

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC SPEAKING SESSION
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014
6:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Taylor-Moye called the Public Speaking Session to order at 6:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

City Clerk Hudson called the roll.

The following members were present:

130th District: Susan Brannelly, Rick Torres
131st District: Denese Taylor-Moye, Jack O. Banta
132nd District: Patricia Swain
133rd District:
134th District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
135th District:
136th District: Richard DeJesus, Alfredo Castillo
137th District: Lydia Martinez, Milta Feliciano
138th District: Richard Paoletto
139th District: Eneida Martinez-Walker, James Holloway

A quorum was present.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSONS HAVE REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014 AT 6:30 P.M., IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT.

NAME

SUBJECT

John Marshall Lee

Grand List or net Grand List?

30 Beacon Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Mr. Lee came forward and read the following statement in to the record.

City Council President and elected representatives of the people of Bridgeport
(October 20, 2014)

Let's consider the economics of Bridgeport and the trends that you create every time you vote on a matter of financial substance. You vote as a Council on a number of issues of financial substance at these meetings.

For instance recently you voted to reduce the flow of tax revenues to the City for forty years into the future in the case of Laurelwood on Norman Street. You removed property from the Net Taxable Grand List. (That is the important “Grand List” when it comes to taxes.). The new owner will pay a lower, albeit increasing, schedule for 40 years. As that takes effect \$ 4.6 - \$8 Million of appraisal is removed from the assessment list. What is the Net Taxable Grand List value after that reduction? Have you ever seen such a list? Would it help you see these trends that you are creating?

Speaking of lists, where is the list of properties removed by City Council vote over the past 10-20 years? Since all properties are revalued from time to time, the appraisals for all properties are available and the assessments at 70% of appraisal value are also known. What would be the difference between the revenues that will be paid to the City and those that would otherwise be required to be paid according to the annual mill rate? Have you seen such a calculation? What did you give away? At election time next year can you explain to taxpayers just how “economic development” has been served by most of the abatements and initiatives you have passed?

If you have not seen financial reports such as I mention, perhaps you understand how taxpaying homeowners and businesses feel at this moment. The City, after unsuccessfully trying to escape a State mandated five year appraisal, ordered the revaluation and it was completed in 2013. Taxpayers funded close to \$300,000 for this wasted effort. We heard through the grapevine that City leaders who did get to review this data were so distressed by “the reality of the numbers”, that is the decrease in property values especially in certain voting neighborhoods, that they allowed the information to ‘disappear’. Even former City Council President and Mayor, John Fabrizi with a Freedom of Information request on his own home could obtain no such info from the City. John Fabrizi is a small taxpayer as I am also, though when I have to write the check twice a year, it does not feel small to me, especially when I feel that City leadership is not being fair and square with us.

Have you ever thought about Bridgeport’s largest current taxpayer, Wheelabrator, the private operator of the “trash to energy” facility on Howard Avenue? That firm takes in waste materials from communities in the area, burns the refuse, and produces electricity that is sold. They also produce heat that can be of value to “green” economic development but that is a story for another day (and perhaps indicates better treatment of a major taxpayer by the City?)

Wheelabrator has been fighting City assessed values, and non-revaluation City increases in multiple court cases for many years now. And the City has been defending its position as appeals are filed. While the City pushes a real and personal property value of \$473 Million, their own expert as of two years ago can at best substantiate only \$357.5 Million. Why does the City continue to fight the matter in court? It is an expensive fight, but is this legal expense or any part of this story shared with your Budget and Appropriations Committee? Why not? Is it that you fail to ask? Let me remind you, when you fail to ask, you fail in your watchdog role. How is the taxpayer being served? Is it time for your body to let the Mayor know that cooperation with Wheelabrator on developing new green

activities has value to the City? Is it time to call off the lawyers and their hidden expense to the City, especially since the City's own experts cannot substantiate the actual City assessments?

Or do we just find ourselves thinking in the words of Art Carney to Jacky Gleason on too many occasions: "What a revolting development this is"? Time will tell.

Rob Traber, BEA President
3543 Main Street
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Parking at Roosevelt School

Mr. Traber came forward and greeted the Council Members. He said that he was speaking as a member of the Bpt. Education and wished to address the issues of parking spaces at the new Roosevelt School. There will be 33 spaces on site and the remainders of the parking spaces are under the Thruway. However when the Roosevelt School plans were designed, a soccer field was added. He said that he was a founding member of the Soccer League and felt that this would be unsafe because the field will be unsafe simply because it will be surrounded by a four foot fence

Council Member Taylor-Moye then called the next person who signed up to speak forward.

Ms. Barney, the mother of six children and an employee of the BOE came forward to speak about her concerns about the parking. She said that presently there were 62 spaces.

Council Member Halstead joined the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

Ms. Barney said that the 33 spaces that will be there at the new school, three will be for administration and 3 handicapped spaces. She pointed out that the alternative parking requires the teachers to cross two streets in a dark area.

Rev. Mary McBride-Lee joined the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Mr. Jorge Garcia, Bridgeport City employee, came forward said that there had been concerns about the security of the off-site parking. He then listed a number of actions that would be taken, including having a police officer and cruiser there from 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. He said that the department would continue to work on improvement

The next speaker, **Ms. Crystal Mack**, came forward and said that she was speaking about the proposal to take away the four houses that border the school for parking. She mentioned that eminent domain only covers highways and schools, but not parking lots.

She then spoke about a number of schools that have rats that are carrying disease in the schools. These schools should be closed until the rats are removed.

Ms. Mack said that it would be important to take care of Bridgeport Children first and they need to learn good hygiene and practices.

Ms. Mack said that there had been a number of retired civil service employees on disability who had been terminated by the City. She wanted to know why minorities and civil service workers were being treated so poorly.

Ms. Mack then spoke for Ms. Gloria Burns, who was present, and said that Ms. Burns was a City employee that had been disabled for the last 15 years. The City has not paid into her pension and she recently received a very large bill. Shortly afterwards Ms. Burns found out that the City was terminating her even though she was on worker's compensation. This is just another example of the discrimination by the City against the minorities. There are 20 other retired employees who are also going through the same situation. Ms. Mack said that it is wrong to treat retired employees this way.

Mr. Clyde Nicholson then came forward to speak about a situation on Seaview Avenue. He said that the Rowayton Chemical Company was looking for a new site in the area following the large fire in their facility. He said that no one was talking about the chemical spills. Mr. Nicholson then spoke about the Police Department issues and the replacement of parking spaces with a soccer field at Roosevelt School.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Taylor-Moye closed the public speaking portion of the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014
7:00 PM

City Council Chambers, City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, Connecticut

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Finch called the City Council Meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

PRAYER

Council Member Feliciano led those present in a short prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Finch then requested Council Member DeJesus to lead those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

City Clerk Hudson called the roll.

The following members were present:

130th District: Susan Brannelly, Rick Torres
131st District: Jack Banta, Denise Taylor-Moye
132nd District: Patricia Swain, Robert Halstead
133rd District:
134th District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
135th District: Mary McBride-Lee, Richard Salter
136th District: Richard DeJesus, Alfredo Castillo
137th District: Lydia Martinez, Milta Feliciano
138th District: Michael Marella, Richard Paoletto
139th District: Eneida Martinez-Walker, James Holloway

A quorum was present.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

154-13 Public Hearing re: Resolution Approving Amendment #4 to the West End Municipal Development Plan to designate for Acquisition and Disposition of certain Properties in the West End Redevelopment Area for the Cherry Street Adaptive Reuse Project.

Mayor Finch opened the public hearing on Agenda Item 154-13 at 7:07 p.m.

Mr. Ambercini came forward and said that the project was a very complicated project dealing with housing. The unions have the apprenticeship program. He said that the Fairfield county building trades were excited to work on this project and this would provide affordable housing. There were approximately 12 people from the unions present. Mr. Ambercini said that the trades would like to thank the Council and the Mayor for this.

Mayor Finch then asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak to the Council regarding this matter. Hearing none, he closed the hearing on Agenda Item 154-13 at 7:10 p.m.

155-13 Public Hearing re: Resolution Authorizing the Acquisition and subsequent Disposition of four Properties in the West End Redevelopment Area for the Cherry Street Adaptive Reuse Redevelopment Project.

Mayor Finch opened the public hearing on Agenda Item 154-13 at 7:10 p.m.

Mr. Ambercini came forward to thank the Mayor and the Council for these projects. He said that there would be union signage at the project for citizens to become involved in the trades. There were approximately 10 people from the unions present.

Mayor Finch then asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak to the Council regarding this matter. Hearing none, he closed the hearing on Agenda Item 155-13 at 7:13 p.m.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

Approval of City Council Minutes: September 2, 2014.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER MOVED THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2014.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2014 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

177-13 Communication from Board of Education re: Grant Submission: FY 2014-2015 School Readiness Contract for Early Childhood Lab School at Housatonic Community College, referred to Education and Social Services Committee.

178-13 Communication from Central Grants re: Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning Grant Program, referred to Public Safety and Transportation Committee.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED THE ABOVE LISTED ITEMS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

RESOLUTIONS TO BE REFERRED TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC.:

179-13 Resolution presented by Council Member(s) Banta and Taylor-Moye re: Request that Gregory Street be given the Honorary Designation of Walter's Memorial AME Zion Church Boulevard with proper signage to be placed in designated areas, referred to Public Safety and Transportation Committee.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO REFER AGENDA ITEM 179-13 TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia requested that Agenda Item 122-13 be removed from the Consent Calendar. As there were only two items on consent, each item had individual votes taken.

***122-13 Public Safety and Transportation Committee Report re: Request that the Honorary Designation of W.L. Phillips Boulevard be added above the street signage on the two corners where Trumbull Avenue Intersects with Chopsey Hill Road and Reservoir Avenue.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia announced that she would be voting against this item. She made the following statement, "I have no disrespect for the person named, I have been consistent since my first being elected that until a policy is put into place regarding the mass of street name requests, that I would be voting no."

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 122-13.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SEVENTEEN (17) IN FAVOR (BRANNELLY, TORRES, TAYLOR-MOYE, BANTA, HALSTEAD, SWAIN, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE, SALTER, DEJESUS, CASTILLO, MARTINEZ, FELICIANO, MARELLA, PAOLETTO, MARTINEZ-WALKER, AND HOLLOWAY) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (VIZZO-PANICCIA).**

***162-13 Budget & Appropriations Committee Report re: Approval of General Obligation Bonds – To Refund Certain General Obligation Bonds.**

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 162-13.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER SWAIN SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

157-13 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Application with the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEEP) for Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) Projects.

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 157-13.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mayor Finch stated that the following four items were to be added to the Consent Calendar:

- 147-13 Contracts Committee Report re: Professional Services Agreement with Environmental Land Solutions, LLC for Inland Wetlands Consultant Services.**
- 174-13 Contracts Committee Report re: Professional Services Agreement with Collaborative Planning Studio for Upper East Side NRZ Visioning Consultant Services.**
- 175-13 Contracts Committee Report re: Professional Services Agreement with Mandate Media, Inc. for Web-based and Digital Marketing Services.**
- 176-13 Contracts Committee Report re: Professional Services Agreement with Gunn Spirits Productions for Radio and Cable-Based Marketing Services.**

Council Member Swain requested that Agenda Items 175-13 and 176-13 be removed from the Consent Calendar. The City Clerk then called the remaining items on the Consent Calendar.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CONSENT CALENDAR:**

- 147-13 CONTRACTS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL LAND SOLUTIONS, LLC FOR INLAND WETLANDS CONSULTANT SERVICES.**
- 174-13 CONTRACTS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH COLLABORATIVE PLANNING STUDIO FOR UPPER EAST SIDE NRZ VISIONING CONSULTANT SERVICES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SEVENTEEN (17) IN FAVOR (BRANNELLY, TORRES, TAYLOR-MOYE, BANTA, SWAIN, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, SALTER, DEJESUS, CASTILLO, MARTINEZ, FELICIANO, MARELLA, PAOLETTO, MARTINEZ-WALKER, AND HOLLOWAY) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (HALSTEAD).**

The Council then considered the two removed items.

175-13 Contracts Committee Report re: Professional Services Agreement with Mandate Media, Inc. for Web-based and Digital Marketing Services.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 175-13.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

Council Member Torres said that this goes against the practice of using local companies. He added that the website was very liberal and that the City should be choosing a neutral, non-partisan group.

Council Member Swain said that she had other questions and would like to hear a presentation from the group. Council Member Swain asked how the proposal had gotten to this point already and wished to know where the funding was coming from. She asked who presented the item to the Contracts Committee and if there was a presentation of some sort. Council Member DeJesus, one of the co-chairs of the Contracts Committee, said that he was not able to be at the meeting.

Mr. Kooris, the OPED Director, then came forward with a staff member named Brett and said that RFP had gone through the normal process. Brett gave an overview of the process and said that there was also a sub contractor part that would be using local contractors. Mr. Kooris then said that the marketing budget was the funding source and Mr. Sherwood would have to speak to the financing.

Council Member Torres asked about the use of marketing budgets. Mr. Kooris said that his department has a marketing budget. Mr. Sherwood said that he would see the marketing as a general use fund that several department draws from via their line items. Council Member Torres had several questions about the details, which Mr. Sherwood answered.

Council Member Swain then asked if there would be one department overseeing the two companies. Mr. Kooris said that OPED would normally do this. Council Member Banta asked if it was normal for a City Council member or a member of the ECDCE Committee to be involved with the decisions. Mr. Kooris said that he would be happy to review the process with them.

A roll call vote was requested.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 175-13 PASSED WITH FIFTEEN (15) IN FAVOR (BRANNELLY, TAYLOR-MOYE, BANTA, SWAIN, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, DEJESUS, CASTILLO, MARTINEZ, FELICIANO,**

MARELLA, PAOLETTO, MARTINEZ-WALKER, AND HOLLOWAY) AND THREE (3) OPPOSED (TORRES, HALSTEAD AND SALTER).

176-13 Contracts Committee Report re: Professional Services Agreement with Gunn Spirits Productions for Radio and Cable-Based Marketing Services.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 176-13.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

Council Member Torres said that this doesn't make sense since there are companies in Bridgeport that could do this. The RFP was released across the entire country.

A roll call was requested by Council Member Holloway.

Council Member Lyons said that she would like to know more about the bidding process that the Purchasing Department follows. She asked what would happen if there was not many responses. Mr. Kooris said that there were significant responses to the RFP. Then the decision was made by following the City's purchasing policy with the assignment of points for various things. Council Member Lyons said that she would like to suggest that an overview of the bidding process works be presented to the Council Members. Mr. Kooris said that would be fine.

Council Member Swain said that her frustration was that this was being brought forward tonight after the Contracts meeting last Wednesday. She said that she would like to have the Council know that the OPED was out there actively bidding.

Council Member Torres asked if the Purchasing policy required that the MBE be used. Mr. Kooris said that the contract was for services and the MBE does not apply to service bids. It applies to contract work.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 176-13 PASSED WITH FIFTEEN (15) IN FAVOR (BRANNELLY, TAYLOR-MOYE, BANTA, SWAIN, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, DEJESUS, CASTILLO, MARTINEZ, FELICIANO, MARELLA, PAOLETTO, MARTINEZ-WALKER, AND HOLLOWAY) AND THREE (3) OPPOSED (TORRES, HALSTEAD AND SALTER).**

MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON:

173-13 Contracts Committee Report re: Agreement with the City Attorney's Union Local 1303-272, Council #4, AFSCME, AFL-CIO regarding their Bargaining Unit Contract.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 173-13.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Paoletto reminded everyone to sign their reports.

Mayor Finch recognized Pastor Hawkins who was present in reference to Agenda Item 179-13.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services.