

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 3, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Maria Valle, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Michelle Lyons, Eneida Martinez, Maria Pereira, Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-chair (6:19 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member(s): M. E. Brantley, S. Burns, J. Cruz, M. McBride-Lee, M. McCarthy, E. Newton, R. Roman-Christy & S. Suliman; T. Gaudett, Mayoral Aide; Melissa Oliveira, Central Grants; Bonnie Lambert, Public Facilities; Frank Croke, OPED; Max Perez, OPED; Scott Appleby, Director, EOC; Terri Williams, Barbara, iPhone; 203-275-6420; 203-348-2644; 203-673-7218, 203-903-3500; 929-436-2866.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Valle called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

Council Member Valle said that Co-chair Taylor-Moye would be joining the meeting later. She stated that Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia has an excused absence.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES:

• **July 7, 2021 (Regular Meeting).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOVED THE JULY 7, 2021 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY 7, 2021 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AN ITEM REGARDING THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE “2021” FIRST ROUND OF SIDEWALK REPAIR PILOT PROGRAM, REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE TO THE AGENDA.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

82-20 Appointment of Terri B. Williams (D) to the Police Commission.

Council Member Valle requested this item be tabled because she was not able to distribute the information regarding the appointment to the Committee members in time for the meeting.

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 82-20 APPOINTMENT OF TERRI B. WILLIAMS (D) TO THE POLICE COMMISSION.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

Council Member Burns gave an update on the Task Force and said that they were working on the job descriptions for the social services component that the Task Force had recommended. They are also working on staffing study for the Police Force. An RFP will be released regarding this study.

Council Member Pereira stated that this particular resolution had nothing to do with a social services or staffing study. She noted that there were six references included in the therefore clause of the resolution, and number six has five separate parts. The resolution is now over a year old.

She wished to know the status on the specific therefore clauses noted in the resolution which was introduced by Council President Aidee Nieves and cosponsored by councilmember Scott Burns along with Council Members Valle and Taylor-Moye.

Council Member Pereira added that it included divestment of funding from the Bridgeport Police Department. However, Council Member Pereira pointed out that the City had given the Police Department an extra \$5 million in funding.

There was also a statement in the resolution regarding creating a Citizen Advisory Board for oversight and advisory authority on disciplinary matters, policies and procedures but this was not done.

There was a statement about removing the SROs from the school system but this was not done either. Instead, there was a vote not to remove them.

Council Member Pereira asked what the status was on the elimination of the gang database, there was also statement regarding the demilitarization of the Bridgeport Police Department.

Another section called for the passage of legislative reforms with five specific bullet points. This is not acceptable.

Council Member Burns said that they had transferred two million from the Police Budget for social services. The SROs were not in the schools. Council Member Burns said that he could not speak to the gang database. However, the de-militarization of the Police force was not simply a matter of returning the government equipment to the Federal Government. There are a number of issues that have to be addressed.

Council Member Pereira replied that they had not divested any money because the police had received an additional \$5 million in funding.

Council Member Valle noted that Council Members McBride-Lee, Brantley and Suliman were in attendance at 6:15 p.m.

Council Member Cruz thanked Council Member Burns and Council President Nieves for working on this resolution. He said that from his perspective that the Police Department was in need of patrol officers, regardless of how much money was divested. That means that officers will be working longer shifts. People are struggling with mental health and the social services component is desperately needed. While they may not have gotten everything they wanted, progress has been made. He thanked everyone for their input and it is time to move this forward. It is time to stop antagonizing the officers and while this resolution will not satisfy everyone, it is a start.

Council Members Roman-Christy and Taylor-Moye had joined the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

Council Member Brantley said that she wanted to echo Council Member Cruz's comments. There are many moving parts and changes will take time. She requested that the Council Members support the item so they can move forward. There is a lot of work that needs to be done.

86-20 Grant Submission: re Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Port Security Grant Program. (#22369, #22388, #22390, #22392, #22393)

Ms. Oliveira from Central Grants spoke about the Virtual Shield program and said that second project was for the laser imagining enhancement, and the third project was for the replacement of an aging rapid response patrol boat. The fourth project was for the replacement parts including an underwater drone. The last project involves a replacement of the Fire Department response vessel. She listed the various funding sources and said that Mr. Appleby was on the call to answer questions.

Council Member Pereira asked if the grant was competitive. Ms. Oliveira said that it was competitive. Mr. Appleby confirmed that the Port Security grant was competitive and Bridgeport is one of the three largest ports in the State. So far, the City has been successful in the past. He added that they had received an unofficial acknowledgement that they had been approved for a half million dollars allocation.

Council Member Pereira pointed out that there were matching funds required for each of the Departments. The matches are substantial. She wished to know what specific line items the matching funds would be transferred from.

Ms. Oliveira named a number of departmental line items. Council Member Pereira said that she wanted a list of the specific line-item numbers and wished to know how it was that they had all

this money available right out of the gate. Ms. Oliveira said that this grant was spread over a three-year period.

Mr. Appleby said that if it was true that the Zodiac boat and the Fire Department boats were approved, the Police boat will go to another municipality and the Fire Department will deploy the older boats to Lake Forest or other large bodies of water.

Council Member Pereira said that she would not be voting in favor of this item. Based on her previous statements, 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.

Council Member Newton asked where Bridgeport stood in comparison to New Haven. Mr. Appleby said that New Haven's boat was a combined police/fire boat that is shared. [Inaudible due to crosstalk] Mr. Appleby said that New London had a complimentary boat. He said that he believed that Bridgeport had the most resources but noted that Bridgeport responds to the highest number of incidents according to the Coast Guard.

Council Member Newton asked the Committee members to support this item and suggested that the Council Members consider supporting the Harbor safety in the next budget.

Council Member Burns asked about the LPR and how it would apply on the water. He also wished to know if further training would be needed.

Mr. Appleby said that the LPR was a license plate reader and it would be located at the Bridgeport ferry dock. Mr. Appleby said that there had been a major incident where a rental car was used by an individual who was feeding information to a terrorist group at the ferry terminal. He also gave some other examples of how the LPR would be used. There will also be some training required for the staff.

Council Members Herron and McCarthy joined the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Council Member Brantley thanked Council Member Burns and Ms. Oliveira for seeking the grants. She said that she was one of the original chairs of the Port Authority when it was created. She encouraged her colleagues to support this item as they are needed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 86-20 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) PORT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM. (#22369, #22388, #22390, #22392, #22393)**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (HERRON, LYONS, MARTINEZ AND TAYLOR-MOYE) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

90-20 Proposed resolution authorizing Driveway Variance, Right of Way Modification and Johnson Street conversion to two-way traffic – Windward Apartments, 20 Johnson Street.

Mr. Frank Croke of OPED spoke about the details of the request. He said that the project was on target, but the Fire Marshal had requested that the driveway flares be extended to accommodate fire trucks.

Mr. Croke then spoke about some modifications to another area and said that the improvements have opened up the area. This would re-align the street into the City right of way and the diagonal stall parking would fulfill the Zoning requirements. The private property owner would maintain the sidewalks and the diagonal parking spaces.

The third item is a proposal to change Johnson Street to two-way traffic.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said she would like to have the Council members support these projects. They have spoken to the community members and the changes would accommodate everyone. This is a win/win situation and will help the emergency response teams when needed. She thanked the staff who came out to speak to the residents and community about the right of way and the two-way street changes.

Council Member Pereira said she voted against the project because street parking was going to be dedicated to those parking. She said that now the developers were back because the parking spaces were required by Zoning. She said that she did not have a problem with widening the driveway flare and the safety changes.

Council Member Pereira said that she did not understand some of the terms in the resolution. Mr. Croak said that this involved a legal description of the areas. Council Member Pereira requested the site map be displayed on the screen. Mr. Croak displayed the site map. A discussion followed about the location of the sideways and the designated diagonal parking stalls.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked why this was before Public Safety because the change from a one-way street to a two-way street was a Police Commission matter. Mr. Croak said that they had been working with City Engineering and Planning and Zoning on this. The matter will be presented to the Police Commission.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that the Police generally are not in favor of making a one-way street into a two-way street. Mr. Perez said that the reason that this was being done was because the street was being expanded onto private property, which would then be ceded to the City.

Council Member Valle said that she was concerned that the homeowners be notified about the changes because the signs are often only 8 x10 and the residents often don't see them.

Council Member Taylor-Moye explained that the developers had met with the community at UB and in Marina Village and other sites, where they talked about the modifications and changes. OPED and the Housing Authority were all part of it.

Council Member Martinez said that she wanted to move the question, but was willing to wait for others to speak. She said that this was a phenomenal drawing. These projects were no different than any other project in the City. There have been issues with changing the one-way street to two way before. This is similar to Crescent Crossing and there have been no issues.

Council Member Newton said that he was in support of the project. He heard Council Member Taylor-Moye said that the residents were aware of these changes. The Council Members who live there talk to their constituents. Council Member Newton said that he believes the statements from the two Council Members from the District. This is a great project and people knew this project was underway. Each Council Member should be speaking for their own district and respect others in their districts.

Council Member Cruz said that he had lived and worked in Marina Village. He is happy to see this development coming to the South End. He pointed out that the same situation had existed for years and people would have to go down another narrow to come around the block. The South End needs this two-way street and this is a great development. When there is development, there will always be changes. It will reduce the volume of traffic. There will be sidewalks on both sides and all people need to do is to stay on the sidewalk. He thanked Mr. Croak and Mr. Perez.

Council Member McCarthy said that someone had asked who would be liable if someone had an accident when they backed out of a parking space into traffic. He said that the drivers would be responsible.

Council Member McCarthy pointed out that when the street is widened, the City will be taking private property. Mr. Perez stated that it would be City property.

Council Member Pereira said that on the second to last paragraph on page two, it states that the street is being converted into two-way traffic with at least 12 feet of travel lanes in both directions and proposed parking on Johnson. She wished to where the additional 12 feet was coming from; whether it was being taken from private property and who would be paying for that.

Mr. Perez said that he did not know what the cost was, but the private property was being ceded by the developer to the City of Bridgeport.

Council Member Pereira reiterated that this was not what the proposal stated because it says sidewalk and parking stalls will be on private property and therefore will be maintained by the owner. The City Charter is clear that the City Council cannot and has no authority to exempt the City of Bridgeport or any private or private industry or enterprise from the provisions of any ordinance. And under the Ordinances, all sidewalks must be owned by the City in a public right

of way. She said that she can't support it because it is a violation of the City Charter and ordinance.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 90-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING DRIVEWAY VARIANCE, RIGHT OF WAY MODIFICATION AND JOHNSON STREET CONVERSION TO TWO-WAY TRAFFIC – WINDWARD APARTMENTS, 20 JOHNSON STREET.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (HERRON, MARTINEZ, AND TAYLOR-MOYE); ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (LYONS).**

Council Member Valle said that she had not seen anything from the City Engineer so there was still time to look into the issue before the Council vote.

97-20 Communication from Public Facilities re: Proposed Resolution regarding the “2021” First Round of Sidewalk Repair Pilot Program, referred to Public Safety and Transportation Committee.

Ms. Lambert said that she had submitted a list of residents who had completed paperwork for the sidewalk repair program. A lien will be placed on the property as surety for payment.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOVED TO PURSUANT THE APPROVED SIDEWALK REPAIR PILOT PROGRAM , IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL THAT THE CITY PROCEED WITH THE REPAIRS AS SET FORTH IN EXHIBIT A, AND IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED THAT IF ANY OF THE HOME OWNERS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM FAIL TO PAY THEIR 50% WITHIN THE ALLOTTED TIME AND/OR FAIL TO WORK OUT AND ADHERE TO AN APPROVED PAYMENT SCHEDULE, THE CITY COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES THE FILING OF A LIEN ON THOSE RESPECTIVE PARCELS FOR THE ACTUAL COST OF THE REPAIRS, BUT IN NO EVENT, NO MORE THAN 10% MORE THAN THE ESTIMATE SET FORTH IN EXHIBIT A, BUT ALSO NOT FORECLOSE OR SELL SUCH SIDEWALK REPAIR LIENS AS PER THE PROGRAM'S INITIAL APPROVAL.**

**** THE MOTION FAILED DUE TO LACK OF A SECOND.**

Council Member Newton pointed out that there was no second to the motion.

Council Member Martinez said that she thought that this was urgent because there was a deadline for Ms. Lambert to move forward on the sidewalks.

Council Member Martinez said that she had put the pilot program on hold because this went back out to bid. In listening to Council Member Pereira, Council Member Martinez said that it appears

to be an attack against Council Member Newton and his work with the City of Bridgeport on the sidewalk program. She noted that Ms. Lambert was the staff member that was supposed to be presenting the item to the Committee and no one else.

Council Member Martinez wanted to know if the project was on hold, what the deadline was for the project and why it was immediate consideration.

Ms. Lambert said that they had gone out for a re-bid in February. She said that she did not know why it had to be rebid.

Council Member Martinez stated that Ms. Lambert did know why it had to be rebid and that was because Ms. Lambert had not communicated with the two minority bidders.

Ms. Lambert said that the bidder who won the first bid won the second bid on price. The City Attorney took a month to approve the contract. She said she had sent out 100 estimates and the owners that responded were on the list. She said that the reason for the urgency was to present the list to the Council in September for approval so that the contractor can start working on the sidewalks before the season changes.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO TABLE THE MATTER TO FIND OUT FROM THE MINORITY BUSINESS OFFICE WHO BID AND WHY THE PROJECT WAS AWARDED TO PREVIOUS CONTRACTOR AGAIN.**

Council Member Pereira said that there were residents that had been waiting for two years for their sidewalks and the behavior was inappropriate.

****COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said that this was outrageous, personal, unprofessional and she was opposed.

**** THE MOTION TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 97-20 COMMUNICATION FROM PUBLIC FACILITIES RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE “2021” FIRST ROUND OF SIDEWALK REPAIR PILOT PROGRAM, REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (HERRON, MARTINEZ, AND TAYLOR-MOYE) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (PEREIRA AND LYONS).**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (HERRON, MARTINEZ, AND TAYLOR-MOYE) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (PEREIRA AND LYONS).**

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services