

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT**  
**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2017**

**6:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Ganim called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

**PRAYER**

Mayor Ganim requested that one of the local pastors lead those present in prayer.

Council Member McCarthy also requested a moment of silence in memory of former Council Member Howard Austin who had died earlier that day.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**ROLL CALL**

City Clerk Martinez called the roll.

130<sup>th</sup> District: Peter Spain  
131<sup>st</sup> District: Denese Taylor-Moye  
132<sup>nd</sup> District: Marcus Brown, Kyle Langan  
133<sup>rd</sup> District: Thomas McCarthy, 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: Maria Zambrano Viggiano, Alfredo Castillo  
137<sup>th</sup> District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle  
138<sup>th</sup> District: Karen Jackson, Nessah Smith  
139<sup>th</sup> District: Eneida Martinez, Ernest Newton

A quorum was present. Council President Nieves announced that Council Member Smith had a scheduling conflict and Council Member Banta was absent due to illness.

Council Member Newton said that he recognized that the Council would be voting on issues that were out of their control. The Council does not have control over what the State does or doesn't do. He said that he would be reading a resolution. In serving in the General Assembly for 17 years, Council Member Newton said he had never seen this kind of situation. It is important to let the taxpayers know that the Council Members are always thinking about them. Council Member Newton said that he believed that there was something in the works on the State level

and hoped that the rates would be lowered next year. He then requested that there be a voice roll call vote.

Mayor Ganim said that he would like to have the item read into the record first.

Council Member Spain asked to see the resolution in writing. He was then given the copy of the following text to read over:

Whereas, it may be the case that the State of Connecticut gives the City of Bridgeport a larger tax motor vehicle reimbursement next year, the City Council will look to keep down the motor vehicle mill rate.

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

**\*08-17 (A&B) Budget and Appropriations Committee Report re: Budget Modifications to the FY 2017-2018 General Fund Budget: (A) Appropriation Increase for the Board of Education Line Item 01899000-56180 (\$25,708,035) and Increase the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Revenue Line Item 01863000-44520 (\$25,708,035) to comply with State Mandated Education (MBR) and (B) Motor Vehicle Mill Rate change from 37.00 to 39.00 Mills, Revenue Increase Line Item 01040000-41693 (\$933,131) and Revenue Decrease Line Item 01040000-41346 (\$933,131) to comply with the State Adopted Budget.**

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that as a Budget and Appropriations Committee co-chair, everyone had come up with the right answers.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that the whereas would have to be inserted before the Car Taxes paragraph because it had nothing to do with the BOE allocations.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ZAMBRANO VIGGIANO MOVED AGENDA ITEM 08-17 (A&B) BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: BUDGET MODIFICATIONS TO THE FY 2017-2018 GENERAL FUND BUDGET: (A) APPROPRIATION INCREASE FOR THE BOARD OF EDUCATION LINE ITEM 01899000-56180 (\$25,708,035) AND INCREASE THE EDUCATION COST SHARING (ECS) REVENUE LINE ITEM 01863000-44520 (\$25,708,035) TO COMPLY WITH STATE MANDATED EDUCATION (MBR) AND (B) MOTOR VEHICLE MILL RATE CHANGE FROM 37.00 TO 39.00 MILLS, REVENUE INCREASE LINE ITEM 01040000-41693 (\$933,131) AND REVENUE DECREASE LINE ITEM 01040000-41346 (\$933,131) TO COMPLY WITH THE STATE ADOPTED BUDGET.**

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

Council Member Langan asked what fund it would be coming from and which fund it was going to. Mr. Flatto came forward and said that the State had decided to re-allocate the ECS funding.

*Council Member McCarthy left the meeting at 6:20 p.m.*

Council Member Viggiano read the following resolutions into the record:

**RESOLUTION:**

**(A) BE IT RESOLVED THAT BOE EXPENDITURE LINE ITEM 01899000-56180 APPROPRIATION WILL INCREASE BY \$25,708,035, AMENDING THE ABOVE FY2017-2018 LINE ITEM APPROPRIATION FROM \$0.00 TO \$25,708,035**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE \$25,708,035 BOE EXPENDITURE APPROPRIATION INCREASE WILL AMEND THE TOTAL FY2017-2018 BOE APPROPRIATION FOR \$202,008,471 TO \$227,716,506 AND WILL AMEND THE TOTAL FY2017-2018 GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION FROM \$541,598,860 TO \$567,308,895.00.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE \$25,708,035 BOE/ECS REVENUE LINE ITEM 01863000-44520 INCREASE WILL AMEND THE ABOVE FY2017-2018 REVENUE LINE ITEM AMONG FROM \$138,431,495 TO \$164,139,530.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE \$25,708,035 REVENUE INCREASE WILL AMEND THE TOTAL FY2017-2018 GENERAL FUND REVENUE FROM \$541,598,860 TO \$567,308,895.**

**(B) BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT DUE TO THE UNTIMELY ADOPTION OF THE FY2017-2018 STATE BUDGET, AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATE LAW AND AUTHORIZATION, THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT MOTOR VEHICLE MILL RATE FOR FY2017-2018 BE AND HERBY IS ADJUSTED AND AMENDED FROM 37.00 TO 39.00 MILLS AND IS SET AT 39.00 MILLS FOR FY2017-2018, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2017 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2018.**

*Council Member McCarthy rejoined the meeting at 6:22 p.m.*

Council Member Martinez then read the proposed amendment into the record:

Whereas, it may be the case that the State of Connecticut gives the City of Bridgeport a larger tax motor vehicle reimbursement next year, the City Council will look to keep down the motor vehicle mill rate.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that Council Member Newton had said he had spoken with the delegation and that there may be some adjustment in the mill rate. Council Member Newton said that he had spoken with the State Delegation members the previous day. Council Member McBride-Lee said that she was concerned about this and wanted to know whether there will be a Plan B if Hartford doesn't come through with a break next year.

Council Member Newton said that there was a chance for Plan B when the new City budget is done and they make changes where they can.

Council Member Spain asked the B&A Co-chairs what kind of analysis was done before the decision was made to increase the car taxes? Council Member Taylor-Moye said that this increase had been imposed on the City by the State and the issue was to adjust the vehicle mill rate so that the debt would not increase. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that it was very important that people come to the committee meetings and participate. She said that the co-chairs are always willing to review the information with the Council Members who cannot make the meetings.

Council Member Spain asked Council Member Zambrano Viggiano asked if cuts in the budget were suggested. Council Member Zambrano Viggiano said that the gap that State created was a multi-million-dollar gap and far more than \$933,000. She said that the staff had worked to find other savings.

Council Member Spain asked if the only source of information was the Mayor's Office. Council Member Zambrano Viggiano said that she had taken some time to look up the State Budget, which is 866 pages long. She said that her additional research was to find where Bridgeport was specifically impacted. In addition to the information and recommendations from staff, who are hired to provide this information, she found that this information was accurate.

Council Member Langan asked Mr. Flatto and Mr. Nkwo. Mr. Flatto said that the shortfall was about \$15 to \$17 million from State funding. Council Member Langan asked what was the biggest shortfall. Mr. Flatto said that it was the car tax rebate.

Council Member Langan asked how much has been paid down and where the savings were from. Mr. Nkwo said that the City had refinanced some debt and the Mayor had frozen all hiring. Every financial requisition over \$1,000, Mr. Nkwo personally reviews and approves.

Council Member Langan asked if there was any other way to cover the shortfall. Mr. Nkwo said that they were continuing to work on the situation to resolve the shortfall.

Council Member Langan asked how the tax bills would go out. Mr. Flatto reviewed the process with him.

Council Member Martinez moved the question.

Council Member Lyons requested a roll call vote on the amendment proposed by Council Member Newton.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO ADD THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE TO THE RESOLUTION:**

**WHEREAS, IT MAY BE THE CASE THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT GIVES THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT A LARGER TAX MOTOR VEHICLE REIMBURSEMENT NEXT YEAR, THE CITY COUNCIL WILL LOOK TO KEEP DOWN THE MOTOR VEHICLE MILL RATE.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

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

Council Member Langan said that it was extremely important to understand there was a history to this. The administration knew about this back in February or March, but they were still called to a Special Meeting. It is also important to understand that this came out of an agreement from 2015, which made the state more equitable. Bridgeport is over taxed while the surrounding communities are only taxed at rates between 15 to 25 mills. The State set up a cap for the car taxes and now Republicans and suburban driven policy has allowed this to raise taxes on Bridgeport citizens in order to make up the difference in the funding. This is a move away from equity. Instead of coming to a resolution where the sales tax is increased by a quarter percent across the entire State, which would impact everyone in the State, including those who live in the suburbs, the increase in the car mill tax only impacts city residents. Because of the State's decision, the burden of this debt has been shifted onto the black and brown cities. The City of Bridgeport does not have to go along with what the State is telling the city to do. The City can choose to go along with it and let others dictate the City's decisions or the City can make a decision as a community.

Council Member Langan encouraged everyone to vote against this increase. While he could not attend the special Budget and Appropriations meeting, he said that he would be doing so in the future. There doesn't seem to have been any attempt to resolve this other than taking the money off the backs of the City residents. During the campaign, Council Member Langan heard over and over again about the tax burden from the City residents. Now he was being asked as one of his first actions to increase the taxes and he will not do so.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA ITEM AS AMENDED PASSED WITH TWELVE (12) IN FAVOR (TAYLOR-MOYE, MCCARTHY, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, ZAMBRANO VIGGIANO, CASTILLO, NIEVES, VALLE, N. SMITH, MARTINEZ, AND NEWTON) AND SIX (6) OPPOSED (SPAIN, BROWN, LANGAN, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, AND JACKSON).**

### ADJOURNMENT

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

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

The meeting adjourned 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Service