscal year they paid out \$92,000, 3 of the last 4 years the expenditure didn't exceed \$100,000, and this year the suggested budget is \$200,000. Mr. Nkwo stated that they could feasibly take \$50,000. Co-Chair Burns stated that the amount is likely due to concerns about high exposure cases, and that the City's attorneys are doing a great job, however this is an increase of 60% over the previous year's amount allotted to this line.

Co-Chair Burns directed those stated to Item 51099 regarding Contracted Salaries. He stated that the item has not reached its budgeted threshold for the past few years, but that it also refers to expert council witnesses. He stated that they could likely save some money on this item.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia directed those seated to Item 56130 regarding Legal Services and Outside Counsel.

Co-Chair Burns stated his concern for the item regarding Legal Services, as both previous years the Department was quite a bit over. Mr. Nkwo stated that the amounts vary and cannot be predicted, as they are calculated depending on the case.

Co-Chair Burns stated that the committee is, in summation, looking to make two personnel changes and two line item changes.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye noted a small amount in the City Attorney's budget and asked what it is to be used for. Mr. Nkwo stated that he did not know, but would find out.

Council Member Casco suggested that the committee cut some of the funds for personnel from Legal Services and Outside Counsel, then it will lessen the legal service requests in turn. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked how much Council Member Casco suggested cutting and from where. Council Member Casco suggested that they take \$100,000 from item 56130. Mr. Nkwo stated that this line relates to uniquely skilled individuals, including those with forensic specialty and utility lawyers, who are needed for their expertise. Council Member Brantley suggested that they hold off on cutting the amount until they see the information Mr. Nkwo returns with tomorrow. Council Member Casco stated that the amount requested for litigation services is doubled, and suggested that they remove \$15,000 from that line.

Council Member Feliciano noted that the salary for the Deputy Director of OPED went from \$194,000 to \$235,000. Council Member Nieves stated that Mr. Nkwo had previously told them that this amount would be allotted to the land use director, a position not previously in existence. Mr. Nkwo stated that the land use director was originally supposed to be one with the deputy director of OPED, and unfortunately, when that individual was hired his employees were making more than him and ultimately, the position did not work out. Council Member Feliciano asked why the position needs to be filled now, after it has been vacant for 2-3 years. Co-Chair Burns stated that the position is in the charter, and includes Inland Wetland matters, due to the fact that Bridgeport is a shoreline city. Council Member Feliciano stated that there are a number of positions in the charter that the City doesn't presently have filled. Mr. Nkwo stated that he will speak to the department.

Council Member Feliciano stated that she thought one of the deputy directors in OPED overlapped with the grants office, and Mr. Nkwo stated that this relates to the person who takes care of the CDBG grants.

Council President McCarthy stated that there are frequent complaints that OPED is understaffed, and that there are other ways to fix this, but they wanted more oversight.

Council Member Feliciano stated that the clerical assistant positions are valued at \$28,000 and office specialists are valued at \$66,000 and asked if the positions are necessary.

Co-Chair Burns stated that, in general, regarding OPED, that they want Bridgeport to grow and get bigger. He stated the Bridgeport's tax base is heavily residential, and that his personal point of view is that OPED needs to be capable as possible. He stated that if anything can be done to accelerate economic development, he is behind that.

Council Member Feliciano argued that those positions do not accelerate development. Mr. Nkwo stated that to center knowledge on one person, the OPED director, is problematic, as if that

person leaves, they take all of said knowledge with them. Council Member Feliciano stated that she does not understand why this position is now necessary after not having it for 3 years. Co-Chair Taylor-Moye stated that she can request further information about the position for the committee.

Council Member Brantley asked if the two anti-blight employees will be moved to the Housing Department, and Mr. Nkwo answered in the affirmative.

Co-Chair Burns stated, in regards to the marketing services for the appropriation side, they were budgeted last year for \$180,000 and only spent around \$70,000. He stated that they are now budgeted for \$150,000, and stated that he was unsure if they needed more, less or what constituted marketing services. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia stated that she didn't believe they would need to increase the funding in that line, as it is under the operational fringe benefits.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye noted that the item Supportive Contributions went from \$63,000 back up to \$110,000. Mr. Nkwo stated that the \$63,000 is a year to date expense. Council Member Paoletto requested more information regarding this item, and Mr. Nkwo stated that he could bring a print out, and that some of the aspects of this item are commitments the City has.

In regards to the CAO's Office, Mr. Nkwo stated that, off the top of his head, there are two positions that are to be moved regarding the Lighthouse Program. He stated that the City and CAO are essentially two divisions in one. Council Member Brantley asked if the two had combined offices, and Mr. Nkwo answered in the affirmative, stating that it may look bloated, but that this is the way it has been for years. Council Member Brantley asked if there is only one position from the Lighthouse Program, and Mr. Nkwo answered in the affirmative. Council Member Brantley asked if this added to the increase, and Mr. Nkwo answered in the affirmative, and stated that there are savings left in the Lighthouse Program.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye directed those seated to the item marked Personnel Services. Mr. Nkwo stated that this refers to pre-moving positions. Council President McCarthy stated that there is a problem when looking at the year to date, as the positions being transferred aren't being counter against the CAO's office. Mr. Nkwo stated that those employees are still being paid out of Lighthouse.

Council Member Lyons asked what they plan to do with the Lighthouse, and Mr. Nkwo stated, as far as he knows, they plan on keeping it.

Co-Chair Burns stated that, while he was not present for the night OPM and CAO presented, he has asked the Director for job titles, descriptions and salaries, as well as organizational charts, but has not received them. He stated that he has not received a straight answer from CAO regarding the jobs being performed per salaries, and while Mr. Nkwo received titles and a chart with salaries, he wants to know what they go to and how they benefit the City. Co-Chair Taylor-

Moye asked if it would be possible to get that information, no later than Friday, in the Council's bins for Saturday. Mr. DePara stated that he will brief the Director of CAO to provide the information as soon as possible.

Council Member Nieves directed those seated to the item regarding Minority Business Enterprise 107.

Council Member Casco directed those seated to the item regarding Personal Services and asked why the requested amount of funding is so high. Mr. Nkwo stated that they are seeing the monetary indicator of the transfer of the assistant project manager from Lighthouse. Mr. Nkwo stated that the current year is \$171,000, and with the necessary calculations, there isn't any actual increase. He stated that the position must have initially been hired at a lower salary. Mr. Nkwo stated that they have put the employee where they will now be accountable.

Co-Chair Taylor-Moye asked that the next meeting be devoid of side conversations.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia stated that they are missing the department's stated goals, and Mr. Nkwo stated that he can gather and provide them.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER THE MULTI-PAGE PACKET SUBMITTED BY CO-CHAIR BURNS AS EXHIBIT 5416-1.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASCO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Ramos
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION
BUDGET HEARINGS
MAY 5, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Scott Burns, Co-chair
AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Anthony Paoletto, M. Evette
Brantley, Aidee Nieves (8:39 p.m.), Council President
Thomas McCarthy

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ken Flatto, Finance Director

OTHERS: Council Member Nessah Smith, Council Member Richard
Salter, Council Member Jeanette Herron, Council Member Mary
McBride-Lee, Council Member Kathryn Bukovsky; Council
Member John Olson, Council Member Michelle Lyons, Council Member
Jack Banta, Tom Gaudett, Mayor's Office; John Gomes, CAO, Angel
dePara, CAO's Office

CALL TO ORDER.

Council Member Burns called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m. A quorum was present.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADD A DOCUMENT DATED 05-05-16 CURRENT LABOR UNIONS' STATUS AS EXHIBIT 05-05-16-1.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADD A DOCUMENT DATED 05-05-16 B&A FROM F. RABINOWITZ AS EXHIBIT 05-05-16-2.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADD A DOCUMENT DATED 05-05-16 FROM ED LAVERNOICH AS EXHIBIT 05-05-16-3.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADD A DOCUMENT TITLED MEDICARE, SOCIAL SECURITY & MERF AS EXHIBIT 05-05-16-24**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADD A DOCUMENT TITLED DURATION OF UNION CONTRACTS AS EXHIBIT 05-05-16-5.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADD A DOCUMENT TITLED CITY OF BRIDGEPORT G/L ACCOUNT DETAILS AS EXHIBIT 05-05-16-6.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Lyons said that the answer to the third question on Exhibit 5-5-16-2 regarding Title 1 funding compliance was unacceptable. She said that she wanted more information on this issue by Saturday. Mr. Nkwo made a note of it.

Mr. Flatto said that a tentative State agreement had been expected, but an agreement was not reached, so they will be having a special session next week. Mr. Flatto said that there were some items on page 48, which included the sales tax reimbursement. At this time, the sales tax reimbursement may be reduced. He gave the details. Originally, Bridgeport had expected to receive \$17 million dollars, but now the estimate has been reduced to \$7 million.

Mr. Flatto said that there was also an adjustment on the car tax. Originally it was expected to be 32 mills, but now is expected to be 37 mills. Mr. Nkwo said that there were too many dynamics involved to do accurate projects. He said that the BOE and the City was cut by \$10.7 million.

Mr. Flatto said that House and Senate closed all the legislation last night and they were able to secure an amendment that would modify payments to the State pension. He gave a brief overview of the change and it appears that there will be \$4.8 million dollars credit from this year's payment. There are local pension obligations that still need to be met and it might be a good move to use some of the money from the \$4.8 to pay that off.

Mr. Nkwo said that the Bridgeport delegation should be commended for their hard work and the Mayor was able to smooth the troubled waters with the legislators. It was not easy. Hartford tried to get the same amount, but only Bridgeport was able to pull it off. Mr. Flatto said that the 20 year old pension bonds would mature soon and that would be a major financial benefit.

Mr. Nkwo said that the deferred payment is primarily attributed to the transfer of the Police and Fire Plan B to the MERF Plan. Council Member Bukovsky asked about the difference between the \$7.5 million and the \$4.8. Mr. Flatto explained that the \$4.8 was only part of the pension payment involved with Police and Fire Plan B. Discussion followed about how this would change the projections.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADD A DOCUMENT TITLED ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AS EXHIBIT 05-05-16-7.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council President McCarthy gave a brief overview of the five budget votes that would be taken at the full Council Meeting.

The discussion moved to the various reasons that one of the line items were used for on page 321, OTHER FINANCING such as helping with a payment for a funeral for a poor family, or paying for buses for championship teams to participate in out of town events. It was suggested

that the amount be cut to \$100,000. Mr. Nkwo pointed out that the Barnum Festival and Rysap would take the \$100,000. Council Member Burns said that he would suggest that it be reduced from \$200,000 to \$150,000.

The discussion then moved to the potential \$5 million dollar give back from the unions. Mr. Nkwo said that he and Ms. Hawkins had contacted the various unions and there had been some discussions. Council Member Lyons said that Ms. Hawkins should have been present to discuss this. Mr. Nkwo said that she had been present when the Committee asked her to be there. He pointed out that she had not been invited to attend this meeting. Council Member Lyons said that Ms. Hawkins should be there on Saturday. Mr. Nkwo made a note of this.

Council Member Herron said that in the past, the smaller unions had given back money, but AFSME had refused. There was another time when \$500,000 had been given back from the BOE and was supposed to be given back to the City. The money never made it that far. Council Member Herron said the smaller unions had already given back, but Fire and Police haven't. They should be asked first.

It was noted that the 5 million seemed high. It was suggested that it be lowered to \$3 or \$4 million dollars. Mr. Nkwo said that it was pathetic that the Council was lowering the amount being asked from the union. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she disagreed. Council President McCarthy agreed with Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia. Discussion followed.

Council Member Herron said the smaller unions had already given back, but Fire and Police haven't. Those unions should be asked first. She said that giving back 10 days for the smaller unions could be devastating. Council Member Herron said that she would like to see more respect given to the unions.

Council Member Nieves joined the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

The discussion moved to page 64 and asked if the two vacant positions could remain that way. The Committee then reviewed the details of the changes in the budget.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked if the information from the CAO's Office had arrived. Mr. dePara said that he was still working on getting the information for the Committee.

The Committee then reviewed the Zoning Department on page 264. Council Member Lyons asked why there were raises across the Board. Mr. Nkwo said that they were all Union positions. Council Member Lyons then read a statement regarding an Inspector. She said that when the position had been approved, it was with the caveat that the inspector would investigate residences for unrelated people living in the same residence. She said that one of positions was not being funded properly. Discussion followed about the details of the potential revenue.

Council Member Lyons said that she had asked about this issue earlier and was told that she should wait until this department was up for review. Now, she was asking about the position and was being told that the Committee does not manage individual positions. She said that she would remember this and not help the other Council Members when they asked in the future. Council Member Lyons said she was leaving the meeting.

Council Member Lyons left the meeting at 9:16 p.m.

Council Member Olson asked about issues on page 100. Council Member Burns said that the Committee had not received any concrete information yet.

The Committee then moved to page 110, to consider the Police Department. Council Member Burns gave a quick summary of last year's budget and overages. He said that the Mayor would like to add about 100 more officers to the force. Approximately a third of the 100 are in the academy. He said that if the last third class of police candidates delayed. Mr. Nkwo said that they have to be very careful because the department must be careful not to fall below the minimum staffing because it will affect the \$2.2 million dollar COPS grants. Council Member Burns said that this was the first that he had heard about the COPS grants. Mr. Nkwo made a note to get the information to the Committee. Discussion followed.

Council Member Olson left at 9:38 p.m.

The Committee then looked at Police Overtime and the change in gas prices, found on page 217. Mr. Nkwo said that the price of oil has hit the bottom in the first few months of the year, but they have been slowly increasing during the last two months.

Council Member Bukovsky left the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

The discussion then moved to whether or not there were any take home vehicles. Council President McCarthy said that there were not any administration take home vehicles, but that there were some Police vehicles that were take home, such as the demolition expert.

Council Member McBride-Lee left the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

The discussion moved to Public Safety on page 117. There was a discussion about the renovations for River Street for Narcotics and Vice Department.

Council Member Burns directed everyone's attention to page 118, Legal Services. Mr. Nkwo said that he would get the details on this line item.

Council Member Burns asked how the State reduction of the MERF pension payment would be handled. Mr. Flatto and Mr. Nkwo gave an overview of the accounts. These reduced payments would be found on page 117.

Mr. Nkwo directed everyone to page 133 and said that the proposal was 35% of the pension projection on the appropriate line item. He said that there is no way to change any of the MERF figures because it is automatically calculated.

The Committee then moved to the Fire Department on page 124.

Council Member Burns asked about the details of the Safer Grant, which is good for two years. Mr. Nkwo explained that the SAFER grant requires minimum staffing. He added that the grant application has been submitted, but the City has not yet been notified as to whether or not they

have been awarded the funding. The department will be notified about the decision after June 30th. Discussion followed about the fact that the grant can enhance, but will not supplant funding.

Council Member Taylor-Moye pointed out that Weights and Measures generated revenue.

Council Members Herron and Banta left the meeting at 10:40 p.m.

Council Member Brantley asked if the Committee was going to give everyone a 15% cut across the Board. Discussion followed.

Council President McCarthy asked about the Public Facilities on page 146. Discussion followed about what would happen if the Office Specialist was converted back to an Assistant Manager. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that the various positions that were listed in the book such as Office Specialist were not actually approved.

Council President McCarthy said that Council Member Nieves had asked for a list of current vacancies and which positions were filled. Council Member Nieves said that the committee had asked for this since the first few days, but never have received the information.

Council Member Brantley asked about the positions that were changed. Discussion followed.

Council Member Salter left the meeting at 11:00 p.m.

The Committee then reviewed OPED on page 251. Council President McCarthy asked about the last line item on the page. Council Member Burns said that he had been told that the funds in that account were for matching grant funds.

The Committee then discussed the marketing funding and the Deputy Director position. Discussion then followed about this position.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET HEARINGS
MAY 7, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Anthony Paoletto, Council President Thomas McCarthy, M. Evette Brantley, Aidee Nieves (9:28 a.m.); Jose Casco (2:15 p.m.); Scott Burns (via telephone)

STAFF: Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ken Flatto, Finance Director

OTHERS: Mayor Joseph Ganim; City Attorney R. Chris Meyer; Council Member Jeanette Herron, Tom Gaudett, Mayor's Office; Spencer Cain, Consultant; Council Member Mary McBride-Lee. (9:25 a.m.); Council Member John Olson (9:31 a.m.) Council Member Milta Feliciano; Council Member Eneida Martinez

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Taylor-Moye called the meeting to order at 9:16 a.m. A quorum was present.

Mayor Ganim came forward and said that he would have to leave the meeting soon due other obligations, however, he wanted to speak to the Committee about the budget. Mayor Ganim said that the budget had to be completed by May 10th. He gave a very brief overview of the State issues regarding the recent budget decisions. There have been numerous meetings regarding the funding from the State, which will only be decided when the State finalizes their budget.

Mayor Ganim said that there was some discussion regarding the Board of Education budget. Mayor Ganim explained that he had met with the Speaker of the House along with Superintendent Rabinowitz to talk about the rising Out of District Placement costs. He said that the City would invest \$1,000,000 from the Capital budget to help facilitate new State Special Education program which will provide a reduction of up to \$300 million in Out of District costs.

Mayor Ganim said that he believed that Bridgeport might become a model for the State in terms of Special Education in District.

Mayor Ganim said that Mr. Nkwo had distributed copies of a draft document Summary of FY 2016-2017 Budget and Appropriations Committee Amendments to Mayor's Proposed FY 2016-2017 Budget.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Mayor Ganim then reviewed the various cuts that he believed would occur.

Council Member Aidee Nieves joined the meeting at 9:28 a.m.

Mayor Ganim said that he was working on verifying the information that was submitted on the COPS grant in terms of the minimum staffing. He said that he had spoken with Police Chief Perez about reducing the overtime. The crime incidents have dropped recently. He said that there were some reasons to have \$530,000 in reserve and gave some examples.

Council Member John Olson joined the meeting at 9:31 a.m.

Mayor Ganim added that they were looking at having the class work a 40 hour week rather than a 35 hour work week, which will put the officers through the course a month earlier.

Mayor Ganim said that he would support the proposed budget, but he would respectfully request that they would leave the cutting of his staff to him because he needs the staff to handle the work load.

One of the things that the new position was working on was transportation. Mayor Ganim said that there were some issues regarding the Airport and that the FAA had come to Bridgeport the previous day and threatened to pull the Airport license.

He spoke about the furloughs and said that there had been some discussions with the Police and Fire unions regarding this.

Mayor Ganim said that the State does not have a budget right now. He said that if the City's Budget passed on Monday, then he would wait the 14 days in the hopes that the State would vote on their budget. If the State approves a budget that will negatively impact Bridgeport, Mayor Ganim said that he would make a "friendly veto" to send the budget back to the Committee in order to put it back on table.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked Mayor Ganim about the educational aspects. He suggested that they discuss it after the State made their budget decisions.

CAUCUS

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO GO INTO COUNCIL CAUCUS**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Council Members entered into caucus at 9:45 a.m. to discuss budget issues.

Council Member Burns joined the meeting via telephone.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 10:00

Council Member Jose Casco joined the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

The Council Members returned to Public Session at 5:46 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED CITY OF BRIDGEPORT G/L ACCOUNT DETAIL AS EXHIBIT 5-7-16-1.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATION OFFICE AS EXHIBIT 5-7-16-2.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT GENERAL FUND BUDGET AS EXHIBIT 5-7-16-3.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ENTER INTO CAUCUS.**
**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Council Members entered into 5:53 p.m. They returned to Public session at 6:15 p.m.

Council Member Burns disconnected from the meeting at 6:14 p.m.

Mr. Spencer Cain left the meeting at 6:16 p.m.

The Council Members then discussed the changes that they would like to make in the budget. A significant mathematical error was discovered by Council Member Smith.

Council Member Feliciano said that for the record the Council Members were going back into caucus without the financial advisor present and that the financial advisor should have caught the major error. Council Member Lyons agreed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER INTO CAUCUS.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Council Members entered into caucus at 6:49 p.m. They returned to Public Session at 7:50 p.m. A discussion followed about further adjustments to the budget.

Council Member McBride-Lee, Council Member Olson, Council Member Herron, and Council Member Nieves left the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER INTO CAUCUS.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Council Members entered into caucus at 8:11 p.m. They returned to Public Session at 9:04 p.m.

A brief discussion followed about further adjustments to the budget. Mr. Nkwo noted the additional changes and left the meeting to process the final draft of the FY 2016-2017 Budget and Appropriations Committee Amendments to the Mayor's Proposed 2016-2017 Budget.

RECESS

Council Member Taylor-Moye announced a recess at 9:15 p.m.

Council Member Feliciano and Council Member Martinez left the meeting at 12:15 a.m.

Council Member Taylor-Moye reconvened the meeting at 12:38 a.m.

Council Member Nieves joined the meeting via telephone.

Mr. Nkwo distributed updated copies of the proposed FY 2016-2017 Budget and Appropriations Committee Amendments to the Mayor's Proposed 2016-2017 Budget.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER THE FOUR PAGE DOCUMENT TITLED CITY OF BRIDGEPORT SUMMARY OF FY 2016-2017 BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS TO THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED 2016-2017 BUDGET AS EXHIBIT 5-8-16-1.**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia noted that the sections titled Expenditure Increases (C) and Expenditure Decreases (D) should have been titled "Appropriation Increases" and "Appropriation Decreases". Mr. Nkwo made a note of this correction.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE REVENUE INCREASES (A) OF \$2,556,950.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE REVENUE DECREASES (B) OF \$10,820,028.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE APPROPRIATION INCREASES (C) OF \$2,531,686.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE APPROPRIATION DECREASES (D) OF \$14,404,280.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX IN FAVOR (TAYLOR-MOYE, MCCARTHY, VIZZO-PANICCIA, CASCO, NIEVES AND BRANTLEY) AND ONE OPPOSED (PAOLETTO).**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT SUMMARY OF FY 2016-2017 BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS TO THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED 2016-2017 BUDGET (E).**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX IN FAVOR (TAYLOR-MOYE, MCCARTHY, VIZZO-PANICCIA, CASCO, NIEVES AND BRANTLEY) AND ONE OPPOSED (PAOLETTO).**

Council Member Taylor-Moye thanked everyone for their hard work on this budget and said that they had done an amazing amount of work.

Council President McCarthy also thanked everyone, especially Mr. Nkwo, Council Member Taylor-Moye, Council Member Burns and Council Member Nieves for staying the course.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services