

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM
MONDAY, MAY 2, 2022
City Council Chambers, City Hall
45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, CT 06604**

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: Frederick Hodges, *Alfredo Castillo*
137th District: Aidee Nieves, 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 President Nieves reviewed the rules for Public Speaking. Council Member Newton stated that Council Member Simmons was not present due to illness. It was also stated that Council Member Brown was delayed at work and Council Member Boyd was enroute from Hartford.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, MAY 2, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604.

NAME

SUBJECT

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1.) Helen Olga Losak
304 Bradley Street
Bridgeport, CT 06610 | “Stop the Killing” - Ordinance regarding
illegal chicken coops & rabbit coops. |
|---|---|

Ms. Losak said that there was a City ordinance about livestock and other animals. She said that her neighbors had killed two black and white chickens and laughed at her when she objected. She called the police and an officer arrived a few hours later. She also reported this to Animal Control. After several calls to different departments, her neighbor was made to dismantle the coops. She stated that this man killed over 30 chickens. This is animal cruelty and should not be tolerated.

2.) **John Marshall Lee**
30 Beacon Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Housing Neglect.

Mr. Lee came forward and displayed a sign with the word “FAIR” in large black letters and a diagonal red line through it. He read the following into the record:

Over the past two months at four CC meetings, I have had the pleasure of showing you one example of “See it and say it” operating in our City. A well-known TV reporter reported 6 months ago about Main Street residents who were subject to elevators in need of repair. The residents of 190 units, at Stratfield Apartments, a HUD supported facility were fearful of entrapment in one of several elevators. Federal and local legislators became part of the witnessing “neighbors.”

Two Council persons took time to stop, look and listen to multiple issues that have been revealed including allegations of racial intimidation, retaliation, and harassment that defy equal treatment under the rule of law demanded by HUD when their funds underwrite a housing provider.

I am pleased to tell you that a meeting of nearly fifty persons was held last week at 4:00 PM. Light refreshments were offered, and Jorge Cruz introduced Regional Manager Alberto Argueta and three members of his staff to answer questions while Tyler Mack listened in from Hartford. I made notes about the subjects raised and was specifically interested in the way residents were treated, fairly, and pursuant to the statutes and governing rules for NAACP and civil rights.

Management answered questions about elevator maintenance with new provider and contract; pest control with new contract increasing from 12 to 29 regular clients, washers, and dryers seemingly inadequate to the task, apartment upkeep including paint and carpeting, USPS delivery, cameras, safety and security personnel and certain rules and directives that cause problems and misunderstandings.

Looking forward, there likely will be another meeting soon that can assist residents in creating a ‘tenant association’ to improve communication and make for a more neighborly sense of independent residential life. Additionally, while there were some statements from the audience before any questions were raised indicating a lack of racial issues, a number of residents are completing HUD statements alleging lack of communication for some tenants, unequal treatment by staff, and disrespect for people of color, including threats of eviction that bear further investigation and response to regional HUD.

Absent the creation of a self-governing tenant association, what do such tenants do in the absence of Fair Housing and Fair Rent groups here in the CITY? Doesn’t 15

years of patience by a City Council with elimination of FAIRness demand some action on your part? Will you petition the Mayor for a timeline to review the purpose and charges of such committees and re-construct these groups in Bridgeport, especially the issue of FAIRness? If you do not act, who will?

- 3.) **Clyde Nicholson** Guns.
396 Madison Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Mr. Nicholson said that he was present to talk about the guns that are killing black people all over the nation. He noted that Fairfield has 107 armed officers but no black individuals had been killed in Fairfield. He reminded everyone that Black Lives Matter, but Mayor Ganim doesn't seem to notice when black people are killed in Bridgeport. He said that billions of dollars were being sent to Ukraine, but the truth is that they need the money here. He reminded everyone about what happened in Newtown could happen in Bridgeport.

Mr. Nicholson said that he was looking for a meeting with the Council to work on this problem.

- 4.) **Tony Barr** Budget & Schools.
141 Pennsylvania Avenue, #8
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Mr. Tony Barr came forward and said that he was present to speak about Cecil Young, who has been coming to the Council for the last 13 years. He said that Mr. Testani had been breaking the rules in Bridgeport and Police Officers can do things wrong and still be rewarded. However, Mr. Young had been there 13 years begging the Council for justice. He said that they would be bringing this to whoever they need to.

- 5.) **Maria Pereira** The People's Platform/Ordinance & Governance.
206 Bradley Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Council Member Pereira came forward and said that there was an ordinance proposed by the People's Platform. She said that they wanted it to be an equal platform to the administration. However, the two things that were eliminated were the attorney and the fiscal analyst that would make sure that the Council was independent of the executive branch. She said that she had never had a constituent contact her about Council Members staff but they had contacted her about other quality of life issues.

Council Member Pereira said that there was a new law as of May 1st about having meetings in person. She said that the constituents have the right to lobby the Council Members in person. She said that she was in favor of holding the meetings in person.

Ms. Maureen Cece came forward to speak about 80 Parkway Street. She said that she was present to speak as a resident, not as the management of the residence. The Rooster River is highly polluted and the rainwater flows down the street into the river. There is a poor drainage system and it is a health care issue. It is a danger to those who are immune compromised. She said that she was pleading with the Council to do something about this flooding issue.

Ms. Cece thanked the staff who helped her at City Hall to come here to speak about this. A Zoom meeting is not an option for her. The Council Members need to find the funding for the project so they don't end up with lives washed away.

Ms. Ellie Gonzalez came forward to address the Council Members about the children that were in the Police Academy. They have been meeting all over the City and now they are meeting in Fairfield. She said that this was wrong. The children need to have space. She said that there were 10 children in the program. Police Officers are leaving and going to other towns. The Council Members are elected officials and can do something to change this.

Ms. Callie Heilmann of Grovers Avenue and **Ms. Gemeem Davis** came forward to speak about the Empower Bridgeport Act. She said that the People's Platform supports the Council having their own staff that is equal to the executive branch.

Ms. Heilmann said that there were many people who were supporting the Council staff members. The Council Members will be able to get legal counsel when they need it. She thanked the Council for their time.

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Nieves closed the Public Speaking portion of the Council Meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 2, 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 7:06 p.m.

PRAYER

Mayor Ganim asked Council Member Smith to lead those present in prayer.

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.

130th District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy
131st District: Jorge Cruz, *Tyler Mack*
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136th District: Frederick Hodges, Alfredo Castillo
137th District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle
138th District: Maria Pereira, Michele Small
139th District: *Wanda Simmons*, Ernest Newton

Council Member Newton stated that Council Member Simmons was not present due to illness. It was also stated that Council Member Brown was delayed at work and Council Member Boyd was enroute from Hartford.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

• April 4, 2022

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 4, 2022 MEETING.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 4, 2022 MEETING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

73-21 Request from OPED to Order a Public Hearing for May 16, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. re: Proposed Resolution Approving Programs for Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program Applications.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED AGENDA ITEM 73-21 REQUEST FROM OPED TO ORDER A PUBLIC HEARING FOR MAY 16, 2022 AT 7:00 P.M. RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION APPROVING PROGRAMS FOR CONNECTICUT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE TAX CREDIT PROGRAM APPLICATIONS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

73-21 Communication from OPED re: Proposed Resolution Approving Programs for Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program Applications, referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

74-21 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Settlement of Pending Litigation in the Matter of Ronald Mercado and James Geremia – Case #3:20-cv-01783 (SALM), referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

75-21 Communication from Engineering re: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Town of Fairfield concerning the Rooster River Watershed Project, referred to Contracts Committee.

76-21 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Settlement of Pending Litigation in the Matter of Dagmar Linsert – Docket No. FBT-CV-19-6091557-S, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED THE FOLLOWING COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:**

73-21 COMMUNICATION FROM OPED RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION APPROVING PROGRAMS FOR CONNECTICUT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE TAX CREDIT PROGRAM APPLICATIONS, REFERRED TO

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.

74-21 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION IN THE MATTER OF RONALD MERCADO AND JAMES GEREMIA – CASE #3:20-CV-01783 (SALM), REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.

75-21 COMMUNICATION FROM ENGINEERING RE: PROPOSED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WITH THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD CONCERNING THE ROOSTER RIVER WATERSHED PROJECT, REFERRED TO CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

76-21 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION IN THE MATTER OF DAGMAR LINSERT – DOCKET NO. FBT-CV-19-6091557-S, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):

***60-21 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: Environmental Task Force Community Environmental Benefits Fund – Fitness Courts (#22398).**

***61-21 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development Urban Act Grant Program – Remington Arms Demolition and Remediation Phase II (#22215).**

***66-21 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Public Health – Heart Health Disease and Stroke Prevention Program.**

***68-21 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) COVID-19 Response, Innovate, Sustain and Equip (RISE) Awards (#22397).**

***19-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Denese Taylor-Moye (D) to the Parks Commission.**

***39-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Mary F. Gaits (R) to the Zoning Board of Appeals.**

***62-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Settlement of Pending Litigation in the Matter of Shannon L. Calhoun v. Christopher J. Borona, et al – Docket No. 3:18-cv-1203 (AWT).**

Mayor Ganim asked if any Council Member wished to remove an item from the Consent Calendar. Council Member Pereira requested that Agenda Items 19-21, 39-21 and 62-21 be removed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED THE REMAINING CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:**

***60-21 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS FUND – FITNESS COURTS (#22398).**

***61-21 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT URBAN ACT GRANT PROGRAM – REMINGTON ARMS DEMOLITION AND REMEDIATION PHASE II (#22215).**

***66-21 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH – HEART HEALTH DISEASE AND STROKE PREVENTION PROGRAM.**

***68-21 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY AND CITY HEALTH OFFICIALS (NACCHO) MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS (MRC) COVID-19 RESPONSE, INNOVATE, SUSTAIN AND EQUIP (RISE) AWARDS (#22397).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

19-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Denese Taylor-Moye (D) to the Parks Commission.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED AGENDA ITEM 19-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: APPOINTMENT OF DENESE TAYLOR-MOYE (D) TO THE PARKS COMMISSION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira stated that on December 2, 2021, Mayor Ganim issued a press release about all the Board and Commission vacancies in which he stated the candidates should “ not currently hold or have held a public office or a role in an organization with the primary purpose of influencing legislation”. She pointed out that Ms. Taylor-Moye had been on the Council until November 2021. She asked how Ms. Taylor-Moye could be considered for the position.

Council Member Pereira said that there are people who have applied for vacant spots and never gotten a response. Those who have been recently elected officials should not be put on Committees or Boards.

Council Member Newton said that there are those on the Council who seem to act as judge and jury. Ms. Taylor-Moye had served on the Council for many years. He pointed out that they cannot discriminate against those that had previously served. Ms. Taylor-Moye has the qualifications. He added that Ms. Taylor-Moye would be a great person to add to the Parks Commission. The City Council has no jurisdiction other than approving or deny the candidate.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that they had asked for clarification from Ms. Vickers. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that Ms. Taylor-Moye had been approved by the entire Miscellaneous Matters Committee because Ms. Taylor-Moye would be a good addition to the Parks Commission.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she was in support of Ms. Taylor-Moye. She was a good Council Member and loves Bridgeport. She will make an excellent Park Commissioner. She will continue to give back to the City. Council Member McBride-Lee totally supports the appointment of Ms. Taylor-Moye as a Parks Commissioner.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 19-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: APPOINTMENT OF DENESE TAYLOR-MOYE (D) TO THE PARKS COMMISSION PASSED WITH FIFTEEN (15) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, CASTILLO, HODGES, NIEVES, VALLE, AND NEWTON) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (PEREIRA AND SMALL).**

39-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Mary F. Gaits (R) to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED AGENDA ITEM 39-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: APPOINTMENT OF MARY F. GAITS (R) TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS.
** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira stated that a roll call vote was required for this item. A roll call vote was taken.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 39-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: APPOINTMENT OF MARY F. GAITS (R) TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

62-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Settlement of Pending Litigation in the Matter of Shannon L. Calhoun v. Christopher J. Borona, et al – Docket No. 3:18-cv-1203 (AWT).

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED AGENDA ITEM 62-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION IN THE MATTER OF SHANNON L. CALHOUN V. CHRISTOPHER J. BORONA, ET AL – DOCKET NO. 3:18-cv-1203 (AWT).
** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said that they were being asked to approve a \$140,000 settlement and the information is not available because it is a federal case. She said that since she had been on the Council, there has been over \$2 million in settlements. It is an embarrassment to the City, the State and the nation.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia sad that this had been discussed in Committee and those who were not in Executive Session can call the City Attorney's Office for an appointment to review all the information.

Council Member Newton reminded everyone that there was a time when the Council Members could attend Executive Sessions. However, that changed, but the Council can go into caucus. He said it was wrong to deny the settlement for the victim because the Police Department made a mistake. If it goes to trial, the cost will be even higher if the judgement is against the City.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she will be voting yes because she has some confidence in the Miscellaneous Matters Committee but added she would like to see the officers take responsibility for their actions.

Council Member Hodges asked if there was a list of the suits that have been filed against the City because of the Police Department. He was told that one could be compiled.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 62-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION**

IN THE MATTER OF SHANNON L. CALHOUN V. CHRISTOPHER J. BORONA, ET AL – DOCKET NO. 3:18-cv-1203 (AWT) PASSED WITH SIXTEEN (16) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, CASTILLO, HODGES, NIEVES, VALLE, SMALL AND NEWTON) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AGENDA ITEM 44-21 THE PROPOSED FIVE – YEAR CAPITAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023–2027 TO THE AGENDA.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 44-21 COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR RE: PROPOSED FIVE – YEAR CAPITAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023–2027 BY SUBSTITUTION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED AGENDA ITEM 44-21 COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR RE: PROPOSED FIVE – YEAR CAPITAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023–2027 AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**

Council Member Burns said that the Committee had worked hard on this Capital Budget and appreciated the cooperation of the Board of Education regarding the reallocation of funding for some Capital Projects. He reviewed the changes to the proposed bond amounts.

Council Member Newton noted that there had been funds allocated for projects that had not been done yet and rather than have the money sitting there, the Committee decided to re-allocate that funding for other projects. He also thanked the Board of Education regarding their use of some Federal dollars for Capital Projects, which helped with funding for other Capital projects that need to be done.

Council Member Newton noted that there had been claims that Bridgeport was the highest taxed City in the State. He said that Hartford had a mill rate of 74.29; New Haven had a mill rate of 42.98; Waterbury had a mill rate of 60.12; Stamford had a mill rate of 26.05 and Norwalk had a mill rate of 23.15. Bridgeport's mill rate is 43.25. It is not the highest taxed city in the State.

Council Member Pereira said that in her years on the Council, this was the cleanest Capital Plan she had seen. For the record, she objects to certain items that are being bonded for 20 years of debt. She went on to list a number of items including the Nutrition Center and street paving. However, since there is funding for flood control, she will be supporting the Plan. Her constituents have experienced four major floods since July 2020 and some lost all their belongings and others had four feet of water in their basements.

Council Member Lyons said that she was in agreement with Council Member Pereira regarding the flooding issues.

Council Member McCarthy said that the Police Headquarters need to be replaced. They have talked about this for years and years. Now it is on the Capital Plan and the project can move forward.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 44-21 COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR RE: PROPOSED FIVE – YEAR CAPITAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023–2027 AS AMENDED COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR RE: PROPOSED FIVE – YEAR CAPITAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023–2027 AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services