

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM  
MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024  
City Council Chambers, City Hall  
45 Lyon Terrace  
Bridgeport, CT 06604**

**CALL TO ORDER**

City Council President, Aidee Nieves called the Public Speaking session of the City Council to order at 6:34 p.m.

Council President Nieves welcomed everyone to the public speaking session, read the rules for public speaking, and noted that comments are to be civil and respectful of all those in attendance, and must adhere to the three-minute time limit.

**ROLL CALL**

City Clerk, Lydia Martinez called the roll. Eighteen (18) members were present, two (2) members were absent (McCarthy, Lyons). There was a quorum present.

**130<sup>th</sup> District:** Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy (Absent)

**131<sup>st</sup> District:** Jorge Cruz, Tyler Mack

**132<sup>nd</sup> District:** Dasha Spell, Rolanda Smith

**133<sup>rd</sup> District:** Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron

**134<sup>th</sup> District:** Michelle Lyons (Absent)

**135<sup>th</sup> District:** Mary McBride-Lee, Richard Ortiz

**136<sup>th</sup> District:** Alfredo Castillo, Frederick Hodges

**137<sup>th</sup> District:** Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle

**138<sup>th</sup> District:** Jazmarie Melendez

**139<sup>th</sup> District:** Eneida Martinez, Ernest Newton

The following persons have requested permission to address the City Council on Monday, April 15, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut:

There were a total of six speakers, nine were registered to speak, four speakers were absent, three speakers had signed up on the sign-up sheet and were called to come forward to speak.

**John Marshall Lee** addressed the Council and excerpts of his statement are as follows:

Where does oversight come in. After 911 the phase ‘See something, say something’ took shape and now freedom of faith, ability to speak and gather freely, right to vote, or participate in governance activities like speaking to a City Council factor into this assessment of personal democratic liberties? They should do something? Where do you go to find facts and information to get the truth about taxes, budgets, schools, and important health and safety issues? Who keeps record of practices? Where do we hold community conversations, where people seek a place at the table, to be respected, welcomed, and listened to in turn so that all may learn with a right to speak in turn? Time will tell.

**Deborah Boles** addressed the Council and excerpts of her statement are as follows

**“Any portrayal of the resolution as a “collaborative effort” is simply false. This ‘meeting’ was nothing more than a manipulative scheme to enable the council members who pushed the resolution to claim that they worked cooperatively with the Jewish community - a claim that was dishonestly reported to the press and has been repeated by numerous parties since then.”**

**To repeat: our clergy was used. When it was shown that no collaboration took place, this council did nothing to remedy the situation.**

**How would you like it if your personal Priest, Minister, Pastor, Imam was used like that? The Mayor and City Council owes the Jewish Community, Rabbi Landa and Rabbi Schultz both public and written apologies. Was this defamation of two Rabbis and a religious-based community? Was this done out of hatred or just old-fashioned antisemitism?**

**I know you want this to go away - but without public, written, and private apologies to the Rabbis and to the**

Lisa Becker was not in attendance

Carin Savek was not in attendance.

David Ball was not in attendance.

## **Judith Shapiro**

My name is Judith Shapiro, and I am a member of the Jewish Federation of Fairfield County, 4200 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT.

I would like to thank the four City Council members who on April 1<sup>st</sup> voted to rescind the Gaza ceasefire resolution. Thank you also to the members who stressed that this was a lost opportunity to bring opposing sides together. And I was moved by the members who expressed their wish that some official group had called for a ceasefire when their people were being persecuted.

Ceasefires are intended to bring an end to the killing that takes place in war. In the Middle East, however, they tend merely to provide a respite between wars. This is especially true of Hamas, who used a ceasefire in place on October 7, 2023, to launch a surprise attack on Israel, raping, butchering, and burning their way through peaceful farm villages – and then taking 250 hostages, in some cases entire families, back to Gaza. Back to the brutal war machine that Hamas has designed to put civilians on the war's front lines.

And why? Why all the horrible carnage? I found the answer right here while attending Bridgeport City Council meetings. I cannot describe what it was like to hear the slogan, "From the River to the Sea" repeated over and over, and realize that those chanting it were advocating for the destruction of the state of Israel with its 9 million Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Druze, and Bahai citizens.

For that is Hamas' goal, as declared in their founding document, specifically Article 13: "Initiatives and so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences, are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement ... There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad."

## **April DelVecchio**

I have been a taxpayer here for over 20 years and I'd like to know whose duty it is to protect the taxpayers of the city, from unnecessary and avoidable financial liabilities. Some financial liabilities that I know first hand are being created due to the actions of Chief Porter abusing his role as Police Chief.

My complaint alleging the disparity, abuse of power and malfeasance of Chief Roderick Porter was sent on 01/04 and 04/08/24 to Mayor Ganim, CAO Gaudett, City Attorneys, Labor relations and then Internal Affairs. Not one single office has returned a call to inquire as to the validity of my accusations.

City Charter, Chapter 2 Sec. 17-(Removal of Certain Officers)

By being made aware of this alleged malfeasance, at the very least, someone within the city should have both an interest and obligation to investigate the facts surrounding these serious claims of blatant misconduct, abuse of power and the intent to cause harm by Chief Porter.

City Charter, Chapter 13-(Police),

Chief Porter has failed to faithfully and impartially execute the duties of his role as Chief of Police. Directives, Policies and procedures have been disregarded and his operation and acts in utilizing policies are also blatantly inconsistent with past practice which is a matter of public record.

I ask that there be accountability as there must be fair and impartial treatment of all officers based on policies and without personal vendettas at the hands of Chief Porter.

## **Reverend Sara Smith**

Bridgeport should be proud that a ceasefire resolution was passed. I commend Councilmember Melendez and all those who support bringing peace to Gaza. As some council members stated,

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other non-binding resolutions have passed, and the current situation is certainly an appropriate time for this one.

Thankfully the motion to rescind was unsuccessful and no evidence was brought forward to show that anything improper occurred. The full council should accept that tonight. I hope that the Israeli hostages are returned safely. I hope that the thousands of kidnapped Palestinians in Israeli prisons are freed as well, many of whom Amnesty Int'l and Human Rights Watch confirm are held without charges and are victims of humiliation, torture, and beatings. I am energized as I witness people exercising their First Amendment right to speak up for those in another land who are asking the world to let their truth be known.

**Mohammad Hamada** addressed the Council and excerpts of his statements are as follows:

10 city council meetings, over 90 Gaza ceasefire speeches. I'm going to recap them all for you in three questions:

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1. Did the Bridgeport city council have the right to pass a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza? Absolutely, YES
  - Over 100 cities in the United States have passed ceasefire resolutions including:
    - Albany, Atlanta, Chicago, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Seattle, Iowa City
    - Even a small town like Newfane, Vt., with a population 1,645 people has passed a ceasefire resolution. Anyone who thinks a small town in Vermont with 1,600 people has more weight than the largest and most diverse city in Connecticut, should be ashamed of themselves.
  - Overwhelming majority of city council members including the one member who flipped her vote under pressure have already stated that they have an obligation to the Bridgeport community and that the resolution sends a message to the White and federal legislators to call for a cease fire.
  - Lastly, it's crucial to emphasize that the ceasefire resolution isn't about politics or foreign policy; it's purely humanitarian. We did not ask you to pass a resolution on the conflicts between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. We asked you to pass a resolution calling on the Zionist president of the United States to stop the atrocities that are killing tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children funded by our tax dollars.

**Jonathan Maclay** addressed the Council and excerpts of his statement are as follows:

I am a resident at 1188 Main St, commonly known as The Lofts, and I have been living there since 9/1/2023. I am here today to talk about loud music coming from 1211 Main St, The Hollywood Hookah Lounge.

After moving to The Lofts during Labor Day weekend, I noticed loud music coming from the club until 3am. I later found out that the club is open Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and plays loud music every night it's open. I'm not sure if the club gets smoky and that's why they open the door but when they do again the entire street and its neighbors can hear it until 3am.

I only called 911 twice about the music since September about and one time nothing was done. The other time, I think a patrol car was dispatched and sent to the club and the music stopped. The 911 dispatcher did tell me that they get many 911 calls about the club.

I am asking if the Bridgeport City Council could make an ordinance that would prohibit loud music to be played after 1am on Thursday and Sunday nights since Friday and Monday's are work days. For your consideration.

**Deborah Weiss** addressed the Council, excerpts of her statement are as follows:

Mayor Ganim to the press about the approved resolution: "Even in a small place like Bridgeport, a loud voice of Muslim and Jewish leaders who come together and say we want to end the violence. It's a very important statement." However, his statement was false. Here is the truth from Rabbi Schultz, Bnai Israel, about what actually occurred on January 2nd at the Bridgeport City Council meeting.

While attending the meeting, Tom Gaudett, Ganim's Deputy chief-of-staff, approached us asking that we leave the public audience. He led the two of us and five members of the Muslim community into a private room. Soon after we entered the room, Ganim, President Nieves, and council members entered, We did not request this meeting, nor have any advance knowledge.

When asked if we were comfortable with the language of the proposed "ceasefire resolution," we replied that the language was problematic and the resolution was one-sided and flawed; we stressed the Jewish community's lack of prior knowledge about the resolution, urging that it be tabled to allow for meaningful input. We made it clear that we couldn't represent the entire Jewish community; were vastly outnumbered, pressured to provide immediate input, and continually interrupted. The members of the Islamic

Today, we stand witness to yet another tragic chapter in the ongoing conflict in Gaza.. As we gather here, it is imperative that we raise our voices and call for an immediate ceasefire. First and foremost, let us remember the human cost of this conflict.

Council President Nieves closed the public session at 7:05 p.m. and called for a five-minute recess prior to the start of the Council meeting.

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024**

**7:00 PM**

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Joseph Ganim called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

**PRAYER**

Mayor Joseph Ganim asked Council Member McBride-Lee to lead the assembly in prayer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Joseph Ganim asked Council Member Mack to lead the pledge of allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

City Clerk Lydia Martinez called the roll. Eighteen (18) members were present, two (2) members were absent (McCarthy, Lyons). There was a quorum present.

**130<sup>th</sup> District:** Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy (absent)

**131<sup>st</sup> District:** Jorge Cruz, Tyler Mack

**132<sup>nd</sup> District:** Dasha Spell, Rolanda Smith

**133<sup>rd</sup> District:** Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron

**134<sup>th</sup> District:** Michelle Lyons (absent), AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia

**135<sup>th</sup> District:** Mary McBride-Lee, Richard Ortiz

**136<sup>th</sup> District:** Alfredo Castillo (Absent), Frederick Hodges

**137<sup>th</sup> District:** Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle

**138<sup>th</sup> District:** Jazmarie Melendez, Maria Pereira

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### Moment of Silence

Mayor Ganim acknowledged the following members that asked for a moment of silence:

Council Member McBride Lee asked for a moment of silence in memory of T.W. Plummer an active member of the Bridgeport Community that passed away. She thanked all those that attended the services and acknowledged that it meant a great deal to her and her family.

### MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Approval of City Council Minutes: March 18, 2024

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 18,2024.**

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

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH SEVENTEEN VOTES IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED AND ONE ABSTENTION (PERIERA).**

### COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

**64-23** Communication from Tax Collector re: Refund of Excess Payments – Phoenix Petro Corporation, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

**65-23** Communication from Mayor re: Appointment of Mdsufian Ahmed (U) to the Historic District Commission, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

**66-23** Communication from Police Department re: Proposed Mutual Aid Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the Fairfield County Mutual Police Assistance Compact (Fairfield County Blue Plan), referred to Contracts Committee.

**67-23** Communication from City Attorney’s Office re: Proposed Settlement of Pending Litigation in the matter of Reina Ramos v. City of Bridgeport - Docket No. FBT-CV-22-6113320-S, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

**68-23** Communication from City Attorney’s Office re: Proposed Settlement of Pending Litigation in the matter of Jermaine Rogers v. City of Bridgeport - Docket No. 3:23-cv-00348 (JAM), referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO WITHDRAW ITEM 65-23**

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

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

- \*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED FOR ITEMS:  
64-23, 66-23, 67-23, 68-23 COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS, AND  
RESOLUTIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES.**
- \*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

**\*63-23** Budget and Appropriations Committee Report re: (Ref. #58-23) Request to Appropriate Funds for the Senior Paralegal Position in the City Attorney’s Office.

**\*52-23** Public Safety and Transportation Committee Report re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Emergency Management Performance Grant (FY23-27).

**\*61-23** Public Safety and Transportation Committee Report re: Resolution regarding the 2024 “First” Round of City Sidewalk Repair Pilot Program.

*\*Council Member Newton requested Item 63-23 to be TABLED from the Consent Calendar.*

The following item was removed from the Consent Calendar to Matters be Acted Upon:  
Council Member Newton read the item and requested it to be sent back to Committee.

- \*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO TABLE ITEM 63-23.**
- \*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* THE MOTION TO TABLE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- \*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS 52-23 AND 61-23.**
- \*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD THE FOLLOWING ITEM TO THE AGENDA:**

From Miscellaneous Matters Committee:

Five (5) Various Proposed Worker’s’ Compensation Stipulations as listed below.

- \*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* THE MOTION TO ADD ITEM FOM MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE TO THE AGENDA PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**



**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO APPROVE FIVE (5) VARIOUS PROPOSED WORKER’S’ COMPENSATION STIPULATIONS AS LISTED. (ITEM #69-23 A-E)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED THE MOTION.  
\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services