

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 9, 2023**

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

**OTHERS:** Council Member(s): A. Boyd, J. Cruz & M. Valle; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Tonya Turkvan, Public Facilities; Eneida Martinez

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**• December 12, 2022 (Regular Meeting)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 12, 2022 REGULAR MEETING.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 12, 2022 REGULAR MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**• Public Facilities: Review of unfunded state-associated cleanup costs.**

Mr. Nadrizny presented a chart showing the number of man hours spent maintaining the landscaping, street sweeping and MadVaccing the State Road areas.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER A DOCUMENT TITLED “MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT AND THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT – AUGUST 26, 2022” (PUBLIC FACILITIES MAINTENANCE REPORT) AS EXHIBIT # 01-09-2023-A.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

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

Mr. Nadrizny explained that the chart shows just the manhours spent maintaining the State roads in Bridgeport including the entrance and exit ramps for the State highways.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that about a year or year and a half ago, the Mayor had entered into a contract that the City would take over the maintenance of the State areas. She

asked if it was included in the budget. She also asked if the City was being reimbursed for the work on State roads and about the details of the agreement with the State.

Mr. Nadrizny said that the State had never reimbursed them for the clean-up and maintenance of the areas around the State roads including the exit and entrances to the highways. He said that he had been working for the City for 25 years and while the City maintained the roads, and swept the areas, they never received any type of reimbursement.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that they might have to discuss this with the State legislators regarding this so the taxpayers don't end up paying for what the State should be doing.

Mr. Nadrizny said his Department had already provided this information to the State DOT. He would like to receive some funds since the City is maintaining the State right of ways and the roads, long with the entrance and exit ramps. The State has a policy that they only cut the grass around the highways twice a year.

Council Member Newton said that he had not known that the State would come out and cut the shrubbery by Orange Street and the Beardsley Street Underpass. The City has been cleaning up those areas.

Council Member Burns asked if there would be a way to qualify a reimbursement so that it doesn't end up comingled with other State funding. Mr. Flatto said that the State does give each municipality a small grant for the roads. He said that if the State starts paying one facility, then they will have to pay all of them. Discussion followed about the LOCIP funding and the Operating Fund.

Council Member Burns asked Mr. Nadrizny to get some comparative figures about what other municipalities are doing regarding the cost of maintaining the areas around the state roads. He noted that the cost was about \$700,000 and would like some similar data points.

**• General Discussion re: Review of the Monthly Financial Report.**

Mr. Flatto said that there were no significant changes, but had some items he would like to highlight. He noted that the City had more cash on hand due to the ARPA funding and some other grants. At this time, there is a possibility that the City will be over budget by \$2 million. They are looking at diversify the funding into Treasury Bills and other government security investments. He gave the details and noted that most of the money is averaging about 3%. However, this will affect the bond interest rates.

Mr. Flatto said that the Bassick High School permit had come in and while it was a transfer of City funds to a City account, it was helpful. The administration is still working with the Stratford Airport regarding the sale of the airport. He suggested that the Committee request an update from the administration.

Council Member Newton said that the City makes the same mistake about projecting funding from projects into the budget. They should not include assumptions. Now the City may be short \$4 million if the sale does not go through. That will reduce the budget to a break even budget. No one knows if there are enough Council votes to approve the sale and the City has to stop budgeting this way.

Council Member Burns asked about the amount of cash on hand. Mr. Flatto reviewed the amount with him and reminded everyone that there were fluctuations during the periods when the taxes are not being collected.

Council Member McCarthy said that he would like a break out on the surcharges and the OPED rents. Mr. Flatto said that he did not realize that the Committee wanted the break out on a monthly basis.

Council Member Newton said that there were numerous contracts coming up for renewal such as Fire and Police. He asked if the Department was prepared. Mr. Nkwo said that his projections for reserve were within the budget. Mr. Flatto agreed that the reserve should cover the retro payments. Discussion followed.

Council Member Cruz asked about the City Trust PILOT. Mr. Nkwo said that the PILOT had expired. Council Member Cruz asked about the parking garage. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details of the agreement with him. The discussion moved to the State PILOTS, which have been changed to tiered PILOTS for the State owned land.

Mr. Flatto said that there were no major changes on the expense side of the budget. There are currently no variances to discuss.

Council Member Newton asked for an update on the status of vacant positions in departments other than Police and Fire. Discussion followed about the delays in the approval process and also the lack of interested candidates.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the variances of the vacant positions and the impact of not paying fringe benefits for those vacant positions. Mr. Flatto said that due to the difficulty of predicting the cost of a new employee (single, married, children, etc.) the difference is put in the Health account. Mr. Flatto noted that the Public Facilities and Park appeared to have overages but one or two good snowstorms could deplete those funds very quickly. Discussion followed about the expansion of responsibilities for the Public Facilities.

Mr. Flatto said that the annual financial has been completed and copies have been distributed to the Council Members in their mailboxes. The auditors will be present at the February meeting.

Mr. Flatto said that last year they had ended the year with about \$3.5 million surplus and the contingency fund was increased by about \$3.3 million. A more complete report will be presented at the next meeting.

Council Member Newton said that he wanted to compliment both Mr. Flatto and Mr. Nkwo for the recognition awards that they have received recently.

Council Member Burns said that a few months ago, they had the Fire Department in about the overtime and this past month, there has been a decrease in overtime.

Council Member Burns asked if they could get a list of actual vacancies from the various departments.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that Mr. Flatto and Mr. Nkwo had done a good job.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services