

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL
MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE
MARCH 1, 2010
5:45 P.M.

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Vizzo-Paniccia; co-chair, M. Ayala,
Taylor-Moye, Silva, Brannelly, Walsh

OTHERS: David Dunn, Personnel Director

CITY ATTORNEY: Mark Anastasi

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia called the meeting to order at 5:58 p.m.

She stated that due to time constraints, there wasn't time to fit other agenda items in. She will talk to the city clerk about adding the other items to the agenda for the next scheduled meeting.

28-09 Proposed Revision to Civil Service Commission Rule IV Fees

David Dunn, Personnel Director passed out a comparison sheet that listed other municipalities fees. He noted that currently, Bridgeport's fees are \$10.00 for residents and \$40.00 for non-residents. The Civil Service Commission is looking to increase the fees to \$100.00 for residents and \$250.00 for non-residents. He explained that there hasn't been an increase in over 20 years and the fees are a small source of revenue for the civil service office. So this is an opportunity to generate a little bit of revenue and cover costs.

He further explained that it costs approximately \$3,000 per candidate they hire and they will test between one-hundred and one-hundred and fifty candidates and will end up hiring at least twenty (20) officers to begin with. There is a written test that will cost \$35.00 per person and the physical ability test will cost \$65.00; however, none of the other towns pay for that test anymore, the candidate does. So they are looking to follow

the same policy that the other towns are. He repeated that the written test is \$35.00 and they test up to (800) candidates. They will then do an assessment test at a flat fee of \$9,000 for a group or they can pay by the individual, so the fees continue to build up. After the three testing components, Koskov will grant scholarships for any Bridgeport candidates and they will pay for it or the candidate will pay for it. The written test is \$35.00 per person and then the assessment test is administered. Then a list of candidates is generated for the chief to interview made up of a committee that is put together by the chief. Overall, they are asking for the increase so the fees will be more competitive with what other towns are doing in the state. He clarified that they want candidates that are motivated, interested and who will put up a good effort to pass the tests. He added that the fee increase may be too much and perceived as an attempt to restrict non-residents and that might become a legal issue, in that they have to be careful not to put up any artificial barriers. He said he had a discussion with the police chief and legal staff and it was thought that the fee was more in line with what others were charging. But if they are inclined to move beyond \$200.00, he suggested that they table the matter to research the legality. Again, they don't want to be perceived as excluding non-residents, although what they do for the residents could be looked at as a disadvantage to non-residents.

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if there was any state statute in regard to fees. Attorney Anastasi pointed out that for the differential between residents and non-residents, the justification for charging non-residents more is to cover the administrative component, so it's a legitimate rationale and a legal basis to have a difference between the two.

Mr. Dunn stated that there is a large recruiting committee made up of the the Mayor's staff, Civil Service, the Guardians and the Hispanic Police Organization. The group was given a \$50k grant that they used to hire a consulting company to advise the police department on how to go about the recruitment effort. The sentiment was not to let the fee issue get out of hand and everyone was fine with the \$35.00 and \$70.00 increase, but they are looking to get the best candidates. And by restricting the pool, it may be limiting to getting the best and brightest. They need to be cautious of any roadblocks that may hinder the process.

Council member T. McCarthy personally thought that the fees should be \$10.00 for residents and \$1,000 for non-residents. He said that although he recognized the limitations, he was supportive of the \$35.00 fee for residents and \$100.00 fee for non-

residents. He stressed that he wasn't in favor of tabling the matter again and he felt they should make a decision tonight due to the twenty officers already being recruited.

Council member M. Ayala stated that his proposition would be \$100.00 for residents and \$200.00 for non-residents.

Attorney Anastasi said that Koskov had a \$35k pot for scholarships. He thought the higher fee would be eaten up fast at the rates of \$100.00 and \$200.00, he cautioned them not to go too far beyond what the other towns were doing in terms of the fees they applied. He said if they went with the lower fees, they will be more in line with other communities.

Mr. Dunn said that most communities only have a slight distinction from resident to non-resident. He agreed they will be over the range and highest in the state if the numbers go from \$100.00 to \$200.00.

Council member Brannelly asked if he was proposing the same fees for the police department and fire department. She noted that other towns were consistent with their fees, except for East Hartford. Mr. Dunn stated that they don't have a fire department exam scheduled yet, but when they do, he felt the fee would go up.

Council member Brannelly asked if the scholarship would cover 100% of the fee. Mr. Dunn said they will offer a \$65.00 scholarship to any Bridgeport resident who signs up to take the test and they need it for the CHIPS exam that is good for six months. He clarified that CHIPS meant: *Complete Health Injury Prevention*. They do all the physical ability testing in the State of Connecticut. It costs \$65.00 to have the test administered.

Council member Walsh questioned the \$100.00 and \$250.00 initial fees that will now be reduced to \$35.00 and \$70.00. Mr. Dunn clarified that the fees currently are \$10.00 and \$40.00 and the sentiment is to raise the fees as high as they can, although it was thought that the amounts are too high.

Council member Brannelly said they had to look at the risk of putting up banners for outside residents.

Council member Walsh said he didn't have a problem with the \$100.00 difference and he would prefer they go with \$35.00 for residents and \$135.00 for non-residents.

Attorney Anastasi commented that there was a reasonable expectation that they won't jack up the fee under the representation that they will foot the bill per the scholarship. Council member Vizzo-Paniccia felt the scholarship matter was irrelevant and a separate matter as it pertained to the fees increases. Attorney Anastasi urged the committee that if they felt the fees were too low, they should be tweaked rather than doubled.

Council member Walsh emphasized that city residents already pay more in proportion to taxes etc. and he felt that the lower fees would make more of a difference from a practical standpoint.

Mr. Dunn noted that applications were being collected. And up to two weeks ago, they had up to 1,500 interest cards.

Attorney Anastasi said that when they take the physical ability test they become qualified, so they could then seek out other placement elsewhere, ie., the test is transferable and will then eliminate the additional fee they have to pay.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEE OF \$100.00 FOR RESIDENTS AND \$200.00 FOR NON-RESIDENTS**

There was no second to the motion

Motion failed

**** COUNCIL MEMBER WALSH MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEE OF \$35.00 FOR RESIDENTS AND \$135.00 FOR NON-RESIDENTS**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

It was noted that the item will be brought to the floor during the city council meeting.

*It was stated that the approved fees would apply to the Police Department and Fire Department.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services