

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 10, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Dasha Spell, Co-chair; Fredrick Hodges, Co-chair;
Mary McBride-Lee; Denese Taylor-Moye

OTHERS: Tammy Papa, Health & Social Services;
Joseph Katz, Central Grants;
Roger Johnson, Initiative Center;
Toshirea Jacksons, Director of MIRA

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Spell called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm. There was a quorum present at the time of the roll call.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

- **Approval of Committee Minutes: October 12, 2024**

****COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 12, 2024.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (SPELL, HODGES, MCBRIDE-LEE) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (TAYLOR-MOYE).**

Council Member Taylor-Moye shared she needed to abstain from voting due to her not being on the committee at the time of the October 12, 2024 meeting.

- **Approval of Committee Minutes: February 14, 2024**

****COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 14, 2024.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (SPELL, HODGES, MCBRIDE-LEE) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (TAYLOR-MOYE).**

Council Member Taylor-Moye shared she needed to abstain from voting due to her not being on the committee at the time of the February 14, 2024 meeting.

108-23 Grant Submission: re Connecticut State Department of Education Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Education - 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant (Lighthouse After-School Program).

Mr. Katz explained this was a grant from the Connecticut state department of education to fund the lighthouse afterschool program for nine elementary schools and three high schools. The grant would cover services for five years from October 2024 to September 2025 with funding of 1.05 million dollars. The grant do not require the city to match or take on any expenses.

Ms. Papa added each grant submission will service three schools, the total of the grant would be \$350,000 dollars; \$250,000 dollars will go to after school and summer programs, \$50,000 dollars will go to tutoring and the last \$50,000 dollars will go to the high school program. The city would not be charged any administrative fees as neighborhood studios. Bethel AMA church, Maritime aquarium and the YMCA would help with the program activities but each school will have a program crafted to their needs.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said the plan is wonderful and asked what would be the fees and if they had any waivers available.

Ms. Papa replied since these are federal funds, they cannot force a parent to pay anything for the program. They do ask parents to pay \$5 dollars a week for 12.5 hours of programming, or \$10 dollars a week for a 40 hour program during the summer. The Lighthouse program is funded by municipal funds, state or federal grants, and parent fees. They also have a no fee membership for families that have low earnings. Once the initial application is approved they need to submit how expenses would carry and they will be on a sliding scale based on household income.

Council Member Taylor-Moye if any funding can go to afterschool programs outside of the school system.

Ms. Papa replied the grants must be spent the same year at the same school. If a parent is paying for services at Dunbar, the money must stay with Dunbar school to continue supporting their program.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked why and how the nine schools were chosen.

Ms. Papa replied their funds either have already run out or are set to expire September 30, 2024. A few schools have some funding left but will not have anything to carry over during the school

year, other schools have had zero funding for the past year but with contributions from ARPA they were able to maintain the program.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked how the families would be made aware of the scholarships.

Ms. Papa replied they will be advertised, messages on the parent notices, and word of mouth. She added families with multiple children in the program will pay on a sliding scale.

Council Member Hodges asked if they have any limits.

Ms. Papa replied in the previous year's attendance, some schools have a wait list which means they need to request more funding and some schools have low attendance rates.

Council Member Hodges asked what is the average attendance to the programs.

Ms. Papa replied during the school year there are about 75 to 150 students and 2000 students attending a summer program each day.

Council Member Hodges asked about information regarding the curriculum.

Ms. Papa replied the curriculum is all individualized to each school but the structure is based on homework help, educational enrichment, fun time/exercise, reading, and math.

Council Taylor-Moye replied she went to Washington D.C. and the program is well known. She knows of many afterschool programs outside of the education system that are on the same level as the lighthouse program. She hopes they can accept grants to continue services as well.

Ms. Papa replied there is funding from the YSB that is granted every two years.

Council Taylor-Moye replied thank you for your service and work you have put into the school system.

Ms. Papa replied thank you.

****COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 108-23.**

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

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

An Informational Session with Toshirea Jackson, Director, MIRA regarding formal introduction of her goals and plans for the Mayor's Initiative and Re-Entry Affairs (MIRA) program for the 2024-2025 business year.

Ms. Jackson shared she is the new director to the program and she has created focus groups to learn how aspects of the programs are working. She must fulfill the requirements for the last grant received but she is working on bus passes for transportation, book bags filled with hygiene products, gift cards, and information cards. She would like to set up workshops for the formerly incarcerated to learn how to get their Identification cards, employment skills, voting, and learning to become homeowners. In her proposal she would like to create makers' space to build a sustainable economy for those members where they can set up low entry businesses, create marketing, product development, grant writing, and use the space as a business mailing address.

Ms. Jackson went on to share the focus groups are to help indicate the improvements and success of each service provided. She has gotten a lot of good feedback from the members feeling blessed with the information knowing they are not canceled out of society. With every service there are requirements to guarantee success and better help every individual. She also has implemented a survey to gain accountability for herself and focus on what is needed of her.

Council Member Hodges said the survey is a good idea to keep her accountable and asked how the bus passes are tracked.

Ms. Jackson replied they must bring the bus passes back and while they are finding a job, they must submit proof of their job search and after interviews, the employer must fill out a survey of the person.

Council Member Taylor-Moye appreciates the time and effort Ms. Jackson has put into the program. She shared information about an organization that helped with employment, housing, and a money matching program for all the money each individual saved.

Ms. Jackson said Thank you and will look into it.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked about the phones.

Ms. Jackson replied there are no more state phones available and the AFC program ended in May of 2024 so she is looking to work with a cell phone service provider that would help. As for housing, Alliance Community helps with the security deposit and first month's rent for those who can move on their own but that only lasts for 30 days.

Council Member McBride-Lee shared that Alliance helped her get through college and jobs will then align.

Ms. Jackson said there are colleges and grants that will help with tuition costs, and she has been connecting with local business owners to get interviews for employment. Her goal is to build the makers' space with abandoned property and have the members help fix it, and sell marketing and print services to local businesses.

Council Member Hodges said the city gives money to a construction company to hire local people. Maybe she can reach out to them so her people can be interviewed first. He added BRBC could help with workshops and possibly finding a space to get started with.

Council Member Spell loves the initiative and encourages her to push through the hurdles. She agrees the city owns a lot of property that is not in use and it doesn't hurt to reach out. She would love to hear the progress and data for the growth.

ADJOURNMENT

****COUNCIL MEMBER MOTIONED TO ADJOURN MEETING AT 7:10 PM.**

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

****THE VOTE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Vianca Rivera,
Telesco Secretarial Services