

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 26, 2022**

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

OTHERS: Council Member(s): A. Boyd, M. Lyons, M. Pereira, R. Roman-Christy & R. Smith; Callie Heilmann, Chinedum Nnodum, Willie Smith, Barbara, Call in User-1; 203-374-2611, 203-913-1984

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the public hearing to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present. He gave a brief review of the rules, including the request that the speakers limit themselves to 3 minutes.

Co-chair Newton said that the Committee was present to listen to the residents and not engage in back-and-forth dialog.

Council Member Burns then opened the Public Hearing on the General Fund Budget.

The following is a summary of the comments made by the public at the meeting.

Ms. Callie Heilmann came forward and said she lives at Grover's Avenue. She is a co-director of Bridgeport Now. She thanked them for last year's budget when the Council transferred money from the Police Department and funded money to the Social Services unit. Mayor Ganim proposed to flat fund the schools, but the Council allocated an additional \$2.5 million toward education and \$765,000 towards the Social Services unit.

She said that the school immediately used the additional money towards the health care, transportation costs and other shortages. The money that was sent to the Social Service was not utilized. The budgetary powers are only as strong as the administration. The Ganim administration has proven incapable of administering even a pilot social services unit for mobile crisis units. She said that she hoped that they would keep the funding in place.

Ms. Heilmann asked how many things that funding was allocated was not used. She said that when the Mayor releases his budget, it should include an analysis of how the funds were spent in order for the Council Members to make a clear, informed decision. This is about capacity.

She then asked about the six positions for the Legislative Office and her organization strongly supports the positions and the funding to pay for them. She said that it would be good to permanently staff a fiscal analyst to help analyze the cost of proposed ordinances and to get

timely updates on revenue and performance. Anything they can do to improve the capacity is a win for everyone.

Mr. Brandon Clark came forward and said that he was present to speak about the Board of Education. They need to do better by their children. He spoke about how he had been studying teaching and ended up in Bridgeport and worked with a teacher who he described as a rock star. Now he is the father of three young children and knows how the school falls short financially year after year.

The District cannot depend on ARPA money. Since 2014, the City has been flat funding the District and the City contributes less than a neighboring town. Today's youth will be tomorrow's leaders and they need to provide an additional \$8.5 million to the District.

Council Member Burns asked if anyone else would like to address the Committee on the General Budget. There was no response. He repeated the call two more times with no response. Hearing none, Council Member Burns closed the public hearing on the General Fund Budget at 6:20 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services