

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM
MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2019
6:30 PM
City Council Chambers, City Hall
45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, CT**

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Aidee Nieves called the Public Speaking Session to order at 6:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk Lydia Martinez called the roll.

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

Council President Nieves stated that Council Member Herron was not able to attend due to being out of town.

Council President Nieves said that they had changed the Council Rules to allow ten speakers at each meeting, which means that each speaker will only have 3 minutes.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2019 AT 6:30 P.M., IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT.

NAME

SUBJECT

Ethan Book
Coleman Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Municipal Accountability Review Board 144
and Minority Party Representation on City
Council.

Council President Nieves stated that Mr. Book had informed her that he would not be able to be present to address the Council at the meeting.

John Marshall Lee
30 Beacon Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Municipal Governance.

Mr. Lee came forward and read the following statement into the record:

Greetings to those who have held office for years. Special welcome to those who are new to the experience of serving the public on the Council. I have addressed the Council regularly in past years to question City actions, often about finances, and to call attention to areas where more OPEN, ACCOUNTABLE, TRANSPARENT and HONEST governance can improve the quality of life for all.

You have continued the 30 minutes preceding each Council meeting for public address. The time slots have been reduced from five minutes to three minutes. The explanation is that you would like to hear from a larger number of citizens, presumably on more topics of import to the City? I hope so. Sincere interest in having an OPEN platform for folks to speak up might serve to encourage more people to vote, rather than to talk about how their vote means nothing.

Is there a way for you to indicate that a reasonable topic worthy of pursuit has been raised for attention? If five minutes does not allow for a back and forth conversation, then patently, a three minute limit does not. However, there must be a way that questions raised can get assigned to a subcommittee for attention? And the subcommittee chairpersons might allow a subject to be raised by a member of the public with explanation including print materials?}

Within the last 12 months the City, after the City declared a matter closed on two occasions regarding the wrongful tagging of a motor vehicle as abandoned and subsequent destruction of the property, the City paid \$5,000 for the vehicle and around \$3,000 for attorney representation. The facts did not change. But taxpayers spent an additional 60% unnecessarily. That was real money.

What about citizen civil rights? During that same time period a “returning citizen” from the New York State prison system to Bridgeport after 25 years behind bars came to tell you his story. It was compelling to me. He wished to attend a City event during Black History Month, at City Hall, with no admissions fee, addressing history, urban violence, hip hop music and more. He found his photograph in the hands of multiple police officers who prevented him from entering. He asked for an explanation on more than one occasion and did not receive a response. He left peacefully.

You will hear him tonight. He will use his personal three minutes, seeking an answer. (At least one member of the City Council has written about this injustice on social media under a name other than what she is known as in this body.) And she has encouraged the

limitation of the free rights we all enjoy to this specific “returning citizen”. Perhaps it is time to ask what are her interests? Time will tell.

Lycha Andrews
98b Alfred Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Safety regarding transportation for K-12.

Ms. Andrews said that she was associated with the BOND Personal Security phone app and played a video about feeling safe. The video spoke about personal security issues such as having an agent speak with the caller until the caller felt safe or having the app track someone’s walk until they arrive at their destination. At the conclusion of the video she said that the students who were within 1 mile of their school was expected to walk to school. She said that everyone should have this app installed on their phones.

Davon Polite, President
Bridgeport Guardians
300 Congress Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Elevating an African American to the executive level within the Police Department.

Mr. Polite came forward and stated he was the President of the Bridgeport Guardians and a Bridgeport police officer. He then read the following statement into the record:

First and foremost I personally would I like to congratulate Assistant Chief Garcia for her promotion which was well deserved.

The Bridgeport Guardians support the decisions that Mayor Ganim and Chief Perez have made to diversify the City of Bridgeport and the leadership of the police department.

However, I’m here today advocating on behalf of meaningful diversity with the appointment of black officers to leadership positions at the upper ranks of the police department, which we haven’t had a Black Officer at the position of deputy chief in about 20 years.

From my understanding Police Chief Perez and Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey (city consultant) selected Captain (Lonnie) Blackwell’s resume along with Captain (Ray) Masek and Captain Garcia to all be promoted to the executive level.

I have been receiving tremendous pressure from the community and guardian members for the promotion of Captain Blackwell to deputy chief.

I personally haven’t seen any indication that the selection process is being acted upon.

Please be advised that Captain Blackwell is the first African American to run our regional academy. He attended chiefs school and all leadership schools such as PERF

which is Police Executive Research Form. Captain Blackwell is well rounded and extremely qualified. Captain Blackwell holds a masters degree in Criminal Justice and a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and has taught at the collegiate level as a professor for several years. Captain Blackwell continues to stay connected to the community implementing the six pillars of 21st century policing.

The police administration and the city of Bridgeport have stated they want the police department to represent the demographics of the city of Bridgeport. Currently we have 3 Hispanics and 1 Caucasian at the Executive level and no African American representation.

As the president of the Bridgeport Guardians I would like representation at least at the deputy chief position. There hasn't been an African American at that level in 20 years.

Finally, It is my duty to keep the city council informed that we do have a very qualified African American who should be promoted from within.

Lynn Mosher-Howell
Rapha Massage, LLC.
25 Elm Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Downtown Advertising and Meters.

Ms. Mosher-Howell came forward and said that she was a massage therapist whose business is well known. Her clients include out of state residents. She said that she was present on behalf of the downtown merchants. While her clients include out of state residents, she pointed out that none of the Bridgeport Council or the City staff had come in to patronize her businesses. She asked where the money from the meters goes. Ms. Mosher-Howell said that some of the money from the meters should go back to the downtown merchants. There has also been a problem with over-ticketing.

Stephen Nelson
24A Stoneridge Road
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Miscellaneous.

Council President Nieves called Mr. Nelson to speak. There was no response. She called his name again and hearing no response, she continued on to the next speaker.

Myron Dukes
184 Harriet Street
Bridgeport, CT 06608

Attempted ban from City Hall.

Mr. Dukes came forward and said that on February 23rd on this year, he was targeted and prevented from participating at an open City event. Later, a City Council Member had spread rumors and false claims about him and attempted to silence him. However, when he came to the Council, there was nothing done and the problem was not addressed. Later the same Council Member contacted a former City official and filed false charges against him.

Council President Nieves said that Mr. Dukes needed to keep his remarks focused on the being banned from City Hall.

At this point, Council Member Martinez said that she was the one who banned him, Council President Nieves called Council Member Martinez's name several times. She then told Mr. Dukes to go get some help and that he needed psychiatric help. She said that he had addressed her on Facebook and he should address her in public. Council Member Martinez said that Mr. Dukes was present only for a show and pointed out that Mr. Grimaldi and Mr. Brian Lockhart were present. Council President Nieves called Council Member Martinez's name again.

Council President Nieves said that Mr. Dukes still had one minute and 20 seconds but repeated her request about keeping his remarks focused on the being banned from City Hall.

Mr. Dukes said that because this issue was not address when he originally came forward, it has ended up with him having to go to court to defend himself. He just wanted to know why his photo was given to the police and he was not allowed to attend an event at City Hall that was open to all.

Scott Fische
Jerry's Printing
1183 Broad Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Parking Meters.

Ms. Mosher-Howell came forward and said that Mr. Fische was not present but there was another downtown merchant present who wished to speak to the Council about over-ticketing that is occurring downtown. Council President Nieves said that she was sorry, but that the rules only allowed the person that signed up to address the Council.

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Nieves adjourned the public speaking portion of the Council meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2019

7:00 PM

City Council Chambers, City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Mayor Ganim called the meeting of the City Council to order at 7:34 p.m.

PRAYER

Mayor Ganim requested Council Member Jorge Cruz to lead those present in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Ganim requested that Council Member Roman-Christy lead those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk called the roll.

130th District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy
131st District: Denese Taylor-Moye, Jorge Cruz
132nd District: Marcus Brown, M. Evette Brantley
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Council President Nieves stated that Council Member Herron was not able to attend due to being out of town.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

Approval of City Council Minutes: December 2, 2019

The following corrections were noted:

City of Bridgeport
City Council
Regular Meeting
December 16, 2019

Page 5, please change the following from:

“Council Member Martinez requested her name be withdrawn as liaison to the WPCA and substitute Council Member Pereira’s name as liaison.

Council Member McBride-Lee requested that her name be withdrawn from the Public Safety Committee and the Education and Safety Committee. A brief discussion followed.”

To:

“Council Member Newton requested his name be withdrawn as liaison to the WPCA and substitute Council Member Pereira’s name as liaison.

Council Member McBride-Lee requested that her name be withdrawn from the all the Committees. A brief discussion followed.”

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 2, 2019 AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

09-19 Communication from City Clerk re: Certification of Oath of Office of City Council Members, ACCEPTED AND MADE PART OF THE RECORD.

10-19 Communication from Tax Collector re: Refund of Excess Payments – Optimus Health Care, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

13-19 Communication from Central Grants re: Proposed Resolution regarding a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Action for Bridgeport Community Development, Inc. (#20266), referred to Contracts Committee.

14-19 Communication from Central Grants re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Public Health Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) Statewide Expansion and Response (#20606), referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

15-19 Communication from Central Grants re: Grant Submission: Subcontractor Agreement with the Town of Stratford Health Department regarding the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health – Healthy Communities Project (#20607), referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

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

11-19 Resolution presented by Council Member McBride-Lee & Co-Sponsor(s) Newton & Martinez re: Proposed Honorary Street Naming of Logan and Carrie Streets as “Rev. Dr. Sulton Stack, Jr. Way” with appropriate signage, referred to Public Safety and Transportation Committee.

12-19 Resolution presented by Council Member(s) Nieves & Brown re: Proposed Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2.06 – Common Council, amend to add New Section 2.06.070 – Office of Legislative Services, referred to Ordinance Committee.

16-19 Resolution presented by Council Member Newton re: Proposed resolution for the Development of a Policy for Early Inclusion of the City Council in the Collective Bargaining Process, referred to Contracts Committee.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN MOVE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:**

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

09-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY CLERK RE: CERTIFICATION OF OATH OF OFFICE OF CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS, ACCEPTED AND MADE PART OF THE RECORD.

10-19 COMMUNICATION FROM TAX COLLECTOR RE: REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS – OPTIMUS HEALTH CARE, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.

13-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WITH ACTION FOR BRIDGEPORT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, INC. (#20266), REFERRED TO CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

14-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH OVERDOSE DETECTION MAPPING APPLICATION PROGRAM (ODMAP) STATEWIDE EXPANSION AND RESPONSE (#20606), REFERRED TO ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.

15-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: SUBCONTRACTOR AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF STRATFORD HEALTH DEPARTMENT REGARDING THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH – HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PROJECT (#20607), REFERRED TO ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.

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

11-19 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE & CO-SPONSOR(S) NEWTON & MARTINEZ RE: PROPOSED HONORARY STREET NAMING OF LOGAN AND CARRIE STREETS AS “REV. DR. SULTON STACK, JR. WAY” WITH APPROPRIATE SIGNAGE, REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

12-19 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL MEMBER(S) NIEVES & BROWN RE: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 2.06 – COMMON COUNCIL, AMEND TO ADD NEW SECTION 2.06.070 – OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES, REFERRED TO ORDINANCE COMMITTEE.

16-19 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POLICY FOR EARLY INCLUSION OF THE CITY COUNCIL IN THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS, REFERRED TO CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):

***05-19 Contracts Committee Report re: Letter Agreement concerning the Appointment of Captain Rebeca Garcia to the Position of Assistant Chief of Police.**

***06-19 Contracts Committee Report re: State Lobbying Services Agreement with Reynolds Strategy Group, LLC.**

Mayor Ganim asked if there was any Council Member who would like to remove an item from the Consent Calendar. Council Member Pereira requested that Agenda Item 05-19 being removed from the Consent Calendar.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN MOVED THE FOLLOWING CONSENT CALENDAR ITEM:**

***06-19 CONTRACTS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: STATE LOBBYING SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH REYNOLDS STRATEGY GROUP, LLC.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

***05-19 Contracts Committee Report re: Letter Agreement concerning the Appointment of Captain Rebeca Garcia to the Position of Assistant Chief of Police.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 05-19 CONTRACTS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: LETTER AGREEMENT CONCERNING**

THE APPOINTMENT OF CAPTAIN REBECA GARCIA TO THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT CHIEF OF POLICE.

Council Member Pereira said that she was very excited about this appointment. However, Council Member Pereira was concerned about the fact that there was an article in the newspaper about the competitive search done in 2015. Council Member Pereira said that the copies of the contract were not received until earlier in the meeting. She said that she would not support this because the contract was not delivered in a timely manner.

Council Member Newton then spoke about the newspaper article and said that there was some confusion about the job title of Assistant Chief and Deputy Chief. He said that the Council should sit down with the Labor Department to discuss the Council's goals during the negotiation process.

Council Member Burns said that he was concerned about a lawsuit associated with this particular position. He pointed out that there was a cost to the taxpayer.

Council Member Lyons asked for clarification on the job titles. Mayor Ganim said that the position of Assistant Chief is a non-competitive position classified in Civil Service per the Personnel Director. Atty. Anastasi said that as far as the litigation goes, the matter is pending, but the settlement does not involve a reinstatement. There will be no problem with filling that position at this time. The plaintiff is not seeking reinstatement.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 05-19 CONTRACTS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: LETTER AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF CAPTAIN REBECA GARCIA TO THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT CHIEF OF POLICE PASSED WITH EIGHTEEN (18) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, TAYLOR-MOYE, BROWN, BRANTLEY, DEFILIPPO, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, ZAMBRANO-VIGGIANO, CASTILLO, NIEVES, VALLE, SULIMAN, MARTINEZ, AND NEWTON) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

Mayor Ganim thanked and welcomed Captain Garcia who was present. He noted that she would be presenting the next class of candidates for swearing in on the 18th. At that time, Captain Garcia will be sworn in as Assistant Chief.

Council President Nieves thanked Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia and City Clerk Martinez for their work on hosting the National League of Cities in Bridgeport last summer. She added that Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia was recognized by the National Federation for Women Legislators.

Council President Nieves said that Council Member Newton was the Regional Director for the National Black Caucus Elected Officials and was recognized for his work in that organization.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES IN REFERENCE TO RULE 13 TO ADD TIME SENSITIVE RESOLUTION THAT THE**

CITY COUNCIL RECOMMEND AND URGE MAYOR JOSEPH GANIM TO DECLINE THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE RESIGNATION OF JOHN RICCI, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC FACILITIES IN ORDER TO MOVED FORWARD COLLECTIVELY TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF EVERY RESIDENT OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT.

Council Member Pereira said that this was just a recognition of Mr. Ricci's 44 years of service to the City.

Council Member Pereira then read the full resolution into the record:

WHEREAS, John Ricci has an extensive 44 year record of public service serving in a variety of municipal positions, under 10 separate mayoral administrations, and on behalf of the residents of Bridgeport; and

WHEREAS, John Ricci is supervising the largest City Department overseeing essential and critical services that directly impact every resident and taxpayer of Bridgeport; and

WHEREAS, John Ricci is only compensated \$29,000 annually as Director of Public Facilities based on his pension eligibility, which is currently being forfeited, which is of substantial financial benefit to the City of Bridgeport and its overburdened tax payers; and

WHEREAS, due to John Ricci's exceptional performance as Director of Public Facilities a number of elected and appointed officials, as well as city employees and community leaders have expressed concern regarding his sudden resignation; and

WHEREAS, John Ricci has a reputation for being highly competent, a man of integrity, and is trusted and valued by the vast majority of elected and appointed officials, city employees and community leaders; and

WHEREAS, No man or woman should be criticized, penalized, or a demonized for simply demonstrating compassion for those who are in need of assistance, empathy and understanding; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Bridgeport City Council that we strongly recommend and urge Mayor Joseph P. Ganim to decline the acceptance of the resignation of John Ricci as Director of Public Facilities in order to move forward collectively to improve the lives of every resident of the City of Bridgeport.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SULIMAN SECONDED.**

Mayor Ganim said that there had been a roll call vote requested and that passing the item would require a 2/3rds approval.

**** THE MOTION TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD THE ITEM TO THE AGENDA PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES IN REFERENCE TO RULE 13 BY WAIVING REFERRAL TO THE MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION OF THE RESOLUTION DUE TO THE TIME CONSTRAINTS IN THE MATTER OR THE RESIGNATION OF JOHN RICCI ON JANUARY 4TH BEFORE THE NEXT CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON JANUARY 6TH.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SULIMAN SECONDED.**

Council Member Brantley asked for clarification regarding the statement that “No man or woman should be criticized, penalized, or demonized for simply demonstrating compassion for those who are in need of assistance, empathy and understanding” Council Member Pereira said that Mr. Ricci was from a different era and was very traditional. Sometimes his compassion creates potential conflicts of interest. Discussion followed about the details of the situation that were reported in the news media and on social media.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she felt this should have been addressed via a letter from the Council that was signed by the Council Members supporting the action rather than presenting as a resolution.

Council Member McBride-Lee pointed out that the Council Members did not know whether Mr. Ricci wished to continue on in the position of Public Facilities Director. She pointed out that she was not sure that this was something that the Council should be doing.

Council Member Newton said that there had been a time when the Council had the authority to approve mayoral appointments. However, the Council gave up that authority years ago. If the Council wants to have some input, they need to change the rules, but right now, Council Member Newton urged his fellow Council Members to reject this resolution.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she was in agreement with Council Member McBride-Lee and Council Member Newton. She said that she did not think that the Council should interfere in this situation because of what was in the press or on social media.

**** THE MOTION FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION FAILED TO PASS WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (BROWN, DEFILIPPO, PEREIRA, SULIMAN, AND MARTINEZ), TWELVE (12) AGAINST (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, TAYLOR-MOYE, BRANTLEY, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, ZAMBRANO VIGGIANO, CASTILLO, NIEVES, AND NEWTON) AND TWO (2) ABSTENTIONS (LYONS AND VALLE). (ITEM #17-19)**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services