

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM  
MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022  
City Council Chambers, City Hall  
45 Lyon Terrace  
Bridgeport, CT**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council President Pro Tempore Brown called the Public Speaking session of the City Council to order at 6:39 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: *Vacant, Alfredo Castillo (6:59 p.m.)*  
137th District: *Aidee Nieves (6:44 p.m.)*, Maria Valle  
138th District: Maria Pereira, Michele Small  
139th District: Wanda Simmons, Ernest Newton

The names in italics did not appear to respond during the roll call. Council Members Burns, Smith and Herron had excused absences.

**THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604.**

**NAME**

**SUBJECT**

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

Fair Housing/Safety Public/City  
Financial.

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

Two weeks ago, I opened comments to you with a story of a distraught woman tenant of 1241 Main Street being rescued from a ledge outside her third-floor window by two other women. She has been away for two weeks but returns tomorrow.

Is there a difference in your mind between a Housing and Fair Housing group? I can make a case for saying Bridgeport should have active organizations staffed with dedicated public citizens to oversee equity and non-discrimination in helping people to seek and maintain safe and secure shelter from the elements. The fact that we have two such Boards with no attention by Mayors for 20 years says something about our community. It is not positive. What do you call a leader who allows the negative to exist, and is not even embarrassed in the slightest for such a failure? Isn't homelessness the alternative to 1241 and we fight that annually.

Who knows a former neighbor or family member living in such property today: with staff hostile to some tenants? Where there is no 24/7 security to protect the tenants from unwanted aggression from outsiders? And where USPS or package delivery systems are subject to compromise and loss?

In recent months the Stratfield Apartments by way of Frank Recchia and Channel 12 stand out today for the frequency with which the elevators seem to fail and Frank reports a story. It is a big complaint. And the fear of being trapped in a small space for longer than one expects is a most human fear. However numerous other interruptions of service for a couple minutes to less than an hour seem to happen with enough repetition to betray trust from regular passengers in smooth elevator operation. And notices from managers at the site in YELLOW advising of elevator shutdowns are such a regular indicator of poor service that it is hard to overcome mistrust. When a sign is removed does that indicate or certify that an elevator has been repaired or made to serve well again? When would you know for certain? Does the management keep a record of dysfunction? Yellow signage? Repair? Return to service? How about an Ordinance on elevators?

On occasion elevator failure may involve 2 or 3 elderly or perhaps disabled residents caught between floors for a time and no other rescue mode is found, so a call is made to the Fire Department. That happened only once last year according to Fire Chief records in contrast to more than 20 EMS calls to the Rescue squad for the same time period.

Nearly \$350 million worth of apartment buildings make up a part of the Taxable Grand List. Those are commercial apartments like Stratfield. They pay property taxes to the City and Fire, Police, Health Department provide services to the Stratfield residents.

*Council President Nieves joined the meeting at 6:44 p.m. and assumed the chairmanship.*

One neighbor has estimated that more than half of the units receive nurses, health, and rehab aides, as well as mental health professionals due to the anxiety level from living in such an environment. Some of these health professionals have their own professional code of conduct and having observed bad behavior by managers, toxic to their clients, are ready to report with facts and numbers. With no Fair Rent or Fair Housing groups where would you wish such evidence of inappropriate behavior be reported? Time will tell.

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

Council vote for GVI's lease and use of 1469  
Reservoir Avenue (Reservoir Community  
Farm).

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Ms. Ellie Angerame came forward to ask for continued support for the GVI. They have removed large amounts of trash from the property, employed Bridgeport residents and have donated a lot of food to the residents. She mentioned the various previous leases and noted that the lease was relatively short. She said that they would have 24 months to vacate the property if necessary. She added that the lease had been changed to limit the future use of the land to be exclusively for the library. She said that she would like to continue growing healthy food there.

**Cecil Young**  
99 Carroll Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06607

Follow up: Violation of Civil Rights.

Mr. Cecil Young said that he was sick and tired of coming to the Council regarding his unjust termination from the City. He mentioned Council Member Newton had been working on this for a number of years. He said that he was mad and mentioned he had left copies of the transcript of the court hearing for some of the Council Members. He said that he would be going to the streets with his case. The City violated his civil rights. He repeated that he had been fired unjustly after working for the City for 27 years. He said that he would be practicing what he preaches.

**Leslie Moss Green**  
Green Village Initiative  
10 Camp Place  
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Supporting a new lease for Green Village Initiative at 1469 Reservoir Avenue.

Council President Nieves called for Ms. Moss Green to address the Council. There was no reply. She repeated her call two more times with no response.

**Rev. Mary McBride-Lee**  
125 Hillcrest Road  
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Greetings my fellow Council Members:

I write to vehemently oppose the efforts of Council Members deliberately interfering with the library and garden project on Reservoir Avenue, particularly situated in the 135th District without consulting in good faith with those elected to represent the interest of the constituents in the district. Myself and Councilwoman Roman-Christy wholeheartedly believe that those who are in favor of the garden project exclusively are misguided; and therefore, or misleading the public as to the heart of the issue.

Bearing this fact in mind, I find it to be woefully inappropriate and reprehensible for sitting Council Members who represent other districts to monopolize on this debate and attempt to drum up support to divert the initial project from its original intent.

I wish to be clear, the constituents of 135th District elected Councilwoman Reverend Mary McBride Lee and Councilwoman Roman Christy to represent their interest, and to make critical

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decisions regarding issues impacting the District. While it is true that we work as a collective legislative body to make decisions on behalf of the City, it is equally true that special consideration should be given to those who are elected from a specific District, especially when there are far-reaching implications regarding the future of that individual District with respect to crucial decisions being made specific to that district. As such, the residence of the 135th District continue to express full support of the garden project. Therefore, I wish to be crystal clear, my Council colleague and I have no intention of removing the garden – we will not settle for not having a library in our community either.

I am requesting from this legislative body, that when the lease comes up for vote, I am respectfully asking you to have full faith and confidence in Councilwoman Christy and myself to do what is just unfair for the people in our district. Plus, the lease arrangement should be accepted (as is) in its current iteration, with no additional adjustments without our full consent and report.

The Library will not only serve the children who attend the five schools in our District, but will also serve adults and those who frequent our district. The youth of our district will be better served if they had access to a library nearby. The fact remains: there is no Library that they can go and study in peace, no park that they can go and play in, no recreational center that they can assemble in after school, and no sprinkler system that they cool off under in the summer months — when it is scorching weather conditions. The Library will not solve all their problems, but I am sure it will help.

Finally, many of you have stated that you were in favor of the garden, and guess what? We are too! But we are also in favor of the library. The question is: why can't we have both? I continue to feel that some Council Members feel that our children are not deserving of anything or that Councilwoman Christy and I are incapable of making the right decisions for the 135th District. For those who share these sentiments, I wish to assure you that our children are deserving, and Councilwoman Christy and I are more than capable of making prudent decisions.

**Carmen Lopez**  
Bridgeport Ct 06605

Retired Judge Lopez said that she wanted to talk about Zoom meetings there would be a very important Planning and Zoning meeting coming up.

Retired Judge Lopez said that she wanted to thank her Council Members for having the meeting in the Council. She added that she had spoken with Atty. Liskov about having the meeting in the Chambers. This is a matter of fairness. She said that she wanted to thank her Council Members and Atty. Liskov for the opportunity to have the meeting in person.

**Ms. Dasha Spell**

955 Main Street  
Bridgeport, CT

Ms. Dasha Spell came forward to greet the Council Members and spoke about the children's education. She said that budget was coming up and that she was starting to speak for the children. They are the future. She said that Council Member McBride-Lee's comments mentioned children. They need money for education. Federal grants came through. But every year for the past eight years, the BOE has gotten \$2 million, but they end up getting deeper and deeper in debt. Bridgeport has ended up on the national news for negative things but no one talks about the high school that almost won the national finals. She will continue to advocate for the children. If they don't fight for the children, what will happen?

**Robert Halstead**

55 Sterling Place  
Bridgeport, CT

Mr. Bob Halstead came forward and greeted the Council. He said that he was present to speak about the community gardens. This year, he asked to apply for two grants, but was told that they were disqualified because the name was incorrect on the application.

He then spoke about the need for agriculture particularly in light of the supply chain issue. He said that the South End needs community gardens. He spoke about some parcels that had power lines on in the North End. He said that area would be perfect for having community gardens since houses cannot be built there.

**Ms. Amy Vasquez**

Amy Vasquez, a retired Special Education teacher came forward to speak about the community gardens. She said she had used the gardens frequently and brought her students there frequently. GVI was very important for the sake of the children. She is now hearing that they might be using part of the parcel for a library. Ms. Vasquez then read a letter from a student about the importance of keeping GVI there because the student learned about veggies, bugs and composting.

**Ms. Cameron Williams**

91 Clearview Drive  
Bridgeport, CT

Ms. Williams, President of the Reservoir NRZ came forward and said that the NRZ has been trying to get the Council Members to the meetings to tell them that they don't want GVI to share the parcel with a Library. They need to represent what the resident wants, not what they personally need.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Council President Nieves closed the Public Speaking portion of the Council Meeting at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022**

**7:00 PM**

**City Council Chambers, City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace**

**Bridgeport, Connecticut**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Ganim called the Regular Meeting of the City Council to order at 7:18 p.m.

**PRAYER**

Mayor Ganim asked if there was any member of the public who wished to lead the Council in prayer. A member of the public came forward and prayed.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**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, Tyler Mack  
132<sup>nd</sup> District: Marcus Brown, *Rolanda Smith*  
133<sup>rd</sup> District: Aikeem Boyd, *Jeanette Herron*  
134<sup>th</sup> District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia  
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136<sup>th</sup> District: *Vacant*, Alfredo Castillo  
137<sup>th</sup> District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle  
138<sup>th</sup> District: Maria Pereira, Michele Small  
139<sup>th</sup> District: Wanda Simmons, Ernest Newton

The names in italics did not appear to respond during the roll call. It was announced that Council Members Burns, Smith and Herron had excused absences.

**FILLING OF VACANT CITY COUNCIL SEAT IN THE 136TH DISTRICT.**

Mayor Ganim opened the floor for nominations.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO MOVED TO NOMINATE FREDERICK HODGES TO THE VACANT CITY COUNCIL SEAT IN THE 136TH DISTRICT.**

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

Council Member Newton said that he has known Mr. Hodges for many years. He said that he was honored to know that his friend was being nominated for the Council position.

Council Member Newton then asked for a moment of silence for the Hodge family who lost a family member the previous week.

Following the conclusion of the moment of silence, Council Member Pereira said that she wished to offer her condolences to the Hodges. She said that in terms of the nomination. She had not received basic information and if it was not for Only In Bridgeport, she would not have known about this. Mr. Hodge's name is not even listed on the agenda. She never votes for anyone when she doesn't know about their basic core values. She will not be voting against Mr. Hodges. This is an administrative issue.

Council Member Newton reminded everyone that the candidates were handled by the Town Committee, who are the elected leaders by the community. He said that they had been following this procedure for many years.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE NOMINATIONS OF FREDERICK HODGES TO THE VACANT CITY COUNCIL SEAT IN THE 136TH DISTRICT PASSED WITH FIFTEEN (15) IN FAVOR (MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, BROWN, SMITH, BOYD, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, CASTILLO, NIEVES, VALLE, SMALL, AND NEWTON) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (PEREIRA).**

The oath of office was then administered to Mr. Hodges, who then took his seat on the Council.

**CHANGES TO THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES:**

**COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS:**

**MCCARTHY, HERRON, CRUZ, ROMAN-CHRISTY, PEREIRA, HODGES AND NEWTON.**

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES:**

**CRUZ, BOYD, SMALL, SIMMONS, HODGES, PEREIRA AND LYONS.**



**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING:  
BROWN, NEWTON, VALLE, HODGES, ROMAN-CHRISTY,  
VIZZO-PANICCIA, AND MACK.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD SECONDED.  
\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:**

**• FEBRUARY 22, 2022**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED THE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2022 MEETING.  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

The following amendments were noted:

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said for the record that her excused absence from that meeting was due to personal reasons.

Council Member Brown stated that he had voted no on approval of the minutes of the January 2022. This was verified that the vote was recorded correctly. Council Member Brown withdrew his correction.

Council Member Small stated that she had arrived late during the public speaking session.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2022 MEETING AS AMENDED PASSED WITH SIXTEEN (16) IN FAVOR (MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, BROWN, SMITH, BOYD, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, CASTILLO, HODGES, NIEVES, VALLE, SMALL AND PEREIRA) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (NEWTON).**

**COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:**

**51-21 Communication from Environmental Task Force re: Annual Report – Environmental Task Force Pursuant to Ordinance Section 2.124.050, ACCEPTED AND MADE PART OF THE RECORD.**

**52-21 Communication from Finance re: Proposed Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 3.08 – City Contract and Purchasing Procedures, amend Section 3.08.070 – Purchasing Procedure, referred to Ordinance Committee.**

**53-21 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Settlement of Pending Litigation in the Matter of Debra Giannattassio – Docket No. FBT-CV-19-6084321-S, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.**

**54-21 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Settlement of Pending Litigation in the Matter of Aaron Kearney vs. Cristina Arroyo, et al – Docket No. 3:19cv00651 (AWT), referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.**

**55-21 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Update and Action needed concerning Outside Counsel Retention Agreement and Settlement Authority in Marinelis Sena, Administratrix of the Estate of Tyrone O. Tillman, et al vs. American Medical Response, Inc., et al – Docket No. FST-CV-15-6044815-S, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO REFER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

**51-21 COMMUNICATION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE RE: ANNUAL REPORT – ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE SECTION 2.124.050, ACCEPTED AND MADE PART OF THE RECORD.**

**52-21 COMMUNICATION FROM FINANCE RE: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 3.08 – CITY CONTRACT AND PURCHASING PROCEDURES, AMEND SECTION 3.08.070 – PURCHASING PROCEDURE, REFERRED TO ORDINANCE COMMITTEE.**

**53-21 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION IN THE MATTER OF DEBRA GIANNATTASSIO – DOCKET NO. FBT-CV-19-6084321-S, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.**

**54-21 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION IN THE MATTER OF AARON KEARNEY VS. CRISTINA ARROYO, ET AL – DOCKET NO. 3:19CV00651 (AWT), REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.**

**55-21 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED UPDATE AND ACTION NEEDED CONCERNING OUTSIDE COUNSEL RETENTION AGREEMENT AND SETTLEMENT AUTHORITY IN MARINELIS SENA, ADMINISTRATRIX OF THE ESTATE OF TYRONE O. TILLMAN, ET AL VS. AMERICAN MEDICAL RESPONSE, INC., ET AL – DOCKET NO. FST-CV-15-6044815-S, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.**

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

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

**\*24-21 Public Safety and Transportation Committee Report re: Resolution regarding the 2022 First Round of Sidewalk Repair Pilot Program.**

**\*31-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Lee Grisby (R) to the Parks Commission.**

Mayor Ganim asked if there was any one who wished to remove an item from the Consent Calendar. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like to remove Agenda Item 31-21 from the Consent Calendar.

**24-21 Public Safety and Transportation Committee Report re: Resolution regarding the 2022 First Round of Sidewalk Repair Pilot Program.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MACK MOVED AGENDA ITEM 24-21 PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION REGARDING THE 2022 FIRST ROUND OF SIDEWALK REPAIR PILOT PROGRAM.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 24-21 PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION REGARDING THE 2022 FIRST ROUND OF SIDEWALK REPAIR PILOT PROGRAM PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**31-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Lee Grisby (R) to the Parks Commission.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had not been at the Miscellaneous Matters meeting, but had read the minutes and she was concerned about a comment Mr. Grisby had made about his personal opinion. A Commissioner should be voting on what is best for the City regardless of their personal opinion.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MACK MOVED AGENDA ITEM 31-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: APPOINTMENT OF LEE GRISBY (R) TO THE PARKS COMMISSION.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.**

A roll call vote followed.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 31-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: APPOINTMENT OF LEE GRISBY (R) TO THE PARKS COMMISSION PASSED WITH SIXTEEN (16) IN FAVOR (MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, BROWN, SMITH, BOYD, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, CASTILLO, NIEVES,**

**VALLE, SMALL, PEREIRA AND NEWTON), ONE (1) AGAINST (VIZZO-PANICCIA) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (HODGES).**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services