

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 10, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton Co-chair; Jorge Cruz, Jeanette Herron, Matthew McCarthy, Mary McBride-Lee, Amy Marie Vizzo-Paniccia (10:30 a.m.)

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): M. Lyons, E. Martinez, M. Pereira, R. Roman-Christy, D. Taylor-Moye & M. Valle; K. Flatto, Finance Director; N. Nkwo, OPM Director, Craig Nadrizny, Acting Public Facilities Director, Paul Catino, Public Facilities; Aaron Curry

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Co-chair Newton reviewed the ground rules including announcing there were guest in attendance that would be presenting their projects. He cautioned everyone to be respectful.

CAPITAL BUDGET REVIEW

Council Member McCarthy said that they had received a document from Mr. Nkwo about the 2020 Capital Items were funded. Council Member Burns said that this would be discussed at the Monday meeting.

Mr. Nkwo explained that the Capital Budget for all the departments had been scaled back to the immediate needs. He pointed out that items like a garbage truck or recycling vehicle tend to be very expensive, so they can only order one a year and they must be bonded.

Mr. Catino said that they were trying to move what they can into the General Fund. However, there are numerous pieces of large items that are still needed, particularly snow removal equipment.

Mr. Nadrizny said that they have been requesting three trucks for replacing vehicles from 1992. The trucks take at least a year to build and while they are used for snow plowing, they are also used for multiple other things. They are also requesting an additional sweeper. They have six right now, but need eight to fully sweep the City.

Mr. Nadrizny then explained that the City equipment was aging and many of the vehicles are over 20 years old. When a storm hits, the old vehicles have to return to the garage almost as soon as they go out. There have been more mechanics needed in order to keep these vehicles running. The oldest sweeper is from 1998. They are looking for smaller snow trucks and hope to

add more equipment for day to day work. There are many pieces of equipment that are over 10 years old and they are utilized to their fullest. The Health Department also needs vehicles to keep up with the pandemic. The Maintenance staff are also driving vehicles from 1995 and they need reliable vehicles to get to the job sites.

Council Member Newton said that they have been kicking the can down the road for a long time. After the issues with the WPCA, it is important to keep up with things. He asked what the final cost if they were to fully stock the Public Facilities Department with the needed equipment. The Council Members also get the same type of complaint phone calls that Public Facilities receives.

Mr. Catino said the original request was for \$3.047 million. After deducting the Mayor's Recommended Budget number and the \$1 million dollars already in the Capital Fund, the remaining amount is \$1.412 million. They agree that putting the fleet and smaller vehicles into the General fund is a wise idea. This is the third or fourth year they have been doing this. However, there are larger pieces of equipment that need to be bonded. \$1.4 million would be left unfunded with the current proposal. Discussion followed.

Mr. Nkwo reminded everyone that last year, they had approved almost \$2.1 million dollars for equipment, however, only \$1 million was bonded. This means that there is still \$1 million dollars in the Capital Plan that the Council has already approved, but not bonded at this time. He suggested that they ask the Council to approve the \$1 million that had not been bonded in addition to the \$1 million that was proposed. Mr. Nkwo went on to give the details of the previous approvals.

Council Member Newton said that Mr. Nkwo should do whatever they have to do to get them the funding to cover their needs. Mr. Flatto confirmed Mr. Nkwo's comments. He asked for a day to confirm the numbers and to allocate the funding. Discussion followed.

Council Member McCarthy asked why the City delays on bonding the equipment that needs to be replaced. Last year, there was approval for equipment bonding, but it was never bonded.

Mr. Flatto said that he had a list from Bond Counsel but there were items missing. He said that he would reconcile with Mr. Nkwo and provide the Council with an updated, accurate list.

Council Member McCarthy asked Mr. Flatto and Mr. Nkwo to review the equipment replacement list and indicate which items would be included in the General Budget and which items would be in the Capital Plan. Council Member Burns said that Mr. Nkwo had already sent a list with the transferred items out.

Mr. Flatto said that the list that he had checked was different from the list Mr. Nkwo was referring to in the Capital Plan. He explained that if they had bonded everything that was approved in last year's Capital Plan, it would have been difficult to go to the Bond Market with such a large figure. Each year, Mr. Flatto tries to spread out the equipment over two years.

Mr. Nkwo reminded everyone that when the administration had taken over from the previous administration, there was over \$30 million dollars in Pension liability. By handling that first and bonding that debt, they saved the City \$3.5 million dollars in interest every year for the next 20

years. The State was charging 8% in interest. Now they are in the position to use those savings to service the City needs such as bonding for this equipment.

Council Member Lyons said that she agreed with Council Member Newton's comments regarding the Public Facilities' equipment needs. She asked if they had to outsource some of the snow removal sometimes. Mr. Nadrizny said that they do and it costs \$250/hour per truck. This is very expensive.

Council Member Lyons said that years ago was that they were outsourcing the garbage pickup. She suggested that the City pick up the garbage in the condos, which alleviated many problems. The cost of outsourcing would make it worth it. The Council Members get the phone calls about property damage during plowing.

Council Member Martinez said that she supports replacing the Public Facilities equipment and echoed Council Member McCarthy's comments. She added that two years ago, they included funding for new vehicles for the Health Department and she believed those vehicles had been replaced.

Council Member Martinez said that the drivers of the vehicles need to be held accountable for the way they drive these vehicles into the ground.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the call at 10:30 a.m.

Council Member McBride-Lee also agreed about getting new vehicles for handling snow. She asked if the full listing was in the documents she received. Council Member Burns said that it was in the documentation. Mr. Nkwo said that the \$1.4 million would cover four or five trucks and the two trucks the staff was talking about would be included in that.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that in order to do a job, the staff needs the right equipment to actually do the job, so she is in support of this.

Council Member Pereira said that the Charter gives the Council full authority over the purse strings of the City. When the Council decided to bond for the Public Facilities equipment, Mr. Nkwo and Mr. Flatto decided what to approve. She asked Mr. Nkwo and Mr. Flatto where they got the authority to circumvent the authority of the City Council. The City Council took a vote and the Mayor can veto it and the Council can override that vote. Mr. Flatto and Mr. Nkwo are not elected officials and do not have the authority to do this.

Mr. Flatto explained that it was a two-step process. The Capital Plan is presented for approval and then later, a bond resolution with suggested items is prepared for the Council's approval. Not all the bonding is done at once, it is usually done in phases. Two years ago, the Committee decided that there were a number of authorizations that were never bonded. The Committee then de-authorized \$2.8 million for equipment in 2019. Those items can be re-authorized again. Everything is done with Council approval.

Council Member Pereira listed the steps that a Committee would have to take in order to de-authorize items. However, the full Council made the decision. Therefore the Committee could

not defund the items on their own. She said that when bond resolutions are passed, they should bond for everything that was approved in a certain amount of time. She repeated that Mr. Flatto was not an elected official of the City. The Council is. When the Council approves something, that's how it goes. The vote is binding on everyone.

Council Member Pereira said that last year, there was \$700 million in bonded debt. She said that they were paying over \$100 million in interest on that debt. That does not get anyone anything tangible. She supports Public Facilities. The number one thing people care about is quality of life issues — sidewalks, street paving, and noise. There are items on the bonding list that cost \$5,000 or \$10,000 and they shouldn't be.

Mr. Nkwo said that his notes were for moving things into the General Fund. He does not approve bonding for items that last less than 10 years.

Council Member Pereira said that her copy did not have the notations on it. Council Member Burns said that Mr. Nkwo had sent him a rough draft with handwritten notations on it, but Mr. Catino provided a clean copy which was much more readable for the Committee members.

Council Member Herron said she was concerned because Council Members have said that the City should be run as a business, which she agrees with. They can't keep neglecting the items and buildings that are falling down. It is an embarrassment to the City. She supports providing the Public Facilities with the equipment they need. They can't run a functional City with run down equipment. There should be a regular line item for repair or replacement of this equipment.

Council Member Valle asked what the Public Facilities would need to have their own fleet so they wouldn't need to outsource plowing or other services like sweeping. The East Side and East End need to have the streets cleaned. The streets should be plowed and the garbage picked up without leaving stuff behind.

Mr. Nadrizny said that it would be important to update the snow fleet. The mechanics do an outstanding job in keeping the trucks running. It takes a year to get a truck delivered after it has been ordered. He noted that there were residents who do not follow the alternate side of the street parking, which interferes with plowing and street sweeping.

Council Member Cruz said that he has a great deal of respect for Public Facilities. He used to drive trucks in Massachusetts and the trucks take a beating. Once the trucks get old, they have to rely on the mechanics to keep the trucks running. He said that he would support Council Member Newton's request that the Public Facilities get the equipment they need. They need to support the community.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the equipment is needed and agrees with Mr. Nadrizny said about the residents not abiding by the alternate street parking rules. However, this is not what they are discussing at this time. The City needs to enforce this in order to properly clean or plow the streets.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that having a lot of trucks would be great, but they also have to find the trained employees to take proper care of the streets. She said that she would be speaking about this later.

Council Member Burns said that the document listing the items that Mr. Nkwo transferred from the Capital Funding Request to the Operating Fund was sent out with other documents on Thursday.

Council President Nieves requested that the item be exhibited to include in the record. Council Member Burns explained that the document had already been submitted to the City Clerk's Office.

Council Member Burns said that while it would be great to give the departments everything they asked for, there are long term expenditures that they have to consider.

Council Member Newton said that he had been hearing about street sweepers and wished to know if they would see the sweepers on the street.

Mr. Nadrizny said that they had started sweeping in April on the day they do recycling and each street should be swept twice this month. Half of the City has been done and there have been Council Members who have reported they had seen the sweepers.

Council Member McCarthy asked if the list that they had received from Public Facilities was separate from the 2020 list that authorized equipment for bonding.

Mr. Catino said that the lists were not the same list. They had requested the items that were the highest priority and those items were not carried forward onto the new list. This list is for the 2021 highest priority. Some of the items have been transferred to the Operating Budget.

Council Member Lyons asked for a report on the cost for outsourcing services from the last year. Mr. Nadrizny said that they do not like to outsource, but if they have a storm that has snowfall of over six inches, they are not capable of handling it, so they bring in additional plows.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that she loves Bridgeport but that the City was dirty. She hears that from visitors from other cities. She said she called Mr. Nadrizny a million times about her constituents complaining their streets were not plowed. Mr. Catino replied that often the plows were delayed because they broke down.

Council Member Burns said that it had come to his attention that the Klein Auditorium, which is a City owned building, is in need of a new roof. He said that people need to consider adding this to the list of projects. He will send out the backup documents as soon as he receives it.

Mr. Nkwo said that he had received the request from the Klein about the leaks. He said that the bricks need to be repointed. He said that the project could be included in the Capital Plan, but suggested that when the guidelines from the Stimulus funding comes through, they might be able to use some of that funding rather than bonding for it. He recommended that they include the project in the Capital Plan, but not bond for it right away.

Council Member Newton reminded everyone that the Klein had been willed to the City by the owner and they need to preserve that historic building.

Council Member Herron said that the Klein had just put in over \$900,000 in new lighting technical equipment and they need to repair the roof to protect the equipment.

Council Member McCarthy asked if there would be an issue with using CARES funding for this because it is a City owned building. He said that the work needs to be done because it is a great place for the community. He was concerned because there was money for blight that was not used two years ago, followed by bonding for Land Acquisition or Blight in 2020 and another request to bond for Land Acquisition and Blight this year. He suggested using the Land Acquisition funds for the Klein instead.

PUBLIC FACILITIES GENERAL BUDGET

Mr. Nkwo pointed out that some of the transfers would be reflected in the General Budget and would show up as a variance.

Mr. Nkwo then narrated an overview of the Revenues with the Committee as listed on page 210 in the Budget Book, including the micro-grid, the parking meter collections, and commercial dumping.

Council Member Pereira asked why the parking meters revenues were down by a certain date. Mr. Nkwo said the meter collections were based on the actual collections of \$91,000 for nine months of this year.

Council Member Pereira said she was talking about July 1st. In 2020, it states the City collected \$365,000. She wished to know why the projection had been reduced by \$150,000. Mr. Nkwo said that there were fewer businesses in downtown now.

Council Member Pereira asked if all the revenue from the parking violations used in the Public Facilities Budget. Mr. Flatto said that the revenue that comes into a department goes into the General Fund. Some revenues are attributed by the department to the fees that they come from but the City has a General Fund for all revenues.

Council Member Cruz said that if he was not mistaken, the Mayor had ordered that a freeze on the parking meters.

Mr. Nkwo then reviewed the personnel budget. He reminded everyone that the vacant positions were not filled at the time when he created the budget. One of the positions will be filled on May 1st.

Council Member Newton asked who would be handling the companies like UI that dig up the streets. Mr. Catino said that it would be handled by Licenses and Permits Department and Mr. Urquidi, the City Engineer, working with them as well.

Council Member Newton said that they have to increase the fees because the City has done a poor job in protecting the streets. The companies leave the streets in terrible condition and two people in the department cannot cover the entire City.

Council Member McCarthy said that he agreed with Council Member Newton about the condition that the companies leave the roads in after an excavation.

Council Member McCarthy then asked if there was an annual review of employees regarding their performances.

Mr. Nadrizny said that it would depend on the individual Department Supervisors. If their performance is on par and doing a good job, they tell them to continue on. If there are issues or poor work, they are written up if need be.

Council Member Pereira said that the most expensive line item was the Director of Construction Services and there are two of them. She was trying to understand what they were doing.

Mr. Nadrizny said that they supervise projects all over the City. They only have one at this time, and are working on hiring another individual.

Council Member Burns reminded everyone that they refer to only positions rather than the individual.

Council Member Pereira replied that she only referred to the position and did not mention an individual. She said that they were requesting another Special Project Coordinator and this was one of the most concerning positions in the City. It is often filled as a patronage position with people who are not qualified for their position. She said that she had raised this issue last year and was raising it again regarding the fringe benefits linked to all these positions are listed five pages away. It is intentional and purposeful. In her years of working on budget in corporate, when looking at a P&L statement, the fringe benefits would normally be listed right next to each position. She repeated that they had to flip over five pages to see the corresponding fringes, which is not normal.

Council Member Pereira said that there was over \$14 million dollars in projected debt. Mr. Nkwo said that he stated in the beginning of the presentation that there was a transfer of a data base position.

Council Member Pereira said that she wanted her answer regarding the debt. Mr. Flatto said that the debt is allocated by programmatic use by the Police, Facilities, Board of Ed and so on. There is a total of \$78 million all together, but it is allocated by programmatic use. Mr. Nkwo reminded everyone that Public Facilities often end up as a catch all since they are responsible for all City buildings, cars, and equipment.

Council Member Valle asked which department would be responsible for checking on the streets where there have been excavations. Mr. Nadrizny said that it would be the Permit Supervisor.

Council Member Valle asked where the revenue from the permits went. Mr. Nkwo said that it was listed on the upper portion of the page.

Council Member Valle said that the Permit Supervisor needs to visit Brook Street where the construction company excavated and there were no repairs. She said that the Supervisor should be let go because he wasn't doing his job.

Mr. Catino said that he had asked Mr. Urquidi to step in because it is impossible to expect one person to inspect over 800 miles of road in the City. They are adding additional staff and they are looking at how other cities handle the problem.

Council Member Valle said that the City paves a street and having a construction company come in to excavate and leaving it destroyed is wrong. Mr. Catino said that he understood because his staff are the ones that have to go out and repair the damage left behind.

Council Member Burns said that sometimes it is a private company that comes in and does work. The City needs to look at this and revise it.

Council Member Lyons asked how they hire seasonal workers. Mr. Nkwo said that it would be listed under Roadway Maintenance.

Council Member Pereira said there are now Special Project Coordinators in this one section of the administration. She wanted to know why it was listed on three separate lines. It should only be one line with the job title.

Mr. Nkwo said that each Special Project Coordinator was affiliated with different unions and each union has its own job task code. When the budget is compiled, it is printed out based on job task codes. Based on the union's agreement, the different codes allow the raises to be applied accurately.

Council Member Pereira said that she had never heard of such a thing when she worked in a union environment during her 20 some odd years career.

Mr. Nkwo said that these positions had gone through Civil Service and the City Council approved the raises with the positions listed each year.

Council Member Newton said as a point of order that Council Members should simply ask their questions, let the staff give their answers and move on.

Council Member Burns asked Mr. Nkwo about the Special Projects Coordinator. Mr. Nkwo said that it was just re-classification, not a new position.

Mr. Nadrizny said that the position previously had been a Data Base Administration which did not apply to what they needed. They need a staff member to update the website, work with Purchasing and other administrative work.

The Committee then reviewed page 216.

Mr. Nkwo said that Public Facilities does manual labor so they expect some Worker's Compensation.

Mr. Flatto said that the Debt Service was increasing because all the principal payments were rolled into this year's payment, starting this year. He reminded everyone that they had done three refinancing in the last few years to decrease the debt service. He reviewed the details of this transaction. Council Member Burns said that they had already known about this and now it was due.

Council Member Pereira said that the Capital Plan Budget had a note about moving the fleet to the General Fund, which has been done for the last three years would be \$2.827 million. If the City Council approves the \$2 million for Public Facilities, the debt will not be calculated on the last line.

Mr. Flatto said that this was correct. The interest payments would not start for 6 to 12 months and the principal payments would start after 2 years. Discussion followed about the details.

The Committee then reviewed the Garage Budget. Mr. Nkwo pointed out that the Garage does not have any revenue. The Parks Department does have revenue, which will be discussed at that time.

Mr. Nkwo said that the head mechanic had been vacant when he compiled the report but the position has since been filled.

Council Member Newton pointed out that there was only one welder in the department and wanted to know what would happen if that staff member was out or on vacation.

Mr. Nadrizny said that they don't have a backup staff member because it is a specialized job, so they would most likely have to outsource the job.

Council Member Newton said that it does not make sense to only have one welder. The City should not have to outsource this. Mr. Nadrizny replied that the extra jobs usually are short. Mr. Nkwo agreed and said that it would be less expensive to outsource than hire another staff member.

Council Member McCarthy said that he was reading on page 220 in the short goals for the garage and felt that replacing the trailers and wished to know why they could not be fixed. Mr. Nadrizny said that they use their skilled labor as much as possible, but they can only do so much. Council Member McCarthy said that he was tired of COVID being used as an excuse for everything.

Council Member Cruz said he did not understand why other staff members could help with welding. Mr. Nadrizny said that an employee would have to be in the welder's union or the union would file a grievance. Council Member Cruz said that this was a problem.

Council Member Pereira asked about page 220 under Other Personnel Services where there was an increase from last year to this year, but there was a zero for 2022-2023.

Mr. Nadrizny said that last year, the Council approved two more mechanics and the department created two shifts. One shift starts at 4 a.m. and the second shift starts at 7 a.m. This reduces overtime. Discussion followed.

Council Member Pereira said that there were six mechanics listed on page 218. She asked if the City had saved any money by adding the two mechanic positions or end up spending more with the fringe benefits. Mr. Nkwo said that the Council had previously approved the addition of the two mechanics and this has reduced the overtime budget.

Council Member Pereira asked what the total amount for the two mechanics and their fringe benefits was. Mr. Nkwo said that he would have to check because their fringe benefits vary if they are single, married or have children. He estimated that it could be \$85,000 each. Council Member Pereira said that this means it cost the City more.

Mr. Nkwo said that the goal was keeping the fleet on the road. It may cost more in Personnel, but the benefit was having the trucks and other equipment ready for snow or other events.

Council Member Pereira said that she wanted people to understand the benefits of operating the garage.

Council Member Lyons asked if Mr. Nadrizny had any other positions where he needs more staff. Mr. Nadrizny said that they need more people in roadway. He added that they had requested four mechanics, but only two were approved.

The Committee then reviewed Road Maintenance on page 224. Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview of the summary page. He said that adding a part time painter would be helpful and there was vacant plumber position. The Mayor has approved a number of job requests recently.

Council Member Newton asked Mr. Nadrizny if he could move staff around to assist other departments. Mr. Nadrizny replied that Public Facilities tradesmen can work anywhere, including Parks, Airport or City buildings.

Council Member Newton asked if the Mechanic's Shop welder could go to 999 Broad Street to work if needed. Mr. Nadrizny said that they try to utilize their staff to assist every department.

Council Member Pereira asked how many of the 32 positions were retirees that were already collecting pensions and come back to work. Mr. Catino said that there were no full time employees that would fit the description.

Council Member Pereira said that she had asked about every position because the taxpayers were paying their pensions and now they were back on the payroll. Mr. Catino said that the only position that was a retired individual would be the part time painter. However, Mr. Catino said that he did not know that individual's status.

Mr. Nkwo said that during COVID, they were painting offices and the Director decided to bring an experienced painter on to staff. There were no benefits involved.

Council Member Pereira said that Bridgeport has the highest unemployment rate in the State, so when there are job opportunities that do not require specific skills, they should be doing everything in their power to employ Bridgeport residents, not people who collect pensions already. This is about the budget that will start July 1st. She repeated that Bridgeport has the highest unemployment rate in the State. The job opportunities should be given to Bridgeport residents who don't have pensions.

Council Member Newton said that Mr. Nkwo should answer the questions with a yes or no. Mr. Nkwo said that he would not do that again.

The Committee then reviewed the Operations on page 228. The traffic light controls increased by \$10,000. The City has to keep the lights functioning to avoid liability. He said that the freezer was for the Police Department to store evidence and the request was moved to the General fund. Deco lights had an increase of \$10,000 because they have to maintain them. When accidents happen, they file insurance claims when possible. Utilities like water and gas increase annually. A new MadVac is included for \$55,000. Mr. Catino gave a brief description of the other specialized vehicles requested.

Mr. Nkwo then reviewed the details listed on page 229.

Council Member Newton asked about page 228 lists something for the BOE. Mr. Nkwo said the BOE requested some building repairs that were minor. The Council made a recommendation to allocate \$150,000 a year in preventative maintenance.

Council Member Newton asked Property rental and leases and whether the Amphitheater was covered by a lease. Mr. Nkwo said that the City had given \$7.5 million for the Amphitheater. The developer will make an annual payment to the City and there will also be some funding set aside for maintenance.

Council Member Newton asked why it was not under the other City rental and leases. Mr. Nkwo explained that it was revenue, not an expense. The lease payment is listed under OPED as revenue.

Council Member Pereira asked about 228 about water utility and the sewer use fees. She wished to know if water use was actually Aquarion and why there was such a disparity. Mr. Catino said that the differential was the fire hydrants. The City pays approximately 82% of that water utility expense and Mr. Catino said that they should review this in the future. The City pays the same amount for the hydrants regardless of whether they use them or not because they pay for capacity, not usage.

Council Member Pereira said that the WPCA has filed for an increase of 3%. She said that the anticipated increase is not reflected in the figures.

The issue with the fire hydrants is significant. She wished to know if it was a State statute and where the authority came from to charge for capacity versus use. Mr. Catino said it was his understanding that this was regulated by PURA and would require the State to review the

process. Mr. Nkwo said that the City has tried everything they could think of but the rate was based on cubic inches of the pipe diameter in the City. Discussion followed.

Council Member Pereira requested that the Council look at this and contact the City's legislative delegation.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had brought up this issue every year that she was on the Council. She stated that there had been a contract signed in the 1980's but no one could locate it. Five years ago, the State legislative committee did not want to address the issue due to potential issues with other towns. Having individual meters at residences would be possible but it is very expensive. It is an ongoing situation and should be reviewed.

The Committee then reviewed the Roadway Budget on page 232. Mr. Nkwo noted that one of the eight vacant positions involves Workers' Comp and cannot be filled. Five of the Maintainer I positions are new. There is a Maintainer IV position that is vacant. He then indicated where the Parking Attendants transfer to the Police Department was listed.

Mr. Nadrizny clarified that they do not have eight vacant Maintainer 1 positions. All of them have been filled since the budget report was created.

Council Member Newton said he did not have a problem hiring people for Public Works, but hopes that the Bridgeport residents are hired first. It's not happening in the City. Council Member Newton said that he was tired of having outsiders coming to work in the City and not paying taxes. Bridgeport has 140,000 residents and the City should try to employ as many as possible.

Mr. Nadrizny said that they have to do more with less. He said that he had started as a seasonal 23 years ago. While they would love to have Bridgeport residents as employees because they care about the City.

Council Member Pereira said that the notes on page 232, it mentions the Supervisor. She wished to know where the Supervisor was listed. Mr. Nkwo said that he believed the position was moved to the Police Department as a Special Project Coordinator.

Council Member Pereira said that one of the Maintainer 1 positions was being removed from the Fire Department. Mr. Nkwo said that Mr. Nadrizny can assign the staff members where he wishes. If the Fire Department has a need, they will bring it to Mr. Nadrizny. The position is vacant. Discussion followed about the details.

Mr. Nadrizny explained that it was in the Fire Department budget, but they were not utilizing the position. Mr. Nkwo transferred the Maintainer 1 to Mr. Nadrizny's budget so that he can now utilize the position.

Council Member Lyons asked about the seasonal positions. Mr. Nadrizny said that they were having a difficult time recruiting workers. It is only a four month job opportunity. In the past they had regulars who would return, but in the last two years, that has not happened. Seasonals are vital for the Parks, the Roadway and a variety of other departments.

Council Member Lyons said that she supports the youth being involved as a seasonal.

Council Member Newton asked what the benefits of being a seasonal would be. He asked how someone would become a full time worker from seasonal. Mr. Nadrizny said that they tell seasonals that if there is an opening and the employee works hard, they will be considered for the job. He said that often a CDL is required. Other workers only do what they need to do to get by.

Council Member Newton asked why every employee in maintenance needs to have a CDL. Mr. Nadrizny said that Public Facilities supports every other division. If Sanitation has someone out, an employee with a CDL is needed. The majority of trucks in the fleet require CDLs for operations.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked if there was a statute that requires seasonals only work four months a year. Mr. Nadrizny said that this was so.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked why they were not hiring these seasonal as permanents. Mr. Nadrizny said that he would like to have all permanent employees.

Council Member Pereira asked about page 238 for Roadway Equipment where there was a major increase. Mr. Nkwo said that the \$155,000 covers other pieces of equipment that were moved from the Capital Budget. \$55,000 is for a MadVac; \$25,000 to replace a 1993 roller used for road patching and \$75,000 for a piece of equipment used at the Transfer Station. He explained that the Mayor's Recommended Budget was to put them in the General Fund and not have 20 year debt on them.

Council Member Pereira asked about asked what they spent \$13,000 on for Laundry Services in Public Facilities on page 239. Mr. Nkwo said that the union contract requires clean laundry for the uniforms. The Laundry service handles the washing. Mr. Nadrizny said that the service not only washes them, but repairs or replaces them as well.

Council Member Pereira said that it was outrageous that they are paying a laundry service for the uniforms. This needs to be negotiated out of the contract. Mr. Nkwo pointed out that these employees do not get a uniform allowance like the Police and Fire every year. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Pereira said that her father worked at Raybestos for years and paid for his own clothing and her mother washed those clothes. She said that she had worked at McDonald's but she has an issue with taxpayers paying to launder Public Facilities uniforms.

Council Member McCarthy said that the vehicles that were \$18,000 per vehicle should have been in the General Budget rather than the \$75,000 machine. Mr. Nkwo said that during the last two years, they had purchased a number of vehicles in the General Fund. They are phasing in the various pieces of equipment over time.

Council Member McCarthy said he did not have an issue with the laundry services because the staff are climbing up on garbage trucks or crawling under cars and trucks. Changing it would require giving the staff a uniform allowance and it would be a financial wash.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the laundry service includes vests and not every washing machine is the same. This keeps it in check and provides uniformity. She said that she has seen it both ways and was in favor of keeping the laundry service. The uniform services are professionals and know what they are doing.

The Committee then reviewed Sanitation and Recycling on page 242. Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview and noted that the vacant Maintainer III position was actually filled and the staff member was on Worker's Comp.

Council Member Newton asked if they were saving money when they brought the service in-house rather than outsourcing it. Mr. Nkwo said that he believed that they are saving money doing it in-house. He spoke about how much money the City saved with the Transfer Station because the third party service increased the price so much. Mr. Nadrizny said that he had heard from other towns that outsource the service and they are having a lot of problems.

Council Member Burns asked about the enforcement fines. Mr. Nadrizny said that they would refer it to the Health Department.

Mr. Catino said that it was the fines when people are not recycling or create contaminated loads. At this time, it actually costs the City more to recycle than it costs for straight garbage, so they are not enforcing it. Violators get a sticker on their bin. Residents tend to abide by the rules to avoid the fine.

Council Member Pereira said that there was an issue when residents leave the Toters out on the sidewalk all the time. She wished to know who would be responsible for fining people for not bringing in their Toters. Mr. Catino said that there was a new ordinance that they had to be removed after 24 hours. He said that the Health Department should be notified.

Council Member Pereira said that Personnel summary on page 242 indicates that there are four supervisors, with two vacancies. She asked how long the positions have been vacant.

Mr. Nadrizny said that people had been promoted and the positions has been vacant for about a year. Council Member Pereira said that it was outrageous that a supervisory position in Sanitation was vacant for so long. Discussion followed.

Council Member Newton said that unless the Mayor signs off on the job positions, they cannot hire. Department Directors cannot just hire someone on their own.

Council Member Newton said that when the garbage cans were emptied, they need to be put back in front of the owner's home. Mr. Nadrizny said that he was aware of that particular situation.

Mr. Nkwo reviewed the variances. Municipal tipping fees are expected to increase along with the CRRRA tonnage rates. Recycling services are now costing more because China is no longer interested in our recycling materials.

Council Member Burns said that he had been working on recycling food scraps through composting and his small group has pulled about 5 tons often out of the waste stream. The Governor had created the GC-3, the Climate and Sustainability program. The Governor is concerned that their version of Wheelabrator will be shut down. He said that food scrap waste was something people should be considering.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that this was a program that they were hoping to start with the previous administration. It would help with less waste in the landfills. She hopes this administration would follow through on this. Mr. Nadrizny said that they were discussing having a compost site at the landfill to try it out. However, they don't have the Toters or the staffing to do composting. He suggested that they start off small and see how it works.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that there had been good questions and valuable. She thanked Mr. Nadrizny for giving the information to the Council Members.

Council Member McCarthy said that he keeps hearing that they don't have the staff or bodies, but others talk about how Bridgeport had the highest unemployment rate in the State. He asked what the problem seems to be and why they could not fill the positions. Mr. Nadrizny said that the positions have to be approved in order to be filled. Some positions like a certified mechanic, can take between six months to a year to be filled. Seasonals and Maintainer candidates with CDLs started in the \$20s pay range in other towns. Bridgeport starts them off at \$16 and change. Most of the candidates they get just graduate from driving school, so it is difficult. Discussion followed about the hiring process.

Council Member Lyons asked about composting and burying their garbage in the ground. Council Member Burns said that compost is food scraps that turns into material to amend the soil.

Council Member Pereira asked where it says in the Ordinances that once the City Council has budgeted and approved a position, the Mayor has to sign some type of form. She said that she is unable to find it. This has been a continuous problem. Mr. Nkwo said that it was most likely under the Civil Service regulations. The Mayor is the Chief Administrative Officer of the City and he has the final authority to do this. Discussion followed.

Council Member Newton said that whether they like it or not, the Mayor is the Chief Executive Officer of the City. Unless this was something that the Council can change, every Mayor since Jasper McLevy has had the authority to sign off on the positions. These are the elected leaders of the City. He said that to his knowledge there is no Chief Administrator of any city that does not sign off on the various jobs because there are other factors like budget that have to be considered. He said that in private corporations, the President of the company has input on hiring. The Council's job is to continue doing what they are doing by adding the positions, but it was his understanding that Mayor still has to sign off on it or veto the position. The Council cannot circumvent the Mayor's authority.

Mr. Nkwo said that the Committee and the Council reviews the budget and makes decisions and cuts. The Mayor has to exercise management rights in certain areas, such as Police overtime or Fire overtime.

Council Member McBride-Lee thanked Council Member Newton for his explanation about the Mayor's authority and role. She said that she had been hearing a lot about what certain individuals would not vote for this or that because the Mayor had to sign the appropriate documents. Someone has to sign the documents.

The Transfer Station was the next item discussed. Mr. Nkwo said that the City had taken over the operation of the transfer station a few years ago. It has been cheaper for the City to run this in-house and the City now has control. One Maintainer V position is shown as vacant, but Mr. Nkwo said that he would have to check to see if this was truly vacant or if Worker's Comp was involved.

Mr. Nadrizny said that the position was filled and the staff member was out on Worker's Comp, but the position was being covered by a Roadway employee.

Mr. Nkwo then gave an overview of the operating budget which appeared to be in line with previous years.

Council Member McCarthy said that the Transfer Station needs to have a complete overhaul. He said that he had heard from others that the staff have been rude and also experienced it himself. There are a number of four business people dumping stuff, which no other town allows.

Mr. Nadrizny said that every commercial truck that goes through there has a permit and no one pays cash. They are billed. He agrees that the facility needs to be overhauled and said that the other cities have limits as to how much can be dumped every year or how many times one could visit the dump. He said that he felt it was well run but they could do better.

Council Member Newton said that he agreed with Council Member McCarthy that an overhaul was needed. The employees are here to serve the public, not the public to serve the employees. That includes being respectful to the public.

Mr. Nadrizny said that he had worked the scales many years ago and some of the residents were very disrespectful. Some try to dump stuff that the station doesn't accept even with it is clearly posted and when they are stopped, they call the Mayor, his brother and his mother. He said that the staff will take photos of the load and its construction debris.

Council Member Pereira asked if there was no revenue listed when there has to be revenue generated from the fees. She said that there was a business that leaves a mess all over the sidewalk.

Mr. Nkwo said that it was listed in the Public Facilities Administration on page 210. He said that the City fronts the money for CRRA for the tonnage. They also require a 3 month deposit in case the businesses does not pay their bill.

Council Member Pereira asked about the amount of revenue that the fee covers versus the cost of running the Transfer Station. Mr. Nkwo said that if they charge all the taxpayers for the dump, they will have more blight.

Council Member Pereira said that there were businesses that pick up material in the surrounding area and dump the stuff in Bridgeport. Mr. Nadrizny said that the vehicle must be licensed in Bridgeport. Council Member Pereira said that the taxpayers were paying almost \$2 million in costs but only \$70,000 in fee revenues. Discussion followed about commercial dump companies and the process for identifying City residents.

Council Member Valle said she would not like to see fees for the residents and homeowners. Residents often don't want to pay extra fees because they already pay high taxes.

Council Member McCarthy asked what happens to the revenue from the 10 Barnum Dike wood grinding site. Mr. Nadrizny said that the reason the transfer station gives people who have a large amount of brush a slip is to prevent others from dumping their stuff at the site. The City does not pay Barnum Dike and Barnum Dike does not pay the City.

Council Member McCarthy said that Barnum Dike sells the mulch. Mr. Nadrizny said that the brush from the parks and esplanades goes there and is chipped. All the brown bags of leaves and storm debris goes there.

Council Member Pereira asked if they ask the residents if they were more upset about paying for the park stickers or paying for the transfer station, she felt that the vast majority of residents would say it was wrong for them to pay so much in taxes and still have to pay to get into the parks. She said that there were people who were abusing the transfer station.

Council Member Newton said it was a good meeting but time to finish up. Any questions should be sent to the Co-chairs so they can get the information in advance.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services