

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
JUNE 14, 2021**

**ATTENDANCE:** Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair; Maria Valle, Co-chair; Eneida Martinez, Council President Aidee Nieves.

**OTHERS:** Thomas Gaudett, Mayoral Aide; Isolina DeJesus, Director, Central Grants; Councilmember(s): R. Roman-Christy, S. Burns (5:34 p.m.) M. McCarthy (5:34 p.m.); Lt Paul Grech

This meeting was held via Zoom/teleconference.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Taylor-Moye called the meeting to order at 5:19 p.m. A quorum was present.

**80-20 Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division Project Longevity Grant (#22351).**

Ms. DeJesus said that this was for a Project Longevity grant. She noted that Lt. Paul Grech was also on the call. Ms. DeJesus then reviewed the breakout of the funding with the Committee.

Council Member Valle asked who the two subcontracted individuals were and how many cellphones would be involved. The grant is to reduce gun violence. Council Member Valle asked how they planned to reduce the gun violence.

Ms. DeJesus said that the two individuals were the Program Manager and the Social Service Manager. The two phones were for the staff and cost \$40 a month.

Lt. Grech said that this program was also running in Hartford and New Haven. The staff meets with the individuals who are in trouble and assist them in getting them into a training program such as tractor trailer driving or culinary school. There has been a lot of violence recently, but this is only one part of the program.

Council Member Valle asked how successful the program has been and where the staff are located. Lt. Grech said that the program has been running for 10 years and that the staff works closely with the Federal prosecutors. Lt. Grech said that the program was associated with John Jay University, but he was not sure about the success rate because the program has limited resources. Mr. Dimbo was trying to open up communication with the community.

Council Member Martinez said that she was familiar with the program. It has been in the City for a long time. She said that she believed that Project Longevity was a good program but \$174,000

is not enough particularly when \$136,000 will go to salaries. She then listed a number of areas of need like housing, therapeutic referrals, providing food among others. She suggested that the Grants Department try to find additional funding for the program. Mr. Dimbo's reputation in Bridgeport is very good.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she felt that the City should be doing more for Mr. Dimbo.

Council Member Burns and Council Member McCarthy joined the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

Council Member Valle said that Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia was not able to join the meeting due to work obligations.

Council Member Burns asked if there were data points regarding how many families were being served. Lt. Grech said that they do have data but pointed out that they serve so many different aspects. They have figures on how many people attended training, but it wouldn't cover food or clothing. Once a client gets a job, it's a success, but they don't have the resources to track that individual long term. He added that there were those clients who had serious criminal backgrounds that had gotten jobs, so there was no accounting for that.

Council Member Burns said that having data points would be helpful. It would help garner more public support.

Ms. DeJesus said that when the administration had changed, the new coordinator realized they were not collecting data and now they submit a quarterly report.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that the amount of funding did not seem to be enough to cover all the activities. Ms. DeJesus said that the total amount was determined on a Federal level and then the funding was allocated between three cities: Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. In the past, there was surplus funding and the money was returned. However, now with the new State Coordinator, they are working to make the program efficient and utilize the funding. Council Member Roman-Christy asked if the City had sent back funding in the past. Ms. DeJesus said that there had been funding returned in the past by the State Coordinator.

Council Member Valle said both she and Council Member Burns asked about the success rate. She said that it was not successful if they were only feeding 10 families. \$83,000 was being paid to someone who was not doing his job.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she would like to make an impact statement. She said that for people who have worked with Project Longevity, they know that the focus is helping the youth overcoming the issues in their lives. Project Longevity help them with housing and also works with agencies. Project Longevity can't stop the violence in the City but neither can the Police Department. It is needed here in the City, for the youth, and the families. She said that she was hoping that the Council Members would support Project Longevity because it was trying to save people.

Council Member Valle said that she was not against the project because it was not costing the City money. However, funding was sent back.

Council Member Martinez said that she was disappointed to hear that funding was sent back. She pointed out that when there is an outsider who doesn't know what the community needs, they can't address the needs. The program needs a local person who knows what the needs are. She said that she was involved with the program from the start. The City needs Project Longevity but Mr. Dimbo has to submit his requests to someone who is not from the area.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 80-20 GRANT SUBMISSION: STATE OF CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY AND PLANNING DIVISION PROJECT LONGEVITY GRANT (#22351).**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER VALLE SECONDED.**

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

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services