

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL
CONTRACTS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2011
6:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Paoletto; Co-chair, Curwen, Holloway
Council member T. McCarthy (*sat in to make a quorum*)

NON-COMMITTEE: Council members: Baker, Walsh

OTHER(s): Tyrone McClain, Mayor's Staff Lobbying firm representatives: Jay
Melzinski, Lisa Fecke, Steve Kinney, J. Ricci, Sikorsky Airport
Manager

Co-chair Paoletto called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Approval of Committee Minutes of December 14, 2010.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HOLLOWAY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

129-09 Proposed Lease and Option to Purchase Agreement with Four Kids
Enterprise, LLC for property located at 485 Howard Avenue to be used by
the Police Department.

Co-chair Paoletto stated that a letter was given to the city clerk for a request to officially
withdraw the item.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HOLLOWAY MOVED TO WITHDRAW**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY SECONDED**

Co-chair Paoletto questioned if the letter of withdrawal should consider the item withdrawn or denied.

It was determined that the item should be denied.

Council member Holloway explained that the matter went out for an RFP and it should have never been on the agenda.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HOLLOWAY MOVED TO DENY
** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

166-09 Proposed State Lobbying Services Agreement.

Jay Melzinski stated that his lobbyist firm represented the city during last year. He said they were interested in remaining the lobbyist and working with the Mayor's office and the legislative delegation. He mentioned that they had an ambitious agenda for the coming year if they were awarded the contract. He gave some background information about the firm, noting that they have extensive experience, collectively fifty years; working with municipalities, corporations and state agencies, but they are not a partisan firm. However, they are as good as any other firm. He expressed that they are committed to the Mayor's agenda and working with the city council.

He recalled the issue that they ran into with the Bridgeport Port Authority last year. He explained that it wasn't made clear that they represented the Port Authority and the problem of there being a conflict wasn't indicated at the time. So as far as they were concerned, they didn't expect there would be a conflict. However, the firm did take partial responsibility for the miscommunication and the matter was subsequently straightened out. He further stated that they would like to work closely with the city council to assure that everyone is on the same page.

He went on to give some background information about himself being an attorney. He expressed that he personally has an affinity with Bridgeport and what they have to offer. He mentioned the projects that his firm has worked on through the years and he said hoped they could continue working with the city.

Co-chair Paoletto addressed the housing bill regarding the eviction of tenants in the city. Mr. Melzinski stated that State Representative Auden Groggins did work on the

legislation, which involved restoring possessions without cost to the city. They found a warehouse to store items and the city won't have to take the burden of storing them, this resulted in actual legislation. *Co-chair Paoletto requested a copy of the bill sent to him.*

Council member Holloway spoke about the eviction notices. He stated that as a representative of the community and in his observance of how evictions are handled by a landlord, he said that many people don't know how to use the services to prepare themselves before they go to court. He pointed out that the city has been storing items for the last thirty years at the firehouse on Middle Street. There are rumors that whomever stores the items, they become sold within so many days. Tyrone McClain commented that what's usually stored isn't of much value. Normally, when the items are held after one or two weeks they are disposed of. He noted that this process takes place under Charles Carrol's office.

Mr. Melzinski said there was a much bigger issue that occurs in Bridgeport. He explained that it's a statewide problem and it's not necessarily driven by Bridgeport.

Council member Holloway asked if the removal of possessions is done in the presence of a sheriff. The response was yes and an inventory list is taken and stored by Public Facilities Department under the care of Charles Carroll.

Council member Curwen commented about the storage issue. He said that every municipality charges a fee and Bridgeport doesn't. He hoped that Bridgeport would consider charging a fee, because he has found that some people take advantage of the process to store their personal items without paying a fee.

Council member Curwen stated that he would like an update on the payment schedule for the deficit funding. Mr. Melzinski said there would be legislation forthcoming and they will have to make a case for the extension. Mr. McClain said they were waiting until it expires to come back, then they will talk to them and ask for another extension. Council member Curwen advised that they not wait until the last minute, because of the overlap between the city and state budgets.

Council member Curwen went on to emphasize that he was perturbed with the law firm for trying to take away the city's authority. He recalled the mention in a brief concerning why the law firm took the path it took in representing the Port Authority. Mr. Melzinski said the issue resulted from what they were asked to do by the city, which was to change the ability of the local municipality to impact the governance of the Port

Authority. However, there was a communication problem and they were told at the Port Authority that the Mayor's office was informed about the legislation. He admitted that although they should have verified that the Mayor's office was aware of the situation, they assumed he knew. The firm absolutely didn't know of the conflict between the city and the city council. He further stressed that in the future, they won't take things for granted and they will be more proactive in preventing this type of problem from happening again.

Council member Curwen stated that since the legislation was formed by the city council, it impacts them directly. He agreed that more communication should be established with the city council. He added that although he was still distraught over the issue, he was glad the matter was taken care of.

Mr. Melzinski stated that he had some distress over the problem as well. He reiterated that the firm took responsibility and fixed the problem immediately. He commented that was a reason to initiate more communication in the future. He suggested that addressing the city council once or twice per year would be effective. Council member Curwen agreed that the dialogue should trickle down to the city council also.

Co-chair Paoletto temporarily halted further discussion on this item to take up item 11-10 – see below for continuation of the discussion.

11-10 Supplement No.1 to Lease Agreement No. DTFANE-06-L-00025 with United States of America, Federal Aviation Administration ATCT/AFS for space at Igor Sikorsky Memorial Airport.

Mr. Ricci stated this item pertained to a lease between the city and Sikorsky for a tower. The contract expired on September 30 and they are still negotiating a new lease. He needed approval for the extension on the existing lease.

Council member McCarthy asked if the matter had been through the Airport Commission. Mr Ricci said not yet.

Council member Curwen asked how long the lease would be extended. Mr. Ricci said it would be extended for nine months.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HOLLOWAY MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

Co-chair Paoletto returned to item **166-09** Proposed State Lobbying Services Agreement.

Council member Baker asked what the main function was of the firm in assisting lobbyists. Mr. Melzinski said they take legislative priorities in the direction of the Mayor and the city council in conjunction with working in Hartford to get as much legislation as possible passed. In essence, they are an advocate to assist the city's own legislative delegation.

Council member Baker asked how the firm works with the delegation. Mr Melzinski said they meet with the actual legislatures to obtain feedback on established priorities. They were told that the legislative delegation will come up with their priorities within the next week or so. Mr. McClain added that they will meet this week to fine tune it.

Council member Baker asked when they update the city council, will the state legislation be involved. Council member McCarthy responded that they will probably have their own meeting with them. He noted that he will talk to State Representative Andres Ayala about scheduling a meeting.

Mr. Kinney said for the first year they represented the city, they met with the delegation. He noted that they have daily discussions with the delegation when there's a matter of particular importance going on and they work with the chairman of the delegation to maintain communication.

Council member Baker asked for a synopsis of where they were at with PILOT's, funding and adjustments with St. Vincent's Hospital. Mr. Kinney said what's driving them is exposure through the city, this information is found out through the Mayor's office. As of February, everything will be on the table, but it's not necessarily a good forecast in terms of acquiring local aid. Mr. McClain added that CCM is usually in the front line during discussions.

Council member Walsh asked if the firm worked with any other municipalities in the same capacity. Mr. Melzinski said they currently represent the Town of Stamford and they previously did work for the Town of Vernon and New London. He stated that they

haven't had any conflict between working for Bridgeport and Stamford. However, if a conflict does arise, they will bring it to their attention.

Council member Baker asked how much the contract was for. Mr. Melzinski said the contract was in the amount of \$50k and part of the budget is allocated specifically for those services as a separate line item.

Council member McCarthy recalled his reaction to the Port Authority issue and how unhappy he was. He said the result of where the Port Authority is now is an indication of how the matter was handled. He said that although this firm was not first on his list, their reaction to handling the problem was effective and he hoped they got the message of communication, communication. He further stated that he has seen the firm in action and how effective they are, so for those reasons, they had his support and he hoped they never experienced the problem as they did in the past. He reiterated that overall, he was in support of the contract.

Council member Holloway said over the last 17 years, he has spent time in Hartford with lobbyists and the delegation. He agreed that it was hard to get a group together, but with the finger on the pulse, he felt they would receive what they can from the firm.

City Attorney Anastasi stressed that given the Port Authority example, the firm did an outstanding job to preclude construction of the safety zone in Stratford. He mentioned that they did an amazing job pulling the Bridgeport group together.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COIUNCIL MEMBER HOLLOWAY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN SECONDED
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services