

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**MONDAY, MAY 18, 2020**

**7:00 P.M.**

This meeting was conducted by teleconference.

\*\*\*Due to the public health emergency, public speaking  
will be by written testimony only\*\*\*

\*\*\*Please submit written testimony to [PublicTestimony@bridgeportct.gov](mailto:PublicTestimony@bridgeportct.gov)  
by 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 18th\*\*\*

Mayor Ganim called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

**PRAYER**

Mayor Ganim asked Council Member Brantley to give an opening prayer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Council Member Newton led 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: Denese Taylor-Moye, Jorge Cruz  
132<sup>nd</sup> District: Marcus Brown, M. Evette Brantley  
133<sup>rd</sup> District: Michael DeFilippo, Jeanette Herron  
134<sup>th</sup> District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia  
135<sup>th</sup> District: Rosalina Roman-Christy, Mary McBride-Lee  
136<sup>th</sup> District: Alfredo Castillo, Avelino Silva  
137<sup>th</sup> District: Maria Valle, Aidee Nieves  
138<sup>th</sup> District: Maria Pereira, Samia Suliman  
139<sup>th</sup> District: Eneida Martinez, Ernest Newton

A quorum was present.

**ITEMS FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION:**

**99-19 Resolution presented by Council Member(s) Newton, Nieves, Taylor-Moye, Cruz, Brantley, Herron, Silva, Valle & Martinez re: Proposed resolution Urging the Creation of a SAFER Supervision Committee in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO CONSIDER AGENDA ITEM 99-19.**

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

**\*\* THE MOTION TO SUSPEND THE RULES PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Atty. Anastasi said that since the item was already listed on the agenda that they did not have to suspend the rules to consider it. He said that the Council needed to state the reason.

Council Member Newton said 83% of the State inmates are infected by COVID-19. This resolution would encourage the Governor to release those who have less than 18 months on their sentence to go to a halfway house or to return to live with a family member.

Council Member Herron said that she wanted to thank her colleagues for putting this on the agenda. She said that she heard from a number of families about this because they had relatives in prison and were concerned for their well-being.

Council Member Pereira asked if it was to create a committee to look at the issues or releasing people who have committed crimes. Council Member Newton said that the inmates that were being considered were ones scheduled for release within the next eighteen months. The City should have a team set up to help the residents fight COVID-19. Discussion followed.

Council Member Brantley said she wanted to encourage everyone to support the bill because these members of society are at risk due to their proximity to others who have COVID-19. She said that she had received several calls from concerned families about the well-being of their relatives who were incarcerated.

Mayor Ganim asked Council Member Newton if the intent was to form a committee. Council Member Newton said that they would be getting a new Health Department Director and needed to have a plan in place.

Council Member Pereira said that as long as it was to form a committee, she was fine with it.

Council Member Cruz expressed his support.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 99-19 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL MEMBER(S) NEWTON, NIEVES, TAYLOR-MOYE, CRUZ, BRANTLEY, HERRON, SILVA, VALLE & MARTINEZ RE:**

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION URGING THE CREATION OF A SAFER SUPERVISION COMMITTEE IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

Council Member Newton said that this was to encourage the Governor and the Commission to release those inmates that qualified earlier.

Council Member Pereira said that based on Council Member Newton's comments, she would have to withdraw her previous support.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 99-19 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL MEMBER(S) NEWTON, NIEVES, TAYLOR-MOYE, CRUZ, BRANTLEY, HERRON, SILVA, VALLE & MARTINEZ RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION URGING THE CREATION OF A SAFER SUPERVISION COMMITTEE IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC PASSED WITH SIXTEEN (16) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, TAYLOR-MOYE, BROWN, BRANTLEY, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, SILVA, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SULIMAN, MARTINEZ AND NEWTON) AND FOUR (4) OPPOSED (VIZZO-PANICCIA, PEREIRA, DEFILIPPO AND LYONS).**

**104-19 Communication from Central Grants re: Grant Submission: U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) – Airport Program 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act Grant Program, FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AGENDA ITEM 104-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) – AIRPORT PROGRAM 2020 CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT GRANT PROGRAM, FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION BECAUSE THIS WOULD ALLOW THE AIRPORT TO PROCEED WITH REPAIRS.**

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

Council Member Burns said that he had seen this in the packet and the grant funding was for two years but wanted to know what the funding would be used for.

Council President Nieves said that it would be used for airport repairs. Ms. Muoio explained that this was an opportunity to receive funding without a matching City funding requirement. Discussion followed.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO SUSPEND THE RULES PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED AGENDA ITEM 104-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

**(FAA) – AIRPORT PROGRAM 2020 CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT GRANT PROGRAM, FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION BECAUSE THIS WOULD ALLOW THE AIRPORT TO PROCEED WITH REPAIRS.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

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

**105-19           Communication from Central Grants re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security – FEMA Public Assistance Disaster Relief for COVID-19, FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO CONSIDER AGENDA ITEM 105-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY – FEMA PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DISASTER RELIEF FOR COVID-19.**

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

Council Member Pereira asked if the funding will be used for the constituents. She said that she did not want the funding to be used for TV ads or other advertising because there were people who were in need of PPE.

Council President Nieves pointed out that the discussion should take place under the discussion For the Agenda Item.

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

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 105-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY – FEMA PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DISASTER RELIEF FOR COVID-19**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said that she would like to have her earlier question answered.

Council President Nieves said that the funding could be used for medical supplies, food, ice, and other items. Ms. DeJesus said that the grant reimburses 75% of the immediate cost and the items that Council President Nieves described were allowable under the grant funding.

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

**COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:**

**97-19 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Settlement of Pending Litigation with William McMahon, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.**

**98-19 Communication from Board of Education re: Grant Submission: School Construction Project Application for State Grants and the Initiation of Design for Underground Oil Tank Removal Projects at the following schools; JFK Campus, Read, John Winthrop, Park City Magnet, Wilbur Cross and Columbus, referred to Education and Social Services Committee.**

**100-19 Communication from OPED re: Proposed Resolution Authorizing an Affordable Housing Tax Incentive Development Agreement for Windward Commons located at 20 Johnson Street, referred to Joint Committee on Economic and Community Development and Environment and Contracts.**

**101-19 Communication from OPED re: Proposed Resolution regarding Authority to enter into an Environmental Land Use Restriction (“ELUR”) concerning the Family Dollar Store Property located at 1197 State Street, referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.**

**102-19 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Worker’s Compensation Stipulation with Jose Negron, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.**

**103-19 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Worker’s Compensation Stipulation with John M. Evans, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.**

Council Member Brown asked that Agenda Item 100-19 – Communication from OPED re: Proposed Resolution Authorizing an Affordable Housing Tax Incentive Development Agreement for Windward Commons located at 20 Johnson Street, referred to Joint Committee on Economic and Community Development and Environment and Contracts be withdrawn.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO COMBINE AND REFER THE FOLLOWING COMMUNICATIONS TO THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES:**

**97-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION WITH WILLIAM MCMAHON, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.**

**98-19 COMMUNICATION FROM BOARD OF EDUCATION RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT APPLICATION FOR STATE GRANTS AND THE INITIATION OF DESIGN FOR UNDERGROUND OIL TANK REMOVAL PROJECTS AT THE FOLLOWING SCHOOLS; JFK CAMPUS, READ, JOHN WINTHROP, PARK CITY MAGNET, WILBUR CROSS AND COLUMBUS, REFERRED TO EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.**

**100-19 COMMUNICATION FROM OPED RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING TAX INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR WINDWARD COMMONS LOCATED AT 20 JOHNSON STREET, REFERRED TO JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRACTS.**

**101-19 COMMUNICATION FROM OPED RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO AN ENVIRONMENTAL LAND USE RESTRICTION (“ELUR”) CONCERNING THE FAMILY DOLLAR STORE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1197 STATE STREET, REFERRED TO ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.**

**102-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED WORKER’S COMPENSATION STIPULATION WITH JOSE NEGRON, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.**

**103-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED WORKER’S COMPENSATION STIPULATION WITH JOHN M. EVANS, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.**

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

Council Member Brown stated that based on Rule 31, the request to withdraw Agenda Item 100-19 was submitted by OPED to the City Clerk. The City Clerk cannot move to withdraw anything, so he, as a Council Member, was requesting the item be withdrawn.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO REFER THE VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS TO COMMITTEES PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON:**

**87-19            Contracts Committee Report re: Nomination of Lisa Morrissey for the Appointment to the position of Director of Health.**

Council Member Herron said that the Contracts Committee had voted to allow this matter to come before the full Council.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED AGENDA ITEM 87-19 CONTRACTS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: NOMINATION OF LISA MORRISSEY FOR THE APPOINTMENT TO THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF HEALTH.**

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

Council Member Brantley requested a roll call vote.

Council Member Herron said that she was disappointed in the process and what she discovered during the process. While Ms. Morrissey is very well qualified, Ms. Morrissey was not informed that she should be living in Bridgeport.

Council Member Cruz said that he disagreed with the nomination because the fair process was neglected. He said that it sounded like she had already been approved before she was interviewed.

Council Member Cruz said that he felt disrespected by Ms. Hawkins and [inaudible] about this due to a post on the Internet. Giving jobs to people who live outside of Bridgeport is wrong. Vote no.

Council Member Cruz repeated that he was insulted and disrespected by the administration's staff members.

Council Member Newton said that the Mayor has the right to hire who he or she wishes to. The Council has no jurisdiction on how the screening process goes. No one has articulated more about residency than Ernie Newton, but they have to look at qualifications.

Council Member Newton warned the Council that if they did not appoint someone tonight, the State could step in and appoint someone regardless of what the Council or the Mayor thinks.

The Council can give a waiver if there should be a hardship. The Council's sole role is to vote either yes or no. With COVID-19, the City does not have time to fool around. The politics have to come out and people need to think about their constituents. This candidate is very qualified.

Council Member Pereira said that she did not think they could say that there was no one else that was more qualified. She said that this residency was in the Charter and voting yes would be clearly violating the City Charter. While Ms. Morrissey is highly qualified, Council Member Pereira said that she would not vote to violate the City Charter.

Council Member Silva said that he was disappointed in how this was done. If the rules had been followed, he would support the candidate without question. He said that he could not support this candidate.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that Council Member Newton had pushed hard for Bridgeport residency. However, the candidate was not given all the information she should have been told when she applied. It is not fair to expect her to move her family to Bridgeport. Council Member McBride-Lee will be supporting this nomination because she is very qualified. This is not Ms. Morrissey's fault and Ms. Morrissey should not be made an example of or the scapegoat. There are people in City Hall that have worked here that don't live in Bridgeport. From here on out, if you don't live in Bridgeport, then there will be no job for you in Bridgeport.

Council Member McCarthy said that the qualifications were definitely there. He asked two specific questions in Committee and did not feel that he was given honest answers. He said that he was tired of people being brought in the back door, so he will be voting no.

Council Member Valle said that Ms. Morrissey's resume was very good. Council Member Valle went on to express concern about the interview and hiring process; how long the job was posted; other resumes that were submitted and who was on the committee to select the Health Director.

Council Member Brown said that he was in the Contracts Committee and said that Ms. Morrissey was present at that meeting. It is important to be respectful. However, the Charter is clear about officers who are appointed must live in the City. The voters are the ones who approved the Charter. That is the reason he will be voting no.

Council Member Lyons said that Ms. Morrissey's qualifications were very good, but she will have to abstain because there is an immediate family member who would be affected.

Council Member Roman-Christy reiterated what Council Member Newton said earlier about the Governor could easily appoint someone who was not a Bridgeport resident.

Council Member Newton said that he took exception to the fact that Council Member Pereira said that the Council could not grant a waiver. There are some serious issues on the table. The Council Members have nothing to do with the selection committee. The Mayor can allow the Governor to choose the Health Director.

Council Member Cruz said that he appreciated everyone's passion. He said that he was new to the Council and past practices were water under the bridge. He said that he didn't want to use her as a scapegoat or be threatened by the Governor coming in to appoint someone. The Charter speaks for itself.

Council President Nieves said that issue had been belabored. She pointed out that this position was not a competitive process and those who submit resumes are not guaranteed an interview. It is an appointed position. Labor Relations did do an outreach. This is the Mayor's choice.

Council President Nieves said that the Governor has recently privatized the Health Department and gave the details. There are serious questions about COVID-19 being asked, such as when will the testing be done, or when will we have PPE.

This is the same process that was used for the Police Chief. Council President Nieves said that she would be voting yes because Ms. Morrissey didn't say she wouldn't move to Bridgeport, she said that she would discuss it with her family.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 87-19 CONTRACTS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: NOMINATION OF LISA MORRISSEY FOR THE APPOINTMENT TO THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF HEALTH PASSED WITH ELEVEN (11) IN FAVOR (BURNS, TAYLOR-MOYE, MCBRIDE-LEE, SULIMAN, ROMAN-CHRISTY, NIEVES, VALLE, NEWTON, BRANTLEY, HERRON AND MARTINEZ) AND EIGHT (8) OPPOSED (BROWN, DEFILIPPO, VIZZO-PANICCIA, SILVA, CASTILLO, PEREIRA, MCCARTHY AND CRUZ) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (LYONS).**



Council Member Martinez asked for a moment of silence in memory of Mr. Herbert Sims for former fire fighter and worked with Housing Authority who recently passed away.

Council Member Newton asked for a point of personal privilege. Council Member Newton said that he wanted to recognize Council Member McCarthy for feeding a number of first responders. He thanked Council Member McCarthy but reminded Council Member McCarthy that he was still waiting for his ribs.

Mayor Ganim announced that the Council had to vote on the mill rate.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES FOR THE PURPOSE TO ADD AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA REGARDING THE MILL RATE FOR THE 2020-2021 FY CITY OF BRIDGEPORT MILL RATE.**

Mayor Ganim explained that this was an item for immediate consideration because the Council had to approve the mill rate within a certain time frame, which would expire before the next Council meeting.

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

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO WAIVE REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 CITY OF BRIDGEPORT MILL RATE AT 53.99 MILLS FOR REAL PROPERTY AND PERSONAL PROPERTY AND 25.00 FOR MOTOR VEHICLES. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 TOTAL ADOPTED REVENUE AND TOTAL ADOPTED EXPENDITURES APPROPRIATIONS ARE \$571,936,510.00.**

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

Atty. Anastasi said that they needed three votes. The first was to suspend the rules in order to include it on the agenda. The second vote needed would be to waive the referral to Committee for the stated reasons, and the third vote would be to approve the item.

Council Member Pereira said that she did not understand. After the budget was adopted on May 4th, she said that they were required to set the mill rate by May 11th by the City Charter.

Mayor Ganim said that the short answer was no and that if Council Member Pereira would like more details, they would be provided to her. Atty. Anastasi gave a brief overview of the process.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO WAIVE REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE PASSED WITH NINETEEN (19) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ , TAYLOR-MOYE, BROWN, DEFILIPPO, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, SILVA, CASTILLO, SULIMAN, ROMAN-CHRISTY, NIEVES, VALLE, PEREIRA, NEWTON, BRANTLEY, HERRON AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (LYONS).**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED TO APPROVE THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 CITY OF BRIDGEPORT MILL RATE AT 53.99 MILLS FOR REAL PROPERTY AND PERSONAL PROPERTY AND 25.00 FOR MOTOR VEHICLES. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 TOTAL ADOPTED REVENUE AND TOTAL ADOPTED EXPENDITURES APPROPRIATIONS ARE \$571,936,510.00.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 CITY OF BRIDGEPORT MILL RATE AT 53.99 MILLS FOR REAL PROPERTY AND PERSONAL PROPERTY AND 25.00 FOR MOTOR VEHICLES. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 TOTAL ADOPTED REVENUE AND TOTAL ADOPTED EXPENDITURES APPROPRIATIONS ARE \$571,936,510.00 PASSED WITH NINETEEN (19) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ , TAYLOR-MOYE, BROWN, DEFILIPPO, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, SILVA, CASTILLO, SULIMAN, ROMAN-CHRISTY, NIEVES, VALLE, PEREIRA, NEWTON, BRANTLEY, HERRON AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (LYONS). (ITEM #106-19)**

Council Member McBride-Lee welcomed Ms. Morrissey to Bridgeport.

Council Member Herron said that as a Co-chair of one Committee, she said that they were elected to represent the constituents. She said that it was important to respect one another and not to rush the meetings.

Council Member Brantley said that she would hold off and discuss the issues of how the masks were distributed to the black and brown community. Council Member Brantley had asked another Council Member to ask about handling of the PPE distributions and she was not satisfied with the answer. She said that she was sick and tired of seeing the black and brown people die because they didn't follow up.

Council Member McCarthy stated for the record the votes for the Health Director were 11 in favor and 8 against. City Clerk Martinez confirmed that this was correct.

Council Member McCarthy said that this was the third meeting where people have talked over other people.

Council Member Pereira suggested that it would be safer to follow Portugal's method of mailing a care kit to every household.

Council Member Cruz said that he would like to have a conversation with the Mayor. Mayor Ganim said that Council Member Cruz could speak with him as needed.

Mayor Ganim welcomed Ms. Morrissey to Bridgeport.

Ms. Morrissey said that she was looking forward to working with everyone. She said that was promising to give this job her all.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services