

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 25, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Co-chair; Aikeem Boyd, Co-chair; Rolanda Smith; Richard Ortiz; Tyler Mack (6:54).

OTHERS: Council Member(s): Aidee Nieves, Council President; Scott Burns, Jorge Cruz, Jeanette Herron, Michelle Lyons & Maria Pereira; Andy Toledo, Director of Community Relations; Rosa Franco; Tom Gaudett, CAO; Eric Amado, Personnel Director; Tyisha Toms, City Attorney; Bruce Levins, Assoc. City Attorney; John Mayans, Esq. with Milano & Wanat LLC

**** CO-CHAIR VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED THE MEETING INTO THE CHAMBERS DUE TO THE ATTENDANCE SIZE OF THE PUBLIC. ****

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. There was a quorum present at the time of roll call.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- **FEBRUARY 28, 2024 (RESCHEDULED MEETING)**
- ** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 28, 2024.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

51-23 APPOINTMENT OF ROSA FRANCO (D) TO BOARD OF PARKS COMMISSION.

Ms. Franco shared she has worked with the (inaudible) and is currently retired. She has hosted many events at the park and is familiar with the Parks Commission and worked with the senior citizens. She is looking to promote events for the community and senior citizens.

Council member Periera asked if Ms. Franco was currently a city employee. Ms. Franco said no.

**** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 51-23.**

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

**** THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

37-23 APPOINTMENT OF JOHN STEVENS (U) TO THE HARBOR COMMISSION.

**** ITEM 37-23 IS A DUPLICATE, NO ACTIONS WERE ACTED UPON. ****

45-23 PROPOSED CITY COUNCIL RULES AMENDMENTS.

Council member Burns wanted to bring up the public speaking rules regarding the city council rules. There is an online sign up process but the rules don't really reflect that.

**** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO TABLE ITEM 45-23.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION WAS TABLED UNANIMOUSLY.**

46-23 PROPOSED RESOLUTION CALLED FOR RESCISSION OF NO.20-23, (RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN IMMEDIATE DE-ESCALATION AND PERMANENT CEASEFIRE IN ISREAL, GAZA AND THE WEST BANK) BASED UPON VIOLATIONS OF APPLICABLE PROCEDURAL RULES AND VIOLATIONS OF FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW.

Council member Burns said that the war is horrific and everyone is saddened by what's going on. There have been many changes to the resolution locally and internationally, the senator has asked the Israeli leadership to step down and the U.S government has created a temporary pier to bring in aid. He hopes future council members take into account that international affairs do not fall on the city council and religious issues are something that the city shouldn't take official positions on. He is saddened by the divide that this has created.

****COUNCIL MEMBER JORGE CRUZ JOINED THE MEETING ATA 6:41PM****

Council President Nieves explained the item will go back to the full council before it gets officially acted upon on April 1st, 2024.

Council member Cruz said he was disturbed with the item being entertained. He believes amendments were supposed to be made as the council met with senators, attorneys, and leaders from both religious groups. He doesn't understand why they are still discussing the original resolution, it is a symbolic oath to stand for humanity and ceasefire. He feels the emotion coming from the public when they attend the meeting and supports the ceasefire.

Council member Herron added that the United Nation security council passed a resolution to stop the ceasefire in Gaza which happened just a few hours ago. She also mentioned that there were supposed to be meetings to amend the resolution which hasn't occurred. The city council has a responsibility to the community and support all their community members, along with working in harmony.

**** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 46-23.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTIONED WAS DENIED WITH ONE (1) IN FAVOR (SMITH) AND THREE (3) OPPOSED (ORTIZ, BOYD, AND VIZZIO-PANICCIA)**

57-23 PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR CRITICAL DEPARTMENTS.

****CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO TABLE ITEM 57-23.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER MACK JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:54 PM****

****CO-CHAIR BOYD RESCINDED THE MOTION TO TABLE AS COUNCIL MEMBER MACK HAD ARRIVE TO SPEAK ON THE ITEM.**

Council member Mack shared the resolution was to prepare the city employee to step up, as staff leave there should be a transitional period. Succession planning is managed by the CAO and works with the department head to maintain the order. Staff should be cross trained and know the duties of their higher up for when position becomes vacant or someone is sick at home. The resolution calls for the mayor or designee to begin a succession plan on July 1st, 2024 with yearly progress updates. He has met with the CAO and they are comfortable with resolution and looking for one amendment.

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked who will oversee this as department heads retire. Council member Mack replied the chief Administrative Officer will be in charge of this. Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia also asked if he has done this before or spoke with anyone regarding the resolution. Council member Mack responded he has not done this before but he has only spoken with the Chief Administrative Office.

Council member Periera asked why the deadline is a full year from July. She added to be careful of resolutions as they are not binding, it is better to create an ordinance as they are a legislative body. Council member Mack said the points are valid but the logic is to get it started, everything must get voted upon. The allowed time span is to give respect to the upcoming budget season and resolution is a huge task.

Council President Nieves added she understands the resolution but they must be careful as some employees are union based. The employees must be on active duty pay.

Mr. Amado added this is a two part situation, one part is gathering the information first. There shouldn't be any issues with collective bargaining until using the wording or something similar to assigning tasks in absence of x. The charter defines what each department does. They could collect information and then make recommendations prior to (inaudible).

Council President Nieves said that would be her concern along with giving them a year and a half to complete the job, it might take more time just to acknowledge contracts and do job analysis.

Council member Mack replied there is no definite completion done, in the resolution they are just looking for a progress report. In the ordinance they can specify a time and date.

Council member Herron added this is a good concept, people need to be cross trained. A lot of people like to keep their knowledge to themselves, working officials should know everything. They have high retirement levels going on in the city and end up contracting those positions back to them due to not preparing for those retirements.

Council member Mack shared Mr. Gaudett asked to amend the mayor or designee to chief of administrative office.

Council member Mack noted the following council members Newton, Herron, Vizzo-Paniccia, and Nieves would like to sponsor the resolution.

Council member Burns said he doesn't see any issue with the mayor or designee language being used.

**** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 57-23 WITH THE AMENDMENT OF INCLUDING THE CO SPONSORS: ERNEST NEWTON, JEANETTE HERRON, AMY MARIE VIZZO-PANICCIA, AND AIDEE NIEVES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

58-23 PROPOSED APPROVAL TO ESTABLISH THE NEW JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE CLASSIFICATION AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE SENIOR PARALEGAL POSITION PURSANT TO MINICIPAL CHARTER CHAPTER 17, SECTION 206(D).

Mr. Amado shared that Attorney Meyer didn't establish or propose to establish new classifications the last time he was in front of the committee. What they are trying to do now is establish new classifications within the chart of organization to pursue the new higher level or senior level paralegals. They currently have just an entry-level classification, the senior paralegal would be delegated higher level duties. This should help train new staff and with the new proposal of succession training.

Council member Herron asked for clarity if it is just one position being added. Mr. Amado replied yes, right now they are just establishing the classification or existence of the senior paralegal. They would have to come back to the committee in regards to how many of those positions would be available.

Council member Pereira said after reading the proposal to the charter, if the commission can determine the office cannot function without the new position. Mr. Amado said they have to investigate the request and the commission must review if the position can properly function.

Attorney Toms added this position is required due to salary discrepancies within the city attorney's office. Compared to Norwalk, the Bridgeport staff is getting paid \$20 thousand dollars less. There is currently one vacancy and no distinguishing between entry or senior level paralegal in the office. Since she has been associated with the office they have lost 4 attorneys due to salary. The city positions take a lot of effort and intellect without much pay.

Council member Herron said she understands the issue regarding salary, it is a city wide problem and they cannot retain or recruit with the salaries available. With the budget coming up, they need to review each department to create a trickle effect.

Council President Nieves understands the budget is coming up which is a tricky season, and new department heads will be in position. She has heard of many people leaving due to being overworked and believes they can afford change. This will be fruitful to everyone.

Council member Periera said Attorney Meyers had requested funds in the budget cycle for this. Co- Chair Vizzo-Paniccia said it was only approved by the committee. Council member Burns clarified Attorney Meyers had made the request after the regular budget for one paralegal and the council did not approve it.

Council member Pereira asked how it would affect the current staff of paralegals in the office. Attorney Toms said there are five positions available with one vacancy. She would like to hire one senior paralegal and promote two current staff. One staff member has received a job offer of \$90 thousand dollars that she is looking to match so they don't leave the office. The budget plan was submitted without her contributions due to the timing of her being sworn in; she saw the budget two hours before being sworn in. She will be submitting a budget proposal from the city attorney's office.

Council member Mack shared he supports the item as it makes the city better and once the city's attorney office is where it needs to be then there will be a trickle-down effect between all the departments for the better.

**** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE ITEM 58-23.**

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

**** THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

59-23 PROPOSED APPROVAL TO UPDATE THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE CLASSIFICATION OF DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION PURSANT TO CIVIL SERVICE RULE IX, SEC 3.

Mr. Amado shared items 59-23 and 60-23 are very similar but different requests. Back in 2006-2007 the collective bargaining removed the fire deputy chief from the union description and classification to create three new positions that failed to come to the city council to create or update the classifications. After doing the job analysis, it has been running with the classifications of Fire deputy chief of Administration Operations and Fire deputy chief executive officer. They used the job description from the rules and regulations of the fire commission.

Council member Pereira asked if the positions have been existing with being properly created. How long has this been going on? Mr. Amado said yes, it has been going on since 2006-2007 and they are looking to correct that with this proposal.

Council member Pereira asked what is the purpose of the fire chief of Administration Operations and the order or organization. Mr. Amado said the position mostly works in an office doing administrative work but will cover fires as needed. The fire chief is first, followed by the fire deputy executive chief and then the fire deputy chief of administration operations.

Council member Burns asked Mr. Amado can share the organization chart and if the positions are similar to other towns. Mr. Amado said yes, they are all recognized as the same.

Council member Pereira asked if any of the positions are within the bargaining unit. Mr. Amado said no, in 2002-2003 they removed the position but didn't go to the legislative body to approve the subset.

**** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 59-23.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

60-23 PROPOSED APPROVAL TO ESTABLISH THE NEW JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE CLASSIFICATION AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER POSITION PURSANT TO MUNICIPAL CHARTER CHAPTER 17, SECTION 206(D)

Mr. Amado said this would be similar to the last item.

- ** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 60-23.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

*****EXECUTIVE SESSION*****

53-23 PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION IN THE MATTER OF EMILIA CHARLES V. CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, DOCKET NO. FBT-CV-21-611-0594-S

**** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO ENTER AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR ITEM 53-23 WITH ATTORNEY BRUCE LEVINS, TYISHA TOMS AT 7:45 PM IN ROOM WHEELER A & B.**

- **COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- **THE MOTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO RESCIND THE MOTION TO ENTER AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR ITEM 53-23 WITH ATTORNEY BRUCE LEVINS, TYISHA TOMS AT 7:45PM IN ROOM WHEELER A & B DUE TO OUTSIDE ATTORNEY JOHN MAYANO JOINING THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ RESCINDED HIS SECOND.**

**** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO ENTER AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR ITEM 53-23 WITH ATTORNEY BRUCE LEVINS, TYISHA TOMS, AND JOHN MAYANO AT 7:52 PM IN ROOM WHEELER A & B.**

- **COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- **THE MOTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

****THE EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDED AT 8:05PM****

- ** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 53-23.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURMENT

- ** CO-CHAIR BOYD MOTIONED THE ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vianca Rivera

Telesco Secretarial Services.