

Office of the City Clerk
Legislative Department
Lydia N. Martinez, City Clerk
Frances Ortiz, Assistant City Clerk



**Notice and Agendas for Miscellaneous Special Budget & Appropriations
Committee Meetings for FY 2023-2024**

Zoom & Teleconference Information:
Dial-in number for all meetings: (929) 436 2866
Meeting ID for all meetings: 117 676 489

Date	Time	Agenda Subject / Dept.	Location
Wednesday, April 5	6:00 pm	Capital Plan and General Budget Review	Zoom/Teleconference
Thursday, April 6	6:00 pm	Capital Budget: Public Facilities	Zoom/Teleconference
Monday, April 10	6:30 pm	OPED/ Capital Discussion	(In-person) Conference Rooms A, B & C
Tuesday, April 11	6:00 pm	City Attorney /Registrar of Voters	(In-person) Conference Rooms A, B & C
Wednesday, April 12	6:00 pm	Public Facilities: All Departments except Engineering	Zoom/Teleconference
Thursday, April 13	6:00 pm	Health Department	Zoom/Teleconference
*Saturday, April 15	10:00 am	Health Department: (Social Services/ Administration) – EOC	(In-person) Conference Rooms A, B & C
Tuesday, April 18	6:00 pm 6:30 pm	Public Hearing: Capital Plan ITS	(In-person) City Council Chambers
Thursday, April 20	6:00 pm	Civil Service /Human Resources /Labor Relations & Benefits	(In-person) Legislative Services Office
*Saturday, April 22	10:00 am	Capital Plan and General Budget Review: Police Department	(In-person) Conference Rooms A, B & C
Tuesday, April 25	6:00 pm	Board of Education /Library	Zoom/Teleconference
Wednesday, April 26	6:00 pm	CAO /Central Grants Office /OPM	(In-person) Legislative Services Office
Thursday, April 27	6:00 pm	Public Hearing: Board of Education and Library	(In-person) City Council Chambers

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*Saturday, April 29	10:00 am	Capital Plan and General Budget Review: Fire Department; Vote – Capital Plan	(In-person) Conference Rooms A, B & C
Monday, May 1	7:00 pm	City Council Meeting: Vote – Capital Plan	(In-person) City Council Chambers
Wednesday, May 3	6:00 pm	Finance /Public Facilities: Parks Administration, Engineering, Roadway & Sanitation	Zoom/Teleconference
Thursday, May 4	6:00 pm 6:30 pm	Public Hearing: General Fund Budget Legislative Department /General Discussion: General Budget (Possible Vote)	(In-person) City Council Chambers
*Saturday, May 6	10:00 am	General Discussion: General Budget (Possible Vote)	(In-person) Conference Rooms A, B & C
Monday, May 8 (Tentative)	6:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting; General Budget - Vote	(In-person) City Council Chambers
Tuesday, May 9 (Special Meeting) (Tentative)	6:00 pm	City Council Meeting; General Budget – Vote (Possible Vote if Necessary)	(In-person) City Council Chambers
Monday, May 15	6:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting; General Budget – Vote (Possible Vote if Necessary)	(In-person) City Council Chambers
Schedule is subject to adjustments as needed by Committee Co-Chairs: 04/24/2023 – Rev.# 2			

Locations: **City Council Chambers: City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace 1st fl., Bridgeport, CT 06604.**
Conference Rooms A, B & C: Margaret E. Morton Government Center, 999 Broad Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604.
Legislative Services Office, Margaret E. Morton Government Center, 999 Broad Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604.

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 5, 2023**

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

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): M.
Pereira & M. Valle; Ken Flatto, Finance Director;
Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Barbara, 203-880-5666

This meeting was held via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

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

CAPITAL PLAN AND GENERAL BUDGET REVIEW

Co-chair Newton said that a number of recommendations that had not been included in last year's budget have been included in this year's budget. Most of the items were included were ones that would generate revenue. Council Member Newton thanked both Mr. Flatto and Mr. Nkwo for putting a good budget together.

Council Member Burns said that this meeting would be an overview of the budget.

Mr. Nkwo said that he had gone through all the Committee's suggestions and changes and included as much as he could. He gave a brief overview of the various items that he had included along with the changes, such as isolating the Parking Meter revenue and the revenue from the Amphitheater.

Council Member Burns noted that both Council Member McBride-Lee and Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia would be joined the meeting later due to work obligations.

Mr. Flatto said that this year's budget was a challenge and they worked to produce the best budget that they could. He said that he had presented a strong argument to the State that Bridgeport deserves more State allocations. He also mentioned the State pension payments

Council Member Burns displayed the FY2023 OPM Capital Budget Revenue sheet. Mr. Nkwo then reviewed the details regarding the PILOT Payments, Police Special Events and Seaside Park Rental (Sound on Sound) revenue. Mr. Nkwo noted that regarding the All Airport Revenue line item, they have to be careful regarding revenue because the City could end up paying the Town

of Stratford taxes. He continued to review each line item, which has a justification explanation attached to it.

Council Member Newton asked about the Harding High School project and the Airport sale. He asked how the figures were calculated, which Mr. Nkwo reviewed with him.

Council Member Newton also asked how much of the ARPA funds were left. Mr. Flatto explained that he believed that were only about \$4 to \$5 million left that was not committed.

Council Member Newton then asked about the exterior bus cameras. Mr. Nkwo explained that once someone has been fined once or twice, they stop driving past stopped school buses, so the revenue will decrease.

Council Member Mack asked for the details about the State Aid and Mr. Nkwo reviewed the item with him.

Council Member Mack pointed out that the ARPA funding was only temporary and asked how the City was planning to cover the difference. Mr. Flatto said that the ARPA funds stop in 2025. He pointed out that the BOE has a similar situation. Mr. Flatto said that they did not allocate the funding for reoccurring expenses but allocated it to programs. The groups that received funding will have to work to make up the shortfall. Mr. Nkwo agreed and said that no one knows what the market is going to do.

Council Member McCarthy said that there was a net increase of \$23 million in expenses, but had concerns about the fact that there was always increase in the expenses. Mr. Nkwo said that they are required to pay the MERF amounts, which is set by the State, and there are also other fixed expenses like the cost of fuel and electricity, which the City has no control over. The discussion moved to how the budget is constructed.

Council Member McCarthy pointed out that last year was the last year was the last year for the Police Department to have the retain the required number of officers hired with grant funding. He asked how many Police positions had been unfunded. Mr. Nkwo said that the cost of health care had increased over 29%.

Council Member Pereira had questions about the 20 Johnson PILOT. Mr. Nkwo said that he could not recall what the name of the project was offhand. Council Member McCarthy said that it was Marina Village. Mr. Nkwo thanked Council Member McCarthy and explained that they had changed from using the project name to using the street address a few years ago.

Council Member Pereira asked about Seaside/Beardsley Parks Checkpoint. She said that they had discussed not charging Bridgeport residents admission for Seaside and Beardsley Park. Mr. Nkwo said that it was required by ordinance. Mr. Flatto said that since the parks were purchased with Federal money, they would not be able to charge out of town visitors if they don't charge residents. Council Member Pereira said that she did not think that was accurate.

Council Member Herron said that they should change the ordinance and pointed out that in the past, the residents had been issued a park pass when they paid their taxes. The current cost for a Park pass is \$15.00. Discussion followed.

Mr. Nkwo then reviewed the Revenue Decreases with the Committee.

Council Member Pereira said that she did not understand why the expiration of a PILOT was listed as a decrease because the property owner would now be paying the full amount of taxes. Mr. Nkwo explained that he had to show that there would be no more revenue from that particular source again.

Council Member Pereira asked about the Sound on Sound had applied to use the park for two festivals. She asked why this was now listed as 0. Mr. Nkwo said that they had reclassified it under Parks.

Council Member Pereira said that the rental fee was about \$200,000. She had several detailed questions about the figures in the budget. Council Member Burns said that the Park Committee was receiving the flat rental fee and the City was receiving the ticket sales percentage.

Mr. Nkwo then reviewed Expenditure Increases with the Committee. He then gave the details involving the Police overtime, which is now in a different category to assist in determining how much an event costs the City.

Council Member Newton asked about using civilian flagmen rather than sworn officers. Council Member Herron said that they would have to discuss it with the Chief because this involved the union. To date, nothing has been done. Mr. Nkwo said that the Police Department had added eight civilian positions, discussion followed.

Council Member Pereira asked for more detail regarding the new overtime category which includes the Amphitheater exterior overtime, and the Sound on Sound exterior overtime. Council Member Pereira asked for the total amounts for which the City was not reimbursed for the Sound on Sound along with the same amount for the exterior for the Amphitheater. Mr. Nkwo said that the Sound on Sound had agreed to pay the total overtime.

Council Member McCarthy said that next year, they will be able to see where the City was losing money on Police overtime. He said that they would not be able to do anything about previous contracts, but they could see where they need to pay attention.

Mr. Nkwo then reviewed the Expenditure Decreases with the Committee. He explained that last year, there were many retirements. He noted that the Mayor has suggested that they combine the Police and Fire Headquarters into one facility. There were reductions in the amount of paper and plastic supplies due to the reduction in COVID protocols. He also noted that Civil Service had requested a new Exam Hall and some of the City space had been designed for the testing venue. This reduces the cost by eliminating the rentals and associated costs. The BOE ECS Grant Expense has decreased.

Council Member Newton said that he had heard that the BOE would be receiving a significant amount of State funding. He also said that he was concerned that there were a number of crashes involving police vehicle, one of which happened before the vehicle was even delivered to the Police Department.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the High School Scholarship that was being established. Mr. Flatto reviewed the program model with her.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the Departments surplus funding. Mr. Nkwo said that he visited the departments to make sure the money is being used for what it was designated for.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the fuel prices. Mr. Flatto said that they call a number of fuel providers and Santa has been the one that has consistently provided a good price. They try to lock in for six months or a year contract.

Council Member Pereira said that it appears that there will be early voting for up to 14 days before the election and that she did not feel that the allocation was sufficient.

Council Member Pereira said that last year, the Council agreed to give the BOE \$2.5 million but because the Council's budget was not approved, the BOE only got \$2 million. The extra \$500,000 went to the Promise Scholarship and most of the students enroll at Housatonic which is a two-year program and most students do not graduate. She felt that the money would only fund 500 students and that it would be better spent giving the \$500,000 to the BOE.

Council Member Pereira said that there was a larger conference room on the first floor of the Margaret Morton Government Center and they could use that.

Council Member Burns asked when the six-month fuel contract would be. Mr. Flatto reviewed the details with him.

Mr. Nkwo then reviewed the Expenditure Surpluses. Discussion followed about the details including the bond debt service.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ADD AN DOCUMENT TITLED "FY24 VERSUS FY23 SUMMARY OF THE MAYOR'S RECOMMENDED VARIANCES" AS EXHIBIT 04-05-23-A.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER A DOCUMENT TITLED "CAPITAL REQUEST VARIANCE" AS EXHIBIT 04-05-23-B.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER A DOCUMENT TITLED “FY2024 CAPITAL BUDGET REQUEST FUNDED IN THE FY24 RECOMMENDED GENERAL FUND BUDGET” AS EXHIBIT 04-05-23-C.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Nkwo then gave a brief overview of the FY2024 Capital Budget Request funded in the FY24 Recommended General Fund Budget.

Council Member Herron asked if any ARPA funding was used to purchased vehicles. Council Member Burns said that they were paying for the vehicles up front so they were not using bond funds. Discussion followed.

Council Member Herron asked for a listing of the equipment and the amounts spent from the ARPA funding along with how much of the funding has been utilized.

Council Member Pereira asked about the information on page 22, which she said she had never seen before. She asked about the inclusion of Success Village Co-op and Watermark in what appears to be a summary of commercial properties. Mr. Flatto said that because it was considered as multi-family, which is often reviewed as commercial property.

Council Member Newton said that there had been a meeting scheduled for Saturday but Public Works was not able to attend, so the meeting was cancelled.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 6, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Tyler Mack, Matthew McCarthy, Mary McBride-Lee, Jeannette Herron

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): F. Hodges, M. Pereira, R. Smith & M. Valle; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Paul Catino, Public Facilities; Aaron Curry, Public Facilities; Deputy Director Joe Tiago; Public Facilities Deputy Director Craig Nadrizny; Public Facilities Director; Jon Urquidi, City Engineer; Luis Burgos, Parks Department, Michelle O. 203-880-5666

This meeting was conducted via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER.

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

CAPITAL BUDGET – PUBLIC FACILITIES

Mr. Nkwo gave an overview of the proposed budget for Public Facilities as shown on the Capital Plan spreadsheet.

Mr. Nadrizny said that Mr. Catino would be presenting the report but was experiencing connectivity problems.

Mr. Nkwo reviewed each line item with the Committee. Mr. Nadrizny said that they had been allocated \$4 million and that there was a possibility for an additional \$3 million, which would bring the total to \$7 million.

The discussion moved to the Wonderland of Ice and Michelle said that they had gone out to bid for an architect. The cost of construction has also increased greatly. Mr. Tiago said that they were waiting to hear back from the tenant’s attorney and the City Attorney.

Mr. Urquidi, the City Engineer, then spoke about the condition of the Newfield Boat Ramp and said that they had submitted a permit to DEEP and it takes a minimum of 90 days for a decision. They would like to have the ramp open for Labor Day, but they need to repair it completely.

Mr. Catino quickly reviewed the details regarding the new Police Headquarters. He said that Ms. Muoio was not available to speak about the Airport proposed allocation.

Mr. Urquidi said that they had received some funding to demolish the Pleasure Beach Bridge, but the amount was insufficient. There were some ARPA funds added to it, but the \$150,000 was just for contingency. There has been a change order involving some previously unknown piles and those are being handled.

Mr. Catino spoke about the status of the Perry Memorial Arch and said that they had almost reached the end of Phase One for the project. He reviewed the remaining items.

Council Member Burns asked about the funding for the Perry Memorial Arch and when it might be completed. Mr. Nadrizny said that they were on track with the funding. Mr. Catino said that they have to wait for the work to dry out and that he hoped that they would be able to start the final round repairs in the spring of 2024 and finish up seven or eight months after that.

Council Member Burns asked if there were any remaining capital fund that could help with the Pleasure Beach Bridge project. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details.

Council Member McCarthy said that he agreed that the City should not bond for street paving.

Council Member McCarthy asked for a list of City parking lots for paving. He would also like the account for the Public Facilities Equipment for the last five years.

Council Member McCarthy wished to know how long it would be if the City repaved Wonderland of Ice this year before it would require repaving. Mr. Nadrizny said that usually parking lots lasted longer than streets.

Council Member McCarthy asked Mr. Urquidi about the Brewster Street ramp. Mr. Urquidi said that there were a number of variables such as the width and length of the ramp and its condition. Mr. Nadrizny said that he would have the Harbor Master take a look at the ramp.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the details for Kennedy Stadium, which Mr. Catino reviewed with him.

Council Member Newton reminded everyone that the Council Members were limited to two questions each.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked for an update on Pleasure Beach and the paving program. Mr. Nadrizny said that this year, they just have the regular amount, but next year, they were looking forward to doing more paving.

Council Member Pereira asked for clarification the \$800,000 paving allocation for each District. Mr. Nkwo said that they would be using some of the ARPA money for the District paving.

Council Member Pereira said that she was concerned about the low amount of contingency for some of the projects. She asked if it was for Newfield Park because she said that there was no interest in the tennis court in Success Park. Council Member Newton said that there was a group in the Newfield area that were using the courts.

The discussion then moved back to the paving issues and having an inspector for the areas where the utilities cut into the street and do a patching job.

Council Member Hodges asked why they needed to work on track at Kennedy. Council Member Herron said that the nearby school uses the track along with the residents.

Council Member McCarthy said that there had been comments that the City supervises and takes care of 40 properties and he would like a list of those properties from Public Facilities and one from OPED. Mr. Nadrizny said that he would send it.

Council Member Pereira said that no one had mentioned the flood projects. She said that the flooding was getting worse due to climate change and there were families that were experiencing major losses due to floods. Mr. Urquidi said that there were funds set aside as matching funds for flooding projects such as Island Brook, Ox Brook, Ash Creek and others. They have to do studies and environmental impact studies before starting. There is an RFP out for flood mitigation, but the money is listed in the outer years.

Council Member Pereira said that the flood problem starts in Trumbull and works its way down. Mr. Urquidi said that all the streams connect and listed a number of the tributaries. When they get to the North East portion, they will start to figure out how to put all the pieces together. Council Member Pereira said that the residents are experiencing property damage.

Council President Nieves said that she wanted to talk about the tennis court and basketball courts. She reminded Mr. Nadrizny that they needed to have lines painted on them. There was another basketball court that was all cement behind Barnum School. There are other community courts that needs to be redone. She said that when they redo tennis courts, they need to add pickleball lines for it. Mr. Nadrizny said that when they renovated a court, they put in pickleball lines.

Council Member Newton said that before COVID, they had been working on redoing the bathrooms at the parks and then everything shut down. Mr. Nadrizny said that they had started work on Newfield but it doesn't look like it because the work is being done inside. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about a court at Trumbull Gardens. Mr. Nadrizny said that the court belonged to the Housing Authority. He added that he thought there was one behind a school on Chopsey Hill.

Council Member McCarthy said that there were a number of parks that needed bathrooms. He said that he doesn't like to have the low dollar amounts for court repairs. He wished to know if they could combine the court repairs and do them all at the same time.

Council Member Burns asked for more details about the Newfield Boat Ramp. Mr. Urquidi said that a number of people use it for recreational and noted that both Stratford and the Bridgeport Fire Department use the ramp for rescue launches. Mr. Nadrizny said that there were pictures of the ramp and it needs repair. Right now, there is a significant drop at the end of the ramp and it is

a public safety hazard. This is the only ramp open to the public since the other one is at Seaside Park. Discussion followed.

Council Member Pereira said that she was not happy to hear that there was City property that was a dead trap. She noted that Mr. Urquidi had mentioned Stratford. Mr. Urquidi said that Stratford uses the ramp when they are doing a joint rescue with Bridgeport.

Council Member Newton thanked Mr. Nadrizny for coming. Mr. Nadrizny said that the Council Members should be receiving a list of streets for repaving and encouraged everyone to send their lists back within two weeks so they can be ready to start paving.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER R. SMITH SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 10, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Scott Burns, Co-chair; Jeannette Herron, Tyler Mack, Mary McBride-Lee, Matthew McCarthy

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): A. Boyd, F. Hodges, M. Pereira & R. Smith; Thomas Gaudett, Deputy Chief of Staff; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nwko, OPM Director; Thomas Gill, OPED Director; William Coleman, OPED Deputy Director; Arden Kica, Building Department Director, Paul Boucher, Zoning Official, John Delgado, Zoning Department.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Newton called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. A quorum was present.

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (OPED).

Co-chair Burns directed everyone to page 326 in the budget book. He gave a brief overview of the various numbers on the page.

Council Member Newton said that the Council Members should be respectful to the staff.

Mr. Nkwo gave an overview of the revenue and personnel. He explained that the property manager would be responsible for collecting rents and inspecting properties.

Mr. Gill explained that there were five departments under the OPED umbrella: Economic Development, Building, Zoning, Planning and Housing and Community Development.

Council Member Pereira asked about a new position announced by the Mayor's Office that was being created to deal with the arts. Mr. Gill said that the City has a number of businesses and properties that need oversight. This would include tracking leases, and ensuring that rents are collected and dealing with illegal dumping. Mr. Gill said that there was a short list of the OPED properties that they manage. However, Public Facilities has a very long list of properties they manage. Discussion followed.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the Davidson building. Mr. Coleman said that they had released an RFP on it and there was a proposal for 12 units of housing in the historic Building.

Council Member Newton said that both Harding and Bassick should have been on the listing.

Council Member McCarthy said that he has been asking for a listing of all the properties that the City owns and this was the first one he had ever received.

Mr. Gill said that the properties were assigned to different departments. Council Member McCarthy said that he thought they had hired someone to track and review all the leases.

Council Member McCarthy said that the parking revenue was too low and he felt that there were numerous issues that have to be addressed. Mr. Gill said that the State owns the parking lot under discussion and the City does receive a percentage of the fees.

Council Member Burns said that he has been going to the Arena and that they only accept cards.

Council Member Burns asked for details on the proposed Deputy Directors. The discussion moved to the relationship of BRBC and the City. Mr. Gill said that there was a staff member who manages the OPED properties, but not for the other departments.

Council Member Cruz asked if the position was approved for full time. Mr. Nkwo said that it was. Council Member Cruz said that he would support this.

Council Member Mack said that Council Member Valle has concerns about the fact that the staff goes to conference but never shares the information with the Council Members.

Council Member Mack said that Council Member Valle was also concerned about the CDBG funding allocations.

Council Member Mack asked if there was a position that would help a resident who was starting a business. Mr. Gill said that they do have a staff member who handles the business type inquiries and directing them to the appropriate agencies.

Council Member Newton said that he was not against the position, but did not want it to be a political Hack. It has to be a professional. The goal is to attract businesses to Bridgeport. Mr. Gill said that every position that they fill has qualifications.

Council Member Newton said that it appears that they do not have enough Zoning Inspectors. Mr. Gill reminded the Council Members that the Zoning inspectors cannot issue tickets, they can only write a report.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked for a copy of the listing of Bridgeport City owned properties.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked for an update on the downtown movie theater. Mr. Gill said that they had contacted the state about it. It is an expensive project and they will need the backing of the State.

Council Member Burns asked for a listing of the salaries in a breakdown because there are CDBG funds involved.

Council Member Burns asked for an update on a billboard. Mr. Kica said that the permit has been issued.

Council Member Cruz had some detailed questions about sending out zoning inspectors to a site. Mr. Gill explained that the inspectors do not have the authority to shut down an illegal operation.

Council Member Pereira said that the Zoning Regulations had just been updated and she wished to know if they should have included the fines.

Council Member Pereira said that when she looks at Planning and Zoning management and they were all white males and the decisions that are made affect neighborhoods that are primarily non-white. As a white European female, this bothers her.

Council Member McCarthy pointed out that there would be \$12 million in ARPA money this year and another \$12 million next year. He asked what the plans were for the following years. Mr. Gill said that they have been working on negotiations with developers. Mr. Coleman said that the project could be on private land but they are asking for a tax break, so it would not be on the OPED listing.

Council President Nieves asked about the update for Intergov in terms of permitting. Mr. Kica said that there have been a number of upgrades, but there are people who are struggling because they are not computer savvy. Once all the kinks are smoothed out, it should be much easier for applicants to submit their forms.

Council Member Mack asked about the Deputy Director position and expressed concerns about the Department being top heavy. Mr. Gill said that the Department had two deputy Directors in the past. They need more help with the administrative work.

Council Member Burns asked about page 344 where the Planning and Zoning and Zoning Compliance appeared to be reversed. Mr. Nkwo said that when the data was entered, there was a mistake with the line item number.

Council Member Burns asked about Revenue building on page 334 and wished to know how the electrical and plumbing rates were assessed. Mr. Kica said that these were estimates and it was difficult to know what the job would entail.

Mr. Coleman then narrated a PowerPoint presentation on Bridgeport development. He answered a number of questions regarding the recent upgrades to the train station and the Harbor, and other residential projects.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she was seeing many projects in other Districts but nothing for the North End. Mr. Coleman said that their first charge was to handle the vacant City

buildings but there are not many in the North end. The North End will require a different approach and there are some problematic parcels.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO ENTER THE OPED POWERPOINT PRESENTATION TITLED “BUILDING BRIDGEPORT – AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION” AS EXHIBIT 04-10-2023-B.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO ENTER THE OPED ORGANIZATIONAL CHART AS EXHIBIT 04-10-2023-C.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED OPED PROPERTY REPORT AS EXHIBIT 04-10-2023-D.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member McCarthy asked about the medical marijuana dispensary on Dewey Street. Mr. Kica updated him on the permitting process.

CAPITAL BUDGET

Mr. Nkwo presented the Capital Budget. He said that the five-year Capital Plan indicated that OPED would receive \$2.5 million over the next four years, totaling \$10 million.

Council Member McBride-Lee said Eminent Domain made her nervous because the last time it was done, the property belonged to black and Hispanic owners, who were displaced. Council Member Newton said that eminent domain was used when a property owner is holding out and blocking a development.

Council Member Pereira said that she had concerns about the Land Acquisition, Blight and the Land Management line items. Mr. Coleman said that he could provide her with a list. He explained that the money that was expended in Blight. Council Member McCarthy pointed out that the clean-up of blighted properties is not just a bag or two of garbage. It usually involved environmental clean ups. Mr. Gill said that there are buildings that are unsound and the City demolishes the building and puts a lien on the property.

Council President Nieves said that she had attended a Condemnation Board meeting recently and asked about a property on Knowlton Street. She said that she would like to have the Condemnation Board to tighten up the process. Mr. Gill said that the Condemnation Board cannot order eminent domain but they can order a demolition.

Council Member Pereira asked how it benefits the property owners to have fines on a blighted parcel. Mr. Nkwo said that it was a tax write off.

Council President Nieves asked about translation services. She said that many of the departments have someone who speaks Spanish but there are other residents who don't

Council Member Burns said that the next meeting will be City Attorney and Registrars of Voters. Wednesday will be Public Facilities and Thursday will be the Health Department.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 11, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Tyler Mack, Matthew McCarthy, Mary McBride-Lee

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): J. Cruz, (6:02 p.m.); F. Hodges, (6:20 p.m.); M. Pereira & R. Smith; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; City Attorney M. Anastasi; Associate City Attorney J. Maye; Associate City Attorney Lawrence Ouellette; Associate City Attorney Dina Scalo; Linda Grace, Republican Registrar of Voters; Patricia Howard, Democratic Registrar of Voters, Associate City Attorney John Bohannon, (6:05 p.m.); Kathy, OPM

CALL TO ORDER

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

REGISTRARS OF VOTERS.

Co-chair Burns announced that this section of the budget starts on page 78.

Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview. He noted that there was a vacancy that was in the process of being filled.

Council Member Pereira asked about a position that appears to have a large increase. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details with the Committee.

Atty. John Bohannon joined the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

The Committee then reviewed page 81 and Mr. Nkwo reminded everyone that the Registrar of Voters is under the supervision of the State of Connecticut.

Council Member Newton asked if the Registrars had thought about the impact of Early Voting. Ms. Howard, the registrar, said that she was not sure if they were going to authorize 14 days or 18 days, but it would include weekends.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Council Member Newton asked if they had factored the extra costs into the budget. Ms. Howard said that they were not sure how much money the State would be providing funding.

Council Member Pereira asked whether the primary would be included in the early voting. Ms. Howard said that she had not heard about this. Council Member Pereira said that she had heard that it was in the newspaper that they would be doing it through the primaries and that there were legislators were looking to put all the financial cost for this on the town rather than the State.

Council Member McCarthy asked how much money the registrars felt that they needed. Discussion followed about the costs of having locations open on the weekend. Ms. Grace said she thought they would need three times the amount of the increase.

Council Member Newton said that he thought the Town Clerk's office might have the same issue. Ms. Howard said that they need access to the vault and if they were open over a weekend, they would need to secure those ballots.

Council Member Hodges joined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Council Member Pereira asked whether people could be voting by absentee ballot while others were voting in person. Ms. Grace reviewed the details. Discussion followed.

Council President Nieves asked whether they were planning on increasing the amount of equipment. She said that if all the schools were open on Election Day, she wished to know how much equipment they would need. Discussion followed about keeping the lists current.

Council Member Burns asked about an upcoming conference.

Council Member Cruz left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Council Member Pereira expressed concerns about curb side voting and associated parking issues. Ms. Howard said that they have to wait for guidelines from the State regarding using a municipal building like the Morton Government Center that would be open to the general public.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she supports having the voting at the Government Center would be good. Some states have the early voting at a remote location to discourage people from voting.

Council Member Burns thanked Ms. Howard and Ms. Grace for their input.

CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

The budget for the City Attorney's Office was on page 90. Mr. Nkwo said that there was a variance of \$88,000 because a legal assistant was no longer employed by the City. While the new staff member that fills that place will start at Step 1, they may have a family, which will change the benefits.

Mr. Nkwo then directed everyone to page 92 and he pointed out the COLA adjustment.

Attorney Anastasi introduced Atty. James Maye, Atty. John Bohannon, Atty. Dina Scalo, and Atty. Lawrence Ouellette.

He spoke about the issues around FOI requests. The goal is to have the departments trained to provide the FOI information. Attorney Anastasi then distributed a document to the Committee.

Council Member Cruz joined the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER Council President Nieves FOI INFORMATION PACKET FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE DATED MARCH 2, 2022 AS EXHIBIT 04-11-2023-A**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Atty. Ouellette said that he was present to speak about limiting the liability and risks for the City. Much of this work centered around reviewing OPED Contracts Committee limit the City's exposure. He then gave several examples of this and add that they also have to review claims and insure that the claims are filed with the appropriate entities. When there have been situations when the City has to pay out, there have been opportunities to sue the entities who are at fault to recover a portion of monetary damages.

Council Member Newton asked about the legal cases involving bad behavior. Attorney Anastasi said that some of the issues are a result of poor hiring decisions, or failures in training. He said that they are aware of the Council's concern about police officers that have repeated vehicle accidents or use excessive force. Atty. Bohannon said that Chief Porter is making an effort to address these issues.

Council Member Burns said that he felt there were a number of good recruits for the Police Department and that the trainer was doing an excellent job with the recruits.

Council Member Newton said that he was hoping that rather than the City Attorney's Office telling the Council what they can't do, would provide the Council with solutions that they can do.

Attorney Anastasi said that the City Attorney's Office was committed to improving the relationship between the Council and his office. He said both his department and Civil Service was reviewing the Charter and looking at what might need to be changed to allow the Council to move forward on some issues.

Council Member McCarthy said that he had spoken about the legal services budget line in the past. He asked about FY21 and how the estimated budget and the actual spending amounts were often different. He said that if there was a surplus, then the department did not need it.

Council Member McCarthy asked about hiring outside counsel. He said he was combining FY 21 Legal Services and Litigation. He noted that there had been surpluses in those two line items

for the last two years. He wished to know why they could not lower the estimated total for those two lines. He also wished to know the status of the Personal Property claims.

Mr. Flatto said that the Litigation has been higher than the number in the book because there were a few large cases that dated back five or six years that had many legal fees associated with them. He explained that when those bills came due, he charged them to the accrual account.

In terms of the overall account that is used for the largest lawsuits, it is in good shape. However, he cautioned everyone that if one case goes to a jury trial, it could be depleted very quickly. Discussion followed about the accrual accounting practice. The surplus funding in other accounts is then transferred into the accrual account and Mr. Flatto said that he notifies the Council when that happens. However, there has not been a transfer of this type for the last 15 or so months because the reserve is in good shape.

Atty. Bohannon then spoke about a construction site lawsuit involving asbestos contamination. He said that they needed outside legal counsel on this case. The fees for that specialized attorney are extremely high. Discussion followed.

Attorney Anastasi summarized the issue by saying that when the large lawsuit was settled, the settlement amount was paid out the accrual account rather than the Litigation and Legal Services accounts, so it appears that they were spending less than the actual expenditures.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked Atty. Maye about the lawsuit that involved the death of a woman and three children due to a fire. Atty. Ouellette gave the details of the case and why the City was sued for liability.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the departments receiving training. Attorney Anastasi said that they were working on training the staff to work on FOI. He then spoke about the recruiting efforts for police officers.

Council Member Mack asked where the figures on the Litigations Services and the Legal Services. Attorney Anastasi said that the Litigation Services was for court stenographers and marshals to serve papers.

Council Member Mack said that they had lost an attorney for Labor Relations. Attorney Anastasi said they have temporarily filled back the position and Atty. Skyers is temporarily covering the position. Atty. Ouellette explained that due to COVID, the State had deferred cases that required juries. Now the backlog needs to be cleared and there will be a number of cases.

Council Member Hodges asked about the training and said that he was hoping that the training will reduce the number of complaints for Labor Relations.

Council Member Hodges asked to get a number of the number of misconduct cases. He said that he wanted to know that there were consequences for officers who misbehave. He added that the police cars with front drivers and passenger windows should have all those tints removed.

Council Member Pereira said that the FY 2021 was in the wrong column. She said that 2022 was not included.

Council Member Pereira asked about the salary for the City Attorney. Attorney Anastasi then reviewed the details with her.

Council Member Pereira said that there was no Deputy City Attorney position listed in the Charter and also noted that the Charter indicates that Atty. Bohannon should not be a member of the Union.

Attorney Anastasi said that he was filling the unexpired terms for the former City Attorney but is being compensated as an Associate Attorney. This is also true of Atty. Bohannon, who is handling the Deputy City Attorney position.

Council Member Newton asked for clarification on Atty. Skyers in Labor Relations. Attorney Anastasi explained that if Atty. Skyer decided he does not like the position, he can return to the City Attorney's Office. Atty. Bohannon said that they need someone both in Labor Relations and in the City Attorney's Office, but it has to be two individuals. Discussion followed.

Council Member Cruz asked about the newspaper coverage regarding FOI. Attorney Anastasi said that there was a perception that they were trying to pawn work off, but the training will help move things along. He mentioned a case involving FOI. Attorney Anastasi suggested that he have the person contact Atty. Scalo.

Council Member Cruz said that he supports Chief Porter and also felt Chief Garcia did well. He said that the Mayor created a situation and Former Chief Garcia has left the City.

Council President Nieves said that there were no goals included in the Budget book . Attorney Anastasi said they would send the information.

Council President Nieves mentioned Atty. Adams who is located in the office but not included in the budget book listing. Attorney Anastasi said that Atty. Adams was not on the organization chart and does not report to him.

Council President Nieves said that there was a cashier's window that was often vacant. Attorney Anastasi said that the cashiers should be on the first floor. Mr. Nkwo said that they were moved upstairs because of COVID and there is no longer a reason for them to be upstairs.

Council Member Pereira asked about the compression of the columns and subtitles, which Mr. Nkwo reviewed with her.

Council Member Pereira said that she has submitted 14 FOI requests, some of which are four years old. The State law has changed and she worked on these changes. Attorney Anastasi said that promptly covers the availability of the records, staff time and other factors. It does not mean

immediately. The paralegal and others who are working on the issue are doing a yeoman's job in addressing the backlog.

Council Member Burns asked if there were resources to address the FOI issues and pointed out that the staff needs a license to use redacting software. Atty. Scalo then spoke about how they plan to reduce the backlog. They are trying to take a systematic approach. Attorney Anastasi said that the administration was concerned about overburdening the department.

Council Member Burns asked about the cost for the licenses. Atty. Scalo Said that there was a cost for those licenses but she did not know how much it would be. Council Member Burns asked Mr. Nkwo to get the figures for that.

Council Member Newton said that the City cannot hire 46 people to work on FOI. Atty. Ouellette said that in the past, the specific department would receive the requests and they would send the information out. Unfortunately, some confidential information was released that should not have been and the administration decided that the City Attorney's Office should vet all the information going out. That became a choke point. The newspaper article did not mention that they have been working to address this problem since last year.

Regarding the backlog, they are sending out letters to all those who requested information that is older than 6 months old to see if they still want the information. The recipient has 30 days to respond. If they don't, they will be cut from the list. Once that happens, the office will have a much clearer idea of the number of active cases.

Council Member McCarthy asked if they needed the Council's assistance. Attorney Anastasi said that often the recipient objected to the redaction. Council Member Pereira said that she had filed a complaint about this already. Council Member Burns asked for an update in a few months.

Council Member Hodges asked if there were legal interns who could come in and help with the situation. Attorney Anastasi said that they had one intern in the past.

Council Member Pereira asked if Mr. Flatto was trained to handle FOI requests. Mr. Flatto said that the staff has regular duties to do and if an FOI request come in, the staff is not required to drop everything to handle the request immediately.

Atty. Anastasi said that when FOI materials are released, many times, the recipients disagree with the redactions. Council Member Pereira said that she was filing a complaint right then. This means that there will still be hearings, which will require an attorney and possibly a paralegal. The attorney's role will be reduced to allow them to address their other legal work. However, reducing the backlog will not happen overnight.

Council Member McCarthy pointed out that they don't really know how long it will take them to get through the backlog. Atty. Anastasi pointed out that some of the backlogged cases were going back to the departments for processing.

Council Member McCarthy suggested hiring some temporary help to come in for six months to handle the backlog. Atty. Bohannon agreed and said that it would have to be someone who was qualified to handle the work.

Council Member Burns thanked everyone for their time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 12, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Jeannette Herron, Tyler Mack, Matthew McCarthy, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Mary McBride-Lee (8:10 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): M. Pereira & R. Smith; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Paul Catino, Public Facilities; Craig Nadrizny, Public Facilities Director; Steve Roach, Golf Pro; Luanne Conine, Recreation; Michelle Muoio, Sikorsky Airport; Council Member Michelle Lyons, Barbara

This meeting was conducted via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Co-chair Newton said that he would like to hear from Mr. Nadrizny about the Tree Warden because he was hearing things about the item and was concerned about the salary. Mr. Nkwo said that someone had been hired for the position. Mr. Nadrizny confirmed that this was so.

Council Member Newton asked why a new employee would come in at the top salary level. Mr. Nkwo said that this was contract and that he was not involved in the hiring process. Council Member Newton said that he had a problem with the salary of \$108,000 and wished to know if the position was posted. Mr. Nadrizny said that the position was not posted, but the individual was qualified. Council Member Newton said that he did not like the way this was handled and the Committee would review this. He said that it should have been posted and maybe someone from Bridgeport would have been hired.

Council Member Herron said that this was on page 288 in the budget. She suggested that they start with Parks since they were already talking about this.

Co-chair Burns said that the position was listed in the books as new, but it was already filled. Mr. Nkwo said the position has been reclassified.

Council Member Burns asked if the individual had their certification. Mr. Nadrizny said that the staff member has 12 months to get the certification. Council Member Newton said that they should not have started the individual at the top level without the certification.

Mr. Nadrizny said that they also hire people as drivers and give them 12 months to get their CDLs. Council Member Newton asked what the top salary was. Mr. Nkwo said that it was \$110,000. He repeated that it should have been posted and maybe someone from Bridgeport would have been hired. Mr. Nadrizny reminded everyone that the former employee had not only covered the trees but also oversaw a number of other projects. Discussion followed.

Council Member Herron reminded everyone that the former Tree Warden had been doing a number of jobs along with his normal responsibilities. She said that Mr. Nkwo said that they need to have competitive salaries and she agrees.

Council Member McCarthy asked what the entry level salary was for the Tree Warden. Mr. Nkwo said that the range was between \$73,000 to \$110,000. Mr. Nadrizny said that the staff member would be assisting Mr. Burgos at the parks. Mr. Nkwo pointed out that the staff member was salaried and would not be accruing overtime.

Council Member Pereira said that there had been discussions about having a Director of Parks, since the Charter requires it.

She went on to ask who would be teaching the staff member about the trees if the staff member is not certified.

Mr. Nadrizny said that the staff member has a strong knowledge about the trees and felt it would be an asset to the City.

Council Member Pereira said that this was outrageous and that the Council had not approved this position and the position should not have been filled because it was disrespectful.

Council President Nieves said that she had been hearing many of the same concerns. She said that when the administration came into office, a statement had been made about not having staff members doing extra duties so that they would master their own responsibilities. The last tree warden left seven years ago. She said that she was not happy that about this was handled in the manner that it has been. The Council Members should be informed as to who the staff member is, so they can contact that staff member if they have concerns about trees.

Council Member Newton said that this position was not approved by the Council, they will be looking at this position closely.

Council Member Mack asked about the percentages of the tree and landscape maintenance. Mr. Nadrizny said that they only have 11 full-time people for the Parks Department and they outsource some of the work that is mainly tree removal.

Council Member McCarthy asked how the Department ensures that employees who have second jobs or their own businesses in addition to working for the City, are not working on their secondary duties while on City Time.

Mr. Nadrizny said that there was an assignment sheet every day and there are supervisors out on the road checking on things. Also, the vehicles have GPS on them so they know where everyone is.

Mr. Nkwo then gave an overview of the Executive Summary to the Committee.

Council President Nieves asked about the parking meter collection. She said that all of the meters have been removed on Middle Street and No Parking signs have been put up due to the construction. She asked who removed the meters and whether the City was getting reimbursed for the lost revenue.

Council President Nieves asked about the amount of revenue from the sidewalk repair fee especially since many of the sidewalks are being ripped up. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details with her.

Council President Nieves said that she had heard from someone whose neighbors had a sidewalk ripped up and the replacement was done with black asphalt rather than the original style of cement.

Mr. Nadrizny said that if it is a sewer lateral that goes into the street, it is the responsibility of the resident to insure that the contractor replaces the sidewalk correctly or report them to his department.

Council Member Pereira said that she was frustrated about the FY22 was not the correct column. She said that this had happened not only in the City Attorney's budget, but also the Public Facilities Department. Mr. Nkwo said that he would send a digital copy to everyone.

Council Member Newton said that it is not worth having the meetings if the data is not correct. He then asked the co-chair if they should reconvene the meeting tomorrow. Council Member Newton told Mr. Nkwo that he should make sure that when they receive these budget books the numbers are correct.

Council Member McCarthy suggested that Mr. Nkwo check the upcoming budgets for the Departments that they will be reviewing. He said that when they have the bulk pickup they will see what the charges really are. Mr. Nadrizny said that the Council Members are in charge of the ordinances that set the charges. He said that the commercial vehicles need a permit.

Council Member McCarthy said that there were non-commercial vehicles that make frequent drop offs. Mr. Nadrizny said that they would have to consider how to do that.

Council Member Cruz said that there were some sections of the street that had the meters removed and people were parking trucks and food trucks there the entire night.

Council Member Cruz said that he had not heard of any type of discount that the City provides for the senior park permits.

Mr. Nadrizny said that all seniors are able to get a free pass that would be displayed on the dashboard. He said that he would speak with Ms. Conine about getting this information out to the seniors. He said that they do have to get the approval of the Parks Board to reduce the park stickers. Ms. Conine said that there is advertising on the City website and at the park checkpoint booths.

Council Member Mack said that there was a food truck that was parking near his district and he heard that in order for the food truck to get to the parking spots for the food trucks, they have to pay a \$50.00 fee. He asked if that revenue was coming to the City. Mr. Nkwo said he did not know, but would look into it.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the revenue from CPower and Titan Energy. Mr. Nkwo indicated where it was on the budget sheet.

Council Member Pereira said that they just need to move the numbers from the 2021 column, but they need the 2022 actuals also.

Council Member Pereira asked about the bonding debt service increase that had gone up significantly. Council Member Newton said that they had to turn to page 218 to see the breakout. Mr. Flatto said that the debt service was spread out a number of years.

Council Member Lyons said that some of the trucks that were parking without paying were from Fairfield but were parking on the Bridgeport side.

The discussion then moved to the Personnel page for the department. Mr. Nkwo said that there were a few positions that were being transferred to the Engineering Department.

Council Member Newton asked if the staff that was being transferred would be bringing more revenue to the City. Mr. Nadrizny said that for the past two years, the staff has been working in the Engineering Department and they were just clarifying the personnel.

Council Member Pereira said that she had a problem because they were eliminating a position in the union and adding another.

Council Member Newton asked whether Ms. Gaines was still working on Anti-Blight. Discussion followed.

Mr. Nadrizny said that the technicians were out removing graffiti. Illegal dumping and blight are two separate issues.

Council Member Mack asked about the Blight Department. Mr. Nadrizny said that Blight is under the Health Department, but the Blight Technicians are out there removing graffiti, which is under Public Facilities.

The discussion moved to the Operational Expenses and Debt Service. Mr. Nkwo said that they bond for paving.

Council Member Pereira said that Council Member Mack has asked about the service indicators for the anti-blight technicians and Mr. Nkwo told him that they were listed in Roadway.

Mr. Nadrizny said that at this time, they were listed in Public Facilities Administration. Council Member Pereira asked why they were being listed in this section of the book.

Mr. Catino said that he would speak to Mr. Nkwo about this and have them moved to Roadway. Mr. Nkwo said that at the daily meeting, the technicians are given their directions by their supervisor. The Roadway Supervisor has a different schedule and tasks. Discussion followed.

Council Member Pereira asked why the MERF payments had increased so much.

Mr. Nkwo said that the State had increased the amount that they needed to pay.

Council Member Mack asked how long the Municipal Garage manager position was vacant. Mr. Nadrizny said that it was vacant for two months.

Council Member Newton asked if they looked internally, posted the position or just selected someone like they did with the Tree Warden.

Mr. Nadrizny said that they look internally first and Mr. Curry has a candidate in mind.

Council Member Pereira asked about the increases for the welder, the fleet mechanic and the automotive services.

Mr. Nkwo said that it was due to contractual obligations. Council Member Pereira said that the contracts were expiring. Mr. Nkwo said that he would send her the contracts so she could review them.

Council Member Burns asked about the diesel and gasoline prices. Both Mr. Flatto and Mr. Nkwo said that the prices could vary greatly.

Council Member Burns asked if they could use trucks that were adjusted to run on mixed fuel. Council Member McCarthy said that the diesel and gas was trending down.

Council Member Mack asked about the short-term goals that mentions Third Eye Management. Mr. Nadrizny said that they had looked at the system but it was not applicable.

Mr. Nkwo then reviewed the allocations listed on page 230.

Council Member Newton asked if they knew how much money they saved on the overtime since there was a very mild winter. Mr. Catino explained that there was expense avoidance regarding overtime for roadways.

Council Member Newton asked why the carpenters were getting overtime.

Mr. Nadrizny said that when they need to put up sheet rock or paint, they do it in the evening after the daytime staff has left.

Mr. Nkwo then explained that the City had hired some social workers and they need to provide vehicles for them. There was also a van for the Registrars of Voters.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the property insurance. Mr. Nkwo said that it was for all City properties.

Council Member McCarthy said that this was the third meeting where he has asked for a listing of all City properties but had yet to get it.

Council Member Burns said that Mr. Flatto had sent the list out, but Council Member Burns said that he did not have a chance to forward it to the Committee members.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Council Member McCarthy asked about “dignitary cars”.

Mr. Nadrizny said that his department handles ordering the vehicles and he was not aware of a “dignitary car” but would look into it.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked why the Registrars needed to have a van. Mr. Nkwo said that they often have machinery to bring to different locations.

Council Member Herron asked if they were using ARPA funding to purchase the vehicles. Mr. Nkwo said that they were not doing that.

Council Member Herron said that she felt that they should be money they were given rather than bonding.

Council President Nieves said that an SUV was being purchased for OPED. She asked what vehicles were being auctioned off. Mr. Nkwo said that the old vehicles go to the Public Auction and the amount goes back into the Capital Budget. He gave a brief overview of the process. Council President Nieves asked that the amount received from the auctions be listed.

Council Member Pereira asked about the Maintainer 1 - Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3. Increases. Council Member Pereira said that the salary increases were very large. She said that there were nine positions in the proposed 2023 budget but there were only 8 in the Mayor's budget. She wanted to know where they got the other position.

Council Member Pereira asked about the City's share of Health Insurance. Last year it was lowered, but now it is being increased.

Mr. Nkwo said that the City rolled back some insurance for some employees. Council Member Pereira said that she did not like these major variations in the health insurance tracking.

Council Member Pereira asked about the vehicle insurance and what it covered. Mr. Nkwo explained that Public Facilities is in charge of maintaining all the vehicles.

Council Member Lyons asked for a list of all the vehicles the City owns.

Mr. Nadrizny said that he would provide a list of all the vehicles expect for the BOE, the Police Department and Fire Department.

Council Member McCarthy asked why the social worker's vehicles were going to the Police Department. Mr. Nadrizny said that the social workers are listed under the Health Department.

Council Member Herron said that the Police Department officers are members of ASFME.

Council Member Burns asked about the old garbage trucks.

Mr. Nadrizny said that they have the vehicles for parts because new parts are often expensive and once they are done with them, they go to an online site to be sold. Council Member Burns asked where the funding from that goes. Mr. Nadrizny said that they use the funds to purchase new equipment.

Council Member Pereira asked why the maintenance lines were decreasing and why the Police Department maintenance line was increasing for a wall.

Mr. Nkwo said that the Police need a secure room for storage. Council Member Pereira said that this was not maintenance and it should come out of the Police budget rather than Public Facilities.

RECESS

Council Member Newton called a recess at 8:44 p.m. He reconvened the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

Mr. Nkwo then gave an overview of Roadways on page 234. He said that they do have a copy of all the contracts that the Council approved. He said that when there is an increase, it is often retroactive which means that the amount is compounded.

Council Member McCarthy suggested that Mr. Nkwo provide the Committee with copies of the contracts at the beginning so the Committee members can review them.

Council Member Pereira said that the Financial Coordinator position that had been requested was very important but this year it is not as important and was changed to a Data Coordinator.

Council Member Pereira said that there was a large increase for a Maintainer I.

Mr. Nkwo said that there were two ASFME bargaining units. Mr. Nadrizny said that it was ASFME 1303 and that when the contract was signed last year, it was three years overdue.

The discussion moved to the Appropriations Supplement.

Council Member Pereira asked if this was the decorative lamp posts were purchased. Mr. Nadrizny said that they were in the Maintenance. Council Member Pereira said that there were many lamp posts down.

Mr. Nadrizny said that they had been allocated \$140,000, but each deco light unit costs \$10,000 to replace. Council Member Pereira said that in some locations it was the only light and the broken ones are a safety hazard. Discussion followed.

Council Member Herron asked whether they could allocate some of the General Fund to repair the deco lights.

Mr. Nadrizny said that during the last two years, they have been converting the lights to LEDs. He said that it was not the heads or the bulbs that were expensive, but the poles. It is important to have Public Facilities included in discussion like the Capital Plan project for things like this since Public Facilities has to handle the maintenance, repairs and replacements of the items.

Council Member Herron said that it would be nice if some of the replacement bulbs made their way to her district.

Council Member Newton asked for a listing of the deco lights that need to be replaced.

Mr. Nadrizny said that he had already costed out what it would take to replace everyone in the City, but they didn't include the installation.

Council Member Pereira asked Mr. Nadrizny if he had the list separated out as to the ones that are missing and those that have just lights out. Mr. Nadrizny said that he had the list broken out that way.

Council President Nieves asked about page 239 and the service indicators for snow and ice removal. Mr. Catino reviewed how the calculations were done.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that she would like to be sure that her District gets their share of the lights.

Council Member Burns asked about street sweeping. With all the cars being parked on street, it is hard to get the streets clean. He suggested that they have the police help with signage and possibly ticketing and towing.

Council President Nieves asked that the Tree Warden and the new Deputy Director. Mr. Nadrizny said that he would introduce him to the Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 13, 2023**

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

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): Tyler Mack, Maria Pereira, Rosalina Roman-Christy & Michelle Lyons (6:15 p.m.); Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Ebony Jackson-Shaheed, Health Department Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Anthony Paoletto, Tammy Papa, Bridgeport Youth Services; Sumit Sharma, Health Department Deputy Director; Patty Ulatowski, Director of Vital Statistics; Victoria Montoya, Barbara, 203-209-1058, 203-880-5666

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. A quorum was present.

Co-chair Newton said that Ms. Gaines had a death in her family and a moment of silence was held in acknowledgement of this.

Council Member Burns said that the incorrect headers in the budget book had been corrected.

VITAL STATISTICS

Council Member Burns directed everyone to page 356. Mr. Nkwo said that the budget was very straight forward.

Council Member Newton asked about the number of marriage licenses that were being issued. He said that he has seen a number of couples coming in to get married at the Government Center. Ms. Ulatowski said many of the couples are coming in from New York.

Council Member Pereira said that the President had announced that the COVID pandemic was over and she questioned the estimated number of death certificates. Ms. Ulatowski said that the State had mandated that all the death certificate information be done online and the State collects the money and issues digital checks to the Vital Statistics Department.

Council Member Pereira asked what the status was on the Archive Succession Plan.

Ms. Ulatowski said that the Plan was completed and submitted to the CAO. The money for this project was included in last year's budget, but if the administration does not give her the

authorization to transfer the records, the funds will go back into the General Fund. She had suggested that they use APRA funding for this project.

Council Member Pereira said that the records in Vital Statistics were amazing, but they were being stored in a very poorly lit area.

Council Member Mack asked about the internal audit. Ms. Ulatowski said that there had been an inspection and she had been given suggestions about chairs and light outlets, which have been completed.

Council Member Herron said that they should be using the ARPA funding for this project and was not happy that this was not being done.

Council Member McCarthy asked if there was an update from the Health Director. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that she had not heard about this project from the administration but she will be following up on it. Discussion followed.

Council Member Burns asked if the forms are available in other languages. Ms. Ulatowski said that the forms are available in both English and Spanish and are online.

Council Member Pereira said that in the adopted 2021-2022 budget there were very modest increases. She asked where the funding was. Ms. Ulatowski said that the funding listed in the Archive section on page 94. The discussion then moved to why the funds had not been dispersed.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Council Member McBride-Lee said she was amazed to find that the records about her father's company were in Vital Records.

Council Member Lyons asked whether the out of town Justice of Peace ministers' numbers were holding steady. Ms. Ulatowski said that it is still at the same level.

Council Member Lyons asked about the school records that had been lost. Ms. Ulatowski said that those records would be at the BOE.

Council Member Lyons asked about the retired positions. Ms. Ulatowski said that her senior records clerk was retiring and the job had been posted.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details about the Public Health Department.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they were working on letting people work for Public Health, but the new graduates are looking at hospitals or the Visiting Nurse programs. They are still trying to

hire a nurse practitioner, but the salary scale is not competitive. Discussion followed about the details of the Nurse Practitioner position.

Council Member McCarthy asked when they would be out of the Main Street building. Mr. Flatto said that they have been working on a relocation and that Mr. Gill was almost ready to present a project to the Council. Discussion followed about potential sites and the salary steps.

Council Member Mack asked how long the two positions had been vacant. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that both positions had been vacant for a few months.

Council Member Newton pointed out that the Council had just reviewed the position of a Tree Warden for \$108,000 and these positions had top steps around \$87,000. Discussion followed.

The discussion moved to page 362. Council Member Pereira asked why they were only forecasting a lower amount of revenue in Billed Services.

Mr. Flatto explained that these were reimbursements for vaccines and the City received \$40.00 per vaccine, but with COVID pandemic being over, that revenue will no longer be available. However, Mr. Flatto said that there were funding for opioid deaths and the City has been working with Koskoff's office regarding the reimbursements. He suggested adding a line for the opioid reimbursements.

Mr. Flatto said that there was a Federal grant that was issued to the State to address the problems in the City. The State will be allocating the funding through grants.

Council Member Pereira asked a detailed question about the Appropriation Summary about health insurance. Council Member Burns explained that the administration has no control over the amount of health insurance that the City has to pay, but it is determined by whether someone gets married or leave the position.

Council Member Mack asked about the Health Care Administrator position. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that previously, the job had been filled by a nurse but the position entailed a lot of administrative duties. The individual who was doing the job chose to go back to the clinical environment and another employee moved into the administrative position. It has been working out well.

Council Member McCarthy asked what happens when someone goes to the Department for immunizations. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that there was a nurse on site but was funded by CDBG funding for COVID. She gave a quick overview of how the funding was allocated.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that there were a number of states that were seeing an increase in the number of rodents, specifically rats. The owls and foxes that

eat the rodents are affected by pesticides. The Health Department is being more aggressive in this area.

Council Member Newton asked about the number of hair salons and barbershops that are in Bridgeport. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they have the number of shops that are licensed, but there are unlicensed ones.

Council Member Newton asked if they keep tabs on the unlicensed ones. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said this was the first year that the City has a barber shop ordinance. Letters are being sent to the businesses and they have a certain time to file for a license. She said that there were food trucks and pop-up stands that are harder to track.

Council Member Pereira asked if the listing of the licenses was current and controlled by State statute. Mr. Nkwo said it was controlled by City Ordinance. She asked when the last time the list was updated. Mr. Nkwo said that it was 2016 which is over five years ago.

Council Member Pereira then asked about the license renewals and who was verifying the licenses were current. She asked the Health Director to review the licenses in order to raise the license fees.

Council Member Lyons asked how long the food licenses last and whether they are limited to an area. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that the Police Department controls where they can park. The Department does have the food trucks come to 999 Broad for an inspection by a sanitarian.

Council Member Lyons asked if the license was limited to just the operator. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that there was a food handlers certification for those preparing the food, and the business license is separate.

Council Member Burns asked whether there was a rating system for restaurants. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that sometimes a rating system doesn't matter. A restaurant could be perfect, but something is wrong with the temperature because a refrigerator failed or there was another temperature variation.

Council Member Pereira asked about the Permit Inspection List and asked whether places like a hookah lounge and a cigar lounge or a marijuana dispensary would be inspected. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that if they are smoking in a room, they could be inspected.

Council Member Pereira spoke about an issue from last year where there was an incorrectly stated job title, which since has been corrected. She asked about another similar position. Discussion followed.

HOUSING CODE

Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview of the budget.

Council Member McCarthy asked for clarification on rooming houses and hotels. He asked for clarification on the definition of the hotel versus rooming house. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that there were some rooming houses in Bridgeport and the property owners have indicated they may want to convert to a hotel.

Council Member Mack asked for clarification on the Medium Term Goals. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that the department had a limited number of staff that was too small for the size of the City. However, there is a new job classification that will allow the staff more flexibility.

Council Member Pereira asked about the Personnel Summary. She said that there were two jobs that has the same job description. He said that it had to do with the job codes and seniority.

Council Member Pereira said that the Sunnyside Inn had terrible conditions. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that the Department was complaint driven and if there was a complaint, they would go and do an inspection.

Council Member Lyons asked if the Housing Code Inspectors have the authority to inspect a private residence that is being used as a rooming house. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that all housing spaces are zoned for a certain number of individuals. It is not illegal to increase a three bedroom apartment to a 6 bedroom residence. She said if this happens and they get a complaint, they go out for an inspection. The Building Department and the Zoning Department would also be involved.

Council Member Mack asked about the Anti-blight figures listed in Housing Code. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that “in progress” means that the case is not closed because work is going on or fine payments have not been made.

Mr. Nkwo then reviewed the costs for personnel with the Committee.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that the Lead Inspection staff member was not present due to family matters.

The discussion moved to Human Services, which Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said was not being utilized. She requested renaming the Department as Research and Development.

Council Member Newton asked the Council Members to support this Department, particularly since COVID.

Council Member McCarthy said that there were numerous clinics and hospitals so he was not sure that they needed another department.

Council Member Pereira asked where the Renter's Rebate Program was being administered. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that it was being handled through Social Services.

DISABILITIES

Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview on page 390 and said that the department was handled by three part timers.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed explained that the staff member Council Member Pereira had asked about. was working in Social Services but under her supervision.

DEPARTMENT OF AGING

Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview of the budget for Department of Aging. Council Member Newton asked why the Department of Aging was going to be moved to Public Facilities. This is a political power grab.

Mr. Nkwo said that the Department of Aging had been under Public Facilities and then moved to the Health Department. Council Member Newton said that the Department should not be in Public Facilities and asked the Council Members not to move the Department to Public Facilities.

Council President Nieves said that she did not see what gerontology had to do with Public Facilities, but there was a connection with Recreations. She said that they need to stop shifting departments around. These area human people that they are dealing with.

Council Member Pereira said that she agreed with Council President Nieves. There are over 1,000 housing units dedicated to seniors and there is only a part time person running the Department to Aging. This is a disservice to the senior residents.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that she was in agreement with Council Member Newton, Council President Nieves and Council Member Pereira. She asked the Council Members to stand for the Department of Aging to remain with the Health Department.

Council Member Herron said that it was so gracious for the administration to give them \$10,000 to the Department that they never had. She said that it was wrong that the Director had to beg for funding.

The Veteran's Affair budget on page 378 was the next item discussed. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the positions.

Council Member McCarthy asked if the Veterans Affairs Coordinator would be a Special Project Coordinator because this is a new position. He asked if it had been posted. Mr. Nkwo said that it had not been posted.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that the new Special Project Coordinator would be working on more events for the veterans rather than just one or two a year.

Council Member Mack asked for clarification on the job duties, which Mr. Nkwo explained to him.

Council Member Mack asked about the estimates for the last year decreased. He wished to know if the new position would result in an increase. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that it would.

Council President Nieves asked where the new position would be located. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that it would be in the Eisenhower Senior Center.

Council Member Newton asked if there was any coordination with the Veterans program at Homes for the Brave, on Park avenue. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that she was fairly certain they do coordinate with the other groups. She said that the group focuses on homelessness and housing. The Department of Veterans Affairs focuses on access to care. The second focus is the food pantry. A barbershop will be donating haircuts.

Council Member Herron said that before the Health Department building deteriorated, the State had offices in that building. The clients at Homes for the Brave receive services to reintegrate into regular life.

Council Member Pereira said that the veterans often face the same challenges as those with disabilities. She asked why the two departments could not be combined together. A discussion followed about the relocation of the Veteran's Affairs and Department of Disabilities into the Eisenhower Center.

The Lighthouse Program on page 404 was the next program reviewed. Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview of the budget.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that Council Member McCarthy had asked earlier about the difference between hotels and rooming houses. The biggest difference was that rooming houses had a lower number of rooms available.

Ms. Papa said that there were no major changes to the program.

Council Member Pereira said that she had mentioned every single year about the revenue not being shown. She said that they had taken in hundreds of thousands of dollars and it is not reported here. Ms. Papa said that the revenue is reported, reviewed and accounted to the State on a quarterly basis. It does not go into the General Fund because it is specific to the Lighthouse. It does not impact the General Fund. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Pereira said that it was outrageous that there was between \$500,000 and \$600,000 of revenue that was not recorded and she would continue to say this every year. There is no reason why the public cannot access every dollar that is expended because this is Transparency 101.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked where the funding goes. Mr. Nkwo said that the money is used to pay the fees. All the accounts are for revenue.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked if they were still giving the children time to do their homework. Ms. Papa said that they should have 45 minutes for homework and if that was not happening, she wanted to know about it.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked if the program received any money from the General Fund. Ms. Papa said that she does not have any revenue from the General Fund.

Council Member Pereira said that she had a problem with the fees, but wanted the accounting to be available. Mr. Flatto said that the State allows the schools to operate outside of the municipal operating budget and this is in the same category.

Council Member Newton said that the program was now internationally known. The program was brought to the National Council. He reminded everyone that the Lighthouse Program has been audited in the past, and there has not been a problem. The State is aware of the funding. It is time to give her credit for what she does for the students. He commended her for her excellent work.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that no one was accusing Ms. Papa of stealing and that the Council Members have a right to ask for an explanation. Ms. Papa answered the question she asked.

Council Member Newton said that he was not questioning the Council's right to ask questions. What he was questioning was the fact that every time Ms. Papa comes to Budget, it is the same question asked over and over again. She gives the same answer every year. Ms. Papa has the Finance Director, OPM and the State watching over her.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that there had been the national recognition for the Lighthouse Program and the Health Department also had been recognized for Research on COVID Hesitancy in Bridgeport. They recently submitted an abstract on COVID Hesitancy And Social Norms to a national organization.

Council Member Burns reminded everyone that they would be looking at the Social Service Department on Saturday morning.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 15, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Scott Burns, Co-chair; Council President A. Nieves, Tyler Mack, Matthew McCarthy, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (10:11 a.m.); Jeannette Herron (10:19 a.m.), Mary McBride-Lee, (10:25 a.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member(s): A. Boyd, J. Cruz, F. Hodges, M. Lyons, M. Pereira, R. Smith & M. Valle; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Ebony Jackson-Shaheed, Health Department Director; Sumit Sharma, Deputy Health Director; Scott Appleby, EOC Director; Kathleen Brickett, OPM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Newton called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. A quorum was present.

HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Nkwo reviewed the information on page 350.

Council Member Valle joined the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

Council Member McCarthy asked what the effect of having clinicians transfer out. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that she felt they could maintain the level of service.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia and Council Member R. Smith joined the meeting at 10:11 a.m.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that many times it was just a matter of changing titles.

Council Member Burns asked if the administration was meeting the needs of the Health Department. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they were.

Council Member Herron joined the meeting at 10:19 a.m.

Council Member Pereira asked for clarification on the transfer of the Youth Service Director to the Health Department, which Mr. Nkwo reviewed with her.

The Committee members then moved to page 354. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed was asked about the membership fees and she named a number of professional organizations that the Department belongs to.

Council Member Pereira asked for clarifications on the goals. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they had uploaded all the documents regarding accreditation. She said that there were only two or three Health Departments in the State that were accredited. If the Department applies for a grant, it will give them a plus. The State is looking forward to having all the Health Departments accredited. Council Member Newton said that he thought they were very close to obtaining accreditation when Ms. Bonds was Health Director.

Council President Nieves reminded everyone that the process had stopped cold because of COVID.

Council Member Valle asked about the Research Team. She had concerns about the allocation of \$10,000 covering all the seniors in the City. She asked that the research include the number of seniors in each District.

Council Member Valle said that she was also concerned about the CDBG funding and the fact that she was disqualified from being part of it because of a conflict of interest.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Mr. Nkwo explained that the \$10,000 was an extra amount above and beyond what was budgeted for the seniors. However, this money is to be allocated by the Health Director. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that there were issues with the seniors during COVID and they were focused on vaccine hesitance in the residents. They are also building a data base in. Terms of STDs . They will be designing a study focused on the seniors but need time to gather the data. Discussion followed.

Council Member Hodges joined the meeting at 10:33 a.m.

Council President Nieves asked about the Research and Development. She wished to know what type of plan there. She also wished to know if it was for dealing with the opioid crisis. She said that the Budget Committee needs to see the plan because they need to justify keeping the positions.

Council President Nieves said regarding the reorganization, she pointed out that they need to have a plan for addressing the number of seniors in the City so they won't be in the same position they were when COVID hit.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that there is a comprehensive plan for dealing with situations like COVID and these plans are transparent. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that she was on the State Committee for Opioids and they are working on a financial plan. Council President Nieves said that it was important that the plan is forward facing and the Committee needs to be aware of the work that the Health Department is doing.

Council President Nieves said that she was driving down Main Street at 12:30 a.m. and there were four barber shops open. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they were working with the Fire

Marshals and the Police Department regarding this issue. Once they have an address, they can send someone by.

Council Member McCarthy asked how much they were spending out of the General Fund and how much was coming out of grant funding. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that the position was a combined position with Emergency Preparedness. She listed a number of contract positions that had been combined to allow the Department to utilize their skills. The grant funding won't last forever and by combining the jobs with permanent City position, it will help if there is another pandemic.

The discussion then moved to the amount of worker's comp listed on page 354. Council Member McCarthy said that he thought the amount was too low. Mr. Nkwo explained why the amount was allocated.

Council Member Burns said that he supports a department that has been professionalized and was pleased to see this.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 10:54 a.m.

Council Member McCarthy asked what the amount of grant funding the EOC received. Mr. Sharma said that it was about \$700,000.

Council Member Pereira said that there was a lot of overlap between the Health Department regarding Blight, so she calls Public Facilities when there is an issue. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that the Anti-Blight department staff was working on having all six staff members cross-trained, so if an inspector goes to a location because of blight and sees issues with lead, the inspector can file both the blight report and the lead prevention report rather than having to send out someone from Lead Prevention. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they had worked on changing the salary steps so that those who don't have sanitarian degrees cannot surpass those who do.

She added that once the blight extends from the private property into the street, the issues goes to Public Facilities.

Council Member Boyd joined the meeting at 11:02 a.m.

Council Member Pereira asked about C-clip-fix program (3-1-1) and asked for clarification about the service. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that the service is monitored by the Blight Specialist and then the staff refers it to the appropriate department. Council Member Pereira was concerned that there was only one person handling it and said that it shouldn't be just one person. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that other staff members also check the service.

Council Member Herron encouraged everyone to register on C-clip-fix and said that she receives regular updates. She has also trained her constituents to use it.

Council Member Hodges asked about the short-term goals on page 35 and the funding allocations. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that the opioid funding is divided up between the Health Department and the Police for community health.

Council Member Hodges said that he was not seeing anything going to the school system and wanted some of the grant funding to go to the schools. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they were using the funding for education programs but the majority of the funding would be going out to outside organizations. Council Member Hodges said that he was in the community and he was not seeing the program making a difference. Discussion followed.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked how they were getting the program information out to the Community. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they were using social media and trying to expand beyond the website. She said that they had posted information to HIA and received feedback, so they know people are seeing it. She added that there were some high expectations for the staff and noted that if all six inspectors just focused on inspecting units, they would each have to do 76 units a day. Discussion followed about the fact that there was only one school in Connecticut that offered environmental studies.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that the Health Department was doing a great job.

Council Member Newton said that they should be cross training the inspectors in the other Departments.

Council Member Smith asked about permits. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that it depends on the zoning and licensing to determine the hours of operation. If a restaurant has a live entertainment license, the hours of operation will be later. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that Bridgeport has the largest number of licensed sanitarians.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it sounds like there should be more inspectors rather than more administration. She then asked about the staff that would be qualified to testify in court.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had asked the Mayor to include a news sheet with the tax bills.

SOCIAL SERVICE

Mr. Nkwo then gave an overview of the Social Service on page 410. Council Member Burns distributed an Organizational chart for Health and Social Services. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that three of the clinician positions had been filled and the fourth applicant had some HR issues.

Council Member Herron said that the ARPA funding is helping the Health Department, but her concern was whether the Department would not be available after the funding is gone. She also asked why the Clinical Director was not present. Mr. Nkwo said that the positions were not funded through ARPA.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO ENTER THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AS EXHIBIT # 04-15-2023-A.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Burns said that the intent for the positions to interact with the Police Department. He asked if they were moving in this direction. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that she had a copy of the report from the outside group. Council Member Herron asked for copies to be sent to the Committee members.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they were now at Phase 2 of the program and the social workers were riding along with the officers. The Police and the contact person have been working very well together. She said that there is one staff member that does this exclusively and the remaining three will rotate for one shift a week. At this time, the recommendation is that they only work during the day shift.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed then spoke about the various specialties and the caseloads. She explained that there were some cases that required all of the social workers to handle the case as a team. There are also families involved. She spoke about the number of cases handled by the team.

When mental health or opioid calls come in, the social worker goes out with the Police officer. She also gave an overview of the process for handling a case from the initial call. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they have a book that outlines all the responsibilities for the social workers. She will send a copy of the manual to the Committee.

Council Member Burns asked about the qualifications of the social workers. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that all the social workers are fully licensed. The Director of Clinical Services does not have a social worker's licenses that staff member does not need it. However, the Director of Clinical Services is qualified to write any report necessary.

Council Member McCarthy said that the Council had requested social workers for the Police Department, but the administration put the social workers in the Health Department. He said that he agreed with Council Member Herron about the fact that they should not be listed as Special Project Coordinator. Council Member Newton agreed that the title should be changed because they need to protect the fact that the position is for a social worker. Mr. Nkwo explained that originally, there was no specific titles, but now there are.

Council Member McCarthy said that when the positions are moved from one department to another, he feels they are just moving people around to add positions.

Council Member Mack asked about the short-term goals, where the department was not awarded a grant. Mr. Sharma said that the grant was for the Relocation Coordinator but was not awarded to the City.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the Social Workers who were qualified to deal with mental illness. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed indicated that they were. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that the State requires the data collection if they are in a clinical practice. The information that the social workers gather is for the department to refer the client to the correct resources.

Council Member Newton reminded everyone that the funding that the Council had transferred to the Social Work Department. The police have to keep the law. However, there maybe someone who is high and the social worker can direct them to resources.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked why the word "pilot" was used. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that this was the first time that the program was being done and that it was the languages used in the document.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the social workers wear vests when they are with the officers. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they were. The ID's are worn outside of the vest and the cost of the IDs is paid for from the Police Department budget.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it was not always the police against the people, but also the people against the Police. She said that she hoped that they could get more employees in the Health Department.

Council Member Pereira said that she was disappointed to hear that there were only one Social Worker who travels with the police. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that right now the recommendation is to limit it to the day shift and they are not working on the weekend at this time. As the program expands, that will change.

Council Member Pereira asked how many of the cases that they were handling were a result of referrals from the Police Department. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that it was just under 40 cases. As the Police Department becomes more adjusted to the social workers being with them, it will increase. Council Member Pereira said that she wanted to know how many cases resulted from the case worker being on site. Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that she would send that information.

Council Member Newton and Council Member Hodges left the meeting left the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Council Member Hodges said that the specialist may not be able to deal with someone who is desperate at a gas station. He added that there were no recovery courses offered.

Council Member Lyons said that a family member is a social worker and the social workers don't get their fair due. She asked if the group was familiar with Logan and Sola, which is for training for police officers and social workers. Discussion followed.

Council Member Valle said that she would prefer that the Social Workers stay with the Health Department, but she had concerns about issues that might happen at night or on weekends. She

went on the speak about the fact that there are residents who can't speak English well and there was no assistance for them.

Council Member Valle said she had called for guidance on issues but had not received a call back about various things such as where the Renter's Rebate program was located.

Ms. Jackson-Shaheed said that they have social workers who are bilingual in Spanish and in Haitian Creole. She explained that the Renter's Rebate was handled at 999 Broad Street but other services are located elsewhere.

Council Member Herron said that she was concerned that there are social workers located at the Police Department.

Council Member Valle left the meeting at 12:46 p.m.

Council Member Herron said that she only felt that only part of the Social work should be at the Police Department. She had three major fires in her District, one of which displaced over 30 people. Not having a Relocation Coordinator is critical because the Red Cross only pays for two days.

Council President Nieves reminded everyone that it took almost a full year to get the program up and running.

Council President Nieves asked how they should be getting social workers out into the community. She added that they will be able to have their own vehicles and answer calls.

Mr. Appleby said that they classify the calls into violent, non-violent, psychiatric and overdoses. All medical calls go to AMR. If it was a psychiatric call, they would refer it to a social worker, but if one is not available, they would send an officer. He recounted a State incident where two social workers went out on a call and the resident violent attacked one of the social workers and seriously injured that person. Mr. Appleby reminded that it was important to realize that responses in urban settings are different from suburban calls.

Council President Nieves said that there had been a problem with the Renter's Rebate because a resident was referred from the Eisenhower Center to 999 Broad Street to make an appointment. She said that they have coordinators at each of the Senior Centers.

Council Member McCarthy said that he did not feel that they should be discussing issues such as phone calls that are not returned or other issues, during budget. Council President Nieves said that they were getting rid of Human Services position.

Council Member Lyons left the meeting at 1:13 p.m.

Council Member McCarthy said that he did not feel it was right that some people who receiving emails from the EOC while others were not. Mr. Appleby said that emails were only to go to NCIC approved individuals.

Council Member Pereira asked about the Data Analysis position that was not filled and wished to know if it was filled. Mr. Nkwo said that the position was still vacant.

Council Member Pereira asked about the new position in Disability on page 390. Mr. Nkwo said that there is never a dollar-for-dollar match because of fringe benefits and other issues.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia reminded everyone that with any reports or statements they should not have names or other identifying information.

EOC

Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview of the budget on page 206.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ENTER THE OPM SPREADSHEET AS EXHIBIT 04-15-2023-B.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Nkwo said that if someone retires, the new employee will come in at a different pay level. Sometimes it is more, other times it is a lower salary step.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the separate budget for a separate building. Mr. Nkwo said that when it was set up, the Council wanted to know how much the EOC costs. Mr. Appleby said that the Fusion Center was listed as a specific line item.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the increase of \$200,000 for security personnel. Mr. Appleby said that they were losing security personnel to schools and other locations because the salaries were not competitive. They increased the budget this year and the increase is the new adjusted amount.

Council Member Mack asked about the turnover. Mr. Appleby said that there was a national issue with turnover in the Dispatch. He said that they were trying to open up advancement paths for the dispatchers so they don't burn out.

Council Member Pereira asked if those who were not able to pass muster as a police officer applied to the EOC. Mr. Appleby said that if they did not pass the psychological, they wouldn't be able to work in EOC, but there were other candidates that might be qualified.

Mr. Nkwo directed everyone to page 210. He explained that there was a modified budget number on the sheet and gave the details.

Council Member McCarthy left the meeting at 1:37 p.m.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about cameras in schools and wished to know who had access to the video. Mr. Appleby said that the security guards, the principals and a very limited number of others had access. He said that if someone went into the system, it would be flagged and an inquiry would be made.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT /EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CITY COUNCIL REVIEW FY2024" AS EXHIBIT 04-15-023-C.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Appleby said that that they do about 250 community outreach programs a year, but he thought they could do more.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said she was involved with national organizations for Public Safety and for the record, she wished to congratulate Mr. Appleby on the fact that he was nationally recognized.

Mr. Appleby spoke about how the State will reimburse the EOC up to 50% if they meet certain qualifications.

Council Member Burns asked about the security status in different buildings. Discussion followed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked where the Harbor Master was listed. Mr. Nkwo said it was listed under Public Facilities. Mr. Nkwo said that they had a Harbor Master, but Mr. Nkwo did not know if he was certified. Mr. Appleby said that the Coast Guard reviews the candidate. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked for more details as to whether he was qualified and what the hours and job duties were.

Council Member Burns asked if the hurricane evacuation signed were up to date. Mr. Appleby said that they were not. Since they were installed there before Mr. Appleby's time, he would like to verify their placement and update the information.

Council President Nieves spoken about the social services calls. They had 705 calls this year ranging from late food orders to serious incidents. She thanked Mr. Appleby for the Department. Discussion followed about the CERT team members.

Council Member Pereira left the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

Council President Nieves said if they receive money for 9-1-1 calls. Mr. Nkwo said that Bridgeport was too big to be part of a regional 9-1-1 system. Mr. Appleby said that the State was encouraging the smaller towns to regionalize. There is a lot of funding that comes along with

that. Council President Nieves said that Hartford got \$700,000 for their EOC. Mr. Appleby said that they were providing all three services, whereas Bridgeport does not handle medical. He gave the funding amounts that the City receives from Federal agencies.

Council President Nieves said that they have to figure out how they are going to survive the end of the grant funding in 2025.

Council Member Herron said that at the national conference, it was evident that the other municipalities are already doing what Bridgeport wants to do.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the City's fight with MERF should have no bearing on the revenue and they need to stop assuming revenues. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if there were spreadsheets that the Council should have, Mr. Nkwo should give it to the Council Member at the next meeting.

Mr. Appleby then said that the psychiatric calls start coming in at 10 a.m. through the early evening. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia reminded everyone how many times AMR responders are attacked.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 2:27 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 18, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Matthew McCarthy, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia

OTHERS: Council President A Nieves, Council Member J. Cruz, Kathleen Brickett, OPM; Anthony Paoletto

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. A quorum was present.

FY2023/24 CAPITAL BUDGET HEARING

Council Member Burns opened the public hearing on the FY2023/24 Capital Budget.

He asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak. No one came forward. He repeated the request two more times. Hearing no response, Council Member Burns closed the public hearing at 6:08 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at. 6:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 18, 2023**

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

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves; Council Member(s): J. Cruz, M. Lyons & R. Smith; Katheen Brickett, OPM; Anthony Paoletto, Curtis Denton, ITS Director; N. Nkwo, OPM Director

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. A quorum was present

ITS

Mr. Denton came forward and greeted the Committee. Council Member Burns directed everyone to page 138.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED “ ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES (ITS) CURTIS J. DENTON, APRIL 18TH, 2023” AS EXHIBIT 04-18-2023-A.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Denton said that they had filled four positions and that they also have 3 interns in order to give those interns real world experience. Mr. Denton then said that he was not asking for a budget increase.

Mr. Denton then reviewed the security details that the Department had instituted. He also spoke about the upgrades that He wished to make to the system.

Council Member Herron asked how Mr. Denton would protect the City against a cyberattack. Mr. Denton said that at the current moment, they were ahead of many of the small cities and town and outlined some of the preventative measures that have been taken.

Mr. Denton said that he doesn't ask for funding that he doesn't need. He said that the priority is on licensing and mentioned how much the licensing fees increased.

Council Member Newton asked about the staff review process. Mr. Denton spoke about the fact that he wants the staff to talk about their successes and their challenges.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that when she got her phone, she didn't have a clue how to use it, but someone took the time to help her. She asked what happens to the old phones. Mr. Denton went to turn them in but AT&T did not want them back. He keeps those to replace the phones that get lost.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked if the two vacant positions have been posted. Mr. Denton said that he advertises because he needs staff with specific skills. He said that one of the potential hires received another job offer with a substantial salary range the day before he was supposed to start, so Mr. Denton had to start all over again.

Council Member McBride-Lee thanked Mr. Denton for using high school students as interns.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the union agreement. Mr. Denton said that he could not speak to the Union agreements but Labor Relations could answer any questions about the hiring process.

Council Member Herron thanked Mr. Denton for keeping the budget down. Council Member Herron said that she was happy to hear that Mr. Denton was performing the staff evaluations. She said that the Council needs to push staff evaluations.

Council Member Cruz said that they need to upgrade the equipment in the Council Chambers. Mr. Denton said that an RFQ was released, but the cost came back on the high side. He outlined some of the details involved.

Council Member Newton said that the Council Chambers equipment should be top flight. Mr. Nkwo said that the estimate was about \$275,000 for the upgrade.

Council Member Herron agreed with Council Member Newton about upgrading the Council Chambers and asked why they were not using the ARPA funding to upgrade the sound system because the Council Members look foolish when the microphone fails.

Council President Nieves said that under the CARES Act they could use funding to give the community access to the meetings.

Council Member Lyons asked why the Planning Department was in charge of the upgrade for the Chambers. Mr. Denton said that it was important to define who the stakeholders were.

The discussion then moved to the Park City Portal and how it will provide the residents with information and allow residents to apply for permits and other items. Mr. Denton said that it was up and running, but it is too early to know the overall effect. Discussion followed.

Council President Nieves asked a question about the revenues and the leads, which Mr. Denton reviewed with her.

Council Member Smith left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Council Member Newton asked how this would help the contractors. Mr. Denton said that once a contractor signs in, the general information will be downloaded and then the specific requirements for the type of work would be displayed, along with the suggested best practices. Then the inspections can be scheduled and fees can be paid. The status update will be displayed so everyone knows where they are in the process.

Council Member Newton asked if the staff would have lap tops in the field, so that they can upload the information while on the site. Mr. Denton said that Intergov does have an inspection module and the Health Department will be using that. There have been conversations about this and it would be a significant time saving.

Council Member Burns asked about payment options. Mr. Denton said that the credit card transactions were small in number, but they will be available.

Mr. Nkwo reminded everyone that the City ITS was the hub of the BOE system. The BOE uses MUNIS for accounting and the payroll and their internet services.

Mr. Nkwo said that they have been notified that the MERF rate was increasing by 20% along with the health care and insurance.

Council Member McCarthy asked why there was a \$60,000 increase this year. Mr. Nkwo said that employees get married or have children or change their status. There are too many variables when it comes to health insurance. The Human Resource Department handles all the status changes, but the staff only sees the employee's name and their employee number, but they don't necessarily know what department that employees works in. Salaries are changed by payroll and the changes are just reflected in MUNIS. Discussion followed.

Council Member Lyons and Council Member Cruz left the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Council Member Herron said that questions about insurance dependents had been discussed at the last two meetings. She reminded everyone that HR handles this, not ITS.

The discuss moved to the goals listed on page 149. Mr. Denton outline how Intergov and the dashboard system worked.

Mr. Nkwo said that the \$187,000 included the \$100,000 for the City website page, which was a one-time expense. Council Member McCarthy asked for a listing of one time charges. Mr. Nkwo said that he had presented the Committee with a list of one time charges.

Council Member Burns asked about the charges for Intergov. Mr. Denton said that the amount was to cover the credit card charges. It is regulated by the State. Mr. Denton said that they have tried to keep the fees for the public as low as possible.

Council Member Burns said that the Council Members were very pleased that he was doing such a good job.

Mr. Nkwo said that because of the high ceilings in the chambers, they need to hire a sound engineer to design the system. Mr. Denton said that he can't be one of the stakeholders on chamber redesign, which is why the Planning Director was heading up the initiative.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like to have the security system upgraded so that the overall building would be more secure. Discussion followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER A SPREADSHEET TITLED “CITY OF BRIDGEPORT OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF BONDED. CAPITAL PROJECTS BALANCES” AS EXHIBIT 04-18-2023-B.
** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Nkwo said that there were times when a project cost is over a period of time and this also means that the cost of the project increases because of material costs. All of the bonding has been included. Discussion followed.

Council Member Burns thanked Mr. Nkwo for providing the information. Last year, there was a similar report for Public Facilities. There had been a discussion about reprogramming money, but it did not happen. He said that he would like to have a Capital Report.

Council President Nieves asked that the year that the funds were bonded be included in the updated report. Council Member Newton said that last year, Mr. Nkwo has provided the Committee with a break out that they could understand.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 20, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Matthew McCarthy, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (6:03 p.m.), Tyler Mack (6:08 p.m.), Mary McBride-Lee (7:16 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves; Council Member(s): R. Smith & M. Lyons; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Kathleen Brickett, OPM; Eric Amado, Personnel Director; Deborah Brelsford, Civil Service; Atty. E. Skyers, Acting Labor Relations Director; Monquencelo Miles, Benefits Manager; Sandra Ferreira, Human Resources Manager; Atty. Costello; Anthony Paoletto

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Newton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

CIVIL SERVICE

Mr. Nkwo directed everyone to page 98 and gave a brief overview. He noted that the \$16,000 variance was to have been corrected but had not been adjusted.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

Council Member McCarthy asked why it was not correct. Mr. Nkwo said that they expected to pay a larger salary but did not need to do so.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED “ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024” AS EXHIBIT 04-20-2023-A.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Amado then narrated the overview for his department. He said that there had been an increase in the number of qualification exams due to retirements and other vacancies. He said that the department was constantly being questioned about their Ethics due to the past events.

Council Member Mack joined the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

Mr. Amado then reviewed the various exams that had been given during the year. He said that when he took over, the Council was concerned about provisional employees and he has reduced the number by 82%.

There had been questions about lateral transfers and Mr. Amado said that they were working on this. The Department is trying to modernized the Civil Service Rules.

Council Member Newton asked about moving some of the police administration positions to civilians. Mr. Amado said that Atty. Skyers would be the best person to answer this question.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the details of the lateral transfers. Mr. Amado said that there was a draft job description created and the Labor Relations and the unions are discussing it.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the testing area. Mr. Amado said that they had been using the schools but could not hold the exams when school was in session. He said that the lower level of City Hall was available.

Council Member Herron spoke about having a five-year residence period for police officers. Mr. Amado said that it was a union contract issue. They are trying to incentivize the officers to remain in the City longer than the two-year period. They are collaborating as much as possible with the Police Department to address the issue. Discussion followed.

Council Member Burns said that there were 11 exams given last year. He asked how they set up exams. Mr. Amado said that there was an issue about Charter requirements and then safety issues are considered. Some think Civil Service only tests for Fire and Police, but they test for other things. Public Safety is a priority.

Council Member Burns said that a testing center was a good idea. Mr. Amado said that most employers are dealing with high turnover. The younger employees want to feel good about their jobs and are not concerned about pensions and vacation times.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said she agrees with Council Member Herron about the five-year obligation of employment or having to pay the City for their training. She said that they should have a firm amount for how much it costs for training a new employee. It will be important to have Policy and Procedure manuals.

Mr. Amado said that there is a need to modernize the Rules and Regulations because they have not been updated for a number of years.

The discussion moved to updating the job titles, which Mr. Amado said that has been reviewed.

Council Member Newton said that Bridgeport was the only City that did not have yearly reviews.

Council Member Herron said that there were certain unions that do hold yearly reviews. She said that they have job descriptions for all the positions.

Mr. Amado said that they are encouraging continued engagement from the employer and the employees. There are evaluations done before a promotion. New employees are reviewed during the probationary period. Discussion followed.

Council Member Herron asked if they had used interns to help with the workload. Mr. Amado said they had had them in the past and needed to jump start the program again.

Mr. Flatto said that there were some exams that were frustrating because they might have a candidate that got through the process but didn't pass the exam. He also said that his department has lost people because other towns offer higher salaries.

Council Member Newton commended Mr. Amado for the great job that he has done since he came to the department. The changes have been very obvious.

Council Member Burns asked for clarification on a line item about Other Services. Ms. Brelsford said that last year they had asked for software for exam tracking.

Mr. Nkwo said that he will be using the in-house carpenters and painters to renovate the City Hall lower level for the testing area. Mr. Amado said that he has to ensure that the areas are soundproof so that a candidate cannot hear what another candidate says during the interview.

PERSONNEL

Mr. Nkwo directed everyone to Page 104 and gave a brief over. Ms. Ferreira is in charge of this department,

There are two part-time clerks in Personnel. Atty. Skyer, the Acting Labor Relations Director, said that they use the floating Position to fill staff gaps and the individual can get experience in the different departments. Some of the staff who have held this position moved into permanent department positions from this position.

Council Member Herron asked about Paid Family Leave. Atty. Skyers said that they have been discussing this and felt Council Member Herron was correct. He said that it was his understanding that it was a very large endeavor and it was a contract issue.

Council Member Herron said that she was not happy about this and it should have been discussed two years ago.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about Seasonal positions, which are limited by a number of days. Mr. Nkwo said that he was the one that approves temporary or floating positions and if the word "seasonal" is used, he does not approve it. Discussion followed.

Ms. Ferreira said that they have interns working in the City.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the Paid Leave. Ms. Ferreira said that municipalities are exempt from that requirement.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the fringe benefits on page 104. Mr. Nkwo said that the breakdown on page 111 and the majority of the staff are retirees.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

Council Member Burns asked about feedback. Ms. Ferreira said that it was a something she talks with Labor Relations about performance goals and employee feedback. Discussion followed about having it move to an IT platform. Council Member Herron said that BOE already uses an online evaluation process. Mr. Nkwo said that MUNIS could accommodate a performance review.

Council Member Burns asked how much it costs to process the average employee. Mr. Amado said that the tox screen costs about \$147.00. The real costs is the man hours in guiding the candidate through the process.

LABOR RELATIONS

Mr. Nkwo said the budget was on page 114. He gave a brief overview. He explained that there was a City Attorney who was acting as the Labor Relations Director.

Council Member McCarthy asked if they were looking for a permanent director or are they happy with the Acting Director. He also asked if they were not attracting candidates because of the salary.

Atty. Skyers, the Acting Labor Relations Director, said that he had been with the City for 8 months and had been recruited for the position. He will make a determination in a few months as to whether he wants to step into the position permanently or return to the City Attorney's Office.

Atty. Skyers said that one of the Labor Relations Officers positions had been filled and the second one had a pending offer.

Council Member McCarthy asked about Other Services. Mr. Nkwo said that the outside attorney for binding arbitration. Mr. Nkwo explained that the City Attorney's Office was for outside legal attorneys who deal specifically with lawsuits. The Labor Relations outside law firm is for all labor law including arbitration law. Discussion followed.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 LABOR RELATIONS" AS EXHIBIT 04-20-2023-B.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Atty. Skyers distributed a document and spoke about health incentives to reduce health care costs.

Council Member Burns noted that there were 9 outstanding union contracts and understood that the office was in flux. He said that the delays were costing both the City and the employees. Atty. Skyers said that the delays were due to negotiations.

Council Member Burns asked about the City Attorney's contract. Atty. Costello said that they would be handling it and Atty. Skyers had recused himself from the negotiations.

Council Member Herron said that she was familiar with Atty. Skyers work and felt he should take the position permanently. She added that the Contracts Committee had requested to be included in the discussions. Atty. Skyers said that he was aware of this.

Council Member Newton commended both Mr. Amado and Atty. Skyers for their work. He said that having young people in the positions was excellent. Atty. Skyers said that he would like to have the record reflect he was called young.

Council Member McCarthy said that he likes Atty. Skyers because he doesn't talk like a lawyer.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she was very happy with Atty. Skyers and noted that he calls her back with answers to her questions.

Council Member Burns asked about line 119 that had been zero and was now \$30,000. Mr. Nkwo said that it was Special Services. Mr. Flatto said that it was the actuary studies that they do for benefits and insurance.

Council Member Burns asked about the Connecticut Partnership and said it does not appear to have saved the City money. Mr. Nkwo said that they had reduced their costs by about \$11 million just by joining. He said that there was nothing wrong with re-examining it to see how much cost avoidance they had managed. Mr. Flatto said that the Connecticut Partnership does save money because of the size of commodity. He explained that there may be a high deductible option for younger members.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Budget and Appropriations
Budget Hearing
April 20, 2023

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 22, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Matthew McCarthy, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia; Mary McBride-Lee (10:23 a.m.)

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves; Council Member(s): J. Cruz, R. Smith (10:38 a.m.), M. Pereira (12:17 p.m.) & M. Lyons (11:04 a.m.); Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Kathleen Brickett, OPM; Captain Manny Cotto; Deputy Chief J. Baraja; Police Chief Roderick Porter (10:28 a.m.); John Marshall Lee, Anthony Paoletto

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 10:22 a.m. A quorum was present.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON ENTERED THE DOCUMENT TITLED "BRIDGEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET PRESENTATION, APRIL 22, 2023 AS EXHIBIT 04-22-2023-A.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Nkwo directed everyone to pg. 166 and reviewed the revenue for the Department.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 10:23 a.m.

Mr. Nkwo explained that they have adjusted the system so that they can now see what the actual special event charges were, versus what the reimbursement was. Capitan Cotto then spoke about the overtime process and tracking of the overtime.

Chief Porter joined the meeting at 10:28 a.m.

The discussion moved to parking violations. Several of the Council Members expressed concern about the fact that the Department does not tow or boot vehicles that are parked illegally and the owners simply pay the fines. Because the Department is so short staffed, the patrol cars often just drive past a violation. Chief Porter said that they need to work on towing because the style of vehicles has changed and they need to work on the contracts with the towing companies. Discussion followed.

Council Member R. Smith joined the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

Council Member Cruz thanked the Chief and staff for handling the recent shooting at Seaside Park so quickly and competently.

Council Member Cruz said that he had concerns about the fact that one of the apartment buildings that had assigned parking on the public street and the residents have been having their vehicles towed. This is a quality-of-life issue.

A discussion followed about the details involved with food trucks parking at various locations and competing with the local brick and mortar restaurants.

Council Member Newton asked about having the Fusion Center staff in the field. Chief Porter said that there was not a drop off on the coverage with the staff in the field. There will also be some students helping with the downloading of video footage from the crime scenes. They have a social worker schedule planned through June and at that time, they will evaluate how the program is working. It has been a slow roll out, but the social workers assisted with 33 different cases.

Captain Cotto reminded everyone that the social workers were civilians, so they have had the social workers come to line up and other routine Police duties at the station. Once they become acclimated to the Police department procedures, they can do ride alongs because they have a framework of the police procedures.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 11:04 a.m.

Council Member Herron asked whether the Health Department has a social worker available for the general City issues.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that there were incidents where the perpetrator was high but everyone said that it was mental illness. Chief Porter said that many of the officers were trained to recognize whether a person is under the influence of drugs. Chief Porter said that the officers recognize that the individuals are impaired.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that Health Director had been before Budget Committee for six hours. She said that she did not think it was fair to put these people through this.

Council President Nieves said that there were 650 non-violent calls to the EOC and she wanted to know about the referral procedures. She reminded everyone that Ms. Jackson-Shaheed previously had said that she received 34 referrals from the Police Department. She wanted to know why the numbers were so widely different.

Chief Porter said that often when an officer goes to a non-emergency call, they are accompanied by an ambulance and the officer just assists. The discussion moved to the use of term "referral".

Council Member Cruz said that he has been working with DEMAS and said that the social workers might not have the experience of working with the clients. He spoke about how the DEMAS staff makes assessments of their clients and can call for medical assistance. Council Member Cruz said that he knows his clients, but the social workers don't know the client. That's why the social workers need to have an officer present on the call.

Captain Porter said that many police departments charge to have their fingerprints done but Bridgeport does not. Bridgeport does not charge for creating the print, but they do charge for scanning it into the system and running reports. When Trumbull gets backed up, their residents come to Bridgeport for the service.

The discussion moved back to the issue of towing. Captain Cotto said that the towing fees are set by the State. Council President Nieves said that while the City is using four towing companies, the City is not getting their reimbursement for the abandoned vehicles tow. It was also mentioned that often the older vehicles can be a revenue source for car parts. Discussion followed.

Council Member Lyons said that there had been a number of large parties in the North End. She asked where the payments from SHU were listed. Captain Cotto explained that they issue a credit to the Outside overtime until the contractor (SHU) paid and then that money is deposited into the Outside overtime account.

Council Member Lyons asked about the 25 police cars that were involved in a party event and she felt that the Police Department should be arresting people and charging the landlords. Chief Porter said that right now the party issues are nuisance calls but arresting everyone there would result in a lot of officers being tied up processing the arrest. He said that he was aware that the North End was being held hostage to SHU. Discussion followed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia spoke about the parking enforcement that needs to be done when there is alternative side of the street parking. Chief Porter said that when there are snowstorms, they will go out and ticket. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that they do not enforce alternate side of the street parking.

Council Member Newton asked for a report on the towing companies that respond to the Police Department calls.

Council Member Herron asked if they were up to date on paying the overtime for the patrol officers. Captain Cotto said that when they switched to KRONOS, there were some lags in the transfer. Now it is paperless and the officers are being paid promptly. However, if the supervisor is ill, there may be a delay, but for the most part, the payments are being made promptly.

Council Member Herron thanked Captain Porter for following through on the promises that he made during the interview.

Council Member Herron asked about the ticket enforcement and wished to know if they were limited to downtown. Chief Porter said that they were focused on downtown and the parks.

Council Member Cruz asked if a driver was stopped and arrested, could the driver call AAA to tow the vehicle to their residence. Chief Porter said that they are contractually obligated to call the next tow company on the list. Discussion about the details followed. Captain Cotto said that once they make the call, the vehicle was under police custody.

Council Member Lyons asked about speed enforcement because it results in accidents. Chief Porter said that they were aware of the high number of accidents and were working on upgrading the computers with a new component that will track the high-volume accident areas. There are other speed reduction measures they are taking.

Council Member Lyons asked about loud engines and whether the drivers can be ticketed. Chief Porter said that they could and Deputy Chief Baraja gave the details.

Captain Cotto then narrated Exhibit 04-22-2023-A. He said that there were 19 vehicles with over 140,000 miles and they are costing the department a lot of money in repairs and parts.

Council Member Newton said that there were times when the police vehicles have been in accidents that were not in response to calls. Captain Cotto said that they were tightening the supervision and that the officers were now facing discipline for a crash.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the vehicles parked on Chapel Street. Captain Cotto said that those vehicles are being held for parts.

Council Member Pereira joined the meeting at 12:17 p.m.

Captain Cotto said that most of the overtime was geared towards Public Safety. He said that the second highest cause of overtime was the Special Event Overtime. Chief Porter said that the Department appreciates the need for cultural events, but the cost comes out of the Police Department budget. Council Member Newton suggested that they consider making the items come out of the General Fund and not charge the Police Overtime budget since the City decided to hold these events. Discussion followed.

Chief Porter said that overtime is always a priority. He said that they were implementing policies to eliminate abusive overtime practices. They are working on reducing the unnecessary overtime.

Council Member Pereira said that she has issues with the Amphitheater and the Arena and wanted it on the record that the taxpayers would be outraged by the costs since the Amphitheater and the Arena are for profit entities.

Council Member Pereira asked how the Fringe Savings number was calculated. Captain Cotto reviewed the estimate and noted that there would be increases and decreases in the budget as people are hired and others leave.

Council Member Pereira asked Mr. Nkwo what the real number would be. Mr. Nkwo said that they were assuming that there was a consistent number of 147 vacancies throughout the year.

Council Member Pereira said that the BOE hires younger teachers without families and there are massive savings and felt that this was also true of the Police Department. The new officers are coming in at a lower salary range. Council Member Pereira said that the Police Department was the largest budget.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about putting in a civilian in the Police Department and wanted to know if they would be affiliated or unaffiliated. Mr. Nkwo said that he would be posting the job and the candidates will be presented to Chief Porter. Chief Porter said that he had met with Mr. Nkwo about this. He added that he wanted to bring on someone to handle the IT portion.

Council Member Lyons asked about the dirt jobs and traffic control jobs. Chief Porter said that the contractors pays for the time. He said that originally the officers were being paid for the half an hour it took to come in and pick up the body cam and the time it took to drop them back off. This practice has been discontinued.

Council Member Lyons said that there were issues with the officers arresting people. Chief Porter said that the Department uses arrests as a last resort and they try to be consistent with their values and professionalism in all the districts.

Council Member Newton said that he was pleased to see that the budget was put together correctly and the Department was moving into the 21st Century.

The discussion moved to 10 police cars. Mr. Nkwo said that the funding would be 50% through the General Fund and 50% through Capital.

Chief Porter said that having a more realistic number of officers would help them. He said that there were many years when the administration was not streamlines. Chief Porter said that they were trying to have the Captains out on the road more and to have the Captains train Lieutenants in leadership skills.

Chief Porter said that there was a contractual issue regarding one sergeant for every ten officers.

Council Member Pereira asked if the condition of the Police Station factored in recruiting the candidates. Chief Porter said that they do need a more professional building. Chief Porter said that he had been at a location where the Police and Fire were in the same building and it didn't work out as well as they hoped.

Council President Nieves asked about how the reimbursement from other municipalities was calculated. Captain Cotto reviewed the process and said that they were trying to stop poaching, so they charge for everything.

Council President Nieves asked about the range training that they provide to other municipalities. Deputy Chief Baraja reviewed the details and said there were in-kind benefits. Council President Nieves pointed out that there was a cost associated with the officer training since they are not available to respond to calls.

Council Member Lyons left the meeting at 1:11 p.m.

Council Member Herron asked about sending officers to other municipalities for special academy classes. Chief Porter gave a brief overview of the process.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that it was important to be competitive with other communities. People often focus on material things rather than the salaries for the personnel. She said that if an officer was trained in Bridgeport and works for a year in Bridgeport, they can get a job almost anywhere else.

Chief Porter said that they were working on improving the community relations and explaining to people why they were pulled over. Council Member McBride-Lee said that there should be respect across the board.

The discussion moved to pending retirements. Chief Porter said that the number was an estimate and they might have to do more with less.

Council Member McBride-Lee and Council Member R. Smith left the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Chief Porter said that there were some officers who had left the department and wanted to come back to Bridgeport. Chief Porter said Mr. Amado was working on establishing a process for this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia suggested that the old Harding High School be used as an academy. Chief Porter said that he was in discussions with others about improving the academy facilities. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it would be important to utilize the assets they have.

Council Member Pereira said that she had been very upset when two officers left to go to Norwalk and the Norwalk rejected them but Bridgeport took them back.

Council Member Cruz said that at DEMAS, they have allowed previously retired staff to come back at four-month intervals. Mr. Nkwo said that if the officers came back as a full-time employee, they would lose their pensions. Captain Cotto spoke about a potential program where a retiree could come back and have their pension placed in an interest-bearing account, which would allow the individual to work for a few additional years before drawing their pension.

Chief Porter said that some retirees come back for 19 hours a week to help with administrative duties.

Council Member Burns asked Captain Cotto to forward the Committee some of the details regarding hiring retired officers as part-time clerical help.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like them to remove the term "seasonal" from the budget because of the issues associated with it.

Council Member Pereira left the meeting at 1:42 p.m.

Chief Porter then reviewed the recruiting and said they were looking at new scheduling models for better efficiency. They are continuing to reach out to the community through Facebook and other social media.

Chief Porter said that they have been reviewing the candidates to determine which ones would be suitable.

For 2024, there are two Assistant Chief positions listed. One of the Assistant Chief positions will be open to all qualified candidates. The second one will most likely be filled in-house.

Chief Porter continued to give a brief overview of the goals listed in the information packet. Chief Porter said that the Vanessa Avery of the State Attorney's Office had been very pleased with the Department's cooperation with them.

Council Member Newton asked if Chief Porter had the opportunity to review Chief Ramsay's study report. Chief Porter said that it was part of President Obama's 2015 Task Force and Chief Porter was very aware of the report. The first tenant was about being trustworthy. The second one involves oversight. The third tenant was focused on technology and social media. He said that they have been moving forward with the technology and social media. Chief Porter listed a number of different improvements they had made. the name of the Bridgeport Training Academy has been changed to the Bridgeport Training and Education Academy.

The officers are being held accountable to the 16-hour rule, which does not allow an officer to work more than 16 hours consecutively. He said that the Department was on their way to achieving these goals.

Chief Porter said that his role was to develop all his officers to their top potential. He said that he was accountable for the finance.

Council Member Herron asked if they needed two Assistant Chiefs with the size of the department right now. He said that he felt that they did.

Council Member McCarthy said that he was surprised about how many crimes the Department solves and suggested that they reach out to some of the vendors about promoting this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if there was a policy requiring the new officers to remain with the department for a period of time after they join the department or pay for the training,

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the Council would appreciate a meet and greet with the Police administration so people can get to know one another.

Council Member Cruz thanked the Chief and Captain Cotto. Council Member Cruz said that they will need some help with it. Chief Porter said that they had started the Facebook Live in December.

Council Member Cruz asked how the Council could help the Department to connect more with the community. Chief Porter said that when an event was held, they should let the Department know so they can try to send a Captain or Lieutenant.

Council President Nieves spoke about having Crime Stoppers on the website. Chief Porter said that Hearing about crime statistics and noted that the crime rate was down. discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Newton said that they have to make the community more aware. Chief Porter said that they try to be transparent. He said that they do try to share information and also let people know about positive situations.

Council Member Burns asked about the music noise levels. Chief Porter said that they were discouraging open trunks and large sound systems. There is a difference between enjoying music and being a nuisance. Council Member Herron said that there were car clubs that had permitted events. But now there were some car clubs that were just getting together without permits and causing problems.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Budget and Appropriations
Special Meeting
April 22, 2023

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 25, 2023**

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

OTHERS: Council Member(s): A. Boyd, J. Cruz, M. Pereira & M. Valle; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Kathleen Brickett, OPM; Joseph Sokolovic, BOE Member; Richard Chumney; Alyshia Parrin, Interim Superintendent; Marlene Siegel, BOE Finance; Thomas Errichetti, Bridgeport Library Board Treasurer; Anthony Paoletto, Christine Baptiste-Perez, BOE Vice Chair; Elaine Braithwaite, City Librarian; James O'Donnell, Library Board Chair

CALL TO ORDER

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

He asked everyone to introduce themselves and then said that they want to keep the discussion followed on budget issues rather than other issues. Co-chair Burns agreed.

BOE

Interim Superintendent Perrin greeted the Committee and proceeded to narrate a PowerPoint slide deck. She reminded everyone that the BOE was responsible for 38 schools, 29 Elementary/Middle Schools plus 7 High Schools, Aquaculture and the Bridgeport Learning Center. She displayed the enrollment figures along with a chart for SPED and ELL programs, both of which have experienced increases in enrollment.

Ms. Siegel then gave an overview of the 2022 NCEP: Net Current Expenditures Per Pupil. She said that Bridgeport was just catching up with Waterbury, but was still behind a number of other cities in terms of Expenditures per Pupil. Of the 166 CT School District, Bridgeport is ranked at 121.

Ms. Siegel then displayed a chart showing the City share percentages for Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford and Waterbury. Bridgeport provides approximately 27% of the funding. Ms. Siegel then reviewed the numbers of peer District Comparisons for 2022-2023. For SPED, the BOE spent over \$95 million on SPED, most of which were in district placements. The cost of the out of district placements has increased.

The cost of transportation is a major expense and the cost has been increasing due to contractual factors.

Ms. Siegel then presented the 2022-2023 Budget Status and said that it was important for everyone to understand the past and the present status along with the future projections. She displayed a pie chart showing the City Share, State ECS, Federal Grants and State Grants. Both the State and Federal Grant amounts decreased, including a decrease in Title II funding. The Title III grant funding is being utilized the ELL programs. Title I funding is being utilized to fund the SPED paras. She also displayed a bar graph showing the State and City contributions. The next spreadsheet displayed the average growth for the District of 1.12%, which is insufficient to keep pace with the increasing costs.

Ms. Siegel's next graph showed the pie graph with the State funding projection showing the City Share, State ECS, Federal Grants and State Grants. She said that they were projecting \$26.5 million, which include MERF, Collective Bargaining Agreement, Health Insurance, Transportation, and Utilities. She thanked Mr. Flatto for being able to negotiate a good price for one of the contracts. They also include an increase for SPED and ELL which are not covered by grants. The ELL population has exceeded the SPED population.

There were savings that occurred during the COVID pandemic years. Those savings were deposited into the Internal Service Fund (ISF). They were able to withdraw some of the funds to balance the budget. Ms. Siegel gave the details and added that they have to compensate for the \$9 million that they did not previously have.

There is a labor shortage and when they create the new budget, they have to include the anticipated cost of the temporary staff. There is also projections for retirements, but filling these positions has resulted in a teaching salary increase since many of the new hires are experienced teachers who may not have been teaching for a few years.

The next set of figures involved the bargaining agreements and the 2023-2024 budget for closing the gap. The average growth in the City share is 0.63%. The District staff is also aware that the projected ECS from the State is 1.15% but is subject to change. This is the final year for the ESSER Grant and they must use the fundings within the Federal guidelines. However, there are areas where the ESSER Grant funding can be used to allow other funding for staffing if needed. There is also a GAP Resolution that will help provide funding for substitutes.

Ms. Siegel then spoke about strategies for closing the funding gap including the utilization of grant funding in place of operating funding. The District has over 19,000 students who deserve access to the services. She displayed a graph showing the various services that are essential to the District.

She said that close to 80% of the budget goes to instruction and displayed a slide showing the breakout for the MUNIS funding allocations.

For 2023-24 Budget Factors include an increasing student enrollment including more SPED and ELL Students. Teachers' Salaries also have risen along with escalating costs for health insurance, benefits, transportation, and utilities. The average revenue growth for the last eight years has been 1.12%, which is insufficient to cover the rising costs in other areas.

Interim Superintendent Perrin then reviewed the ESSER Grant Supplementary Services slide and provided a general summary of the various resources covered by the grant.

Ms. Siegel then narrated a section about a 2024-2025 Fiscal and Service Cliff and the impact of the loss of the ESSER Grant funding. The loss of the funding will result in the loss of services that Interim Superintendent Perrin had just reviewed. There will also be insufficient operating revenue in 2024. Bridgeport has been historically underfunded for their budget. The shortfalls in the previous budgets will compound along with the loss of the grant funding.

Ms. Siegel said that the BOE operates with full transparency and full disclosure. At the end of the year, the District is anticipating a shortfall of \$9 million and a shortfall of \$15 million at the end of the FY year 2024. There was also a chart that outlined the categories of the position reductions that took place prior to FY 2021. While the pandemic has subsided, the students' needs remain along with the learning loss.

Council Member Newton thanked the Interim Superintendent Perrin and Ms. Siegel for their presentation. He also reminded everyone that this hearing was not to turn into a debate.

Mr. Flatto said that on behalf of the Mayor and the City Council, everyone wants to help the BOE. He noted that last year the City's budget increased only by 1.3% so giving more to the BOE was not possible. He reminded everyone that they were able to lock into energy costs that managed over \$1 million in cost avoidance. He said that the Mayor had been fighting hard for State funding for the City and the District. He said that Bridgeport received about 15% less than the other largest cities. He added that the student population has dropped by 10% but the cost of services had increased.

Mr. Flatto then said that he was surprised that the BOE had not been able to use the ESSER funds for several positions and gave the details. He added that there have to be some ISF amounts held for reserve.

Mr. Nkwo then displayed a MUNIS spreadsheet that listed the ECS amounts, debt service, the Alliance Grant, the school crossing guards and additional expenses that the District experienced. He summarized the various figures on the spreadsheet for the Committee. He said that with in kind contributions and the increase in the Alliance Grant, the increase was about \$25 million. Mr. Nkwo said that 41% of the entire City budget was allocated towards the District. The City also has experienced the same cost increases in salaries, fuel, electricity and other similar issues.

Ms. Siegel said that regarding Mr. Flatto's statement about the ESSER grant funding, the District has leveraged use of the funding, but they are not allowed to fund principals, or second or third grade teachers. However, they did use the funding for 18 positions for ELL students. They were also able to use the funding for contracted services for speech issues. They were able to use ESSER grant funds for HVAC systems and replacing broken furniture, along with some surplus computers for the students.

Council Member Newton said that Ms. Siegel did not include the funding that Mr. Nkwo mentioned. Ms. Siegel said that they would not include those amounts in the Operating Budget.

While they appreciate the services, she felt that it was a standard operating amount. He also noted that Hartford receives more money because of Sheff vs. O'Neill lawsuit and New Haven receives more funding because they have more magnet schools.

Council Member McBride-Lee spoke about transportation and wished to know why they provide transportation to the Catholic schools, the charter schools and private schools. Ms. Siegel said that they were required by law to provide transportation to all the schools. Council Member McBride-Lee said that if someone could afford to send their child to private schools, the parent should pay for the transportation because they are taking away funding from the public school students.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked what happens with the budget if a teacher is absent. Ms. Siegel said that if the school ends up with a surplus for substitutes, then the surplus goes into the Internal Service Fund. Discussion followed about the use of the ESSER funding for illnesses or absence due to COVID.

Council Member Burns asked if there was a figure for the average teacher's salary and asked about the ESSER funding expiring in 2024. Ms. Siegel said that the ESSER grant expires on September 30, 2024 and all the encumbered funds have a deadline, but that particular school year ends in June 2025.

Ms. Siegel said that the average teacher's salary in April was \$75,758. Last year it was \$73,880.

Council Member Pereira said that in her 12 years of local politics, Bridgeport has always been the city that contributes the least percentages to the Public Schools. Ms. Siegel said that she could not speak to the analysis to the other towns.

Council Member Pereira asked about the percentage of contributions with both the City and the State. She said that Ms. Siegel had joined the District in 2012 and would like to know what the strict percentage that the City has given to the BOE. Ms. Siegel said that she would have to review her figures.

Council Member Pereira asked if the report and Mr. Nkwo's spreadsheet was going to be sent to the Council Members. Council Member Newton said that it was.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked if the schools receive additional funding when a student is classified as a SPED or ELL to that school. Ms. Siegel said that there was additional funding under Title III, but it does not go to the specific school. The State also has the out of district cost grant and the out of district placement grant, but there had not been increases in the grant funding.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked what the operating budget was. Ms. Siegel said that it was \$263 million. Council Member McBride-Lee said that she had been working in the District for 30 years. She said that every year, it is the same situation and Bridgeport cannot do this by themselves. She said that the staff had done a wonderful job with the presentation.

Council Member Newton asked about the School Improvement Grants. He was told that the funding was available but it was for Social/Emotional programs and not for operating budget. Discussion followed about the details of the programs.

Council Member Pereira asked if Ms. Siegel had been able to access the information. Ms. Siegel said that she had not been able to compile the figures just yet and would send it to the Council Members.

Council Member Pereira said that she had calculated figures. Ms. Siegel said that it was 13% over the years. Council Member Pereira said that she was concerned about the remarks from the Finance Department. She asked if the only entity that was able to determine control over the funds in the Internal Service Fund is the BOE. Ms. Siegel said that the District works with Mr. Flatto and they are working to insure that there will be a reserve if a shortfall in the future. She said that Mr. Flatto and she had discussed keeping \$2 million in the ISF. Council Member Pereira said that it was solely the School Board's decision and the money was totally controlled by the Board.

Mr. Flatto said that there was a formal agreement with the BOE that once ISF money was turned over to the City that it was under the City's control. Council Member Pereira said that this was changed under Mayor Fabrizi and was totally incorrect.

Council Member Burns asked about moving out the long term building. Ms. Siegel said that they had reserved funding for retention grants. She spoke about cross certifications for ESL and other types of cross training for paraprofessionals. Interim Superintendent said that they were exploring possible sites for early education.

Council Member Burns said that he was interested in the out of district placements. Ms. Siegel said that the number of SPED students had decreased and they were working to reduce the out of district placement.

Mr. Nkwo said that no one is questioning the Board of Education's control of the funds, but there are accounting practices and policies that have rules. No one is questioning the Board of Education's authority but there are accounting rules that must be followed.

Council Member Newton thanked Ms. Siegel and Interim Superintendent Perrin for their presentation.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO ENTER THE POWERPOINT DOCUMENT FROM THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION AS EXHIBIT # 04-25-2023-A.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO ENTER THE SPREADSHEET TITLED "OPM BRIDGEPORT SCHOOLS" AS EXHIBIT # 04-25-2023-B.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO ENTER THE BRIDGEPORT LIBRARY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART AS EXHIBIT # 04-25-2023-C.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED “BRIDGEPORT LIBRARY IN THE MEDIA” AS EXHIBIT # 04-25-2023-D.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

LIBRARY

Ms. Braithwaite greeted the Committee members and explained that their funding comes directly from the public, so she did not prepare a spreadsheet for the Committee. However, she did speak about a number of programs such as the Chess program and a listing of the links for the Connecticut Post links about the programs.

Ms. Braithwaite said that the Beardsley Branch had a soft opening on March 18th and then a formal opening, both of which were well attended. The branch has an open floor plan with a circular check out desk. There is also a room where someone could create a podcast if they wished to do so.

A design photo of the previous Salvation Army building which will become the East Side Library was the next image displayed. This is a renovation and should not take very long. She said that she hoped it would go out to bid before the end of the year.

Ms. Braithwaite then explained that the organizational chart had not been formally approved by the Library Board, but will be presented to them. She said that in the past, librarians did accounting, or research. This chart shows an administrative staff that would have positions such as an accounting clerk, an ITS specialist, an HR specialist, and a Library Assistant.

Council Member Newton asked about the various branches. He said that the East End Branch was one of the finest branches he had seen. Mr. Errichetti asked how many of the branches had come in over budget. Mr. Errichetti said that Beardsley had come in under budget and one had come in over budget. He listed some other branches that had been renovated.

Council Member Pereira asked about the current dedicated mills. Mr. Errichetti said that it was 1.3 mills. She then asked if they had received the 1.3 mills of the grand mill. He said that they get 1.3 of the paid taxes and this had been done consistently

Council Member Pereira said that they should get the consistent rate of the 1.3 of the grand list by statute. She then asked when the taxes are collected late, if they receive the appropriate amount. Mr. Errichetti said that they have agreed to disagree.

Council Member Pereira said that the Library Board was the best Board in the City.

Mr. Nkwo said that this had been a question since Council Member Pereira had joined the Council. He said that the two lawyers had agreed that it should be 1.3 mills of the collected tax and he leaves it at that. Mr. Flatto said that Mr. Nkwo allocates 1.3 mills of the tax levy each year for the library. He explained that Council Member Pereira was saying that they should pay out the gross amount, but that could be a tax levy that does not exist since the City has not collected it.

Mr. O'Donnell said that the Board works with the OPM and Finance about this and accept the current status but under protest. The statute does not speak about collectibles, but the MOU does not address these issues. He gave the details and said that they are working within the funding that the administration has provided.

Council Member Newton asked Mr. O'Donnell about the need for the City to approve positions even though the library has the funding. Mr. O'Donnell said that the Library is required by the City to have seven signatures to approve hiring. He said that if the Civil Service signs off on this and the funds are available, those should be the only signatures needed.

Council Member Burns said that he thought that the Library was limited to Capital Funding from the State. Mr. Errichetti said that all the paperwork had been submitted to the State. He then listed other grand funding that had been requested from the State and gave a brief outline of the timeline.

Council Member Newton thanked everyone for their presentation and said that they will be discussing how to get the personnel that the library needs.

Council Member Pereira said that she wanted to go back to the issue of the 1.3 mill rate. She said that if tax liens have been sold, they would not give the Library the money. She then asked why they were not giving the Library their portion of the money. Mr. Nkwo said that when the tax levy is set, the Library gets their portion regardless of whether it is collected on time or late. The City takes the risk of not collecting the money.

Council Member Pereira said that every year, the tax revenue has come in higher than expected. She said that Mr. Nkwo said that he and Mr. Errichetti had discussed this, but Mr. Errichetti said that he and Mr. Nkwo had agreed to disagree.

Council Member Pereira said that there were no Sunday hours in her library. The extra funding would allow them to have extra hours for the residents. This is not fair.

Mr. Flatto thanked the Board and said that the Library has had a surplus every year and they have the right to spend it as they wish. He said that he was not involved with the hiring, but was willing to help Ms. Braithwaite with hiring issues if he was needed.

Mr. Nkwo said that OPM has nothing to do with hiring other than verifying that the funding was available. Ms. Braithwaite said that it was always less than a 24 hour turn around with OPM.

OPM

Council Member Newton asked Mr. Nkwo to give a brief overview of OPM. Mr. Nkwo then gave a brief overview of the budget for OPM as listed in the budget. He spoke about the Senior Budget Analyst and the Part-time Clerical Assistant.

Council Member Newton asked about the Special Project Manager. Mr. Nkwo said that when every employee is hired, it is not done through OPM. He just ensures the funding for the position was present in the budget.

Council Member Burns thanked Mr. Nkwo for his work and said that he had no issues with the Department.

Council Member Burns said that on Saturday, they need to vote on the Capital Budget. Anyone with questions about the Capital Budget should email the Co-chairs.

Council Member Newton thanked the BOE and the Library staff for their time.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 26, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Tyler Mack, Matthew McCarthy, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia Mary McBride-Lee (6:11 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member J. Cruz; Council President A. Nieves (6:20 p.m.); Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Kathleen Brickett, OPM; Anthony Paoletto, Janene Hawkins, CAO; Lily, Rev. Herron Gaston, Assistant CAO; Isolina DeJesus, Central Grants Office

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. A quorum was present

Council Member Burns requested that everyone introduce themselves. Council Member Burns asked everyone to stay focused on the budget issues and not on policy.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS AS EXHIBITS:**

THE SPREADSHEET TITLED " POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET SUMMARY AS EXHIBIT #04-22-2023A.

THE SPREADSHEET WITH THE HEADING "NEW POSITIONS" AS EXHIBIT #04-22-2023B.

THE REPORT TITLED "OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATION OFFICER" AS EXHIBIT #04-22-2023C.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Burns explained that the Police Budget Summary was a follow-up document that the Committee had requested.

Council Member McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

CENTRAL GRANTS

Mr. Nkwo said that Central Grants does not collect fees or fines, but they do generate revenue through grants. Therefore, there is not much listed in revenue.

Mr. Nkwo said that the position of the Director is now titled as a Project Manager. Council Member Newton said that he felt that they should keep the job titles the same since all the other departments have Directors and this one has a manager.

Council Member McCarthy said that when the job position was titled as the "Director of Central Grants", everyone knew it was about Central Grants. However, a "Special Project Manager" could be transferred to Public Facilities.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia requested that OPM look into why the job position was changed. She felt that the change from "Director" to "Manager" was a step down. Mr. Nkwo said that he has no control over the Job Titles.

Council Member Burns asked about two specific positions, one of which had a salary decrease and another one which has a salary increase, which Mr. Nkwo reviewed with him.

Council President Nieves joined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there was only one grant writer and she felt that they need more grant writers. This is a revenue stream for the City and often involves public safety. Discussion followed about the number of grant writers that should be in the department.

Council Member McCarthy asked if it would be possible for the Council to have a part-time non-union grant writer. Mr. Nkwo said that the individual would have the title of Clerical Assistant and a position could be created. Mr. Nkwo said that when he first worked with the City, all the grants were handled by the individual departments and it was very hard to keep track of the information. He suggested the Committee consider using CDBG funding. Council Member Herron said that years ago, there had been many jobs that were covered by CDBG funding, but as the Chair of CDBG Committee, she discouraged that practice.

Council Member Burns said that Congress had just authorized funds for infrastructure. Ms. DeJesus said that they were now in the second year and there have been a lot of changes.

Council Member Newton reminded everyone that there were a number of grants for cleaning up environmental sites. Ms. DeJesus said that they had been working on applying for funding to clean up these properties.

CAO'S OFFICE

Council Member Burns said that the budget was located on page 137 of the Budget Book. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details of two positions that will be included next year. He said that one of the positions will be for CDBG Manager and Central Grants and 50% of the salary would be from CDBG funding. He explained that the staff member who was in charge of CDBG was designated as a project manager and was a union manager. He explained that there was a \$46,592.00 savings in this department.

Council Member Newton said that he was uncomfortable with the job title of Project Manager and pointed out that these staff members could be transferred from their department to another department.

Council Member McCarthy had detailed questions about the salary differential for the Deputy Chief Administrative Officers. Mr. Nkwo noted that one of the positions would be overseeing two departments.

Ms. Hawkins, the CAO, said that the issue with the Central Grants Department has a long history. She said that when the department was created in 2015, the staff member in that position was laid off and had the right to come back and challenge that position for two years according to union rules. When the reorganization was done, job titles were changed. A discussion followed during which several Committee members expressed their dismay regarding the proposed changes for the job titles.

Council Member McCarthy left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Ms. Hawkins then narrated the various topics covered in the information document.

Council Member Newton asked if there had been a staffing study done on Public Facilities. He also wished to know why they needed someone else as a property manager when there was already a staff member doing the same thing. Ms. Hawkins said that there were also leases that have to be monitored and updated to ensure that all the rents are being paid. There are many other aspects that involve leases such as outstanding debt, ensuring the tenant was upholding their lease agreements, whether the building was vacant and should be sold. Discussion followed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked whether the position would be dedicated to leases and also mentioned that attention needs to be given to paper streets where there are slivers of land that the abutting neighbors would like to purchase. Ms. Hawkins said that often the City Attorney's Office was responsible for drafting the document, but then OPED would take over or it would just be left to run its course until things became so out of hand, the City Attorney would have to take action.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she was also concerned about paper streets. Ms. Hawkins said that she would look into this and get back to both Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia and Council Member McBride-Lee.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked if the City is reimbursed when they clean up a blighted property. Ms. Hawkins said that sometimes they are. The City cleans up State properties and it costs \$750,000.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked if they had received a list of all of the vacant properties. Ms. Hawkins said that she had been speaking about the City owned properties. Mr. Flatto said that compiling a list of the private owned properties would be difficult.

Council Member Mack asked for clarification on the Deputy Chief Administrative Officers. Ms. Hawkins said that they had just gotten a Deputy CAO which will help overseeing the Health Department and other departments. There have been a number of challenges overseeing CDBG funding. However, she has many responsibilities and meets with all her departments on a consistent basis. The staff is phenomenal but the departments are not receiving the attention they deserve. Discussion followed.

Council Member Herron asked if the jobs had been posted. Ms. Hawkins said one position had been posted, but later taken down. Both will be posted again soon.

Council President Nieves asked about the various City-owned properties that need a property manager. Mr. Flatto said that there are complicated leases for the Amphitheater. Council President Nieves said that there were already two different property managers, one in OPED and one in Public Facilities. Mr. Flatto said that they have been looking at the rents and are collecting outstanding amounts.

Ms. Hawkins said that there were supposed to be monitoring the leases but things have fallen through the cracks. She said that there were a host of different reasons why things haven't happened, but now they want to get back on track. Discussion followed about how duplicate positions come in to being and whether they are in the union positions or not.

Council Member Burns asked for the details with the Deputy CAO position that would oversee the CDBG and Central Grants. Mr. Nkwo said that there is room in the CDBG budget for the additional position. Ms. Hawkins said that she would need to review the details and would email the Committee chairs tomorrow.

Council Member Burns said that having a property manager would be important. It will be critical to keep tabs on the various parcels. Council President Nieves said that there was a property in her district that had been shifted between Public Facilities and OPED a number of times. She said that they need to know the value of the work and that the Council Member need to see the real numbers.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that they need department policy and procedure books and that the files on the various properties belong to the City, not to the employee.

Council Member Herron asked how they would facilitate paying the high salaries knowing that next year, the Federal Grants would be ending. Mr. Nkwo said that he had been talking about this for years and last year, they added 35 positions in Public Facilities.

Council Member Herron asked how many of the 35 positions were clerical, maintainers and seasonal for the past five years. She asked Mr. Nkwo to send a list of those jobs broken out. She said that the Committee was sitting here hour after hour and she was worried about what will happen next year. The Committee needs to bring the money into the City.

Council Member Cruz said that he would support the property manager position.

Council Member Burns asked about permits and Engineering. He said that there would be two new positions in that department. He also wished to know about Intergov. Ms. Hawkins said that Intergov was not working as well as they hoped. However, the program is five years old and is basically becoming outdated. The permitting process is key to generating revenue. She explained that she had been in the Building Department just before COVID and discovered that it was the permitting that was slowing down the process.

Council Member Burns said that he had heard from other municipalities about Intergov and they were not satisfied with the program either. Council Member Herron said that her electrician and other contractors like Intergov. However, she pointed out that there are people who resist learning new programs, can't learn new programs or won't learn new programs.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 27, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Mary McBride-Lee, Tyler Mack, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Scott Burns, Co-chair (6:16 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member(s): A. Boyd, M. Pereira, R. Smith, F. Hodges (6:20 p.m.); M. Lyons (6:20 p.m.), Anthony Paoletto

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Newton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

Interim Superintendent Perrin came forward and greeted the Committee members. She said that they serve over 21,000 students in the City and was present to advocate for more funding for the District. She was grateful for the \$2 million but the BOE has not been able to keep up with inflation. She said that they need to consider the students who are here in Bridgeport and will lead the City. She asked the Council to consider the students and their future.

Ms. Bobbi Brown, the Board of Education Chair, came forward and greeted the Committee members. She said that the last thing that should be removed from the Budget is the funding for the schools. The students need extra support, hands and resources. The BOE is waiting to see what their budget will be and if they don't have enough money, they will cut their budget by closing schools and staff. Education is the single most powerful tool. She said that they have a duty and an opportunity to reverse this Increase the funding and increase the opportunities for the students.

Mr. Robert Traber, a member of the Board of Education, came forward and said that he had been before the Council Members for 30 years asking for more funding. This is not a new discussion and while he has known many of the Council Members through the years and now he is on the Board of Education. He said that previously, Mayor Ganim had given \$5 million to the District and said that he wanted to be known as the education mayor. He said that Hartford had a bill on the floor that would give more money to the charter schools and less to the public schools.

He said that if they worked with the District, they could end up with \$22 million by taking the funding from the charter schools and giving the money to the public schools.

Mr. Albert Benejan Grajales came forward and said that he thought that it was wrong that they didn't have someone present who spoke Spanish to translate. He remembers when his son was in first grade and now his son has graduated from Bassick. The District and the City needs to work together. They have to work together for everyone, for the schools, for the students and the

residents. He spoke about reading a newspaper article from 1963 asking for more funding for the schools. The staff is trying the best that they can.

Mr. Benejan Grajales then addressed those present in Spanish for those who did not speak English.

Council Member Burns joined the meeting at 6:16 p.m.

Mr. Joseph Sokolovic, a BOE Member, came forward and read the following statement into the record:

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Joseph Sokolovic. I am the finance chair of Bridgeport Board of education, speaking on behalf of more than 19,000 students and 2,500 staff. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. It was an opportunity that was not provided to any board member during the board of ed presentation on Tuesday. This is the third consecutive year that the budgets and appropriations committee has refused to allow board members to speak. I guess they like operating in an echo chamber of misinformation, and misdirection.

Tuesday's budget and appropriations committee was the worst example of smoke and mirrors I have seen in the last decade. The finance director purposefully conflated the operating budget funds provided by the city of Bridgeport with the State grant funds and bonding for city owned buildings. This is troublesome, as the state delegation has stated repeatedly, that the state is less likely to fund Bridgeport because Bridgeport refuses to fund itself. Bridgeport, of the 169 municipalities funds its schools at the lowest, or second lowest, on a per pupil basis in the entire state! The State however, gives Bridgeport the second largest dollar amount of the 169 municipalities. The state is not going to save us. To be clear Bridgeport only provided 73 million local tax dollars, while the city of Waterbury provided 106 million local tax dollars to education in the last budget. Waterbury received far less from the state.

Also, in the response to Ms. Seigel's presentation, the city budget director claimed that the cost of controlling traffic on city streets is a contribution to education. Traffic control is not education, it is a city responsibility. Another attempted sleight of hand was the attempt by Ganim's budget director was to include interest payments on city owned property as education. That's like a landlord telling their tenants that he has helped them afford their groceries this year because he paid the mortgage interest on the house or building he owns that you're living in. Lastly in an outright misstatement of facts, it was asserted that the accumulated savings, or rainy day fund, in the education department was owned and controlled by the city. I don't doubt that Ganim's budget directors are acting on his orders to purposefully mislead you into thinking we can't afford more than 2 million for education, when the public safety, facilities and general budget is receiving 2 to 3 times more of an increase than education.

This the is the 8th consecutive year that Mayor Ganim, and the city council, have shortchanged education. The first four years they basically flat funded our children, and the next four years they missed the target by millions of dollars. Since Ganim took office, there has been over 243 jobs cut from education and at least another 117 slated to end at the beginning of the 24/25 school year when ESSER (covid) funds run out. That number

does not include coming cuts in the operating budget due to a structural deficit.

Bridgeport's children cannot afford four more years of Joe Ganim. We've got choices for Mayor and city council, some of which have attended Board of Ed finance forum now and in the past we need to vote out Mayor Ganim and maybe the entire city council as well if they do not add the dollars we need to the education budget.

Council Member Lyons and Council Member Hodges joined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Ms. Sandra Sotamba, a member of Make the Road, who lives on Laurel Avenue, in Bridgeport came forward with six other people holding signs about funding for SPED, better food, and "Inversion en Education = Futuro" She asked that the Council Members allocate \$12.2 million for the schools to help the children. She said that one of the buildings is very old and during the summer, the building is really hot.

Ms. Sotamba then addressed the Committee in Spanish.

Ms. Minerva Antigua came forward and spoke about how there was a collaboration of Latino parents and She said that she has been in Bridgeport for the last four years. She said that he has been bullied by other students. The City must support the children through education.

Ms. Martha Lopez came forward and addressed the Committee in Spanish.

Ms. Lopez the addressed the Committee in English and said that she had lived in Bridgeport for five years. She said that she was present with her friends to speak about the fact that her children do not speak English and the teachers do not speak Spanish. She said that the lack of resources hurts the students.

Ms. Yedni Ocott came forward and addressed the Committee in Spanish.

Ms. Ocott said that she had been living in Bridgeport for five years and said that her son was a Special Education student. The lack of resources is critical for the SPED students. They need bi-lingual educational resources.

Ms. Christine Baptiste-Perez, a member of the Board of Education came forward to speak about how the students who are African American or don't speak English need support. They need support. She said that as a parent, a former teacher and an attorney, she found it hard to believe that the Council doesn't see the increase with gas, food, and other things, and not realize that the cost of education has increased. The City and the State have to contribute. The City should match the State funding.

Mr. Jeff Morrisey of the Bridgeport Education Association, came forward and said that he was a teacher at Harding High School and had previously taught in Pakistan, Korea and other locations. He said that the Council has an obligation to fund the public schools. there are over 100 certified teacher vacancies. The students are being split up into different classrooms or have different substitute teachers on any given day. Grade levels are being combined because they

cannot find good quality educators. Smaller class sizes, better graduation rates and increasing support for SPED and ELL students would help, along with better HVAC systems. He asked that the Council give the students opportunities to excel.

Mr. Hermino Planas of Platt Street came forward and greeted the Committee. He said that he was present as a taxpayer. His mother was well known but could not attend the meeting. The schools' needs have grown greatly after COVID, particularly for SPED and ELL students. He said that they have been working on using less paper and using texts on the computers. The District has started so many programs to help students after the pandemic. The District will need \$12.4 million for funding, otherwise there will be more cuts.

Council Member Newton thanked Faith ACTS for their hard work.

Pastor William McCullough came forward and greeted the Committee. He said that he was present to represent Faith ACTS, CT's only black faith based organization. There are over 65 church represented. The students deserve better. Faith ACTS was founded 8 years ago and he was asking for \$12.6 million for the District to properly educate the students properly. It will only take 2% of the City's total funding. He's said that he had come from Mississippi because there were better opportunities in the North. He said that he was up in Hartford to advocate for additional State funding for the schools and \$20 million that should come to Bridgeport.

Ms. Orlanda Strong came forward with six young students. She said that she comes to these meeting and only hear lies because the Classical Education building is old and hot. There are no special education teachers. She said that her children were SPED and the teachers for her children don't have the right kind of training.

Ms. Dasha Spell of Beechwood Avenue came forward and said that she was present to speak about the Classical Education Studies School. She said that when the District has to place a child out of District, it costs around \$50,000, but it costs about \$15,000 for a regular education student. There are six charter schools in the City. The Charter Schools reduce the amount of funding the public schools receive. Her daughter is going to high school this year, but she will be going out of Bridgeport for school because the Bridgeport High Schools don't offer what she needs. The Council Members all have been educated and Ms. Spell said that the education that the Council Members received was better than what the students are receiving.

Sanjay came forward to speak about Bridgeport NOW. He said that he had to scrounge up pennies to raise the money for projects. He said that he felt that there needs to be love for education and while \$2 million dollars is a lot of money, it's not enough. The reason there are 100 certified teacher vacancies in Bridgeport is because there is not enough interest in investing in the students.

Mr. Chunjang Bruynder said that as a child of Bridgeport, he has become a role model and has worked with the sticks and stones that the students work with today. It is time to invest in the children.

Council Member M. Periera came forward and said that the Library goes hand in hand with the public schools. She said that the State Statutes is clear that the Library should receive 1.3 mills of the grand list, not the amount that the City collects in taxes.

Council Member Newton said that the Library was not on the agenda. He was informed by another Committee member that it actually was part of the hearing.

Council Pereira said that she would not vote for the BOE members because there is one member who can't use punctuation and another who is a parent of a Charter School student. Council Member Newton said that the hearing was about the budget, not personal attacks. A disagreement between Council Member Newton and Council Member Pereira followed. Council Member Newton ruled Council Member Pereira out of order.

Ms. Meg Doyle of Haddon Street came forward and greeted the Council. She said that by the lack of funding, the message is that the Bridgeport students have a reduced amount of priority than the other students in other towns. This is educational inequality based on class and race.

Council Member Pereira left the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

She said that it would be right to tell the truth that they can't deliver a good education.

Vanessa came forward and said that she was the proud member of Make The Road. Eight other members of the group came forward with signs. She said that they should not need to call for outside groups to tell her what is wrong with the City, They should know. Shame on those who don't know what the city needs and it is time to buckle up and get the job done.

Mr. Vinnie Latino came forward and said that they were there to speak again about the same issues and quoted Hosea 4:6 - My people are rejected for lack of knowledge. Mr. Latino said that he had spoken so many times about this. An education takes money. He asked what the school district would look like if they put the money into the District. Even if it was only one child, it would be important.

A resident came forward and said that she didn't have a prepared speech, but that she would like them to support the schools, so they could have more activities or sports. Bridgeport students deserve the same education as the neighboring towns. She wished to know why they receive less. She said that education is power.

Jose Hernandez was the next speaker called. There was no response.

Ms. Flores came forward and addressed the Committee in Spanish. She said that she was a mother and her child is going into high school. She said that she has sacrificed everything for her son and she has to put her son in private school. It is important to have the students receive a better education.

Ms. Nellie Jara of Burnsforth Avenue came forward and said that she was part of Connecticut Workers in Bridgeport. She said that she has two children and she could always see the need that the teachers and the students. She added that she has pictures on her phone showing the rotten food. This is not right. The City and the District needs to work together. Her group will mobilize more parents. Providing the opportunities for the students will be the future of Bridgeport. She said that she will work hard to keep the Council informed about what happens in her community.

Tamika came forward and said that education is the seed of knowledge. Teachers are leaving because they are paid more in other communities. The students are not getting the knowledge they need. When teachers are offered \$15,000 in other towns. The District needs the funds for the teachers. The parents should not have to raise thousands of dollars for the students, the District should have the money. She said that they were asking that the Council help the district with the money that they need.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia left the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Ms. Ashley Agulera of Lindley Street came forward and spoke about the fact that she could see the differences between her schools and neighboring towns from the team uniforms that the other schools to the type of instruction. She said that the teachers chose to stay in Bridgeport to help the children. The schools need more fund but it is worth it for the children.

Ms. Callie Halliman came forward with 11 people and encouraged people to imagine what it would be like if Bridgeport Public Schools were thriving. This is what the taxpayers want for their students. Bridgeport Generation Now feel it is their job to bring this about because voters want one thing. Working together, the Council and the District can be different. She suggested that the Council start deliberations with the assumption that they will listen to the voters and will give Bridgeport Public Schools \$12.2 million. This will cause a rapid change in the City. She said that the Council could work with the District to bring this about. Since 2014, the City has refused to keep up with inflation and this created a shortfall.

Ms. Halliman said that she had spoken with a Fairfield parent and they mentioned the former Bridgeport School Superintendent who is now in Fairfield. She said that the Fairfield budget included a raise. This current situation is unsustainable. It is time to reverse this terrible trend and the Council should provide the District with the \$12 million dollars.

Council Member Hodges came forward to speak about the school to prison pipeline and said that he is seeing younger and younger individuals coming into the prisons. He said that as a Council Member it is important to help the students and the teachers. He is hearing that the teachers are leaving Bridgeport to go to other towns. He said that they need to think about this and come up with something better than what they did last year.

Ms. Jennifer Perez of Edna Avenue came forward and said that she was a former teacher and the President of the 136th District. She said that she had lived in Bridgeport all her life. She spoke about her various teaching positions and some of the challenges it involved. She asked the Committee members to consider what has been said and increase the budget for the schools.

Ms. Lizabeth Villegas of Gordon Street came forward to speak about her experience in the District. She is the mother of a six year old and she just recently moved back to Bridgeport. She noticed that that school was different. She said that they need to give back to the schools and the teachers because they work hard to provide for the students.

Mr. Chris Caruso Came forward and said that he was a former Council Member, he was part of the group that made the change from the Board of Taxation to the City Council. He noted that the budget was not the Council's budget, but the budget of Mayor Ganim. He said it was hard to find \$12 million in the budget. He said that while he does not have children, he cares deeply about the system because it is the quality of life. When people look at Bridgeport, one of the things they look at is the education. Chris also pointed out that when he was on the Council, they had increase the ECS funding, but the previous mayors did not increase the statutory amount.

He said that Council Member Hodges had made a suggestion that they try to increase the budget to \$6 million. There will be people who are upset but this would help the students.

Council Member Newton thanked everyone for coming out and apologized for the disruption in the meeting. The Council may have to make some hard decisions, but it is important for them to hear what people have to say about the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE LEE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 29, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Tyler Mack; Mary McBride-Lee; Matthew McCarthy, AmyMarie Vizzo-Panicca (10:09 a.m.)

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves (10:22 a.m.); Council Member(s): J. Cruz, M. Pereira, R. Smith (10:22 a.m.); M. Lyons (10:58 a.m.) & A. Boyd (11:19 a.m.); Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Kathleen Brickett, OPM; Acting Fire Chief Lance Edwards; Acting Fire Deputy Chief Greg Pigg; Anthony Paoletto; Mr. Garcia, BOE

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. He requested that everyone introduce themselves. A quorum was present.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 10:09 a.m.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Council Member Burns directed everyone to page 184.

Co-chair Newton thanked the Acting Fire Chief Edwards and Deputy Fire Chief Pigg for coming and said that they would be respected.

Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details of the Revenue for the Fire Department.

There was a brief discussion regarding the staffing and the minimum staffing required.

Council Member Newton asked if the Fire Department has been properly reimbursed for the Sound on Sound event. Chief Edwards said that they had. The discussion moved to the fact that while it was good that they were planning to include MERF costs in the outside Contracts, this had not been done in the past.

Chief Edwards then greeted everyone and narrated his PowerPoint presentation. He said that currently, they had 283 employees and they have minimum staffing of 62 and standard staffing of 68.

Council Member Smith and Council President Nieves joined the meeting at 10:22 a.m.

Chief Edwards explained that the Bridgeport Fire Department was smaller than Hartford and New Haven but were able to provide assistance to the Health Department with the pandemic shots.

He pointed out that it is important to monitor the age of the firefighters and currently, the average age is 44 years old. This allows them to forecast the potential numbers of retirements and adjust the recruitment needs accordingly.

The new Ladder truck is scheduled for delivery in July. There is also a migration of data underway from Firehouse Software to Fireworks software.

Council Member Herron pointed out that there were a number of seniors that have hearing issues and wished to know how the Fire Department addresses this. Council Member Newton said that they need to take this into consideration for smoke alarms that seniors can hear.

The discussion then moved to the fact that the Department is now providing their own training which reducing the amount of overtime. Also, Bridgeport is able to schedule the classes when they wish to. Deputy Chief Pigg said that he had spoken to several recruits who told him that they were able to attend the classes in Bridgeport, but would not have been able to attend the classes at the Academy because they were required to stay on campus.

Council Member Pereira said that the Police had provided a breakout of the Special Events costs and would like to have a similar break out for the Fire Department. She would like to hear the costs for the parades, Sound on Sound, the Amphitheater and other items.

Council Member Pereira then asked about the overtime costs that sending recruits to the Academy, Chief Edwards said they could provide that information.

Chief Edwards said that they were working on keeping the overtime costs down and also watch the firefighters for PTSD.

Council Member Pereira asked about the accrual of Firefighter overtime contract work with their Benefits.

Council Member Cruz asked about the policies regarding PTSD and how the support is provided. Chief Edwards gave a brief overview of how they support their firefighters after traumatic events.

Chief Edwards said that the cost of outfitting a firefighter has increased from \$200 to \$600. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the City should never stop providing top notice equipment because the Police and Fire are the first responders.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 10:58 a.m.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had been at a CCM meeting and collected information about some grants that could be used. She said that she would be sending the information to Chief Edwards, Police Chief Porter and Mr. Appleby.

Council Member McCarthy asked if it was common practice for municipalities to pay for the firefighter's equipment. Chief Edwards said that it was.

Council Member McBride-Lee commented that the equipment was not only for the fire department, but for the community also.

Chief Edwards said that with two deputy chiefs, they are getting the work done because they love what they do.

Mr. Flatto said that he had become aware that the State wants the Fire Department to provide medical services. Chief Edwards said that they would have to have all the firefighters become EMTs and also have some paramedics. At the present time, AMR has a contract with the City. Deputy Chief said that one of the issues is the transportation of the patient.

Council Member Pereira said that on page 190, it says that 477 were listed as actual fires and she wished to know what the remaining calls covered. Chief Edwards said that the remainders involved medical.

Council Member Pereira asked for the details regarding the fact that there was a 26% increase in one of the categories. Mr. Nkwo explained that the summary page does not allow them to expand the details. He directed everyone to the supplemental pages on page 184 and reviewed the details with everyone. Discussion followed.

Council Member Boyd joined the meeting at 11:19 a.m.

Council Member Lyons asked how they charge for false alarms. Deputy Chief explained that sometimes the alarm is a commercial alarm and other times, it may be an individual who see smoke somewhere.

Council Member Herron thanked the Chief for doing the job. She said that she utilized the Fire Department for installing smoke alarms and also for administering shots during COVID.

Council Member Herron asked about the number of permits. Deputy Chief explained that there were a number of permits that were interdepartmental permits.

Chief Edwards said that they were looking for any revenue sources out there and mentioned that they had CDBG application for smoke alarms.

He then went on to give a brief overview of the Capital Project Budget requests, which includes the replacement of a building that is 106 years old and another fire engine that is 16 years old.

Council Member Newton said that he hoped that the Council Members would remember these equipment needs when they talk about hiring a grant writer.

Council Member Lyons thanked the Fire Department for sending a retired fire truck to Haiti a number of years ago. She said that it went to a town that did not have a fire truck. She asked whether the retired vehicles are sold or used for parts. Deputy Chief said that as long as they can use the vehicles for parts, they keep them.

Council Member Pereira asked about the staffing information shown on pages 187 and 188. Chief Edwards said that he had reviewed the positions with Mr. Nkwo and their numbers matched up.

Council Member Mack asked whether it would be better to save up money from the Operating funds rather than bonding for it. Deputy Chief Pigg said that they were concerned about the technology changing, which makes the old equipment obsolete.

Council Member Herron said that there was ARPA funding and she felt that they could use the money for equipment now.

Council Member Cruz had several detailed questions about equipment. Chief Lance reviewed the details with him.

Council Member Pereira asked about the information on page 190 and wanted to know why their response time was over 5 minutes. Chief Edwards said that their goal was to get there as quickly as possible. Their response time was the same as it was last year.

Council Member Newton left the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Council Member Burns noted that there were some major projects coming along such as Steel Point and the new high school. Chief Edwards said that they were ready for the new projects.

Council Member Burns asked if Intergov was working for the Department. Chief Edwards said that it appeared to be working.

RECESS

Council Member Burns announced a recess at 12:05 p.m. He recovered the meeting at 12:22 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT "BRIDGEPORT FIRE DEPARTMENT FY 2024 BUDGET PRESENTATION" AS EXHIBIT 04-29-2023-A.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "TOTAL EMPLOYEE COUNT" AS EXHIBIT 04-29-2023-B.
**COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED " FIRE DEPARTMENT OVERTIME PROJECT" AS EXHIBIT 04-29-2023-C.
** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Nkwo then reviewed the FY 24-28 BAC Recommended Five Year Capital Plan.

Mr. Garcia then spoke about the Dunbar elevator which no longer has parts available.

Council Member Pereira asked how many people at Dunbar had disabilities. Mr. Garcia said that he would get her the information. He explained that when a repair needs to be made, the parts have to be custom made. Council Member Pereira said that the American Disabilities Act could result in a lawsuit.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that they have some students at her school that are in wheelchairs and on crutches, but they keep them on the ground floor since an elevator might break down. Council Member Pereira said that a student was in a wheelchair they cannot prevent them from being on the second floor with their class. Council Member McBride-Lee said that it was the students' safety that should come first.

Mr. Garcia said that the District tries to do preventive maintenance but there are some projects that need to be done completely from start to finish. He pointed out that there were some buildings that were 30 years old and others that were 135 years old. They are using computers to link the schools together and have created an app for the custodians and the staff. The goal is to reduce the costs as much as possible.

Council Member Pereira asked about the issues at Hooker, which Mr. Garcia reviewed with her. Mr. Garcia said that his team goes into a building and finds the various repairs and tried to get the repairs done in a systematic manner rather than a scattershot manner.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked if Mr. Garcia had the number of staff that he needs to get the work completed. Mr. Garcia said that they have done needs assessments and the principals do have input in the process. He said that one of the issues is the HVAC and once that is installed, it becomes an issue of maintenance. There are chillers, boilers and asbestos to deal with. He said that they had done a great deal of crack sealing in order to stabilize the parking lots.

Mr. Flatto suggested that the BOE present a list of projects that were covered by the ESSER funding.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that there were a number of schools that had issues with the fire alarms. Mr. Garcia said that there was new technology and that they have been working on it.

Council Member Pereira said that the JFK campus has a State school on the site. She said that the roadway was terrible. Mr. Garcia said that they had paved the entire campus last year.

Council Member McCarthy said that when he drives by Park City Magnet, it looks terrible. Mr. Garcia said that during the summer they will be working in the back.

The discussion moved to whether the elevator repairs should be lumped all together or placed under the individual Facilities.

Council Member Herron said that she works for the BOE and that Mr. Garcia has gone to the various jobs and was on top of the project. She said that when they have disabled students on the second floor, they have an area of refuge and the students are brought there. The Fire Department knows where the students are and they are a priority.

Council Member Smith asked about the Curiel project. Mr. Garcia said that they have to do the project when the students are not there, so he would like to bundle the projects together. For Curiel, they would do the gym floor, the dividing wall and the stage repairs all at the same time. Discussion followed about the timeframe.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that Mr. Garcia had inherited a number of buildings and was working his way through each school and doing a wonderful job. Mr. Garcia said that he would be retiring in the next year or two.

Council Member Lyons left the meeting at 1:24 p.m.

Mr. Nkwo then reviewed the OPED BAC requests on page 6 of the handout and Public Facilities on page 7. The discussion moved to which City parking lots would be paved.

Council President Nieves said that she wanted a note included on the Newfield Boat Launch and Ramp Complete Repair that the City was going to pay up front for the funds.

Council Member Pereira asked about the fire engine. Mr. Nkwo explained that the fire engine was going to be paid for by CDBG funding.

Council Member Pereira said that she was pleased that there was an allocation for the Police Department. She wanted clarification. Mr. Nkwo said that he had put in an amount as a placeholder.

Council Member Herron said that she had an issue with the fact that there was a line entry about paving city parking lots and she could not vote for it unless she knew what parking lots they were talking about. Mr. Nkwo said that they would zero that out.

Council Member McBride-Lee left the meeting at 1:49 p.m.

Council Member Burns said that he had a question about Kennedy stadium., which Mr. Nkwo reviewed with him.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 24-28 BAC RECOMMENDED FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "OF THE ROUGHLY 20.5 M. PROPOSED BONDING PROJECTS FOR FY24" AS EXHIBIT 04-29-2023-D.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
MAY 3, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Matthew McCarthy, Tyler Mack, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia; Mary McBride-Lee (6:22 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves; Council Member(s): J. Cruz, M. Lyons, M. Pereira, R. Smith, M. Valle & R. Roman-Christy (6:22 p.m.); Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Veronica Jones, Tax Collector; Jon Urquidi, City Engineer; Luis Burgos, Parks; Paul Catino, Public Facilities; Bret Caulfield, Tree Warden; Luann Conine, Recreation Department; Greg Dancho, Beardsley Zoo; B. Gaffney, Assessor's Office; John Hosier, Parks Commission, Craig Nadrizny, Public Facilities Director, Anthony Paoletto, Julie Miller, Kim Jack, Kemesha McDonald, Barbara, Lee, Chineka, Meryb, 203-395-3190; 203-645-7711, 203-880-5666

This meeting was held via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Newton called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. He requested that everyone introduce themselves. A quorum was present.

Co-chair Newton asked the City employees to introduce themselves and reviewed the ground rules for the meeting.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Flatto said that they have 59 positions in the Department. There is a vacancy for a full-time Tax Assessor and Mr. Gaffney is acting in a part-time role. He displayed an organizational chart showing the number of employees and the number of vacant positions in each department.

Mr. Flatto then reviewed the highlights of the past year and the Fund Balance, which is now near 7% of the budget. He explained that when he joined the administration, the Fund Balance was dangerously low and the City was actually spending more money than they were taking in. While the Grand List has stabilized, it had not grown significantly.

They have also had a clean audit for FY 2022 and the tax collections are on target.

Mr. Flatto asked the Committee to start with the Assessor's Office at that time. Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview of the Assessor's Budget revenue. Mr. Nkwo said that Mr. Gaudett and Ms.

Vickers were in Hartford, speaking with the State Legislators about the amount of PILOT payments that the City has been receiving.

Mr. Gaudett called in from Hartford to let the Committee know that there had been some very promising discussions with the delegation and various members of the legislature to allocate more money for Bridgeport regarding PILOTS, CMERS and the Educational reimbursements. He encouraged the Committee to continue working with their current figures because the State will not make a decision until after Bridgeport's budget has been finalized.

Council Member McBride-Lee and Council Member Roman-Christy joined the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

The discussion moved back to the Tax Collector's Budget. Mr. Flatto spoke about the State of Connecticut reimbursement which was intended to lower the cost of motor vehicle taxes for car owners.

Mr. Nkwo explained that when they see the zero in the PILOTs, it means that the PILOTS have expired. Council Member Newton asked if Mr. Nkwo or Mr. Flatto could send the chairs a listing of the PILOTS with the information on how much they have left on the agreement and how much they owe.

Mr. Gaffney said that things were going well in the Assessor's Office.

Council Member Mack asked if they knew when the last time the Tax Abatement program was reviewed and if they needed to be updated. Mr. Nkwo explained that these PILOTS were contracts and they are done on an individual basis. He said that when the original agreement expires, some of the organizations come back for a second round. Council Member Newton said that the Council no longer approve 40 or 30-year tax breaks.

Council Member Pereira asked about the formula for calculating the PILOT payments. Ms. Jones said that the spreadsheet does not have the full amount they owe. They have the amount the owner has to pay and how many more payments they owe. Mr. Flatto said that he has that information for the auditors. Council Member Newton asked him to send that to the chairs.

Council Member Pereira said that it was important to see what the long term, significant tax breaks are costing the City. She said that she does not want a PILOT on luxury rentals, but does support the PILOTS for some of the projects. Discussion followed.

The discussion moved to page 138, which is the Comptroller's Office. Mr. Flatto said that his office probably has the highest percentage of Bridgeport residents as employees.

Mr. Nkwo spoke about the revenue generated by the nips bottle redemptions and the street sweepers.

Council Member McCarthy then spoke about the cannabis dispensaries and said that they might be a source of extra revenue. He believes that the first one that opens up it will likely generate \$10 million in revenue.

Council Member McCarthy said that the State statutes requires that some of the funding remain in the area where the dispensary is. Council Member Pereira agreed. Mr. Nkwo said that there would be earmarked funding. Council Member McCarthy said that he did not think it was wrong to project some of this funding.

Council Member Cruz asked if some of the funding could be directed towards substance abuse programs. Mr. Nkwo said that it would be up to the Committee. He said that he supports the dispensary but felt that some of the proceeds should go to substance abuse programs.

Mr. Nkwo said that with the high interest rates, the interest generated can be used to offset the debt service. Council Member Newton said that they were hiding the revenue. Mr. Nkwo pointed out that there was no interest to speak of until recently.

Council Member Pereira said that there was about \$1 million dollars in the interest account. She said that they should not zero out the revenue in the budget. Revenue is revenue and they should bring the excess revenue to the Committee for a decision.

Mr. Flatto said that there was a staff member who was doing the same work as an accountant but was receiving a lower pay. He would like to increase that salary for that employee.

Council Member Pereira said that she was concerned about the lines were there was \$364,000 in one line and then it increased to \$5,000,000 and now has dropped to 0. Mr. Flatto said that there was a payment from Steel Point for the infrastructure and also a small amount for another project, all of which has been reimbursed. Mr. Flatto reviewed the details of the legal issues about the payments. Discussion followed.

Mr. Flatto said that the Purchasing Agent was retiring and a Civil Service test will have to be given for the position.

Council Member Newton thanked Mr. Flatto and his staff for their time.

ENGINEERING

Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details of the Personnel and Mr. Urquidi explained why one employee has taken on a supervisory position over two electricians who repair traffic signals. The employee took an inadequate and substandard system and upgraded it to a reliable system. Council Member McCarthy said that they should look at changing the job title for this employee.

The discussion moved to the fact that currently Engineering only has one inspector and the place holder that was inserted while the job description was being updated by Civil Service.

Council Member Pereira has a detailed question about the union classification and the ranking of the individuals.

Council Member Burns said that the City Engineer had requested these positions last year and they were not in the book. This year they are in the book but need to be adjusted. The Council supports these positions. Discussion followed.

Mr. Urquidi said that his department has been working on issuing permits for various projects that they had not done before. However, with only one inspector for the entire City, it is hard to cover all the jobs that need to be done. Mr. Urquidi would like to hire a sidewalk inspector and a roadway inspector.

Council Member Newton said that Public Facilities is now checking with the utility companies before they pave the street.

Council Member Lyons said that she is in full support of their request for positions.

Mr. Nadrizny said that he was aware of all of the streets that are torn up by contractors.

Mr. Nadrizny said that the Committee had requested to meet Aaron Curry and he was present. Mr. Fred Caulfield, the new Tree Warden, was also present.

Mr. Nadrizny said that they have two full-time custodians and need more. An organizational chart was displayed. He said that the vacant positions were entry level positions. He also spoke about an employee that had been working as a clerical assistant but was hired as a maintainer. They would like to change the job title to the clerical assistant.

Discussion followed about having the maintenance employees float to the other divisions to cover manpower.

The Committee reviewed the Recreation and Parks next. Mr. Catino explained that often the seasonals were lifeguards and gate checkers. Council Member McCarthy asked about using the \$490,000 for full-time employees. Mr. Catino said that they would never get rid of the seasonals because Parks and Recreation need the seasonal staff to run the parks.

Council Member Valle said that she had three concerns. She was respectfully requesting the Committee listen to Mr. Nadrizny regarding the East Side Senior Center. Many of the staff there are seasonals and the City lose many good staff members because they are seasonal. They should be permanent employees.

Council Member Valle said that there have been reports of irregularities at the transfer station. She said that people have been told they don't accept different types of materials. She said that she will be going to the transfer station to see for herself.

Council Member Valle said that the Department of Aging was moved to the Health Department and her final request was for the Department of Aging to transfer back to Public Facilities. When

the seniors have needed something, Ms. Conine has been able to fill the need. She said that Ms. Conine had done great things for the seniors.

Council Member Newton said that he was against moving the seniors to the Public Works Department because of some the things that has been done in the past.

Council Member Newton said that it was important to focus on the budget rather than particular parks or issues.

The discussion moved back to page 278.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked who supervisor was for the school custodians. Mr. Nadrizny said that George Garcia was the supervisor for the school custodians.

Council Member Cruz said that Public Facilities was forever in need of more workers. He said that he was in full support of every position they were requesting.

Council Member Pereira asked about the Seaside Park Rental details. She asked if there would be a Sound on Sound concert in the fall also. Mr. Flatto said that he believed that this was so. Council Member Pereira said that they were not able to hold the second festival that they had planned. She said that they were contractually obligated to hold that second event. Council Member Burns said that the contract allows the organizers to do two weekend events, but the second event is not an obligation. Discussion followed.

Council Member Lyons said that she would support Mr. Nadrizny for his work along with Ms. Conine. She added that she had submitted some questions to the chairs and they were working on getting the answers.

Council Member Newton said that the Amphitheater had agreed to improve Seaside Park. Mr. Nkwo said that the agreement was that they would leave Seaside Park in the same condition that it was. Mr. Nadrizny said that the contract states that the Amphitheater will repair any damaged area to at least the same or better condition, which they did.

Council Member McCarthy said that there had been discussions that Sound on Sound would do some work on the western ball fields. However, he pointed out that they did leave the park in better condition after the events.

The discussion moved to the details of the ticket surcharge.

Council Member McCarthy said that they need to recreate a revenue generating stream from the bath houses.

Council Member Pereira asked about the Seaside Park rental amount. Mr. Nkwo reviewed the details with her. She said that the organization was charging \$75 per vehicle to park on City property. The City only got \$15 per vehicle. This is not a good agreement for Bridgeport.

Council Member Lyons asked about bringing in the Parks Police to help with the Parks after the shooting that happened there. Council Member Newton said that this would be discussed on Saturday.

Council Member Burns said that the parking was a valid point and this was being discussed with OPED. He added that the City was on the verge of starting a police study and the Parks Police was part of the scope of the study.

Council Member Burns directed everyone to page 245. He said that the tipping fees at the transfer station was about \$68/ton and the cost is starting to increase.

Mr. Catino said that Bridgeport belongs to a group of towns that formed back in the 1990s. He said that it would not be appropriate to discuss the details in a public forum. He gave a brief overview of the situation and said that his department was very concerned since Hartford's waste was now being shipped to the Midwest.

Council Member McCarthy said that there was a great program for compositing which is a great way to save money.

Council Member Pereira asked about the curbside advertising. Mr. Nadrizny said that it was a program through Creative Advertising, who maintain the cans and take care of the pick-up. He explained that the company bases the amount on the number of cans and the number of ads they have. Council Member Pereira said that they need to be more aggressive when the contracts comes up for renewal.

Council Member Pereira asked about the sanitation and recycling staff. Mr. Nkwo said that they were union members. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member Pereira said that she did not understand why they always had expired contracts. She said that on the BOE they never had expired contracts because the BOE could not afford retroactive pay for the teachers. Council Member Newton replied that the City of Bridgeport does not operate like the BOE. Sometimes the unions are reluctant to settle and other times, it's the administration. It is not right to compare the City, the Fire Department, the Police Department and other workers to the BOE.

Mr. Nadrizny said that he did not think anything that they had requested was out of the normal range for the budget. There was a question about diesel and the amount allocated. Mr. Catino said that there were serious cost reductions during the winter when there was basically no snow. However, cutting fuel is not a good idea. Mr. Catino then proceeded to list a number of line items that had either been cut or reduced.

Council Member Newton asked if Mr. Nadrizny had been training his staff about maintaining the equipment. Mr. Nadrizny said that for a piece of equipment like the sweeper, they have the company come in and train the staff and then also have staff go with new staff to show them how to operate the equipment. He added that the Roadway staff has been trained to operate the payloaders and other equipment because Roadway staff fills in where needed.

Council President Nieves asked whether they were using the State contract for the diesel. Mr. Flatto said that he coordinates all those types of contracts and by buying in bulk they save money. When the oil prices drop, they try to take advantage of the opportunity.

Mr. Flatto said that one department had run out of fuel and was paying retail price, but Mr. Flatto said that he was able to negotiate a better price, so that department should be up and running again.

Council President Nieves said that she wanted to know if the Department had ever followed through on buying hybrid trucks.

Mr. Nadrizny said that the hybrids require an electrical infrastructure to support the vehicles and they are very expensive. Also, there have been a number of fires for electrical vehicles and if one went up in the garage, the City would lose a lot of equipment.

Mr. Flatto said that the State does have a grant for the hybrid recharging station.

Mr. Nadrizny said that all of the mechanics are trained on regular vehicles, so it would also cost to train them to service the electric vehicles. He suggested that they consider a few smaller vehicles first or maybe a sweeper first.

Council Member Cruz said that he agreed with Mr. Nadrizny about the trucks. He said that when he worked for the transportation department, he was cross trained.

Council Member McCarthy said that he felt that the diesel was going down and they should cut the budget amount. Mr. Catino said that right now they were looking at going over \$600,000. Council Member McCarthy said that he would like to see the data Mr. Catino was reviewing. Mr. Flatto said that the gas prices per barrel had dropped from \$89 to \$70 per barrel and then spiked and now was back down to \$70. It is very difficult to predict.

Council Member Pereira then spoke about the Toters that are left on the street for days at a time. It looks terrible. Mr. Nadrizny said that it was a blight issue and they were working with the Health Department about a fine for this. Council Member Pereira said that these were flagrant violations and they could generate revenue for the City.

Council Member Newton said that he heard that some staff had disconnected some of the GPS locators on City vehicles. He suggested that Mr. Nadrizny check the vehicles. Mr. Nadrizny said that Mr. Curry would check the GPS on the truck to verify they are operating correctly.

Mr. Dancho said that he appreciated being heard. They will be opening up the bear habitat on May 20th and invitations will be going out. Mr. Dancho displayed the photo of a golden tamarin and said that they had four baby otters born recently. Last year was the 100th Anniversary of the Zoo and Mr. Dancho said that he was celebrating 40 years with the Zoo. There will be a free Saturday admission for all Bridgeport residents.

Mr. Dancho gave a very brief overview of the upcoming programs. The new tiger habitat will start this fall and there are some State funding that will be used to construct the tiger habitat.

Council Member Mack said that he had seen the street sweepers out and felt that they are a lot of things happening when the sweepers are out on the weekend. Mr. Nadrizny said that they have main roads that they try to sweep twice a week. They have to time it to avoid the Toters being on the street. They also sweep the parks.

Council Member Mack said that there were a lot of vehicles parked on the weekend. Mr. Nadrizny said that they could send Council Member Mack the written schedule. State law requires them to sweep the City Streets. He said that they are not just sweeping sand, but also sweeping trash up. Council Member Mack said that he had a problem with the timing.

Council Member Burns asked about the seasonal boat captain that was for Pleasure Beach. The full-time boat captain is actually acting as a Harbor Master. Council Member Burns asked for more details about the Harbor Master duties. A discussion followed about whether the Harbor Master was a seasonal position.

Council Member Burns said that they were trying to get more park stickers onto cars. He said that having two checkpoints to get the stickers seemed cumbersome. Mr. Nadrizny said that the staff physically attach the stickers to the vehicles so that they can't be sold to non-residents.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there were people who love Bridgeport but post queries online about getting a park sticker even though they live out of town.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it was important for the City to maintain the Harbor Master positions so they can get the Federal Grants. The waters need to be maintained and someone has to be on call at all times. She said that she just wanted to make sure that the individual was qualification. Mr. Nadrizny said that the individual had been in the position before Mr. Nadrizny became Director but he would look into it.

Council Member McCarthy asked if there was someone who identified as the Harbor Master. Mr. Nadrizny said that the boat captain identified as the Harbor Master. Mr. Nadrizny said that there were Coast Guard requirements and other qualifications for the position.

Council Member Pereira said that on page 320, the position was being unfunded. She said Mr. Nadrizny had been in his position for three years while this individual had been acting as the Harbor Master. Mr. Nadrizny said that the boat captain worked full time with the previous Harbor Master before the official Harbor Master retired. He repeated that he would look into this.

Council Member Pereira said that she was shocked that this position was in the budget for seven years when the position was vacant.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
MAY 4, 2023**

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

OTHERS: Council Member(s): J. Cruz, M. Pereira, R. Roman-Christy & M. Valle; Thomas Gaudett, Deputy Chief of Staff; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Kathleen Brickett, OPM; Anthony Paoletto

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the Public Hearing to order at 6:14 p.m. He requested the Committee members to introduce themselves.

Co-chair Burns said that Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia had informed him that there was a death in her family. A quorum was present.

OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. Chris Caruso
208 Beechmont Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Mr. Caruso came forward and said that he was concerned with the creation of a Parks Director. There are 47 parks in Bridgeport. The three largest are Seaside Park, Beardsley Park and Pleasure Beach, but there are many pocket parks. He said that the position should be open for public review and have qualified candidates. The Charter calls for a Parks Director. It did not call for the Parks Director to merge into Public Facilities. He said that the Tree Warden salary is a 103,000. It has to be a professional. The last Parks Director was Charlie Carroll and that was 15 years ago. Seaside Park and Beardsley are refuges for those residents who aren't able to go on vacation.

Mr. Caruso then spoke about other cities that have Park Rangers. He said that he would encourage people to consider having Park Rangers.

Ms. Gemeem Davis

Generation Now
Bridgeport, CT

Ms. Gemeem Davis came forward and thanked the Council. She said that last week, several members of Generation NOW were present to speak about giving more money to the BOE and she was just present to confirm that the District does need the funding for all of the things that other nearby school Districts have the Bridgeport Students don't have. She said that she thought it was doable. It won't be easy and will hurt, but this is for the children. It is time for the District to get on the right track.

Council Member Maria Pereira

206 Bradley Street
Bridgeport, CT

Council Member Pereira said that there had been a great deal of mis-information given out at the last Public Hearing. She then spoke about a \$14 million dollar allocation for education and said that she had done an analysis of the data from the Office of Fiscal Analysis regarding the bill for Educational Funding. This cost analysis was done by the legislative branch of the government. Council Member Pereira then went on to give the various figures involved including Charter Schools and ECS.

Council Member Burns asked if anyone else present who wished to address the Committee at this time. Hearing no response, Council Member Burns closed the Public Hearing on the Operating Budget at 6:25 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
MAY 4, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Scott Burns, Co-chair, Ernest Newton, Co-chair, Jeanette Herron, Matthew McCarthy, Tyler Mack, Mary McBride-Lee

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): J. Cruz, M. Pereira, R. Roman-Christy & A. Boyd; Kathleen Brickett, OPM; Thomas Gaudett, Deputy Chief of Staff; K. Flatto, Finance Director; N. Nkwo, OPM Director; Chris Caruso

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. He had everyone introduce themselves. A quorum was present.

Co-chair Burns said that Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia was not present due to a death in the family.

Council Member Burns said that there were some items that they did not exhibit at the previous meeting and they will be reviewing the Mayor's Office. Council Member Newton said that they had interviewed the majority of departments and they will be adjusting the budget numbers.

Mr. Gaudett said that the State Legislature was voting. He said that it appears that the State will be passing some legislation about early voting and there may be a way to apply for funding for the cost of early votes.

Mr. Gaudett said that there were some major changes for CMERS, which will help the various towns and cities and will save everyone money. Both the BOE and the City will have some significant savings.

Mr. Gaudett then spoke about his meeting with the Speaker of the House and while things look promising, there is a possibility that the Governor may veto the budget. Mr. Gaudett said that he felt good about the budget, but could not guarantee anything. He also mentioned the PILOT payments and said that they would not be re-formulated this year.

Council Member Newton said that he had received a number of phone calls that expressed appreciation of how hard the City's delegation has worked for the City.

Mr. Gaudett said that there has been a dispute about the phasing in of the ECS funding and gave a general update about current status.

Council Member Burns asked when the CMERS savings would happen. Mr. Gaudett said that the savings will not happen until next year. He said that they have reduced the percentage in the COLA formula. He also said that there are employees who feel they are forced to retire, but the changes may allow municipal employees to continue working without sacrificing their retirements.

Mr. Flatto said that CCM had just released the Republican Legislature budget and that it also includes the CMERS information.

Council Member Pereira said that there would be at least one election with the early voting since she expects President Biden to have to primary.

Council Member McCarthy said that there have been times when the projected revenue did not come in but Mr. Flatto and Mr. Nkwo were able to work the number around so that the City ended up with a surplus. Mr. Gaudett reviewed the details with the Committee. Discussion followed.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she felt that the delegation was working well for the City and she thanked Mr. Gaudett for running his mouth for the City.

Council Member Pereira said that the CT State Comptroller will be coming to Bridgeport for a press release about CMERS. Mr. Gaudett said that the date had not been confirmed yet.

Council Member A. Boyd joined the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Council Member Cruz asked why constitutional officers come to Bridgeport and then the City is forgotten during Budget time. Mr. Gaudett said that the elected officials he met with agreed that Bridgeport needs more financial support. Discussion followed.

Council Member Newton explained that due to the Sheff vs. O'Neill decision, Hartford will always receive more money due to a court decree. New Haven has more magnet schools than Bridgeport and they get more financial support.

Council Member Burns asked how this potential reduction would affect the CMERS payment. Mr. Nkwo said that the amount would be credited towards the overall savings. The discussion moved to the accounting details.

Council Member Burns said that Mr. Nkwo had compiled some draft changes for the Committee to discuss. He then reviewed the numbers that had been adjusted. Mr. Nkwo said that the interest rates had increased significantly. Council Member Newton said that he would like to know how much they were making on interest. Mr. Flatto said that up until recently, there was no interest to speak of. Council Member Newton said that the Budget Committee should know how much they are earning in interest.

The discussion moved to parking violation increase. Mr. Nkwo said that in order to attain the parking revenue, the parking enforcement has to increase.

The Committee then moved to the General Fund Decreases. Council Member Newton stated that he does not like counting on revenue that they have not actually collected. Mr. Flatto, as an Airport Commissioner, said that he thought the sale was imminent.

Council Member Pereira spoke about an 8 acre parcel on Boston Avenue that was only appraised at \$3 million dollars. She said that someone lined their pockets. Mr. Nkwo pointed out that he was not a real estate agent or appraiser. Council Member Newton said that he would speak to the School Building Committee and OPED about this. Mr. Nkwo said that the school building no longer belongs to the School District. Discussion followed.

The Committee then moved to the General Fund Increases. Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview of the proposed changes.

Mr. Nkwo said that they were transferring the allocated Council Member travel expenses into the stipend because the amount of paperwork was becoming too difficult. Discussion followed about the details involved and possibly going back to the use of a 1099 form for the Council Members.

Mr. Gaudett suggested that the Committee decided to add the COLA increase now so that it can be factored into the budget on a regular basis and that making a decision on what the base allocation should be. Council Member Pereira said that she was opposed to this.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about having a press secretary. Council President Nieves said that a press secretary could be handling several roles. She added that the press secretary would also manage constituent services. Council Member Burns said that he and Council Member Mack had been in contact with Civil Service about the press secretary and this particular budget position was simply a placeholder. Discussion followed.

Council Member Roman-Christy left the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

Mr. Nkwo then gave an overview of the General Fund increases line by line.

Mr. Flatto said that he thought that improvements in the Council Chambers should be in the Capital Budget. Council President Nieves said that it might be covered by ARRA funding.

The discussion moved to converting a part time custodian at the Senior Center to a full time custodian. They wish to have one full time custodian and one part time custodian. Council Member Pereira said that she was concerned that having one full time person would require an extra \$38,000 in benefits rather than two part time people. Several other Council Members agreed.

The discussion moved to the Public Facilities where there was a Maintainer 1 who was acting as a Clerical Assistant. Council Member Pereira said that an Maintainer employee that was acting as a clerical assistant would lead to union grievances and Labor Relations issues. A lengthy discussion followed about the actual number of maintainers needed.

Council Member Cruz left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

The discussion moved to the Harbor Master. Council Member Burns said that Mr. Gaudett has found the 2016 letter from Governor Malloy that named the individual who was acting as the Harbor Master to the position. The State of Connecticut requires the City have a Harbor Master. Mr. Gaudett said that as far as he understood, the previous Harbor Master retired, the Governor appointed the current individual who has been acting as Harbor Master, but apparently the City did not sign off on all the paperwork.

Council Member Herron said that she would like to see a job description and would like to confirm that he was qualified.

Council Member Pereira asked how it was that the boat captain was acting as the Harbor Master for seven years without someone noticing. She said that this was outrageous.

Council Member Pereira said that she had a problem with the fact that Atty. Anastasi was being paid as a City Attorney. She said that she had the contracts for Atty. Anastasi along with two other attorneys. Council Member Burns stated that Atty. Anastasi was filling out the previous City Attorney's term. He is only receiving a part-time salary.

Council Member Pereira said that she had a problem with Atty. Pacacha because he lives in Florida. Council Member Pereira also said that she had a problem with Atty. Anastasi having a City computer to use and using a City office. She said that she wanted to see a list of the pending legal cases.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that the employee had worth and deserved to be paid for their work.

Council Member Burns said that the Council Members do receive quarterly statements about pending litigation.

The discussion moved to the Chief Administrator's Office and the reductions that were made.

Mr. Nkwo said that there was a line for Police Administration. There had been a proposal for combining the Police and Fire headquarters. Council Member Burns spoke with both the Police Chief and the Fire Chief about the combined headquarters and neither of them were in favor of the idea. The funds will be used for a staffing study and a study for Police Headquarters.

Mr. Nkwo said that the line is present to clarify the intent and neither of the proposed projects were ever included in the budget.

A lengthy discussion followed about the reduction in vacant Police positions and the fringe benefits associated with those positions.

**** COMMISSIONER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "FINANCE PRESENTATION" AS EXHIBIT 05-03-2023-A.**

**** COMMISSIONER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COMMISSIONER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "PUBLIC FACILITIES" AS EXHIBIT 05-03-2023-B.**

**** COMMISSIONER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COMMISSIONER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "PILOT LISTING " AS EXHIBIT 05-04-2023-A.**

**** COMMISSIONER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COMMISSIONER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED "FIRE OT – OVERTIME" AS EXHIBIT 05-04-2023-B.**

**** COMMISSIONER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member McBride-Lee invited everyone to her book signing on May 20th at the African American Museum in Stratford.

Council Member Newton said that they were hoping that they would vote on the budget in order to bring the finalized Budget to the Council on Monday for a vote.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
MAY 6, 2023**

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

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves; Council Member(s): A. Castillo, J. Cruz, F. Hodges, M. Lyons, M. Pereira & R. Smith; Thomas Gaudett, Deputy Chief of Staff; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Anthony Paoletto, Kathleen Brickett, OPM; Constance Vickers, Mayor's Office; Mary

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Newton called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m. A quorum was present.

Mr. Nwko distributed an updated copy of the FY 2024 BAC Proposed General Fund Budget. A second summary sheet was also handed out that highlighted the changes. Council Member Burns reviewed the line items on the summary sheet.

The discussion moved to a surcharge for the police work when they supervise for a contractor job. It was pointed out that the amount for that work was part of the police contract.

The potential sale of the airport was the next item discussed. Council Member Newton reminded everyone that if the airport generates any revenue, that money stays at the airport.

Council Member Cruz asked which department would be receiving the funding for the Opioid reimbursement. Council Member Cruz said that he wanted to see the Health Department receive funding for addiction programs. He added that this was also true for the cannabis revenue. Mr. Flatto said that they had started to receive funding for the opioid. Council Member Cruz said that people were dying and he wished to be part of the conversation for the programs.

Council Member Pereira asked for clarification on the parking revenue for the amphitheater. She had concerns about the Sound on Sound's use of municipal parking lots. Council Member Newton reminded everyone that the City had entered into a contract with Live Nation. Council President Nieves said that the Council would have to write a resolution to bring the contract back for renegotiation to change things.

Council Member Pereira asked about the revenue for the Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course. Mr. Flatto said that the work had been completed on the front 9 holes and now that they were working on the back 9.

Council Member Pereira asked about the reduction of the permits for electrical and plumbing permits. Mr. Nwko said that they can't project the electrical, plumbing and heating revenue individually, so an estimate was created.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the Parks Board was receiving revenue from Sacred Heart for the use of the parking lots at the Golf Course and the other nearby City-owned property.

Council Member Cruz left the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

The discussion returned to the parking charges for the amphitheater. Council President Nieves said that the department in charge of that building needs to do their job.

Council Member Newton explained that he had confirmed the Governor is the person that selects the Harbor Master.

The Veterans have been relocated to the Eisenhower Center. Council President Nieves said that there had been a tentative location identified for the Health Department. Discussion followed.

Council Member Pereira asked about having tractor trailer cabs parked on the street all over the city. Council Member Newton said that this was not a budget issue. Council Member Pereira said that they could tow the vehicles but they need a city lot to park these vehicles.

Council President Nieves said that she would like to move the Parking Enforcement back to Public Facilities. The Police Chief has said that he would rather have the officers back on the street rather than in the office. Council Member Newton reviewed the reason why the department was moved from Public Facilities to the Police Department.

Council Member Pereira said that according to the Connecticut General Statutes, the sworn police officers were the only ones who have the authority to ticket a vehicle parking on the street or a right of way. Parking Enforcement officers can only ticket in private lots. She said that the officers would grieve if they are moved from their current positions.

The discussion then moved to comp time and the City Attorney's office.

RECESS

Council Member Burns announced a recess at 1:03 p.m. He reconvened the meeting at 1:25 p.m.

The discussion moved to the suggested increases. The Committee discussed the re-establishment of the Parks Department as a separate entity from Public Facilities.

Council Member Herron said that there had been two new attorneys hired and those attorneys had never been introduced to the Council. She said that she was not in favor of having either of the two Deputy Directors move up into the Parks Director position.

Council Member Smith left the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

Council Member Lyons asked why the Department of Aging was listed under the Health Department. Mr. Gaudett explained that while the Department of Aging was a stand-alone Department that was placed under Public Facilities to help with the upkeep of the facilities. Later it was moved to the Health Department, but the staff had very little to do with. He said that the staff had asked to be moved back to Public Facilities. Discussion followed.

Council Member Hodges said for the record that the school to prison pipeline was directly connected to education. He said that it was clear that no one at the meeting cared about the children and the students were getting a substandard education.

Council Member Newton pointed out that if the Council only had to worry about the BOE budget, it would be one thing. However, they have the rest of the City to worry about. It is wrong to say that no one cares about the children. The State also has responsibility towards the students.

Council Member Castillo said that Bridgeport was a City of 68% minorities but there were no minorities in leadership. He suggested making the Parks Manager as a Park Director. Mr. Nwoko said that the Council has the authority to provide the funding for the position, but does not have the authority to select the employee.

Council Member Hodges said that he would be coming back next year because he was not satisfied about the quality of education. He said that there was a direct line between the quality of Education and poverty. He said that they used to have wood shop and other vocational training but they don't have any of those courses anymore.

The Committee then took a series of consensus votes on various portions of the proposed budget changes.

Council Member Lyons and Council Member Castillo left at 2:33 p.m.

Council Member Burns suggested that rather than retained the employee who is not qualified to be a Tree Warden, the employee should be given the title of Tree Inspector. Once that individual becomes qualified, the job title can be changed to Tree Warden.

Council Member Burns noted that the Airport Director, the Planning Director and the Health Director has all resigned their position within the last month.

Council Member Mack said that OPED had requested another Deputy Director. He said that he would not support that. Council Member Burns said that the Department could generate revenue. Discussion followed.

The Bridgeport Promise program was the next one discussed. Council Member Mack gave a brief overview of the program and Council Member Herron said that people in the outside agencies would be watching over the administration of the program.

Council Member Mack suggested cutting the marketing position.

Council Member Pereira asked for the details regarding the gasoline costs, which Mr. Nwko reviewed with her.

RECESS

Council Member Newton announced a recess at 3:16 p.m. Council Member Newton reconvened the meeting at 4:38 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE GENERAL FUND REVENUE INCREASES (A) AS FOLLOWS:**

COUNCIL VOTE: REVENUE INCREASES (A)						
BAC Proposed General Fund Revenue Increases:						
Below are the Budget & Appropriations Committee proposed changes to the Mayor's FY2024 Proposed General Fund Budget.						
Department	Account #	Object	Object / Description	FY2024 Mayor's Proposed Budget	FY2024 BAC Proposed Budget	BAC Proposed Revenue Increases
Comptroller Dpt	01010000	41513	Cannabis Sales Tax	250,000	350,000	100,000 L
Treasurer Department	01045000	41246	Earnings on Investments	2,500,000	3,300,000	800,000 L
Parks Administration	01355000	41635	Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course Re	1,900,000	2,100,000	200,000 L
Public Facilities Administrati	01300000	41650	Parking Violations	0	1,500,000	1,500,000 L
Economic Development	01450000	41687	Parking Revenue-Amphitheater	10,000	85,000	75,000 L
Weights and Measures	01586000	41252	Annual Fees	90,000	100,000	10,000 L
Police Department	01250000	41367	Redeemed Vehicle Surcharge	38,000	125,000	87,000 L
Total Revenue Increases				4,788,000	7,560,000	2,772,000

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE THE GENERAL FUND REVENUE DECREASES (B) AS FOLLOWS:**

BAC VOTE: REVENUE DECREASES (B)					
BAC Proposed General Fund Revenue Decreases					
Below are the BAC proposed changes to the Mayor's FY2024 proposed general fund budget.					
Department	Account #	Object / Description	FY2024 Mayor's Proposed Budget	FY2024 BAC Proposed Budget	BAC Proposed Revenue Decreases
REVENUE DECREASES:					
ITS Department	01108000	41610 Freedom Of Information Fees	250	0	-250
Other Financing	01610000	41544 Sale of City Owned Properties	7,000,000	5,062,760	-1,937,240
Police Department	01250000	41650 Parking Violations	1,200,000	0	-1,200,000
Total Revenue Decreases			8,200,250	5,062,760	-3,137,490
Net Revenue Incr./((Decr.)					-365,490

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS INCREASES (C) AS FOLLOWS:**

BAC PROPOSED: APPROPRIATIONS INCREASES VOTE (C)					
Budget & Appropriations Committee Vote of General Fund Appropriation Increases					
Below are the BAC proposed changes to the Mayor's FY2024 proposed general fund budget.					
Department	Account #	Object / Description	FY2024 Mayor's Proposed Budget	FY2024 BAC Proposed Budget	BAC Proposed Appropriation Increases
Central Grants	01005000	51000 Salary	300,125	371,919	-71,794
Central Grants	01005000	52504 Merf Pension Contribution	76,567	94,774	-18,207
Central Grants	01005000	52360 Medicare	4,214	5,255	-1,041
Central Grants	01005000	52917 Health Insurance	32,095	59,580	-27,485
Registrar of Voters	01050000	51100 Salary-Part-time seasonal	180,000	200,000	-20,000
Legislative Dept	01095000	51000 Full Time Salary(Legislative Direct	0	58,967	-58,967
Legislative Dept	01095000	52504 Merf Pension Contribution	0	14,954	-14,954
Legislative Dept	01095000	52360 Medicare	0	855	-855
Legislative Dept	01095000	52917 Health Insurance	0	27,485	-27,485
Legislative Dept	01095000	56180 Other Services	60,000	80,000	-20,000
Legislative Dept	01095000	53905 Emp Tuition and/or Travel Reimb	200	1,000	-800
Legislative Dept	01095000	51402 City Council Stipends	180,000	220,000	-40,000
Legislative Dept	01095000	51000 Full Time Earned Pay	310,943	320,943	-10,000
City Clerk	01050000	51000 Full Time Earned Pay	520,024	530,024	-10,000
Town Clerk	01015000	51000 Full Time Earned Pay	518,801	527,801	-9,000
Finance Administration	01100000	51000 Full Time Earned Pay	629,469	632,469	-3,000
Policy and Management	01100000	51151 Special Events Regular 1.5x Overt	150,000	950,000	-800,000
Police DPT-Special Events	01310000	51000 Salary	2,081,052	2,098,823	-17,771
Pub Fac. Facility Maint.	01310000	52504 Merf Pension Contribution	473,169	483,939	-10,770
Pub Fac. Facility Maint.	01310000	52360 Medicare	27,320	27,578	-258
Pub Fac. Facility Maint.	01310000	52917 Health Insurance	483,169	510,654	-27,485
Pub Fac. Roadway Maint.	01320000	51000 Salary	2,089,250	2,094,895	-5,645
Pub Fac. Roadway Maint.	01320000	52504 Merf Pension Contribution	491,445	492,876	-1,431
Pub Fac. Roadway Maint.	01320000	52360 Medicare	30,688	31,507	-819
Pub Fac-Transfer Station	01330000	56210 Recycling Services	25,985	65,985	-40,000
Department of Aging	01351000	51000 Full Time Salary	444,593	467,064	-22,471
Department of Aging	01351000	52504 Merf Pension Contribution	66,375	77,145	-10,770
Department of Aging	01351000	52360 Medicare	5,202	5,528	-326
Department of Aging	01351000	52917 Health Insurance	105,812	133,297	-27,485
Harbor Master	01390000	51000 Full Time Salary	0	80,943	-80,943
Harbor Master	01390000	52504 Merf Pension Contribution	0	20,527	-20,527

Harbor Master	01390000	52360	Medicare	0	1,173	-1,173
Hlth Dpt-Comm. Disease	01554000	51000	Full Time Salary	313,301	321,569	-8,268
Hlth Dpt-Comm. Disease	01554000	52504	Merf Pension Contribution	79,454	81,551	-2,097
Hlth Dpt-Comm. Disease	01554000	52360	Medicare	4,197	4,317	-120
Hlth Dpt-Comm. Disease	01554000	53050	Property Rental/Lease	0	55,000	-55,000
Housing Code Dpt.	01556000	51000	Full Time Salary	747,632	765,632	-18,000
Hlth Dpt. Human Services	01575000	51000	Full Time Salary	109,594	169,284	-59,690
Hlth Dpt. Human Services	01575000	52504	Merf Pension Contribution	28,059	43,196	-15,137
Hlth Dpt. Human Services	01575000	52360	Medicare	1,400	2,265	-865
Hlth Dpt. Human Services	01575000	52917	Health Insurance	38,085	65,570	-27,485
Hlth Dpt-Veterans Affairs	01578000	51000	Full Time Salary	73,343	112,108	-38,765
Hlth Dpt-Veterans Affairs	01578000	52504	Merf Pension Contribution	18,961	28,791	-9,830
Hlth Dpt-Veterans Affairs	01578000	52360	Medicare	1,063	1,625	-562
Hlth Dpt-Veterans Affairs	01578000	52917	Health Insurance	0	27,485	-27,485
Hlth Dpt-Light House Prog	01579000	51000	Full Time Salary	307,152	317,152	-10,000
Hlth Dpt-Light House Prog	01579000	52504	Merf Pension Contribution	79,301	81,837	-2,536
Hlth Dpt-Light House Prog	01579000	52360	Medicare	4,264	4,409	-145
Board of Education	01863000			239,235,977	239,735,977	-500,000
Public Facilities Administrati	01300000	51000	Full Time Earned Pay	1,776,145	2,086,894	-310,749
Public Facilities Administrati	01300000	52504	Medicare	24,140	28,646	-4,506
Public Facilities Administrati	01300000	52360	Merf Pension Contribution	443,541	522,347	-78,806
Public Facilities Administrati	01300000	52917	Health Insurance	289,263	481,658	-192,395
Pub. Fac-Dpt of Aging	01351000	all acct	Transfer of Dpt Aging.	0	656,081	-656,081
Total Expenditure Increases				252,861,370	256,281,354	-3,419,984

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it would be important to have a certified Harbor Master.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

RECESS

Council Member Newton announced a recess at 4:55 p.m. Council Member Newton reconvened the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE MOVED TO APPROVE THE GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS DECREASES (D) AS FOLLOWS:**

BAC PROPOSED: APPROPRIATIONS/EXPENDITURE DECREASES VOTE (D)						
City Council Vote Of General Fund Appropriation Decreases						
Below are the BAC proposed changes made to the Mayor's FY2024 proposed general fund budget.						
Department	Account #		Object / Description	FY2024 Mayor's Proposed Budget	FY2024 BAC Proposed Budget	BAC Proposed Appropriation Decreases
City Attorney	01060000	51099	Contracted Salaries	300,000	270,000	30,000
City Attorney	01060000	51000	salary	2,146,387	2,121,387	25,000
City Attorney	01060000	53005	Personal Property Claims	150,000	125,000	25,000
City Attorney	01060000	56130	Legal Services	625,000	600,000	25,000
City Attorney	01060000	56131	Litigation Services	175,000	150,000	25,000
Labor Relations Dept	01085000	56180	Other Services	225,000	200,000	25,000
Legislative Dept	01095000	51099	Contract Services	90,000	20,000	70,000
Legislative Dept	01095000	56250	Travel Services	40,000	0	40,000
Chief Administrative Office	01106000	51000	Full Time Salary	544,742	457,540	87,202
Chief Administrative Office	01106000	52504	Merf Pension Contribution	138,698	116,584	22,114
Chief Administrative Office	01106000	52360	Medicare	7,292	6,020	1,272
Chief Administrative Office	01106000	52917	Health Insurance	77,924	60,448	17,476
Police Administration	01250000	51320	Comp time payout	400,000	350,000	50,000
Police Administration	01250000	51322	Holiday Payout Retirement	1,100,000	950,000	150,000
Police DPT-Patrol Division	01251000	51000	Full Time Salary	18,092,644	17,491,332	601,312
Police DPT-Patrol Division	01251000	52504	Merf Pension Contribution	5,523,226	5,343,313	179,913
Police DPT-Patrol Division	01251000	52360	Medicare	239,357	230,638	8,719
Police DPT-Patrol Division	01251000	52917	Health Insurance	5,891,650	5,693,370	198,280
Pub Facility-Mun. Garage	01305000	54610	Diesel	670,000	600,000	70,000
Pub Fac.Roadway Maint.	01320000	51100	salary-P/T Seasonal	270,000	249,200	20,800
Pub Fac.Roadway Maint.	01320000	52360	Medicare	30,688	30,387	301
Pub. Fac-Parks Maint.	01356000	51000	Full Time Salary	786,837	730,798	56,039
Pub. Fac-Parks Maint.	01356000	52504	Merf Pension Contribution	191,467	177,256	14,211
Pub. Fac-Parks Maint.	01356000	52360	Medicare	18,745	17,932	813
Pub. Fac-Parks Maint.	01356000	52917	Health Insurance	295,780	268,295	27,485
Pub. Fac-Dpt of Aging	01351000	all acct	Transfer of Dpt Aging.	656,081	0	656,081
Office of the Mayor	01001000	56275	BPT Higher Education Promise PR	500,000	250,000	250,000
Communication	01107000	56160	Marketing Services	375,000	300,000	75,000
Economic Development	01450000	51000	Full Time Earned Pay	1,301,213	1,229,213	72,000
Police Department	01259000	51000	Full Time Earned Pay	4,100,245	3,789,496	310,749
Police Department	01259000	52917	Health Insurance	859,731	667,336	192,395
Police Department	01259000	52504	Merf Pension Contribution	701,907	623,101	78,806
Police Department	01259000	52360	Medicare	53,224	48,718	4,506
Other Financing	01610000	50700	Attrition	-1,000,000	-1,375,000	375,000

Total Expenditure Decreases				45,577,838	41,792,364	3,785,474
Net Expenditure Incr./.(Decr.)						365,490

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY2024 BAC PROPOSED GENERAL FUND BUDGET A-E AS ADOPTED.**

E - Total Budget as Adopted		TOTAL REVENUES	628,213,833	627,848,343	-365,490
(Votes A-D)		TOTAL EXPENDITURES	628,213,833	627,848,343	365,490

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Newton and Council Member Burns thanked everyone for their cooperation.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services