

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 28, 2010**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chair; Angel dePara, Co-chair; Lydia Martinez, Susan Brannelly; Carlos Silva

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM, Michael Feeney

OTHERS: Fleeta Hudson, City Clerk; Council Member Martin McCarthy,
Alba Rodriguez; Council Member Andre Baker, Frances Wilson, Alma Maya; Assistant City Clerk; Ron Preston, Adam Wood, Andy Nunn, Ann Murray,

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

MAYOR'S OFFICE

Mr. Sherwood directed everyone's attention to page 2. He gave a brief overview of the staffing in Mayor's Office.

Mr. Wood said that the Mayor's priorities are focused on having the City be a greener city and keeping control on the spending. Promoting public safety is also important.

Council Member Baker asked about the increases in the salaries and pointed out that there were cuts in other departments. Mr. Wood said that there were no layoffs in the current budget or the upcoming budgets. As part of the bargaining units agreement, there were no increases. Mr. Sherwood said that the increases are contractual increases. If there are concessions given by the unions, this will reduce the overall spending in order to have a final figure to project the number. If no concessions are given, the funding will have to be paid out. The non-union members of staff in the Mayor's Office follow the BCSA union contract. Last year, the staff in the Mayor's Office took furloughs, as did many of the other unions.

Council Member Baker asked what positions were in the union. Mr. Wood listed which the union positions.

Council Member Baker asked about the health care increase and the pension increase. The health care costs have increased across the board, Mr. Sherwood explained and the State increased the pensions by 2%.

Council Member Brannelly asked about one position that was appeared to be a Mayoral aide. Mr. Wood explained that the position was actually in CityStat in the CAO's office.

Council Member Martinez asked about the various positions in the Mayor's Office. Mr. Sherwood and Mr. Wood reviewed all the various titles.

CITY CLERK

Mr. Sherwood said that the budget was on page 61. Ms. Hudson said that Ms. Wilson was the new Assistance City Clerk. Ms. Murray, who retired recently, was present to assist with questions regarding the budget.

Ms. Wilson explained that the office was asking for a new time stamp, a new City Seal and a Typist 3 positions. The two stamps are 15 years old, in need of repair with parts that are no longer available.

City Clerk Hudson said that the records that the office maintains are permanent and need to be properly processed. Council Member dePara said that he had been in the office and seen the City Clerk trying to repair the time stamp with a great deal of difficulty.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the Typist 3 positions. Ms. Murray said that one of the Typists 3 positions was filled and funded, and the second position had been unfunded last year. She explained that floaters had been sent up, but they did not have the necessary qualification for the position.

Council Member dePara then reviewed the Personnel lines as to their funding and vacancy. Mr. Sherwood then gave the overview of details. Ms. Murray will be training Ms. Wilson on a part time basis regarding the State and Federal mandates for FOI, claims against the City; processing

records. Council Member dePara asked for a list of the various tasks for the Committee. Ms. Murray said that she would compile one for him.

Council Member Brannelly expressed concern about filling Ms. Wilson's vacant position. Her position is currently being filled by a Clerical Assistant that transferred from Public Facilities.

Council Member dePara asked about the benefits for the part time training position. Mr. Sherwood said that the benefits were from the retirement.

Council Member Martinez asked about the replacement of Clerical Assistance with a Typist 3. Mr. Sherwood said that this would have to be handled by Civil Service and would be dictated by how the funding was allocated.

Council Member Martinez asked the fact that the BOE had brought in formerly retired administrators as consultants and that the City had objected to this practice. Mr. Sherwood said that there was a difference in that the BOE retirees came back for long term positions, while this position is short term.

Council Member Baker asked about the details of the Typist 3 positions, which Mr. Sherwood reviewed.

Council Member Silva asked about the transfer of the Clerical Assistant to City Clerk's. Mr. Sherwood said that last year Budget Committee had authorized the transfer of the Clerical Assistant.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

TOWN CLERK

Mr. Sherwood said that page 98 has the budget for the Town Clerk.

Ms. Maya said that she would like to warn everyone that Ms. Rodriguez was considering retiring and that she may need to return for elections since the rest of the staff is not up to speed on election law.

Ms. Rodriguez reviewed changes in the revenues, including the conveyance taxes, and registrations. There will be increases in Vital

Records, because the State is raising the fees. In November, all the new election laws will be taking effect.

Regarding the attendance at conferences, the office only has funding to attend one of the conference, rather than the two conferences.

A request for the toner for printer was reduced by the budgets. The budget for Legal Notices was reduced, and the Legal Notices are required by law. The election equipment needs to be maintained. All of the job responsibilities in the office are mandated by State Statute.

Council Member Silva asked about the location of the conferences that the staff is required to attend. Ms. Rodriguez said that they were in state.

Council Member Silva asked whether there is a safe. Ms. Rodriguez said that there was a fire proof file cabinet.

When asked about the job classifications, it was said that the job classifications were out moded and does not work for the office.

Town Clerk's, City Clerk's and Registrar of Voters are all governed by State Statutes.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the mandatory conferences budget line reductions. Mr. Sherwood said that the reason that there were cuts, was because the Mayor had directed that all zero expended lines be reduced by 25%. One problem is that the bill for a line item might not arrive until March 10th. Other lines that had some expenditures were reduced by 10%. The department does have the ability to transfer funds between accounts.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about Policy and Procedures manual for the department. Ms. Rodriguez said that one of the staff members is working on creating one. When Ms. Rodriguez joined the department had 13 employees, now it is down to three.

Council Member McCarthy asked about holding employees accountable. Ms. Maya said that the Department was working on it and a time clock will be employed. Supervisors need to be given the authority by department heads.

Council Member dePara asked about some of the line items on page 100. Ms. Rodriguez explained that everything, such as the scanning that is done with high speed connection for the Internet. The discussion then moved back to the issuance of hunting and fishing licenses, which the Town Clerk's no longer will be doing.

Council Member Martinez about the revenue of 1.5 million. Ms. Rodriguez confirmed this. Mr. Sherwood said that the State was considering increasing the State's portion of the fees. Some of the increases in fees will go to the City.

Council Member Martinez asked Ms. Maya if the department had a candidate to replace Ms. Rodriguez if she retires.

Council Member Curwen asked about the increases in the fees for Vital Statistics. Ms. Maya directed everyone's attention to the various fees that would be increasing.

A discussion then followed about the hunting and fishing licenses and how many the City issued.

Council Member dePara asked about the conveyance tax. Mr. Sherwood reviewed this with the Committee. Ms. Rodriguez pointed out that the State now had a vacant property fee regarding foreclosed properties.

Council Member Baker asked about the liquor permit fees. Ms. Rodriguez said that the revenue remains in the City. Council Member Baker asked about Mr. Blunt's inspection. Mr. Sherwood said that this was because it was food.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 7:26 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7:30 p.m.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Feeney said that he was present to have the Committee's approval of Tax Anticipation Note (TAN). He handed out a Cash Flow Forecast. This is done on a routine basis. The weak cash flow time is from November to February. This has been done for the last five years.

Mr. Feeney introduced Mr. Ron Preston was appointed by the Mayor as the Treasurer for the City of Bridgeport.

Council Member dePara asked if Mr. Feeney had the resolution referred to the Council. Mr. Feeney made copies for the Committee members.

Council Member Curwen asked what the interest rates would be. Mr. Feeney explained that he would be breaking the \$95,000,000 into two issuances, one in June and another in November. He pointed out that the amounts would be based on trends and history.

Council Member Brannelly asked about liability of Pullman and Connelly, the bond counsel, if the City was found to be out of compliance. Mr. Feeney said that if it was the bond counsel's error, the liability would be on them.

Council Member Baker asked about the payment schedules. Mr. Feeney reviewed this with him. Council Member Baker asked where this would be reflected in the Budget book. Mr. Feeney said that it would in the Other Financials around page 360. Council Member Baker asked what the fees were for Pullman and Connelly. Mr. Feeney said that he could have this information ready for the Committee on Friday.

Council Member Martinez asked if there were plans to continue with Pullman and Connelly.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the hours worked could be included with report. Mr. Feeney said that the Finance Department does not actually track the number of hours being paid for. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would just like to have a list of the services provided.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the fact that the City was actually spending \$1,500 a day for the TANS. Mr. Feeney agreed. He pointed out that there is no Fund Balance to draw down. The ECS money arrives late in the year. However, the payroll of 19 million a month and the vendor bills of approximately 2 million dollars a week must be paid on a regular basis.

Council Member Silva asked about whether or not the bond counsel was local or statewide. Mr. Feeney said that there was an RFP and the firm is local.

Council Member Martinez asked to see the trend of bonding. Mr. Feeney said that this would be available in the Capital.

Council Member Baker asked about expenses, which Mr. Feeney quoted to him. Council Member Baker asked if Purchasing had tried to negotiate longer terms with the businesses, such as a 45 day window. Mr. Feeney said that this had been done in the past, but that there had been a lot of complaints, so it was moved back to 30 days. The largest vendor is United Illuminated.

Council Member dePara asked why the City wants one issuance of TAN. Mr. Feeney said that he was only asking for authorization for the TAN. The actual draw down and issuance of bonds will be done in two stages. Council Member dePara asked why Mr. Feeney wasn't doing a smaller amount, and coming back to the Council for a second amount. Mr. Feeney said that it was a matter of timing because it has to go to Committee, and then to the Council.

Council Member dePara asked the repayment schedules. Mr. Feeney said that this was a tax anticipating note, which determines when the repayment is due. Since this is a tax note, it would be due a week after the taxes were due.

Council Member Curwen said that he would like to see it clarified in the resolution so that in the event of a catastrophic event, there would be documentation that there was going to be two issuances of the bond. Mr. Feeney said that this was written in this manner to have flexibility with the cash flow and timing.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA MOVED TO APPROVE THE ISSUANCE OF TANS AS OUTLINED IN THE RESOLUTION FROM THE FINANCE OFFICE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services