

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 8, 2022**

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

OTHER: Council Member(s): Jorge Cruz, Rolanda Smith, Aikeem Boyd & Rosalina Roman-Christy; Kenneth Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Tamara Root; Fred Gee

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M. There was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES: JULY 11, 2022 (REGULAR MEETING)

**** MS. HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 11, 2022 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** CO-CHAIR NEWTON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

UPDATES FROM OPED AND CAO REGARDING PROPOSED NEW POSITIONS OF BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LIAISON AND DEPUTY CAO FOR PLANNING, PERMITTING, LICENSING, AND CODE ENFORCEMENT, RESPECTIVELY, AS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED BY THE MAYOR'S OFFICE.
(PURSUANT TO COUNCIL RULE XXIV A.)

Ms. Hawkins was unavailable for comment for this item. No one from OPED wished to discuss the OPED position on this item. Co-chair Newton shared details of a prior discussion with CEO Hawkins. He said that it was their understanding that Ms. Hawkins needed this item to begin restructure and reorganizing the City's workforce. Discussion followed regarding the details of the proposed positions and their responsibilities. Ms. Herron recounted the history of the proposed position and the reason for its necessity. Co-chair Burns suggested that this item be tabled until next month when someone from OPED and Ms. Hawkins could be present to discuss the details. Further discussion followed regarding the position and related concerns. The current budget and salary for the position was brought up. Council Member Cruz felt it was ironic that the Mayor and City Attorney had stopped the Council from voting on a budget developed by the Budget Committee but was now asking to have these positions. He felt that this sort of thing should not be tolerated and, as a result, should be tabled.

Co-chair Burns noted that code enforcement was important as well and he noted other issues that were happening with Public Facilities that made it so that it was important to discuss this item with Ms. Hawkins. It was noted that the Council had the ability to hire/appropriate funds and it was the Mayor who hired and approved positions he deemed appropriate. As such he had the exclusive authority to hire for the position and the funds were already approved and this item

was for information strictly. Ms. Herron voiced her own issues with the situation for those present. Further discussion followed.

Mr. Mack asked to ensure that all relevant parties would be present for the next meeting. Co-chair Burns said that they would likely hear back by next week. He pointed out that the positions were not low-salary positions and needed proper discussion. He noted that he had heard that there was not a lot of engagement between OPED and City businesses/organizations and hoped this would be a step in the right direction. It was noted that there was a need for more manpower in economic development. Further discussion followed.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE: SMALL & MINORITY BUSINESS OFFICE.

Mr. Gee came forward to discuss this item. He said his update would mostly be hard numbers and the status of the businesses that participated so far this year.

**** CO-CHAIR NEWTON MOVED TO EXHIBIT 0822-A: NB SET ASIDES 2022.**

**** MS. HERRON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Gee went into detail to review the companies outlined in the report. The report submitted outlined the jobs that had been completed by the companies. The aggregate contract value for this year had been funded and is \$55,600. Currently it has 30% minority participation when 6% is the requirement. Projects have been slow due to disruption by COVID. Co-chair Newton asked for details regarding the companies that the City was purchasing from. Mr. Gee said he did not have that data. It was noted that it could be difficult to know who was or wasn't a minority contractor in some situations. Further discussion followed on this point and how various businesses were identified on the spreadsheet. Discussion then moved to the purchasing process and how that was handled in regard to small and minority-owned businesses. It was noted that they needed to be careful to not violate federal or state statutes. Ms. Herron asked if it was possible to utilize computer systems to make this process easier. Mr. Gee said he did not have the authority or jurisdiction to ask the vendors about their procedures so long as they provided proper documentation. It was also brought to question if it could even be legally asked what gender, ethnicity, or background a vendor was and it could potentially violate federal law.

GENERAL DISCUSSION RE: REVIEW OF THE MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT.

Mr. Flatto came forward to discuss this item. The numbers are not final but are also unlikely to change much. He proceeded to provide a review of the financial report. The following points were noted:

- There had been a \$10,000,000 shortfall in state aid.
- \$31,093 was collected from 515 West Avenue.
- Review of the numbers for taxes collected.
- 930 Main Street and Park City Ridge have only paid half their payments and will now have to pay a 'delinquent fee'.
- Overpayments and Refunds.
- The Amphitheater Billboard and its associated payments.

- Parking revenue from the amphitheater.
- Potential audits and the possibility of hiring an audit team.
- The status of checking on rentals.

Mr. Flatto suggested that they scale down the police salaries to the extent that they were able to hire for the next year's budget. Once the feasibility study is done they will know what the true staffing for the police should be. No department went over budget except police and fire in overtime. Mr. McCarthy suggested that they get a report from the police regarding the overtime. Further discussion followed regarding the police overtime.

UPDATE REGARDING ITEM #86-21 ON POSSIBLE REFUNDING OF CERTAIN CITY BONDS.

This item was approved by the Council previously. Mr. Flatto provided the update on the refunding. In June they had passed a bond resolution for the capital money projects that went into the Capital Plan and a second resolution for the option to do a refinancing to attempt to save money for the next few budgets. After reviewing with the underwriters and financial advisors they will not be moving forwards on the refunding. He went into further detail regarding the refunding including the reasoning for their decisions. They will re-examine the bond come mid-September. Discussion followed regarding the bonds up for renewal.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** CO-CHAIR NEWTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** MS. MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:42 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Ian A. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services