

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2024**

**ATTENDANCE:** Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair;  
Jeanette Herron; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia;  
Mary McBride-Lee (6:05); Richard Ortiz; Frederick  
Hodges (6:07)

**OTHERS:** Council Member(s): Aikeem Boyd, (6:07); & Dasha Spell, (6:59);  
Ashley Aguilera, Legislative Director; Ken Flatto, Finance  
Director (6:19)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Newton called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. There was a quorum present at the time of the roll call.

**APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- Approval of Committee Minutes: August 19, 2024 (Special Meeting)

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 19, 2024 (SPECIAL MEETING).**

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

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:05 PM\*\***

Update from OPED/Finance on Tax Incentive policy projects.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT “BRIDGEPORT CITY COUNCIL - APPROVED TAX INCENTIVE AGREEMENTS, 2019-2024” AS 09-09-2024-A.**

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

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBERS BOYD AND HODGES JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:07 PM\*\***

Council member Burns shared that they should take some time to review the projects that are receiving tax incentives as they wait for Mr. Ken Flatto to arrive to get into further discussion.

Council member Newton said number 4 has mentioned not getting the tax bills to his property so he hasn't been able to pay but is willing to.

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia asked how long he has been aware of this problem and should be responsible to request or tell the city the issues of not receiving his bill.

Council member Hodges asked if they could set up some type of penalty for developers delaying their projects.

Council member Newton replied that tax abatements are time sensitive.

Council member Burns added from the plans, they pick up the taxes owed. Projects not occurring will revert but there are provisions allowing for request of extensions.

**\*\*KEN FLATTO JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:19 PM\*\***

Council member Burns filled in Mr. Flatto with the thoughts that were shared before he joined the meeting.

Mr. Flatto said there are 8 to 10 other projects that were not included and 1 to 2 got behind with the projects.

Council member Hodges asked if they could penalize any of the developers for payments that didn't come in or projects that have been delayed.

Mr. Flatto replied he is not familiar with anything along those lines but can look into it.

Council member Herron said she agrees with the penalty as they must be corrective and find resolutions.

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

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

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

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

General Discussion re: Review of the Monthly Financial Report.

Mr. Flatto said that last June there was a surplus between 4 to 5 million dollars and a possibility for more. He suggested reducing the ARPA funds by \$1 million to roll off or reserve money for next year's budget.

Council member Newton asked how much is in the reserve.

Mr. Flatto replied it is approximately \$50 million dollars. He added the Board of Education added funds into the internal service health fund because they had money left over. The Board of Education has about \$30 million dollars and the City has \$10 million dollars in the fund.

Council member Newton replied the Board of Education used a lot of the reserves.

Mr. Flatto replied they build a budget for the current year, last year they overspent. They were \$1 million dollars short and the grants are running out at the end of this month so the general fund will have to cover those expenses.

Council member Burns asked if there is an ordinance on the internal service fund.

Mr. Flatto replied the committee is himself, Nestor Nkwo, and Ms. Siegel. The ordinance allows the surplus or deficiency to be spread out.

Council member McBride-Lee said why the spread stopped.

Mr. Flatto replied that the superintendent. If they use  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the budget then there will be a big hole and with no changes in the budget created a bigger hole.

Council member McBride-Lee shared many people got hired with high salaries as they were begging for money. She believes they should have given the money to the teachers and she's glad there is a freeze on hiring more staff.

Mr. Flatto said in July, the revenue is small because three mortgage companies wired money and the \$110 million arrived on August 1st. He noted the total for July is about \$69 million dollars. He added the expense side is high due to the overtime in the Police Department and Fire. He hopes with the graduating classes in the Police will drop some of the overtime cost.

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if December, June, and April are months for retiring.

Mr. Flatto replied many people had retired last year and there are state rules that will change the formula of cost of living for retirees.

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Council member Vizzo-Paniccia replied there is a possibility for a mild winter, but do they have funds available just in case there is a heavy winter.

Mr. Flatto replied the supply accounts are good, they just need to be concerned with staffing and outside services but he will reach out to the department to confirm how they are standing.

Council member Burns asked about the line regarding police administration under revenue.

Mr. Flatto replied it is payment from the amphitheater with back payment included.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER. SPELL JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:59 PM\*\***

Council member Herron said the billing has been behind for many months; they have to get the bill out on time.

Council member Newton added contracts require two signatures and must stick to the agreement.

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia asked how the City gets paid.

Mr. Flatto believes it is per ticket sold. He added the sound on sound event sent their reimbursement for fire and police.

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia asked how they get paid for the clicks on the billboard.

Mr. Flatto replied they can send a letter of demand.

Council member Burns asked about the building revenue.

Mr. Flatto replied there is no rollover, but there could be a distribution error with residential and commercial in the same line that he could confirm.

Council member Burns asked about the earnings on investments.

Mr. Flatto replied there is a lot of money that is in a STIF fund and the money in the bank is acquiring interest as well.

Council member Newton asked why doesn't the City get anything from the towing company as he sees them repossessing cars all the time. The City needs to act like a business and should put new bids out to renegotiate the terms for their favor.

Council member Herron added they did have the conversation.

Council member Newton said this is an issue that should be brought up to the police department and have the contracts committee involved as well.

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia said they should include everyone that needs to be there in order to avoid miscommunications and prolong the conversation.

Council member Newton brought up the tinted windows.

Council member Burns explained during the budget season they explained in order to remove the tint would be \$150 dollars for each window.

Mr. Flatto said they were also requesting new cars.

Council member Hodges added any contracts over \$25,000 dollars require at least 3 bids. He went out personally to get quotes for the removal and found cheaper estimates.

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia replied it could be a different tinting film the department used.

Council member McBride-Lee added if the police cannot have tinted windows, then the citizens shouldn't have tinted windows.

Council Hodges said he isn't advocating against the police. In order to be more connected and friendly they need to remove the barrier. As a council member he can't even engage with them because of the dark tints. He wants for the police to be more engaged and connected to the community.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO ADJOURN AT 7:26 PM.**

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Vianca Rivera,  
Telesco Secretarial Services

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