

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
APRIL 9, 2022**

**ATTENDANCE:** Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Matthew McCarthy, Mary McBride-Lee, Tyler Mack

**OTHERS:** Council Member(s): A. Boyd, J. Cruz, F. Hodges, M. Lyons, M. Pereira, R. Smith, & M. Valle; Tom Gaudett, Mayoral Aide; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Craig Nadrizny, Acting Director, Public Facilities; Tonya Turkvan, Public Facilities; Paul Catino, Public Facilities; Steve Hladun, Parks; Jon Urquidi, City Engineer; Barbara, XMan, Louis Burgos, iPhone-DNPH80W00DXT

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

Co-chair Burns said that they had forgotten to Exhibit the response from the previous meeting.

Co-chair Newton said that the Department Directors were present and reminded everyone to be polite and keep the questions and discussion focused on the budget.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER A DOCUMENT TITLED OPED RESPONSE TO COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS AND COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON, CHAIRS OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE AS EXHIBIT 04-09-2022-A.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER A DOCUMENT TITLED OPED ORGANIZATION CHART AS EXHIBIT 04-09-2022-B.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**CAPITAL DISCUSSION – PUBLIC FACILITIES – GENERAL**

**BUDGET DISCUSSION – PUBLIC FACILITIES  
(Roadway, Garage, Sanitation & Transfer)**

Mr. Nkwo reviewed the Public Facilities General Revenue with the Council Members. Mr. Nadrizny said that the fees had been flat for a number of years, and they will be submitting a request to the City Attorney's to increase the fees.

Council Member McCarthy said that at the transfer station, he is still seeing various people who appear to be doing dump runs for others. Mr. Nadrizny said that those who have commercial plates have permits. Council Member McCarthy asked about those who drive trucks with non-commercial plates. Mr. Nadrizny said that he had tried to change the rules in the past with no success.

Council Member Newton said he wished to make the Committee aware that they were thinking about moving the Parking Meters back to Public Facilities, however it requires an officer to accompany the parking meter staff when the collections are brought in. This has caused overtime. Mr. Nkwo agreed and said that it did not appear to be a good use of police man hours.

Council Member Newton said that there were issues with commercial vehicles being parked on lawns and streets. Parking Enforcement is only one person.

Council Member Herron said that she had pulled the State statutes on commercial vehicles because the Parking Enforcement officer leaves at 4 p.m., but the State Statute allows commercial vehicles to park on the street until 6 p.m. She said that the individuals were called Parking Enforcement Officers, but they can only use that title if they are working under the Police Department. She would like to see the ordinance corrected rather than having the department transferred back to Public Facilities.

Council Member Herron also asked why there was overtime being charged when the staff goes home at 4.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked for clarification on how the money is collected. Mr. Nadrizny reviewed the process and said that the coin cannisters were locked, inserted into a lockbox where the coins transfer into the general lock box.

Council Member Pereira then gave a summary of the Charter and State statute for the meter collection that is under the Police Department along with the parking violations. She asked why the commercial vehicles could not be ticketed at 2 a.m. when there was not much happening. Mr. Flatto pointed out that these were two different violations. Discussion followed about the contract requirements. Council Member Herron pointed out that they should be discussing this with Acting Police Chief Garcia.

Council Member Pereira said that she wished the Council had some control over the Police Department, but they are under the direction of the Police Commission. She said that this appears to be a way to collect significant overtime.

The discussion moved to the Personnel Budget on page 199. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the various positions.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the Construction Services Director. Mr. Nadrizny said that the construction projects needed to be overseen and pointed out that in the past, there were

always two Deputy Directors. He reminded everyone that he was only the Acting Director of Public Facilities, and his actual job was as a Deputy Director.

Discussion followed about the larger upcoming projects, such as Steel Point and the Library along with issues with the on-going Canfield Avenue Apartments. Mr. Catino explained that Public Facilities does not have authority over the Building Department.

Council Member Pereira said that there was a second Deputy Director because of arbitration. She said that there had been numerous school projects that overlapped one another and they were overseen by one person.

Council Member Pereira asked about the raise for the accountant's salary which was 13%. Mr. Nkwo said that it was a combination of the steps and a raise. Council Member Pereira asked for copies of the steps for the unions and the raises. Mr. Nkwo said that he would have that information sent.

Council Member Lyons asked about the hiring process for the positions under discussion. She asked how much input the Department Director has over the person hired for the position. Mr. Nadrizny said that every position was different and when a position opens up, if it is a union position, it is posted internally. If it is not a union position, it is posted publicly and then a interview committee from different departments select the candidates.

Council Member Lyons asked if the vacancy was posted publicly. Mr. Nadrizny said that if it was a union position, it was posted internally. If it was a non-union position, it is published on the City website.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the Special Projects Coordinators, which Mr. Nadrizny reviewed with him. Mr. Nadrizny said that the Coordinators work in his office and he does review their work if they are not performing adequately. Discussion followed about the details of the positions.

Council Member Burns said that they had requested Organizational Charts and they did not have one for Public Facilities.

Mr. Urquidi said that one person cannot do the job that they are asking them to do because there are 250 miles of road in Bridgeport and he can't inspect all the roads.

Council Member Pereira said that there were Special Project Coordinators listed three different times on separate lines. She said that this appears to be unethical. Mr. Nkwo said that they were different classifications and the individuals were in different unions. Council Member Pereira said that she had worked in unions and had never seen that done before. Discussion followed.

Council Member Valle said she had been told that there were 60 employees in Public Facilities and wished to know if they were being cross trained in other tasks. Mr. Nadrizny said that they were.

Council Member Lyons said that Mr. Urquidi has mentioned the need for another individual on staff. She said that when they don't have enough staff to handle the work load, the requests get backlogged. They are already backlogged with requests from the City Council Members.

Mr. Urquidi said that they had spoken about cross training earlier and wanted to say that the permit inspectors will help with a variety of tasks, like sidewalk and street evaluation for paving.

Council Member Hodges asked about the class codes and the Project Managers. Mr. Nadrizny gave him an overview. Mr. Flatto asked if the various inspectors could report items such as unpermitted modifications to homes.

Council Member Newton asked for additional information on the Project Managers for the Committee.

Council Member Newton also asked what the sidewalk inspector does when the sidewalks are completed. Mr. Nadrizny said that the Permit Supervisor inspects sidewalks. Mr. Urquidi said that even when the concrete plants are closed, there are excavations that are done and they also check temporary patching, which can easily become potholes.

Council Member Newton said that when it is off season, the staff needs to be handling other tasks.

Council Member Hodges asked about Roberts Rules, which Council Member Burns confirmed for him.

Council Member McCarthy said that it would be good to have one more Special Project Supervisor and having it under Engineering rather than Public Facilities.

Mr. Catino said that the reason that the residents don't see the inspectors out at sites was because there was only one person that was doing inspections. He added that was why they were asking for another position. When employees are asked to work outside of their job classification they have the right to grieve it.

Council Member Burns said that the next topic of review would be the garage.

Council Member Pereira objected that she had not been given the opportunity to ask a question. Council Member Burns asked her to submit her question in writing. He reminded her that she had already asked several questions.

Council Member Burns displayed the Public Facilities Expenses budgets on screen. Mr. Catino said that while the fuel prices had gone up, they only had a contract for part of the year. He said that the State has suspended the taxes for gas, but the City does not pay that tax, so their fuel prices do not decrease as much.

Mr. Flatto said that he had locked in the fuel a year ago, but the contracts were due to expire in June. He requested that the Committee consider increasing those amounts.

Council Member Mack asked about the overtime pay. Mr. Nkwo explained the factors that would be used to calculate the overtime budget.

Council Member Burns asked if the City had been looking into electric vehicles. Mr. Nadrizny said that they were looking at grant opportunities for the smaller fleet vehicles like the street vacs. They may also install solar panels on the garage to help supply the power for the vehicles.

Mr. Nkwo then reviewed the details for a Financial Coordinator position transfer from Parks and Recreation.

The discussion moved to the Property Insurance. Mr. Flatto noted that it was city wide insurance and they don't receive the three quotes until June.

The Committee then reviewed the vehicle requests, which included a small vehicle that can have a plow attached that will be able to plow out small spaces.

Mr. Nkwo said that there was a cost for repaving a police parking lot and listed as building maintenance services for \$414,445.

Council Member Pereira said that the Finance Coordinator on page 212 will be transferring from Parks and Recreation and it reflects a raise.

Council Member Pereira objected to the transfer of a staff member to cover absences. This is not reasonable and is not done in the corporate world.

The Committee then reviewed the Roadway budget on page 220. Mr. Nkwo spoke about a Clerical Assistant that was eliminated but a letter had already been sent to a candidate for the position. He reviewed the details of the issue.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the street paving. Mr. Nadrizny said that it was part of the Capital Budget. Mr. Flatto said that they were going to bond for \$4 million next year for paving.

The discussion returned to the details of the eliminated Clerical Assistant position.

Council Member Pereira said that Mr. Nadrizny claims that they are chronically understaffed, but they only pay the seasonal staff \$15.00. Mr. Nadrizny said that they can't pay a seasonal employee more than they pay a full-time employee. Their level 1 pay is \$16.00 and there were not many people interested in working for \$16.00, particularly if they have a CDL license.

Council Member Pereira said that this was her third year hearing the same comment and wished to know what the Council was doing to address it.

Mr. Nadrizny said that he was looking for 4 Maintainer 1 positions. The discussion moved to the seasonal employees that stay for two or three weeks and then leave. The department then has to hire more people.

Council Member McCarthy said that the seasonals don't care for the equipment because they know they are only working for four months. Discussion followed about the policy for seasonals. Mr. Nadrizny said that in the past, a seasonal would be able to work almost a full year, so many of the seasonals were retirees. Once the seasonal position was limited to 120 days, the interest in the job dropped dramatically.

Council Member Newton said that returned citizens have often found jobs in Public Facilities and suggested that they consider extending the seasonals for almost a year. Those who work four months have no reason to return. If returning seasonal staff apply, they are considered first. Mr. Nadrizny said that they often let the seasonals know when full time positions are available.

Council Member Newton thanked Mr. Nadrizny for all the effort his department has made for returning residents.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that sometimes the seasonal employment gives the worker false hope. However, they are people who are happy to work for 4 months.

Council Member Valle said that it was the State that regulates this. Mr. Flatto said that it was a Federal regulation and that if someone works more than 120 days or more than 19 1/2 hours, they need to receive benefits.

Mr. Catino said that when they come in for sanitation, they have open routes and have to pull people from Roadway to cover the routes. This is a chronic condition and needs to be addressed. Council Member Newton said that he could confirm this because the Roadway staff often doesn't know the routes. Discussion followed about the salaries, plus benefits costs.

Council Member Pereira said that she was a big believer of quality over quantity. She said that having four good part time workers was better than having 6 or 7 seasonals.

Council Member Burns asked about where the scrap metal comes from. Mr. Nadrizny said it comes from what the staff picks up on the street and what is taken to the Transfer Station.

Council Member Cruz said that if he had a CDL license, he would not be interested in working for \$15.00 an hour when he could easily get \$20.00.

Council Member Burns asked about the street sweeping. Mr. Nadrizny said that they sweep the streets twice a month during the season and the main streets twice a week. The signs need to be changed. Discussion followed.

Council Member Newton asked for more garbage cans and suggested the garbage cans be emptied when the recycling is done. Mr. Nadrizny agreed.

Council Member Lyons said that they needed to do something about seasonal employees. She said that it would be important to have garbage cans in front of individual stores. Mr. Nadrizny said that the storefronts are supposed to maintain their area. Discussion followed.

Council Member Valle said that East Main Street should be as clean as the downtown area. She has been told that the street sweeper went by. She asked if they could change the schedules for the street sweeper. Mr. Nadrizny said that the street sweeper would be on that street at 4 a.m.

Council Member McCarthy said that they have the same issues in Black Rock as the rest of the City, but he suggested that they contact the store owners about cleaning up in front of their stores. Council Member Burns said that there was an ordinance on the books about this.

The Committee then moved to page 226, which is the appropriations supplement. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the items, such as a Mad Vac and Mad Vac trailer.

Council Member Burns asked about the regular overtime pay, which Mr. Nkwo and Mr. Nadrizny reviewed with him.

Council Member Pereira asked about the Other Services amount. Mr. Nkwo said that it was the parking meters, the poles and the services. Mr. Catino said that service includes some revenue sharing. Council Member Pereira said that she would like to know how much revenue the parking meters were generating.

Council Member McCarthy said that Mr. Nkwo had spoken about one time appropriations from AARPA. He said that he did not like putting a one-time revenue into the Operating fund. He asked how much that amount was.

The Committee moved to the Sanitation on page 230.

Council Member Pereira said that there was a major issue with residents not bringing in their Toters after the recycling or trash is picked up. It is a detriment to the neighborhood. She asked who might be responsible for insuring the Toter is brought back in. Mr. Nadrizny said that it was not an ordinance and they were working on updating the ordinance. The ordinance is for cans and would fall within the Health Department's authority. Discussion followed.

Mr. Nadrizny said that they did not have enough staff to deal with it. Council Member Pereira repeated that this was a major fine.

Council Member McCarthy said that he was a property owner and that he has had to tell his tenants to bring the Toters in.

Mr. Catino said that the Public Facilities run 12 garbage routes and 4 recycling routes every day. This is institutionalizing open routes because they are constantly pulling people from Roadways to cover Sanitation.

Council Member McCarthy asked how long it takes do a route. Mr. Nadrizny said that all the routes were different and that they should try to reorganize the routes in order to do more with less. Mr. Nadrizny said that there were contract issues involved.

Mr. Catino said that the tonnage had increased because people have started to order more online and that has increased the amount of garbage. Council Member McCarthy said that it would be important to compost.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she had requested more maintainers. Mr. Catino indicated where it was located in the budget.

Council Member Pereira asked if they were mapping the garbage routes manually. Mr. Catino said that it was done manually. Council Member Pereira said that the School District had started using software for the route scheduling and had saved thousands of dollars.

Council Member Pereira asked about the number of 32 positions. Mr. Nadrizny said that they were always short 5 people so when streets are missed, it is most likely the Roadway staff driving because they don't know the routes.

Council Member Pereira said that if they ticket Toters for 60 to 90 days, the people would learn that there is a consequence. They need to be held accountable.

Council Member Lyons said that she regularly checks the condo associations and has noticed that there is more garbage to pick up.

Council Member Burns asked if there was any thought about moving towards trucks that have a mechanical arm to pick up the Toters.

Mr. Nadrizny said that he did not think that the mechanical arms would work with the number of cars. Mr. Catino said that they have mechanical trucks, but people often leave things next to the Toter and that needs to be lifted by hand. He also mentioned that there were union contract requirements of 2 people per truck.

Council Member Burns asked how long the staff has to wait at Wheelabrator to unload the garbage trucks. Mr. Nadrizny said that the wait is usually about an hour or two but if it is busy, it can be three or four hours.

Council Member Newton asked if they need Maintainers I's or II's. Mr. Nadrizny said that if the five positions were filled in Sanitation, they won't have to take five people from Roadways. Council Member Newton asked if there were bumping rights. Mr. Nadrizny said that they were not union positions. Discussion followed about the details of the positions.

Council Member McCarthy asked if the Sanitation drivers are sitting in a truck waiting to unload they get overtime. Mr. Nadrizny said that if they don't go over 8 hours, it is regular pay. If it is over 8 hours, they get overtime for the amount past 8 hours.



Council Member McCarthy asked if they could have a special line at Wheelabrator for the City trucks. Mr. Nadrizny said that they had asked in the past with no luck.

Council Member Burns said that Wheelabrator had a competitor in Hartford that was closing down, so there may be more customers at Wheelabrator.

Mr. Catino said that the fee increases weren't the problem, but it was the tonnage that was driving the number. Since the pandemic, the amount of tonnage has increase significantly. He said that Wheelabrator was almost at full capacity.

Council Member Burns said that the private tipping fees have increase substantially. Council Member Pereira said they don't cook much at her home, and since the pandemic restrictions have lifted, she's noticed the restaurants are packed. She thought that this would reduce residential refuse. Mr. Catino said that he wished that she was correct, but the tonnage had remained steady and is increasing.

Council Member Pereira said that the tipping fees were listed on the page. Mr. Catino said that he thought they were catching up with the tonnage growth that occurred. He said that they had budgeted \$2.5 million, but the actual was \$2.8 million. The deficit has been incurred over two years.

Council Member Burns then directed everyone to the Transfer Station. Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview and said that most people have gone back to work on site and they expect the tonnage to remain at the current amount.

Council Member McCarthy said he had been told that only clean, dry cardboard is recycled. Mr. Catino said that there is a significant amount of items in the recycling that can't be recycled and is shipped back to Wheelabrator. There has been progress, but they are still paying a high amount. The clean cardboard is money for the City. Paper, and plastic generate some revenue. Glass is a cost driver, but there is a new glass recycling plant in Beacon Falls that will drive the cost down.

Mr. Catino pointed out that everyone is required to recycle by the State.

Council Member Pereira spoke about the problem of off hours dumping near Asylum Street. Mr. Nadrizny said that they have cameras on their property but the Police would need to install other cameras off the site. He added that they have been working on catching the illegal dumpers.

Council Member Newton said that the illegal dumping happens all over the City.

Council Member Hodges asked what kind of revenue the recycling generates. Mr. Catino said that they had a five-year period when the City was getting money for recycling, but now they pay for the recycling.

Council Member Hodges said that he would like to know about mattress recycling. Mr. Catino said that they were happy about the mattress recycling company that opened 10 years ago because that has reduced the cost and disposal.

Council Member Hodges asked about the scrap metal recycling. Mr. Catino said that the prices have increased, but people have also started selling their own metal recycling, so the City doesn't get the same amount.

Council Member Lyons suggested that the students are excited about recycling and they should do an awareness program. She said that she would start raising awareness in her area about recycling.

Council Member Pereira asked about the fees that were collected at Asylum Street listed on page 190. She asked if they could increase the fees. Mr. Nkwo said that the fees were connected to the tonnage. Discussion followed.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services