

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
OCTOBER 15, 2024**

**ATTENDANCE:** Scott Burns, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Co-chair;  
Jeanette Herron; Richard Ortiz; Frederick Hodges

**OTHERS:** Council Member(s): Aikeem Boyd (6:48); Aidee Nieves, Council  
President (6:48) & Maria Valle (7:01); Ken Flatto, Finance  
Director; Lance Edwards, Acting Fire Chief; Mark Cody, Deputy  
Fire Chief

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Newton called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm. There was a quorum present at the time of the roll call.

**APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- Approval of Committee Minutes: September 9, 2024 (Regular Meeting); April 16, 2024; April 20, 2024; April 25, 2024; April 27, 2024; April 30, 2024; May 1, 2024; (Special Budget Hearing Meetings).

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS ONE VOTE.**

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

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

▪ **Public Safety Personnel quarterly update.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT “POLICE STAFFING”. TOTALS 2023-2024” AS 2024-10-15-01.**

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

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT “POLICE STAFFING Q3 2024” AS 2024-10-15-02.**

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

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT “FIRE STAFFING Q3 2024” AS 2024-10-15-03.**

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

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT “SCHEDULE A- ARPA SLRFR APPROVAL OF FINAL ARPA OBLIGATIONS” AS 2024-10-15-04.**

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

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

Council member Burns shared they have been receiving the quarterly reports from the departments to see the rates of recruits, employment, and retirees.

Council member Ortiz asked how many retirees there would be for next year.

Council member Burns replied possibly 31 but no one has indicated they are looking to retire. He added the meeting information is sent to everyone and thanked the fire department chiefs for showing up. All he knows about the Police Department is that the study is almost completed so they will be attending one of the meetings soon.

Council member Herron added this is not the first time the police department doesn't have a representative at the meetings so she commends the fire department for making the effort as they are part of the agenda.

Co-chair Newton shared he will write a letter to the police department regarding a representative attending the meetings wherever there is an item on the agenda regarding their department to get questions answered.

Council member Burns added the assistant police chief is listed as vacant, they have funded the position for two years, and just filled the position.

Mr. Flatto shared that the new hire is processing his documents.

Chief Edwards shared they have approximately 800 applications submitted and around 700 people took the test. Instead of paying overtime to employment to focus on recruiting, they used social media and casual outreach which allowed them to not spend any funds on overtime.

Co-chair Newton honorably shared that his son took the test and placed 11th out of the 700 candidates.

Chief Edwards replied his son will be joining a great department.

Council member Burns asked about the second block on the report.

Chief Edwards replied he asked civil service for 28 positions and received 24, since 7 resigned they are now down to 17. From the exit interviews he's gotten feedback that the workload was too much or the environment was too structured for them.

Council member Herron asked if there was anyone 65 years old would request to add another year.

Chief Edwards replied there will be one retiree coming February of 2025.

Council member Burns asked what their vetting process was.

Chief Edwards replied they usually use the police to run background checks but with them being understaffed the department only used the background checks from the civil service.

Council member Hodges asked if they would create a waitlist for the other candidates who passed the assessments.

Chief Edwards replied yes, they create a waitlist with the individuals that is good for two years then expires.

Council member Burns asked about positions that were listed.

Deputy Chief Cody explained they completed the first phase of hiring and currently have two candidates already working with the city for the apparatus foreman. He mentioned the Wilton Fire Department will help with the panel interview along with himself and the chief. They will also be recruiting for someone to fill the fire equipment mechanic and fire senior inspector, which needs a job analysis.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER AIKEEM BOYD JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:28 PM.\*\***

Co-Chair Newton asked what is injured leave.

Chief Edwards replied when someone who calls out sick has 14 days to provide a doctor's note, based on the employee's history they will get either a verbal or written warning. He added employees cannot use sick leave to work and if they do get a tip, they will hire an investigator. He further explained sick leave is an injury or illness that occurred outside of duty, and injury leave is something that occurred from work.

Council member Herron commended the fire department as every contract that goes under review never enters an executive session and all their employees are very honest and respectful.

▪ **Review of unspent ARPA Allocated Funds.**

Mr. Flatto shared the numbers in the report about approximately the final numbers and the money on the second page is what hasn't been used yet. They must vote by December on what to do with the funds that are not committed yet as the federal government will pull back the funds.

Council member Herron requested that any money that's used be brought to the attention of this committee as the administration doesn't ever notify the council when they use funds.

**\*\*COUNCIL PRESIDENT AIDEE NIEVES JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:48 PM.\*\***

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO AMEND ITEM 123-23 PROPOSED RESOLUTION: SECOND WHEREAS, SUBSTITUTE \$97 MILLION TO \$93.5 MILLION AND REPLACE JULY TO SEPTEMBER.**

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

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

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO SUBSTITUTE ITEM 123-23 SCHEDULE A FOR EXHIBIT 2024-10-15-04.**

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

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

Co-Chair Newton asked if the department was receiving the reports from the organizations receiving funds.

Mr. Flatto shared that the Mayor's office has the information and gets quarterly reports. His auditor will soon look over them to include them into the final reports.

Council President Nieves shared she doesn't understand the report as there isn't a real status update on the programs. They need to keep everyone accountable and know where the reallocations come from and go to.

Mr. Flatto replied every program has spent their money except for what is listed on the second page.

Council President Nieves added they need to have the funds already set aside for the red rooster river for flood control.

Mr. Flatto suggested they need to allocate the funds so the government doesn't pull them from the city.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER VALLE JOINED THE MEETING AT 7:01 PM.\*\***

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBERS HERRON AND BOYD LEFT THE MEETING ROOM AT 7:01 PM.\*\***

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE 123-23 AS AMENDED.**

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

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

▪ **General Discussion re: Review of the Monthly Financial Report.**

Mr. Flatto shared on the revenue side the interest rates are increasing on investments and they will be receiving a deposit soon from a bond that was issued. The refinancing saved the \$5 million dollars in debt services.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON AND BOYD RETURNED TO THE MEETING AT 7:08 PM.\*\***

Co-chair Newton shared he saw the bond rating was A+ and credits the committee for not bonding more money and using funds that they had.

Mr. Flatto replied it was a smart move as they can only refinance every two years. He added in the spring they will be reviewing the capital projects to see how much is left.

Mr. Flatto added the fees are running in sync with the predictions, there are no updates regarding the Harding sale, and they received \$1.6 million during the tax lien sale. In regards to expenses, they have the same issues with overtime. He hopes with the graduating classes that will help with the issues and end the year in a surplus.

Council member Hodges asked if there is an update on towing fines.

Ms. Flatto replied he got word that it is illegal for the City to collect money from the fines.

Council President Nieves shared Danny Roach has been editing the ordinance and no commission should not interfere with the City revenue.

Council member Burns shared that if the council didn't fund a position, then they wouldn't have had the ability to make the \$1.6 million dollar sale. They paid x amount for the position but have gotten that back in multiples. He asked why there are departments with no items listed.

Mr. Flatto replied that this report was generated a month ago.

Council member Burns replied that it is quite concerning and followed up with asking what would be the expectation on the tax revenue.

Mr. Flatto replied car taxes under \$250 dollars must pay up front and don't get a split bill.

Council member Burns shared it is hard to project and sees they will be receiving more revenue as the second cannabis shop was just opened in Bridgeport.

Mr. Flatto shared they paid the money out to the receiver of Success Village Apartments.

Council President Nieves shared she would like to connect with the co-chairs to set up a rubric regarding how they would like the departments to present items to the committee so that there is transparency.

Co-chair Newton added that it would help departments share simple and accurate information rather than sharing a numerous amount of pages that cause confusion for the committee.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO ADJOURN AT 7:30 PM.**

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Vianca Rivera,  
Telesco Secretarial Services