

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
DECEMBER 1, 2020**

**ATTENDANCE:** Maria Valle, Co-Chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-Chair; Jeanette Herron, Michelle Lyons, Mary McBride-Lee, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia

**OTHERS:** Council Member(s): Matthew McCarthy, Maria Pereira, Eneida Martinez, M. Evette Brantley & Ernest Newton (6:26 p.m.); Tom Gaudett, Mayoral Aide

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Valle called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. A quorum was present.

She said that each person would be able to ask two questions. Committee members will be acknowledged first.

**APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 4, 2020**  
**(Regular Meeting).**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 4, 2020.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 4, 2020 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**169-19 Proposed Resolution regarding Police Chief Search Committee Transparency Bill.**

Council Member Herron explained the reason this resolution was submitted was due to the past practices for Police Chief which appeared to be tainted. The reason is that there needs to be transparency with Council. She wished to know who would be on the search committee before it is assembled and not after the fact. The Council needs to be at the table like they now are with Contracts.

Council Member McCarthy said he was glad this was being done. He said that they were halfway through the 150-day time frame for the search and this needs to move forward. The Council needs to hold the administration to this standard.

Council Member Pereira said the Charter has an extensive section on the Chief of Police and pointed out that once that the Mayor requests three candidates, the Director of Civil Service starts a national search. She asked how the Council would have any authority and asked if the City Attorneys had reviewed this issue.

Council Member Herron said she had spoken with the new Civil Service Director before the search committee was assembled. She also consulted with the City Attorneys about this.

Council Member Pereira stated the Charter does not require a search committee. She said she was trying to understand where the search committee originated. Council Member Herron said there were search committees used in the past.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked for clarification on the role of the Council. Council Member Herron gave a brief overview.

Council Member McBride-Lee pointed out that there were two officers who had qualified for the position of Police Chief. She asked if a national search was necessary. Council Member Herron said that the test results had expired on October 19th and the candidates would have to take the test again.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked when Chief Perez stepped down. Council Member Herron said that it was on September 10th. Council Member McBride-Lee said that the other two candidates were still active when the former chief had resigned. The administration had apparently let the deadline run out rather than appointing one of the two candidates. This was not fair to those two candidates.

Council Member Herron agreed with Council Member McBride-Lee. This resolution shows that the Council was serious about making changes.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she would be following up on this issue and wished to know who she should contact.

*Council Member Newton joined the meeting at 6:26 p.m.*

Council Member Brantley said she would like to add her name to the resolution and they need to take a more pro-active stand with the departments. The Council needs to be included in what is going on.

Council Member Brantley added that the City has to also look from within, particularly since they have people on the force already who are qualified.

Council Member Taylor-Moye agreed with Council Member Brantley. She also requested to be added to the resolution. Council Member Taylor-Moye said Council Member McBride-Lee should inform the administration of her concerns. She said Council Member Herron should receive kudos for presenting this resolution. It is time for the Council to be aware of what is going on.

Council Member Newton said this resolution was long overdue. He added that the Police Department needs an overhaul. They claim they need 400 officers, but there was no study done to verify they need that many officers. He said he had spoken with past Council Members. The past Council gave the Chief more power and took the authority from the Police Commissioners.

The Council needs to be in touch with Civil Service. The City needs to stop filling positions with provisional staff appointments. If the City is serious about the police force, they need to stop hiring 20 officers when they know 25 officers will retire. The Council needs to find the funding for 30 new police office. Civil Service has done a poor job of planning for this. He asked to be included on the resolution.

Council Member Martinez said she was in full support of this resolution and would like to be included on the resolution.

Council Member McCarthy said the change needs to be made from the outside.

Council Member Lyons said that there were always 20 reasons why the Council can't do something. The Council needs to push forward. She asked to have her name added to the resolution. It is time to stop running around the mulberry bush and have the Mayor take care of things.

Council Member Pereira said that she was troubled by this debate particularly since she had presented a resolution about this before the timeline ran out. There are lawsuits being filed that could end up with major judgments against the City.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she would like to be included on the resolution. Captain Porter and former Assistant Chief Nardozzi are filing suit because they were treated wrongly. She said that there was no reason why the two that were qualified shouldn't be at the table. This is why she wants to be included in the review of the search committee.

Council Member Newton said that he needed to clarify a few things. He said that the Charter gives the Mayor the right to appoint whoever he or she wishes to appoint regardless to their ranking on the list. This is his authority. The Council has no authority to tell the Mayor who to choose. Thinking that the Mayor has to choose one of the three finalists is wrong. The Mayor can choose whoever he wishes to.

Council Member Taylor-Moye repeated her earlier statement that this was a great resolution. It will be important for everyone to pay attention to this process. Now they have a better chance of being informed. She said she did not know that the selection process was rigged.

Council Member Valle said that a resolution was presented to the Committee and she did not remember seeing an invitation for the Council Members to sign on to the resolution. It will be important to follow this through and not let it fall off by the wayside. It will be important for those involved to keep the Committee and the Council informed on the status of the resolution.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia gave a point of clarification. She said that former Mayor Finch did not appoint Chief Gaudett but had merely extended his contract.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM AS FOLLOWS:**

**PARAGRAPH 4 TO READ AS FOLLOWS:**

**WHEREAS THE ELIGIBILITY LIST FOR CHIEF OF POLICE EXPIRED ON OCTOBER 19, 2020,**

**AND THE LAST TWO PARAGRAPHS TO READ AS FOLLOWS:**

**WHEREAS CHAPTER 14 OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES (CGS) ENSURES THAT MUNICIPAL COMMITTEES OR RECORDS CREATED BY A MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT SHALL BE DISCLOSED TO THE PUBLIC; UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOI);**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT HENCEFORTH SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS AND ASSESSORS OF THE POLICE CHIEF SEARCH COMMITTEE, SELECTED BY THE PERSONNEL DIRECTOR, MAYOR OR DESIGNEE SHALL BE REVIEWED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AND APPROVED BY THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION PRIOR COMMENCING A SEARCH. THE EXAMINING BODY SHALL PROVIDE A COPY OF THE EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL, BEFORE REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATION OF THE ESTABLISHED LIST IS SUBMITTED TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION OR MAYOR.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ADD THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL MEMBERS AS COSPONSORS:**

**COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY,  
COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE,  
COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS,  
COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE,  
COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON,  
COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ  
AND COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA.**

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 169-19 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING POLICE CHIEF SEARCH COMMITTEE TRANSPARENCY BILL AS AMENDED.  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services