

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 24, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Co-chair; Tyler Mack, Co-chair; Aikeem Boyd, Alfredo Castillo, Matthew McCarthy, Wanda Simmons, Rolanda Smith

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): S. Burns, J. Cruz, J. Herron, E. Newton, M. Pereira, M. Small, M. Valle & R. Roman-Christy (6:10 p.m.); T. Gaudett, Mayor's Office; Constance Vickers, Legislative Affairs; Atty. Joe Passaretti; Atty. Mark Anastasi; Monti Miles, Benefits Manager; Milta Feliciano, Anjerice Miller, CDBG Coordinator; Barbara, Eneida Martinez, Call in User_1; 203-414-9712,

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Mack called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES:

• October 25, 2021. (Regular Meeting)

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia requested Atty. Anastasi clarify the issue regarding voting on the minutes from the previous Council. Atty. Anastasi said that the Council Members who were on the previous Committee could vote with less than a quorum. He reviewed the details. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked Atty. Anastasi to send a memo with the explanation out to the Council Members.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 25, 2021 MEETING.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 25, 2021 MEETING PASSED WITH TWO (2) IN FAVOR (CASTILLO AND MCCARTHY) AND FIVE (5) ABSTENTIONS (MACK, VIZZO-PANICCIA, BOYD, SIMMONS AND SMITH).**

• December 20, 2021. (Emergency Meeting)

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 20, 2021 EMERGENCY MEETING.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD SECONDED.**

The following correction was noted:

Page 1, under ATTENDANCE: please add “Wanda Simmons”

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 20, 2021 EMERGENCY MEETING MINUTES AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

• December 27, 2021. (Regular Meeting)

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD MOVED THE DECEMBER 27, 2021 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 27, 2021 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

14-21 Proposed Resolution to determine membership and Status of the Fair Rent Commission.

Council Member Newton said that there had been problems finding residents to serve on the various Commissions. He noted that there was a member listed on the Fair Rent Commission who was deceased. He thanked Ms. Vickers for her work regarding recruiting residents to serve on the Commissions.

He reminded everyone that the candidates for the Commissions are not paid for their time. When the Council Members ran for their seats, there was no blueprint that required a Master’s degree or being a home owner. He said that the candidates deserve respect. There are many Commissions that need attention.

Ms. Vickers thanked the Committee and Council Member Newton. She said that she had two former Commissioners that she had information for. She will be doing some research on when the Commission last met. If the Council Members know of anyone who is willing to serve, please let her know.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that this was not the only Commission that reviews the candidates for Boards and Commissions. She noted that this Agenda Item was not really an item that can be voted on because it was for basic information.

Council Member Pereira said that she wanted to address the issue about the difficulty of finding candidates for the Commissions. She related that there was an individual who wished to be on the Police Commission but was told that the Mayor liked the current Commissioners, one of whom has a term that expired 12 years ago. The administration has been in office for over six years and this is a reflection on the administration.

Council Member Simmons asked where to find out about the various openings on the Commissions and Boards. She also wished to know where the public would hear about the Commissions. Ms. Vickers said that the information was on the City website along with the details about how to apply for a vacancy.

Council Member Simmons asked if there was some kind of public notice in the newspaper. Ms. Vickers said that in the past they had sent out press releases, but everything was on the City website.

Council Member Roman-Christy joined the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Council Member Newton suggested that the Council Members refer interested individuals to Ms. Vickers.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 14-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO DETERMINE MEMBERSHIP AND STATUS OF THE FAIR RENT COMMISSION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

18-21 Proposed Resolution regarding the approval of the 2022-2024 Citizen Union Committee.

Council Member Mack requested a motion to discuss the item.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED THE ITEM.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SIMMONS SECONDED.**

Ms. Feliciano said that Ms. Anjerice Miller, who coordinates the CDBG funding, was present on the call. Ms. Miller said that every two years, the Council Members have the opportunity to nominate individuals for the Citizen's Union. The Committee members that qualify will review the block grant applicants, and review the amounts.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH MOVED TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 18-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE APPROVAL OF THE 2022-2024 CITIZEN UNION COMMITTEE TO NOMINATE MS. DASHA SPELL AS A PROPOSED CANDIDATE BY COUNCIL MEMBER MARCUS BROWN AND MR. LAMOND DANIELS AS COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH'S PROPOSED CANDIDATES FOR THE CITIZEN'S UNION REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE 132ND DISTRICT.**

*** COUNCIL MEMBER SIMMONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 18-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE APPROVAL OF THE 2022-2024 CITIZEN UNION COMMITTEE TO NOMINATE MS. DASHA SPELL AS A PROPOSED CANDIDATE BY COUNCIL MEMBER MARCUS BROWN AND MR. LAMOND DANIELS AS COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH'S PROPOSED CANDIDATES FOR THE CITIZEN'S UNION REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE 132ND DISTRICT PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Pereira said that the motion was to discuss not approve, so the motion to amend would not be valid.

Council Member Pereira said that the application process just started about a week ago. Ms. Miller said that the applications had opened up earlier in the month.

Council Member Pereira asked what a conflict of interest was and how it would be determined. Ms. Miller said that it would be if anyone had a family member involved as a Board Member or employed by the organization.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked if the individuals were supposed to live in the district. Ms. Miller said that this was so. Ms. Feliciano said that right now, all the individuals on the list resided in their district. She said that she would not know if Ms. Spell and Mr. Daniels resided in the 132nd District until she saw their information.

Council Member Pereira asked for clarification on what was defined as an immediate family member. Ms. Feliciano said that when the candidates receive the information packet, there is a listing of immediate family members on that form. It is the same form used by the Council Members for Conflicts of Interest.

Council Member Pereira said that she had more questions. Council Member Mack pointed out that Council Member Pereira had already asked two questions.

Atty. Anastasi said that when the Chair determines that the debate has been exhausted, he can call for a vote. Council Member McCarthy said that the Chair had the right to run the meeting the way he or she wished to.

Council Member Pereira said that on her two years on the Council that there have been two rounds of questions with 2 questions apiece. Council Member Mack said that he had not said that there would be two rounds of questions.

Council Member Newton said that the Chair had the right to determine how to run the meeting. Atty. Anastasi then read a section from Roberts Rules.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED THE QUESTION.**

Council Member Pereira objected because Council Member McCarthy had not raised his hand.

20-21 Appointment of Tiheba Bain (D) to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 20-21 APPOINTMENT OF TIHEBA BAIN (D) TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SIMMONS SECONDED.**

Ms. Bain was present on the call. She said that she lives in Bridgeport and has her own business in the City. She gave the reasons why she wished to serve on the Board.

Council Member Simmons asked about the general Commissions, like the ZBA or Civil Service Commissions. She said that she had not been given any information on the various commissions but she was being asked to vote on candidates for these Boards and Commissions.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had discussed this with Council Member Simmons and that Ms. Vickers would be in touch. She said that a number of years ago, Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia had compiled a number of binders that gave a summary of the Commissions and Boards for the Council Members. She encouraged everyone to submit questions in advance so the Co-chairs can provide the information.

Atty. Anastasi said that on the City Website, there is a description about the various boards and Commissions along with a wealth of additional information.

Council Member Pereira said that Ms. Bain was currently listed as an alternative and a Republican on the website. However, Ms. Bain was listed as a Democrat on the agenda. Ms. Bain said that it was a misprint and did not know who had posted that information.

Council Member Pereira said that the last ZBA meeting was the worse run one that she had ever attended. She added that the ZBA did not have a meeting for a few months due to a lack of a quorum. The State statute allows for applications that exceed 60 days to be automatically approved.

Council Member Pereira asked Ms. Bain if she had received any training about the statutes on the Zoning Board Appeals and what would be classified as a hardship. Ms. Bain said that she had been provided with materials to read about what constitutes a hardship. However, she has not received any training.

Council Member Pereira said that there were many violations at this meeting.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 20-21 APPOINTMENT OF TIHEBA BAIN (D) TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia requested this item be placed on the consent calendar.

21-21 Appointment of Ralph R. Ford, Jr. (D) to the Civil Service Commission.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED AGENDA ITEM 21-21 APPOINTMENT OF RALPH R. FORD, JR. (D) TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.**

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

Council Member Pereira said that Mayor Jasper had created a strong Civil Service Commission in order to end patron employment. She recounted many of the recent incidents that had happened with the Civil Service Department recently. She said that Mayor Finch had fired a Civil Service Director who wouldn't do what he wanted and mentioned the more recent firing of Mr. Dunn, who was the Acting Civil Service Director, in violation of the City Charter. She also

added that former Police Chief A. J. Perez had been fired after the discovery that the position requirements had been changed.

There is no accountability. Now they want to put Dr. Ford on the Commission, a former State psychologist that was terminated for illegally billing State Clients to his private practice.

Council Member Pereira asked if someone who was fired by the State, escorted off the property and required to pay over \$20,000 in fines should be in a position to make decisions about other Civil Service employees in regards to hiring or termination. This is why the constituents have no faith in City government.

Council Member Pereira said that she would not be voting in support of this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if Mr. Ford was present on the call. She was told that he did not appear to be on the call. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that they should table the item until Mr. Ford was present to discuss his situation and answer questions.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 21-21 APPOINTMENT OF RALPH R. FORD, JR. (D) TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION BECAUSE MR. FORD WAS NOT PRESENT TO DISCUSS HIS APPLICATION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD SECONDED.**

Council Member Cruz said that they had just heard about the problem recruiting candidates.

Council Member Pereira announced that a motion to table was not debatable.

**** THE MOTION TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 21-21 APPOINTMENT OF RALPH R. FORD, JR. (D) TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION BECAUSE MR. FORD WAS NOT PRESENT TO DISCUSS HIS APPLICATION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Cruz said that it was sad that they were doing the same thing they had been warned about just a few minutes earlier.

18-21 Proposed Resolution regarding the approval of the 2022-2024 Citizen Union Committee. CONT'D.

Council Member McCarthy asked for clarification on Agenda Item 18-21.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 18-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE APPROVAL OF THE 2022-2024 CITIZEN UNION COMMITTEE AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 18-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE APPROVAL OF THE 2022-2024 CITIZEN UNION COMMITTEE AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia requested this item be placed on the consent calendar.

Council Member Herron said that she welcomed the new members. They deserve the leeway to learn all the rules. Having a Council Member that continues to criticize a new member is wrong. If the Council Members criticize people, it will be a tough two years.

Council Member Simmons thanked Council Member Herron for her comments. The Council Members are here to learn and she hope that the senior Council Members would be less judgmental and more willing to help learn the process.

Council Member Newton said that it was sad that they want people to serve but this is why people don't want to serve on Boards or Commissions. He asked the Committee not to be influenced by what they were hearing. It is wrong to sift through someone's background like the FBI. The Council's job is to include people to serve. He said that he had been the Council President, a State Senator and a State Representative.

The Chair has the right to stop people from disparaging a candidate. No one is perfect and that includes those who serve on Commissions and Boards. The comments came from someone who was not even on the Committee.

22-21 Proposed Worker's Compensation Settlement re: Michael and Karen (Widow) Rodriguez – Claim No. W000818810.

Council Member Mack asked Atty. Passaretti gave a brief summary of the case which was a death resulting from heart and hypertension issue. The Bridgeport Police officer was diagnosed with heart issues and hypertension. He has since passed away.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS AGENDA ITEM 22-21 PROPOSED WORKER'S COMPENSATION SETTLEMENT RE: MICHAEL AND KAREN (WIDOW) RODRIGUEZ – CLAIM NO. W000818810.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.**

Ms. Miles said that she was there from Benefits. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that no one from Benefits had attended the Executive Sessions before. Atty. Anastasi said that he believed both he and Ms. Miles would be helpful for the first portion of the session and when they have delivered their information, they should leave the session. Discussion followed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would prefer that the Executive Session be limited to the Committee members along with Atty. Anastasi and Atty. Passaretti.

The Committee members entered into Executive Session to discuss Agenda Item Agenda **22-21** Proposed Worker's Compensation Settlement re: Michael and Karen (Widow) Rodriguez – Claim No. W000818810 at 7:03 p.m. They returned to public session at 7:24 p.m.

No actions were taken or motions made during Executive Session.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 22-21 PROPOSED WORKER'S COMPENSATION SETTLEMENT RE: MICHAEL AND KAREN (WIDOW) RODRIGUEZ – CLAIM NO. W000818810.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia requested this item be placed on the consent calendar.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services