

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 7, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Rolanda Smith, Co-chair; Eneida Martinez, Jorge Cruz, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Jeanette Herron, Michelle Lyons

OTHER: Council Member(s): Aidee Nieves, Council President; Scott Burns & Mary McBride-Lee; Fire Chief Lance Edwards, Acting Fire Marshal Robert Marrero

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Smith called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. There was a quorum present.

Approval of Committee Minutes

Approval of Committee Minutes: October 3, 2023 (Regular Meeting).
Approval of Committee Minutes: January 3, 2024 (Regular Meeting).
Approval of Committee Minutes: February 13, 2024 (Regular Meeting).
Approval of Committee Minutes: April 2, 2024 (Regular Meeting).

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked to combine the minutes into one approval motion, but it was noted that those who had attended the meetings were not present.

- ** **COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO TABLE APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS FROM OCTOBER 3, 2023; JANUARY 3, 2024; FEBRUARY 13, 2024; AND APRIL 2, 2024.**
- ** **COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** **THE MOTION TO TABLE THE MINUTES PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Information Session

**Information session with the Chief of the Fire Department Lance Edwards
Regarding positions retirement and officers' duties.**

Fire Chief Lance Edwards began with an introduction of Acting Fire Marshall Robert Marrero who has taken over the position vacated by the untimely death of long-term Fire Marshall Alberto Hernandez, who passed away last week. Mr. Marrero gave an overview of his background and his 23-year employment history in the City of Bridgeport, holding various positions in the Fire Department

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Chief Edwards gave an overview of the personnel vacancy positions open and explained they are working with Civil Service Commission and the Personnel Department with issuing 32 conditional employment offer letters, and they are looking to hire 17-20 firefighters. They are starting recruitments to run entrance exam tests for September-October. He explained that they are anticipating a 'mass exodus' with retirements based on the new early retirement state program and expect to lose from 14-15 personnel in 2025.

Comments and questions from Committee members were fielded over home inspections with occupancy checks. There was discussion on the backlog situation process of inspections and permits. Acting Fire Marshall Marrero explained that this occurred during COVID, and it has taken a great deal of time to address the backlog. It was suggested to pull in outside help, but he explained that there needs to be Union approval for this to occur. It was also suggested to have a meeting with all Department Heads and P&Z to streamline the operations and the bottlenecks of the City approval process.

There was discussion on the position openings and scheduling of entry exams. He further explained that after Deputy Chief positions are filled, then the Fire Chief position will be posted, and a national search will take place. He noted that he is currently Acting Chief and is eligible to apply for the Chief position once it is open and posted.

Review of the Police and Fire Departments' Requested Budgets in Accordance with City Council Rule XIII.10.A.

Chief Edwards reviewed the budget requests for equipment and apparatus for the upcoming year. There was discussion on the needs for station upgrades, engine and ladder replacements in the Capital Budget requests.

Council Member Martinez noted that the detailed budget requests are on the forms as contained in the budget book, and noted for the record that she does not intend to sit through another budget presentation as she attended the series of many budget meetings, and that information is available in the budget books.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about overtime and if there was a union requirement to pay for attendance at meetings. Chief Edwards replied that the Deputy Chiefs and Fire Marshall are not paid for meeting attendance, and firefighters would request overtime pay if they were asked or required to attend meetings.

Council Member Herron noted that there is a feasibility study in the budget to evaluate the process of building permits to determine the intergovernmental flaws that the City has faced for decades.

Chief Edwards fielded questions and comments throughout the discussion and thanked the Committee for the opportunity to share the information.

*It was noted that there was no one in attendance from the Police Department to address the Police Department portion of the agenda item.

ADJOURNMENT

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

****COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services