

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 1, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Maria Valle, Co-chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Maria Pereira, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Michelle Lyons (7:27 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, (6:15 p.m.) Council Member(s): M. E. Brantley, S. Burns, E. Newton, R. Roman-Christy, M. McCarthy, (6:15 p.m.); M. McBride-Lee & A. Silva; T. Gaudett, Mayoral Aide; Atty. M. Anastasi; Melissa Oliveira, Central Grants; Barbara, Thalia, Victoria Makewski (she/her); Call-in User 1; 203-275-642 0

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Valle called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. She said that Council Member Lyons was delayed at another meeting and would try to join the call when her item is presented.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES:

May 4, 2021 (Regular Meeting).

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED THE MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2021.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2021 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

138-19 Resolution regarding Commitments by the City Council to Reform Policing in the City of Bridgeport.

Council Member Burns said that the task force had made some recommendations and were looking to move ahead with a social service unit and increase public safety as a whole in the City.

Council Member Pereira said that this item was referred to the Committee on July 2020 and not one of the concerns had been addressed. She listed a number of items, including defunding the police department and having the SROs in the school buildings.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it was a work in progress. She said that she would not be voting for it because she believed that this is a work in progress and should be handled internally.

Council Member Newton said that he disagreed with Council Member Pereira and noted that they had made some changes in the budget to address the concerns in the resolution. He added that the SROs were no longer in the school buildings. This was discussed previously. There are things that have been done and there have been people who have responded when there were substance abuse issues or similar situations.

Council Member Pereira reminded everyone to mute their phones.

Council Member McCarthy and Council President Nieves joined the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Council Member Burns said that their group was a work in progress and would be allocating funding in the future. He has spoken to CAO Hawkins about addressing the issues in Chief Ramsey's report.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 138-19 RESOLUTION REGARDING COMMITMENTS BY THE CITY COUNCIL TO REFORM POLICING IN THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (HERRON, VIZZO-PANICCIA AND TAYLOR-MOYE) ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

Council Member Pereira stated that she was opposed because nothing in the resolution had been addressed.

Council Member Valle said that unless there was an update on the item, the item would not be included on the next agenda.

34-20 Proposed Resolution for Honorary Naming of paper street traversing the parking lot of the House of God Community Church on Stratford Avenue as "Bishop Ronnie Brayboy Way".

Council Member Newton said that at the last meeting, the City staff stated they would verify that it was a paper street and not a parking lot.

Atty. Anastasi said that he believed that there was an email sent out from the staff that verified that it was a paper street. Council Member Valle agreed and reminded everyone that there was a fee associated with the sign placements.

Council Member Newton said that he would inform the church officials about the fees.

Atty. Anastasi said that on April 7, City Engineer Jon Urquidi had sent out an email to Council Member Newton saying it was on private property. Mr. Nadrziny had stated that they must maintain the sign.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if a paper street was still a liability for the City. Atty. Anastasi said that it was his understanding was that it was on a parking lot, which is private property.

Council Member Pereira said that originally Mr. Nadrziny had indicated it was a paper street, but now it has been clarified that it was on private property. She asked why there were fees, since this has nothing to do with the City. The City employees do not have the right to be on private property. She said that the ordinance covers City streets and not private property. Council Member Valle said that they would look into this.

Atty. Anastasi said that it was a hybrid situation because the Council is looking to approve the honorarium because of the church's request to honor someone.

Council Member Newton said that they recognize that this is private property but they want the signage to be done correctly and the church has no problem with the fees. He said that Bishop Ronnie Brayboy was being recognized for all his work in the City. This is symbolic.

Council Member Pereira said that the resolution mentions a paper street, not a parking lot owned by the church. She said that she did not have an issue with the Bishop Brayboy, but would not be voting for a paper street.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would be voting against this because she has consistently done regarding similar items since 2004. She suggested that the Council consider recognizing Bishop Brayboy as they have others in the past.

Council Member Herron said that while this is not her district, she was confused about why this was a problem since the church is willing to pay for the sign.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 34-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR HONORARY NAMING OF PAPER STREET TRAVERSING THE PARKING LOT OF THE HOUSE OF GOD COMMUNITY CHURCH ON STRATFORD AVENUE AS "BISHOP RONNIE BRAYBOY WAY".**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 34-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR HONORARY NAMING OF PAPER STREET TRAVERSING THE PARKING LOT OF THE HOUSE OF GOD COMMUNITY CHURCH ON STRATFORD AVENUE AS "BISHOP RONNIE BRAYBOY WAY" PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (HERRON, TAYLOR-MOYE AND VALLE) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (PEREIRA AND VIZZO-PANICCIA).**

42-20 Grant Submission: re Resolution – Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program (#21210 & #21483).

Ms. Oliveira said that she had been notified by the City Clerk that page 3 of the resolution was incorrect and this has now been addressed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE CHANGES TO AGENDA ITEM 42-20 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE RESOLUTION – DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT (AFG) PROGRAM (#21210 & #21483).**

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

Council Member Pereira said that she would not be voting on this item based on her previous statements that she wished to make it clear for the record that she was opposing the application not because of the substance of the application but because there is language in every one of these resolutions, it allows the Mayor and/or any of his designees to sign any contract or agreement without coming to the Contracts Committee.

**** THE MOTION TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 42-20 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE RESOLUTION – DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT (AFG) PROGRAM (#21210 & #21483 PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (HERRON, TAYLOR-MOYE AND VIZZO-PANICCIA) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 42-20 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE RESOLUTION – DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT (AFG) PROGRAM (#21210 & #21483 PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (HERRON, TAYLOR-MOYE AND VIZZO-PANICCIA) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

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

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 42-20 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE RESOLUTION – DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT (AFG) PROGRAM (#21210 & #21483) AS AMENDED PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (HERRON, TAYLOR-MOYE AND VIZZO-PANICCIA) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

45-20 Proposed Resolution to conduct an informational meeting with Police Chief, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director regarding use of Fire Police volunteers.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE MOVED AGENDA ITEM 45-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING WITH POLICE CHIEF, FIRE CHIEF AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR REGARDING USE OF FIRE POLICE VOLUNTEERS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it was her understanding that due to contractual obligations, they could not do this. It has been addressed in the past and was not allowed.

Council Member Pereira said that it would be a violation of the union agreement.

Atty. Anastasi said that both Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia and Council Member Pereira raised valid points. Atty. Anastasi said that the resolution appeared to invite the Police Chief, the Fire Chief, the EOC, Civil Service and Labor Relations to come to a meeting to inform the Council regarding the requirements that this proposal would generate.

Council Member Brantley joined the meeting.

Council Member Herron said that it would be a good idea to have this conversation because there have been questions about using flag men like New Haven. Until the unions are at the table, no choices can be made.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked Atty. Anastasi about holding informational sessions in other committees. She asked if the problem was the fact that the Police, Fire and EOC were involved. It was about information on public safety.

Atty. Anastasi said that Rule 13 subsection 14 of the Council Rules gives the authorization of the Committee to conduct informational meetings to collect data on items they have been assigned jurisdiction.

Atty. Anastasi said that he had not been aware that there was a problem with organizing the informational meeting. He said that it would be important to have Labor Relations present. With an issue such as flagmen, it might be covered in the contract and this was something to be aware of for future negotiations, if needed. It's an open invitation to discuss the issue.

Council Member Taylor-Moye thanked Atty. Anastasi for his comments.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said this was another reason she had previously mentioned regarding the number of resolutions that were being submitted. She said that volunteers are often professionals in other positions. Atty. Anastasi said that he was referring to professional who are compensated.

Council Member Herron said that there was a great deal of clarification in this discussion. Council Member Newton said that Council Member Herron and others had put in this resolution so that they would have some insight. It was done with the intent so that the Labor Department would have the support of the Council. He gave an example that the Council did not want officers acting as flagmen on the street rather than dealing with other police business on the

street. He asked everyone to support it. The Contracts Committee will not be negotiating any contracts, but will be giving the Labor Department instruction on the issues.

Council Member Pereira said that she was not opposed to having the discussion, but thought there were items in the “whereas” that might be problematic. However, it never hurts to have a conversation.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 45-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING WITH POLICE CHIEF, FIRE CHIEF AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR REGARDING USE OF FIRE POLICE VOLUNTEERS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.**

Atty. Anastasi suggested that they consider amending the resolution to indicate in the resolution some of the details such as where this should be held, whether it would be held by the Committee or a joint meeting between Public Safety and Contracts.

Council Member Herron said that she was a co-chair of Contracts. She said that she would like to see it go before both the Contracts and Public Safety Committees. Council Member Valle and Council Member Taylor-Moye also agreed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON WITHDREW HER EARLIER MOTION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION FOR AGENDA ITEM 45-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING WITH POLICE CHIEF, FIRE CHIEF AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR REGARDING USE OF FIRE POLICE VOLUNTEERS TO BE HEARD BY A PUBLIC SAFETY AND CONTRACT JOINT COMMITTEE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 45-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING WITH POLICE CHIEF, FIRE CHIEF AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR REGARDING USE OF FIRE POLICE VOLUNTEERS TO BE HEARD BY A PUBLIC SAFETY AND CONTRACT JOINT COMMITTEE PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (HERRON, TAYLOR-MOYE AND PEREIRA) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (VIZZO-PANICCIA).**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia explained that she was opposed due to not having a written presentation on this.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 45-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING WITH POLICE CHIEF, FIRE CHIEF AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

DIRECTOR REGARDING USE OF FIRE POLICE VOLUNTEERS TO BE HEARD BY A PUBLIC SAFETY AND CONTRACT JOINT COMMITTEE AS AMENDED.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 45-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING WITH POLICE CHIEF, FIRE CHIEF AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR REGARDING USE OF FIRE POLICE VOLUNTEERS TO BE HEARD BY A PUBLIC SAFETY AND CONTRACT JOINT COMMITTEE AS AMENDED PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (HERRON, TAYLOR-MOYE AND PEREIRA) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (VIZZO-PANICCIA).**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia explained she was opposed for her previous stated reason.

71-20 Proposed request for the Installation of a Streetlight on Utility Pole #6365 located at 1259 Kossuth Street.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED AGENDA ITEM 71-20 PROPOSED REQUEST FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A STREETLIGHT ON UTILITY POLE #6365 LOCATED AT 1259 KOSSUTH STREET.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.**

Council President Nieves said that there was a map and an illustration of the lighting fixture along with a note from Public Facilities saying there was enough funding for the project. Engineering said that there were not enough accidents there. Four way stop signs were installed. Council President Nieves said that originally, there had been a towing company there that used large flood lights to illuminate the street but now that the company is no longer using the flood lights to light up the street so the street is very dark.

Council Member Pereira said that the resolution states that there have been a number of accidents at the location, but the traffic engineer issued a report that there were no accidents there. It is not in a high incident area. She wished to know why this issue was being pursued.

Council Member Valle said that there were light poles installed in every block but this one does not have a light fixture at all.

Council President Nieves said that the Engineer had not done the study at night. Jim's Auto had been providing the lighting in the past. When the Habitat house on the corner was built, there were questions about the light pole. However, there were no light fixture installed. She reviewed the details with the Committee. The cost for installation of a light is in the budget.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that everyone has had issues with lighting in their Districts. They should be providing lighting for their residents. This is a safety issue and a quality of living issue.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that in the past, there was someone who did a study about the lighting and worked with UI. She said that now they have to figure out the technicalities involved. If there is no communication, historical information should be relayed to the Department. She said that she did not know how they could do it if the City Engineer says that they should not.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Council Member Valle said that this was not giving the neighbors a light. She had gone to the area at night and since the towing company stopped lighting the area, it is very dark. There are three poles installed without fixtures. She noted that there were recently some shootings right in her own neighborhood where they had previously asked for a stop light which was denied by the City Engineers.

Council Member McBride-Lee said the Bridgeport tax payers don't get a lot for their money and she did not see anything wrong with installing a light there. She would not want to live on a dark street. When it comes to the full Council, she will vote for it because there should be a light on the pole.

Council President Nieves repeated that the lighting for the street had been from Jim's Auto's flood lights. She said that Google maps will show that the poles don't have fixtures on them. Because the business owner made sure that the area was lit, it wasn't a problem. But now it is. There is a disparity in putting in lights. Council President Nieves said that the lumens should be increased. This is not for specific residents. It should have been installed a long time ago and it wasn't.

Council Member Herron said that there were many areas that did not have proper lighting. Having a light on a corner that was not provided by the City is wrong. The decorative lights were installed but often don't work. Shot Spotter has been very active and everyone should be aware of this.

Council Member Newton said that the previous administration had reduced the lumens, which was a disservice to the residents. The Council needs to change the lumens to light up the City because it is a disgrace to have dark streets. As a Council Members, they need to change this to light up the City.

Council Member Valle recounted a tragic accident on Barnum Avenue and said that there had been things in the past that were not recorded and also pointed out that the City Engineers are primarily concerned with cars and traffic. She mentioned two traffic lights on Barnum Avenue that had been removed in the past.

Council Member Pereira said that someone had previously stated this wasn't at the request of residents, but the resolution includes a statement about the residents meeting with City Council Member about the safety and requesting the additional lights.

She said that Council President Nieves had stated that Public Facilities was in support of this but in the three letters from Public Facilities Director Nadrziny, it does not say that they support it. The Traffic Engineer's report says there should not be a light there. She expressed concerns about overriding the Traffic Engineer's report.

Council Member Pereira went on to speak about some of the stop signs that were mentioned earlier in the 137th District. Discussion followed about the issue of Committees overriding the professionals' reports, which is why she would not be supporting this. Council Member Pereira said that there were frequent attempts in the 137th District to override the Engineering Department. When Council Member Valle questioned this, Council Member Pereira said she had seen the emails from Mr. Urquidi that were presented to the Police Commission because Mr. Urquidi was upset when the Police Commission ignores his reports. This seems to be a pattern. A discussion followed about the various locations in the 137th District where there were past requests.

Council President Nieves said that Council Member Pereira's statement about the 137th was charged statement because everyone knows this was not just about the 137th. There have been Council Members who were adamant about various issues. The Council Members know their Districts and the safety issues in them. She noted that for someone raised in the East Side, Council Member Pereira would have realized that the particular section of Kossuth Street always was lit by Jim's Auto for many years. He went above and beyond to provide lighting even after erecting the fence around his property. As a child, Council President Nieves recounted her recollections of this and pointed out that there were many streets that had two light poles on them to provide lighting.

Council President Nieves said that they had met with the residents to listen to their concerns about not only that block but the other blocks, also. The street is dark and the lack of lighting makes the road dark. The Engineers doesn't do lighting studies and Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia had mentioned a former staff member who did perform the lighting studies. They have also checked other resources and this is not able votes. There were conversations many years ago with the East Side community and Habitat for Humanity about the lighting, and nothing was ever done. Jim's Auto was no longer providing the lighting there. The language in the resolution falls within the ordinance. The funding is there for it, so they should move forward with the project regardless of the City Engineer's report.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 71-20 PROPOSED REQUEST FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A STREETLIGHT ON UTILITY POLE #6365 LOCATED AT 1259 KOSSUTH STREET PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (HERRON, TAYLOR-MOYE AND VIZZO-PANICCIA) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services