

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2022

This meeting was conducted by Teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk Lydia Martinez called the roll.

130th District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy
131st District: Jorge Cruz, Tyler Mack
132nd District: Marcus Brown, Rolanda Smith
133rd District: Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron
134th District: Michelle Lyons, *AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia*
135th District: Mary McBride-Lee, Rosalina Roman-Christy
136th District: *Avelino Silva, Alfredo Castillo*
137th District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle
138th District: Maria Pereira, *Michele Small*
139th District: Wanda Simmons, Ernest Newton

A quorum was present. The names in italics did not appear to respond during the roll call.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M. THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED BY ZOOM/TELECONFERENCE.

NAME

SUBJECT

Cecil Young
99 Carroll Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06607

Follow up Status on Civil Rights Violation.

Mr. Young spoke to the Council about the issues involving his dismissal from City employment 16 years earlier. He spoke about a recent judicial ruling and requested that the Council sit down with him to discuss this. Mr. Young claimed that he had been at work the day that the City claimed he had not reported to work. He said that he has been working with his psychiatrist for the last 16 years on this issue.

City of Bridgeport
City Council
Regular Meeting
February 7, 2022

Eneida Martinez
819 Connecticut Avenue, #2
Bridgeport, CT 06607

East End Abandoned Vehicles, Sheep
Trailers, Sidewalks, Dumping, Lots, etc.

Ms. Martinez greeted the Council and said that she wanted to address the Council meeting about Dr. Ford's Civil Service Commission candidacy. She said that Dr. Ford had served on the Commission many years ago and noted that Dr. Ford was the East End District Leader. She said that everyone had issues in their past and reminded everyone that he was dedicated to the City. He always fought for development, always put the City's progress first. There is one Council Member who always says negative things and Ms. Martinez stated that the Council Member had been involved with drug dealers, has a history of drug abuse and a variety of other issues.

John Marshall Lee
30 Beacon Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Council Governance & CAFR.

Mr. Lee then read the following statement into the record:

City Council Members.....How are things moving in 2022, in your fiscal year, in the school year to students and families?

Global warming and other irregular and unusual weather patterns in many lands? COVID 19 and variants still sickening and killing globally two years later. Authoritarian, autocratic regimes on display and growing. And do we struggle locally with how to keep democracy alive? With citizens getting opportunities to stay informed? With preservation of the opportunity to vote and have the vote counted? What's happening locally?
People problems?

- What gives with the "protect and serve" department in this City? Retirements reduce ranks faster than City can put trained officers, under knowledgeable and experienced command structure, to follow policy and serve public. Civil trials revealing white supremacy environment allegations at the highest leadership levels with racist evidence on all sides, but the taxpayer will be on the hook financially?

- Housing insecurity? Disappearance of Fair Rent Commission over past 20 years in plain sight? Why? What is problem with restaffing? Holding public hearings? Keeping track of complaints and worrisome conditions? Main Street residential units awarded to elderly or infirm (those with SSDI conditions) with folks on upper floors unable to use stairs when elevators are broken regularly? What about expense for non-secure units? And where a permanent fix is ignored for years at a time?

- If HUD supplies funds to Park City Communities and to private property owners representing a subsidy for eligible and qualifying lessees, where do they report on operations within the City annually? Two separate reports or only one? Which CC subcommittee has oversight?

- City funds and finances? Audit usually arrives a month ago, but CAFR is delayed more than usual, WHY? Will Council hold special meetings, staffed with

Finance and OPM administrators, to inform public and respond to Q&A in person? If not, why not do this before budget session? Where are reports on Federal funds flowing through State or directly to City for distribution maintained? How much funding has come into the City for individuals, businesses, government, not for profit entities and how much of it has been put in the hands of the public already? How much in reserve?

- Where is City Council having discussions with public in attendance about its desire to secure professional and technical assistance to better attack its goals and purposes? Who has served on the City Council for even one term and would admit that at least one gripe they had was inability to have quality professional assistance available to their independent purposes? Have you sought support from those who remain in the City but are daunted?

Some folks think I ask too many questions, but isn't that the only reliable way to determine what is accurate and trustworthy? Who is "in the know"? And who cares about what voters really think as they listen to Council members and watch their action? Time will tell.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Brown stated that Council President Nieves had to step away from the call. Council Member Brown then announced that the Public Speaking portion of the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2022

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 7:01 p.m.

PRAYER

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Ganim asked Council Member Valle to lead those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The Assistant City Clerk Frances Ortiz called the roll.

130th District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy
131st District: Jorge Cruz, Tyler Mack
132nd District: Marcus Brown, Rolanda Smith
133rd District: Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron
134th District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
135th District: Mary McBride-Lee, Rosalina Roman-Christy
136th District: *Avelino Silva*, Alfredo Castillo
137th District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle
138th District: Maria Pereira, Michele Small
139th District: Wanda Simmons, Ernest Newton

A quorum was present. Council President Nieves said that Council Member Silva had a prior engagement.

APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL MINUTES:

• **December 6, 2021 & December 20, 2021**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 6, 2021 MEETING AND DECEMBER 20, 2021.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VALLE SECONDED.**

Council Pereira stated that she had numerous corrections to the December 20, 2021 minutes.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO RESCINDED THE APPROVAL OF BOTH THE DECEMBER 6, 2021 MEETING AND DECEMBER 20, 2021 MINUTES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VALLE SECONDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 6, 2021 MEETING.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VALLE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 6, 2021 MINUTES AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

• **December 20, 2021**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO TABLE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 20TH PENDING THE SUBMISSION OF CORRECTIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VALLE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO TABLE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 20TH PENDING THE SUBMISSION OF CORRECTIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Pereira submitted the corrections for the December 20, 2021 minutes as follows:

1) **Public Comment- Page 4- Last Paragraph:** *"Council Member Pereira said that she would be meeting with Nate because there is a need for litigation [inaudible]"* I have no idea who "Nate" is and made no such reference regarding speaking with a "Nate" about "litigation." This needs to be eliminated.

2) **Regular Meeting - Page 9 - First paragraph:** Should read *I stated "Everything about Steel Pointe reeks of gentrification. Bass Pro was being sued by the Federal Department of Labor for racist hiring practices when the developers and Mayor Finch decided it was a great idea to bring them to Bridgeport when our community was 78% minority." Boca and Starbucks aren't here for existing Bridgeport residents, they are here to cater to*

wealthy, white outsiders. I have never had anyone ask me to stop by Starbucks to grab a cup of coffee as the vast majority of residents are Dunkin Donuts coffee drinkers."

3) **Page-9- Third Paragraph:** It should read as "*When the 400 units are rented, their tenants will be utilizing our public services to include our streets, snow removal, libraries, parks, fire & police and possibly our schools, yet the vast majority of taxes will go right back to the Steel Pointe Special Services District, not the city coffers to offset the costs associated with their use of those public services.*"

4) **Pages 11-12- Last Paragraph to First Paragraph:** Approval of October 4, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

The minutes show that only Amy Vizzo-Paniccia abstained due to her illness. It shows that Tyler Mack, Aikeem Boyd, Michele Small and Wanda Simmons all voted in favor of the October 4, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes although all four have previously abstained from voting on the previous regular meeting minutes because they were not members of the Council until December 1, 2021. In consultation with Michele Small she is confident that she abstained. Councilmembers Mack, Boyd and Simmons will have to advocate for their position on this specific vote as cannot specifically recall how they voted on this matter. It just didn't make sense when I reviewed the minutes.

5) **Page 13- Paragraphs 3-8:** The motion is the approval of the Nurses Contract, however all 6 paragraphs referenced are our discussion on the Crossing Guard Contract. This needs to be corrected.

6) **Page 13 - Paragraph Three:** also asserts I stated " These are the lowest union members in the City and this is the worse(sic) contract she has seen in 12 years. It is not codified that they are not pedophiles, or sex offenders." *It should read "These are the lowest compensated union members in the City and this is the worst contract she has seen in her 12 years of public service. The contract does not codify that national background checks must be conducted to ensure pedophiles, sex offenders, etc.; are not hired as crossing guards."*

7) **Page 14 -15 - Paragraphs 4-9 on Page 14 & Paragraphs 1-4 on Page 15:** The motion is the approval of the Crossing Guard Contract, however all 10 paragraphs are our discussion on the Nurses Contract. This needs to be corrected.

8) **Page 16 - Paragraph 2:** The minutes state "This is an opportunity to allow the people of the 132nd District to vote on a vacant seat. It is not an unfilled seat. In order to vacate something, one must first occupy it." My position was the complete opposite. It should read "*This is an opportunity to allow the people of the 132nd District to vote on this unfilled seat. It is not a vacant seat as in order to vacate a seat one must first occupy the seat.*"

PUBLIC HEARING(S) TO BE ORDERED BY THE FULL COUNCIL:

28-21 Request from OPED to Order a Public Hearing for February 22, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. re: Proposed Resolution Authorizing a Lease Agreement with Green Village Initiative Inc. for 1429 Reservoir Avenue and 20 Yaremich Drive.

Council Member Herron noted that the street address for the Green Village Initiative, Inc. is actually 1469 Reservoir Avenue.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED AGENDA 28-21 REQUEST FROM OPED TO ORDER A PUBLIC HEARING FOR FEBRUARY 22, 2022 AT 7:00 P.M. RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH GREEN VILLAGE INITIATIVE INC. FOR 1429 RESERVOIR AVENUE AND 20 YAREMICH DRIVE WITH THE CORRECTION OF THE STREET ADDRESS FOR THE GREEN VILLAGE INITIATIVE, INC. TO1469 RESERVOIR AVENUE.**

**** THERE WAS A SECOND.**

**** THE MOTION FOR AGENDA 28-21 REQUEST FROM OPED TO ORDER A PUBLIC HEARING FOR FEBRUARY 22, 2022 AT 7:00 P.M. RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH GREEN VILLAGE INITIATIVE INC. FOR 1429 RESERVOIR AVENUE AND 20 YAREMICH DRIVE WITH THE CORRECTION OF THE STREET ADDRESS FOR THE GREEN VILLAGE INITIATIVE, INC. TO1469 RESERVOIR AVENUE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

24-21 Communication from Public Facilities re: Proposed Resolution regarding the 2022 First Round of Sidewalk Repair Pilot Program, referred to Public Safety and Transportation Committee.

25-21 Communication from Police Department re: Proposed Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10.12 – Stopping, Standing and Parking Generally, amend Section 10.12.080 – Illegal Parking in a Bus Zone, referred to Ordinance Committee.

26-21 Communication from Police Department re: Proposed Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10.16 – Parking, amend Section 10.16.070 – Rates and Charges; Grace Period; Prompt Payment Discount; Immobilization; Exemptions, referred to Ordinance Committee.

27-21 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Settlement of Pending Litigation with William Gomez-Perez, Et Al – Docket No. FBT-CV-19-6082893-S, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

28-21 Communication from OPED re: Proposed Resolution Authorizing a Lease Agreement with Green Village Initiative Inc. for 1429 Reservoir Avenue and 20 Yaremich

Drive, referred to Joint Committee on Economic and Community Development and Environment and Contracts.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVE TO CONSOLIDATE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WITH THE CORRECTION ON AGENDA ITEM 28-21 WITH THE CORRECTION OF THE STREET ADDRESS FOR THE GREEN VILLAGE INITIATIVE, INC. TO 1469 RESERVOIR AVENUE**

24-21 COMMUNICATION FROM PUBLIC FACILITIES RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE 2022 FIRST ROUND OF SIDEWALK REPAIR PILOT PROGRAM, REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

25-21 COMMUNICATION FROM POLICE DEPARTMENT RE: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 10.12 – STOPPING, STANDING AND PARKING GENERALLY, AMEND SECTION 10.12.080 – ILLEGAL PARKING IN A BUS ZONE, REFERRED TO ORDINANCE COMMITTEE.

26-21 COMMUNICATION FROM POLICE DEPARTMENT RE: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 10.16 – PARKING, AMEND SECTION 10.16.070 – RATES AND CHARGES; GRACE PERIOD; PROMPT PAYMENT DISCOUNT; IMMOBILIZATION; EXEMPTIONS, REFERRED TO ORDINANCE COMMITTEE.

27-21 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION WITH WILLIAM GOMEZ-PEREZ, ET AL – DOCKET NO. FBT-CV-19-6082893-S, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.

28-21 COMMUNICATION FROM OPED RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH GREEN VILLAGE INITIATIVE INC. FOR 1429 RESERVOIR AVENUE AND 20 YAREMICH DRIVE, REFERRED TO JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRACTS.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):

***13-21 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Resolution Declaring Homelessness as a Public Health Crisis.**

***16-21 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: United Way of Fairfield County Impact Philanthropy Fund – COVID Relief for Residents in Need (#22480).**

***18-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Resolution regarding the Approval of the 2022-2024 Citizen Union Committee.**

***20-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Tiheba Bain (D) to the Zoning Board of Appeals.**

***22-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Worker’s Compensation Settlement re: Michael and Karen (Widow) Rodriquez – Claim No. W000818810.**

Mayor Ganim asked if there was any Council Member who wished to remove an item. Council Member Pereira stated she wished to remove Agenda Items 20-21 and 22-21. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia stated she wished to remove Agenda Item 13-21.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE REMAINING CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:**

***16-21 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: UNITED WAY OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY IMPACT PHILANTHROPY FUND – COVID RELIEF FOR RESIDENTS IN NEED (#22480).**

***18-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION REGARDING THE APPROVAL OF THE 2022-2024 CITIZEN UNION COMMITTEE.**

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

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

13-21 - Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Resolution Declaring Homelessness as a Public Health Crisis.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED AGENDA ITEM 13-21 - ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION DECLARING HOMELESSNESS AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said that homelessness was a public health crisis, but it would be important to take action to address the issue.

Council Member Cruz stated that there was a homelessness crisis and he then spoke about a recent meeting regarding agencies that help with the homelessness. While the South End Community Center is open at this time, the clients there are not guaranteed permanent housing. This will be an on-going issue.

Council Member Herron said it was a nationwide crisis and the reason that this resolution was introduced on paper was to make people aware. She added that she and JC had been working on this and because of the efforts on the part of the two of them, progress has been made, but it is a work of progress.

Mayor Ganim said that the administration had worked hard to assist with homelessness. Because of the efforts of the Council Members, he felt that the City was making progress.

Council Member Cruz said that he would like to thank Ms. Adrian and Dr. Gaston who worked tirelessly to assist the homeless residents.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 13-21 - ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION DECLARING HOMELESSNESS AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS PASSED WITH EIGHTEEN (18) IN FAVOR. (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, BOYD, BROWN, MACK, HERRON, SMITH, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, PEREIRA SMALL, SIMMONS, AND NEWTON) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (VIZZO-PANICCIA).**

20-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Tiheba Bain (D) to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK MOVED AGENDA ITEM 20-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: APPOINTMENT OF TIHEBA BAIN (D) TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS.**

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

Council Member Pereira thanked Council Member Mack for the additional information he provided regarding Ms. Bain. She had been planning on voting against Ms. Bain. Council Member Pereira said that she did not know why Ms. Bain was being put on the ZBA rather than the Police Commission.

Council Member Newton said that he was speaking in support of Ms. Bain and recognized how far Ms. Bain has come in her life. People say that they believe in second chances and this is a prime example of this.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 20-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: APPOINTMENT OF TIHEBA BAIN (D) TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

22-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Worker's Compensation Settlement re: Michael and Karen (Widow) Rodriguez – Claim No. W000818810.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO MOVED AGENDA ITEM 22-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: WORKER'S COMPENSATION SETTLEMENT RE: MICHAEL AND KAREN (WIDOW) RODRIQUEZ – CLAIM NO. W000818810.**

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

Council Member Cruz asked why Dr. Ford's name was not on the agenda.

Council Member Pereira said this was a \$64,000 settlement that was discussed by the Committee in Executive Session. She will not vote for this item if she does not have adequate information.

Council Member Lyons said Council Member Newton had brought up the subject regarding Miscellaneous Matters reports for the rest of the Council Members.

Mayor Ganim said there was a discussion about the FOI regulations in terms of what could be discussed in public.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that all the Council Members have the right to contact the City Attorney's Office for additional information. She noted that in the past, all the Council Members could attend the Executive Session, but that was changed a number of years ago by the courts.

Council Member Newton agreed with Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia's statement regarding Executive Session. Council Members who are not on the Committee now must contact the City Attorney's Office for additional information. He suggested that if there were large settlements, the Council might be able to go into Executive Session as a body.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 22-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: WORKER'S COMPENSATION SETTLEMENT RE: MICHAEL AND KAREN (WIDOW) RODRIQUEZ – CLAIM NO. W000818810 PASSED WITH SEVENTEEN (17) IN FAVOR. (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, BOYD, BROWN, MACK, HERRON, SMITH, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SIMMONS AND NEWTON) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (PEREIRA AND SMALL).**

Council Member Newton said that he had a question about the Point of Personal Privilege procedure. Mayor Ganim said that he did not want to hear Council Members making accusations against others.

Council Member Newton said that he was sad to see that the hotel has closed. He suggested that they reach out to the Christoff's to see what they might be able to do.

Council Member Cruz said that he wished to apologize to Janene Hawkins. He said that he had a lot of respect for her and he came to work with everyone. He said that he would like to sit down and talk about this and come to a common ground.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she was pleased to hear Council Member Cruz's apology and respected where Council Member Cruz was coming from.

Council President Nieves announced that Bridgeport has been awarded a Youth in Education Grant from the National League of Cities. Bridgeport was one of five cities across the country to be selected. The purpose of the grant is for RYASAP Stem Career Counselling. RYASAP will be partnering with the United Way of Fairfield County and the Greater Bridgeport Stem Learning System to develop a new platform for Bridgeport's young adults.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services