

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 12, 2011**

ATTENDANCE: Angel dePara, Chair; Bob Curwen; Carlos Silva; Lydia Martinez;
Susan Brannelly, Council President Thomas McCarthy; AmyMarie
Vizzo-Panniccia (6:41 p.m.)

OTHERS: Dawn Norton, Interim Financial Director; Peter Harris, WPCA; Bill
Robinson, WPCA; Council Member Martin McCarthy, Council Member
Andre Baker, Michael Andreana, Pullman and Connelly; Ray Wiley,O&G

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member dePara called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He then introduced all those present to the public.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES: OCTOBER 26, 2011

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 26, 2011 COMMITTEE MINUTES.**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 26, 2011 COMMITTEE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

02-11 Proposed Resolution Affirming and Approving Financing in the amount of \$44,000,000 for the Design, Rehabilitation, Upgrading and Construction of Various Improvements to the Combined Sewer Overflow Facilities.

Ms. Norton, Chair for WPCA, stated that this was a proposal to increase the Combined Sewer Overflow [CSO] project, which is part of the Clean Water Act. She distributed a copy of the the Additional CSO H Projects Not Yet Funded information sheet.

Council Member Curwen said that prior to his original election to the Council sixteen years ago, there was a bond for \$90,000,000 for the WPCA. He asked about this. The WPCA Board members gave the Committee a brief overview of the status of the bond.

****COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO ENTER TWO DOCUMENTS:
WP-1 - DETAILS OF WPCA BORROWING, WPCA MAJOR PROJECTS
DATED 12/12/2011; AND**

**WP-2 - WPCA FOR THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, ADDITIONAL CSO
H PROJECTS NOT YET FUNDED.**

INTO THE RECORD.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Harris came forward and explained that the Upper East Side Plant and Upper West Side Plants were part of project. He added that the WPCA was in compliance with the Federal guidelines. Mr. Harris then reviewed the details on the WP-1 information sheet.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

Council President McCarthy asked for a detailed breakout of the various projects, with the details of what the projects entailed, completion dates and general description.

Council President McCarthy asked which projects were still on the Capital Plan. Ms. Norton said that there was a sewer separation project that was on the Capital Plan.

Mr. Andreana, with Pullman and Connelly, the City's Bond Counsel, then reviewed the details of the loans that were done through the Clean Water Fund. These has been repaid through sewer fees. He also covered the increase in borrowing authorization. Discussion followed about the details of the grant funding and the loan terms.

Council President McCarthy pointed out that the State requires the City and the WPCA perform these projects. Mr. Robinson agreed and reviewed the process with the Council Members. He pointed out that there were several loans that had been repaid by the WPCA through the user fees.

Council Member de Para inquired about a recent decision by the WPCA. Mr. Robinson reviewed the details about this.

Council Member Martinez requested clarification regarding the role of the WPCA. Mr. Robinson said that in 1989, the Council established the WPCA through an ordinance as an independent agency. Council Member Martinez expressed concerns regarding what would happen if the WPCA dissolved with outstanding loans. Council President McCarthy stated that since the Authority had been established by the City, the Council would have to vote to dissolve the Authority, but would assume the outstanding debt.

Council Member Curwen asked for details about the requested projects. Mr. Harris reviewed the various projects with the Committee. Mr. Robinson indicated that there were more details in the back up material on page 5 about the individual projects.

Council Member Curwen asked what kind of exposure there would be if the Federal funds dried up. Mr. Harris gave a brief overview of the process and reminded everything that while the Council may approve the request for authorization, there was no guarantee that the State would approve the bond. If the State does not approve the bond, then the project can not be done. Usually the State does not require a project unless the State has already committed to the funding it and knows that the WPCA has gathered all the local authorizations.

Council Member Curwen asked if this authorization was approved, whether it would cause the water rates to rise. Mr. Harris informed the Committee that there were a number of loans that were nearing final payment and that the earliest repayment of the loan would be at least three years down the road. Then when the debt service for the new loans came into play, it would only cause a very slight rate increase.

Council Member Curwen stated that the Council Members are more than aware of the deterioration of the system, but said that it would be important to know how much the rates might rise. Mr. Harris said that he had a model that could be used for projections. Council Member Curwen requested that this information be presented to the Council Members before a final vote.

Council Member Curwen wished to know where the exposure would be if the projects were regionalized. Mr. Harris said that if the WPCA became part of a regionalized authority, all the debt would carry over to the new authority.

Council Member Curwen asked what would happen if to the projects after authorization, the authority was regionalized. Mr. Robinson said that the projects would not be abandoned.

Council Member Martinez asked whether there were representatives of the community on the Board of Directors. Ms. Norton said that there were. It was explained that there were some positions that were held by employees, but others were appointed by the Mayor.

Council Member Brannelly asked for clarification on the dollar amounts. Mr. Andriana reviewed the structure of the approval amounts with Council Member Brannelly.

Council Member de Para then asked what would happen if the State determined that they did not have funds for a required project six months in to the process. Ms. Norton said that the City would not be liable. Mr. Harris said that the project would come to a halt and that the State would have to rescind the requirement. Mr. Andriana reviewed the overall process of the State requiring the City to do the project because of the contract with the WPCA. Discussion followed about this.

It was stated that in order to complete the list of projects that have been required by the State, the approval of the Council, the WPCA board and others would be needed. Council Member

Martinez asked if this project would create more jobs. Mr. Robinson then reviewed the details of how the bid process for the project would work.

Council Member Silva asked what would happen if the State decided to make cuts, and the projects were abandoned, and whether the WPCA would come back to the Council. Mr. Robinson said that usually two or three million dollars were borrowed first to complete the phase of the project. Council Member Silva said that he, like other Council Members, were concerned about the rates increasing if the State abandoned a project. Discussion followed.

Council Member Curwen asked whether the potential rate increase would be limited to just City residents, or be for all the customers. Ms. Norton said that it would be for all the customers of the WPCA.

Council Member Curwen asked if the WPCA suggested the various projects or if all the projects were simply mandated by the State. Mr. Robinson explained that right now the focus was on separating the storm and sewer lines and treating overflow sewage events. These are mandated by the State.

Council Member Curwen said that there were numerous problems with brooks and flooding in the various districts. Mr. Robinson said that the WPCA works only with the sanitary sewers and providing clean water. While the WPCA does clean catch basins, it is not responsible for collapsing bank walls or blocked brooks and streams. The WPCA has some equipment that can help, but the equipment is not capable of reaching very far.

Council Member Martinez thanked the WPCA for working on the East Side as a priority shortly after their creation. Mr. Robinson said that he would include his card in the information packets for the Council Members.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 2-11 - PROPOSED RESOLUTION AFFIRMING AND APPROVING FINANCING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$44,000,000 FOR THE DESIGN, REHABILITATION, UPGRADING AND CONSTRUCTION OF VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOW FACILITIES CONTINGUENT UPON THE PROVISION OF THE DOCUMENTATION THAT WAS REQUEST**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member de Para requested the item be placed on the consent calendar.

06-11 Approval of Additional Capital Project Authorization to the 2012-2016 Capital Plan – Columbus & Longfellow School Projects (2,700,000).

Ms. Norton then gave a brief overview of issues that became apparent during the upgrades at Longfellow and Columbus Schools. In order to get a certificate of occupation for the students to return to the buildings, there is additional remediation work that must be done.

Mr. Ray Wiley from O&G came forward to give more detailed information to the Committee. Copies of documents were also distributed to the Committee members.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE COLUMBUS SCHOOL AS EXHIBIT 1, AND THE LONGFELLOW ADDITION/RENOVATION AS EXHIBIT 2.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO ACCEPT FIVE YEAR CAP PLAN AS EXHIBIT 3.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Wiley said that in upgrading Columbus to include ADA compliance, it was discovered that there were PCBs in the window caulking. The caulking was removed, but the air testing the day before opening revealed more PCBs than allowable. This has increased the cost of the remediation. There is still one room that is not in compliance and there has been extensive investigation as to where these PCBs are coming from. Unfortunately, until the source of the PCBs is located, the final cost can not be determined.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the ventilation system in Columbus. Mr. Wiley reviewed the details of the ventilation in the school. Discussion followed about the possible source of the PCBs. The State will pay 80% of the remediation. There is a protocol that is required by the EPA in reference to this type of building.

Council Member Curwen said that it is important to remember that as the City moves forward with additions for the various schools, that the current air quality standards are much higher than they were when the building was constructed. Council Member Curwen said that he serves on the School Building Committee. These issues must be addressed when they are discovered. This request needs to be added to the Capital Plan.

Mr. Wiley said that PCBs were added to the requirements in February of this year. He then reviewed the issues at Longfellow School. Much of the site has contaminated soil from ash from the incinerator plant. The remediation will include capping everything and placing two feet of clean fill and top soil on top of a fabric barrier. The clean fill will come from the Magnet School currently under the construction.

Council Member Martinez asked about a nearby playground. The remediation for this will be the addition of more barriers.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about a project in Stratford and said that there was leaching from that site. She asked what kind of protection there would be in the future. Mr. Wiley said that he was not familiar with the Stratford project. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if there would be a plan for handling this in the future. She said that there was no set policy or plan. Discussion followed. Mr. Wiley said that the EPA was watching the work, but they had regulated the site. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that frequently the EPA, the DEP, the State, and other agencies often set policies, but then don't follow them. Mr. Wiley reminded everyone that he was not the one setting the policy.

Council Member de Para asked if Mr. Wiley was familiar with a process that burned PCBs out of the ground. Mr. Wiley said that he was not. Discussion followed about the feasibility of using this process. The discussion then moved to a broken water and sewer pipe. Mr. Wiley reviewed the details about this project.

Council Member Brannelly said that she had attended some meetings about the DEP and EPA. She reminded everyone that the City was following the standards. She added that when Ray Bestos was remediated twenty or thirty years ago, it was done according to the current standards, but now the standards have changed. It is also important to recognize that the level of contamination was not great.

Council Member Martin McCarthy said that he had heard from an DEP employee that a child would have to eat handfuls of dirt day after day before the contamination would be dangerous. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it would be important to keep updated on the situation. Council Member Martinez said that she would bring copies of the handouts. Council Member Curwen said that the data was available but very detailed. Discussion followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED AGENDA ITEM 06-11 APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECT AUTHORIZATION TO THE 2012-2016 CAPITAL PLAN – COLUMBUS & LONGFELLOW SCHOOL PROJECTS (2,700,000).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member dePara requested that this item be placed on the consent agenda.

07-11 Approval of General Obligation Bonds – To Fund Certain Capital Improvement Projects (2,700,000).

Ms. Norton explained that the bond was for the remediation project that the Committee had just approved.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED AGENDA ITEM 07-11
APPROVAL OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS – TO FUND CERTAIN CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS (2,700,000).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member dePara requested that this item be placed on the consent agenda.

General discussion regarding the review of the Monthly Financial Report.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had noticed that Mr. Sherwood was not CC'ed on the notice of the meeting.

Ms. Norton said that the monthly report was before the Committee members. The first six months of reports would not change. She said that the report format was cumbersome and difficult. The projections are included along with a wealth of other information, but it was too extensive. Council Member de Para said that he would like an executive summary. Ms. Norton suggested using the larger report for quarterly report. Council Member de Para suggested adding the Executive Summary to the full report. Discussion followed.

Council Member Silva said that he felt that it would be important to track the Administration's spending so that there would be no surprises. Council Member Curwen said his comments to the CT Post were along the lines of improved communications. Further discussion followed.

Council Member Brannelly noted that this was the first time that this Monthly Financial Report had been presented. She reminded everyone that none of the Committee members had read the report. Having either the Department head or Mr. Nunn present to answer questions would be important. The process will become easier as the Committee members become more familiar with the report. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that those on the CC list should be present. Council President McCarthy said that by having Mr. Sherwood, Mr. Nunn and Ms. Norton present, it would cover the entire scope. Ms. Norton reminded everyone that her department creates the report, but she can't explain the variations in the numbers.

Council Member Curwen said that more than six months ago, a monthly report had been requested. Both Mr. Sherwood and Ms. Norton said that the report was being revamped. Ms. Norton said that Mr. Sherwood had been working on other issues, so Mr. Sherwood has not structured the new format. Council Member de Para asked Ms. Norton to bring examples of what other municipalities have done. Ms. Norton said that she would do so, but that the other cities had much smaller reports. Discussion followed.

Council Member Brannelly said that she was surprised that the financials did not include the month of November. Ms. Norton explained that the books had not been completely posted for

November. She then reviewed the reasons why the information would not be accurate without the complete posting. Further discussion followed.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services