

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2024**

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

OTHERS: Council Member Richard Ortiz; Mark Harp, Youth Services/Lighthouse; Regina Vermont, Director, Youth Service/Lighthouse

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Spell called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m. There was a quorum present at the time of the roll call.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

- **Approval of Committee Minutes: July 10, 2024**

****COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 10, 2024.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

Council Member Melendez shared she needed to abstain from voting due to her not being present at the time of the July 10th meeting.

An Informational Session with Regina Vermont, Director of Youth Services and Lighthouse and Mark Harp, Youth Service Manager regarding the services and resources they provide to our youths.

****COUNCIL MEMBER HODGES MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT “LIGHTHOUSE PROGRAM PRESENTATION” AS 09-11-2024-A.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER HODGES MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT “SUMMER ACTIVITIES GUIDE” AS 09-11-2024-B.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Vermont went over the lighthouse program presentation and highlighted their partners and need for subcontracting grants to meet the needs of the programs and children.

Council member McBride-Lee asked what is the involvement of Bethel AMC church?

Ms. Vermont said there is a separation of church and state in their relationship. Their involvement is managing the teachers, payroll, and budgeting.

Council member Taylor-Moye thanked Mr. Harp for a job well done.

Mr. Harp said he is always looking for funds for the program.

Ms. Vermont added they receive federal, state and city funding and some contributions from parents. They have 22 sites and 3 high schools with an average of 2,200 students that participate in the program Monday through Friday. They also host a before school program at 7 sites and summer program at 13 sites.

Council member McBride-Lee asked for more information regarding the before school program.

Mr. Harp explained the before school program is a self-paid program that requires at least 20 students to operate. Parents pay \$20 dollars a week to bring their children into school earlier to participate.

Council member McBride-Lee asked if students are able to finish their homework on time.

Mr. Harp replied they get a minimum of 45 minutes of homework time.

Council member Hodges asked what is the age requirement for the before school program.

Mr. Harp replied all schools allow for Kindergarten to 8th grade to participate and at Discovery Magnet School they allow for Pre-Kindergarten to participate. He shared they used Care for Kids Program but DCF added an 18 hours of training requirement for all staff and they cannot afford those training cost to get paid through Care for Kids.

Council member Hodges asked how much the training would be.

Mr. Harp replied that the training can run about \$10,000 dollars.

Council member Taylor-Moye added the state provides snacks to the lighthouse program but other organizations have to go out of pocket to provide resources. She noted the students are not receiving homework.

Ms. Vermont replied they have educational tools available for when the students don't have any homework. She added they have been engaging with the community to bring in STEM education, swim lessons, sports, performing arts, and Girl Scouts.

Mr. Harp replied they also host events around health for the kids at Seaside Park and they go to performing art shows. Along with the "young, savvy, and safe night live" event at Harding high school.

Ms. Vermont added they are hosting a shark tank pitching project for the students.

Mr. Harper mentioned they also have a basketball training program. He added he also does work permits for students over 16 years old looking to work afterschool. He had 250 students employed last year.

Ms. Vermont said they are waiting on federal funding for tutoring at 9 sites where the students are referred by the teachers for help. They are also working with the workplace to get technology certification courses for the students and looking to begin a parent resource program to enrich the family.

Council member Taylor-Moye replied what is the age or grade requirement for the certificate training.

Mr. Harper replied they must be a high junior, senior and up.

Council member Hodges suggested they include construction trades.

Mr. Harper replied he is working on that but those trades require age requirements.

Council member Hodges asked if the Girl Scout member generated any money.

Mr. Harper replied the girl get an opportunity to sell the cookies.

Council member McBride-Lee said she didn't know about the great connections and programs they have. She suggested they should include the choir in city events.

Council member Taylor-Moye said the program has progressed immensely. They are removing the stigma of children fighting or not connecting on healthy levels. She sees their efforts with education and fun events for students. They must keep going.

Council member Melendez said this was a great presentation and supports their mission. She hates their struggle for money because this increases the public safety in the city.

Council member Spell asked them to come back with updates with data to help with the next budget.

****COUNCIL MEMBER SPELL CALLED FOR A BREAK AT 7:15 PM****

****COUNCIL MEMBER SPELL CALLED THE MEETING TO RECONVENE AT 7:19 PM****

An Informational session with committee members regarding discussion on resolutions the committee would want to work on.

Council member Spell explained this discussion session would pertain to education and social services and recommendations they would like to suggest. She shared she would like there to be communication between the Board of Education and the city council as they work under two different entities but they are both here to empower the youth.

Council member Melendez suggested they host a public hearing to listen to everyone who has an opinion on the matters of the Board of Education.

Council member Taylor-Moye said it was a good idea but they should reach out to the PACT members first then work up to a public hearing.

Council member McBride-Lee agreed with council member Taylor-Moye and they should reach out to an individual from each school to get the truth. They need a relationship with all of the Board of Education.

Council member Melendez said they cannot ignore the hundreds of teachers who discussed their issues within the district. She wants there to be unity and transparency to find the solution. If they reach out to one category of people involved it excludes many other experiences.

Council member Taylor-Moye replied she understands the idea but at a public hearing the council would not be able to engage in a conversation. She has heard the Board of Education speak, the union but not the parents. They should be heard now.

Council member Melendez asked what that process would look like.

Council member Spell added the City Council can only make policies and create the budget. They cannot fix the Board of Education but only work with them.

Council member McBride-Lee said they have heard from everyone but the parents.

Council member Taylor-Moye added she had created a curfew years ago to have teenagers in the house by a certain time and many parents were not in favor of the resolution. She believes they need to follow up with the parents first to hear what they want.

Council member Spell said they need to come up with stakeholders to invite to speak with and they need to find a way to bridge the disconnect.

****COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE MOTIONED TO TABLE THE DISCUSSION.**

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

***THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

****THE VOTE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Vianca Rivera,
Telesco Secretarial Services