

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
AUGUST 19, 2024**

**ATTENDANCE:** Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair;  
Jeanette Herron; Richard Ortiz; Mary McBride-Lee;  
Frederick Hodges (6:23)

**OTHERS:** Council Member(s): Aidee Nieves, Council President; Dasha Spell & Maria Pereira; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Fred Gee, Deputy CAO; Bill Coleman, Deputy Director, OPED; Jonathan Delgado, Deputy Director, OPED; Michelle Otero, Public Facilities; Paul Catino, Public Facilities; Aaron Curry, Deputy Director, Public Facilities; Jose Tiago, Deputy Director, Public Facilities

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Burns called the meeting to order at 6:14pm. There was a quorum present at the time of the roll call.

**APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- Approval of Committee Minutes: July 8, 2024 (Regular Meeting); April 25, 2024, April 29, 2024 (Public Hearings); April 4, 2024; April 6, 2024; April 8, 2024; April 18, 2024; May 8, 2024; May 9, 2024 & May 10, 2024 (Special Budget Hearing Meetings).

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF JULY 8, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING); APRIL 25, 2024, APRIL 29, 2024 (PUBLIC HEARINGS); APRIL 4, 2024; APRIL 6, 2024; APRIL 8, 2024; APRIL 18, 2024; MAY 8, 2024; MAY 9, 2024 AND MAY 10, 2024 (SPECIAL BUDGET HEARING MEETINGS)**

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

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

**123-23** Proposed Resolution for the Authorization of Final American Rescue Plan Act Program (ARPA) Obligations.

Mr. Flatto shared that the final ruling requires the municipality to decide what they want to do with the funds by the end of December 2024, if not the remaining funds would go back to the federal government. The money has funded nonprofit and capital programs to better the

community. He explained the money can be held until December 2026 but must be obligated within a few months.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER FREDRICK HODGES JOINED AT 6:23PM\*\***

Council member Burns recommended they make two amendments regarding schedule A and the language from the resolution.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOTIONED TO AMEND ITEM 123-23:**

- **Schedule A: Remove line 44 as it is a repeat of line 43.**
- **Amendment to resolution to read as: "And Be It Further Resolved that ARPA funds received in prior fiscal years that have been set aside for purposes of revenue lost funding of City programs are hereby appropriated to the City's Special Revenue Fund Account 2100000 object 5999 project 21475 in the amount of \$15,010,029 and hereby obligated for use as expenditures to be incurred in the City's general fund between July 1, 2025, and December 31, 2026.**

**\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ.**

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

Council member Burns added they should correct the resolution as they spent less than \$95,000,000 and not what was presented.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOTIONED TO AMEND ITEM 123-23:**

- **Modify the second whereas, amount of \$97,000,000 dollars to \$95,000,000 dollars.**

**\*\*SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ.**

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

Council President Nieves suggested they should allocate \$2 million dollars from the FY26 funds to create an initiative called the “city council homelessness initiative” to help with homelessness as agencies don’t have money and the city should be able to help with the emergency homelessness and relocation.

Council member Herron said there are many grants and funding rolling out from the federal government regarding homelessness and hopes the city will take the initiative on these opportunities. They need to hold the staff accountable.

Council member Newton added they should put money aside for the issue and address the issue, along with applying to the federal grants rolling out.

Council President replied this stems from a discussion she had with the Department of Social Services and they do not have more than one emergency drop in center in the city.

Council member McBride-Lee asked if there is a plan or if this is still an idea.

Mr. Flatto added they have expended over \$2 million dollars to nonprofits for helping with the matter. If they all agree to the idea, they need to put something in place before the end of December 2024 to keep the money.

Council President Nieves replied they would be looking to do something similar to what the city of New Haven did, they repurposed a hotel they own for homelessness. She believes Waterbury and Hartford are working on the initiative as well.

Council member Herron replied several years ago, a company was going to give the city tiny homes but nothing happened and sees many cities all over the county adopting the initiative. She believes the city would take control of the project rather than an MOU.

Council member Pereira shared she doesn't have an issue with the \$2 million dollars being reallocated. She doesn't understand the forecast of loss revenue for the year 2026 and how they used so much money for flood control when there is still street flooding.

Mr. Flatto replied that the federal government created a formula to see how much money a municipality can use from the ARPA budget.

Council member Pereira replied just because you can use it doesn't mean you should. She sees the homeless population expanding, which correlates with crime and emergency services being called. She believes they are hoarding money intended to help individuals with losses.

Council member Newton asked what is the line regarding Pleasure Beach.

Mr. Flatto replied it was to remove to remnants of the bridge and contaminants.

Council member Newton added by moving money to the future, are there any projections for the future.

Mr. Flatto replied there are fixed costs that will be increasing next year, funds that cannot be accounted for until collected, and the board of education money has run out so the budget is increasing roughly between \$10 million a year.

Council member Hodges suggested they should include funds for the issues of gun violence within the city in the next budget. He believes from the mayor's office there should be an ambassador to advocate and network with other organizations.

Council President Nieves added there are discussions within the state regarding gun violence and other cities have been funding a two year position within the mayor's office with the ARPA funds.

Council member Hodges added since it could be a pilot program they can connect with the cities that have started their initiative to collaborate and bring the issue to the state as a public health issue.

Council President Nieves asked for more information regarding the flood relief program.

Mr. Flatto replied there were plans set under engineering and the capital plan.

Council member Burns asked if anyone would be willing to entertain the motion suggested by the council president.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOTIONED TO AMEND 123-23 BY REALLOCATING \$2 MILLION FOR THE NEW “CITY COUNCIL HOMELESS INITIATIVE” PLAN FROM THE REVENUE LOST LINE.**

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

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO TABLE ITEM 123-23 AS AMENDED.**

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

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

**131-23** Proposed Resolution regarding Approval of Reallocation of City Bond Proceeds for Certain Capital Projects.

**\*\*JOHN STAFSTROM, BONDS COUNSEL, PULLMAN & COMLEY DIALED IN AT 7:02\*\***

Mr. Flatto shared the resolution came forward due to new projects arising that were not put in during budget time. They would like to reallocate funds from different projects to fund the new projects.

Mr. Stafstrom said it must be in the capital budget to then authorize the bonding, in this case they are just reallocating funds due to excess.

Council member Newton said before we approve the item, he made a motion for the item to go to committee with the amendment of \$500 thousand dollars from the citywide complete and safe street project to go to Stratford avenue to add lighting.

Mr. Flatto said the resolution does have the amendment, he forgot to add a footnote on the printouts.

Council member Newton said he needs to see it on paper.

Mr. Coleman said the existing allocation that is already under OPED administrative portfolio that is to be used for what he is explaining.

Mr. Delgado added the funding is there.

Council member Newton said is there half million dollars in the account or enough to do the updates.

Mr. Coleman said he will verify that right now.

Council President Nieves asked why they need the \$500 thousand dollars as the infrastructure will all be new under another grant.

Council member Newton replied the East End is partnering with the City of Stratford but that is not guaranteed.

Council President Nieves replied the city is matching the grant funds.

Council member McBride-Lee asked if the money was allocated for the area or citywide.

Mr. Coleman replied the citywide complete and safe street program is citywide and it requires a city match but they need to plan where the repairs will be made to strategically leverage the money.

Council member McBride-Lee replied she did not hear anything involving the North End of Bridgeport.

Council member Hodges asked if this grant allows speed bumps because on Summit Street what would be needed and some residents need the flashing stop sign as they have sight issues.

Mr. Coleman replied yes.

Mr. Delgado added the DOT grant, safe streets for all will require a major plan that included working with the council to get suggestions of locations to work on.

Council member Herron added she has requested for changing the wattage of the light bulbs because the energy efficient lighting doesn't illuminate the streets enough.

Council member Ortiz said there is nothing for the 135th district area, this has been a long going issue of false promises.

Mr. Coleman replied he disagrees but hears him. The department staff has found money and wants to make the updates.

Council member Pereira said something in regard to Harding High school.

Council member Burns clarified that the matter was not on the item as it was amended.

Council President Nieves replied it was amended when referred.

Mr. Flatto confirmed Harding was removed.

Council member Pereira added they have money sitting in accounts but prefer to bond money.

Council President Nieves replied that is why they are sitting here today to reallocate money instead of bonding.

Council member Burns asked if they are reducing the interest in earning, what would be the potential losses and what if they bond.

Mr. Flatto replied the bond proceeds are growing interest and rates have been increasing.

Mr. Strafstrom added that by law bonds cannot be created and not used to grow interest on it, the money must be used.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 131-23.**

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON WITHDREW HER MOTION.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE WITHDREW HER MOTION.**

Council member Newton said they cannot ignore his amendment.

Mr. Flatto replied they can add a footnote.

Council member Burns added the Civic Block has received a lot of money and if they receive these additional funds it will cut into other neighborhoods.

Council member Newton replied he supports many community developments because it is the right thing to do. He is just asking to fix up the neighborhood and add lighting.

Council member McBride-Lee added they shouldn't do tit-for tat.

Mr. Flatto suggested they split the money between each district.

Mr. Coleman replied they fixed the lighting on Newfield Avenue, Stratford Avenue, and Connecticut Avenue two years ago.

Mr. Strafstrom said the second suggestion from Mr. Flatto is not germane when splitting the money between all the districts.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO ADOPT ITEM 131-23 AS AMENDED AS OF AUGUST 19, 2024 WITH THE FOOTNOTE: SUCH PROGRAM FUNDING INCLUDE UPGRADES IN THE EAST END TOTALING \$500,000 TO BE EXPENDED FROM THE CITY WIDE COMPLETE AND SAFE STREET PROGRAM AND OTHER CIVIC BLOCK CAPITAL BOND PROCEEDS AND ASSOCIATED GRANT FUNDS.**

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

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 132-23 AS AMENDED.**

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

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

**130-23** Proposed Resolution regarding Approval of Additional Capital Project Authorizations related to the 2025-2029 Capital Plan.

Council member Burns said they will be talking about the amended capital plan for the fiscal year 2025.

Mr. Flatto proposed the amendment of moving the Complete City Wide and Safe Street project from Public Facilities to the Office of Economic Development list on exhibit A and the suggestion from administration to leave Harding High School Stay as a capital plan amendment but not bonded until it gets worked on.

Council member Newton doesn't see the city knocking down the property for Bridgeport Hospital, he cannot support the city knocking it down for \$4 million dollars. He suggested they go back to bidding and give it to housing developers.

Council member Pereira agrees with Council member Newton as it is the largest City-Owned parcel in a prime location. She is opposed to the deal as the property tax value is very high.

Mr. Coleman replied they received two proposals for the property but they both wanted the building to be demolished beforehand. He added the vision appraisal shares appraisals in regards to the structure so the land actually is appraised at only \$3 million dollars. He added the upside to hospital negotiation is that they take all liability regarding what is in the soil.

Council Newton added Bridgeport Hospital does a great job and deserves an upgrade but not at their expense.

Council member Pereira replied the hospital is landlocked with nowhere to go so they need it, so they should come to the table with something reasonable. She added they don't make any opportunities for the residents besides low level jobs.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED AMEND ITEM 130-23**

- **Move "City Wide Complete and Safe Street program to Economic Development.**
- **Exhibit A: Modify Allocations to \$2,529,000 for 999 Broad Street Roof Ramp and \$1,300,000 for 45 Lyon Terrace Bathroom/Basement Renovations.**
- **Striking "Old Harding High School Demotion" yielding a total of \$5,844,000 for the FY2025 capital plan additional authorizations.**

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

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

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**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 130-23 AS AMENDED.**

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

**\*\*THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**132-23** Proposed Resolution regarding Approval of General Obligation Bonds to Fund Certain Capital Improvement Projects New Money Bond Issuance 2024 Series A.

Mr. Strafstrom said they should be working with the resolution that has the total of \$18,938,800 in the fourth whereas.

Mr. Flatto recommended they substitute what they have tonight for what the council had voted on.

Mr. Flatto recommended they make the reallocation from Public Facilities to Economic Development, strike Lafayette Blvd/Fairfield Ave/ Redesign-(10% city match) as they obtained the funding, add silver by the river for \$100,000,000, and update the totals from the resolution and exhibit A.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO AMEND 132-23:**

- **EXHIBIT A: REMOVE LAFAYETTE BLVD/FAIRFIELD AVE/REDESIGN-(10% CITY MATCH).**
- **EXHIBIT A: ADD SILVER BY THE RIVER UNDER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR \$1,00,000,000.**
- **EXHIBIT A: REALLOCATE CITY WIDE COMPLETE AND STREET SAFE PROJECT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM PUBLIC FACILITIES.**
- **EXHIBIT A: NEW SUBTOTAL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS \$2,500,000.**
- **EXHIBIT A: NEW SUBTOTAL FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES IS \$12,814,000.**
- **EXHIBIT A: NEW GRAND TOTAL IS \$19,583,800.**
- **RESOLUTION: 2ND WHEREAS, CHANGE TOTAL OF \$10,373,000 TO \$5,844,000.**
- **RESOLUTION: 4TH WHEREAS, CHANGE TOTAL OF 18,933,800 TO 19,583,800.**
- **RESOLUTION: 1ST RESOLVE, CHANGE \$18,933,800 TO \$19,583,800.**

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

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 132-23 AS AMENDED.**

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

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

**124-23** Proposed Approval of General Obligation Bonds – To Refund Certain General Obligation Bonds (Series 2024 B).

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Mr. Flatto shared they seek to refinance bonds to save money and the opportunity to refinance has arrived which will help the budget for 2026, he reminded them interest does change every day.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT “CITY OF BRIDGEPORT PRO- FORM DEBT SERVICE - MARKET AS OF JULY 11 ,2024” AS 08-21-2024-A.**

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

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

Mr. Flatto said it is to refund the bonds in the most efficient way. They will find savings in the 2014 bonds issued and look to save money as the ARPA money goes away.

Council member Newton asked if all the bonds they have are listed on the sheet.

Mr. Flatto replied these bonds were created in 2014 and there is a premium that will be structured to create more savings.

Mr. Strafstrom said this is like refinancing your home to save money on your monthly payment. They are trying to smooth the debt service as in 1999 they issued pension bonds that will be paid in 2029.

Council member Newton asked if they could provide a copy of all the bonds to the committee so they are aware of what is collecting interest and what is outstanding to the committee.

Mr. Flatto replied he can give them that information but the total payments are in the first two lines, which is spread out over the next 30 years.

Council member Burns asked about the bond insurance and refunding cap.

Mr. Flatto replied they did not insure for the last two years.

Mr. Strafstrom added they are not going to reamortize the bonds, it is limited to what's left.

Council member Burns asked about the interest rate.

Mr. Flatto replied the schedule is a week old and slight changes occur daily but many differences. The spread is changing from municipalities to the U.S Treasury.

Council member Burns asked when they would be acting on this.

Mr. Flatto replied in late September.

Council member Burns asked about the saving predictions.

Mr. Flatto replied \$3 million dollars in 2026 and possibly \$4 to \$5 million dollars in 2027.

Council member Pereira asked why the interest was \$40 million dollars.

Mr. Flatto replied that is how the bond is structured, in the beginning the interest is very high.

Council member Pereira replied that has to get paid out of operating money and don't have things for the residents.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 124-23.**

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

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

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 8:50 PM.**

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Vianca Rivera  
Telesco Secretarial Services