

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024  
City Council Chambers, City Hall  
45 Lyon Terrace  
Bridgeport, CT 06604**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council President Pro Tempore, Ernest E. Newton called the Public Speaking session of the City Council to order at 6:29 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The City Clerk Lydia Martinez called the roll.

130<sup>th</sup> District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy  
131<sup>st</sup> District: Jorge Cruz  
132<sup>nd</sup> District: Dasha Spell, Rolanda Smith  
133<sup>rd</sup> District: Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron  
135<sup>th</sup> District: Mary McBride-Lee, Richard Ortiz  
136<sup>th</sup> District: Frederick Hodges  
138<sup>th</sup> District: Maria Pereira, Jazmarie Melendez  
139<sup>th</sup> District: Eneida Martinez, Ernest Newton

A quorum was present.

Council President Pro Tempore opened the public speaking forum by thanking everyone for joining. He carried on to say due to the last meeting being canceled, they will use that list and order of public speakers for tonight since they didn't get the opportunity, should one of those ten not show up then they will go onto the list dated for tonight. Pro Tempore asked the council to indulge in prayer before they began the session, he asked for leaders of each religion to come forward to say a prayer before they begin.

Pastor Anthony Bennett from the Mount Avery Baptist Church went forward to share a prayer. Pastor Debra Boles from the Congregation Rodeph Sholom came forward to share a short prayer. Dr. Khaled Elleithy, president of the BICC came forward to share a short prayer.

**THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSONS HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5 AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604.**

There were in total ten speakers, six speakers were registered from the last meeting that was canceled due to snow and four were registered from the floor.

**NAME**

**SUBJECT**

John Marshall Lee -  
30 Beacon Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Municipal Governance.

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

You have heard me talk about governance issues on multiple occasions. Not political issues about where a person or party exercises authority over others courtesy of election by the people or because of appointment by an official with power. Person's and parties, when discussed as individuals, are easier for people to understand, either 'me or you,' 'us or them,' the 'good against the bad,' for example. This does not deal with systemic injustice in a system, like the failure to keep citizen residents from participating for years in serving on Boards and Commissions to the maximum extent possible. The denied opportunity for public service denies Charter citizen participation. The Fair Rent Commission was a major initiative of the City Council Last year, but the new group has not yet met, though staffing is under the City Health Department. Juan Orlando Hernandez has opened forty-three (43) files and settled perhaps fifteen (15) of them with the CT Statutes recorded last fall. However, only four members have been appointed of the number authorized which may hold up quorums for meetings or hearings. How are the quality-of-life issues of concern by renting residents handled? What about the Fair Housing Commission and action in this regard? City Hall reporting to the State of CT was not timely last year on "fair housing" issues. How does Park City Communities with activities funded primarily by HUD but with a Mayor appointed Board reveal annually at least the complete material discussed by their Board? Where is documentation provided by the City or by Park City Communities website to which the public may refer for better understanding the lives of the thousands of renters supported? Fear for personal safety and fear of eviction for sharing a story that seems unjust is no way to deal with public responsibilities. Where is *official empathy*? Time will tell.

Julian Shafer -  
49 Sidney Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Cease-Fire Resolution.

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

My name is Julian Shafer, I live on 49 Sidney Street.

Bridgeport City Council,

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

I came here today to thank my city government for standing on the side of peace and justice by passing the Palestine-Israel ceasefire resolution last month. In passing this resolution we have joined the likes of about 60 other cities around the country who have also called for a ceasefire. These local resolutions may only be symbolic, but they're an important step in telling the President and our congressional delegation that CT's largest city wants to see an end to Israel's war on Gaza, and developing genocide against Palestinians. Being born and raised Jewish, I began to learn about the Holocaust as early as the fourth grade, when we learned about the dangers of dehumanization, racism, and genocide in Hebrew School. Through our prayers and study of the Torah I was taught to believe that every life is precious, how every life is a world of its own, and how each life lost, is akin to the loss of a world. This is why it pains me to know that Israel's war on Gaza is being done in the name of defending Jewish people. Hamas's October 7th attack cannot be used to justify genocide. War crimes do not justify war crimes. I strongly believe that the genocidal intent of the Netanyahu government against Palestinians is in direct opposition with the values of Judaism, and I believe that it is my duty as a Jewish person to speak out against Israel's war, occupation and apartheid against Palestinians. As of last month, 1 in 100 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed in this war. Entire families have been murdered. Israel has dropped 2,000 lb bombs on refugee camps and apartment complexes. These bombs are so powerful that they turn giant apartment complexes into holes in the ground. Gaza as a whole is on the brink of famine, and its medical system has decimated. Since you passed the ceasefire resolution, South Africa has brought charges of genocide against the state of Israel, and is planning to sue the US government over its material support for these crimes. We here in Bridgeport today would be wise to follow the lead of the South African government, who themselves have experienced the horrors of an apartheid state. In college I spent a semester in South Africa studying its history of apartheid and the movement that ended it. My professors who were part of the anti-apartheid movement themselves explained that international pressure via targeted BDS (Boycotts, Divestments, and Sanctions) of select South African banks and businesses, were a critical pillar in the movement to end South African apartheid. By 1989, 90 US cities and 22 states joined in these pivotal boycotts. And so I can't help but think, while our symbolic action is necessary, it is frankly not enough when genocide is unfolding. I propose to my city council that you take your symbolic action of a ceasefire resolution one step further, and take a material stand against genocide and decades of apartheid, occupation, and illegal settlements. By using the same strategy of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, Bridgeport can take a meaningful stand against Israel's apartheid, occupation, and now war on Palestinians. Even President Biden has called for sanctions against West Bank Settlers in the past week. This task is not a stretch. I believe that both Israeli and Palestinian people today have a right to live on the lands that international law has designated, and a right to live in peace. I also believe it is the international community's duty to help end this 75 year old cycle of violence. Until then, I believe the Bridgeport City Council should support the Boycott, Divest and Sanctions (BDS) movement, and in doing so, end its business with any companies on its boycott list until Palestine is free and has a state of its own!

Dario Sulzman -  
118 Ellsworth Street #2  
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Cease-Fire Resolution.

Mr. Sulzman was not in attendance at the meeting to speak.

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

Hamza al Hameedi -  
935 East Main Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06608

Cease-Fire Resolution.

President Pro Tempore asked Mr. Hameedi to confirm his address as he is aware 1360 Noble Avenue is a gas station. He asked if that is a place where he lays his head at night.

Mr. Hameedi said he does have an address where he does lay his head at night in Bridgeport.

President Pro Tempore told Mr. Hameedi, he must be a resident of Bridgeport. He asked if Mr. Hameedi had residence in Bridgeport. Mr. Hameedi said yes, 935 East Main Street, Bridgeport, CT.

Council member Pereira commented, Driver licenses. Then asked President Pro Tempore why he wouldn't have listed that on the sign up form. President Pro Tempore replied he asked him for an address, he gave us a valid address so he is allowed to speak.

Mr. Hameedi greeted everyone with peace and blessings. He started off by taking a look around the room. He said at the end of the day we are all human, what makes us human is the free will to do what is right, what is wrong, our ability to show sympathy and understand the differences between each other. Mr. Hameedi shared as he spoke that a newlywed lost her husband in the bombing, many families being separated and without homes. He asked everyone to put their beliefs and opinions away to see it for what it is, put Palestine and Israel away for a moment. 2.2 million people are (inaudible) relentlessly. Basic human necessities and resources are being stripped. After this meeting we will go home and turn a blind eye. That is our privilege being taken away by these innocent people when nothing is being done. He asked how much more destruction must occur for us to do the right thing. He asked the city of Bridgeport to pave the way and be light in this dark world, allowing other towns to join in on the cause. Let us not history repeat itself and be on the wrong side.

Helen O. Losak -  
304 Bradley Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06610

Great Police Service - Thanking  
Bridgeport Police & Chief Porter for  
removing falling apart boat from  
Hickory Street.

Ms. Losak greeted the council and everyone in attendance. She shared that right before Christmas she made a call to the chief's office and spoke to a secretary regarding an abandoned boat in front of 63 Hickory Street that has been there for two years. She made the call at 9am and around 11am the same day, the boat was removed by the Bridgeport police department. Regardless of Council member Pereira's pig and piglet opinions, she believes Bridgeport has an outstanding chief and police department. She continued to share that the chief has helped her during funeral services for her brother, Sargent John A. Losak. Ms. Losak shared that Council member Pereira was living on Bradley Street for a short period of time and would call the area the hood and ghetto east. She shared that the 138th district is a culturally diverse district with many cultures; she asked Periera to stop using such language and she said her

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

response was she has a right to express her opinions. Ms. Losak added she teaches preschool and kindergarten in Stratford and the kids love a particular rhyme. “ Mirror Mirror, on the way, who is the fairest of them all, the mirror says certainly not Maria Periera. If not Maria Periera then who mirror? Mayor Joseph Ganim”.

President Pro Tempore, Mr. Newton reminded the public speakers not to mention anyones name and to keep comments to their regarding topic.

Jason Coombs -  
BICC  
703 State Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Ceasefire Resolution.

Mr. Coombs was not in attendance at the meeting to speak.

Dr. Khaled Elleithy, President -  
BICC  
703 State Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Ceasefire Resolution.

Dr. Elliethy came forward and read into the record:

Dear Mayor Joseph P. Ganim and Council Members,  
My name is Khaled Elleithy. I am the President of the Bridgeport Islamic Community Center located at 703 State Street. As The largest Islamic Center in Fairfield County serving the Bridgeport community, we are proud of the City Council adopting a ceasefire resolution to be the first City in Connecticut. Bridgeport is leading the way in Connecticut for other cities, including New Haven and Windsor, discussing similar resolutions tonight as we speak now. With the understanding that the City Council has no power to enforce such a resolution or investigate any claims of wrongdoing, it remains a historic statement by the City Council. It is a call for peace. Just a call for peace. Nevertheless, some cannot digest a call for peace. They have the wrong address if they want a statement to criminalize one party or another. The International Court of Justice address is in the Netherlands, Europe, not Bridgeport, Connecticut. The court can make such rulings and demand parties to take certain actions. I want to express our community's deep concern and disappointment with Councilwoman Maria Pereira's recent racist remarks in her letter to colleagues and the mayor. Such behavior is not an exemplary quality of an elected official, especially one entrusted with representing the diverse community of Bridgeport. It is disheartening to witness an elected representative rejecting a democratic process and resorting to disruptive language. Considering these circumstances, we respectfully request Councilwoman Maria Pereira's immediate resignation or, if deemed appropriate by the council, a decisive action to expel her from her position. At a minimum, we urge the council to censure Maria Pereira formally. It is crucial for the integrity of our local government and the well-being of our community that swift and decisive measures are taken to address this issue. We trust that the council will carefully consider this matter and take the necessary steps to uphold the values

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

of fairness, respect, and unity that our community deserves. We appreciate your attention to this urgent matter and await a swift resolution. Thank you for your time and commitment to the well-being of the City of Bridgeport. We are proud of the City Council.

Pastor Anthony Bennett -  
Mount Avery Baptist Church  
45 East Eaton Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Cease-Fire Resolution.

Pastor Bennett came forward and read into the record:

Good Evening, my name is Anthony Bennett, I live at 45 East Eaton Street, and for the past thirty years, I have been honored to serve as pastor of the Mount Avery Baptist Church here in Bridgeport! I stand tonight to thank you for adopting by majority vote a resolution calling for Immediate Ceasefire in the Israel / Hamas war. I know you heard strong views for and against the resolution. I also participated in some of the informal discussion about the language of this resolution with a few of my Jewish and Islamic colleagues who serve within the Bridgeport community. I know some language was taken out that some wanted to stay in, and others desired language to be added that did not make it into the adopted resolution. I have learned over my three decades of ministry of the interconnectedness of what happens in urban, suburban, and rural areas across Connecticut as well as urban and rural areas around the world. There are certainly nuances in each location, yet there is also the common yearning for freedom, protection and access to what would bring public safety and security. I agree with my clergy colleague James Woodall's post that declared: "Just as violence against Israeli civilians on Oct 7 was unacceptable to us, so is the ongoing violence against Palestinian civilians in Gaza and the West Bank." The Families of these victims as well as the nearly 2 million of displaced people also need access to adequate food, shelter, medical attention, and safety. Ultimately, the greater consensus of history reminds us that long term justice and peace will ultimately come through political negotiation and not disproportionate military retaliation. Therefore, I join those who are encouraging you to stand your ground on this resolution that calls for: Immediate Ceasefire, Comprehensive Humanitarian Aid, and the return of all Hostages in exchange for the remaining previously negotiated Palestinian political prisoners. I do understand my 3 minutes will not afford me the opportunity to share the historic conflict created by the Israeli occupation. I vividly remember visiting Palestine/ Israel in 2018 with a delegation of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, which was a life changing experience where I saw firsthand the impact of Israeli occupation in the Palestinian land. Both Israeli life and Palestinian life matters in our faith traditions and yet many would suggest through their silence that more than 27,000 deaths in Gaza including 10,000 children are just the collateral damage of war with Israel and that the saving of Israeli life his worth the collateral damage of death and displacement of thousands and millions of innocent lives in Gaza. I say that ought not be true. A Ceasefire can give ALL those who have the very difficult task of negotiating, pathways to peace and justice, for both the Palestinians as well as the Israelis, to be achieved.

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

Sarah Ibrahim -  
88 Harbor Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Ceasefire Resolution.

Ms. Ibrahim was not in attendance at the meeting to speak.

Maher Abokhzam -  
1300 Fairfield Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Ceasefire Resolution.

Mr. Abokhzam was not in attendance at the meeting to speak.

Pro Tempore said due to four people being absent that were registered to speak, he will fill in those spots with people registered to speak for today's forum.

Debra Boles, President -  
Congregation Rodeph Sholom  
2385 Park Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Ceasefire.

Ms. Boles introduced herself and stated her community published something in the newspaper that could have been missed out by some of the city of Bridgeport. It was a statement from all the synagogues, and orthodox reform conservatives, she had with her many copies to share. She wanted to thank the two council members that reached out to her to speak. When her congregation learned about the resolution 20-23 and read there was Jewish input, they knew nothing about it until they saw it on the CT post. They read that the Jewish voice of peace was involved, she has never heard of them. With research she learned they were anti-Israel, didn't represent the mainstream Jewish community; and according to the ADL, their ideas push for antisemitism. She shared that hamas broke the ceasefire on October 7th and their intent is to get rid of Jewish people and culture. Her 22 year old nephew has a friend that went to a concert that resulted in him disappearing, she is sure his parents don't want a ceasefire until his return. She is not here to persuade anyone differently of the history in the Middle East. Ms. Losak closed off by saying the city council should not be weighing in on international affairs at all. She believes the resolutions should be rescinded to simply not weigh in on complex affairs outside of the city.

Carin Savel CEO -  
Jewish Federation of Eastern CT  
4200 Park Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Ceasefire.

Ms. Savel introduced herself and commented she was glad the pastor didn't give them a history lesson but she gladly would. She asked if anyone knew the commonality of the following dates: 1947, 1993, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2020. She explained they are all dates that real land for real peace was

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

extended by Israel and every time it was rejected by the Arabians and Palestine leadership. She proceeds to ask what the next set of dates have in common: 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1987, 2000, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2021 and October 7, 2023. She said they are all dates of war waged on Israel and attempt to wipe out the Jewish state. She shared she was in Washington D.C. to speak about the return on hostages and ending the war with members of congress. She closed off by saying those were the correct halls of congress where the ceasefire conversations should have taken place. This resolution submitted by the Bridgeport City Council will open up many discussions on different international affairs.

Briana Wahl -  
20 Amsterdam Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Ceasefire.

Ms. Wahl came forward and read into the record:

Good Evening City Council,

I want to express my thanks for the passing of the non-binding cease-fire resolution. I applaud the brave individuals who spoke up and the city council members who voted in favor of passing the cease-fire resolution. Their commitment to humanity is commendable. Since October 7th, I've seen more death and destruction than I thought was possible every day on social media. The killing and kidnapping of civilians is inexcusable. It was wrong when Hamas did it and it is wrong when Israel does it en masse for the last 4 months and 75 years. We are witnessing a genocide of the Palestinians and there is nothing complicated about it and Israel is not acting in self-defense. Not according to international law and not according to a basic understanding of human rights. While I am grateful the resolution passed, the revised version of the resolution only preserves the status quo to avoid hurting feelings. By removing the historical context and important details like the number of Palestinians killed by Israel, the revised resolution seeks to maintain a pro-Israel stance rather than speaking the truth. But I do want to stress the importance of standing strong as a community in the decision to put forth this non-binding resolution. It is a gesture of peace and a stance with humanity and not against. Currently, I am dismayed at the actions of a City Council member proudly confessing to flipping off constituents from their chair and making racist comments calling people, and I quote, "Palestinian thugs" and "Hamas terrorists." Today I call on the City Council to enact Chapter 5 Section 5b of the City Council Municipal Code to remove this member from the council for making these abhorrent comments. We cannot be distracted by false claims of anti-Semitism for passing this resolution. Anti-Semitism must be identified and fought in every form, but calling for a cease-fire and criticizing the actions of the state of Israel are not anti-Semitic. The Palestinians are experiencing an ethnic cleansing with the highest rate of civilian slaughter in the 21st century. For 121 days the state of Israel has killed thousands of civilians and today millions of people are at risk of starving to death. For a high-level written assessment of Israel's occupation and the need for Palestinian liberation, I offer and recommend the work of Scholar-Activist Dr. Angela Davis, and reports from the United Nations and Human Rights Watch. Before I close, I want to provide one piece of data I've come across which I hope stresses the urgency in strengthening our collective solidarity with the people of Palestine: If you attended one funeral a day for each child killed by Israel in the last 121 days alone, you'd be attending a child's funeral every day for the next 27 years.

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024



Munsen Youusef -  
125 Kossuth Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06608

Ceasefire.

Mr. Youusef introduced himself as a 19 years old who grew up in Palestine. From 2014 to 2019 he was living in the West Bank and goes back almost every summer. Growing up he was exposed to things that he shouldn't have seen as a kid. He said the resolution was the only hope and act they had to support the cease fire, how many deaths need to be counted before the actual ceasefire would occur. As a young Palestinian man they are taught to stay quiet, let zionist do what they want in exchange to stay alive or fight back for their rights but suffer losing your life, being called a terrorist. Him being a Palestinian American in Bridgeport still suffers for standing up from the ethnic cleansing of his people by one of the council members, Maria Periera. He asked how is he supposed to feel safe when members of the city council have something against him because of his ethnicity. He wakes up everyday not knowing what is to come. Mr. Youusef closed off by saying enough of his people have died, the only hope was the resolution, and it should not be taken away.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Council President Pro Tempore Newton closed the public session at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vianca Rivera

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT**

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024**

**7:00 PM**

**City Council Chambers, City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace**

**Bridgeport, Connecticut**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council President Pro Tempore Newton called the meeting to order at 7:29 p.m.

**PRAYER**

Council President Pro Tempore Newton asked council member McBride-Lee to lead them in prayer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Council President Pro Tempore Newton asked council member Martinez to lead them in 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: Jorge Cruz  
132<sup>nd</sup> District: Dasha Spell, Rolanda Smith  
133<sup>rd</sup> District: Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron  
135<sup>th</sup> District: Mary McBride-Lee, Richard Ortiz  
136<sup>th</sup> District: Frederick Hodges  
138<sup>th</sup> District: Maria Pereira, Jazmarie Melendez  
139<sup>th</sup> District: Eneida Martinez, Ernest Newton

A quorum was present.

Council President Pro Tempore acknowledged the newly appointed city attorney. He added it is a great joy to recognize her and they couldn't choose a better month to do. He asked everyone to welcome the new city attorney, Tyisha Toms.

**City Council Citation: In Recognition of AnnMarie Strang, helping in Building a Vibrant Bridgeport Business Community for 35 years as AnnMarie's Hair on Madison.**

Council member Periera asked if they were going to do the recognition for AnnMarie. Council President Pro Tempore, Ernest E. Newton replied the item was removed due to her not being in attendance.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Council member Herron asked for a moment of silence for the mother and two school aged children from Bridgeport that passed away on Route 8.

Council member Spell requested a moment of silence for Bernard Loften, a 40+ year city of Bridgeport employee who recently passed away. He was a community advocate and loved the children. Pro Tempore added he grew up with Mr. Loften and they lost a great individual who was strictly about the kids. He is sure the city of Bridgeport and Bassick community have lost a champion for the children. Council member Periera added as a school board member, she really got to know Bernie. He was loved by students, parents and staff alike. This is a tragic loss for the city and Bassick community.

**MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:**

- December 4, 2023 & December 18, 2023

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 4, 2023 AND DECEMBER 18, 2023.**

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

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, CRUZ, MACK, SPELL, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE ORTIZ, HODGES, PEREIRA, MELENDEZ, NEWTON, AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) ABSTAINED (MCCARTHY).**

**COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:**

- 31-23** Communication from Central Grants re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development Urban Act Grant Program – Total Mortgage Arena Renovations (#24321), referred to the Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO WITHDRAW ITEM 31-23 DUE TO A LETTER OF WITHDRAW FROM OPED BEING SUBMITTED TO THE CITY CLERK WITH THE STATED REASON THAT THE COUNCIL HAS ALREADY GIVEN AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT THE 15 MILLION IN BONDING FOR THE ARENA.**

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

Council member Burns asked why would they be withdrawing this as they normally act to accept grants. Mr. Gaudett replied as this was part of the arena settlement, two years ago the city attorney's office said that the council had already given authority to accept the grant and in fact, the state has already given the city the money. OPED was trying to be proactive in submitting this resolution and then realized they already had the authority to accept the grant.

- 32-23** Communication from Housing and Community Development re: Proposed Resolution regarding the approval of the 2024-2025 Citizens Union Committee, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO SUSPEND THE COUNCIL RULES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING ITEM 32-23 BY IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION BECAUSE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING WAS CANCELED, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THEY CREATE THE CITIZENS UNION IMMEDIATELY SO THEY CAN RECEIVE THEIR TRAINING AND START THEIR WORK FOR THE YEAR.**

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO AMEND ITEM 32-23 TO REPLACE AIDEE NIEVES CITIZENS UNION NOMINATION FOR THE DISTRICT 137TH DISTRICT TO ORLANDO STRONG.**

**\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY.**

Council member Pereira said she assumed this was going to committee, allowing her more time.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOTIONED TO AMEND THE AMENDMENT AND ADD JESSICA ORTIZ FOR THE 138TH DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE, LOCATED AT 32 EMERALD STREET BRIDGEPORT, CT 06610.**

**\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MACARTHY.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE MOTIONED TO AMEND THE AMENDMENT AND ADD KELLY MCGEE FOR THE 135TH DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE.**

Council member McBride-lee stated she will bring forward the information for her nominee.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO AMEND THE AMENDMENTS TO REMOVE EVE PARSON AND REPLACE THE NOMINEE WITH DONNA PALMER.**

Council member Burns stated he will submit the required information needed.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 32-23 AS AMENDED.**

**\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS.**

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

- 33-23** Communication from Mayor re: Appointment of Jennifer Rocha (D) to the Commission for People with Disabilities, referred to the Miscellaneous Matters Committee.
- 34-23** Communication from Mayor re: Appointment of Linda Lubin (D) to the Commission for People with Disabilities, referred to the Miscellaneous Matters Committee.
- 35-23** Communication from Mayor re: Appointment of Ali Akbar (U) to the Planning and Zoning Commission, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.
- 36-23** Communication from Mayor re: Appointment of Ada Gloria Hernandez (D) to the Fair Rent Commission, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.
- 37-23** Communication from Mayor re: Appointment of John Stevens (U) to the Harbor Commission, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.
- 38-23** Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Lease Agreement/Eminent Domain regarding the Parking Lot located at 405-435 Congress Street for the Police Department, referred to the Contracts Committee.

**39-23** Communication from Mayor re: Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 3.16 – Property Taxes, amend Article II – Real Property Tax Relief for Senior Citizens, Section(s) 3.16.110 – Real Property Tax Relief and Maximum & 3.16.120 – Application for Real Property Tax Relief, referred to Ordinance Committee.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO CONSOLIDATE COMMUNICATION TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES (ITEMS 33-23, 34-23, 35-23, 36-23, 37-23, 38-23, AND 39-23) AS ONE VOTE.**

**\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY.**

**\*\*THE MOTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

**40-23** Resolution presented by Council President Nieves and Co-sponsor(s): Burns & Newton re: Proposed Resolution concerning the Initiation of a Charter Revision Process for the City of Bridgeport, referred to the Ordinance Committee.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 40-23 TO BE REFERRED.**

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

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

Council President Pro Tempore said he will put the items for immediate consideration to the side for a moment to complete the rest of the business, which is noncontroversial.

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO REMOVE ITEM 03-23 OFF OF THE CONSENT CALENDAR.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOTIONED TO REMOVE ITEM 29-23 AND ITEM 30-23 OFF OF THE CONSENT CALENDAR.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO CONSOLIDATE MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR) (ITEMS 09-23, 05-23, 07-23, 14-23, 15-23, AND 22-23) AS ONE VOTE.**

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

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

- \*29-23** Contracts Committee Report re: Agreement with The Connecticut Laborers' District Council for the Bridgeport Public Employees Union Local 665 (LIUNA) regarding their Bargaining Unit Contract from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2026.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 29-23.**

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

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, SPELL, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE, ORTIZ, HODGES, PEREIRA, MELENDEZ, NEWTON, AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

- \*30-23** Contracts Committee Report re: Professional Services Agreement with Griffin & Strong P.C. regarding the creation of a New Disparity Study for the City.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 30-23.**

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

Council member Pereira said that she believes the cost is a little excessive. A cost of over \$300 thousand dollars for a disparity study seems excessive and for that she is opposed to it, as it seems exorbitant. She feel like the taxpayers are at a max and they should not spend taxpayer dollars for a disparity study.

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, SPELL, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE ORTIZ, HODGES, PEREIRA, MELENDEZ, NEWTON, AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

- \*09-23** Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Professional Services Agreement with Griffin & Strong P.C. Regarding the creation of a New Disparity Study for the City.

- \*03-23** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods – Congress Street Bridge Capital Construction (#24663).

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 03-23.**

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

Council member Burns said this is an application for the funding of the Congress Street Bridge, he wanted to highlight this project is going on in its second decade and if they are going to act like they are spending money on it then they should do it expeditiously. In this case they are

asking for over 20 millions of federal funds, if they are going to do something then they need to do it completely. Council Member Burns closed by saying he will be voting in favor.

Council member Pereira asked Council member Burns about his remarks, what made him say those remarks and what caused him concern. Council member Burns replied the city has been talking about fixing the bridge for years. There has been publicity about it, funds set aside, and looking at the vacant there. When they get the fund, they should make it a priority within administration to make sure it gets done.

Council member Pereira asked if this was a competitive or automatic grant. Council member Burns replied it is a competitive grant.

President Pro Tempore reminded the council that COVID has a lot to do with prices going up and things changing. Some things are just out of their control, there were also issues with developers that were (inaudible).

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

- \*05-23** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Justice Government-to-Government Program (#24574).
- \*07-23** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods – Route 8 Decking Community Planning (#24893).
- \*14-23** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families – Youth Services Bureau (#24532).
- \*15-23** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families – Youth Services Bureau Enhancement Grant (#24540).
- \*22-23** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Public Health FY24 Per Capita Funding Allocation (#24220).



**MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON:**

- 04-23** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee  
Report re: Grant Submission: Connecticut Department of Economic and  
Community Development Office of Brownfield Remediation and  
Development – Municipal Grant Program (#24409), **WITHDRAWAL.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE  
ITEM OF 04-23 FOR WITHDRAW.**

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

Council member Pereira asked in terms of the withdrawal, she's not sure who introduced the resolution. She assumed it was the Economic development department and their rules require them to submit a letter of withdrawal. Council member Periera asked to know when it was done.

Assistant City clerk, Ms. Ortiz replied it was submitted at the committee level for withdrawal and now it is at the council level for approval.

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

- 13-23** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee  
Report re: Grant Submission: Connecticut Department of Economic and  
Community Development – Community Investment Fund 2030 Grant  
Program Round 4 (#24435, #24439 & #24441).

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 13–23.**

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

Council member Burns had a question that came up during the committee meeting. He saw that the item on the agenda cites three community investment funds on the application and during the committee meeting they were told only one was going forward. He asked for some clarity on whether they would be voting for all three or just one, which should be #2441.

President Pro Tempore, Newton asked if the committee chair or anyone from the community development committee could speak on the item.

Mr. Gaudett replied it is really irrelevant because only one was submitted before the deadline. Only the Stratford Avenue project in cooperation with the town of Stratford has been submitted.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO REMOVE #24435 AND #24439 FROM  
ITEM 13-23 SINCE THEY WERE NOT APPROVED.**

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

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

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 13-23 AS AMENDED.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

**01-23** Contracts Committee Report re: Lease Agreement with Aquarion Water Company of Connecticut regarding Vacant Land at the Fairchild-Wheeler Golf Course for the purpose of Installing a Water Pump Station along with any related Infrastructure or Appurtenances to the Facility.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO TABLE ITEM 01-23 TO ORDER A PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH, 2024 AT 7PM.**

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

Council member Periera said the item 01-23 is to approve the lease, she is not sure why the public hearing wasn't placed on the agenda. She knows she requested for the public hearing to be added to the agenda and is not sure why it wasn't there but if they are going to order a public hearing then it should be added to the agenda by  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote. She said what is on the agenda is about approving the lease.

City Attorney, Mr. Anastasi said what is on the agenda is the contracts committee report and listed item, he is not sure if it is any different when an item is referred to committee, if it was mattered before committee and it votes to recommend it back to the council and before they do it, they also take a vote to schedule a public hearing. The public hearing would not be a separate item, the matter is already on the agenda for action.

President Pro Tempore, Newton said they will be taking the opinion of the city attorney and rule this as is.

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, SPELL, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE ORTIZ, HODGES, PEREIRA, MELENDEZ, NEWTON, AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO TABLE ITEM 01-23 TO THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING DUE TO THE 15 DAY WAITING PERIOD FOR PUBLIC HEARING.**

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

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

**ITEMS FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION:**

**OFF THE FLOOR**

**27-23**

Proposed Resolution Authorizing a Tax PILOT Agreement ("PILOT") with the Bridgeport Housing Authority d/b/a Park City Communities ("PCC") to Facilitate the Substantial Renovation of the Harborview Apartments, Which Provide Housing to Elderly and Disabled Residents, located at 376 East Washington Avenue.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO SUSPEND THE COUNCIL RULES TO ADOPT ITEM 27-23 INTO THE AGENDA.**

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

Council member Pereira asked why is it being added into the agenda, why can't it wait until the next council meeting. They didn't get any advance notice that it will be added by 2/3 vote into the agenda and she doesn't have the documents, so why can't it just wait. They just voted on it at 5 o'clock.

President Pro Tempore said it is time sensitive.

Council member Pereira wanted to reiterate that if they had advance notice on the item then they would know to bring their documents to review and be prepared. Without any advance notice of the item being added to the agenda by 2/3 vote, why would she even vote in favor.

Council member Martinez added on January 17th, 2023 the economic development committee along with the general council recessed to reconvene today on February 5th at 5pm to have a discussion on the matter regarding the questions the committee members had at hand. With the satisfied answers by the CEO of PCC they received today, the committee decided to vote it forward.

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, SPELL, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE ORTIZ, HODGES, PEREIRA, MELENDEZ, NEWTON, AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE ADOPTED ITEM OF 27-23.**

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

Council member Periera had a question, she did read over the documents briefly but doesn't understand how a housing authority property that is tax exempt is entitled to a tax break.

Council member Burns replied it would not be proper to call it a tax payment, it is a pilot so it is a payment in lieu of tax, which is 10% of the shelter revenue. A formula derived from which they get a portion of the revenue to the city as the agreement. The housing authority does not pay tax so no tax can be evaded but they do make a payment in lieu of taxes, such as they do with other properties in the city.

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, SPELL, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE ORTIZ, HODGES, PEREIRA, MELENDEZ, NEWTON, AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

**41-23** Resolution presented by Council President Nieves and Co-sponsor(s): Newton, Vizzo-Paniccia, Herron, Smith, Cruz & Ortiz re: Proposed Resolution to Censure Councilwoman Maria H. Pereira, **FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO ACT UPON ITEM 41-23 FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION DUE TO COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA BEHAVIOR DISPLAYED AT THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON JANUARY 2ND AND CONDUCT THAT IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH PROPER QUORUM FOR AN ELECTED OFFICIAL.**

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

Council member Periera asked President Pro Tempore to maintain the order and stop disruptions from the audience. She wanted to share on record that her central resolution was turned into the city clerk and stamped in before item 41-23, she would like to know why it is placed before hers.

Assistant City Clerk, Ms. Ortiz replied as items come in, it depends on which clerk processes their committee items first and logs their items in accordingly. The clerk who was responsible for processing the first item logged it in after, there are a lot of items to be logged and they don't pick and choose which item will go first or second. The time stamp doesn't determine how items are placed on the agenda and how they are processed. The time stamp is only to show when the items are received and for agenda deadline purposes only. The item was logged in after and it was not intentional at all.

Council member Maria Pereira responded that she sent it hours earlier and it was stamped hours earlier, she doesn't understand how two central resolutions were submitted and hers is second instead of first. She added she is just putting this on the record.

President Pro Tempore said to clarify it is up to the chair, under Robert's Rules, on recognizing a point of order so that's what takes precedence. In the rule book it says, it is up to the chair to recognize.

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, SPELL, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE, ORTIZ, HODGES, PEREIRA, MELENDEZ, NEWTON, AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE ITEM 41-23.**

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

Council member Herron read the resolution for item 41-23 onto the record:

WHEREAS, Council Member Maria Pereira at and following the January 2, 2024, City Council meeting displayed behavior and conduct that was incompatible with proper decorum from an elected City Official.

WHEREAS, during the January 2nd City Council meeting City Council Member Pereira (by her own admission) stuck up her middle finger at constituents from her chair in the City Council chamber. This public display of disrespect is totally unacceptable behavior and was particularly egregious for having occurred at a meeting in which the City Council was working to adopt a non-binding resolution designed to help encourage a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in the ongoing war in Gaza and to promote unity and peace in the Mideast and locally, particularly between the Jewish and Muslim residents.

WHEREAS, by any reasonable measure, it is clear that City Council Member Pereira's actions and comments on January 2nd were deplorable and undermined the City Council's common purpose and created a divisive atmosphere.

WHEREAS, by subsequent email of January 3rd to the City Council President and to a top-ranking member of the Mayor's staff, City Council Member Pereira included references to Muslim members of our community who attended the City Council meeting as a "mob" and "thugs." She even referred to one of the constituents who attended the City Council meeting as a "possible Hamas terrorist." This kind of racial profiling and derogatory comments towards a specific racial group has no place in our politics and civil discourse.

WHEREAS, by such subsequent email, City Council Member Pereira brought further disrepute to the City Council by virtue of her unprofessional and disrespectful statements concerning various named City employees.

WHEREAS, specifically in her email City Council Member Pereira referred to Bridgeport's Chief of Police as "Porter the Pig" and his officers as "piglets." Such inflammatory language not only disrespects the dedicated men and women who serve our community, but also puts their safety at risk. The use of derogatory terms like these is completely unacceptable, goes against the values of unity and collaboration that our city stands for, and undermines public confidence in, and support for, our men and women in Blue, on whom as Connecticut's most populous urban areas we depend on for public safety and security, particularly in our post George Floyd / Black Lives Matter environment.

WHEREAS, City Council Member Pereira's comments not only lacked the empathy that is expected from public officials but also demonstrated a disregard for the lives of those who selflessly protect our community, since elected representatives should lead by example,

promoting civil discourse and respectful engagement, rather than resorting to offensive language that further divides our community.

WHEREAS, in addition City Council Member Pereira in her email made grossly inappropriate comments about mental and physical characteristics of certain named City employees, referring to one as dimwit and mocking another's weight.

WHEREAS, City Council Member Pereira's behavior exhibited insensitivity to our Muslim community's efforts to encourage a ceasefire to the war in Gaza and disrespect to our Muslim residents during the emotional devastation occasioned by the ongoing Mideast violence.

WHEREAS, considering City Council Member Pereira's recent actions, on January 4, 2024, the City Council Leadership condemned her derogatory remarks and called for her immediate resignation from her City Council office.

WHEREAS, while City Council Member Pereira has expressed concerns as to the authority of the City Council to adopt a non-binding resolution regarding a matter beyond its direct local legislative jurisdiction, but of immense international concern on which the City Council as a body chose to express a sense of the body - her objections to the procedural process employed by the City Council are certainly no excuse or justification for her outrageously inappropriate behavior.

WHEREAS, Bridgeport City Charter, Chapter 5, 85 (b) provides:

"The city council may determine its rules of proceeding in conformity to the general principles of parliamentary law, may punish members for disorderly behavior, and, after notice and hearing, may, by a two-thirds vote of all council members, expel a member for due cause. Aquorum shall consist of eleven council members. At the request of any council member, the vote upon any question shall be taken by roll call vote."

WHEREAS, City Council Rules of Order, Rule XXVI: Conduct ni City Council provides:

"In speaking, City Council members shall refrain from mentioning any other member by name, shall confine themselves to the question, shall be courteous and not use unbecoming, abusive, or unparliamentary language, and shall avoid personalities.

Any member who, ni debate or otherwise, indulges in personalities or makes charges reflecting upon the character of another member, shall make an apology in open session at the meeting at which offense is committed, or at the next succeeding regular meeting, and, failing to do so, shall be named by the President or held in contempt, and suspended from further participation in debate until said apology is made."

WHEREAS, City Council Member Maria Pereira at the January 16 City Council meeting will be provided an opportunity to issue an appropriate apology at the City Council Meeting on January 16, 2024, and that she has declined and failed to do so.

WHEREAS, City Council Member Pereira at the January 16" City Council meeting will be provided with an opportunity prior to vote upon this resolution to be heard as to why such resolution ought not be adopted.

**NOW THEREFORE BE TI RESOLVED THAT:** The City Council of the City of Bridgeport for the reasons stated herein, officially hereby condemns and as a body disavows City Council Member Pereira's recent improper behavior at the January 2, 2024, City Council meeting and her post-meeting email derogatory comments, as not being representative of the values, decency and commitment to civil discourse that we hold dear.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: City Council Member Pereira is hereby held in contempt, and suspended from further participation in debate until said apology is made. She will remain eligible to vote on matters before the City Council and to make and to second motions at Council meetings. However, until such time as she apologizes, she will not be eligible to engage in substantive or procedural debate concerning matters pending before the Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: Council Member Pereira is hereby called upon to resign from her office immediately for the best interests of the City's Legislative body as a whole and the public it serves.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ AMENDED THE DATES ON THE RESOLUTION FROM JANUARY 16TH, 2024 TO FEBRUARY 5TH, 2024.**

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

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

Council member Pereira read her response to the resolution for item 41-23 onto the record:

Do you know how Bridgeporters can set their personal calendars to vote in an upcoming election? It's simple, the Mayor, his administration, to include his high-level appointees who also serve as his top-level campaign operatives, and those entrenched in the corrupt democratic machine will concoct negative, slanderous allegations about me just days before voters go to the polls? We have another court ordered election in 22 days, correct? Isn't the pattern here obvious?

Let me state that a number of my constituents wanted to be present this evening, however I requested they not attend out of concern for their safety as I warned them they would likely be harassed & bullied in the same manner I & the Honorable Judge Lopez were at the January 2nd meeting by those in attendance who were in favor of the Ceasefire Resolution. I have also communicated with those opposed to the Ceasefire Resolution who have watched videos of our last meeting on social media and were appalled by the conduct of those in attendance who were in support of the Ceasefire Resolution and further expressed they were concerned for their own safety should they attend tonight, and wanted to know if there would be a police presence this evening. No one should ever be concerned for their personal safety for simply attending a public meeting to express their perspective or point of view. Not the Honorable Carmen Lopez, one of the most respected members of the Bridgeport Community, nor anyone else. Although the Honorable Judge Lopez was contacted by a number of concerned citizens within and outside of Bridgeport to express concern for her well-being, not one member of the Council "Leadership" nor Mayor Ganim's administration contacted the Honorable Carmen Lopez to do the same.

In order for any organization or branch of government to effectively "censure" any of its members, it must be held in high esteem and be well-respected. Neither applies to the City Council. In my 14 years of public service, I cannot think of a single instance when a Bridgeport resident praised this body for its effectiveness, ethics, leadership, vision, independence, critical thinking skills, intelligence in debate or otherwise. In fact, it is the complete opposite. The Council is the co-equal branch of government which has a duty and responsibility to serve as the checks & balances on the Mayor and their administration, however over the last 4 years that I have served on the City Council, I am the only member that has BELOW a 96% rating in voting in favor of proposals put forth by this Mayor. In fact, there are members of this Council who have a 100% voting record with this Mayor. I do not fall into either category.

When those with political power use that power to attack their political opponents, including the utilization of taxpayer funded agencies, we are on a trajectory moving away from democracy, towards tyranny and a dictatorship. That has clearly occurred in my case and will be addressed with the appropriate state, federal and judicial authorities. I recognize I am in a marathon and not a sprint and must proceed strategically and with a plan.

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

The U.S. Congress has existed for 239 years with only 28 U.S. Representatives and 16 U.S. Senators being censured with no one ever being censured more than once, yet this is now the third time this "esteemed" body is attempting to censure me in a 4 year period when there has been no attempt to censure any other member of this body although there has certainly been offenses committed by council members that require a censure under our City Council Rules which have not been addressed including at the September 18, 2023, Regular Council Meeting where the senior councilwoman from the 135th district stood on this floor, pointed directly at me and stated I broke into a 91 year old woman's house with dementia and stole her ballot. It was all captured on public access television and my attorney has it on a flashdrive. Not only was this a flagrant violation of the City Council Rules, it was absolute slander and defamation that surely everyone here now knows was an absolute lie. Although the slander & defamation will be addressed in a court-of-law, I emailed the Council President and my then colleagues on Friday, September 22, 2023 making it clear that the offender needed to be censured at the next regular meeting on October 2, 2023. I never received a response from the Council President, and as of today, no attempt has been made to censure that individual. In addition, In June, the Council President & the senior councilman from the 136th district had a heated exchange during a Democratic Caucus where the Council President attacked the character of the councilman in front of his elementary aged daughter who ran out of the caucus room crying which caused both the senior councilwoman from the 132nd district and I to rush out of the caucus room to console her. Where was the censure for that "deplorable" conduct in front of a young child? And well after the City Council passed Resolution 05-20 on December 21, 2020 entitled, "Resolution approving the City Council President issuing her December 16, 2020 letter to the City Council Membership to provide clear and timely advance notice that henceforth improper, inappropriate, disruptive and/or disorderly behavior that violates the City Charter, Ordinances, Council's Rules of Order and/or any other governing legal authority will no longer be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action as appropriate," On June 3, 2021, the then councilwoman and now current councilwoman representing the 139th district sent me unprovoked & repeated emails utilizing her official city council email address with the entire city council on copy stating, "I am not screwing a 90 year old man to live to survive baby girl," "You have been arrested for being an arsonist and DCF took your kids," "None the less you are a RACIST PIG!," "Get off WELFARE...," "DON'T COME FOR ME BECAUSE I AM A PIT BULL WITH MY MOUTH," "What can you say about my BLACK PARTNER ERNEST NEWTON he used drugs, he went to jail for money fraud, but look where he is at and look where you area at," and much more. On June 4, 2021, I emailed the Council President regarding the use of official city emails for political purposes and specifically asked, "Will you be moving to censure?" she refused. I filed several police reports against both council members representing the 139th district and my attorney has them in their possession. Apparently, the use of the word "pig" in an official city council email copied to every councilmember wasn't offensive in June 2021, but somehow it is worthy of censure today in a private email sent to the Council President and Deputy Chief of Staff from my private email. Interesting. Let's not forget the significant violations of the City Council Public Speaking Rules where the Council President repeatedly allowed the then former councilwoman representing the 139th district to repeatedly address this Council in 2023 stating I was addicted to Opioid drugs, that DCF took my children, that I was an arsonist, and outrageously talked about my daughter jumping from "bed post to bed post." And although I repeatedly raised points of order for these repeated egregious violations of the City Council Rules, the Council President chose to time and time again, to ignore them. I have additional documented examples but I believe I have made my point. What is quite obvious is that I am being treated differently from the other members of this council who are all entrenched in the corrupt democratic machine. We will address that in a court-of-law.

Not only am I the only elected official in Bridgeport that serves as the vocal opposition to this Mayor, his policies and proposals. I am also the only tenured member of this Council who is not a city employee, does not have a family member serving as a city employee, am not a member of the Democratic Town Committee, has never sought or received the endorsement of the Democratic Town Committee, has never sought or received the endorsement of a minor political party, has never sought or received the endorsement of Independent Expenditure PAC, yet I have received the most votes citywide in City Council Democratic Primaries for 2019, 2021 & 2023 which is compelling evidence that my constituents respect, admire, support and consider me to be effective. In addition, I and/or candidates that I have delivered a substantial number of votes to, have now won 34 out of 38 times, and I have never supported a DTC endorsed candidate. Quite frankly, there is not one other person in

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024



Bridgeport who can lay claim to those same set of facts. I recognize that can be extremely frustrating to the Mayor, the DTC Chairs, as well as Deputy Chief of Staff Tommy Gaudett & Legislative Liaison Constance Vickers who jointly created a campaign consulting company where \$165,000 of Mayor Ganim's campaign funds has been funneled into without public disclosure of how those funds were spent, where substantial sums of money and campaign literature they created were repeatedly used to attack me. I get it, the entire corrupt establishment is beside themselves and may feel the urge to rip the hair or hair plugs out of their head because they cannot defeat me at the polls, including when their campaign operatives and former Councilwoman Samia Suliman commit substantial absentee ballot fraud in my district caught on the Mayor's own BPD video cameras. I recognize it is demoralizing, painful and upsetting that no matter what outrageous lies the corrupt democratic establishment perpetuates about me with the assistance of Chief Porter, the BPD, Jillian Baldwin and the Park City Communities Board, you simply cannot get me. I have already defeated the BPD in a court-of-law twice, and I assure you, I will do it a third time.

I have spoken with over 300 constituents on doors, messenger, phone and text and spoke with hundreds more during the Special Democratic Primary standing in front of JFK since I was falsely arrested on November 7th, and a private email I sent to the Council President and Mayor Ganim's Deputy Chief of Staff which according to the Council President, was released to the media by Deputy Chief of Staff Tommy Gaudett. I have only received one negative email from a constituent who was upset about my private remarks about Chief Porter and I immediately responded, but what my constituents have overwhelmingly made crystal clear is they are with me and they could not care less what Mayor Ganim and those entrenched with him have to say about me. In fact, where are ALL my constituents calling for my resignation or censure? However, what you don't seem to understand is your strategy is flawed as your constant attacks against me are absolutely backfiring, not fooling my constituents nor those who support me throughout the City and you are unwittingly making me a martyr. Even those associated with the corrupt democratic machine can see I am being attacked and persecuted because I am a vocal opponent of this Mayor, the democratic establishment, and of course, anyone who knows political math knows no one in this city has delivered more absentee ballot and in-person votes to John Gomes than I have. You do not expend this level of effort to attack and destroy someone who is not effective, therefore one can only conclude that I am a serious threat to the status quo and apparently quite effective.

Although I have received supportive messages from those as far away as Arizona for vocally opposing the Ceasefire Resolution, I want to state on the record here that the position I formed on this matter was from conducting my own research utilizing reputable news sources like Newsweek, the NY Times, etc., and it was that extensive reading that caused me to move from a Palestinian sympathizer who remains completely opposed to both the corrupt Israeli Prime Minister and the billions of U.S. tax dollars we provide to Israel annually, to standing in solidarity with Israel as of the horrific October 7th brutal Palestinian Hamas attack where 1200 Israeli and American civilians were brutally raped, tortured, mutilated, burned and murdered. The only opinion that matters to me is that of my constituents which solely reside in the 138th district. According to the United Nations Human Rights, there have been approximately 307,000 civilians killed in the war in Syria as of 2022. As of January, this year, the United Nations Human Rights has recorded 29,330 civilian deaths in Ukraine where schools, hospitals, civilian residences, utilities, etc. have been bombed by Russia in an unprovoked war. Where's the Mayor's and Council's Ceasefire Resolutions for all the civilian deaths in those war-torn countries?

I am requesting a roll call vote on the Censure but will be first addressing a significant amount of inaccuracies and allegations embedded in this poorly written resolution that you will not able to substantiate & prove in a court-of-law:

There is no specific City Charter, Ethics Ordinance, City Council Rule, or Resolution 05-20 provision "Regarding the "Disorderly, Abusive, Unparliamentary Behavior/Conduct by City Council Members" which included a legal opinion drafted by then City Attorney Chris Meyers passed by the City Council on December 21,2020, noted in this censure resolution which I violated. Not one.

In whereas clause one, it states "at and following the January 2, 2024, I"displayed behavior and conduct that was incompatible with proper decorum from an elected City Official." That is patently false. Over three separate Regular City Council Meeting 26 pro-ceasefire speakers, many who are not Bridgeport residents, signed up to speak in favor of the Ceasefire Resolution. Not a single speaker was disrespected, bullied or harassed by ANY councilmember or member of the public. Only the final

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

speaker who addressed the City Council on January 2, 2023 who is a revered member of this community who is a retired Judge and Attorney spoke in opposition to the resolution based on CT state law and the City Charter and stated that the resolution had several inaccuracies. Only Judge Lopez, Councilwoman AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia and I who spoke in opposition to the resolution were booed, hissed, bullied, and harassed by pro-ceasefire resolution attendees where both the Mayor & the City Council President failed to fulfill one of their most basic responsibilities as Chairs which is to protect the speaker and to maintain decorum. Where is the specific ordinance, including the ethics ordinance, city charter or city council rule that I specifically violated based on a gesture I made AFTER a council meeting had adjourned where I was being targeted and harassed, and a private email I sent to the Council President and Deputy Chief of Staff? I suggest you refer to former City Attorney Chris Meyer's Legal Opinion which was drafted on behalf of City Council President Nieves which she voted in favor of on December 21, 2020. I did not relinquish my right to free speech 24 hours a day, 7 days a week because I serve as a duly elected City Council Member.

In the second whereas clause the baseless allegation that I stuck up my middle finger at "constituents" "during" the January 2nd City Council Meeting is patently false. A young Palestinian man appeared to be fixated on me AFTER the meeting adjourned not during the meeting, which can easily be proven with numerous videos, and repeatedly yelled out my name over and over again as I sat quietly in my chair as the last City Council member remaining in the chamber. All the staff had also departed. "Maria" is a very common name and I initially thought it was someone calling out the name "Maria" trying to grab the attention of someone they knew. I finally looked up and it was a pro-ceasefire young man who was fixated on me, appeared very angry, and was violently shaking a poster over his head, so violently, that I was unable to read it. It is highly inappropriate for anyone to repeatedly call out a city council member who they do not know by their first name. Proper decorum requires they refer to any one of us as "Council Member Blank." Second, what evidence does this body have that this Palestinian young man was a "constituent" as even the CT Post published that the Hartford Islamic Community Leadership put out a call to its members to get to Bridgeport as Palestinians from across CT were needed in Bridgeport to apply pressure to get the resolution passed. What evidence can you provide that this young man was my constituent or a constituent of Bridgeport? I gestured at the young man utilizing my finger, and ONLY that young man, not "constituents" in the plural. I was sitting in my seat quietly texting with those opposed to the ceasefire resolution and this young man was behaving belligerently and harassing me in a way that I found concerning. One of the reasons I decided to stay behind is I do not enter or exit the City Council Chambers utilizing the exterior democratic caucus room door. I always enter and exit the chambers using the front doors to City Hall, and because I witnessed firsthand how Judge Lopez was harassed and bullied, and because the pro-ceasefire attendees were clearly most openly hostile to me as a council member, I thought it best not to exit the chambers while many of them were milling about to ensure the temperature cooled before I departed for my own safety.

In the third whereas clause, it states my actions and comments on January 2nd were deplorable and undermined the City Council's common purpose and created a divisive atmosphere. What comments or comments will the videos of the January 2 regular meeting show that could possibly be defined as "deplorable" and "created a divisive atmosphere?" I know, absolutely none. I made an appropriate Point of Order following Robert's Rules of Order and expressed my opposition to the ceasefire resolution appropriately and professionally as is my right. And made NO comments once the meeting adjourned to anyone. I did not say one word to that young Palestinian young man AFTER the meeting adjourned although he was clearly fixated on me, harassing me and conducting himself inappropriately. I simply gestured at him with my middle finger without saying one word AFTER the meeting adjourned.

In the fourth whereas clause, it references a private email I sent at 6:20 a.m. on January 3rd to the Council President and Deputy Chief of Staff who also serves as a high-level campaign operative of the Ganim Campaign who created a joint campaign consulting LLC with the Liaison of Legislative affairs registered at his private residence where \$165,000 of Ganim campaign finances has been funneled into without public disclosure of how those funds were utilized. It alleges I included references to "Muslim" members of our community which is patently false. I made no reference to any religion nor would I as this country was founded on freedom of religion. I did refer to Palestinian pro-cease fire attendees as a "mob" and "thugs" and provided the Merriam Webster dictionary definitions to justify my assertions. A "mob" is defined as "a large disorderly crowd of people" and a "thug" is defined as a

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

"violent or brutish criminal **OR bully**" which appropriately described the conduct of the pro-cease fire attendees on January 2nd. I was the only member of the city council and city staff who was still remaining in the chamber, and was sitting quietly in my seat AFTER the meeting adjourned when a young Palestinian man was fixated on me and clearly angry with me for refusing to support the ceasefire resolution, repeatedly yelling my name across the chamber and violently shaking a poster over his head. That is not normal behavior for anyone who experienced an overwhelming victory with the resolution passing 13 to 2. I have never witnessed any vote where a resolution passed overwhelmingly where the victor harassed and bullied someone who opposed the resolution. It is by no means; normal behavior and it was unsettling and concerning for me. I did honestly question whether he could have possibly been a Hamas Terrorist. It is well documented that foreign terrorists live amongst us as was well documented in 9/11 and in Bridgeport when in May 2010, a Bridgeport resident and a naturalized U.S. citizen from Pakistan purchased a SUV and created a homemade car bomb and left the SUV in Time Square. He was trained by the Taliban and was sentenced to life in prison. In that same private email, I referred to Chief Porter as a Pig and some BPD officers as "piglets." I would like to remind everyone here that it was I who organized a press conference in front of the Congress Street police station after former Chief Perez resigned and the Mayor outrageously appointed Rebeca Garcia as interim chief. Those who joined, including the councilwoman from the 139th & then councilman of the 133rd, were the only councilmembers who stood up for Chief Porter who had legitimately ranked in the top three and was still on an active and valid police chief finalist list. Porter has known for some time that I no longer respect or support him, and there is quite a bit of internal conflict brewing within the BPD. I do wish to clarify that my reference to Porter's "piglets" was not in reference to every BPD officer as I know we have dedicated, law-abiding, consciousness and respectfully officers, however we have a number of problematic officers. I respect individual police officers; however, I do not respect the BPD as a public institution. We cannot pretend the BPD is a well-respected public agency in Bridgeport. It is overwhelmingly not. Former Chief Perez was sentenced to a year in federal prison, and in my four years on the Council, we have voted on \$4,000,000 in settlements for use of excessive force including the shooting death of residents without weapons or in their backs, false imprisonment, serious violations of residents civil and constitutional liberties and more. My constituents, regardless of age, race, and ethnicity; often share their negative experiences with our police department whether it happened to them personally or to a family member. It is simply a profession that not one bad apple can be accepted. My private email to two public officials did nothing to place the safety of police officers at risk. You would have to substantiate that in a court of law, and you cannot claim my private email places the safety of officers at risk, and then share it with many media outlets in the state in order to utilize it for political purposes and then place my remarks about the BPD on thousands of Ganim mailers. That is an absolute contradiction. Ultimately, if police officers were placed at risk, it was the City Council President and/or Deputy Chief of Staff Gaudett who placed police officers at risk as I made NO public declaration. Again, a council member utilized the words "racist pig" to describe me utilizing an official city council email sent to the entire city council and apparently that was just fine.

In the fifth whereas clause, I am being admonished for showing a "lack of empathy" that is expected from public officials. I am not required to show "empathy," however I absolutely demonstrated empathy for the 1200 innocent Israeli & American civilians who were brutally murdered by Palestinian Hamas Terrorists. It further states "I demonstrated a disregard for the lives of those who selflessly protect our community." I did no such thing as my email was not a public declaration and was only sent to two public officials. If anyone placed the lives of officers at risk, which I don't believe for one second, it was the City Council President and Deputy Chief of Staff who disseminated my email to a significant number of media outlets for purely political purposes. Once again, I comported myself appropriately during the January 2 meeting as did every council member and the videos serve as evidence to support my assertions. The sentence about civil discourse as elected representatives leading by example, promoting civil discourse, and respectfully is just rhetoric as I have already identified three examples of egregious conduct by several of my colleagues where nothing was done to address the behavior and, in some cases, I felt compelled to file police reports.

In the sixth whereas clause, I am accused of making grossly inappropriate comments about the mental and physical characteristics of certain named City employees, referring to one as a dimwit and mocking another's weight. First, every city employee is a public official as defined by CT state law, therefore anyone can criticize a public official. However, my criticisms of both city employees were in

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

their capacity as political operatives as my email clearly demonstrates. Constance Vickers is the Co-founder of Park City Consulting, LLC with Tom Gaudett where substantial sums of Ganimcampaign funds have been utilized to attack, unsuccessfully defeat me and slander me. I can absolutely criticize political operatives and will continue to do so. What if I post on facebook that in my opinion Governor Lamont is an idiot or President Biden is senile? Is it the position of this council that you can censure me for it? Have you ever watched a congressional hearing where representatives on both sides of the aisle skewer nominees and federal employees at actual committee hearings berating them, calling them traitors, liars, incompetent, etc. on nationally broadcast hearings? Have you ever read their facebook and twitter account posts about each other, or the President of the United States regardless of who that may be? I made these references in a private email, there was no public declaration. It was the City Council President & Deputy Chief of Staff who widely distributed my private email to the media, not I. However, if I choose to post my personal opinion about my political opponents who also serve as Bridgeport public officials, I will. I didn't give up my right to free speech twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week when I chose to run for elected office. If my constituents find it problematic, they have every right to vote me out of office, but they won't.

In the seventh whereas clause, it states I demonstrated "insensitivity" to our Muslim community's efforts to encourage a ceasefire and "disrespected" our Muslim residents during the emotional devastation occasioned by the ongoing Mideast violence." This sentence makes absolutely no sense. The only disrespect that was demonstrated during the January 2nd Council Meeting was by the Palestinian pro-cease fire attendees for harassing and bullying Judge Lopez, I & Councilwoman AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia which included booing and hissing at her for simply reading a well written letter by Councilman Scott Burns as to why he opposed the ceasefire resolution which is absolutely our right. In addition, they interrupted our meeting eight times with boos, hissing, chanting and one of the pro-ceasefire attendees walked up to the microphone during our meeting and started yelling into it. This lack of decorum would never be tolerated in the CT Legislature or Congress, but apparently, it's just fine at city council meetings. In addition, I never once made a reference to "Muslims", not in debate or my email on January 3rd. This country was founded on freedom of religion which is sacred, therefore my opposition had absolutely nothing to do with any religion.

In the eight whereas clause, regarding the City Council "Leadership" demanding my resignation, those who attended that press conference need to be highly respected as individuals with a high level of moral integrity to have any legitimacy. Nothing else needs to be said.

In ninth clause, Chapter 5(b) is listed which the CT Supreme Court had already ruled is constitutional. No elected official may be removed or recalled in CT except 5 towns whose city charters were already established before the CT state Constitution was ratified. It also states "the city council may determine its rules of proceeding in conformity to the general principles of parliamentary law, may punish members for disorderly behavior..." Therefore, we must refer to the City Council Rules, Ethics Ordinance, any other ordinance, etc. that I violated, and there is none.

In the tenth clause, City Council Rules of Order, Rule XXVI **"Conduct IN City Council: " In speaking,** City Council members shall refrain from mentioning any other member by name, shall confine themselves to the question, shall be courteous and not use unbecoming, abusive, or unparliamentary language, and should avoid personalities. Any member who, **IN DEBATE** or otherwise, indulges in personalities or makes charges **reflecting upon the character of another member, shall make an apology in open session at the meeting at which offense is committed, or at the next succeeding regular meeting, and, failing to do so, shall be named by the President or held in contempt, and suspended from further participation in debate until said apology is made.**" This City Council Rule has no bearing on a single allegation in this poorly written resolution. Which city council member did I reference in debate where I indulged in their personality or made charges reflecting upon the character of another member that would require me to apologize here this evening? I know, no one. I did not cast aspersions or reference a single colleague during the January 2nd Regular Meeting which is what this city council rule specifically references. I did not even reference a single city council member in my January 3rd email, therefore this city council rule is irrelevant. I also thoroughly reviewed the Ethics Ordinance and entire City Charter and found no violations.

The NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED clause is nothing more than pure rhetoric about our shared values, decency and commitment to civil discourse as noted by just the three specific examples of inappropriate conduct by the City Council President and additional council members. We have

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

councilmembers who have been referred to the state's chief attorney for criminal prosecution for substantial voter fraud, we have a council member who just pleaded guilty to criminal charges, we have a council member who stood in this chamber and accused me of breaking into one of my constituents homes to seat her ballot, held rallies attacking me and outrageously stated our former public facilities director was touching children, with several council members in attendance, and the co-sponsors of this very poorly written resolution are calling for my resignation? Where is the call for all those caught in an overwhelming amount of police videos and indisputable evidence committing substantial absentee ballot fraud to resign?

Not only will I not be apologizing as I did not violate a single city council rule, ordinance, ethics ordinance, or city charter provision; you should know I filed a formal complaint with the Freedom of Information Commission regarding the completely illegal meeting that was held in the Republican Caucus Room the evening of January 2nd where changes to the Ceasefire Resolution were made with the Mayor, Council President, two city council members, the Deputy CAO present along with two Rabbi's members of the Palestinian community and two attorneys who donated \$3,800 to the Mayor's campaign, who also represented the Mayor in his attempt to regain his law license. That very same law firm represented the family of my city council colleague the 138th district, who drafted the ceasefire resolution and whose family filed a lawsuit against the city in the tragic death of their son, her brother's death, committed by a BPD officer. Many of those who participated in that flagrantly illegal meeting were not even Bridgeport residents. I have requested the Freedom of Information "null" & "void" the ceasefire resolution and its passing by the Council which is within their purview under CT state law due to the illegality of the meeting. I am hoping that the Freedom of Information Commission has reached its limits with the City of Bridgeport and will hold it accountable for its repeated failure to follow state law.

We are currently researching the legal basis that the City Council could under any circumstances prevent a duly elected council member who represents 15,000 residents from fulfilling their legal obligation to represent their constituents from speaking or debating matters before the City Council. It has never been done in 239 years of the U.S. Congress, and we have yet to find an example of it in the CT Legislature but continue to research.

In closing, we should focus on those matters within our purview delegated to every municipal legislative body by the CT Legislature, not national or international matters. Going forward, this should not occur again, as any council member can utilize their city council letterhead to draft a letter addressed to the President, Congressional members, etc. regarding matters they are passionate about that are not within our purview, and ask council members to sign on to that letter. This entire exercise has not accomplished unity, it has done nothing but create divisiveness.

Respectfully yours,

Councilwoman Maria Pereira

President Pro Tempore, Newton said everyone has the right to due process and allowed council member Melendez to share some words as she was mentioned in the response by council member Pereira.

Council member Melendez took the opportunity to say a whole lot to what council member Periera said but she will rather say is that she represents the same district at Maria Periera and would like to share how many people along the journey of herself getting elected told her how they are scared of Pereira, how she harasses them, how they feel threatened by her and would not like to see her representing them. There are plenty of people who can come forward but are scared of her. As for bullying, she is also bullied by Maria, everytime she sits in her council chair - and she will be transparent, she has had differences with council members but always kept respect for them as they did for her. Unfortunately, she doesn't get any respect from the person

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

she ran with. During the meetings Periera is constantly in her ear bullying her and making comments online about her, in which she really doesn't care about but there should be a measure of accountability of how elected officials should act. Council member Melendez carried on to say Periera told her and others attending this meeting to shut up multiple times. Council member Melendez closed off by saying she can continue with the matter but there should be something done to elected officials and it is not only her who needs to take accountability. There is restorative justice that she believes in deeply and people can take account to right their wrongs. If people engage in that process then we can begin the process, Periera stated clearly she is not saying sorry so where would that leave them when it comes to restorative justice. Any wrongs that have been done on this council, people who have been impacted have the right to say what that justice looks like. The accountability needs to take place.

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, SPELL, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE ORTIZ, HODGES, PEREIRA, MELENDEZ, NEWTON, AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

**APPOINTMENT OF:**

City Council Standing Committees.

City Council Liaisons to various City agencies, boards, and commissions.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE CHANGES.**

Council member Herron stated she will be reading an email sent to the town clerk from the council president, Aidee Nieves on to the record:

“ While she is out of town due to a death in the family, I am exercising my authority under the council rules to recommend the following city council changes for tonight's city council meeting to be ratified by the body.

- Remove Maria Pereira from miscellaneous matters committee
- Fill the seat of miscellaneous matter committee with Richard Ortiz
- Remove Maria Pereira from the contracts committee
- Fill the seat of the contracts committee with Ernest E. Newton
- Move Matthew McCarthy to the position of Co-chair of the contracts committee

I am making these committee changes in light of recent behavior of city council woman Maria Pereira including calling the police chief a pig and other officers piglets, asserting that the same innocent constituents that come to the last full council meeting were likely terrorist, directing the middle finger towards individuals in the audience multiple times at the last city council meeting while sitting in her chair among other statements and behaviors were taken together demonstrating behavior unbecoming of the council person and that I expect will lead to her

censure by the city council this evening. It is to my understanding that by making these changes the city council woman Maria Pereira has been given a public opportunity to apologize for her comments and has declined to do so.”

Council member Pereira interjects to say, “ yes I have”.

Council member Herron continues to read council president, Nieves email onto the record:

“ I will accept my positioning at which council woman Pereira makes full public apologies

Sincerely,  
Council President, Aidee Nieves”.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTÍNEZ SECONDED THE MOTION.  
\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, SPELL, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE, ORTIZ, HODGES, PEREIRA, MELENDEZ, NEWTON, AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

**42-23** Resolution presented by Council Member Pereira re: Proposed Resolution to Censure Councilman Ernest Newton, **FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.**

Council member Martinez made a recommendation regarding item 42-23, to be removed from the agenda and not be voted on due this being tick-for-tack behavior. This resolution was applicable on a statement that Mr. Newton made, as an African American, who had the right to do so. She asked her colleagues to not even entertain this item.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED THE ITEM 42-23 FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.  
\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER HODGES.**

Council member Pereira called for a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER SPELL MOTIONED TO ACCEPT ITEM 42-23 FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION.  
\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ  
\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Council member Pereira read the resolution for item 42-23 into the record:

WHEREAS, On Friday, January 5, 2024, Councilman Ernest Newton called into the Melissa Sheketoff in the Morning show on WICC following an interview provided by

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

Councilwoman Maria Pereira as an invited guest of Melissa Sheketoff during the nine o'clock morning hour; and

WHEREAS, At the conclusion of Councilwoman Maria Pereira's live interview, Councilman Ernest Newton called into the show in response to Councilwoman Maria Pereira's remarks. Melissa Sheketoff welcomed Ernest Newton to her morning radio show in his capacity as a "councilman"; and

WHEREAS, Councilman Ernest Newton knowingly made a public declaration during the live broadcast; that Councilwoman Pereira calling Chief Porter a p-g was the same as calling him a "n----t," using the most derogatory and offensive racial slur possible; and

WHEREAS, The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines this offensive racial slur as "used as an insulting and contemptuous term for a Black person."; and

WHEREAS, Melissa Sheketoff attempted to block and "dump" Councilman Newton's use of the racial slur utilizing a limited few second delay, but failed to do so in time; and

WHEREAS, Councilman Newton's use of the most offensive racial slur recognized in the United States; was broadcast live to thousands of WICC listeners; and

WHEREAS; Within hours of Councilman Ernest Newton's offensive use of the racial slur, Councilwoman Maria Pereira spoke with constituents and non-constituents who shared they were listening to the live show and heard Councilman Ernest Newton utilize the offensive slur before being cut-off by Melissa Sheketoff; and

WHEREAS; Councilwoman Pereira communicated ot Melissa Sheketoff that her attempt to "dump" Councilman Ernest Newton's use of the offensive slur was not activated ni time, therefore her thousands of morning listeners heard his abhorrent use of the racial slur, live and on the air, and WHEREAS; Per Aidee Nieves, Thomas Gaudett released my private email to media outlets while also serving as a Chief Campaign Strategist for Joe Ganim's re-election campaign who I vehemently oppose. My email was not a public declaration, but a private email requesting information and denouncing the conduct & behavior of those in support of the non-binding Ceasefire Resolution which the City Council had no legal authority to deliberate or vote on, and

WHEREAS; Both Deputy Chief of Staff Thomas Gaudett & Legislative Liaison Constance Vickers created Park City Consulting, LC ni 2022, ni which \$160,000 from Joe Ganim's Political Action Committee for Mayor has been funneled into that LC whose Treasurer, Anthony Paoletta also serves as a Special Projects Coordinator ni Mayor Ganim's office. Deputy Chief of Staff Thomas Gaudett, Legislative Liaison Constance Vickers & Special Projects Manager Anthony Paoletta are al high-level appointees of Mayor Ganim who are not on a leave-of-absence while actively working on Joe Ganim's re-election campaign, therefore the motivation to release my private email to numerous media outlets was clearly politically motivated and not out of any



concern for Chief Porter, Bridgeport Police Officers or the Palestinian attendees at our January 2, 2024 City Council Meeting, and

WHEREAS; Merriam-Webster Dictionary also defines the following words utilized in Councilwoman Pereira's private email, none of which are described as racist or discriminatory based on the federally defined protected classes of race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, national origin or age:

Mob - a large and disorderly crowd of people. Thug- a violent or brutish criminal or bully.

Pig - a dirty, gluttonous, or repulsive person; •4 a crude casting of metal (such as iron); 5- an immoral woman; 6 •police officer.

Piglet- a small usually young swine (no correlation to a police officer per Webster Dictionary)

Terrorist - relating to, or characteristic of terrorists or terrorism: practicing or involving violent acts of terror;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Councilman Ernest Newton be censured for utilizing a reprehensible, absolutely racist, and derogatory slur on WICC on Friday, January 5, 2024 heard live by thousands of Melissa Sheketoff in the Morning listeners. The censure is to include being removed from his leadership position as President Pro Tempore, the Budget & Appropriations Committee, the Ordinance Committee, the School Buildings Committee as Liaison to the Water Pollution Control Authority.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE ITEM 42-23.**

**\*\*THE MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE ITEM 42-23 FAILED TO GET A SECOND.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO DENY THE RESOLUTION.**

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

Council member Pereira stated for the record, she didn't expect this to pass, it is here for legal purposes, to prove a point and show it to the judge that people are treated differently.

President Pro Tempore added for everyone to understand the content of the discussion. Mayor Joe Ganim was speaking on the radio and they gave Mr. Newton 30 seconds to make a statement regarding what he thought about councilwoman Pereira comments regarding the police. He believed it was wrong to call the police and chief a pig and piglets. He doesn't think Pereira is

old enough to realize that if you called a police officer a pig in the 60's, it was like calling him the n word because if you called a police officer, in his day, the officer would beat the you know out of you, if he had caught you because it was gratitory towards the position he was in. Now if he offended Ernie Newton because he was the only one that called himself the n word then it was just like the feelings of when we call cops pigs. He didn't call anyone the n word, he used it on himself as an illustration. He didn't call the audience, or anyone but himself the n word and he made a comparison that if he looked at Jorge Cruz and called him a slur name that was offensive to him, that is what he was trying to get the point across. So no one who was listening to WICC can ever say he called Fredrick Hodges the n word. No one. He said on the live broadcast that calling a police officer a pig was like calling him the n word.

Council member Cruz thanked all who supported the resolution in hopes to restore a sense of dignity in the cambers and a sense of respect for the people who are sitting in the chambers listening. All he would like to say is that he is very delighted with this city. They have gone through hard times, not only because of the intense election here in the city of Bridgeport but also because of what's happening across the ocean in Israel, Palestine, Ukraine, and Russia. There are a lot of us suffering in this world but locally here we need to get a house in order. He would like to say to councilwoman Melendez that he is so proud of her and that she stood up. He added Ms. Melendez gives him chills and it is a great joy to see a young woman like herself not going to stand around and be allowed to be bullied. She stood her ground because she doesn't deserve someone who asked her to run with her to then turn against her so viciously, so vile, it just doesn't make any sense to him and he is sure it doesn't make any sense to their constituents out there. He closed off by asking council member Melendez to please keep up with standing up and thanking Pro Tempore Newton for the great work he's done tonight as he knows it's been difficult. To his Palestinian brothers and sisters, he sees some of his Israeli brothers and sisters have left; we are all suffering with you, I am with you 100% as well. We should not be sending bombs but a cease fire, he sees the thousand, hears about the thousands of kids, it is terrible. It is a tragedy. As they move on forward lets find a way to unite the city together, we got to come together.

Council member Herron added they have sat here and listened, even when Councilwoman Melendez spoke and was finished, she saw the interaction and it was very sad. She has mentioned this to the council for years that they have to do better, they have to act appropriately, they are the ones everyone out there looks at and it hasn't changed. They are elected by the people and here to represent them, whether they like certain groups or not that's not why they are here. They are here to represent the whole, not just one. The ceasefire brought a lot of tension, a lot of animosity but it also brought a lot of truth out. The constituents sat through every meeting and she is so proud to see that, she would like to see that all the time because they have not had this. She's been on the council for 8 years and never saw this many people come out, and there are other causes other than what you're coming here for. They need the public's help not only you but the whole community here, each and every one of this council has to be made accountable for their behaviors. She isn't using this as a political tool because she doesn't care, this is important to all and behaviors are what we need to do and it's not personal. They have to

behave appropriately, so please stick by us, stay with us and come and support us when we need you out here as well.

Council member Spell thanked the Bridgeport police department for sitting here, standing here throughout this whole entire meeting. She thanked them because they actually serve and protect them. They actually put their lives on the lines so she appreciates them for that. Secondly, she would like to vote to drop this whole resolution because they have sat here way too long tonight - that can be put on the record, put on facebook because she doesn't care. She asked to begin the voting process so they can go home.

Council member McBride-Lee added they must be very careful about what they say and terms that they use because it means certain things to certain people. She believed that after tonight everyone should take notice of what they should say and what they should not say to each other. She can relate to Pro Tempore Newton regarding the pig and piglet comments because where she is from it is a second curse word, now where you came from it might mean the pigs are rolling around in the mud - she doesn't know. Also she wishes most of the council people were here, for herself as a civil rights activist she believes in equal opportunity for everyone. They are all created equal; for example, if something was said from a black, african american, or a hispanic person here to some of the other people here, there would have been a riot here in Bridgeport. If someone went up to her and said you black should do whatever, whatever - she would be so upset even though she is black. She believes all of them should be treated the same way. It really hurt her feelings when one of the council members called someone a black boy. Hopefully tonight people will stop the derogatory names. They have to respect each other.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO MOVE AND CLOSE THIS DISCUSSION.**

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

Council member Pereira stated that she has the recording from what Pro Tempore Newton said on the WICC in her possession and what he said when he spoke live was completely different from today, which will be presented in court. Secondly when council member Martinez had the floor, she used it to call her a bully to say she was scaring her own constituents, which is a violation of the city council rule policies talking about another member on this floor so she will be making a center about that. She added the only opinion that matters about whether her council partner is doing a good job is the constituents of the 138 district and she can reassure the council that council member Melendez will not be reelected in 2025.

Council member Martinez added to the record that as the representative of the 139 district, she has sat here tonight and witnessed council member Pereira threaten council member Melendez with her never being elected in the 139 district ever again, if Pereira has the right to do so - that is a threat. This is city council business, not political affairs here. We are not in an election for elected officials therefore Maria Pereira you are wrong if you think Jazmarie Melendez will be censored because of what she stated. Maria, you are a freaking bully and after bullying her, you are very disrespectful.

City of Bridgeport  
City Council  
Regular Meeting  
February 5, 2024

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED TO DENY WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, SPELL, SMITH, BOYD, HERRON, MCBRIDE-LEE, ORTIZ, HODGES, PEREIRA, MELENDEZ, NEWTON, AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vianca Rivera,

Telesco Secretarial Services