

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

**6:30 P.M.**

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council President Nieves called the Public Speaking portion of the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The City Clerk Lydia Martinez called the roll.

- 130<sup>th</sup> District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy
- 131<sup>st</sup> District: Jorge Cruz, Denese Taylor-Moye,
- 132<sup>nd</sup> District: Marcus Brown, M. Evette Brantley
- 133<sup>rd</sup> District: *Michael DeFilippo*, Jeanette Herron
- 134<sup>th</sup> District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
- 135<sup>th</sup> District: *Mary McBride-Lee*, Rosalina Roman-Christy
- 136<sup>th</sup> District: *Alfredo Castillo*, *Avelino Silva*
- 137<sup>th</sup> District: Maria Valle, Aidee Nieves
- 138<sup>th</sup> District: Maria Pereira, Samia Suliman
- 139<sup>th</sup> District: Eneida Martinez, Ernest Newton

During the roll call, there appeared to be no response from the individuals whose names are listed in italics.

Council President Nieves informed everyone that they had three minutes to address the Council.

**THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021 AT 6:30 P.M.**

**NAME**

**SUBJECT**

**Ellie Angerame**  
Executive Director  
Green Village Initiative  
497 Laurel Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Sharing how Green Village Initiative's organization adapted for the community during the pandemic and asking for intentional communication with the Council in 2021.

Dear Esteemed Members of the City Council,

Sincere condolences for the loss of Senator Gomes, a legend and one-time chef for the Green Village Initiative Youth Leadership Program. I'm pleased to come before you to advocate for the farm on Reservoir Avenue, and vision ways for us - the people of Bridgeport and our City Council - to work together in the year ahead.

Last month you heard from Briana Wahl, our Director of Operations, who shared GVI's mission, 2020 adaptations, and our work for food justice in Bridgeport.

I'm proud to introduce myself to you as GVI's new Executive Director as of last year. My insight to understand the leadership I hope to bring to GVI is informed by 22 years living here and the past five years spent managing Reservoir Community Farm. I believe in GVI's investment in generations of young people, gardeners, and families of the past decade and the urban farmers, food business owners, and city leaders to come.

GVI's work is vital. As a food justice organization we understand the power of Bridgeporters to change our food system and community health, especially during a pandemic disproportionately taking black and brown lives.

Thus, we were alarmed in November of 2020 to discover plans already in place - plans made without a public community forum - to convert the urban farm site and green space at 1469 Reservoir Avenue into a public library with budgetary approval given by the City Council on April 20, 2020.

To understand if our community had asked for this development we knocked on doors within a half mile of Reservoir Community Farm with the Sacred Heart approved survey you can find in the attached report. You will find that only 6 people of 96 collected responses had heard any kind of communication concerning plans to build a library.

This is a pattern - GVI came before you in 2019 concerning a top-down decision by council leadership converting Yaremich Drive into a one-way street that was reversed after GVI collected testimony from over 65 impacted households not in favor of the change. Decisions are being made on behalf of the community without community input.

This exclusion of community input means neighbors are now asked to make a decision between the library and our food justice work - a false and unfair choice to a City already challenged with both food insecurity and illiteracy.

GVI is in communication with the Library Board to discuss compromising to divide the land, and doing all we can to hold on to some of the space we have developed and cultivated since 2012. We hope that our district leadership will take up offers to join a community charette in order to move forward through this conflict.

We ask that 2021 will bring rigor and respect to the decisions you make for our farm and other community lands. We seek more open and transparent communications from you, our Council, with GVI, our fellow NRZ members, community gardeners, youth, market-

goers, volunteers, and neighbors who have been impacted and dismayed by the Council's decision.

We hope you can appreciate that our investment in the land of the farm, its market, and its community garden goes far beyond financial inputs - it is a space for incubating dreams, businesses, and new futures for Bridgeport.

Bridgeport can't see the same emergence of black and brown liberatory farming work, new food businesses, and community-driven economic growth as other major cities have if we work against ourselves digging up community roots. Thank you for your time.

**John Marshall Lee**  
30 Beacon Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Current Status of Civil  
Service/Employees.

Members of the City Council what do you know about City of Bridgeport employment practices? In most work environments, as an employee, you know that there is someone to whom you report on your task progress and who observes you in your field of work; they in turn are directed and report in similar fashion to a "boss". Many organizations find that training, guidance, and quality results can be obtained with regular, official oversight and record keeping including personnel records signed by and available to each party in such reviews.

Is this the normal and official process among those employed by the City of Bridgeport? Police? Fire? Teachers? Financial staff members? What is your understanding?

This process is not familiar to many current City employees whom I have questioned. Do we have rules about such matters? Have they fallen into disuse? How many grievances are filed with the City because of misunderstandings that likely would be resolved with an annual employment review process? What is the cost to taxpayers ultimately? Why are settlements kept so secret?

Accountability for one's own duties and responsibilities extend to "seeing something" and then "saying something". When employment reviews are not a regular and functioning engagement, comprehensive training, guidance, and oversight suffer a loss to say nothing about a respectful and productive attitude around completing the work tasks of a department. Why does the State of CT, who provides the City with more than \$200 Million annually employ such a practice, but Bridgeport does not, apparently?

Employment reviews are made available to everyone in a governance structure other than the highest official. Elections are the only time the people get to indicate their approval or disapproval of actions, style, honesty, or accomplishments. In our case the Mayor has represented himself as on the job 24/7 though he has been difficult to locate for as long as a month it has been reported to participate in a legal procedure. Activity as an investor in real estate takes time and our Mayor has been active in this term in this regard. What might be said about his public and private real estate activities were he to inform us fully?

Time will tell.

City of Bridgeport  
City Council Meeting  
Regular Meeting  
February 16, 2021

**Eddie Jamal**  
Phoenix Gulf  
580 North Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Proposed resolution for Amendment  
to City Code Chapter 8.90  
Regulation of the sales  
and Marketing of Tobacco Products.

Mr. Jamal said that he was present to testify against the proposed tobacco regulation. He said that he had a convenience store and kept his store open during the COVID pandemic so that the local neighbors could purchase food items.

Mr. Jamal said that while he does not like tobacco, banning tobacco would just drive the business underground. Now about 25% of the tobacco business is already underground. Taking away the tobacco would destroy a major portion of his income and also affect his employees, many of whom are working to support families.

**Yasser Alany**  
Boston Shell  
1917 Boston Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06610

Opposition to the Proposed  
Amendments to the Municipal code  
of Ordinances, amend  
Chapter 8.90 – Regulation of the  
Sales and Marketing of Tobacco Products.

Mr. Alany said that he owns a number of retail locations, including one on Boston Avenue. 70% of his sales are for flavored tobacco and cigarettes. He employs 12 people at his store, and he supports the City of Bridgeport. His business is open 24 hours a day and this ban would force him to close early and lay off employees. The ban would also give the illegal businesses a golden ticket. Trying to stop people from smoking will do the exact opposite.

**Isik Yildiz**  
Puff City  
575 E. Main Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06608

Opposition to the Proposed  
Amendments to the Municipal  
Code of Ordinances, amend  
Chapter 8.90 – Regulation of  
the Sales and Marketing of Tobacco  
Products.

Mr. Yildiz greeted the Council Members. He owns a tobacco shop. He came from Turkey to work in Bridgeport. He pointed out that his staff take extra care to make sure that they only sell to adults, not underage customers. It is hard to keep the business open during COVID-19, and there is also competition from other shop owners. But his business supports the City with taxes. Banning vape and tobacco products would mean that his employees would have to find new jobs, along with him. It is concerning to see that the City and the State would take this kind of action. He suggested that they look at Massachusetts, where the State is losing revenue because of the ban.

**David Daniels III**  
325 Lafayette Street U-5205  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Proposed Resolution for amendment  
to City Code to regulate the Sales  
and Marketing of Tobacco Products.

Mr. Daniels greeted the Council Members. He said that he was a retired Bridgeport Police Lt. And would like to address the Municipal Code of Ordinances, amend Chapter 8.90 – Regulation of the Sales and Marketing of Tobacco Products. He said that he doesn't vape but was concerned particularly that it includes menthol cigarettes. He said that this ban would force the market underground. A step in a positive direction for the public good is good, but they have to look at the long term effects. It is important to do no harm.

**Maria Pereira**  
206 Bradley Street  
CT 06610

Conduct of Maria Valle, Senator Ed  
Gomes, Governance & lack of Bridgeport,  
qualified cabinet level appointees.

Council Member Pereira said during the summer, there was a neighbor that resides on the same block as her Council representative in the 137th District. This neighbor repeatedly contacted Council Member Pereira about a developer who was caught illegally dumping on the East End. Council Member Pereira contacted a number of City Agencies via email and also copied the Council Member of the 137th District on those emails. However, she never received a response.

Council Member Pereira went to the home of the neighbor and was appalled by the absolute disregard of the developer and contacted News 12 who then broadcasted the story.

The Council Member who lives a few doors down from her own constituent then approached the neighbor's in-laws to admonish an adult woman who is the homeowner with four children for reaching out to Council Member Pereira because Council Member Pereira was not the City Council representative for that area.

Council Member Pereira said that the Council Members should not be admonishing their constituents. They are the ones that should be admonishing the Council Members.

That Council Member lives five doors down from her constituent and sees the developer on a daily basis but did not address this issue. If Council Members fulfilled their obligations, there would not be a need to reach out to other City Council Members from other Districts.

Council Member Pereira said that there was someone who described her attempts to honor the late Senator Gomes as something negative. This is disingenuous. There were only three members of the City Council that the late Senator Gomes described as friends.

Council Member Pereira said she worked very hard to back the late Senator Gomes in every election without compensation because she believed in him. She spoke about a colleague who illegally worked to prevent Senator Gomes from being on the ballot in 2018. Anything that this individual has to say is the most disingenuous.

In closing, Council Member Pereira said that this administration was in shambles because they had not had a tax assessor in over a year, which is critical in the evaluation process. There is no

Director of Civil Service after Mr. Dunn who was in an Acting capacity for 12 years, was arrested, charged and retired in September. There is no Chief of Police, after A.J. Perez was arrested, charged and resigned in September. He served over 400 days in an Acting capacity, also. There is no Health Director during this once in a lifetime pandemic when Bridgeport has the highest number of COVID cases and deaths in Connecticut and there are only 30 days left to fill that vacancy under Connecticut State Statutes. The City has not had a Director of Public Facilities in over a year.

This administration is in shambles and anyone who remains silent is complicit. Thank you.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Council President Nieves adjourned the Public Speaking session at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

**7:00 P.M.**

This meeting was conducted by teleconference.

The public was able to listen to this meeting by calling a conference line.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Ganim called the Regular Meeting of the City Council to order at 7:04 p.m.

**PRAYER**

Mayor Ganim asked Council Member McBride-Lee to lead the Council in prayer.

Council Member McBride-Lee requested a moment of silence for Council Member Newton who lost a nephew, along with Council Member McBride-Lee who lost a niece. There was also a mention of a Mr. Primus Jackson who recently passed away also. Council Member Cruz asked that all those who passed away from COVID also be remembered.

At the conclusion of the moment of silence, Council Member McBride-Lee led those present in prayer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Ganim asked City Clerk Martinez to lead those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

The City Clerk called the roll.

130<sup>th</sup> District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy  
131<sup>st</sup> District: Jorge Cruz, *Denese Taylor-Moye*  
132<sup>nd</sup> District: Marcus Brown, M. Evette Brantley  
133<sup>rd</sup> District: Michael DeFilippo, Jeanette Herron  
134<sup>th</sup> District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia  
135<sup>th</sup> District: Mary McBride-Lee, Rosalina Roman-Christy  
136<sup>th</sup> District: Avelino Silva, Alfredo Castillo  
137<sup>th</sup> District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle  
138<sup>th</sup> District: Maria Pereira, Samia Suliman  
139<sup>th</sup> District: Eneida Martinez, Ernest Newton

During the roll call, there appeared to be no response from any individual whose name is listed in italics.

**MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:**

**Approval of City Council Minutes: January 4, 2021**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 4, 2021.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said that the minutes included a ridiculous statement that she did not respond during the roll call. She stated that she was absent and the minutes should reflect this.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO CORRECT THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 4, 2021 TO REFLECT THAT COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA WAS ABSENT FOR THAT MEETING.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CORRECTION TO THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 4, 2021 TO REFLECT THAT COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA WAS ABSENT FOR THAT MEETING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**20-20 Communication from Central Grants re: Grant Submission: United Way of Coastal Fairfield County Impact Philanthropy Fund – COVID Relief for Residents in Need (#21480), FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO INCLUDE AGENDA ITEM 20-20 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: UNITED WAY OF COASTAL FAIRFIELD COUNTY IMPACT PHILANTHROPY FUND – COVID RELIEF FOR RESIDENTS IN NEED (#21480), FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

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

Council President Nieves said that there was gentleman from United Way on the call along with Ms. Papa.

Council President Nieves said Ms. DeJesus was not present due to illness. Council President Nieves gave a brief overview of the voucher program for families involved in the Rental Assistance Program to purchase food. There will be a list of stores that will accept these gift cards.

Council Member Pereira said that the grant indicated that there would be 80 \$50 gift cards purchased from local food establishments. It does not say groceries. She wished to know if the cards were for a grocery store or local restaurants.

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED AGENDA ITEM 20-20 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: UNITED**



**WAY OF COASTAL FAIRFIELD COUNTY IMPACT PHILANTHROPY FUND – COVID RELIEF FOR RESIDENTS IN NEED (#21480), FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

Council President Nieves said that it was her understanding that these were for grocery stores. Mayor Ganim said that if additional information is available, they will send it to the Council Members.

Council Member Pereira said that it would be important to purchase the cards from grocery stores located throughout the City that people could easily access.

Council President Nieves said that it was for both the smaller stores and the larger chains. She said that they would make sure it was now in the record. Mayor Ganim said that this was now in the record and it would be important not to micromanage the project.

Council Member Brantley said that usually when these types of programs for families in need are done, usually it is for grocery stores.

Council Member Newton pointed out that United Way services a broad area and he asked if it was for Bridgeport residents. He also wished to know who would be distributing them, or if there was an age limit or income limit. Council President Nieves replied that it was through City of Bridgeport Rental Assistance program and would be for Bridgeport residents.

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

**RESOLUTIONS TO BE REFERRED TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC.:**

**19-20 Resolution presented by Council President Nieves re: Proposed resolution to review and amend the Bridgeport City Council Rules of Order as Adopted on December 7, 2020, referred to Special Committee on Governance.**

**21-20 Resolution presented by Council President Nieves re: Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, amend Chapter 8.90 – Regulation of the Sales and Marketing of Tobacco Products, referred to Ordinance Committee.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO CONSOLIDATE AND REFER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

**19-20 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO REVIEW AND AMEND THE BRIDGEPORT CITY COUNCIL RULES OF ORDER AS ADOPTED ON DECEMBER 7, 2020, REFERRED TO SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE.**

**21-20 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES RE: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES,**

**AMEND CHAPTER 8.90 – REGULATION OF THE SALES AND MARKETING OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS, REFERRED TO ORDINANCE COMMITTEE.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said that she had communicated with Council President Nieves repeatedly about the creating of a City Council Rules Committee. Council Member Pereira cited Rule 12 and Rule 18 of the City Council Rules prohibits her from serving on any committee for the Council since she serves as the alternate. She appointed herself as a member of this Committee and this is prohibited. She may not serve on the Committee.

Mayor Ganim reminded everyone that these items were for referral to Committees.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO CONSOLIDATE AND REFER THE ITEMS PASSED WITH EIGHTEEN (18) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, BROWN, BRANTLEY, HERRON, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, SILVA, CASTILLO, NIEVES, VALLE, PEREIRA, SULIMAN, MARTINEZ AND NEWTON) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (DEFILIPPO).**

**MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):**

**\*17-20 Ordinance Committee Report re: Resolution for the City Attorney to draft an ordinance Prohibiting Targeted Residential Picketing within 300 Feet of the Property Line of Certain Residential Dwellings.**

**\*37-19 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Resolution for the Paving and Development of the Municipal Surface Parking Lot at the corner of East Main Street and Nichols Street, DENIED.**

**\*145-19 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Resolution to Ensure Public Spaces Reflect Diversity and Values, DENIED.**

**\*08-20 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Resolution urging the Federal Government to pass the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (H.R. 763) in order to address the current climate emergency as so declared this day.**

**\*10-20 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Settlement of Pending Litigation with Bridgeport Firefighters Local 834.**

Mayor Ganim asked if any Council Member wished to have an item removed from the Consent Calendar.

Council Member Brantley requested that Agenda Items 37-19, and 145-19 be removed. She said that they were two items that were denied in ECDE because of the lack of information. Both sponsors of Agenda Item 37-19 agreed that the item should be denied at this time.

Regarding Agenda Item 145-19, the Committee agreed to deny the item since it dealt with erecting a statue and there were no funds available.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia requested that Agenda Items 17-20 and 08-20 be removed.

Mayor Ganim announced that there was no Consent Calendar.

**17-20 Ordinance Committee Report re: Resolution for the City Attorney to draft an ordinance Prohibiting Targeted Residential Picketing within 300 Feet of the Property Line of Certain Residential Dwellings.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN MOVED AGENDA ITEM 17-20 ORDINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION FOR THE CITY ATTORNEY TO DRAFT AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING TARGETED RESIDENTIAL PICKETING WITHIN 300 FEET OF THE PROPERTY LINE OF CERTAIN RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**

Council Member Cruz said that he was trying to understand what the action was. Mayor Ganim said that it was a vote to refer it to the City Attorney's Office.

Council Member Burns said he was not able to attend the Committee meeting and was concerned about it encroaching on First Amendment rights based notwithstanding what they saw in Washington D.C.

Council Member Brown said that they had sent the item to the City Attorney to draft language but had not heard anything back. Now this was a referral for an opinion.

Council Member Newton said that he was glad that this was just being referred to the City Attorney.

Council Member Pereira said that she had never voted against a referral to Committee because she believes in debate. She said that during the Committee meeting, she had stated that the ACLU would become involved in this. There was a CT Post article that stated that this would be illegal.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she wanted to wait to hear what the City Attorney's Office decides. She said that she would not like to have them in front of her house, but the resolution would put them in front of her neighbor's house.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would be voting against it and did not understand why it was on the agenda. There are too many resolutions going through without the proper documentation. It could be a touchy legal situation.

Council Member Brown said that it was on the Consent Calendar because it was passed in Committee unanimously. He said that a vote by the Council would carry more weight than just something on a letterhead.

Council Member Cruz said that this was not written in stone and they should give the City Attorney the benefit of the doubt. Declaring that they would vote against it before they even hear the City Attorney's opinion is wrong.

Council Member Lyons said that she would like to have a legal opinion.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 17-20 ORDINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION FOR THE CITY ATTORNEY TO DRAFT AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING TARGETED RESIDENTIAL PICKETING WITHIN 300 FEET OF THE PROPERTY LINE OF CERTAIN RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS WITH THIRTEEN (13) IN FAVOR (CRUZ, BROWN, BRANTLEY, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE, SILVA, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, PEREIRA, SULIMAN, MARTINEZ AND NEWTON) SIX (6) OPPOSED (VIZZO-PANICCIA, DEFILIPPO, MCCARTHY, LYONS, BURNS, ROMAN-CHRISTY).**

**37-19 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Resolution for the Paving and Development of the Municipal Surface Parking Lot at the corner of East Main Street and Nichols Street, DENIED.**

**145-19 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Resolution to Ensure Public Spaces Reflect Diversity and Values, DENIED.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

**37-19 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION FOR THE PAVING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MUNICIPAL SURFACE PARKING LOT AT THE CORNER OF EAST MAIN STREET AND NICHOLS STREET, DENIED.**

**145-19 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION TO ENSURE PUBLIC SPACES REFLECT DIVERSITY AND VALUES, DENIED.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO SUPPORT THE COMMITTEE DENIALS FOR AGENDA ITEMS 37-19 AND 145-19 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**08-20 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Resolution urging the Federal Government to pass the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (H.R. 763) in order to address the current climate emergency as so declared this day.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 08-20 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION URGING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PASS THE ENERGY INNOVATION AND CARBON DIVIDEND**

**ACT (H.R. 763) IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THE CURRENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY AS SO DECLARED THIS DAY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said that Council Member Burns had brought forward this item along with Representative Gresko and someone from CCL. It was stated on the record that Jim Himes was in favor of H.R. 763. Council Member Pereira said that there was a conversation about this with Congressman Himes and she received a letter from him telling her that “going forward, please do not state on the record that I support bills that I have no knowledge about.” She said that she had responded to Congressman Himes and explained that Council Member Burns and Representative Gresko said he was supporting this bill.

Council Member Pereira went on the Congressional website and Congressman Himes was a co-sponsor of the bill in 2019. The bill has died because there is a new Congress.

Council Member Pereira repeated that she had received a formal letter from Congressman Himes on his letterhead stating that he was not supporting this bill. She said that she wanted this on the record because she did not know anything about this bill. It was Council Member Burns that introduced the resolution and made the assertion that Congressman Himes supported it. She said she wanted to clear the record on this.

Council Member Brantley said that she was supporting this in spite of the fact that Congressman Himes was not supporting this. It is an environmental issue that everyone is concerned with. If Congressman Himes is not supporting this, they will not use his name. She would like to see a copy of the letter Council Member Pereira received.

Council Member Pereira said that she would be voting against it because she did not get the answers to her questions in Committee.

Council Member Burns said that he was in touch with Congressman Himes and they were pleased to know that the Council was moving ahead with this. There were a number of CT cities, such as Stamford and New Haven that have passed a resolution, and Hartford is working on it. This is a State-wide initiative and now that there is a President who cares about climate change, Council Member Burns was supporting this.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 08-20 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION URGING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PASS THE ENERGY INNOVATION AND CARBON DIVIDEND ACT (H.R. 763) IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THE CURRENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY AS SO DECLARED THIS DAY PASSED WITH SIXTEEN (16) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, BROWN, BRANTLEY, HERRON, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, SILVA, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SULIMAN, MARTINEZ, AND NEWTON) AND THREE (3) OPPOSED, (VIZZO-PANICCIA, PEREIRA AND DEFILIPPO).**

**10-20 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Settlement of Pending Litigation with Bridgeport Firefighters Local 834.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED AGENDA ITEM 10-20 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION WITH BRIDGEPORT FIREFIGHTERS LOCAL 834.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said that there was no Executive Summary which is required. She said that she had read the resolution and it was about a firefighter who was fired twice and the Department filed an appeal to rehire this individual. She said that the documentation was about the elimination of a position.

Atty. Mitola said that this was a mandamus action brought by the Firefighter Maintenance Union and had nothing to do with Firefighter Green's case. The Executive Summary was sent out on January 11, 2021 to the City Clerk's Office. The item was presented to the Miscellaneous Matters Committee three weeks ago. The Committee voted unanimously to approve it.

This will settle the mandamus action brought by the Firefighter Maintenance Union. It is a reorganization of that department. Best case scenario is that the City saves \$87,000 a year due to the settlement. The worst case scenario would be the City saves \$83,000 a year. Any additional information would require an Executive Session.

Council Member Pereira said that the case refers to something she did not understand.

Mayor Ganim said that rather than stating there was no Executive Summary was incorrect, she should ask about the Executive Session.

Council Member Pereira said that she was trying to understand why the litigation was listed in the agreement. Mayor Ganim said that he did not know.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 10-20 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION WITH BRIDGEPORT FIREFIGHTERS LOCAL 834 PASSED WITH EIGHTEEN (18) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, BROWN, BRANTLEY, HERRON, DEFILIPPO, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, SILVA, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SULIMAN, MARTINEZ, AND NEWTON) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

**MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON:**

**137-19 Education and Social Services Committee Report re: Resolution to Review the Use of Bridgeport Police as School Resource Officers.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED AGENDA ITEM 137-19 EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION TO REVIEW THE USE OF BRIDGEPORT POLICE AS SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

Council Member Cruz said that they had many meetings with Lt. Grech and that the goal of the meetings were to determine whether the SROs were physically in the school building. They are not. The case was closed as far as the SROs.

Council Member Pereira said that this was initially referred in July to the Education Committee. It was on the agenda for months. On December 9th, they were concerned that Acting Chief Garcia did not attend and the item was tabled with the condition that Lt. Cotto, Lt. Grech, Acting Chief Garcia and the Superintendent of Schools attend the next meeting.

During the January 13th meeting, Council Member McCarthy stated that Acting Chief Garcia was not on the call. Council Member Cruz announced that they were abusing the Police Department by repeatedly asking questions and he had made the decision that the Committee did not need to speak to Acting Chief Garcia.

Council Member Pereira said that with the democratic form of government votes matter. The only people who don't believe that are Donald Trump and his loyal cult followers. In a democracy, Council Members Cruz and Silva are not kings and Council Member Pereira is not one of their subjects in court. When a vote is taken, that vote is binding, whether it is in Committee or on the full Council. For either of them to say after the unanimous December 9th vote, that those people did not need to come to a meeting was outrageous and unlawful. She said that she wanted to place this on the record.

Council President Nieves said that she wished to clarify this and the reason that they moved it was because they had exhausted the subject. The obligation to keep the SROs on ends this year with the COPS grant. There has been language introduced by Senator Murphy about the SROs. There have been conversations about this transition of the SROs in the Police Department. These are regular Bridgeport Police Officers filling the SRO positions. The Federal grant has been changed and there is a bill being drafted in Hartford. The grant will be ending. They need some time to do the restructuring. The conversation has been exhausted.

Council Member Lyons said that she understood Council President Nieves's comments and the restructuring. Lt. Grech explained about the roles that the SROs had. Her concern was about the legality and Council Member Lyons noted that Acting Chief Garcia had been requested to attend but did not attend the Committee meetings. Because of this, she will be voting no.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that this was a grey area that was not part of the City Council. This is a personnel matter and not a budgetary issue. She said that she would wait for the information. Let Lt. Grech do his job along with officers.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 137-19 EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION TO REVIEW THE USE OF BRIDGEPORT POLICE AS SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS PASSED WITH TWELVE (12) IN FAVOR (BURNS, CRUZ, BROWN, BRANTLEY, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, SILVA, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, MARTINEZ, AND NEWTON) AND FIVE (5) OPPOSED (DEFILIPPO, PEREIRA, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCCARTHY AND LYONS) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (SULIMAN).**

**ITEMS FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION:**

**18-20 Communication from Mayor re: Appointment of Dr. Lesly J. Valbrun (U) to the Ethics Commission, FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD THE FOLLOWING ITEM FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION: 18-20 COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR RE: APPOINTMENT OF DR. LESLY J. VALBRUN (U) TO THE ETHICS COMMISSION.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED AGENDA ITEM 18-20 COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR RE: APPOINTMENT OF DR. LESLY J. VALBRUN (U) TO THE ETHICS COMMISSION.**

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

Council Member Pereira stated Chapter 5, Section 10 of the City Charter, any election by the City Council had to be done by roll call vote.

Council Member Pereira said she was troubled the Ethics Commission was supposed to hold everyone else accountable and questioned if they were violating the ordinance. They were bypassing the process and she was trying to understand. All nominees to Boards and Commissions shall submit to a criminal background check by the City's Office of Internal Affairs or such office determined by the Chief of Police and submit to the Ethics Committee a disclosure of their property, business and financial interests on the forms provided by the City Clerk. They are supposed to hold everyone accountable but the Council was violating the ordinance to place this candidate on the Ethics Committee.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that this was going to be referred to Committee but due to the City Council meeting being cancelled because of the weather conditions. The two Chairs have received the documentation.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 18-20 COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR RE: APPOINTMENT OF DR. LESLY J. VALBRUN (U) TO THE ETHICS COMMISSION PASSED WITH SEVENTEEN (17) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, BROWN, BRANTLEY, HERRON, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, SILVA, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SULIMAN, MARTINEZ, AND NEWTON) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (DEFILIPPO AND PEREIRA).**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**196-19 Ordinance Committee Report re: Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, amend to add New Chapter 12.17 – Establishing an Honorary Street Naming Program in the City of Bridgeport.**



**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 196-19 ORDINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT RE: AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMEND TO ADD NEW CHAPTER 12.17 – ESTABLISHING AN HONORARY STREET NAMING PROGRAM IN THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT REFERRED BACK TO THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE.**

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

Council Member Pereira said that she did not know where the authority came from to refer the item back to Committee. She said that there was no such authority to refer this back to Committee in the Council Rules.

Council Member Newton disagreed.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 196-19 ORDINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT RE: AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, AMEND TO ADD NEW CHAPTER 12.17 – ESTABLISHING AN HONORARY STREET NAMING PROGRAM IN THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT REFERRED BACK TO THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE PASSED WITH SEVENTEEN (17) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, BROWN, BRANTLEY, HERRON, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, SILVA, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SULIMAN, MARTINEZ, AND NEWTON) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (DEFILIPPO AND PEREIRA).**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services