

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 12, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Scott Burns Co-chair; Jorge Cruz, Jeanette Herron, Matthew McCarthy, Mary McBride-Lee, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): M. Lyons, M. Pereira & D. Taylor-Moye; K. Flatto, Finance Director; N. Nkwo, OPM Director; Eric Amado, Labor Relations Director/Interim Personnel Director; Monquencelo T. Miles, Benefits Director; Sandy Ferreira, Human Resources Manager and Deborah Brelsford, Civil Service Executive Assistant and Clerk.

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

CAPITAL BUDGET REVIEW

Labor Relations Director/Interim Personnel Director Eric Amado introduced his staff and explained the overall services to the City of Bridgeport, including full-time and part-time employees as well as retirees in addition to Board of Education employees and retirees.

Mr. Amado stated that for a department of this size, 40 employees should be employed and that he was requesting a total of 25 employees for FY2022. He then moved on to review the separate divisions.

Mr. Amado reviewed the organizational chart for the Civil Service division. He noted that the Personnel Director position is still interim, and that he currently holds the position. He then went on to review the successes and challenges of the past fiscal year and then presented the goals for FY2022 (please see related PowerPoint).

Regarding the request for two new positions in Civil Service, Mr. Amado explained that the Personnel Trainee is an entry level position and can fill several needs of the division. When asked whether the Personnel Examiner position is a tested, competitive position, Mr. Amado replied in the affirmative. The two top short term goals are to conduct a Police Chief examination and a Personnel Director examination.

Discussion followed whether Chapter 13 or Chapter 17 dictates when and how the Police Chief is to be tested and selected. There are also increases in requests for Proctor Pay and Management Services reflected in the anticipated testing costs.

Mr. Amado then reviewed the Benefits and Human Resources division, also noting the challenges and successes of the past year. He noted in particular the CT Partnership, which provides health insurance to city employees, experienced difficulties during the transfer of carriers in October.

Discussion about the value of the CT Partnership continued. Mr. Flatto, Finance Director, explained that the State imposed a county-based adjustment on fees, which affects Bridgeport heavily because of the high cost of living in Fairfield County.

Any future change in health care provided would have to go through the unions with advice from City Finance Advisor Segal, according to OPM Director Nkwo. Human Resources especially faced challenges light of the work environment transformation because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Councilman McCarthy asked about the significant pay increases for the Benefits Manager and Human Resource Manager. Mr. Nkwo explained these were related to union classification and step increases.

Ms. Miles, the Benefits manager, explained that the RFP for medical and prescription carrier is conducted to get the best rate for the City.

Mr. Amado then provided an organizational chart for Labor Relations, adding that all permanent positions were currently filled. He added that he would like to add “off the floor” a request for an additional Senior Labor Relations Officers due to the demands of labor complaints and grievances presented to the Labor Department.

Council President Nieves asked which departments were responsible for most of the grievances and Mr. Amado explained most of the grievances were from the Police and Nurses unions. He said he would forward information on that matter. A consultant currently helps handle some of these legal disputes.

Labor Relations saw state-related actions slowdown as a result of COVID as well as increases in unemployment claims and wage and workplace complaints. Labor Relations also settled eight contracts during the first half of FY21.

Mr. Amado then provided a status update of all labor union contracts with the City. He noted various organizations that he has tried to establish positive relationships with which included The Firebirds, The Guardians, and other labor affiliated groups.

Councilman McCarthy complimented the Department for completing eight contracts and encouraged the Department to keep working on the upcoming contracts.

Councilman Burns noted that the number of unaffiliated and interim positions was also greatly reduced during the past fiscal year.

ADJOURNMENT

**** THERE WAS A MOTION TO ADJOURN
** THERE WAS A SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services