

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
FEBRUARY 12, 2024**

**ATTENDANCE:** Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair;  
Richard Ortiz; Fredrick Hodges.

**OTHER:** Council Member(s): Mathew McCarthy, Aikeem Boyd, (6:04); Tyler Mack, (6:04) & Dasha Spell, (6:08); Kenneth Flatto, Finance Director; Kemeasha McDonald, Finance Department; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Santos Carta, Principal of CLA; Kathleen Brickett, OPM

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Ernest Newton called the meeting at 6:01p.m. There was a quorum present at the time of the roll call.

Approval of Committee Minutes: January 8, 2024 (Regular Meeting)

**\*\*CO-CHAIR BURNS MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 8, 2024.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

**\*\*AIKEEM BOYD JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:04\*\***

**\*\*TYLER MACK JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:04\*\***

Annual Audit Presentation from CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA).

Mr. Flatto introduced the representative from CLA, Mr. Carta. He further explained the accolades of the company and how they are hired to also do the city audits. Mr. Flatto said they had a healthy year from reports and ended the year in very solid shape. In terms of the unreserved surplus, they ended up with \$5 million dollars. (Inaudible). The staff on the audit team did a wonderful job.

Co-chair Newton asked before Mr. Carta spoke, could Mr. Flatto repeat those numbers again and answer a few more questions. He wanted to know what was projected in the rainy day fund and if those funds were able to be used by the city council.

Mr. Flatto replied there will be a quick summary of that within the presentation Mr. Carta will be presenting, on page 9. The unassigned funds increased by \$5.7 million dollars, with a total balance of \$49.6 million dollars, not \$46 million dollars.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER SPELL JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:08\*\***

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Co-chair Newton confirmed the typos. Mr. Flatto said yes, the correct balance is \$49.6 million dollars. They had to set aside a lot of money due to pension contracts and settlements that weren't settled yet.

Mr. Carta went over the audit presentation with the committee. He thoroughly went over page 5, terms of engagement. There were no findings reported on internal control and compliance and the audit should be finalized in March. He went on to page 9, regarding the general fund; \$4 million dollars were assigned with the \$5.7 million dollar increase from last year to the unassigned-unreserved fund.

Co-chair Newton asked if the \$5.7 million dollar increase is assigned to something you would call a rainy day fund in layman's terms. Mr. Flatto said that is correct.

Council member Hodges asked if last year's statement was inside that packet. Mr. Carta said no.

Mr. Carta carried on to page 10 and it explained it as the government wide financial statement. This is where they can see all the funds available to them and what has been monetized.

Mr. Flatto added that because of building values and the pension fund liability, the big problematic area is the government must report all health insurance benefits provided to employees and retirees. Since employees and many retirees are still alive and with different retirement contracts, they don't have to pay into the plans. Recent employees pay about 30% into the plans. Along with pension liability, that is what causes the big negative number to be there.

Co-chair Newton added they are on page 9 in the middle lines if anyone is lost. Mr. Flatto added in the big book it is pages 29 and 30. He mentioned to keep in mind a lot of that number includes the building value of the WPCA so it includes building depreciation.

Co-chair Newton said the first (inaudible) will be on the west side followed by the east side plan within a few years so these numbers will change dramatically as construction costs come up.

Mr. Carta continued with the governmental fund review, the education grants started with \$62 thousand dollars and ended the year with around \$138 thousand dollars. The capital bonds account closed with \$105.8 million dollars while starting with \$92 million dollars. Mr. Flatto added these are all capital projects.

Co-chair Newton asked regarding the end of year balance for the ARPA funds, is that really what's left in the account. Mr. Carta said not really because whatever isn't spent earns revenue. Mr. Flatto added if they look at page 25 from the big book, they will see it is actually \$57 million dollars of unspent money.

Mr. Carta went on to speak on the next column, nonmajor governmental funds, which are all the other funds and expenditures that started at \$12.1 million dollars to now \$15.3 million dollars.

Co-Chair Newton asked if they would be able to show them the money coming in through the city from the state and federal government.

Mr. Carta replied that those are single item line entries.

Co-chair Newton added that is what they want to see, they want to be able to know how much money exactly does Bridgeport have from the state and federal.

Mr. Flatto replied (inaudible) describing the fund balance for each month. They do spend more than that so the non-governmental funds like the library endowment, or the grants that go through the health department are \$15-20 million dollars or so is not what they have as they spend a lot more than that. They also get a lot of revenue from grants so this is what is left at the end of the year.

Mr. Carta said (inaudible). Mr. Flatto added that also includes the education assets, funds, and expenses.

Mr. Carta said the next page is regarding pension funds. Mr. Flatto explained they created 3 different programs and the first program for firefighters and police is difficult to manage due to the payout being larger. It currently takes \$32-33 million dollars to fund and years ago the city issued bonds due to funds being low. Luckily the investment is going up 6 to 8 percent a year but each time there is a raise for active employees, those in the plan also get a raise. Over time the expense will decrease but the city is currently spending more and not seeing any return back. This year there will only be 133 retirees included on the plan.

Co-chair Newton asked for them to speak on the other avenues the city has tried like the employees buying into the state plan.

Mr. Flatto added plan B ran from the 1990s until 2011, which also included firefighters and policemen. This plan operates better funded, firefighters are 100% funded and police officers have about 85% of funding. The board of trustees for both departments match those funds while the city treasury and finance department manage plan A. The third plan is for the janitors between the board of education, which is \$100 thousand dollars pay as they go. Every year the state tells each city they must be investing more into the Municipal Employee Retirement Fund. The liabilities are so big due to upfront cost.

Mr. Carta asked to go over the next page that shows the cost of all the pensions, which is \$145.5 million dollars. Public safety plan is funded by 49.33%, the police retirement plan b is funded by 86.85%, the firefighter plan b has no liability to the state as it is funded 100.19%. The janitors' and engineers' pension has 0% funding which is to be paid between the next 15 to 20 years. If they don't earn extra money then it will come out of the budget.

Co-chair Burns asked when it comes to paying the cost, who determines the number. Mr. Flatto said Seagal has a formula based on many factors that determine the cost to pay.

Council member Hodges asked how long. Mr. Flatto said they forecasted between 15-20 years. They tell the city upfront this is the value they should expect to pay down the line.

Co-chair Newton shared that the Board of Education has a surplus which has been up for debate to give some of those funds to support the kids rather than putting it all away or to pay health insurance. Mr. Flatto added they put the extra in the surplus account and set expectations to budget less for next year to use everything up, in which they end up receiving those funds back.

Co-chair Burns asked about the amortization period on page 72. He reads that in 20-30 years it declines by one year. He asked if that started in 2013, does that mean they should be looking at this decline in 10 years.

Mr. Flatto said it should be 15 years out. They do not keep diminishing they always (inaudible). He continued with Co-chair Newton's point regarding the Board of Education; the teachers have a pension fund but it is through the state. The Board of Education puts money into that and there are footnotes regarding that in the presentation but the city has no control over that.

Mr. Carta went on to speak on the Total OPEB liability. They are .19% funded (inaudible).

Co-chair Newton asked about OPEB. Mr. Flatto said it stands for Other Post Employment Benefits which covers health care and worker's compensation. Co-chair Newton said they don't have a large staff. Mr. Flatto added largely their funds cover the health care cost and worker's compensation. From what Mr. Carta is saying, if you look at page 29-30 from the big book you can see what they spend each year and what they receive from the employee shares and city budget because they have a health co-share system in effect. Mr. Carta is talking about the future liability on a 20 year scale. For example, in one year they paid \$120 million dollars in claims which is  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the city's budget. Theoretically if the city can set money aside and start earning money on investments but right now the city only has very little set aside so that is why the liability is over \$700 million dollars. In about 10-15 years since the active employees are enrolled in a new pension program, it should decline a bit.

Mr. Carta went on to speak on the State Single Audit on page 15. A total of state awards were expended at \$302.9 million dollars. A large majority of those grants go to Alliance, Early Childcare and Pilot programs. Mr. Flatto added all money that Tyler gets from the state is part of that number.

Co-chair Newton (inaudible).

Mr. Flatto said from the Board of Education they got \$44 million granted outside of the budget and he believes Alliance and Early Childcare received about \$130 million dollars. So, they got \$164 million dollars from the state budget, about \$40 million from state grants for one shot programs, and \$200 thousand dollars of that goes to private schools for transportation; character schools get their money directly from the state.

Co-chair Newton said regarding the special education program and transportation. He believes it should be something to think about to create a program in the city school system to provide for our students at home and not have to bus them away for an education.

Mr. Flatto said that would be part of the education line but it could be around 10's of million dollars for special education transport. But he remembers the superintendent years ago tried to adopt their own special education program (inaudible) and the kids needed very special attention.

Co-chair Burns asked from page 10, he saw 5 grant program audits for Alliance, Early Childcare, etc. In terms of auditing, how are they chosen and how does it compare to other city municipalities?

Mr. Carta replied there are two types of programs, type A and B. Anything above \$1.9 million is audited once every 3 years, and that \$1.9 threshold also can change year to year. They also use the Risk (inaudible) assessment where they test 50% of all non-exempt state money.

Mr. Flatto added they don't really have to test pilot money because that money can be used for anything.

Mr. Carta said there is a loophole because they are new programs and haven't or wouldn't reach the 3 years mark then it won't get audited but if something was just raised over 2 million dollars then it has to be tested.

Co-chair Newton (inaudible).

Mr. Flatto said (inaudible) next month.

Mr. Carta (inaudible).

Mr. Flatto added his chief account found out when employees don't get their health exam then they have to pay a penalty while the city employees were paying that out of pocket, the Board of Education was using their funds to pay for those penalties on behalf of the employees.

Mr. Carta asked if there were any questions regarding the presentation. Mr. Flatto added there is a summary in the footnotes regarding large long term leases that is new to the report.

Co-chair Burns referred back to page 43-44 regarding the old budget as it wasn't approved by the committee in the final form, would that be something auditors are aware of as the mayor's budget prevailed.

Co-chair Newton added due to timing and changes in the charter, the council didn't get to approve the budget but now it will be run by them.

Mr. Flatto said technically that shouldn't affect the audit at all but he would look into it.

Co-chair Burns asked about the Special revenue funds, the city does not have a legally adopted annual budget for special revenue funds. Is that something they should consider?

Mr. Carta said it is possible but from the general budget fund they would need a budget line for each. Mr. Flatto added they are mostly grant driven so the city doesn't have much discretion. Mr.

Nkwo shared from his perspective, once the contracts committee and city council accepted and adopted the grants on special grant pages.

Co-chair Newton agreed that is the process.

Mr. Carta said Budgets are a little different as they are approving the revenues and expenditures for the year, grants are more like projects.

Mr. Nkwo agreed grants are like projects, they can only approve the grant to limitation of the award amount. OPM cannot set up a grant budget over the approved amount from the city council.

Mr. Flatto added if they go to page 130, they can see all the specific things like CBG made \$2 million dollars, housing has \$800 thousand dollars, and the home program had \$500 thousand dollars. For each department they can only use the grant money that was approved to them; so technically it is not a budget.

Mr. Nkwo said it is a budget but it is approved under the individual grant program. The whole issue with the grants is they are generally not yearly budgets, they are multi-year budgets. The fund can be approved today but can take 3-4 years to spend.

**\*\*CO-CHAIR BURNS MOTIONED TO DOCUMENT THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT: JUNE 30, 2023 AUDIT PRESENTATION AS EXHIBIT 02-12-2024A.**

**\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ.**

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

**\*\*CO-CHAIR BURNED MOTIONED TO DOCUMENT THE STATE SINGLE AUDIT REPORT AS EXHIBIT 02-12-2024B**

**\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ.**

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

Review from OPED regarding the sale/maintenance status of the former Harding High building and other for sale city-owned buildings.

Co-chair Newton shared when he joined the council there was a company that was allowed to handle all their real estate to focus on the revenue which was stopped for some reason, now the city is in control of the properties. In regards to Harding, it shows they are the worst landlords and shouldn't be owning stuff. With a lot of these properties, OPED needs to up their game; it shouldn't take 6 months to 2 years to reach a deal. As a council they need to figure out what they are going to do. He isn't talking about housing properties downtown. Every school building that closes reverts back to the city; another great example would be owning the wonderland of ice that shouldn't have been owned by the city. They did a good job with the arena as they put

something in place that would cover the renovation and allow them to generate revenue. Unlike spending \$35 million dollars on a ball field which caused a lot of lawsuits.

Co-chair Burns added as a committee they have built in revenue where they can say they are for a certain amount of sales from the properties which hasn't been materialized, if they need to hire outside vendors to meet their needs then they should do that. Tom Gill has reached out to him to say the Harding property is in the middle of negotiations but we all know it has been going on for a while. We as a council need to be on top of them, he is pretty embarrassed a fire occurred at Harding recently.

Co-chair Newton agreed everyone was embarrassed but those are people who were in the cold, got in the building to stay warm. Now imagine if they would have got killed by the fire, the liability the city would have come from all the possible lawsuits would have been horrible. That is something the city should take a good look at and they also have other buildings in the same conditions. He is sure there is a list of things they should not be in the business of owning.

Council member Hodges asked who the bidders were on the property. Co-chair Newton replied he believes it was warranted to Bridgeport Hospital but he is caught off guard when they say they are in negotiations when they already know who is going to get the building and they must rebuild the building. Once Tom Gill is at a meeting, we will learn what is going on and how many properties they own.

Council member McCarthy added he believes they sent a list of all the properties to the budget committee last year. Co-chair Newton said there are quite a lot of properties between lots and houses that they own. While they are crying about housing, affordable, and this to that, this would be a good way to help with those issues.

Council member Boyd asked if the list could be forwarded to him. Co-chair Newton said yes they can.

Council member McCarthy said the list is very, very long but they have to understand there can be a 10 foot property that is water. He believes someone from OPED should give them a true list of properties.

Co-chair Newton said they can ask Economic Development for a breakdown of what is real property apart from paper streets and stuff like that. They can try to get a more accurate list.

**\*\*CO-CHAIR BURNS MOTIONED TO TABLE THE DISCUSSION FOR NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING.**

**\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ.**

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

Finance Department review of ARPA funds status.

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Mr. Flatto said this should be used as a summary for the committee, what he did was take from a municipal list of programs that are set up from the city ARPA program and gave them the allocated budget for each program and what was used since December 31, 2023. The city total budget is around \$110 million dollars, from the reports they set up budgets for \$109 million dollars. For the federal purposes he wanted to report things because there was a time they wanted to pull money back so he wanted to show money was budgeted but not obligated yet. In the federal portal you can see what has been budgeted from the \$109 million and of that, \$90 million is obligated. There is a line called Bridgeport Revenue loss budget for \$30 million dollars where all the money Mr. Nkwo will be giving them all the numbers for the last few years and upcoming. Mr. Nkwo could suggest for next year that at least \$10 million dollars should be requested for the budget. Within the portal it is not obligated just to set budgets so it is not legally obligated yet. Most of the lines have specific budget amounts based on specific bids or RFP that came in. All those numbers are based on nonprofits that applied for funds that get awarded a 3 year grant. If money is unspent then the money will roll back, becoming unobligated and allocated to different things the following year. There are three categories listed; social services, capital programs, and flooding - which hasn't been used due to waiting upon permit approvals.

Co-chair Newton said he doesn't understand why some programs haven't spent not even one penny. (Inaudible) hasn't been able to spend any money due to issues with the city.

Co-chair Burns added Andy Toledo is the liaison to the NRZ and he is helping them do some work on various (inaudible). He believes things are in the works but actually dollars are not being used yet. Mr. Flatto said he believes the money is available for them to use as accounting has already set up the budget.

Council member Hodges asked how much money was given to the NRZ. Co-chair Newton said about \$400 thousand dollars but he does know of problems dealing with the city that hasn't allowed the NRZ to get their money.

Council member McCarthy asked about the city's bulk clean streets program, he remembered it being under the budget but since when was it under ARPA money. Mr. Flatto said the ARPA money allows for blight related pick up, which they started over a year ago. They decided to use ARPA money for the bulk clean up. This report was printed after they responded to how much money they used for the program so they actually used about \$200 thousand dollars out of the regular budget in which he is going to try to take it back from the regular budget since the city said they would use money out of ARPA.

Council member McCarthy said that money could have been used for something else. Mr. Flatto said he can only say they gave them \$2 million dollars for the program over a 2-3 year course. Which could possibly be cut back. Council member Spell said they stopped it. Mr. Nkwo said he wasn't involved in that appropriation. Mr. Flatto said they asked just to set up a line for that but city wide was only about \$200 thousand dollars for last year and they plan to do another next spring.



Co-chair Burns said to Mr. McCarthy's point, he believed they had made a budget in the general operating budget for that program.

Mr. Nkwo added the personnel, meaning public facilities employees get funds from the general fund. Council member McCarthy said they have over a \$10 million dollar surplus. Mr. Flatto said it is about \$9 million dollars. Council member McCarthy said they were about to do bulk pick up and still have a surplus so they don't need \$2 million dollars out of ARPA funds. Mr. Flatto said he wanted to help the budget a bit as they were spending about \$200-300 thousand dollars then let's help take it out of ARPA. He believes what happens is they set up an amount for the 3 years and in the portal, he might have made it higher by mistake just because he didn't know what could have happened in the future. But it is not obligated, it can be cut back. Council member McCarthy said his last comment would be moving forward they will have tighter budgets so he is okay moving forward if they need to have more in there but last year. Mr. Flatto interjected saying even this year could be tight if they don't get the real estate money.

Council member Mack asked for clarification as the presentation last year wasn't mentioned. Mr. Flatto said this isn't something recent that came out a month or two ago. Council member McCarthy said we did give them the power to do whatever they want. Co-chair Newton said if it was over two then they needed to explain why they needed all that money before allocating. Mr. Flatto added maybe because the first year's budget was only a couple hundred thousand so no one didn't fight to say anything. He shared that the ARPA funds are set up on 3 year terms; Nestor set up the first year's budget then he just formulated that this year would be more. Council member Mack said he isn't trying to track anyone, it's just \$2 million dollars.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY LEFT THE MEETING AT 7:26 PM\*\***

Co-chair Newton asked if the Implementation ARPA program cost is the salary of one person or what exactly it is. Mr. Flatto said there were two or three people being funded to work full time and now they are down to one employee for the department. But those few employees had a big workload as they had to deal with internal expenditures for each program. They spent over \$100 thousand dollars between the salaries and benefits over the year. Over the past two years they spent over \$545 thousand dollars between salaries but he will look into it. Co-chair Newton said that one needs to be explained.

Council member Mack asked about the Health clinic facility line, where it is located. Mr. Flatto said that is the one they moved downtown on Middle Street. Council Member Mack said he understood that but last budget cycle there was discussion about closing, he would like to know since it is being funded by ARPA will the cost be taken over by the general fund. Mr. Flatto said the half million was set up over a year ago when they were talking about the east side. Mr. Nkwo said they do have a lease agreement under the general fund and the rent is being paid from the general fund. The allocation from the ARPA funds was intended when they didn't know where they were going. The expenditures you see are just retrofitting of the site, this balance should have not been used.

Co-chair Newton added if they were to stay at the old building which was terrible then that allocation would have to go to repairs but because they found another location, they don't need it

so they use the general fund to cover the cost. Mr. Flatto added what usually happens is their office can ask for money to fund programs, they usually don't need the whole budget. Mr. Nkwo said he only sets up a budget when he is asked after it went through the proper procedures. Council member Mack asked just to be clear, he expects \$450 thousand dollars not to be used. Mr. Flatto said he is not in charge of spending but to his knowledge they aren't spending anymore but he will double check tomorrow.

Co-chair Newton said Co-chair Burns and himself will have a conversation with (inaudible) to refresh his memory that he needs to come to committee in order to do certain things. He asked what is left over from the ARB. Mr. Flatto replied his guess would be \$6-7 million dollars, even though it is almost all budgeted, OPED will require \$10 million to be put away but \$6-7 million would be sitting in surplus. Co-chair Newton said let's just say \$7 million dollars but it could be a high \$10 million dollars because the social service program ends in June.

Mr. Nkwo added whatever is not spent by the social service program will go back into the general fund to balance the budget. Co-chair Newton said but if they are putting \$10 million dollars aside. Mr. Nkwo said they will most likely need more than \$10 million to make sure the budget is properly balanced.

Mr. Flatto said he believes they have \$18 million set aside for future budgets, he assumes there are \$6 million that can be freed up with everything else. By December 2025 they have to obligate and say how they will spend it, technically spending can go into year 2026.

Co-chair Newton said to his understanding those are rough numbers and at least \$16 million dollars will be put aside for next year's budget.

Mr. Nkwo said they can take up to \$25 million dollars over two years towards the city budget. (Inaudible). Whether it relapses it will go back to the general fund.

Co-chair Newton added that whatever they take out and put in the next two budgets, they will need to find a way to refund it. He asked if some projects go online then maybe they can get some tax revenue. It is important that the city gets these projects started to collect revenue. They need to invest in departments that bring in revenue for the city. Whether that is fixing the building department; many departments are looking for help and they can help any one of them to bring revenue in. He believes the building department is the way to go.

Council member Mack said respectfully, every year they have the same conversation. Co-chair Newton replied he knows. Council member Mack continued to say they put out the same budget every year that leads to the same problems every year.

Co-chair Newton said they added people to the building department to help offset the dilemma. Council member Mack said they had added new people into central grants, and added a new deputy director into OPED who still hasn't been hired yet. They are adding new positions to help but they aren't getting the result they are looking for. They have a golden opportunity with the ARPA funds to do something transformation for the city, they had \$100s of millions of dollars to do something structural and they didn't do it. It is on them.

Mr. Flatto said the hope in the social service program is to continue the programs they sought out. Council member Mack said they have even bigger issues than that, there are issues with flooding, and long term issues that could have used this money to be dealt with. Eventually they need to make tough decisions, accept the position they are in, and be honest with it.

Co-chair Burns said he is glad they are having this discussion because they should be looking at where the unexpended funds are going and maybe they don't put so much into the operating budget. He added to Mr. Mack's point, they should do something structural that will reap a long time benefit. There are options and possibilities.

Co-chair Newton said he will let the old cat out of the bag. Where the old health department is, they should knock that down and put the new police station as it has enough space and the old police station can become housing as there is housing already surrounding the area. The new location is in the middle of the city.

Mr. Hodges asked what about the parking. Co-chair Newton said yes there is a parking lot.

Co-chair Burns said it is not near a highway. Co-chair Newton said yes, it is off of East Main Street. Council member Spell said it goes to I-95 South.

Council member Mack said that is a flood zone by the railroad. Co-chair Newton said that would be something to look into.

Council member Hodges asked if they own the property over there. Co-chair Newton said yes. Council member Hodges said that would remove the policeman from the current lease they have in place at where they park.

Mr. Nkwo said the grant list just came out for next year, but in the last 3 years the list hasn't grown. That is horrible. Mr. Flatto said the Real estate was okay but the motor vehicles went low. Mr. Nkwo said they are regressing.

**\*\*CO-CHAIR NEWTON MOTIONED TO DOCUMENT THE ARPA PROGRAM SUMMARY THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023 AS EXHIBIT 03-12-2024C.**

**\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ.**

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

Mr. Flatto said the financial part is a quick summary and the revenue side looks like it will be fairly stable. They are losing some real estate revenue but they are making it up with other investments. (inaudible). The expense item is something he is trying to worry about, the police and fire overtime is because of staffing but it is way beyond the level of the last two years.

Mr. Nkwo said the one that concerns him more is fire because fire is (inaudible).

Co-chair Newton said they are fully staffed, when they come in, we will ask them all those questions; their budget is also high. He was under the impression of them doing much better but from what Mr. Nkwo just said they are over budget and fully staffed.

Mr. Flatto said half of their budget has been used in the last 6 months out of the \$9 million dollars budget they have.

Co-chair Newton said maybe we should call them in before time. He asked Co-chair Burns to reach out to the fire department to set up a meeting with them.

Mr. Flatto said in their defense, when the contract was passed last spring the factor of overtime was not increased. Mr. Nkwo said yes it was. Co-chair Newton said they raised everything.

Co-chair Newton asked if the disparity study for the police had been done, are there any updates on that. His impression was that they were supposed to come. Co-chair Burns said he hasn't heard a lot but he does know they are getting towards the end. They were given a 6 month contract that started at the end of August so they are almost at the end mark. The Police Department wasn't the most warm or cooperative but Eric Amado was appointed by the CAO as the project manager.

Co-chair Newton said maybe we can invite Mr. Amado to get an update. Co-chair Burns said he will reach out to Mr. Amado to get an update on what's going on.

Co-chair Burns wanted to touch on someone from the media calling him regarding money being spent on the election and this person was given his contact from the registrar office. The person who was speaking from the office was essentially spent on the budget. Through December they have spent half a million but they budgeted for almost a million, thus far they are not too far. Mr. Flatto asked if that included January and February. Co-chair Burns said no.

Co-chair Newton said they need to take into consideration that no one planned for three elections to occur in one year. This might be an issue for the budget, the state or the courts won't get it because they don't pay into that budget. Mr. Nkwo added it is pretty hard to get a handle on how much these elections will cost at the end of the day, the security guards are paid as independent contractors, and the custodians putting the barriers up from public facilities will not be charged directly from public facilities.

Co-chair Burns said there are many other associated costs but his concern is someone who doesn't know the nuances is reporting certain figures to the media which are incorrect. As council members we should double check and contact Mr. Nkwo when people reach out to them to not throw out figures that may or may not be correct. We have enough damage as it is.

Council member Mack said after the election they do a post-election analysis to understand how much they paid, what happened and how the city cannot go through this again, in terms of policing, budget issues, and everything else. What will happen is someone will take this information and spin it. Co-chair Newton agreed with council member Mack.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\*CO-CHAIR BURNS MOTIONED TO ADJOURN.  
\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED THE MOTION.  
\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Vianca Rivera

Telesco services