

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 3, 2021**

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

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): M. E. Brantley, A. Castillo, M. Pereira, R. Roman-Christy, D. Taylor-Moye & M. Lyons (6:17 p.m.); T. Gaudett, Mayor's Aide; K. Flatto, Finance Director; N. Nkwo, OPM Director; Barbara, Michael Freddino, iPhone, 203-209-1058; 203-858-2837; 203-880-5666, 203-275-6420

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Newton called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. A quorum was present.

He noted that Council Member Martinez was away on personal business and would not be in attendance.

76-20 Proposed Resolution regarding the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) Grant for the City of Bridgeport.

Council Member Newton said that he and Council Member Burns had reviewed the document and noted that they would need to make some amendments to the language. One area would concern community input, and when the City would be reporting to the Council as to how the funding was spent.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED TO ACCEPT AGENDA ITEM 76-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE 2021 AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARP) GRANT FOR THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Flatto noted that the resolution has an Appendix A, which is on the third page. Council Member Burns said that there would be some amendments to Appendix A, also.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 76-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE 2021 AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARP) GRANT FOR THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT AS FOLLOWS:**

Amendment to resolution 76-20

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Finance Director shall submit to the Budget & Appropriations Committee all quarterly reports filed with the Federal Government pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act and shall update the B & A Committee on a regular basis as to the status of ARA expenditures; such reports will be available on the Finance Department’s webpage.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Bridgeport shall require that recipients of American Rescue Plan Act funds, both municipal and otherwise, provide the City with regular and timely comprehensive reports as to how the funds were expended and any qualitative and quantitative data demonstrating how the money advanced the goals of the American Rescue Plan Act.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that public input shall be required on how the City should spend the American Rescue Plan Act money including, but not limited to a) public hearings to be ordered by the full Council or Budget and Appropriations Committee; and b) a public comment period which shall run for at least 10 days in the month of June in which community groups, NRZs, and the public will have an opportunity to provide direct feedback to the City as to how the City’s American Rescue Act money should be spent.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said that it states that quarterly reports would be submitted to the B&A on how the ARA funding would be spent. She wished to know if the reports would be posted on the website. Council Member Newton said that he believed they would. Mr. Flatto said that he would attest to it.

Council Member Pereira asked if they would make sure that the reports were posted on the website.

Council Member Newton asked Mr. Flatto if that was the normal process. Mr. Flatto said that he would send it to Ms. Ortiz and she would see that it was posted on the website.

Council Member Burns suggested that they add language that such reports would be available on the City Clerk’s website. Council Member Newton said that they were required to do this by law.

Council Member Pereira said that she would like to see it put on the Finance Department pages where the budget is posted. Mr. Flatto said that he would agree to that. Mr. Nkwo said that they post the monthly reports on the Finance website. Mr. Nkwo explained that OPM does not report their actions, but the Finance Department does.

Council Member Burns said that he added that such reports will be available on the Finance website to the item.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked how the B&A Committee would select the various projects for allocating the funding.

Council Member Newton said that there was a list of categories in the resolution that indicates what the funding is allowed to be used for. They will post the information for the public so they know what is eligible and what is not. The Council will vote on this at the Monday night meeting.

Council Member Burns explained that they were not assigning any dollar amounts at this meeting.

Council Member Herron pointed out that most of the organizations and NRZs that would qualify for funding would already be aware of what was eligible.

Council Member McCarthy asked if the public was able to request funding. Mr. Flatto said that the Exhibit A would have the categories and Council Member Burns would be speaking about this. He gave a brief overview of the administrative portion that would include instructing the residents on how to apply for the funding.

Council Member Lyons asked if she could send this out to her constituents so they could speak about where the funding could be assigned.

**** THE MOTION TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 76-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE 2021 AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARP) GRANT FOR THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Burns displayed the original categories on screen.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO AMEND APPENDIX A BY SUBSTITUTION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Newton said that the information was written by the Federal Government about what the funding can be used for. This is the Federal Government's blue print. As long as a project falls into one of the categories, they can apply for funding.

Mr. Flatto said that while they were receiving funding as direct aid, but the State has also started the process for County Aid. He said that there was approximately \$28 million to the cities and towns.

Mr. Flatto also spoke briefly about the Budgetary Relief proposal. He said that the original language focused on lost revenue, but now the language indicates that it is lost revenue and growth. He said that Ms. Vickers informed him that the Governor had tried to reduce some of the funding earlier in the day.

Ms. Vickers said that currently the Governor is working with the legislative leaders and they are expecting an announcement momentarily. She said that the PILOT payments were the sticking point. She said that the PILOT payments would be honored, but Hartford and New Haven could take significant budget hits if the proposal goes through.

Council Member Newton said that they could not worry about what the State will do because they simply do not know.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the broadband allocation for the community needs. Mr. Nkwo confirmed this was so.

Council Member McCarthy said that they had allocated funding for the East Side Senior Center. He wished to know if they could apply any of the funding for the Senior Center. He asked if they could do any paving for the roads, which are infrastructure.

Mr. Flatto said that it would have to be a pandemic impacted area, so the paving would not qualify. However, if they can connect something like the roof for the Klein, or a similar project. He said that he would look at the Senior Center.

Council Member McCarthy said that if they can avoid bonding for a project, they will save the City money.

Council Member Castillo said it was a lot of money but wished to know if there was a way to break down the amount for distribution. Council Member Newton said that the first step was determining what areas the residents were interested in. Mr. Nkwo said that people would not be just receiving checks, but they will release the funding as the applicants attain their goals according to their plans outlined in the applications.

Council Member Newton said that they needed to start looking at a plan and letting groups know they can apply. Discussion followed.

Council Member Newton reminded everyone that they were still in the early stages and they have to listen to the community to make sure that they didn't miss something.

Council Member Cruz asked what the maximum amount a group could apply for. Council Member Newton said that he had not heard the amounts that groups could apply for. Mr. Flatto said that they hoped to have more specific guidelines as time went on.

Council Member Cruz asked about the category of Eligible Programs for Bridgeport citizenry and community. He said that he did not see anything addressing the homeless population. He said that he would like to see more emphasis to address the homeless residents and initiate a program for this. This is a shame because there were people suffering from substance abuse.

Council Member Newton indicated where there was a category that would encompass homelessness along with Aid to Mental Health in the information. Mr. Flatto said that the State was focused on the homelessness and renter assistance.

Council Member Cruz said that he had been speaking with Council Member Herron about constructing small houses for the homeless residents since the shelters don't have the capacity. Other States have stepped up to the plate and provide these houses along with wrap around services.

Council Member Newton said that Council Member Cruz's point was well taken.

Council Member Herron said that there was State funding for homelessness, but Bridgeport did not apply for those funds.

Council Member Herron said that there were requirements that the applicants provide receipts and detailed reports. She wished to know who would be responsible for seeing that these documents were provided to the Federal Government.

Mr. Flatto said that usually it would be the two senior financial officers who would provide the reports and sign off on them.

Mr. Nkwo said that it would be set up in the Budget Office like any other grant.

Council Member Herron asked about Premium Pay. She said that the pay was not included on the list and would like to have it included. Mr. Nkwo said that there were some staff that would qualify. Mr. Flatto said that the rules would limit certain eligible. She said that people who worked every day during COVID should be compensated. Discussion followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ADD PREMIUM PAY TO THE RESOLUTION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member McBride-Lee asked if the City would have to put up the money first and then be reimbursed later. Mr. Flatto said that it would depend on the project because they might have to put out a bid and choose a contract.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked how it would work for something like a youth program, where the organization does not have the funding to start with. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about whether the issues like the waterways and the flooding would be considered. Mr. Flatto said that there was a category about sewer drains, stormwater and infrastructure.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she hoped that the City would not make it too hard for groups or individuals to qualify for the funding.

Council Member Newton said that he was working with Council Member Burns to make sure that they did not have to go through

Council Member Pereira asked why there was one column strictly 2021-22 and the remaining years were grouped together.

Mr. Flatto said that they can only focus on the funding that they will be receiving. As the money comes in, they can update the spreadsheet.

Council Member Pereira said that she agreed with Council Member Herron and Council Member Cruz about homelessness. Safe and affordable housing was critical. There is nothing for food or utilities. The seniors need to go out and engage with one another. She asked about the food pantry box program, which will be reduced.

Council Member Newton said that these categories were created based on what came down from HUD. There are things that are not included, but as long they can fit in the guidelines, they can do it.

Mr. Nkwo said that he read the plan and did not see any references to food. Mr. Flatto said that he did not see anything about food and thought it might be because the Federal Government has food programs.

Council Member Burns said that online 12, they might be able to include homelessness and seniors.

Council Member Pereira said that the Federal Food Box program that has gone out during COVID was ending very soon.

Council President Nieves said that other municipalities across the country were looking to assist mothers going back to work. She said that there was funding from the State through United CT.

Regarding homelessness, Council President Nieves said that this was just a draft and they can allocate funding. The actual ARP plan allows the Council to allocate funding. They cannot start a program that they will not be able to sustain after the funding stops.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked about Line 28 and 29 regarding pollution protection. She recounted some of the flooding that happened in 2019 where boats actually had to be brought into the area to evacuate residents. She asked how they would get someone to apply to clear out the debris and pollution so this doesn't happen again.

Mr. Flatto said that at the MetroCog meeting it became evident that the other towns were also interested in addressing this program. This will be a municipal run project and would require DEEP approval. Getting those approvals can take over a year. Mr. Flatto said that the State Reps were also working on possibly securing funding.

Council Member Herron said that over a year ago, they were able to bring the food boxes to the City. She said that the Food stamps program was giving a second allotment that people can access. There are boxes with 20lbs of produce that the people can receive. She is grateful that they have been able to distribute the food. She said that people would be evicted at the end of the month and eventually this program will shift back to the food pantries.

Council Member Burns reiterated that Council Member Taylor-Moye has spoken with him about the Premium Pay issue and understands that the City won't be handing out checks to people.

Council Member Burns said that when they were reviewing this item, they need to be complimenting the programs, not supplementing. If they can match and leverage the funding, it would be wonderful. He said that they would be requesting a public hearing on June 15th at Monday's Council Meeting. They will also be presenting this from the floor.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE EXHIBIT A AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 76-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE 2021 AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARP) GRANT FOR THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that between Wade's Dairy and Bridgeport Hospital there will be food available once a month and listed the dates. (See below)

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 76-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE 2021 AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARP) GRANT FOR THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

Bridgeport Hospital Food Distribution



Third Tuesday of Each Month
5:30 PM
200 Mill Hill Avenue, Bridgeport

January 19, February 16, March 16, April 20, May 18, June 15, July 20,
August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16, December 21

Each family will receive **one bag** of food while supplies last.
Bags contain milk, eggs, fresh produce and bread.
Everyone must **wear a mask** and **stand 6 feet apart**.



YaleNewHavenHealth
Bridgeport Hospital

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or call (203) 200-3719