

**BRIDGEPORT CITY COUNCIL
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 27TH, 2007**

ATTENDANCE: Committee Members: Robert Curwen, Chair; Leticia Colón, Co-Chair; Amy Marie Vizzo-Paniccia; Susan Brannelly; Daniel Martinez; Andre Baker (6:35 p.m.)

STAFF: Tom Sherwood, OPM; Mike Lupkas, Public Finance; Ted Grabare, Public Facilities

OTHER: Thomas McCarthy, City Council President; Bob Keeley, State Representative; Brian Rooney, Fire Chief; Robert Petrucelli, Deputy Fire Chief; Aaron Leo, Connecticut Post

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mr. Curwen.

Ms. Colón reported that Mr. Baker was running late but would be in attendance.

18-07 Approval of Modification of Capital Plan Re: Firehouse Maintenance Repairs

Mr. Sherwood distributed documentation for this item for those in attendance who did not already have it and explained that the only modification requested was for \$500,000 for the 7/11 Firehouse Building Remediation.

Mr. Grabare distributed and reviewed a breakdown of expenses and the tentative schedule for project completion. Attached to this packet was also an estimate for a mobile home to house fire personnel for the duration of the project and photographs taken on-site. He explained that the project had started out as a basic plumbing problem but that as the floors were opened and concrete slabs removed, more issues became evident. He stated that since the Firehouse was built over a landfill, over time the ground underneath it had sunk so that the soil was now 2-3 feet below the concrete slab instead of immediately below it. Mr. Grabare was concerned that the concrete slab alone would not support the weight of fire vehicles without the slab being supported by soil. He stated that there was an engineered study being conducted over the following several weeks which would determine the degree in which additional support would be necessary. Following the study, either additional fill would be introduced underneath the entire foundation area or the existing slab would be removed and replaced, depending on which was more cost-effective. Mr. Grabare noted that the original authorization for the plumbing problem was \$75,000 but expected that the actual cost to be approximately \$100,000 because the entire house drain had to be replaced instead of just a couple of areas of the house drain.

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Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia asked what else had to be done to repair the building and if it had been thoroughly checked for electrical and other structural issues.

Chief Rooney stated that the building also needed a new roof.

Mr. Grabare agreed that like many city-owned buildings the firehouse needed a new roof. He told Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia that the City had been trying to evaluate all of its buildings over the past several years to ascertain the individual problems throughout but that as of right now for this particular building it appeared as though the issue before them was the only major issue that would prevent it from reopening.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the windows needed fixing. She said that if the roof needed to be replaced then water damage could occur in the walls and ceilings. Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia said she wanted an evaluation of all necessary repairs for the facility as she preferred to complete all the repairs together instead of on a one-off basis.

Mr. Grabare was concerned that once the evaluation was done they would then have to evaluate all other city-owned buildings and the amount of issues that would be presented would be enormous.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia stated that all city-owned buildings should be evaluated.

Mr. Curwen said that the other buildings were not before the Committee at this meeting and that this building was before them on an emergency basis. He agreed that it would be favorable to address the issue as a whole because it would cost more to complete the repairs piece by piece. His main concern was whether this item was actually the root of the problem and asked if the foundation would be secure once the repairs were made.

Mr. Grabare answered these repairs would bring the building back to an operational level that would last for at least the following several years until either a permanent alternative location for the Firehouse was found or a comprehensive study of all of the fire facilities throughout the City was completed. He went on to say that aside from the Board of Education, the City owned 1.6 million square feet of space and during the previous 2-3 years, an evaluation had begun to determine and compare operating costs, capital expense and assessed value of that property.

Mr. Curwen asked Mr. Grabare if there was a Master Plan of the City's Public Facilities buildings.

Mr. Sherwood said the goal was to do a 10 year capital improvement program on all of City buildings.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia said that she'd been hearing about this plan every year since she'd been on the Council and that it was always said that it would be done in the immediate future and never happened. She said she understood it took time and money but was sure

that the City had people in-house that could evaluate city buildings and see what needed to be done instead of spending excessively for evaluations.

Mr. Sherwood said that structural evaluations could not be done by existing city employees. He stated that they have done parts of the plan such as the Public Facilities site, the new garage and the EOC Center but due to the massive scope of the work planned; the City couldn't afford it all and couldn't physically do the work on it all.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia said that those structures were public storage facilities whereas the firehouse actually housed people and should be treated differently.

Mr. Sherwood said that was why the City wanted to fix it right away. He explained that there were temporary trailers to house fire personnel and temporary facilities to house the trucks so that the water didn't freeze and the work requested was to get the facility open again.

Ms. Brannelly asked if it was possible that the results of the engineering study would determine that the site was inappropriate.

Mr. Grabare said that based on his own professional judgment and examinations he didn't think the study would determine that the problem was so drastic that it would require the replacement of the facility.

Mr. McCarthy asked Chief Rooney when he expected full service recovery, how fire service would be made up in the meantime and who was covering the area.

Chief Rooney first stated that there were past capital plans to improve the building and that the Fire Department had submitted several requests to have the building's roof repaired because it was leaking very badly. He stated that the roof had leaked onto the watch desk causing wires to arc and ultimately forcing the shut down of all power to the facility. The chief said that there were many problems in the building, many of which were related to the roof. While he realized the floor was paramount, he urged that the roof was also in need of repair. Chief Rooney distributed *The Bridgeport Fire Department Capital Budget Request Fiscal Years 2006 – 2011* to the Committee, noting that it showed the Department's repeated requests for capital funding for repairs to the roof. He explained that at one time they were given \$75,000 for said repair but they'd had to use it for the roof on another firehouse. Addressing Mr. McCarthy's questions, Chief Rooney said that 7/11 Firehouse's engine and ladder company were currently stationed on Wood Avenue, increasing response time by 3-8 minutes. He said that there was a plan to have a trailer on-site by January 3rd that would be large enough to house four people in it. The Fire Department also planned to partition off a small section of the garage at the 7/11 Firehouse for one engine, enabling a company to provide medical service and water but the ladder company would still be dispatched from Wood Avenue.

Mr. Keeley asked how much the roof would cost

Chief Rooney answered that it would cost approximately \$750,000.

Mr. Sherwood said that complete repair and replacement costs for facility would probably be as high as \$4-\$500 million and since the roof repair was not deemed an emergency it would take months to go through the bid process and conduct inspections and so would not be done along with the floor.

Mr. Curwen stated that it didn't make sense to put a half-million dollars into this project if the roof was the root of the problem and went without repair.

Mr. Grabare said that the root of the problem was not the roof but the house drain that was rotting away and causing major health issues, making the building uninhabitable. He said that the roof could also be done but the floor still needed to be fixed immediately. He added that a study would have to be conducted to verify that the structural slab of the roof system had not been compromised before the bid process could begin.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia inquired as to the square footage of the roof.

Mr. Grabare answered that the roof was probably between 12,000 and 14,000 ft.².

Mr. Curwen said that he'd asked State Representative Keeley to attend this meeting and that when he'd first heard of this problem he'd written to Mr. Keeley asking if the State could help in any way. He asked Mr. Keeley to tell the Committee what he'd done thus far.

Mr. Keeley said he'd been called by Brian Crowe and residents in the Blackrock area about a week and a half prior to this meeting and that these people had asked if he could get emergency funding for the 7/11 Firehouse. He'd replied that if he could, he would. He went on to say that Mayor Finch was still a State Senator and that he was in charge of the Bonding Subcommittee and so after speaking with Councilman Curwen he took his letter to Hartford to present to OPM, the Governor and the Speaker of the House. He explained that if he got money for this it would go against his account but he was willing to make the Firehouse a priority. He suggested that perhaps Mayor Finch could do the same in the Senate and LOCEF funds could then be looked into. He explained that LOCEF was state money that came in every year and 2.2 million was coming in this year which could perhaps be amended to be put towards the roof. He asked if \$735,000 was the amount being pursued because while he couldn't guarantee funding it would still help to have a precise dollar amount.

Mr. Curwen said that based on the information before the Committee and Chief Rooney's figures which were probably out of date, if \$1.2 million could be found for the emergency repairs and roof, the City could probably cover the rest.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia asked Mr. Keeley when he expected the request for funding could be fulfilled.

Mr. Keeley said that the Speaker of the House wanted to meet with Chief Rooney and the Committee and hesitated to guess when the request would be fulfilled because he couldn't guarantee that it would be at all.

Mr. Lupkas asked Mr. Keeley if the City could be reimbursed for this if they paid for it.

Mr. Keeley said that it could and it'd been done before.

Ms. Brannelly asked Mr. Keeley if he had any idea at all on the timeline for fulfillment of the request for funds.

Mr. Keeley said that it could be put to the January Bond Commission meeting, but didn't want to guess.

Mr. Baker arrived at 6:35 p.m.

Mr. Curwen asked Mr. Lupkas when the City would go out to bond for this if they did so.

Mr. Lupkas answered that due to the emergency nature of this project, funding would have to be reallocated from another project.

Ms. Colón said Mr. Keeley how soon the Speaker of the House could be expected to meet with the Committee.

Mr. Keeley answered that the Speaker of the House was currently ill but would probably meet with them the following week.

Ms. Brannelly asked if a 20% contingency was typical and if it usually covered costs.

Mr. Sherwood answered that it was typical and usually covered any unexpected costs.

Mr. Lupkas asked if the \$500,000 was going to be enough, adding that they could always request more funding and reallocate any leftover funding.

Mr. Curwen asked if the authorization for the work that had already been completed had been put out to bid.

Mr. Sherwood added that the original authorization was for \$60,000 with a \$15,000 contingency. He said that there was a bid for \$40,000 for the original removal of the slab, which revealed the issue before them. He said that with the original authorization, they would finish the contract for the original work and pay for new expenses such as temporary housing for fire personnel.

Mr. Curwen asked how many bids came in on the original \$40,000.

Mr. Grabare answered that three bids had been submitted.

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Mr. Curwen revisited Mr. Lupkas' question about whether \$500,000 would be sufficient and went on to ask again about the Mater Plan and if this would be a temporary or long-term fix for the facility.

Mr. Grabare stated that as part of a Master Plan for all City-owned buildings the City had looked into getting prices for capital asset plans to be done throughout the city by outside vendors. The price was expected to be approximately \$1.5 million. He went on to say that the City had a licensed architect and a licensed engineer so some architectural and engineering work could be done in-house but an outside firm would have to be brought in to get an independent, unprejudiced perspective on all of the city buildings. He said that several firms had been looked into to prepare a capital asset plan for the entire city. These firms would charge between \$1.25 million and \$2 million to do an assessment and to have professionals such as mechanical, structural and site engineers evaluate each building, prepare lifecycle costs and to be available to prepare a software system that the City could use to prepare cost benefit analyses for City-owned properties

Mr. Curwen said that he was seeking support for this item because of its emergency nature and that he wanted to pursue the repair of the roof with Representative Keeley.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would rather get all of needed repairs done on the firehouse now and be able to move onto the next firehouse or other building.

**** MS. VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO AMEND ITEM 19-07 TO ADD THAT THE CITY PAY UP FRONT THE FULL EXPENSE OF ALL NEEDED REPAIRS ON THE 7/11 FIREHOUSE AND PURSUE REIMBURSEMNT FROM THE STATE.**

Mr. Curwen said that while he understood Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia's point, she was asking for carte blanche and recommended specificity with regard to this request to avoid overspending.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia said that she wanted the walls, electrical system, foundation, roof and inside and outside plumbing taken care of.

Mr. McCarthy said that the Committee had only two items on the table, and only those items could be legally dealt with at this time. He offered that a modification of the Capital Plan could be made or Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia's concerns could be dealt with at the following meeting.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia asked if there was a price they could put on the modification with the understanding that any leftover funding could be reallocated.

Mr. Grabare said that the roof would probably cost about \$750,000 for the roof but he suggested an evaluation of the entire building which would need to be put out to bid and would probably cost an additional \$2-\$400,000.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would not recommend an extra \$200,000 for an evaluation, because she did not feel that that was a reasonable amount.

Mr. Sherwood said that a cost of an evaluation averaged 10 to 20% of the cost of the work needed and \$2 million of work would likely be needed.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia said that if that was the case it would be better to knock the building down and start fresh.

Mr. Sherwood said that that may be true, but if the repairs were not done than the 7/11 firehouse would stay closed until they were.

Mr. Curwen suggested that if the project was done soon, as expected then perhaps the Committee could speak with the OPM Director and Chief Rooney at the following meeting to discuss money that could be set aside for an assessment. In the meantime Mr. Curwen said he didn't want to delay the process of trying to reopen the firehouse.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia said that she was not looking to delay the project, but rather to get it done right.

Mr. Grabare said that retaining a design professional to design a facility like this would take six months and an evaluation of the existing conditions would take three months.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the roof was considered an emergency repair like the floor.

Mr. Grabare said that the Council could easily consider that an emergency repair as well.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia said that she could include in her amendment that Mr. Sherwood and Mr. Grey bear should attend the next meeting with all necessary information.

Mr. Sherwood said that he would request a modification to the plan for an additional \$1.5 million at the next full council meeting and that upon gathering information, would provide a more precise dollar amount by the next Budgets and Appropriations Committee meeting.

**** MS. BRANNELLY MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 18-07.**

**** MS. COLÓN SECONDED.**

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia said that she wanted the item to be amended to include that further repairs would be made.

Mr. Sherwood suggested making an amendment to modify the item to change the capital plan authorization amount to \$2 million to include the \$1.5 million discussed at the meeting.

Ms. Brannelly asked what the likelihood of the Council approving \$2 million for this item was, considering everybody else's firehouses had troubles also.

Ms. Vizzo-Paniccia said that she saw this as a start to getting them all fixed.

Mr. Curwen said that the likelihood was high because this particular firehouse was in a state of emergency.

Ms. Brannelly said that she didn't want to risk going to the full council for \$2 million, being rejected and losing the originally requested \$500,000.

- ** MS. BRANNELLY MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 18-07 WITH A LANGUAGE CHANGE TO REPLACE THE AMOUNT OF \$500,000 WITH "UP TO AND INCLUDING \$2 MILLION" FOR THE ADDITIONAL NECESSARY REPAIR WORK AT THE 7/11 FIREHOUSE.
- ** MS. COLÓN SECONDED.
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

19-07 Approval of Authorization for Borrowing for Firehouse Maintenance and Repairs

Mr. Lupkas explained that item 19-07 was the authorization for the borrowing of funds. He said that the authorization was for \$500,000 and recommended keeping that amount until more solid plans were in place, at which time another authorization to borrow up to another \$1.5 million could be submitted. He went on to say that there was a project currently underway to expand the Aquaculture School. He explained that there was a request submitted for it several years prior, but the plans changed and the grant was canceled. The grant had been resubmitted in 2005 and an item was added to the Capital Plan for \$2,640,000 for the Aquaculture School. This amount would be the City's share of the total amount of about \$35 million. Mr. Lupkas explained that due to a clerical error previous reports did not include the Aquaculture School item but as shown in the Council's minutes from June 6th, 2005, the Council did the modification to the Capital Plan to include the Aquaculture School. At that time it was not authorized for borrowing but the decision was forwarded to the State for the grant. The State had since approved the grant and work had begun on the school and so there was work being done but without a commitment for city funding.

Mr. McCarthy said that he didn't think that the Committee was allowed to amend the item before them to include the Aquaculture School.

Mr. Curwen said that he didn't think it was appropriate either.

Mr. Sherwood said that they would have been request submitted separately for the next meeting

- ** MS. BRANNELLY MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 19-07.

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**** MS. COLÓN SECONDED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MS. VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Schroder
Telesco Secretarial Services

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET and APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE *of the* CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2008
6:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Colon, Curwen, Austin, Brannelly

OTHERS PRESENT: Mile Feeney, Director of Finance; Dave Cody
Council President McCarthy

Council member Colon called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Minutes Approval

** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO ADD THE MINUTES TO THE AGENDA
** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES
** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

**21-07 Approval of General Obligation Bonds – to Fund Certain Capital Improvement Project
(Aquaculture School - \$2,640,000)**

Mr. Dave Cody, of Construction Management Services stated that back in the year 2005; the city council approved an addition to the capital plan for this project. In July 2007, they received approval of the construction grant at 92% of the project cost, so they were seeking the amount of the city's share now to proceed with the project. He said he was here tonight to answer any other questions about the project.

Council member Curwen stated that he never received any communication regarding the request; he noted it would be difficult to vote on the matter without that information. Mr. Feeney updated that all the information had been hand delivered to the city clerk's office a while ago, approximately two weeks ago, in time to add the item to the agenda. – *Council member Curwen eventually located a copy of the document in back of the city clerk's book.*

Mr. Cody continued and explained that the project reference in schematic design was received from the architect. He pointed out the area on the drawing where the existing school was, in relation to the new addition that went back three to four years. He said that this occurred when the city attorney worked with Captain's Cove regarding a lease to construct the new building. He noted that the area is used for boat storage currently and there is a fence that runs to the north of P.T. Barnum Apartments. He went on to say there was a need to increase laboratory space, because it was now confined to a small area. He explained that they grow aquatic wildlife species. He relayed that what was generated was a request from the state, so now they are developing

physics, biology and hatchery areas. There will also be a media center. And there will be additional classrooms on the first and second floors.

Council member McCarthy asked Mr. Cody to point out exactly where the building was located. Mr. Cody pointed out where the parking lot was in proximity to St. Stevens and Captains Cove.

Council member Curwen asked if the project was doubling in square footage. Mr. Cody said it was going from 38,000 sq. ft. to 72,000 sq. ft.

Council member Curwen asked if 95% of the project was funded by the state. Mr. Cody said the stated funded 92% and they have already drawn on the state funds.

Council member Curwen asked then if tonight's request was a formality to get the bond obligation authorized. Mr. Cody acknowledged that was correct.

Mr. Cody stated that the matter concerned the Inter-district Magnet School and that's why they have a 95% reimbursement rate. Councilmember McCarthy asked if the city gets a percentage of the seats for Bridgeport as a result of that. Mr. Cody said yes, but he wasn't sure of the percentage. Mr. Cody added that it was a beautiful building with a great environment and an impressive program.

Council member Curwen asked if they resolved the issues regarding the K. Williams settlement between the city and the yacht club. Mr. Feeney replied no, but he thought the approval tonight would spearhead resolution to that matter soon, according to Attorney Pacacha.

Council member Curwen asked where the Williams settlement was in regard to taxes. Mr. Feeney said the taxes were still delinquent, but that shouldn't delay this project. He further relayed that they came to a financial agreement with Mr. Williams, but they never resolved the tax matter. Council member Curwen stressed that the delinquent taxes of \$175k should be settled quickly to avoid sending the wrong message.

Mr. Cody continued with his comments and stated that they had to show proof of the city's commitment to fund the project. He referred to the 2005 communication that authorized the addition to the capital plan, noting that the authority to borrow wasn't approved at that time.

Council member Brannelly asked if the state funding was contingent upon the city's commitment to the project. Mr. Cody said they already had the state funding in place. He further noted that as of July 1, they were able to draw down real funds. He stated the request was also approved by the city council.

Mr. Feeney returned to the matter of Mr. Williams and the taxes issue. He explained that Mr. Williams actually owned a large piece of the property that he agreed to deed back to the city, but the project never came to fruition until now. But as far as the delinquent taxes, that has no bearing on this project.

Council member Curwen stated there was an agreement by Mayor Finch to get a ruling on the language from Bond Council. Mr. Feeney said he has been in contact with Mr. Strafstrom to obtain that information, but the flexibility of the language is important. He said that if language is taken out, they will have to put the project on hold. He reiterated that all the projects were previously approved by the city council, but they had to wait until they got approval from this committee before going to the Bond Council.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO APPROVE
** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Council member Colon wanted it noted for the record, that no representative from the Board of Education attended the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services

**BRIDGEPORT CITY COUNCIL
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 11TH, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Committee Members: Robert Curwen, Chair; Sue Brannelly;
Daniel Rodriguez, Andre Baker

STAFF: Tom Sherwood, OPM; Mike Lupkas, Finance; Michael Feeney,
CAO; Nestor Nkwo, Finance

OTHER: Councilman Bob Walsh, Donna Curran

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mr. Curwen.

Monthly Financial Report: Informal Discussion

Mr. Sherwood started by saying that each year when the budget was set, there were different forecasting tools used for a host of items. He went on to say that payroll and overtime analysis was done on a weekly basis and revenue trending based on state schedules, etc. was also done regularly. He explained that some of the City's payroll was seasonal in nature such as lifeguards and laborers in Parks and Public Works. Mr. Sherwood went on to list several reasons for the City's \$16 million deficit. The first of these was the Steel Point project. He stated that the Steel Point budget assumption was \$4.5 million and that assumption was made based on the target closing date for land sale in May of this year. Mr. Sherwood did not believe that the closing would occur within the fiscal year date due to the nature, scope and legalities of the project but did believe it would be realized in the next fiscal year. He then referred to page 2 of his report under Miscellaneous Pilot where he explained the \$2.6 million gap for the Singer Substation being built on Main Street. He explained that the original assumption was that the City would hold that money in escrow until work was started on the project but in fact the organization building it was holding that money and work had begun. He said that while that \$2.6 million would eventually be realized in taxes in the coming year which would amount to almost the full \$2.6 million. He then referred to a few lines above that where he said that the \$1.5 million figure was an assumption on the foreclosure of properties and was also reported as a gap closing measure. Mr. Sherwood then referred to the next page of the document which showed assessments passed with the assumption of what the House of Representatives would do with their budget. He explained that the City had assumed that it would receive about \$2.3 million more in State Pilot Aid than it actually did. He then referred to an item for the Town Clerk which was about \$600,000 short, which Mr. Sherwood attributed to the extremely slow real estate market. He then noted positive change for the Police Department due to a surcharge on outside overtime but this correlated with an increase on the expenditure side of the budget.

Mr. Baker asked for further explanation of the issue with the Town Clerk's office.

Mr. Sherwood said the State allowed the City to keep \$1.10 for every \$1,000 collected in taxes on real estate transactions but with the current state of the real estate market, the projected income based on past trends from that would not be met unless there was an upswing in the market.

Mr. Walsh referred to item 4 on page 1 of the report and asked for an explanation of the \$60,000 budgeted for the grants indirect cost reimbursement which was \$50,000 short because of the voluminous documentations required by the state in substantiating the reimbursement.

Mr. Sherwood explained that the City had developed a federal and a state indirect cost rate about 6 or 7 years ago for the purpose of applying an administrative overhead allocation to grants processing. He said that the work involved in developing the rate was just too tedious and so it hadn't been applied for in more recent years. Instead, \$10,000 was paid for auditing services.

Mr. Walsh asked why it was still in the budget.

Mr. Sherwood explained that the title for that item should have read "Grant Audit Services" and the item would not be in the budget going forward.

Mr. Walsh then referred to comment 6 in the report and asked Mr. Sherwood if he believed the City would be over-budget on interest rates despite falling rates.

Mr. Sherwood answered that the original projection gain was \$2.2 million but because of the market it had been lowered to \$2 million.

Mr. Walsh asked if further analysis could be done on that to get a better idea of the anticipated average balance and what interest rates would pay.

Mr. Sherwood agreed.

Mr. Walsh then referred to comment 10, City Processed Marshall Fees and asked if that was a fee collected by the City and paid to a marshal.

Mr. Lupkas answered that is item related to instances in which the City's Tax Collector or Deputy booted or towed a vehicle without the aid of a marshal. He stated that funds collected from that were kept by the City and the total gain for this was approximately \$80,000 in the last year.

Mr. Walsh noted that the City Council had sold \$377,000 in liens for \$1 and asked where in Mr. Sherwood's report that transaction could be found.

Mr. Lupkas said that the transaction would not show up in this report but in the balance sheet as a reduction to taxes receivable.

Mr. Walsh stated that there was \$670,000 in delinquent taxes on that property and asked if that was reported in property tax collections.

Mr. Lupkas said that if a collection had come in it would have gone under that line or come in as delinquent but it would not be specifically included in the Income & Expense Report.

Mr. Nkwo referred to number 7 of the solutions in the report and said that the \$670,000 in question was part of the \$20 million of taxes on arrears and so there was still plenty of money there.

Mr. Walsh asked for an itemized list of that \$20 million.

Mr. Feeney agreed.

Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the major highlights in expenditures. He said that the only major things here were healthcare and overtime, particularly overtime for Police, Fire and Public Works employees. He reported that Public Works overtime was higher than normal due to the bulk trash collection that had happened that past summer but work was being done to bring the amount back in line. He went on to say that the excess in Fire personnel overtime was due to vacancies caused by a wave of retirements. He explained that there were 28 recruits in Fire Academy who were expected to be out and ready to fill the firehouses by the following month and that would fill vacancies and reduce the need for overtime. Mr. Sherwood said that the rise in overtime pay for Police could be attributed to a deployment issue as well but they also had new recruits finishing their last week of field training in the next week and another class of 20 would be starting training in April. Mr. Sherwood said he expected that an impact on overtime pay would be seen in about 27 weeks.

Mr. Walsh asked for further explanation of Fire Department overtime expenditure.

Mr. Sherwood said the total estimated impact if no action was taken was an excess of about \$2,011,000 in overtime pay. He explained that when the current group of recruits was deployed, that amount could be reduced to \$1 million and a savings could be realized.

Mr. Walsh asked how many new Fire Department recruits were being added.

Mr. Sherwood answered that unless anyone dropped out from the class, 28 recruits would join the Fire Department.

Mr. Walsh asked if any fire personnel were expected to retire in the next year.

Mr. Sherwood answered that the City had budgeted for 10 retirees.

Mr. Nkwo reported that 30 fire personnel had retired at the beginning of the year when the new healthcare contract was made in order to avoid being locked into higher premiums.

Mr. Walsh noted that between 18 and 28 personnel would be added after retirement was factored and asked how the closing of one of Bridgeport's firehouse factored into that.

Mr. Sherwood said that the reopening of that firehouse was not accounted for in the budget, rather the City budgeted towards a required strength for what was currently open.

Mr. Walsh asked where the 28 additional personnel would be placed.

Mr. Sherwood said that there were 30 vacancies after the last budget was passed so 12-14 recruits were already placed in houses and any extra personnel would be staffed in the firehouses and cover academy dropouts, retirees and vacation and sick time for other personnel, thereby reducing overtime expenditure.

Mr. Curwen asked how many vacancies the Fire Department currently had.

Mr. Sherwood answered that there were 18 or 19 vacancies.

Mr. Walsh stated that the Police Department was much more discretionary in their personnel requirements versus the Fire Department which had to have at least 4 people assigned to every engine and asked for further explanation of the projected cut in Police Department overtime expenditure.

Mr. Sherwood said that the total overtime expenditure excess for police was approximately \$1.784 million and there was an expected cut of \$1 million of that due to new recruits being deployed. He explained that there had been a delay in hiring due to a testing issue and retention of new recruits was difficult for the City because many recruits trained and got certified in Bridgeport, only to work for other towns.

Mr. Walsh asked if the projected \$7.3 million in overtime was due only to inadequate personnel levels.

Mr. Sherwood said that it was also due to the increase in the Police Department contract.

Mr. Walsh asked if there was a seasonal factor in police overtime.

Mr. Sherwood said there were seasonal trends with vacation scheduling but one of the things that really attributed to this issue was overtime pay for officers at Harbor Yard and the Arena because since it's and inside detail, there is no reimbursement for it. He stated that those details alone cost the City over \$1 million in overtime pay. He then added that in the next few years, there would be 2 or 3 large waves of retirements to prepare for.

Mr. Baker asked why the Arena details were costing the City so much.

Mr. Sherwood answered that as part of the operating agreement with the Arena, the City pays for the outside detail such as traffic and crossing while the Arena pays for police inside the facility.

Mr. Baker asked if that contract could be renegotiated.

Mr. Feeney answered that it was a 20 year agreement and there was no incentive for the Arena to renegotiate.

Mr. Curwen asked how the City ever ventured into such an agreement, adding that he didn't recall that coming before Council and that he certainly would have said something if it had.

Mr. Sherwood said he assumed the operating agreement must have gone before Council and that he didn't think it could have gone into effect without going through Council.

Mr. Walsh said he didn't recall this issue going before Council either.

Mr. Sherwood continued, saying that if no action was taken, the gap potential was \$16.2 million. He stated that department heads including police and fire had been submitting weekly overtime reports for analysis by City Administration to see if and why there are any spikes in expenditure. He said that about \$2.7 million would be realized in vacancies, delaying of new hires and a City-wide (with the exceptions of the Board of Education, Libraries and seasonal laborers) operating account freeze that could only be flipped on a case by case basis pending review and approval by the CAO.

Mr. Curwen asked if there was a plan for the remaining \$5.4 million deficit.

Mr. Feeney said that it was still being worked on.

Mr. Walsh asked what the closing rate for property tax was.

Mr. Feeney answered that the current projected rate was 96%.

Mr. Walsh asked if that was within budget.

Mr. Sherwood said that it was actually better than budget.

Mr. Walsh asked if there would be a more accurate projection in the following month.

Mr. Sherwood said that final February figures were usually seen in May.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. RODRIGUEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MR. BAKER SECONDED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Schroder
Telesco Secretarial Services

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET and APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
of the CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2008
6:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Curwen, Baker, Brannelly, Vizzo-Paniccia

OTHER(s) PRESENT: Jerry Pyenson

Co-chair Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Council member Curwen read the item into the record.

48-07 A Resolution Urging Congress to take Emergency Action to Enact a Homeowners and Bank Protection Act

Council member Curwen explained that he communicated with Stuart Rosenblatt, who is located outside of Washington, DC who has been doing a lot of lobbying for the banking and mortgage crisis. He said that after reading some literature, he realized that what was happening, applied to Bridgeport and Connecticut. So they were looking for cities to get on board and lead the charge to address the foreclosures problem. However, he clarified that the resolution proposed isn't meant to be used as a bail out, they are just looking for the banks to take responsibility and call for a freeze on all mortgages and fix the variable rates that will allow people to stay in their homes and not have to face losing them. Council member Curwen stated that Jerry Pyenson who was present, was instrumental in gathering some legislative information. He referred to a list of states that were also on board and he noted that other statistics would be reviewed.

Mr. Jerry Pyenson, Hackensack, NJ stated he was present on behalf of **Mr. Larouche of the Political Action Committee**. He stated that in July 2007, Sterns couldn't sell their securities at face value, so it was determined that the system was coming down to protect the people and the banking industry from financial collapse. And although they were told the crisis would be over by December 2007, this wasn't true and he believed that the rating agencies lied and then gave triple-A ratings to allow them to be sold to the banks, thus, this created a huge financial bubble that is now coming down.

Mr. Pyenson recalled there was a similar crisis during the 1930's, noting that this nation was the only nation that didn't become fascist due to the crisis and that was thanks to *President Roosevelt's New Deal answer to the home-loan crisis of the 1930s* that it didn't. His mission was to keep people in their homes, as well as finding a way so the banks could keep functioning. He went on to say that Bridgeport used to be a huge industrial city, so the first step was to reestablish manufacturing and jobs in the nation, as Roosevelt did using what he learned to save the nation from going into financial abyss. However, since the introduction to Congress regarding this matter, nothing has been done, so he went to different cities to try to get a memorial passed in the

legislative body and eighty (80) cities have signed on so far, some of which aren't inner cities, but are affected in instances where there has been a 25% collapse on mortgages.

Mr. Pyenson continued and updated that he was in Albany last week and introduced the memorial during the general assembly and three assembly members have signed on and the Massachusetts State Legislative has already passed the memorial. The purpose is to promote the general welfare of our nation and the government has the right to intervene to keep people in their homes. So the hope was to get the City of Bridgeport to pass the legislation also. It's also being introduced at the state level. He stressed that if we don't act now, our young people won't have a future if the crash is not reversed. He further expressed that leaving a legacy was key in stopping this type of crisis for the next generation. He noted that there were 1 in 34 homes in Bridgeport already facing foreclosure. He said the origin is to being with getting legislation passed. He referred to page 2 of his document that outlined the memorial to pass the legislation that will protect homeowners and the banks. He noted that Council member Curwen's proposed resolution was quite similar to his, but he suggested referencing ***banks and government*** in the resolution as it relates to **Article 1-Section 8 of the constitution**. He reiterated that Congress had to act in this emergency to protect the nation in this crisis.

Council member Curwen proposed an amendment to 2nd page of the resolution, item 3) **To read: Require affordable monthly home mortgage payments and to factor such affordable payments into new mortgages thereby deflating the housing bubble and freeze all existing mortgages for a period of 24-months; and establish appropriate property valuation and reducing fixed mortgage interest rates;**

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia asked when the 24-months would start. Council member Curwen said it would start once the legislation was established by congress. He further noted that they were looking to change the sub-prime rate into a prime rate.

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia asked what the wording *bank* denoted. Council member Curwen said it meant FDIC insured and non-federal banking affiliated establishments.

Council member Baker asked about people that might have non-FDIC rates. Mr. Pyenson said that the legislative act would keep people in their homes and stops **all** foreclosures regardless of the banking entity. However the restructuring would be done by the state's Governor. The key is to assume stability of people in their homes, where it is speculated that approximately two million could lose their homes.

Council member Curwen stated that government will probably have to write off trillion dollars of loans and readjust the rates to be affordable.

Council member Brannelly commented that there wasn't any mention of talk about freezing foreclosures and evictions for people that were victims of the sub-prime rate situation. She explained that there was no differentiation between what was legitimate between the sub-prime rates. Council member Curwen said they were trying to gain more momentum to get Congress to

interceded and take more action. He emphasized how this situation affected Dow Jones. Overall, he thought his proposed resolution coincided with what the government was proposing.

Mr. Pyenson expressed that this wasn't really a mortgage or sub-prime rate crisis, but more of a banking industry collapsing, so implementing a memorial is a crucial step.

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the bank representatives were aware of the proposed resolution. She also questioned how their partnership would be involved. Council member Curwen said he thought a partnership was probably forming now.

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia clarified that she meant to ask who would oversee the process and what amount would it cost to implement the process. Council member Curwen said that information wasn't known yet.

Council member Vizzo-Paniccia questioned whether or not implementing the memorial would teach homeowners to "buckle down" and not take for granted, if they encounter future mortgage issues, that the matter will be automatically taken care of. Council member Curwen responded that he was sure there were many who fell into that category and he recalled the past predatory lending crisis. But he explained the purpose of his memorial was to call upon congress to step in and do the right thing!

Council member Brannelly agreed we were facing a tremendous crisis and everyone was at risk, regardless of the sub-prime rate or not, but she thought there was still the matter of the banks involvement. She also questioned where the facts were really coming from. She referred to Mr. Larouche's background and credentials to point out that his was only one part of the story, and she thought it begged the question of what an appropriate resolution should be. She thought it would behoove the council to act upon something without being fully informed.

Council member Curwen answered to Council member Vizzo-Paniccia's comment regarding the banking concern. He stated that Governor Rell was getting involved and has put together a coalition of three to four banking institutions to freeze mortgages.

Council member Brannelly repeated that this was a big crisis and their voices should be heard, but she questioned whether the message was clearly outlined through the resolution proposed. Council member Curwen said he read the document and passed out seven ordinances from various municipalities at the last city council meeting, and after reading all the information, he devised his resolution from referencing other ordinances. He agreed there were many questions to answer to determine if they could really have an impact.

Mr. Pyenson speculated that if there was a true account done of the banks in the country, many of them might be found to be bankrupt based on the income streams. He commented that Bridgeport was a banking community, but it was also a big industry city that supported thousands of people and the same holds true for larger cities, such as; Detroit, Indiana etc. he made the point that they would like to return to the mission of being the world's greatest producer.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO DENY**
There was no second to the motion

Council member Brannelly stated that she didn't want to completely deny the resolution. She repeated that because of the crisis, she asked if tabling the matter would allow them to discuss it further with the city attorney's input.

Council member Baker agreed that there was definitely a crisis. He also agreed with Council member Vizzo-Paniccia that there would be a risk of some people using the resolution or legislation as a bail out in the future. But he questioned whether or not the wording in the resolution was the proper language to send the message. So he thought that more dialogue was necessary among the other committee members for their input.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO TABLE**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED WITH THREE IN FAVOR AND ONE IN OPPOSITION (COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA)**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION
BUDGET HEARING FOR FY 09
APRIL 8, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia; Susan Brannelly, Howard Austin, Sr., Daniel Martinez (6:43 p.m.); Leticia Colon (6:45 p.m.), Andre Baker (6:45 p.m.),

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM

OTHERS: Iris Molina, Dept. of Social Services; Veronica Otiz, Dept. of Social Services; Helen O'Brien, Dental Hygiene; Joseph Minopoli, Housing and Commercial Code; Michael Meade, Communicable Diseases; Mary Ann Burr, Dental Hygiene, Evelia Gumpas, Dental Hygiene; Council Member Valle; Council Member DePara; Council Member Walsh, Council President McCarthy; Council Member Blunt; Rose Hoyt, Department on Aging, Rosemarie Wong, Department on Aging

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. He then reviewed the ground rules.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr. Sherwood gave a brief overview of Aging the other Health and Social Services and reviewed the Mayor's Proposal.

Ms. Hoyt said that her department was willing to operate on the same budget as last year.

Ms. Wong came forward and stated that last year they had served 3,000 seniors, along with administrating Energy Assistance Program, referrals and also will be assisting with the Social Service rebate. Ms. Wong said that although the focus of the program is for the seniors, the Department also works with the disabled population.

VETERAN'S DEPARTMENT

Mr. Sherwood said that there were no changes to this department. Ms. Sorrentino was not present because she had stepped out to bring in the printed material for the Committee.

LIGHTHOUSE PROGRAM

Tammy came forward to give an overview of the Lighthouse program, which operates in 21 schools five days a week. She said that the program had grown by providing tutoring services. She also reviewed the staffing for the program. During the summer, the program is at its busiest. She said that the overall budget is about 4.5 million and about 1.4 million comes from the City.

PARENT AID PROGRAM

Ms. Ayala came forward and explained the program provides support and services for parents of young children. Council Member Brannelly asked how many teens the program serves. Ms. Ayala said that there were about 70-80 teen mothers. Council Member Martinez asked how the program is administered. Kate then explained that this program was originally integrated with the School Based Health Programs, but that the program had grown so much that it received a large grant from the Federal Government. Council Member Baker asked for more details about the program and where the funding sources are. Kate explained that the majority of the funding comes from the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Health and some of the General funding. Council Member Brannelly asked how the grant funding is maximized and monitored. Kate explained that the Department works closely with the Central Grants Office and when the grant opportunities come up, the Department makes an application.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr. Sherwood said that there were no major changes and that the bulk of the financing was through grants. Ms. Molina came forward and said that they administer the food stamps and other programs, including one for the elderly Hispanic clients. Many of the clients need assistance with applying for services. Another program included Lead Abatement. Homeless Prevention is focused on hardship. She also reviewed the Health Start program and said that the program reaches over 1,000 clients in the region. WIC is now under the Social Services Department and the documentation is carefully monitored. The clientele exceeds over 6,000. Another program allows the clients to come in one day a year and negotiate about their fuel bills with the gas company. There is also an effort to coordinate the food pantries.

Ms. Ortiz then reviewed the details of the budget for the Committee. She indicated that the budget had been reduced by \$3,000.

Council Member Martinez asked about a particular grant that he would have thought the Department of Aging. Ms. Molina said that both departments compliment each other and the Department of Aging had decided not to apply for the grant.

HUMAN SERVICES

Ms. Sorrentino came forward and reviewed the purpose of her department. Mr. Sherwood said that there were no changes to the General Funds. She reviewed the fact that 26% of the budget is from City funds and the rest is grant funding. Ms. Sorrentino then reviewed the various programs that her department offers.

OFFICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Sherwood pointed out that many of the departments do not have technology to pull the information for the budget together.

Ms. Sorrentino said that the salary from the General Fund goes to the ADA coordinator. She handles the handicapped parking stickers, and various other programs.

OFFICES OF VETERAN'S AFFAIRS CONT'D

Mr. Sherwood said that there was one transportation coordinator who is paid from the General Fund. Since the VA office moved to the Health Department, the program has thrived because of the supportive atmosphere. The programs include food programs, case managements, death benefits, obtaining military records and provide transportation to the V.A. Hospital. She said that the program now serves 800 vets. The program is just starting to see the vets returning from Iraq.

Chairman Curwen asked what other resources were available to returning vets in terms of job placement. Ms. Sorrentino said that they didn't have much to offer other than referrals because of lack of staffing.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET

Mr. Sherwood said that there were no major changes. There have been some operational funds that have been removed.

Dr. Evans reminded everyone that there have been leases on copying machines for two or three years, and the reductions of the fundings would affect these contracts. Mr. Sherwood requested that copies of these contracts be sent to him. Council Member Martinez asked about the security guard. Dr. Evans said that the position was filled in February before the hiring freeze.

DENTAL HYGIENE

Ms. O'Brien said that her program sees all the elementary school children for screening. This encompasses 24 schools and means that 3,500 students are seen. The department also offers 20,000 cleanings and occasionally sealing to the students who need it. There are currently 7 permanent dental clinics in the schools. Ms. O'Brien said that the department had also worked with "Give Kids A Smile Day". Dentists from all over volunteer to provide treatment for children who have no dental coverage. The more dentists that participate, the large number of children who can be seen. There are currently 100 children on the waiting list to be seen.

Ms. O'Brien then gave a brief history of the dental hygiene in Bridgeport and pointed out that dental insurance is hard to get in today's workforce. Many times the Department is the only access a student may have to dental health care. Ms. O'Brien said that there is a dental clinic in the new Jenny Tisdale and recently some newer chairs were donated from a dental office that was updating their equipment for another location. The department just finished a three year sealant program, which is now being used as a model for other towns.

In the revenue department, new rates have been set after a long court case. Ms. O'Brien said that the Department would have an opportunity to minimally double their revenue when the new rates go into effect.

Dr. Evans pointed out that three of the staff members live in Bridgeport and would lose their jobs. Chairman Curwen said that the Mayor's Recommended Budget was to dissolve the department. He said that the Committee would take this into consideration.

Council Member Colon asked about the amount of time it takes to do a cleaning. Ms. O'Brien then reviewed the details with her. Council Member Valle asked why Waltersville would not have a dental clinic when it is reopened. Ms. O'Brien said that it was the decision made by the principal to work on fine arts rather than the dental clinic. Council Member Baker asked if the department was partnered with Optimus. Ms. O'Brien said that when a student is sent to Optimus, there is a three to six month wait now. If the department is dissolved, the wait will be even longer.

Council Member Brannelly had some questions about the billable services. Ms. O'Brien reviewed the details of the billing with the Committee.

Council Member Walsh asked Dr. Evans if she had been consulted about the potential cuts. Dr. Evans said that in the three years she had been with the City, she had never been consulted on the proposed cuts.

VITAL STATISTICS

Dr. Evans stated that there are four people in the Vital Statistics office and this past year, two of those staff members have been extremely ill and out of the office. Dr. Evans said that she had spoken with Chairman Curwen about moving the department into the former lab space in the Health Department.

Council Member DePara had a question about the posting of the revenues in the budget. Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the numbers with Council Member DePara.

Council Member Baker asked Dr. Evans how the department could be improved. Dr. Evans said that every year that she had requested an additional staff member. The current location is small and cramped. She added that if the department was located in the Health Department, if there were people out in Vital Statistics, Dr. Evans could send a secretary to help keep the office open. She said that with the larger facility, it would be easier to handle the number of people.

Chairman Curwen said that he would speak to his colleagues about getting at least a part time staff person for Vital Statistics. Council Member Colon reminded everyone that last year, the Department had been talking about moving the Department to the Health Department. Dr. Evans replied that before Mr. Estrada left the Public Works Department, there were plans to move, but since Mr. Estrada left, there has been no progress. The State Librarian is willing to come down to view the area. The approval of the State Librarian will be necessary before the records can be moved.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the increase in rates. Dr. Evans said that State sets the fees and that the fees were not doubled but did increase.

Council Member Baker asked about the movement of the funds from the Vital Statistics Department to the bank. Mr. Nunn reviewed the current procedure.

COMMUNICABLE CLINIC

Ms. Meade came forward and said that last year, the needle exchange program (in Environmental Health) had taken in 33,000 syringes last year. If the syringe program was discontinued, the City would lose a significant grant funding. Ms. Meade said that after some discussion with the State, the Refugee program had been greatly reduced and Ms. Meade said that the current TB program is on an old DOS machine with a DOS program from the 1980s. Ms. Meade said that MERSA scare had not closed the Bridgeport schools and a lot of education had been done about this.

Chairman Curwen asked if the Police and Fire Department come to the Clinic for immunizations. Ms. Meade said that the Fire Department comes to the clinic for treatment but the Police do not. Ms. Meade then reviewed the STD and TB clinic

programs. She said there was a staff member who goes out daily to deliver medication to TB patients and watch the patients take the medication.

Dr. Evans said that currently the firefighters health plan was saving the City, but if there is not enough money for staff, the City would lose this benefit.

Ms. Meade pointed out that all the staff were public health nurses, so if she was short, a school nurse could be pulled from the schools.

Chairman Curwen had a question about the number of vacant staff positions. Ms. Meade said that her positions were filled.

Council Member Brannelly asked why the syringe program was in Environmental program. A brief discussion followed as to whether the department should be located in the Communicable Diseases.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Council Member Blunt came forward and greeted the Committee. He said that aside from the daily inspections of the delis, day cares, swimming pools and various other sites. He noted that an additionally sanitarian had just been hired and now there were five inspectors. There has been influx of complaints. The mini computer operator is overwhelmed. He requested that the Committee consider creating a data entry position for the Department.

Regarding the MERSA outbreaks, he said that his department had worked to make sure the schools had proper hand washing stations.

There was a brief discussion regarding transferring a part time mini computer operator to Environmental Health.

Commissioner Vizzo-Paniccia asked about inspections of restaurants. Council Member Blunt replied that the department had priorities and a list of the restaurants that had reoccurring violations and those establishments are inspected quarterly.

Commissioner Baker asked about the inspections of liquor stores. Commissioner Blunt reviewed the details of those regulations.

Commissioner Brannelly then asked about the productivity of the inspectors. Commissioner Blunt said that the City employees work to do the best for the City. He then asked if the training aspect could be increased.

Commissioner Martinez asked about some of the fees that were currently not collected because the regulations were not being enforced. He reviewed the process for applying a license and the variety of licenses available. A discussion about this followed.

HOUSING CODE

Mr. Sherwood gave a brief overview of the department. Mr. Minopoli came forward and said that bulk of his budget was salary and a small amount for supplies.

Chairman Curwen asked about Nob Hill being in violation. Mr. Minopoli said that the parcel has been inspected and fined. He reminded everyone that when he cites a violation, when the owner pays the fine, it goes to a different department. He said that his department needs another mini computer operator because his department is backed up.

Council Member Vizzo-Panicca asked about the anti-blight ordinances. Mr. Nunn said that anti-blight was handled by Atty. Howlett. The anti-blight office does not have the authority to step on someone's property, so the Health Department must send an inspector. A discussion followed about the difference between the anti-blight program and Mr. Minopoli's department.

LEAD PROGRAM

Ms. Gaines came forward and explained that she had been doing the lead poisoning program for many years. The salaries for the staff is covered by grant funding. She said that her department does not provide a lot of revenue but provide services that allow for matching grants. This includes testing of children in their homes. She said that the budget request is for the maintenance of the lead paint machine, which needs to be done every year.

SCHOOL NURSES

Ms. Garrity said that her department does not generate any funding. Ms. Garrity said that her department works closely with almost every health department in the City. She then read the list of all the various responsible for 32 schools, which includes 8 non-public schools. She said that the schools with high student populations such as Blacknum have a full time nurse. The schools with smaller student populations have a nurse that is there part time.

Ms. Garrity said that last year there were 137,000 visits to the nurses, about 8.5% of the students were sent home. If the nurses are reduced, the percentage of students will rise. 25,699 meds were dispensed. She then reviewed the various statistics with the Committee.

Council Member Baker asked about the non-public schools receiving services. Dr. Evans explained that the City is required by law to provide equal services to the non-public schools that have Bridgeport students. Council Member Baker asked about reimbursement and Ms. Garrity reviewed this procedure.

Council Member Walsh asked if a copy of planning for a worse case scenario. Ms. Garrity said that she would work on this. Council Member Walsh asked Mr. Nunn if this was mentioned in the Mayor's television statement. Ms. Garrity said that in a meeting she had heard that New Canaan had moved the nurses into the Board of Education and in the long run, it had proved more expensive.

Council Member Brannelly asked about getting the clerical help for the nurses. A discussion about this followed.

SCHOOL BASED CLINICS

Ms. Brenninger said that that were SBC in eight schools and staffed by a team of practitioners. Nurse practitioners can perform physicals. A student could wait up to two months for a physical and the NPs can get the students into the classrooms faster. The NPs can dispense medication and manage chronic illnesses such as asthma and obesity. Bridgeport has a high teen pregnancy rate, so the SBCs provide contraception. Ms. Brenninger also reviewed the statistics for those who have suicidal impulses and other social problems. The social workers have an outreach program. There is a full time dental director and a dentist who has been in the service. Oral health services are difficult to provide. Bridgeport is a national model and visited by the federal GAO staff. Any Bridgeport child can access services from the SBC with a signed consent form. The SBC now bills insurances and have collected \$9,000 more in reimbursements since last year.

Ms. Brenninger said that there was some federal funding available for renovating the clinic at Harding. If the Mayor's recommendation is followed, the SBC would be given no funding from the City and this would be a serious loss to the student population in Bridgeport, along with grant funding. The two social worker positions, which are grant funded, have not been filled for seven months because of the hiring freeze. If these positions were not filled, the funds would have to be returned to the grant source.

Commissioner Martinez asked about the clinics that would have to close if the funding was cut. Ms. Brenninger said that one of the clinics was totally dependent on City funding.

Commissioner Walsh asked about how much New Haven and Hartford receives in funding and how it disperses it. Ms. Brenninger said that New Haven handles the funding in a different manner.

Dr. Evans said that she had served Ms. Brenninger, Ms. Catrone, and one of the dentists with a lay off noticed, effective on June 27th. Ms. Brenninger said that she had worked for the City for eight years, and the dentist has worked for the City for eighteen years.

Ms. Brenninger asked why the after school program was not touched but her entire program was being eliminated.

Council Member Martinez asked Dr. Evans if she was involved with the decision making process regarding these cuts. Dr. Evans said that she unaware of the cuts until she was told. She had a meeting with the Mayor at 3 p.m. Commissioner Martinez said that he felt it was a sad situation when the department heads were not being approached for suggestions and ways to manage the cuts. Mr. Nunn said that he would be relaying this to the Mayor. He added that there had been a meeting with the Mayor about the budget earlier.

Council Member DePara said that he felt that it would be a responsible move to discuss the cuts with the department heads Council Member DePara said that he was on the Advisory Board for the School Based Clinics.

Council Member Austin left the meeting at 10:35 p.m.

Council Member Brannelly said that she had to give out lay off notices to people also, and felt that Council Member DePara and Council Member Martinez were also correct in their comments.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DE PARA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 9, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman; Leticia Colon, Daniel Martinez, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia; Howard Austin, Sr.; Andre Baker, Susan Brannelly

OTHERS: Council President Thomas McCarthy; Council Member Valle, Council Member Walsh, Council Member Brian Crowe; Council Member Ezequiel Santiago; Council Member James Holloway, Council Member Richard Paoletto; Council Member M. Evette Brantley

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. He quickly reviewed the rules and said that each speaker would be allotted three minutes.

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE MAYOR'S 2008-2009 BUDGET GENERAL FUND
AND BOARD OF EDUCATION PUBLIC HEARING**

Dr. John Ramos, Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education was the first speaker. He said that since he has worked in Bridgeport since 2006 and each year he has had to reconcile a budget that is different from the request. The first year this was a 6 million dollars shortfall, the second year was a 13 million shortfall and this year was a 5.5 million shortfall. He then asked those present that were Bridgeport Public School Students to stand. He said that in the last few years a clear path has been marked for the District and that the Cambridge Report was pleased with the progress. Dr. Ramos said that one way handle this would be not to open the new school buildings, another would be to close operating schools or laying off staff members. Dr. Ramos said that the recent report made it very clear that the Bridgeport Public Schools were understaffed. He said that this was not an adversarial move.

Max Medino, from the Board of Education, came forward and said that there would not be one attack against the Council tonight. He said that one way to handle this would be to reduce the over inflated health costs and put it in the operating budget. He said that it would be important for the Finch Administration to hear that the schools stand behind the nurses. He urged the Finch Administration to back away from the recent press releases and take another look. He said that he joined the Board of Education to open schools, not

to close them. Mr. Medino said that this was going too far and that when nurses are laid off and School Based Health Clinics are closed, it harms everyone.

Ms. Vanessa Del Rios came forward and said that she was a student at Central. When she moved to Bridgeport a year ago, she didn't have a doctor and that in order to enter school, she needed a physical. The only way that she got that physical was through the School Based Health Center. She said that every morning she can go to school, knowing that there was a place for her.

Eliana Sanchez came forward and said that she was representing the middle school children in Bridgeport. She said that she believe that the children of Bridgeport needed the health clinics. These clinics offer medical help regardless of being able to pay. The students need the support of the teachers and the nurses.

Ms. Tammy Boyle came forward and said that that she was a Columbus school parent. One of her children has severe asthma and often needs treatment two to three times a day. She asked who would call her to tell her that her child had been admitted to the hospital if there was no SBHC. She also asked how the children would learn without the librarians. She said that the Council needed to consider the priorities.

Rev. Luster came forward and said that he was disturbed that the Mayor had run on a platform saying that he was supporting Bridgeport, but this is not what is happening. He said that when the budget discussions mention laying off staff and teachers, then the interest of the City is wrong. He said that the interest regarding Steele Point showed that the priorities are off. He then requested that the Council look at all those gathered here and decided where the City's interest should be.

Ms. Enid Valentine came forward and said that she was worried about her son receiving medication. She said that she was fighting for her job and fighting for her union. The SBHC are doing wonderful work.

Ms. Donna Curran came forward with a letter from Senator Robert Russo, which she read into the record.

The Honorable Thomas C. McCarthy, Council President
Bridgeport City Council
Office of Legislative Services
999 Broad Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

To the Members of the City Council:

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Upon reading today' s Connecticut Post, I want to take a moment to share my concerns regarding the Bridgeport Board of Education budget. I am concerned anytime I hear a school in my district is threatened with closing, but I am particularly alarmed in this instance considering the substantial increase in funding that the City of Bridgeport has received this year.

Connecticut's children are my top priority as State Senator. However I am conscious of the fact that as we increase school funding, we also need to increase accountability.

I do not understand how the Bridgeport Board of Education is facing a nightmare situation considering that total education funding is increasing this year by more than \$10 million. The Governor, at the urging of the City Delegation, recently approved one of the largest increases in State Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding for Bridgeport in the history of the formula. Funding for Bridgeport schools increased \$9.5 million in FY08 and is scheduled to increase another \$7 million in FY09. On top of that, the City of Bridgeport has increased its contribution to education \$1 million this year.

Historically the city has short changed our schools and this increase does not even come close to contributing what we should, but it is forward progress.

Given these substantial funding increases, how can the budget options facing the Board of Education be as dire as board members believe? Can the Board give its assurance that \$164 million in educational aide fro the State of Connecticut is being spent efficiently? Before the Board of Education starts threatening to close schools, scaring parents and teachers, the need to first articulate how the funding they claim they need to prevent a "nightmare" will be spent.

Of course, we will never know for sure until the Board of Education submits to a thorough and independent forensic audit and management study. I intend to make funding for this audit one of my top priorities. The people of Bridgeport have a right to know how their money is being spent and considering more than 80% of our education funding is paid for by the state, the citizens of Connecticut have a right to know as well.

The Board of Education works hard to provide a quality education for each and every one of Bridgeport's children and I admire their hard work. However, I am disappointed they felt the need to scare parents and teachers with the threat of schools closing without a detailed explanation.

Sincerely

Robert D. Russo
State Senator, 22nd District
Bridgeport, Monroe, Trumbull

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Lili Delacruz, a Bassick student came forward and outlined some of the services that she had received from the SBHC. The SBHC helped not only this student but also her entire family.

Kensha Tosado came forward and also spoke about the benefits of the SBHC

James Amador came forward and explained that the students who come to school receive health care that they could not otherwise afford or have access to outside of the SBHC.

Herman Illingworth, who is a parent from the Advisory Council for the District and asked the same question that he did every year, which included lay offs. Every year the children have to pay for the mistakes that the City Government make. He asked when the Council would stand up and say "Enough is enough". He said that if the City would not pay for the nurses, the Board of Education would have to pay for them. Too many children depend on the SBHC and now they would be forced to lose these services.

Ahlaam Abdul came forward and said that she was a senior at Bassick High and knows the staff of the SBHC and the librarian on a personal level. The Teen Health Center provides the students with wonderful services. She said that as a senior she has the services, but fears for her fellow students. Ms. Abdul explained that she collapsed at school and was later told that she was not breathing. Because her school had a nurse practitioner, she was revived and received the care she needed. She said that without physicals, the students won't even be able to attend school and this would take away their right to an education.

Charles Torre came forward and said that he did not want the SBHC closed.

Romeo Garvin, a young Bridgeport student, then came forward with an adult who read his statement. He goes to school in Bridgeport and does not want the SBHC or the libraries closed.

Fatima Alves came forward and reiterated that it would be a major blow to close the SBHCs.

Larean Almonte came forward with her son, Elijah, and said that he was a juvenile diabetic, which requires constant monitoring. She then reviewed the protocol for diabetes and said that when her son's blood sugar dropped to 45, the school nurse was able to help her son and he received prompt medical treatment. Her son is not the only child in the School system with juvenile diabetes. She then asked if the nurses are cut, who will be checking her son's sugar levels or administer his insulin. She said that the school nurses make a significant difference in the lives of many students, and sometimes this is the difference between life and death.

Rita Torro came forward and said that she was an Emergency Room nurse. She was born in Bridgeport, works in the City and is committed as a Critical Care nurse at St. Vincent's. As city resident, she was concerned. When a child goes to register for school, the student must see a public health nurse. This is not only a school issue but a public health issue. In the event of a crisis or emergency, the public health nurses must be available. She said that she doubted that a private contractor would make this kind of commitment. The interest of the City is a priority of the Public health nurses. She said that the Public Health nurses represented the children who are diabetic, have seizures or epileptic, asthmatic, or have other serious health issues. She then recounted two or three incidents when registered nurses provided treatment for students who needed hospitalization. She pointed out that Greenwich

Lori Defeo came forward and said that she had been a Public Health nurse for 19 years. In 1992, there were few private clinics but many free clinics. As private or for profit clinics increased, the free clinics disappeared. Now the nurses work from the schools and are constantly expanding their knowledge and providing many, many services, which she listed. All public health nurses have been trained by FEMA to help in health care crisis. Law regulates many of their duties. Because of the dedication of the public health nurses in Bridgeport, many students receive services. She said that she could not stress the importance of having the school nurses as the first responders in the schools and often the nurses' records are the one thing that helps the City in court actions. No Child Left Behind mandates many of these things. These are essential services.

RECESS

Chairman Curwen announced that the capacity of the room had been exceeded and he requested that all those who are standing in the aisles to please be seated. Council President McCarthy said that this was not under his control but under the dictates of the Fire Chief. Chairman Curwen declared a recess until the situation was resolved at 7:10 p.m. The meeting resumed at 7:22 p.m.

Marianne Mutherburg of Suburban Avenue in Black Rock, came forward and said that she was the school nurse at Columbus. She said that in a history course the political philosophies of the two major parties. She said that the Democratic Party has always reached out the people who can not make their own way. She then asked what makes the Council members different from the Republicans and then asked why the people should vote for them. She said that she is giving services to increasingly younger children who are mothers and many, many students who need free medical care. This includes immunization, and many other services. The students need access to the libraries after school for help with their school work. One of the reason she had taken the job at a very low salary was because of the benefits, but after all these years, she had given back, given back, given back.

Richard Wellon of Trumbull said that he uses the library in the North End several times a week. He added that the library was an important educational tool in any city. Many of the students come to the library to use the computers, the books and also work on their home work. He said that there was a state of the art facility in the North End and closing it would be a tragedy.

A student from the Bassick High School Baseball Team came forward and explained that the team needs the health department in the high schools. He then compared the situation to the bottom of the ninth, being behind with 3 runs down, the bases loaded and Mayor Finch at the plate. This was not a good situation. The audience heartily agreed.

One of the students came forward who attends Harding Magnet. He said that he had a lot of respect for the Council but asked that the health centers be kept alive. It is something that is there in case of emergency. He then asked where the teenage moms would get care and where the teenage fathers would get support. He said that Bridgeport should expect great things.

Ellen Liptak, a public health nurse at one of the schools came forward and said that she had seen the Health Department come under scrutiny and that the services have been lost each time. As school nurses, they are in a critical position to provide the care for many who are not insured, under insured and those who need immediate care. Eliminating health services, closing schools and reducing teachers at the expense of the children is dangerous. She then asked if Mayor Finch had forgotten what it was like as a single father who was raising two boys. He had access to the services that are now being cut.

Lisa Bahalzy, who lives and works in Bridgeport, said that she was able to work with the SBHCs. She said that she was angry when she heard about the closing of the SBHCs. She said that some ask why the government should pay for this and her answer was because the residents need this. At Bassick High School, the program runs successfully when it has the full support of the school. When students experience a loss, the SBHC helps them. This includes attending funerals, arranging for hospital visits and help in general ways. The children and families served by the clinics are the ones that have the most serious needs. The teams fight for the students on a daily basis and now it is time for the community to fight for them.

Jennifer Carrera, a public health nurse came forward at Marvin School. She said that she was present to show the faces of the public health nurses and the staff. There have been over 88,500 visits alone. They often provide complex treatment to the students, including over 10,000 medications. She then asked if Mayor Finch would be available to administer these medications. The nurses also deal with psychosocial issues, like drug abuse, suicide, depression and other conditions. She also pointed out that Mayor Finch

was not present to hear all these residents speak. Cutting the services for the poor and the uninsured is not an action for desperate times.

Another resident came forward who is a public health nurse and said that she was worked for the City for a number of years. She said that it is rewarding career, but requires things such as dealing with asthma, depression, diabetes, suicide, dental hygiene and many other conditions. These nurses are charged with providing the health support of the students. She recounted that forty years ago on April 4th, Dr. Martin Luther King died and he was fighting for justice. Now, the residents of Bridgeport are fighting against the injustices.

Roberto Santos, thanked the Council for the chance to speak. He said that he was the youngest of five raised by a single mother. He said that it was important to have services for those who economically did not have the resources and then read an impressive list of the statistics from the United State Census Bureau. If jobs are lost, then there would be no more money to support a family and this will add more people into the stream that require services. 34% of the children live absent from the fathers according to the Census.

If the resources of the library had been eliminated when he was a student, Mr. Santos said that he would not be present to read the document to the Council. Libraries and the library personnel have been a valuable resource for him and he was now a graduate student at Southern Connecticut University. If these resources were not available, he would not have the ability to accomplish what he had and he urged the Council not to deny the students the resources that they need to become active citizens.

Ms. Rivas came forward and said that she was furious with what was happening today. Her daughter has asthma and without the school nurses, there would be two options, one of which was not taking the medication, or the second would be to self medicate. She said that she was furious that the City of Bridgeport was mishandling the funding and that the City should have great education just like Trumbull, and Shelton. She said that rather than magically creating positions for City officials, there should be an audit for those who really do their job and get removing those who are not.

Another resident came forward and said that she was originally going to reread the speech she gave in 2006, but thought it was time to ask questions, like why the children of Bridgeport were the ones to solve the budget shortfall. She asked if the budget makers so uncreative that the SBHC budget can not be spread out over all the departments and how many of the working poor being served if they can not rent in Bridgeport. She added that most of the staff do not make enough to rent these unit. The SBHC are nationally recognized and now they are being cut. She said that she did not know the Mayor personally, but heard that he was a good parent. The woman then said that she did not want to deny any Bridgeport child what the Mayor would provide for his own.

Dr. Evans, the Director of Bridgeport Health Department came forward and said that she was present to show everyone who she was. She also said she was a team player and was asking that the city spread the reductions around. She said that she was the face of public health in Bridgeport. She was asking that the Council and the Committee to work with her. She said that her first year, she fought for her department and if she stays another year, she will continue to fight for public health and social services.

Maureen Harrison came forward and said that she was coordinator of the victim assistance and handles all the homicides, and aggravated assault victims. She said that her job would be eliminated, unless the Council intervenes. She then spoke about her tax increase of 9% and that this was unconceivable. It is not fiscally responsible to have an increase at the start of a recession. The mayor proposed a \$600 rebate to the residents, but he has failed to keep his word. The City needs to use its reserve money and stop asking the homeowners to increase. Everyone has increase in water, electricity, sewage, and other services. Bridgeport residents pay all of the salaries. She suggested that there be a 3% property tax cap. Homes are evaluated at 8.2% property value. She said that she was disgusted.

Ann Troganowski came she works for the HIV syringe program. She then gave a quick overview of the program. She said that Bridgeport is one of the five cities that has the program. Last year, the program collected 33, 499 syringes from the City of Bridgeport residents. Without this program, these needles would have been tossed aside on the street or into the garbage cans. AIDS cases in Bridgeport have dropped. Currently 10% of the program comes from the City and 90% from the State. Treating one HIV patient for a year costs about 15-20 thousand dollars a year. The syringe program is much less expensive than the increase in patient care that would happen otherwise. Cutting this program will jeopardize the public health of the residents.

Carmen Ayala came forward and said that she was a resident, a taxpayer, an employee of the City, a single parent and involved in many other groups. In other surrounding towns, the SBHC are a necessity, not a luxury. In order to live in the City, parents have to work two and three jobs to survive. Parents can not work if their child has an asthma attacks. Thanks to the SBHC, Ms. Ayala said that she did not have to leave work when her child had an asthma attack. Referring children to the private companies works for certain situations, but the children come to the SBHC for everything else. These are the things that the students need to make good life choices. She suggested that all the departments buckle down and see what they can save so the nurses are not cut from the budget.

Kimberly Davis said that she was present to speak on behalf of the libraries. She gave a brief overview of why she moved to Bridgeport. She said that she works at the furniture collaborative and said that she had a good idea. She felt that the City should raise the proposed budget by 30%. She said that Bridgeport Library has a good collection. Ms.

Davis said that it has been said that the libraries are non-essential, but the children need a safe place to study and to use the Internet.

Kate Gredinger said that she was the supervisor for the SBHC, which are nationally recognized. She then asked where the 30% of children who have no insurance would receive care. She also asked where the 60% of the children who do have insurance but need treatment would need to leave school to receive care. Having the children not receive the treatment at the schools could put more strain on the Emergency Rooms because the students will arrive in more serious condition and without earlier intervention. Ms. Gredinger said that this was ridiculous, stupid and dangerous. She then asked what Mayor Finch saw that previous mayors did not. The previous mayors realized that the SBHC were vital and necessary to Bridgeport students, but Mayor Finch did not think so.

Beth Lazar came forward and said that Mayor Finch had announced that he was cutting services that were non-essential, but she said that a public library was essential to a democracy. She said that there was lot of information to help the citizens with voting and other issues, not to mention the additional wealth of information. Many citizens do not have access to the computers or other information. The Libraries are understaffed already and closing the library will not help the situation.

Charlene Torres and another student asked Mayor Finch why he was closing the SBHC. Her friends said that the SBHC had helped her on many different occasions.

Another Bridgeport resident who lives in a three family house on the East Side came forward and said that she lives in one of the units. Currently, she is just breaking even with her taxes. If the taxes go up, she will have to raise the rent. She said also pointed out that there is a City policy regarding employees that take too many sick days, which results in the employees losing pay. If an employee has to take care of a sick child, then they lose pay. She then said that everyone was talking about closing schools and closing SBHC, so she wanted to know where her tax dollars are going. She said that she was invested in City.

Christian Ballentine said that he had lived in Bridgeport for 19 years. He then said that he currently lives four doors away from Mayor Finch. He said that he had just gotten a part time job with the City, but could not get a full time job because the full time jobs are closed out now. He and his partner are struggling to make ends meet, but if they can't do it, they will become homeless.

A Bridgeport resident came forward and said that she was on the list, but had to leave. She then addressed the group in Spanish. She said that the Council members were here to serve the community and not to just sit around. If they aren't serving the community, then they need to be kicked out of office.

Another resident pointed out that the libraries get 1% of the budget, but was being cut. She said that the seniors also use the libraries. She said that she went to the Mayor's office for a copy of the budget, but had to ask several offices. She finally ended up at the library and was able to access a copy of the budget there because it was online.

Tom Errichetti who is the Treasure for the Bridgeport Library Board, which is a nonessential service, came forward and pointed out that 6,000 new library cards were issued to residents last year. Mr. Errichetti then listed a number of statistics showing what kind of services the libraries provide. The library is a service that is available to everyone in the City. Cutting the library services would give negligible savings to the City.

Jim O'Donnell said that he was present as a private citizen. He added that he was on the Library Budget Committee. He then said that the people present tonight needed to realize that this was not the Council's budget, but the Mayor's budget. Taking 25 positions from the library would put the library back to the dark days when Bridgeport almost declared bankruptcy. The renovations for the Black Rock branch will be completed in the fall, but the doors may not open if the budget is cut. He then asked the Council to seriously consider ways not to turn the library back into the dark days.

Another Bridgeport resident then came forward to speak about the SBHC. She said that the students need medical services and without them, they will not receive treatment. She then asked who would administer the medication and who would be responsible for the students who need medical supervision and assistance. Having the nurses in the school will keep the students safe.

Sal Iannis came forward and said that he lives in Ansonia and would like to speak about the SBHC. When he heard about the closings, he said that they would never close the Central SBHC. He then related a story about how he had received a call from a relative who is a Bridgeport student, who was having difficulty and not in school that day. Mr. Iannis said that he was able to refer his relative to the School Based Health Center and his relative received immediate assistance. Without the SBHC, that particular student would not have gone to school that day at all and would not have received the assistance he needed.

Nita Robelis came forward and said that she would like to thank those who came out to support the School Based Health Centers. She then said that the Mayor's budget and decisions benefits him and not the citizens. She said that the Mayor had kept the previous budget officials and simply shuffled around the officials who had created the previous budgets. The Mayor also eliminated a full time Labor Relations position, but created a part time Administration position with a salary that was higher than the full time position.

Dr. Zane came forward and said that she was from the Fones School at Bridgeport University. She said that the students from Fones had provided many dental services to the Bridgeport students. Tooth decay is 5 times more common than asthma and is a major problem for students. Only 40% of the HUSKY insured students get dental treatment and usually it is dental hygiene. Dr. Zane then gave a brief history of the creation of the Fones School at the University. The Fones School has been providing dental services to the students in Bridgeport since 1913. Eliminating or curbing dental hygiene for the students of Bridgeport is a major

Celeste Barry came forward and said that she was a registered HUSKY dental provider and was very aware of the situation in Bridgeport because she was serving as a legislative representative for one of the dental groups. She then said that the Commissioner of Public Health has asked for an increase in services for public health. With the economic downturn, the request for services has increased. She related that she was present on the baseball field when a student was struck in the mouth with a baseball and lost a tooth. She was able to replace the tooth and get the student to the to a dentist and today has that tooth in his mouth because of the immediate care provided. She concluded by asking that the program not be shut down.

Ms. Curran came forward and said that she was sorry that the Mayor was not present because this was his budget and not the Council's. She said that she had served for two years on the Council and on the Budget and Appropriations Committee. She said that the Budget was not in compliance with the Charter. She then directed everyone to Chapter 5 of the Charter. Only two years of the budget are on the website and the charter requires two years of forecasting. Ms. Curran said that she believed that there needed to be more cuts across the City department. Ms. Curran said that the City does not have the deep pockets needed to help the students, and that the City should go to State for assistance. Ms. Curran said that the system was broken and that she was hearing that the students of Bridgeport were suffering. She said that the way to fix the system was to hire a third party auditor.

Mr. Mark DelMonico came forward and said that he was the new chair of the Republican Town Committee. He then gave a brief overview of his work. He then said that he was present to speak on behalf of those who were not present tonight. Last year, the anticipated revenue spoken of last year did not materialize. He then said that those who were veteran Council members, there was no excuse for their approval of last year's budget. When the tax rate was increased to 40 mils, the Council members said that they would dedicate their time to reducing taxes. Now, the taxes are being raised and property reevaluations will be done later this year. Mr. DelMonico said that he would propose a full performance audit on all the departments. He then asked that Chairman Curwen resign from the budget Committee. He then added that Council President McCarthy

demand Chairman Curwen's resignation if Council Member Curwen did not voluntarily resign.

Marilyn Rossick, a resident, property owner, and taxpayer came forward. She said that she was more than glad to pay taxes to support education, to provide health care for students and to provide libraries. Mayor Finch said that education was a priority during the election. Ms. Rossick then distributed a document that compared what the Mayor proposed in terms of new positions and those eliminated. She then reviewed the figures with the Committee. She concluded that the Council could move this proposal forward. She urged the Council to take a more equitable approach.

Aurora Hill came forward and said that she had three children in the public schools. Education is important to children in Bridgeport. Libraries are important to Bridgeport because reading is power and the students need access. Prevention is cheaper than solutions. It makes a difference in the students' lives. Closing schools and opening new ones doesn't make sense because the new ones will quickly become overcrowded.

Ms. Holly Codis came forward and read a letter from her mother, who had spoken before the body that used to set the City property tax forty one years ago. The taxpayers, including all renters, have had enough and it needs to stop before all the property owners end up homeless and on the street also. With City taxes becoming higher and higher, it is cheaper for the developers to go elsewhere because of the tax rate. Raising the property taxes will push Bridgeport out of the market. Lower the tax rate and keep Bridgeport competitive.

A resident of 294 Brewster came forward and said that he was here to speak on behalf of Bridgeport. He said that he had moved to Bridgeport from Westport three years ago. He said that he was disappointed how the Fabrizi Administration and the Finch Administration disrespected the children of Bridgeport. The resident then said that Mayor Finch was proposing an increase in administration but also proposing closing the libraries. He suggested that Mayor Finch close the Annex and have his offices in City Hall. He also suggested that each non-union employee be evaluated and if found to be non efficient, be removed.

Rob Trager from the 139th and a teacher at Blacknum school. He said that he was here to speak on behalf on the libraries, the SBHC and the public health nurses. He then said that the students were asking questions about whether the library would remain open and why these cuts were being made. Mr. Trager asked the Committee to teach the students why these cut were being made.

Gary Marchetti, of Park Avenue, and a Bridgeport teacher came forward. He said that he was the president elect for the Bridgeport Teachers Union. When it is not the budget time, the Council members support education, but this changes at budget time. He then

encourage the people to provide Bridgeport with the kind of education like the neighboring towns have.

Laura Hurbus, a parent of a Black Rock student, then spoke. When the students are underfunded and libraries are cut, the students lose another year of educational funding. It is harder and harder to stay in Bridgeport when the schools are cut and the libraries are closed. Our students deserve better services.

Andy Kennedy came forward and said that she was a resident. She said that she had visited the schools to see what was so bad about the school system. Now, Ms. Kennedy knows the names of her child's teachers, the custodians, and enjoys the classrooms. She suggested that the schools be smaller. Ms. Kennedy said that it would be important to do the right thing and then increase the school budget.

Craig Jones came forward to address the Committee and said that without the budget cuts the services to the residents are woefully inadequate. It is ironic how the budget cuts affect those who need the services the most. He said that there are many residents who live in the valley of the shadow of death. As a homeowner, he is dismayed. As a citizen, he is very concerned because in the last two years, two Bridgeport students have committed suicide.

Another resident came forward and said that her son attends private school. Her husband had to work long shifts to do this. She said that the education that she received fifteen years ago is not equal to the education the public school students are receiving today. She had visited one of the schools and asked about a foreign language and the teacher looked at her like she was speaking in tongues. She added that it was a shame that the residents have to come to this meeting and spend all night discussing this. The Committee should know better. She then asked what would happen when there were no more services left and people moved out.

A Bridgeport student came forward to speak about the closing of the library. Of all the things that were cut in the City, the library should not be one of them. When a student has a school project, they go to the library. If the library is closed, the message is "Who Cares?" One of the goals is to attract young people to a place to where it is safe to do homework and safe to be. He said that his mother was one of the Bridgeport teachers. The last thing that the teaching staff needs is to have resources removed, whether it is a library or a SBHC.

A Bridgeport student named Grace came forward and said that she was opposed to closing the library. When she was in the classroom, it was not enough, but when she went to the library, she was able to keep up with her work. The Bridgeport Students are the future and it is not right to deny them the resources they need.

A First Street resident came forward to speak in support of the library and pointed out that the libraries are a good place to do homework.

Another student came forward and said that she had learned a lot at the library.

Andy Platis came forward and said that she represented Bridgeport Alliance. She said that she did not believe that the cuts in Bridgeport were random. She then proceeded to explain her viewpoint and concluded that the students of Bridgeport deserved better.

Ms. Joan Lane came forward and said that she was represented the Orbitz, which has two divisions in Bridgeport. She then said that the number of students seen had increase by more than 200%. The State of Connecticut had approved a rate for reimbursement for dental rates and it would be very ironic if the City cut the service just when the City would receive reimbursement for the very services cut.

Another resident who was a single working parent then addressed the Committee. She said that when her children fall and skin their knees, the school nurses comfort them and she appreciates this because she is at work and not there to help them.

Another parent came forward said that she had her two sons in the public school and was a single parent. She said that she dreads if her son has an asthma attack because the last attack ended up with her having to take her son to the hospital. She uses the libraries for computer access because in New York, these types of services are not available. She then requested that these services continue to be available to the students.

A resident of Capital Avenue named Charlene came forward and said that it would be important to have the resources for the teachers and the students. One of the students has a severe insulin problem and must visit the nurse four times a day. Without the school nurses, this student could not attend school.

Anna Lopez, a fifth grade student, came forward to ask why each year there were fewer and fewer resources. Libraries are great resources for everyone. Taking away the SBHC shows where the students are on the priority list. This is also true of removing the school nurses. If the resources are cut now, the City will pay later.

Tracey Wilkins came forward and said that she was parent, a property owner, and a taxpayer. The students should be a priority for the City.

Marie Valentin came forward and said that she was also parent. She said that when an asthmatic child needs his or her inhaler, they need it. Teachers can not administer any medication. She then asked why there were so many excuses. If the parents expect great things from the children, they need to give the children the resources. She asked why one

of her children who was in a Charter school had better opportunities than her other child who was in public school.

Jeff Kohut, a life long resident came forward and said that the proposed budget was wrong. Increasing the taxes would just give a final blow to the residents. There are very few people in Bridgeport who could weather a 9% tax increase. There should be no new taxes. The cuts for the libraries and SBHC will hurt the City with the loss of grant funding.

Bridgeport has had an 11% decrease in crime in the last year, thanks to the efforts of Chief Norwood. He has started up the block watch program again, and provided working radios to those participants in the block watch program.

Traffic speeding and traffic safety need to be addressed. Mr. Kohut then addressed the cuts for the youth programs and mentioned all the new special administration being added to the Board of Education.

Michelle a member of the SBHC came forward to read 10 year old Joseph Maran's statement. He said that he had gotten a flu shot from his SBHC and asked the Committee not to close the SBHCs.

Maraide Harvess, a City employee and resident came forward said that the Mayor and the Superintendent of School along with all the City officials should make the cuts from the administration. She pointed out that Council Member Curwen had been the chairman of the Budget Committee for the last ten years. She then asked why in the last ten years, the taxes had never gone down. She then said that the Mayor had gotten a \$20,000 raise, but she had never received a significant tax reduction.

Ms. Harvess pointed out that the sports programs were almost nonexistent. She said that the park gates are closed at 5 p.m.

John Gallard came forward and said that he did not see the budget for 2008; he has been told that there would be a significant increase in the mil rate. He then referred to the City of Providence, Rhode Island. When one of the mayors was charged with mismanagement of funds, the next mayor furloughed employees and then renegotiated the contracts with the unions. Mr. Gallard said that he had heard so many proposals for developments and then the project fizzled, never to be heard from again. He asked why. Mr. Gallard pointed out that while some of the Council Member are City employees and interested in keeping their jobs, this would be short sighted. In the seven years, his taxes went from \$4,000 to \$16,000, a 400% increase.

He then suggested that the union contracts be renegotiated, curb medical insurance for those who are obese and also look into taxing church property, and check the licenses of

cars parked on the street to verify their tax status. Reducing overtime for city employees because the overtime increases their retirements would also be helpful.

Another resident came forward and said that the choice was pay now or pay later. She asked that the funds that were proposed for cutting be restored.

There being no one else present who wished to address the Committee, Chairman Curwen closed the public hearing at 10:44 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER COLON MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 10, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman; Leticia Colon, Co-chair; Daniel Martinez, Susan Brannelly, Andre Baker, Howard Austin

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM

OTHERS: Council Member Robert Walsh, Mark Anastasi, City Attorney; Andrew Nunn, CAO; Brian Feeney; Adam Heller, Information Technology Services Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. and announced all the members present and their Districts.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Mr. Sherwood gave a brief overview of the proposed budget for ITS. He pointed out that there were two vacant staff positions. The only addition is for Special Services, for the running of one of the systems with United Way.

Mr. Heller came forward, introduced himself and said that there were a lot of exciting changes in the IT Department during the last year. He reminded everyone that the Department had reorganized a year ago, including upgrading the entire network. This included retracing and rewiring the telephones for the Police Department, the Fire Department, and consolidated phones in other City buildings. The Department has also upgraded or replaced every computer in the Police Department. He said that these improvements help the City employees react more quickly and provide more accurate information. There are plans to upgrade the telephone system and also expanding the wireless system.

Mr. Sherwood said that one of the major projects that is listed under IT is the Bridgeport System Integration Project that will bring all the various software programs into one server. Chairman Curwen asked if this would move the City away from using Advantage. Mr. Sherwood replied that it would, and proceeded to give the details of how this would happen. Chairman Curwen asked about the status of the project to migrate the information from Advantage to the new program. He added that before Advantage was utilized by the City, the staff was using logs and documents for reference. Chairman Curwen said that it would be important to have the projects completed so that the money

was not being wasted. He then asked about the new software for the Tax Collector's Office. Mr. Heller replied that it was expected that the installation would be done by the second week of May. Chairman Curwen then asked about some of the delinquent tax properties that have been on the books for years. A discussion about this issue then followed. Council Member Baker asked if the new system would be able to tap into Probate Court and this was discussed in relation to the collection of outstanding taxes.

The discussion then moved to the phone system as it relates to the fact that the East Side will be dug up for another project. Mr. Heller gave a brief overview of the project status to the Committee. Fiber optic connections have been installed between the three major buildings. Chairman Curwen had several detailed questions about this project, which Mr. Heller reviewed with him.

Chairman Curwen asked about the updating of the computers. Mr. Heller reiterated that every wire had been replaced in City Hall, the Police Department and the Fire Department. He added that the equipment routing the traffic had also been replaced. Council Member Baker asked about the new Public Facilities building. Mr. Heller said that this was in progress. Discussion about the ability of the network to allow data to flow between the buildings followed.

Chairman Curwen said that he was very conscious of the difference that the last year has made. He then asked if Mr. Heller needed all the employees in his department. Mr. Heller said that his department was working very hard right now. Chairman Curwen pointed out that Mr. Heller had eliminated two positions and added one. A discussion about the details of this issue then followed.

Council Member Baker asked about future increases in the budget for this Department as the systems become more modern. Mr. Heller said that the system is old and needs to be updated and that his department was in the process of moving towards better systems and servers. This included getting all the computers on the same operating system. Council Member Baker then asked about several other details mentioned in the line items. The discussion then moved to system security and how this is being handled.

Council Member Walsh had a question about the number of positions in the department. Chairman Curwen and Mr. Sherwood reviewed the details of this with Council Member Sherwood.

Council Member Brannelly had some questions about the Special Services, which Mr. Sherwood reviewed with her. Mr. Heller said that there were various departments that had home grown systems that someone had developed fifteen years ago, but the department hoped to provide a more current and better platform for them all to use. Discussion about the various system details followed.

Council Member Martinez commented that the department was always very helpful. Mr. Heller said that the Department has been setting standards and working out plans within the confines of the budget to move the City forward in terms of technology.

Chairman Curwen then related a problem he had with forwarding his City emails to his home computer. Mr. Heller said that he was aware of the problem and that steps were being taken to fix this.

Council Member Austin asked about the projected time line for the consolidation of all the various programs with the new applications. Mr. Heller listed the top four departments that would be consolidated and stated that this process had not been started yet.

Council Member Martinez asked about the City website. Mr. Heller said that a company in California hosts it and they are the ones that do the updating. It is a proprietary system. Mr. Heller said that once the website is in house and is stabilized and updateable, then it will be redesigned.

RECESS

Chairman Curwen announced a recess at 7:45 p.m. The Committee resumed their meeting at 7:55 p.m.

CITY ATTORNEY

Mr. Sherwood reviewed the changes in the City Attorney's Office and said that there was an increase in the paralegal budget, and an increase in the suits and claims line.

City Attorney Anastasi came forward and introduced the other members of the staff present. He said that the proposed budget included a number of new positions and that his department was pleased with the recognition by the Mayor's Office that there needs to be some enhancement in the City Attorney's office. This will also reduce the need for outside counsel, particularly in terms of the business contracts. Attorney Anastasi said that it would be good to discuss the details of the various cases in executive session. He then reviewed some of the general details regarding some of the long term litigation cases.

Atty. Pachaca came forward and spoke about some of the issues with the management of construction contracts. Chairman Curwen asked about the role of the project managers. Atty. Pachaca explained that the project managers were supervised by the contract holders. Discussion of the role of the project managers then followed.

The discussion then moved to the collection of delinquent taxes and how this affects the budget. Chairman Curwen said that while he supported having Atty. Liskov work on the outstanding property taxes, he had some serious concerns about having another City

Attorney staff member working on WPCA charges. Atty. Anastasi said that Atty. Liskov had been busy setting up the program for the delinquent property taxes and now had that up and running. Now Atty. Liskov was expanding the program into other areas, such as anti-blight and other quality of life areas. Chairman Curwen asked what the WPCA charges back for Atty. Liskov's services. Atty. Anastasi then reviewed this arrangement with the Committee. Chairman Curwen said that he had recently heard some discussion about the City allowing the Town of Trumbull to connect to the City's sewer system. The discussion then revolved around the details of this issue.

Council Member Martinez had several questions about the various aspects of the budget. Atty. Anastasi said that there had been a significant reduction in terms of the library because the current trend is towards electronic research.

The discussion then moved to a staff position and the reorganization and reallocation of the City Attorney's Office. He said that he believed that Mr. Sherwood had the job description.

Council Member Brannelly then asked about the difference between adding two paralegals and the cost of using outside counsel. She said that she realized that there would not be a total elimination of the use of outside counsel, but wished to know the impact of using the paralegals on the use of outside counsel. Atty. Anastasi said that they would be a good addition to the office and would help primarily with litigation.

Two attorneys would be replacing one vacancy, which the Department had refrained from filling the position at the request of the prior Administration. Atty. Anastasi said that the position needed to be filled with a serious litigator. The second position that needs to be filled with a serious litigator is the position that is currently held by Atty. Massaro, who was nominated by Governor Rell for a position on the Superior Court Bench. Atty. Massaro will be leaving in a matter of weeks to assume her new position. Atty. Anastasi said that both positions needed to be filled with serious litigators because the City will be involved in more business litigation in the coming months.

The third position is also a litigation position, but for someone who has an expertise in education. The Board of Education is looking to reduce its outside legal services. The BOE is looking to the City Attorney's Office to handle more of the litigation. There will be credit from the BOE for those expenditures. Atty. Anastasi said that he hoped working with the BOE on this would help ease the somewhat strained relationship that periodically exists between the City and the BOE. A discussion about this then followed.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the goals that were listed in the budget and how the Department would know if they attained them. Atty. Anastasi explained that there were two roles, one of support services and the second one that responds to outside pressures. There are some goals that are difficult to set because they are driven by third

parties. These are driven by the nature of the case. He added that his Department works closely with the other offices such as the Tax Collector's but the question is whether or not the income can be broken down in terms of the income to show what the City Attorney's Office is actually producing. Atty. Anastasi pointed out that the system works well with the WPCA because Mr. Harris at the WPCA tracks the numbers. The City has been focused on the substantive produce. With the new City Staff tracking, Atty. Anastasi said that his department would be implementing the new tracking system.

Council Member Walsh said that he would like to see what the City pays for legal services and a break out regarding the payments for settlements. City Attorney Anastasi said that he expected to be able to close out some of the lingering cases. He added that he hoped to see a decrease in outside legal fees with the hiring of John Bohannon. Atty. Anastasi pointed out that there were some cases that the City has no option but to provide a defense.

Council Member Baker asked about what the City Attorney's Office to limit the liability of the City. Atty. Anastasi said that there has been some training that was held with the police in order reduce the number of police related complaints. Atty. Anastasi said that there was no way to prevent fall downs. The other uncontrollable area was poor driving skills. When a fine was levied against the police officers, it resulted in detailed inspection of all the police vehicles and the officers driving the exact speed limit, along with a labor contract complaint.

Another staff member pointed out that the preventative training helps. Now the City has been working with a good investigator who has been able to follow up incidents, even in the civil liabilities.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER COLON MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS LITIGATION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Committee, Atty. Anastasi, Mr. Feeney, Mr. Nunn and another staff member entered into Executive Session at 8:46 p.m. and reconvened into public session at 9:43 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER COLON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 11, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman, Leticia Colon, Co-chair; Andre Baker, Susan Brannelly, Daniel Martinez (6:46 p.m.)

STAFF: Tom Sherwood, OPM, Michael Feeney,

OTHERS: Tom White, Legislative Services; Scott Hughes, Bridgeport Library Director; Tom Errichetti, Library Board of Directors Treasurer; Michael Feeney, Chief Financial Officer; Sylvia Boyd, Bridgeport Library; Jane Flynn, Bridgeport Library; Judith Rossa, Bridgeport Library; Ronald Fontaine, Bridgeport Library; John Soltis, Bridgeport Library; Elizabeth Van Tuyl, Bridgeport Library; Angela Guglielmo, Bridgeport Library; Nancy F. Sweeney, Bridgeport Library; Diane Kurtz, Bridgeport Library; Sharon Breslow, Bridgeport Library; David S. Berkowitz, Bridgeport resident; Anne Watkins, Bridgeport Library; Conzuelo Salas, Bridgeport resident; Paula Keegan, Bridgeport Library; Audrey Bear, Friends of Bridgeport Library; Martha Sweeney, Friends of Bridgeport Library; Anne Cunningham, Bridgeport Library; Diane Antonelli, Bridgeport Library; Sharon Tiago, Bridgeport Library; Aaron Leo, Connecticut Post reporter; Ann Osborn, Bridgeport Library; Nick Pasquariello, Public Access Cable TV, Council Member Maria Valle; Council Member Michelle Lyon

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. He then introduced the members of the Committee to those present.

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

Mr. Sherwood gave a brief overview of the budget request and said that there were no changes in the Mayor's Budget. Mr. Sherwood said that last year, he had requested some increases, but the Council had adopted the same funding from the previous years.

Council Member Martinez joined the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Mr. White said that there was one personnel issue that had not been address by the previous Council. When Chairman Curwen asked about this, Mr. White said that there was a problem about his job description as a department head. This issue had been sent to the Ordinance Committee and the co-chairs for the Committee would not allow it on the agenda.

Mr. White said that he could live the Mayor's budget but there would have to be some transfers. Mr. Sherwood said that he would sit down with Mr. White and work on re-aligning the funding.

Council Member Baker asked Mr. Sherwood about some of the details of the various line items. Mr. White said that he would like to hire a consultant to analyze the interaction between the Legislative Office, the City Attorney's Office and the City Clerk's Office. He then gave a brief outline of the problem.

Council Member Walsh commented that the Council could not continue to have a City Attorney that continues to defend the Administration. He said that it would be important to have a fair and independent counsel for the Council Members.

Council Member Baker asked about the fact that the Council Members' stipends are taxed. Mr. Feeney said that he would send the Council Member copies of the opinion given by an independent counsel regarding this. Chairman Curwen then gave a brief history of the situation, which started during the Gannon Administration and continued forward.

Mr. White said that considering the budget and the impact it will have on many City employees, he would be making recommendations through out the year for economies regarding procedures.

LIBRARY

Mr. Sherwood said that the Mayor's proposal cut about one third of the library's budget and that there was a meeting with Mr. Hughes about this. Mr. Sherwood said that Mr. Hughes had very little time to react to this situation.

Mr. Hughes said that he had proposed as conservative budget of 5.1 million dollars. There are some vacancies and attrition during the years and that millions of dollars had been invested towards opening the Black Rock branch in the coming fall. This was done to maintain the services to the four branches, a book mobile and maintain the staff. The cuts would close the four branches, the book mobile would not be used and staff would be laid off. This would also mean that the main library might not be able to provide uninterrupted service. Mr. Hughes then reviewed the employees' position and said that

the cuts would eliminate all the part time positions. He said that he had discovered the cuts in the Mayor's budget by reading about it in the paper.

Mr. Hughes pointed out that the Mayor has said that he would get back to basics, which Mr. Hughes agrees with. The Mayor also said that he would follow the Charter. Mr. Hughes said that he agreed with this also. He then added that the Library was covered in the Charter in Chapter 16.

Mr. Hughes said that the City needed to provide these essential services. He pointed out that during hard economic times, people use the libraries more rather than less. Cutting the funding does not diminish the people's need to use a library. This will have a very negative impact on the City.

Chairman Curwen said that after 10 years of doing budgets, he was very impressed with the number of teens that came forward at the public hearing to speak in favor of the library. He said that the general feeling among the Committee was that they were going to try to do the best they could for the library.

Mr. Errichetti came forward and introduced himself as the treasurer for the Library Board. He said that Mr. Hughes had worked in a town in New York to institute a resident initiated additional tax to support the libraries. Mr. Errichetti said that the late Judge Sagan had left the Bridgeport Library an endowment that yields about \$60,000 a year. However the stipulation is that if the funds are used for operations, the Library will lose the access to the fund for six years.

Mr. Errichetti said that when a public library is closed, it sends a very strong negative message. He added that he had been planning to give a significant donation to the library in memory of his recently deceased father, but with the possibility of the library being closed, he could not do this.

Mr. Errichetti said that it takes approximately 5 staff members to run each location. He added that Old Mill Green and Newfield are rental facility. Even if the branches are closed, the lease will still have to be honored.

Council Member Martinez asked about the one time investment. Mr. Hughes explained that this was for technology and that it was not put in the Capital budget. Chairman Curwen said that in Greenwich this could be work on, but Bridgeport is distress and the money just isn't there. A discussion about the library that had been planned for construction was not built because a parcel of land had not been acquired.

Council Member Lyons asked if Mr. Hughes knew what the impact of closing the libraries would be on homeschooled students. Several of the staff members reported about the number patrons who utilized their facilities and are homeschooling.

Council Member Brannelly had some questions about the types of computer uses at the library. Ms. Boyd, the IT coordinator for the libraries, then gave a brief overview of the use and how the machines are allocated. Chairman Curwen asked if the library had a replacement for their machines. Ms. Boyd said that there were 200 machines and that they had hoped to replace 40 a year. An operating line for computer replacement of \$40,000 a year would give the library a five year replacement plan.

Council Member Lyon asked about the overtime allocations. One of the Assistant librarians reviewed the overtime issues and stated that it was mostly custodial staff or the librarians who work past 5 p.m. as part of the contract obligations.

Council Member Martinez said that he would like to help out the libraries as much as possible, and that he was recommending that when the library comes back for a second presentation, that the budget be trimmed as much as possible.

Council Member Baker asked about saving that could be found. Mr. Errichetti pointed out that the more open floor plans helps to reduce the need for library staff. He also explained that the North End Library has a community room that can be used by non-profit groups. Mr. Errichetti said that if the library could be made more efficient, then it could be more available.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER COLON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 16, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman; Leticia Colon, Andre Baker,
AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Susan Brannelly

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM; Andrew Nunn, CAO

OTHERS: Janet Finch, Asst. Benefit Manger; Larry Osborne, Deputy
Director Labor Relations; Michael Feeney; Council Member
Robert Walsh.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting together at 6:40 p.m.

LABOR RELATIONS/HUMAN RELATIONS

Mr. Sherwood gave a quick overview on the Mayor's Budget. He reviewed the Health Benefits cost information that was in the financial binder with the Committee.

Ms. Finch came forward and distributed a copy of a document outlining the health care plans and costs. She explained that the City was working on cost sharing plans with other municipalities, like West Hartford, Stamford and Norwalk. Ms. Finch said that City was paying \$27.89 per employee per month and that the administrative costs for the plan was one of the lowest in the State.

Chairman Curwen asked about the allocation for the retirees. Ms. Finch then reviewed the details of this issue.

Council Member Walsh asked if an annual actuary analysis had been done. Mr. Sherwood said that the analysis had been done and that the analysis figures were slightly higher than the City's figures, showing a 7.8% growth. Chairman Curwen then asked if a copy of this could be sent to the Committee members.

Council Member Baker asked about the amount of claims that were actually filed. Ms. Finch indicated where the figures were found in the budget binder. Council Member Baker then asked about the buyout option. Ms. Finch said that there are employees that decided not to receive the City benefits and that the City gives these employees \$500/yr. in recompense.

Council Member Brannelly then asked about the Medicare provision. Ms. Finch explained that employees hired before 1985 were not eligible for Medicare because the City did not pay into Social Security. The City has worked out an alternate wrap around plan for those employees. Anyone who is not Medicare eligible is enrolled in Health Net.

Chairman Curwen asked about the re-enrollment. Mr. Sherwood explained that a re-enrollment is expensive and labor intensive. Health Net would have charged the City for the work. At the time, it was unclear whether Health Net would have the contract again. Ms. Finch said that there were 13,000 enrolled in the program currently. Chairman Curwen said that he had believed that the audit had been done. A discussion then followed about this topic.

Council Member Brannelly said that this was the type of issue that the City residents are talking about and it needs to be addressed. Mr. Feeney commented that the Fire Department, the Police Department and Public Works had taken an aggressive stance on long term disability. He added that Heart and Hypertension is mandated by the State for Police and Firemen who were hired before a given date.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked what the co-payments were. Ms. Finch said that it was approximately \$12.00/per week for a single person. Labor Relations recently negotiated a 12% co-pay for the most of the unions.

Council Member Baker asked Ms. Finch what the goals were for the Benefits Office. Mr. Sherwood said that the office was preparing an RFP, and also learning how to gain the most benefit from Medicare.

Ms. Finch said that after the third refill, the employees are required to use mail prescription.

LABOR RELATIONS

Mr. Osborne came forward and said that his department will have to do a little bit more with a little bit less. He said that there were currently ten open contracts, one of which is the Police Department. He then listed the other nine unions that were scheduled for negotiations.

Chairman Curwen asked what the most vulnerable areas for the contracts would be. Mr. Osborne said that it would be the benefits. That is the biggest burden for the City. A discussion then started about the benefits and disadvantages of having a “twenty years and out” plan.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if a Council Member could sit in on arbitration meetings. This will be checked into and Mr. Osborne will get back to Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia.

Chairman Curwen asked about consolidating departments with Benefits and Labor Relations. Mr. Osborne said that the currently system works and that the Civil Service has a different focus.

Council Member Colon had a detailed question about the other services listed in the budget. Mr. Osborne pointed out that the arbitrators are very expensive and this needs to be factored into budget.

Council Member Baker asked about having preference points for Bridgeport residents in regards to benefits. Ms. Osborne explained that the State Legislators had blown that concept out of the water. Ms. Finch added that with the Civil Service, any resident who passes any tested entry position gets a 10% point transfer of the passing score. She then explained how this could affect a person's ranking on the candidate sheet.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 17, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman; Leticia Colon, Co-chair; Andre Baker, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM

OTHERS: Council Member Maria Valle; Charles Carroll, Parks and Recreation Director; Luann Conine, Superintendent of Recreation; John Cottell, Public Facilities Acting Deputy Director; Gregg Dancho, Beardsley Zoo Director; Robert Kennedy, Public Facilities Acting Director; Paul Catino, Budget and Policy Analyst, Andy Nunn, CAO; Melanie Howlett, City Attorney's Office; Council Member James Holloway; Council Member DePara; John Tristine, Barry Skinner, Engineering

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. He then introduced the members of the Committee.

PUBLIC FACILITIES - ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Sherwood then gave a brief overview of the budget. He reminded everyone that CRRRA Pilots would drop off in December of 2008. There is also a drop in the tonnage, but that is not a loss to the City. He also explained that the Department had realigned some of the positions, such as Parks, which is now found with Public Facilities.

Mr. Catino distributed a document "FY09 General Fund Budget Discussion Public Facilities Administration" to the Committee members. He said that he would be presenting the written material to the Committee and would be introducing the various members. Mr. Kennedy, the Acting Director would be presenting the various department heads. Mr. Catino said that they had worked hard not to reproduce the information in the budget binders.

There are 14 divisions in Public Facilities, which are Administration, Garage, Roadway, Sanitation & Recycling, Transfer Station, Maintenance, Parks, Recreation, Golf Course, Zoo, Airport, Engineering, Harbormaster, and Construction Management Services.

Acting Director Kennedy then gave a brief overview of the department. This included a computerized recording for preventative maintenance, installation of GPS, safety training and preventative courses and the Toter program. The City is also purchasing alternative fuel vehicles.

Chairman Curwen asked about the elimination of one of the positions for answering the 211 phone and also handles the complaints from the public. Acting Director Kennedy said that he was greatly concerned about this because it would reduce services to the public. Mr. Sherwood said that it was part of ITS.

Council Member Baker asked about the Special Coordinator positions. Mr. Catino reviewed the job positions and responsibilities. He said that these were administrative positions that handle the entry of the various billing. Another position handles the anti-blight codes.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the Toter program. Mr. Sherwood said that issue would be on the Capital Budget agenda for the next meeting.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the bathrooms at the Golf Course. Mr. Sherwood explained that the repairs that she was referring to were the handicapped bathrooms, which were renovated.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about alternative fuel vehicles. Mr. Kennedy reviewed the details of this with her.

Council Member Valle said that she believed there were three anti-blight offices: Tom Coble's office; the Health Department anti-blight; and the Public Facilities anti-blight. Mr. Cottell explained that the Public Facilities Department deals with blight in the public right of way, such as leaving a pile of refuse on the sidewalk or graffiti. He explained that Public Facilities does not have the right to go onto private property. That would be the domain of the Public Health or the NRZ. Council Member Valle said that it seemed to take too long to respond. Mr. Cottell said that the Public Facilities can only deal with garbage on the sidewalk or street. Council Member Baker said that in his district there were a number of problems and that it seemed that it never was the right office.

GARAGE

Mr. Andy Kennedy, the Garage Supervisor, came forward and said that the garage was in the process of a major overhaul. There is also an implementing a new vehicle maintenance information system to track parts and repairs.

Acting Director Kennedy pointed out that currently some of the equipment is undergoing the seasonal conversion from winter to spring/summer status. Mr. Sherwood said that the

equipment with hydraulic arms require constant maintenance because they have so many different systems in the vehicle such as the snow plow conversions.

Mr. Kennedy said that there had been some purchases of 14 vehicles from the State that have very low mileage, which will really help the fleet. Acting Director Kennedy said that the City was starting to recap the tires. That will help. Acting Director Kennedy also said that the Department was considering putting nitrogen in the tires, which would give better gas mileage.

Mr. Sherwood said that Council Member DePara had asked about the oils that were being used. Mr. Kennedy reviewed the details of the oil analysis program, which extends the life of the oil from 3,000 to 12,000 miles. There is also a fuel savings with the synthetics.

Mr. Catino said that having the inventory system is a huge advantage because the mechanics can know in advance what parts are available and whether a part needs to be ordered. The budget for the automotive parts has dropped with the savings of \$25,000. He said that usually the budget for parts was almost depleted at this time.

Chairman Curwen asked about the garage. Mr. Robert Kennedy explained that the garage is the old sanitation garage, which barely has room to allow the work on the truck to be done.

RECREATION AND PARKS

Mr. Sherwood gave a brief overview of the Department and distributed a Summary Fact Sheet.

Ms. Conin came forward and gave a brief overview of the opening of Cesar Batalla School and the program that Recreation and Parks held there. There was also a Blackham program in memory of Jackie Lindsay Sr., a coach, who recently passed away. A bowling program was held at Thomas Hooker, a swimming program and swim academy at JFK and Blackham. The swim academy was geared towards lifeguard certification.

The summer camps ran well and calls have already started for registration. There are two trips a week and the program runs for five weeks. The fee is \$75.00 for the session. The campers can also swim every day when the weather permits.

Ms. Conin said that they had their ASA league teams that went from five teams to eight. Mr. Sherwood commented that the Department had managed to do this on the same budget.

Chairman Curwen asked if there was any coordinating between with the Community Center and their programs. Ms. Conin said that she would make a call and explore the opportunity.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the private schools were participating. Ms. Conin said that she would also consider this.

Ms. Conin said that one of the camps that she had not mentioned was the tennis camp. This was distinctly different from the day camp because the students are very focused on tennis and don't willingly put down their rackets during the program.

Council Member Colon asked whether the program give the children any snacks. Ms. Conin said that they don't provide any snacks for the evening programs. Council Member Colon then asked about martial arts and said that Chief Norwood's martial arts program had been cut. Ms. Conin said that the program they had two years ago was not well attended.

Mr. Sherwood said that a lot of the cost was the overtime for the custodian and security to the Board of Education. If this amount could be reduced in any way, it would allow more children and more programs. He also commented that the buildings were already open and the custodian was already on site.

Chairman Curwen said that he wanted to commend Ms. Conin and Mr. Carroll for the wonderful job they are doing with such limited resources. Council Member Colon agreed.

PARKS ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Sherwood said that there were 44 parks, 37 athletic fields, 31 restrooms, and many other sites, but that they only have 22 employees augmented with seasonal employees. There is always something going on 7 days a week. There is also the tree maintenance and the plantings to maintain. Mr. Carroll said that the City had abandoned the end of Lafayette Street to the University of Bridgeport and UB then made it into a soccer field, which the Bridgeport students can use.

Paving has been done around the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, the PT Barnum statute has had the ten foot iron fence removed and bushes will be planted instead. Safety issues are being addressed at Beardsley Park. Signage at Seaside Park will be changed to be readable both from the roadway and the beach side. There will be a tree planting program for private property. Park security is five officers for the week-days and two Segueways will be purchased. The grove section in Seaside Park has been completed. There are a number of groups who are interested in coming in to clean up the parks.

There is a eight member board for the Parks and they work very hard and attend the meetings regularly. There are numerous groups applying for using the parks for picnics. Work is being done on moving the residents who already have stickers on their vehicles to speed the process up on holidays.

Mr. Carroll said that there had been a request to repair the baseball field, which is being worked on.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had some concerns about a hole in a wall by the entrance to one of the parks. Mr. Carroll said that this would be worked on. She added that there was a site where a low gate was damaged and suggested that the fencing from the P.T. Barnum monument be used at that site. She also mentioned that there was an electrical cord dangling from the flagpole. Mr. Carroll said that he would check this out and that he was aware of the broken gate situation. He encouraged people who saw people lifting things over the broken gate should call the police and report the illegal activity.

The discussion then moved to issues regarding the funding for the Zoo and earmarking some of the funding.

Chairman Curwen then had some questions about the various positions that had been re-aligned. Mr. Carroll explained the positions had been moved around so the employees were found in the location where they were physically working. That is why someone was moved from Roadways to Parks because that employee maintains the roadways in the parks.

Ms. Conin said that the ARM program had been run at the golf course and the beaches. Now there are defibrillators at the beach, Beardsley and the golf course. An ambulance will be located at Seaside Park all summer.

Council Member Holloway said that he had been on North Avenue site in January and the lights were on. Mr. Carroll made a note of that and said that he would check it.

Council Member Baker had several questions about the tree maintenance. Mr. Carroll said that while there were some trimming and care, it was difficult to plan for situations as storms and deadfalls.

Council Member Holloway said that his district has five streetscapes and he believed that there were over 100 trees that have not been replaced. He said that the mulching around the base of trees also had not been done. If there is going to be a street scape, he felt that it was important to maintain it.

Council Member Baker asked what would happen if the design for Pleasure Beach fell through. Mr. Carroll said that last year there had been a major effort to clean up the area but that he did not foresee a bridge coming. It would be possible to clean up enough of the area for the public's use. He said that the bridge had been out since 1996 and that last year, a barge was brought in and five cars were removed from the island. Council Member Holloway had a question about whether the bridge was still serviceable. Mr. Sherwood said that there had been an major engineering study had been done on the bridge and it would cost \$20 million dollars to replace the bridge. Council Member Holloway said that a study should be done.

PARKS- ZOO

Mr. Dancho said that the warthog program and the new animals at the zoos had gone well. One of the upcoming programs will be a professional bird show.

People's United Bank had given a major grant for a major graphic update. The front gate and the wetland area will be the first areas that will receive the new graphics.

The Zoo is up for accreditation and this will take two days. The accreditation will be issued by the September Board meeting.

One of the issues that the Zoo is looking at is having high schools students programs. This will be learning about conservation programs, there will also be students who are learning about interacting with the public and other aspects.

The Zoo Folks Concerts will be starting up again and there will be four concerts this year, cumulating with Arlo Guntrie. The Wing Ding event and the Free Shakespeare will also be held again.

Mr. Dancho said that the Zoo is formulating a Disaster plan for animals in the event of a disaster.

The Capital Campaign is being worked on. Mr. Dancho said that he travels to Hartford twice a month for lobbying. He also said that he was excited about doing the solar demo at the Zoo. There will also be a Farmer's Market on Sundays and a grant has been received for marketing.

Mr. Dancho said that the paving at the front of the park helped the Zoo and that the last three days there has been packed at the Zoo.

Chairman Curwen said that he was going to try to move the Capital Bonding issue forward.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the graphics could be outsourced. Mr. Dancho said that the Zoo staff has a graphics designer on staff and the work would be sent to a company that deals with zoo signage.

GOLF COURSE

Mr. Sherwood said that the recent improvements had helped. He also said that a Master Plan for the course would be done in the coming months.

Mr. Carroll said that there are three full time employees, and the rest of the staff are seasonal employees. There will be additional costs for the fields at Veteran's Park will need additional maintenance. With the water bonding, the courses now have grass and there is more maintenance required. However, a lot of the maintenance is being done in house along with various renovations. The driving range has been renovated and Mr. Carroll hopes to see a 3% increase. Customer service and the increase in maintenance has resulted in an increase. Tournaments are being booked and the partnership with First Tee has been working out well. First Tee has paid for the Master Plan. Cart paths will be put in. The hope is to increase the revenue without destroying the course.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about a gross receipt program. Mr. Carroll said that when the contract is up, then the items would be on the table. There are four years remaining on the current lease.

Council Member Baker asked if there were any special rates for Bridgeport residents. Mr. Carroll said that there was a lower rate for residents.

Council Member Colon asked if a miniature golf course had ever been considered. Mr. Carroll said that one was being proposed for Seaside Park by the concession stand.

RECESS

Chairman Curwen called for a recess at 9:25 p.m. The Committee resumed the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

AIRPORT

Mr. Sherwood said that there were no changes to the budget for the airport.

Mr. Ricci said that the renovations and rebuilding were on schedule. He said that the new building should be fully functional by 2010. The T hangers are going up and rents are coming in. It should generate \$48,000 from rents, but it will also increase the fuel sales and other revenues.

The issues regarding the relocation of the road with the Town of Stratford has continued. Mr. Ricci said that he has requested more money for fuel and that he needs the fuel for the vehicles. Mr. Ricci said that it is becoming more difficult and that this year was good because there was not much snowfall.

Council Member Baker asked if there were other sources of revenue. Mr. Ricci said that the airport gets five cents per gallon of fuel pumped, but with the sagging economy, the revenue may be reduced. There was a discussion about the some of the outlying parcels for non aviation uses. There is also the possibility of some housing with attached cars and T hangers.

Council Member Colon asked about the possible sale of a large parcel near the airport. Mr. Ricci said that once that sale is finalized, it would take about two or three years before revenue will be produced from the development. Council Member asked about the size of the airport. Mr. Ricci explained that in terms of acreage, it was the same size as one of the major airports, but because of the wetlands, it is limited in terms of expansion. When asked if the State of Connecticut had been interested in purchasing the airport, Mr. Ricci said that the State did not appear to be interested. He also said that he did not believe that a municipality should own or operate an airport.

HARBOR MASTER

Mr. Sherwood then gave a very brief overview of the Harbor Master. Mr. Savino came forward and reviewed some of his job responsibilities. He said that there were two major grants that were just being finished up for Homeland Security. He said that his revenue comes from the State boat registration, from the mooring fees, and Harbor fee. The registration fees are constant, but the other two fees fluxate according to the use of the harbor.

Council Member Baker asked about the various fees. Mr. Savino reviewed the role of the Port Authority, which was formed to develop the Harbor. It also acquires property in order to put it in back in public hands. The Harbor Master is responsible for assigning moorings, law enforcement along with the police, and the safety of the harbor.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about raising the mooring fees. Mr. Savino said that the State set a ceiling of \$200 for one of the fees. He also said that he did not think that with the rising price of fuel, it would not be wise to increase any fees because the market would not bear it.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked who covers for Mr. Savino when he is out on vacation. Mr. Savino said that the police department has taken over most of the search and rescue tasks and also does a lot of policing, but when he goes on vacation, things come to a stand still

Chairman Curwen asked if there was anything for the Capital budget. Mr. Savino said not at the moment.

Chairman Curwen asked if there could be a ferry to Pleasure Beach. Mr. Savino said that it would require a Coast Guard registered captain. One issue would be parking for those on Pleasure Beach.

Council Member Colon asked whether there was anyone to replace Mr. Savino when he retires. Mr. Savino said that he was compiling a manual but there was no one ready to step into his shoes.

ENGINEERING

Mr. Sherwood said that one of the issues for this department is that one traffic engineer would be cut.

Mr. Skinner came forward and distributed a list of the Engineering Department Responsibilities to the Committee. Mr. Skinner said that there was some renovations going on the office and that once Building moves into its new space, the final stages of the renovation can be done.

There is a high volume of people coming into the office for the various resources, particularly when it relates to the development.

URS is currently working on the design for the Congress Street bridge. One of the bridges that is shared with Fairfield is almost completed. Another bridge project is functionally completed except for some plantings that have to be replaced because of wetland regulations.

Mr. Skinner then reviewed the remainder of his report. He then pointed out that there were several projects underway that could be affected by the cutting of the traffic engineering. There are a number of design and construction projects that would suffer loss of funding if the position was cut. The implementation program calls for a traffic manager, which is what the traffic engineer is qualified to do.

Council Member Baker then had some questions about the various positions in the Engineering Department, which Mr. Skinner answered. He then asked Mr. Sherwood if any of the positions could be combined with Zoning. Mr. Sherwood said that all the responsibilities are distinctive to their roles.

Council Member Colon asked if there was any way a position could be combined with another. Mr. Skinner said that cutting any position would impact services. There was a question about the legal secretary. Mr. Sherwood said that the Civil Service had not

changed her title. Mr. Skinner said that his department has one secretary and she functions as an office manager, secretary and many other functions.

SANITATION

Mr. Sherwood said that the tipping fee at the tipping fees for waste management were a key factor. The big increase in this budget is a straight pass through from CRRA.

Mr. Catino said that one issue everyone forgets is that the City handles the garbage for the schools. Mr. Sherwood reminded everyone that there was a problem a fifteen years ago where there was a rodent problem in the schools. But since the City has taken over the program, the problem has been mitigated.

One of the ways to reduce the \$5,284,992 tipping fee is to reduce the amount of refuse by recycling. Mr. Catino said that the Toter program should reduce injuries and keep the worker time flowing. Outreach and education are key components for compliance.

Council Member DePara asked if a conversation had occurred with the Board of Education about this issue. Mr. Catino said that they had spoken with the Board of Education. The problem is the division of who pays for it. If the pick up went back to BOE, it would most likely be abandoned. Acting Director Kennedy said that he had many conversations with the BOE and pointed out that the City just pays for it, but they do not manage the problem. Acting Director Kennedy said that he was totally frustrated with this. Mr. Sherwood had three suggestions for improving the situation. He said that it costs about \$300,000 a year.

Mr. DiPrimo said that the City was separating the paper from bottle and cans. Mr. Sherwood said that he has seen City custodians sifting through the garbage to make sure that there was no additional recyclables in the trash stream. Mr. Cottell said that there was about 3 tons of garbage a month from the schools. Mr. Sherwood pointed out there was no money in recycling but now there is. He said that when you look at the cost of environmental recycling, that the economical incentive is much bigger now.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia had several concerns about garbage pickup. Council Member Colon asked about the rodent problem and said that the rodents at Roosevelt were large enough to ride. Mr. Cottell said that he remembered the incident at Roosevelt School. The school was throwing plastic bags of garbage into a fenced area and the food and milk were on the ground. The DEP came in and the City stepped forward and started to pick up the garbage.

Mr. Catino said that one of the frustrations is that the City has been trying to get the BOE to work on this because the Council has no leverage. There was a brief discussion about how to charge the BOE for the tipping fees.

Council Member Baker asked how many Toters were currently out. Mr. Catino said that it was 11,000. An additional 19,000 are needed. There was a brief discussion about whether or not the Toter program was authorized last year.

The discussion then moved to garbage pick up for condominiums. Council Member Colon asked why the garbage collection was not included in the common charges. Mr. Cottell explained that there was an issue about this and the State determined that whatever service is given to the regular homeowner, the condos have the right to have one pick up a week. Mr. Sherwood said that additional pick ups were billed out to the condo associations, which has since been forgotten.

Council Member DePara said that an ongoing issue was about putting out garbage cans along gateway routes. Mr. Cottell said that there are companies that actually provide the garbage cans and recycling bins with advertising. Mr. Cottell said that details about this proposal are under discussion. A brief discussion then followed about this.

Mr. DePrimo said that with the safety plan there has been a drop in injuries. Chairman Curwen asked if there was a policy manual available so that other departments could follow the same type of procedures.

ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Catino distributed copies of the FY09 General Fund Budget Discussion for the Public Facilities Roadway Department. He then quickly reviewed the information in the document. There was a discussion about alternative side of the street parking for street sweeping and the cutting of the city pavement.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Mr. Sherwood said that the budget had some increases in positions. The electrician would be taking care of the stop lights and street lights. The other change is with utilities. Electricity is the biggest expense.

Mr. Catino then distributed three documents that gave an overview of the responsibilities of the department. There was a brief discussion about the desperate need for a City mason.

Mr. Tristine said that the eight employees are responsible for all the City buildings, including the Zoo and the Airport. He said that he really needed the electrician for the City owned lights and the stop light.

Council Member DePara asked about energy efficiency. Mr. Tristine pointed out that the cost for energy efficient is also tied up with retrofitting the buildings. The City lights are being changed from 150 watts to 100 watts. He also explained the problems with the various sensors installed on the City lights.

Mr. Cottell said that one problem is that the City is competing with the Board of Education for UI funding because they have the same municipal identification number. The City is working on obtaining a new municipal identification number. Some of the areas have been retrofitted during renovations, like the Tax Office or the Police Department.

He then distributed copies of the UI and Constellation New Energy grid and reviewed the information with the Committee.

Mr. Cottell said that last year, UI and the City worked together in dropping the wattage in the street lighting, except at intersection. An audit has been done and lights that were on abandoned streets or behind fences. Mr. Sherwood commented that this was actually cost avoidance. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about areas where the streets are privately owned. Mr. Cottell reviewed those details and said that there has been an effort to have the lights on every other utility pole. Mr. Sherwood asked if there would be a list of all of these abandoned lights. Mr. Cottell said that he would have a list and had hoped for GPS coordinates, but the accuracy was not very good.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the large boxes that the phone company is installing on the telephone poles. Mr. Cottell reviewed the details and said that a court complaint has been filed with the DTUC about this.

Chairman Curwen said that he needed a total of all the City Street light in the City, the total amount of the telephone poles, the total number of transformers, the total number of gas lines, total amount of lines from Aquiraon, sewer lines and AT&T Boxes, newspaper boxes and the fire hydrants. Acting Director Kennedy and Mr. Cottell noted this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about a newspaper holder that had been abandoned and left lying on the sidewalk for a number of years. Mr. Kennedy made a note of the location. Mr. Cottell pointed out that the City had been charged by the phone company for the light that was in the phone booths long after the phone booths had been removed.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER COLON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 23, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Leticia Colon, Chair; Robert Curwen, Co -Chair;
AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia;

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM

OTHERS: Andrew Nunn, CAO; Council President Thomas McCarthy;
Council Member Marie Valle

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Colon called the meeting to order at 6:56 p.m. She then reviewed the members of the Committee who were present.

Mr. Sherwood stated that the Council President McCarthy would call the City Clerk's office regarding changes to the notice for the Budget Review of the Fire Department. Council President McCarthy responded that the co-chairs of the Budget Committee were responsible for making that phone call. Some discussion about this then followed. Mr. Sherwood said that there was a very short time frame to get the appropriate notice posted for the Saturday 10:30 a.m. meeting with the Fire Department.

Co-chair Curwen said that for the record that the Fire Department had a miscommunication and did not received the notification. Co-chair Curwen said that the Department had just been contacted via land line and asked to be rescheduled for Saturday at 10:30 a.m. and that the co-chairs would be notifying the City Clerk's office to do the official notification via the Connecticut Post.

ADJOURNMENT

**** CO-CHAIR CURWEN MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service

City of Bridgeport
Budget and Appropriations Committee
Regular Meeting
April 23, 2008
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**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 23, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chair; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Andre Baker, Howard Austin

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM

OTHERS: Fleeta Hudson, City Clerk; Ann Murray, Assistant City Clerk; Alma Maya, Town Clerk; Alba Rodriguez, Assistant Town Clerk; Adam Wood, Mayor's Office; Andrew Nunn, CAO; Council President Thomas McCarthy;

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He stated which members of the Committee were present.

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

Mr. Sherwood said that the only changes other than salary were increases in the copiers and maintenance service agreement.

Ms. Hudson came forward and pointed out that there were two lines missing from the City Clerk's budget and that she would like them to be listed even if the amount on the line was zero, so that it does not appear that these items has been cut. Mr. Sherwood said that the Civil Service did not recognize one of the lines and that the payroll reflects what the permanent titles are. Discussion about this then followed. Mr. Sherwood said that he would restore the line for the Assistant City Clerk in the adopted budget.

Ms. Hudson then asked about the City Hall Committee line item. Mr. Sherwood said that he did not know where to locate it. Ms. Hudson said that it was in the budget for years. Mr. Sherwood said that he would add this in 11-3 or 11-4 where it speaks about the City Hall Committee in the adopted budget.

Ms. Murray then asked about some of the details of the contractual obligations and the freeze announcement by the Mayor. Mr. Sherwood reviewed the details of how this was being implemented.

Ms. Murray then commented that Telesco has raised their rates, which is why there was an increase in the budget. She then indicated that Special Services covers all the steno

services along with the program fees. She said that the Council needs to be aware of this increase.

Council President McCarthy asked if this needed to be put out to bid. Ms. Murray said that she believed that the stenographers were being used on an “as needed” basis. At one point, the Council moved to include all the Committees and that it how the City moved into using them. Ms. Hudson said that there had been a period when the City tried to use local people and that it hadn’t worked out. She said that Telesco was providing good service and that there was not another service like Telesco. Council President McCarthy said that it would be good to look. Chairman Curwen agreed and said that by putting it out to bid, it would make the Council transparent. Council President McCarthy said that he likes the service and they do good work. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like a copy of the increase letter and that she would support the RFP on that.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there had been an issue about too much postage on outgoing mail. Ms. Murray reviewed the process involved in getting the Council agenda out and the requirements for bulk mailing. Mr. Sherwood said that the system had been smoothed out and said that if the mail was ready by 11 a.m., it can go bulk. Ms. Murray said that she would look into the details of bulk mailing.

Council Member Baker asked about the City Hall Committee. Ms. Hudson said that Committee was in charge of the property that the City owns and this is in the Charter. She pointed out that many of the line items related to the City Hall Committee had been cut. One of these was the line item that would provide funds for a new flag for City Hall.

Ms. Murray pointed out that the amount for office supplies had been the same for several years and pointed out that the cost of paper and other supplies was increasing.

Chairman Curwen asked Ms. Hudson and Ms. Murray if they had been notified about this meeting via email. Both Ms. Hudson and Ms. Murray replied that they had. Ms. Murray said that hard copies had also been sent out as a back up for the emails.

TOWN CLERK

Ms. Maya and Ms. Rodrigues came forward and greeted the Committee. Ms. Maya said that her department was caught with the freezes because there were some expenses that had already been committed and the work had already been done. However, because of the freezes, the department had to go through a transfer process. Currently, there are adjustments being made to the budget that will impact indexing and the preservation of documents. The department is attempting to continue the reindexing of the documents. This project has gone out and will be started, but the funds in the budget will not meet the financial obligation. Mr. Sherwood said that he would transfer the required funds from

Special Services. Discussion about setting up a service contract for the entire year then followed.

The discussion then moved to the cost of printing the ballots. The Town Clerk is charge of absentee ballots while the Registrar of Voters handles the regular budget. This past year, there were four back to back elections and the final figures for the ballots is expected to be around \$27,000. In the even number years, the cost for printing the ballots is somewhat less than in the odd years. Paper ballots are more expensive.

Ms. Rodrigues pointed out that line item named “supplies” were not really supplies. Most of the items in the Town Clerk’s Office are statutory. By statute, the State must be reimbursed for dog, hunting and fishing licenses.

Council Member Baker asked about one of the allocation sums. Ms. Rodrigues pointed out that the indexing of the land records has to be done by an outside firm. At one point, the department had twelve people but currently only have six. The outside firm has five people working on the indexing the land records. The outside firm provides all the equipment and supplies other than toner, for \$4.90 per document. The department charges \$10.00 per document, which means that the residents, constituents or lawyers are paying to have the document processed.

Ms. Rodrigues pointed out that the number of property sales has dropped and there has been an increase in the number of foreclosures documents. Ms. Rodrigues said that she had already gotten one “Maturity Works” member to do certain tasks like verifying land records and a second one will be starting. She explained that “Maturity Works” is a program from Career Resources. These are retired individuals who can fill in positions for offices. “Maturity Works” pays the salaries, but the Department needs to pay the company. She pointed out that the workers are not taking a City employees job but simply doing the busy work so that the staff can work on their own tasks. It was commented that the turn around for documents was eighteen months behind, but is now only four months behind.

Ms. Rodrigues said that her office collects \$3.00 per document for historic preservation of documents. Those funds are supposed to be allocated to the Town Clerk’s Office for the preservation of documents. After checking into some of the older records, which are white on black, it has been noted that the documents are fading terribly. The company that is currently working on the indexing has provided the department with a sample of how they handle this problem. Ms. Rodrigues said that she has contacted the Comptroller’s office about this. She was asked if this was part of the Capital funding for the indexing. Ms. Rodrigues said that project was for indexing from 1948 to 1979 and that the bulk of the project was completed. Currently, the illegible entries are being corrected. A discussion then followed about the purchase order involved for this project.

Chairman Curwen asked how the \$3.00 is handled. Ms. Rodrigues said that there is a special account and \$2.00 is sent to the State and her department retains \$1.00. Discussion about this then followed.

Ms. Rodrigues said that currently one of the projects is to preserve the old maps. There is a grant for having a preservation survey. The Town Clerk's Office has never put in a request for a preservation survey. Once a survey is done, a request for \$40,000 or \$50,000 for the preservation can be done. Ms. Rodrigues then reviewed the process for filing a document and how the fees are allocated. She said that the money that was collected as a designated fee for the Town Clerk's Office should not be included in the general fund and that this was from the statutes. Mr. Sherwood asked her to get a copy of that statute to him and he would follow up on it.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked for a listing of all the fees that each department charges for various services with a break out of what goes to the State, the City and what amount should remain with the department.

Ms. Rodrigues said that her department would like to computerize and digitize the maps because then the actual documents could be archives while the public can use the maps on the computers. It would make it easier for the public and also allow them to isolate the portion of the map that they need.

Ms. Rodrigues said that she would like to repeat her prior requests for a renovation of the office because it is the first office that many people see and it is in very poor condition. She said that a number of staff members have been ill and there are asbestos tiles on the floor that are cracked and broken. Mr. Sherwood said that the Town Clerk's Office was next on the list for renovation. Council Member Baker asked if it was included in the Capital Plan. Mr. Sherwood assured him that it was.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the conveyance taxes. Mr. Sherwood said that the State had given the City the right to collect these taxes but that the market had dropped dramatically and the revenue wasn't coming in like it had in previous years. There was a discussion about the real estate tax percentage, which was recently voted on by the State.

Ms. Maya said that she would welcome any member of the Town Clerk's Office to come and observe the daily traffic and tasks that are performed there.

OPM

Mr. Sherwood then said that there had been no changes in the OPM office budget. He then reviewed the reductions that he had made in the budget.

Chairman Curwen asked Mr. Sherwood about the goals for his department. Mr. Sherwood said that with the new databases, his office will be collecting more data and able to monitor the statistics. This will also involve City Stats.

Council Member Walsh asked about the Policy Management budget. Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the process and how it would affect. Council Member Walsh asked about the two managers. Mr. Sherwood reviewed Beth and Kim's job responsibilities.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Mr. Sherwood stated that there were several major changes with this department. The first is personnel. The second are the two major increases in the line item budgets. One of those items is the membership registrations and the second is for Other Services. Other Services covers the Federal and State lobbyists line item, which was formerly in OPED and has not been moved to the CAO budget. Membership Registration shows the growth from the following: Mr. Nunn's account, the CCM membership, National League of Cities membership, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and ICMA. These are all city wide programs that the city is a member as a whole. Mr. Sherwood said that CCM has a good labor database, which the City uses.

Council Member Baker asked about the move of the lobbyists and other positions from OPED to the CAO budget. Mr. Jacobs required this line item move in his 2006 Civil Service audit. The Mayor has the right to hire unclassified civil service staff that he or she sees fit to the duties. There were current positions in other departments, but Civil Service required this to be documented this way. Council Member Baker then asked about the details of these positions. Mr. Sherwood reviewed this aspect of the documentation with him. Council Member Walsh had several questions about this. Discussion about the collection of information from the Police and Fire Departments regarding the attendance and sick leave followed.

Council Member Baker then asked about adding the five positions with their pay scales. Mr. Sherwood explained that one of the project managers was moved from the Mayor's Office budget into the CAO's budget. He then reiterated that other vacant part time positions in the various departments has been merged to create the full time positions with the salaries. Mr. Nunn then explained his viewpoint on these five project manager positions. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that the Fire, Police and Public Facilities are massive corporations. He said that there was no consolidated plan as to which way these three departments were going.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had been hearing about City Stats for a few years and that it did not seem like the project was progressing because the City was still gathering data and revenue. Mr. Sherwood said that City Stats takes years to build. The more information that is acquired, the better the information will be. Mr. Nunn said that

he would be going with the Mayor to Baltimore to see how the program works because Baltimore is the model city for City Stats. Discussion about the use and the potential of the program then followed.

Council Member Lyon said that she worked for the Department of Education and when she gets a paycheck, all her vacation, sick days and days used. Mr. Sherwood said that there was a difference with the Fire and Police because they get paid the same week that they work. The rest of the City employees have a week lag. It's almost impossible to do time and attendance when the department was being paid in real time. Mr. Sherwood said that the point was to determine what caused all the overtime. Some of it is caused by special events. Discussion about why Baltimore would be a good example of this then followed.

Council Member Walsh asked if the Project Manager positions were currently filled. Mr. Sherwood said that there were two that were filled, Public Works and Fire; and the remaining two positions have not yet been filled. Council Member Walsh had several other questions about the details of these positions. Mr. Sherwood said that former Mayor Fabrizi had left the positions vacant for the incoming Mayor. Council Member Walsh said that he objected to Mr. Sherwood taking two vacant positions in the various departments, combining them, moving them from one department to another department and hiring staff for those positions. Mr. Sherwood reminded Council Member Walsh that the transfer of the position from the various departments was done at the request of Civil Service. Council Member Walsh said that this was adding positions because the employees worked in CAO. Mr. Sherwood agreed that this was where the employees physically worked for reporting and accountability, but that the two employees would be working for their individual departments. Council Member Walsh then stated that there had been a member of a previous administration who had become the most powerful man in the City because he had control over the salaries. Mr. Sherwood said that he was playing by the rules. Council Member Walsh said that the Mayor and Civil Service was giving out a lot of positions with fat raises. Mr. Sherwood encouraged Council Member Walsh to speak to the Civil Service Department and the former Mayor. Council Member Walsh replied that he would like to get rid of the Civil Service manger because he was playing games with the Mayor. He added that Mr. Sherwood had said that this was always within the rules. Council Member Walsh declared that this was wrong. Mr. Sherwood replied that this was an agreement by the City Attorney. Mr. Sherwood also pointed out that he as the head of OPM, had no right to stop the agreement made by City Attorney Anastasi.

The discussion then moved to a piece of property in Council Member Walsh's district, which a neighbor had been complaining about for more than two years. Council Member Walsh asked if the new software would be removing the responsibility from a manager. Mr. Sherwood explained that other than the seventeen that are mentioned in the Charter, the remaining employees are members of bargaining units. With statistics available, the

discipline route will be much easier because it will provide information about performance without violating the union rules.

Mr. Sherwood said that one of the major issues is finishing the EOC center. Chairman Curwen asked about 49 positions that he had read about in the newspaper. Mr. Sherwood said that the EOC would be manned with civilian employees. He then reviewed the various positions that would be moved from the Fire and Police Departments to the EOC, which will account for 44 positions. Mr. Sherwood said that the positions were still being fine-tuned. He then reviewed the pertinent details and the testing agreement.

A brief discussion about picking up the material from the Legislative Office then followed.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 24, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman; Andre Baker, Susan Brannelly,
Howard Austin

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM

OTHERS: Council President Thomas McCarthy, Council Member Robert Walsh; Keith Rodgerson, Michael Nidoh, Peter Paanjanew, Building Department, Tom Coble, Anti-Blight/Neighborhood Dennis Buckley, Zoning Department; William Minor, L.U.C. R.; Joe McGee, Ed Lavernoich, OPED; Angie Staltero, NRZs; Council Member Angel DePara (8:44 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:46 p.m. Chairman Curwen introduced the members of the Committee to those present.

OPED

Mr. Sherwood gave an overview of the proposed budget. He reviewed the changes, which include five new positions.

Chairman Curwen asked Mr. Lavernoich about the request for the new five positions. Mr. Lavernoich then said that the Mayor convened a group together for economic development. He said that Mr. McGee would give an overview of the Advance Bridgeport Economic Development.

Copies of a document called the Advance Bridgeport Economic Development were distributed.

Mr. McGee then gave an overview of the information. He pointed out that there was a diagram in the packet for the flow chart for the Office of Planning and Economic Development Budget Request and compared this with a proposed flow chart. Mr. McGee said that it would be very important to streamline and strengthen the Land Use office, which emphasizes the Building Department and other regulatory agencies. Mr. McGee said that the Planning Staff is only 3 staff members, while New Haven has a staff of 11 and Hartford has 15. Homeowners applying for a permit currently put a strain on

the system, and frustrate the residents. By increasing the staffing, the City could increase the revenues and relieve the pressure on the Building and Permits process.

Chairman Curwen asked for a copy of the report prepared by Mr. McGee's organization, which he was given. Chairman Curwen also asked about the Zucker report. Mr. Lavernoich said that he would get the Council Members copies of that report. Mr. McGee said that Zucker made 90 recommendations on this issue alone.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about why there were so many directors. She suggested more supervisors or staff members in the field. Discussion about the details of the structure of the various departments then followed.

Council Member Baker said that he would like to see more information on how the various positions would help the communities. He then gave an example of how his district had decided that a particular school would be demolished, but then the Mayor overrode this and said that he wanted the building to remain. Mr. McGee said that it would be important to put the housing and the resources together. Mr. Baker's situation is a political situation. However, by having the staff, the City would have the resources to work in a neighborhood. Strengthening the Anti-blight by moving it to the regulatory agency would help the City.

Council Member Walsh said that he believe that the NRZ program was a façade and that the City did not have the resources to finance the plans for one tenth of the proposed plans. Mr. Lavernoich said that Mayor Finch recognized that the neighborhood projects were not getting the attention that they should.

Council Member Baker left the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

There are resources that are available from the federal and private sources, but without the staff, applications for this funding can not be submitted.

Council Member Walsh said that he wanted to know why the City would be hiring staff when the position of the Economic Development is vacant. He pointed out that new department heads like to bring in their own people. Mr. McGee explained that the new candidates for the department head were excellent, but that they would need some staff and having some staff in place would send a signal to the City that this was serious business.

Council Member Walsh brought up the idea of privatizing the contracts. Mr. McGee said that Hartford decided to privatize the DOT during the Weicker administration, but there wasn't anyone in Hartford who knew how manage the contracts properly. Because of this, it ended up costing the State more than it was should have.

Council Member Brannelly said that her company had been taken over by a Fortune 500 company and that the new management had created a silo, which Mr. McGee had mentioned earlier in the presentation. She said that the silo structure had been a disaster and her company was working on straightening out the tangle. Mr. McGee then suggested that as property was sold, letting the normal amount go into the general fund, but dedicating a percentage to go to Economic Development could reap benefits for the entire City without impacting the City budget.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked what the plans were for the North End. Mr. Lavernoich said that the NRZ was being expanding in the North End. He said that by dealing with the brown fields, the blight and other issues in other parts of the City, it would relieve the tax burden on the residents of the North End because the other parts of the City would begin to carry their portion of tax burden. Mr. Nunn said that the budget was basically a draft document and that the Mayor would be happy to talk to Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia about this.

Chairman Curwen asked Mr. McGee about how the five requested positions would affect the overall department. Mr. McGee reviewed this with the Committee.

Council Member Walsh asked Mr. Sherwood about the collection of the rents at the location where J.P. Morgan was. Mr. Sherwood said that the office was the one that constructed the contract and that he did not have any say in the matter.

Chairman Curwen asked Mr. Lavernoich for a brief description of the requested five positions. Mr. Lavernoich then reviewed the planner, the staff reviewer for P&Z. The ZBA never received staff reviews of applications. Mr. Lavernoich said that the department believes that a full time position is needed to provide this type of information to the ZBA. Mr. Lavernoich pointed out that there would be an increase in the revenues due to the recent increase in fees. Mr. Minor said that currently the increase fees had netted about \$31,000, which was being used to pay for the staff member to review the applications for the ZBA. Mr. Sherwood said that he believed that the increase in fees would net about \$60,000. Discussion followed about this. Mr. Sherwood said that he would like to establish a special revenue account for Land Use.

There were two positions at management level, one of which is a Neighborhood Development Manager. Mr. Lavernoich said that the staff would migrate from the Housing office.

The Deputy Director for Land Use would handle the condemnation function, anti-blight function and the fair housing function would all come under this regulatory role.

Mr. Rodgerson then addressed the issue of the Cultural Affairs Office. He said that many municipalities have a receivership for State funding. He said that there would be a

number of festivals and there is no interface for those who wish to have this type of event. Public art projects need management but can get revenue funding from other sources. Regarding the economic development, a plan is being developed. He then referred to a document that is titled "The Bridgeport Cultural Plan". Mr. McGee said that the Women's Basketball could be worked into a major event. As the festivals are created, there could be quite a bit of bang for the buck by providing managers.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like to see the Cultural Report.

The discussion then moved to the building fees and how this could be managed. Mr. Sherwood said that he believed that the envelope had been pushed on the single family homes and the remodeling permits.

Chairman Curwen said that he would like to talk to Mr. Sherwood about the land use fees. Mr. Lavernoch suggested that the Zucker Report be reviewed by the Committee for discussion.

BUILDING

Mr. Sherwood said that there were no changes to the budget.

Mr. Paanjanew said that they were just continuing the positions that had been filled. He gave a quick overview of the department and said that once the modification to the office was finished, the department would be able to be more accommodating to the public.

Chairman Curwen asked where the Building Department would handle CityStat. Mr. Paanjanew said that he was not as familiar with the program, but that it should work out well. Mr. Sherwood said that because of the level of detail in their permits, using the CityStat and CityView should be very smooth.

Chairman Curwen said that although he has heard public complaints, in talking with the staff, there were no complaints from the staff.

Council Member Walsh pointed out that one of the reasons that additional staff was being added for the big projects like Steel Point. Many of the projects are stalled. Mr. Paanjanew said that the manpower is being used to deal with dormant permits, which often takes two or three inspections. However, once the backlogged inspections are completed, the tax rolls increase.

ZBA

Mr. Sherwood said that there was one clerk and the bulk of work was advertising the bulk of the work.

ZONING

Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the budget for this department. Chairman Curwen asked if Mr. Buckley had become permanent. Mr. Sherwood said that he had.

Mr. Minor came forward and said that there was one position has been filled but that one still remained vacant. When Mr. Buckley had been promoted, this created another vacancy. A Zoning Inspector has been hired, but that employee was involved in an accident and is currently office bound.

Chairman Curwen said that Zoning is the one area he hears the most complaints. He said that there is no one to guide an applicant through the process. In order to create fees and generate revenue, the City needs to work on the Customer Relations aspect of the department. Council Member Brannelly said that she had a problem and became aware of the situation in trying to do a project at her home. Mr. Lavernoich said that there were two issues here, one being the customer relations and the second centering around providing the information for the general public who are not lawyers. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that when she had gone to the Building Department and had been given a sheet with the steps in the process.

Mr. Minor said that since he has been here, previously there had been training for Customer Service, but that has not happened in the last few years. Mr. Minor said that he tries to make sure the staff gives out the correct information. He said that the department was working on attitude adjustment.

Council President McCarthy said that he had also heard about this and that people had ended up in the wrong spot and that the City should help the residents get to the right place. He said that taxpayers are willing to pay their taxes, but they get frustrated when they can't get information.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it would be important to have appropriate signage in the building. She said that one thing is to have the signs mounted above the doors, rather than on the doors, so that the public can see where the office is located. Mr. Minor said that there used to be training in sexual harassment and customer service training.

Council Member Walsh asked about the Zoning Officer who would work non-traditional hours, but that employee had an accident. The details of this issue were reiterated again. Council Member Walsh said that it would be good to have a mystery shopper to test the various departments.

Mr. Lavernoich said that there had been some funding from the Master Plan that used by the department for the Plan Reviewer. Buckers, Fisher and Jacoby had been doing the

reviews, but stopped when the funding ran out. During the last two months, the department has been working on finding the funding to reinstate the service.

Mr. Minor said that he would like to have the Council Members come for a discussion about how the Zoning Department works. He then gave a quick overview of how this may be done. Council Member DePara said that it would be a good idea to have this type of meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 26, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman; Leticia Colon, Co-chair; Susan Brannelly, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia; Howard Austin

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM

OTHERS: Scott Hughes; Bridgeport Library; Deputy Fire Chief Petrocelli, Bridgeport Fire Department; Fire Chief Brian Rooney, Bridgeport Fire Department; Council Member Robert Walsh; Council President Thomas McCarthy; Council Member DePara

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Sherwood gave a brief overview and stated that there was a retroactive raise in the budget that would be taking effect on July 1, 2007. Most of the budget is under personnel with contract salaries.

Deputy Chief Petrocelli then said that there were a few line items that needed to be reviewed. He pointed out that he had asked Civil Service for 39 new recruits, but only received 29. During the training, 10 trainees left the program. This means that the final class was 19.

A discussion then followed about the union contract regarding lieutenants' assignments. Chief Rooney said that with vacancies and vacations, there would be overtime, since the department was understaffed. Chairman Curwen asked about the number of staff that should be on shift. Chief Rooney said that the number was 61. Deputy Chief Petrocelli then reviewed the fact that while 73 people might be assigned to a shift, but a few could be on sick leave, injury, or funeral leave.

The second issue regards the telephone services. Deputy Chief Petrocelli said that when the number was calculated, he felt that the number was adequate. He reminded everyone that former Mayor Fabrizi, former Council President Ayala and former CAO Feeney had decided to institute the Reverse 911 system. Since then the Fire Department had been

informed that they owed \$4,000 with an additional \$985 a month for the service. Mr. Sherwood said that Deputy Chief Petrocelli should call him on Monday about this.

A discussion followed about the EOC, which will be opened in six months. Mr. Appleby will be heading the EOC. Council Member Walsh had several questions about who would be the one directing this system. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the Reverse 911 system was never intended to be used for neighborhood maintenance. Those issues should go to 211. It was designed for emergencies or issues regarding the North Avenue prison.

Council Member Martinez joined the meeting at 10:54 a.m.

Deputy Chief Petrocelli then said that the price of diesel fuel had risen dramatically since the January numbers were calculated. He added that a fireboat would be delivered to the Department soon. The amount allocated for fuel was the same as it was last year.

Council Member DePara suggested that the fire truck tires be filled with nitrogen to improve fuel usage.

Council Member Walsh asked why a fire engine is taken to the grocery store. Chief Rooney pointed out that often the firefighters are returning from a repair call or other routine matters when they stop at the store. While the items are being picked up at the store, the firefighters are also handing out educational materials. Each engine must maintain four firefighters at all times.

Council Member Brannelly left the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

A discussion about the understaffing then followed. Chief Rooney commented that the most recent batch of recruits had taken the Civil Service exam five years ago.

Deputy Petrocelli reviewed the details regarding the temporary trailer and the equipment at 711. With the equipment stored outside with the milder weather has allowed the construction crew to demo the rear portion of the facility and has moved up the reoccupancy date to mid May.

Chairman Curwen asked about the roof at 711. Chief Rooney said that he had never been notified about this. There are also issues at Beechmont Avenue, where the floor is buckling. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that at a prior meeting, there had been additional items such as the roof, the pointing on the walls, and the shift of the building. Chief Rooney said that the basic foundation had been inspected and determined to be sound.

The discussion then moved to Station 12, on Beechmont Avenue. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had toured Station 12 and that the conditions were bad.

The discussion then moved to Vehicle Maintenance Services, which the Mayor's recommendation, would have been able to sustain the department. Since the numbers were submitted in January, Engine 12, a 1992 Pierce Engine, has been determined to need "repowering", which involves rebuilding the engine, the brakes and other items. A new engine would be far more expensive.

Co-chair Colon asked about the repairs to 711. Chief Rooney reviewed the details of how the electrical wiring was removed from below the floor and located above the area and details regarding the temporary trailer.

Council Member Martinez asked about the Director of Emergency Services and a legal secretary. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that the legal secretary would be changing and that when the EOC goes online. Council Member Martinez asked about the payroll clerks in the various departments. Mr. Sherwood reviewed this arrangement and explained that it would not be worthwhile to bring it back to City Hall.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the status of the remaining firehouses and encouraged the other Council Members to tour the houses.

Council Member DePara asked about hydrant inspections. Chief Rooney explained that there were hydrants cards about the details of the hydrants, such as pressure and clarity of the water. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia commented that a hydrant near her had been knocked over and she had called it in several times.

Chairman Curwen asked for a list of the firehouses and the condition of each. Co-chair Colon asked that the number of staff be added to that list.

Council Member Walsh had some questions about the salaries in the budget, which Mr. Sherwood reviewed with him.

Chairman Curwen thanked Chief Rooney and Deputy Chief Petrocelli for coming in. There was a brief discussion about the miscommunication problem, for which Chief Rooney apologized.

RECAP

Mr. Sherwood then gave a brief overview of the previous week's meeting. He then distributed copies of a document titled "School Garbage Pickup for 2008-2009", which contained a break out of the costs of garbage removal for the Board of Education, including the tipping fees, and removal services. Mr. Sherwood said that if the City could give the BOE the amount it costs to manage the garbage. If the schools recycle, it

will take those items out of the refuse stream and would reduce the amount of the tipping fee. Also they could generate income via the recycling. Discussion about this then followed.

There was also a letter from Mr. Jacobs included in the information packet about some of the vacant positions in the budget. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that two of the positions were vacant and they were very unlikely to be filled. Discussion then followed.

Chairman Curwen asked about the various departments reviewed. Mr. Sherwood then briefly reviewed the Capital Budget, the City Clerk's budget and the Fire Department.

Mr. Sherwood said that there were four departments that will be seriously impacted by the fuel prices: Fire, Police, Public Works and the Airport.

Council President McCarthy asked about the fee on the Airport gas. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that the gas that is sold at the airport is aviation gas, which is very high test. However, there are other vehicles that use regular fuel. Council Member DePara encouraged everyone to support putting nitrogen in the tires. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like to know whether this has been tested.

A discussion followed about the details of the Capital Budget regarding sidewalks. Chairman Curwen said that he felt it would be best if the allocations were more specific to avoid the funding being moved elsewhere.

Chairman Curwen said that there would be a meeting to discuss the Capital Budget on Wednesday the 31st following Registrars and Central Grants.

Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the details of Internal Service Fund for Insurance.

Council Member DePara then asked about bulk purchases. Mr. Sherwood said that while the City does not purchase in bulk, it gets the bulk price. The vendor warehouses the supplies and delivers them next day.

Council Member Martinez asked about how the process would be utilized. Mr. Sherwood and Chairman Curwen then reviewed the process.

Chairman Curwen said that one line item that would be reintroduced into the budget would be Steel Point. He said that frequently Bridgeport gets involved in one time revenue streams. Steel Point will be ongoing revenue. He added that there would be additional revenue with CRRA in January, which is in the middle of the budget year. It is the will of the Committee to reinstituting the majority of the library services and working with the public health nurses. Some of the information on the contracts will be coming in this week.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the Council should work together as a whole. She also commented that this was the first time in years that she did not see other new Council Members who are not on the Committee present. Council President McCarthy said that the Council Members were elected to make tough decisions. He said that the Council needed to make the best decision possible.

Co-chair Colon said that she had heard that other Council Members had said that they would not be voting on the budget. She then said that it was important for Committee members to encourage those members to attend the remaining meetings, particularly next Saturday's meeting, which is on the Capital budget.

Council Member Austin left the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

Chairman Curwen said that were a number of items that being considered, such as a surcharge on Arena tickets, possibly dissolving the Port Authority and dissolving the WPCA Board.

Council Member DePara asked about the position of a Cultural Affairs Director. He then suggested that this position should be a private position rather than a City position.

Mr. Hughes said that he was still working on a position that would be submitted to the Library Board. The library has been around for 127 years, but Mr. Hughes has just arrived. He said that he was working on restructuring the Library and have been working with Mr. Sherwood. Mr. Hughes said that there have been staff meetings, but until he has a better idea of the budget will be, it is hard to predict. The previous approach was to save jobs rather than services, but his approach will be different. Mr. Sherwood said that if it was possible to restore dollar funding, it would be helpful and that Mr. Hughes wants to make the staff more streamlined. If the money is not there, Mr. Hughes will have to cut positions and close branches, but it is unclear at this point how this will be done.

Co-chair Colon asked about volunteers. Mr. Hughes said that the unions do not allow the volunteers to perform union tasks. He added that if there were a stable basis of funding, he could then devote time to fund raising. Mr. Sherwood then suggested that the Council makes a commitment to a portion of funding, which would allow him to run the Library as he wishes to as a 501c3. Mr. Hughes said that there were times he could not tell a library staff member to perform a task because the staff members are City employees and work for the City, not for the Library. Council Member Martinez asked about the process for making the library a private entity.

There was a brief discussion about the support materials in the Legislative Offices for the Council members for the budget meetings that have already taken place.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL MEMBER COLON SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 30, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman; Leticia Colon, Andre Baker,
Susan Brannelly, Howard Austin, Daniel Martinez,

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director

OTHERS: Sandi Ayala, Democratic Registrar of Voters; Joseph
Worden, Republican Registrar of Voters; Council Member
Maria Valle, Andrew Nunn, CAO; Carol Salvo; Council
President Thomas McCarthy, Council Member Michelle
Lyons, Council Member Robert Walsh

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

Mr. Sherwood said that the Mayor's budgets had not indicated many changes in the budget for this budget. He then mentioned two union members in the department that have a settled contract. Chairman Curwen asked if there was money in the budget for the primary. Mr. Sherwood said that there was.

Ms. Ayala came forward and said that there was a canvas underway and that there were 5,789 people that needed to be contacted. She then reviewed the process with the Committee. The out of town residents of about 3,000 have been contacted. Ms. Ayala said that canvassing is done by statute and it is done on a yearly basis.

The previous process was changed about five years ago. Originally, the canvas encompassed every single voter. When the two new registrars started their terms in 2001, they attended they checked the NCOA process, which involves the post office providing an updated list. The city does not have the funding to do a citywide registry; the list still includes people who no longer live in Bridgeport. Ms. Ayala said that the Council member had read a recent article about 393 Bridgeport residents that are supposedly deceased. Ms. Ayala said that when further checks are done, many of these people are discovered to be still living. The Registrars check the obituaries that are posted in Bridgeport on a daily basis and also do a monthly check with Vital Statistics. However, there is no way to check if a resident moved from the City to another state and died there. By doing a citywide canvas of every single voter, this would not happen.

Mr. Worden said that the Department was willing to do a full canvas last year but the Administration decided otherwise. If residents leave the City without notifying the Post Office, the Department will not know either.

Council Member Brannelly asked what the NCOA was. Mr. Worden replied that it was the National Canvas Organization Association. Discussion about the cost of the current canvassing method then followed.

Council Member Baker asked for a detailed explanation of the canvassing process, which Ms. Ayala provided for the Committee. Ms. Ayala went on to explain that with every single election, a new group of people is being trained with the exception of the moderators, who are trained by the State of Connecticut. There are very few poll workers that work more than one election and more than one duty. The new moderators often don't understand the new paperwork and that causes problems. The Registrars are responsible for everything that the poll workers do at the voting sites. It will be important to recruit people who can understand the process, understand the law and can implement it. The City pays the lowest rate for the poll workers. The good moderators prefer to work in the surrounding towns, where the pay rate is higher. This is why the largest request is for the Operational budget.

Currently there are three different organizations involved in voter registration. ACORN has been working towards their goal of 32,000 registrations. Council Member Martinez is working with another group whose goal is to register 2,000 and the third group is the League of Women Voters, whose goal is at least 15,000. There are 3,500 cards to be sorted through, including duplicates, with only two clerks to do the work. The names on the cards should receive letters within 72 hours, but this is impossible to do with the size of the staff.

Discussion about the details of this entire process including the sick time and vacation time then followed.

Ms. Ayala explained that the Department was asking for three seasonal, temporary positions or one part time office assistant because the Department had been utilizing some temps to help with the work, but due to the hiring freeze could not have the temps.

Ms. Ayala said that the Department also needs an additional voting machine because the City was provided with 50 machines, which gives two machines per district, but only one for absentee ballots. There is no backup and by law there must be a back up for every single precinct, including the absentee ballots. This back up machine would not be reimbursable.

Ms. Ayala also said that the poll workers level of responsibility has totally changed along with the level of pay. The number of poll workers increased with the new equipment.

The details of the various positions were then discussed. Chairman Curwen then asked the Registrars to give the committee a comparison of the old process, staffing and costs along with the costs of the new process, staffing and costs.

A discussion about the details of the ballot printing and the other items mandated by the State then followed. Council Member Baker asked what the Department was doing to make the voting easier. Ms. Ayala reviewed the changes that the Department had made in regards to the new process and explained how the audits were done. She also reported that the State would be requiring detailed mapping of the polling places and exactly how far the various booths are from one another. Mr. Worden commented that he would like to see the voting places at the new schools, but across the State, Boards of Education are trying to have the voting places removed from the school buildings. Ms. Ayala reviewed some of the details of assigning precincts and explained that State law mandates that not more the 4,800 residents can be scheduled to vote at any one location.

Ms. Ayala also then reviewed the Department's last request for additional funding for the salaries. Ms. Ayala said that she was aware that their salaries were at the lower end of the grid and that the Registrars work very long hours, work hard and felt that they should be compensated for the work that they do accomplish. Discussion then followed which included the use of volunteers.

Chairman Curwen thanked the Registrars for their time and said that he believed the State was cognizant of the various problems with the new system.

CENTRAL GRANTS OFFICE

Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the overall budget recommendations. Chairman Curwen said that major concern was how active the department. He then asked the Acting Director to come forward, which she did. She then presented the Committee with a report about the Department's performance.

She then gave a quick overview of the various staff positions, including the new grant writers and other staff changes. She then distributed a list of grants that had been applied for and were currently pending. These grants are currently being reviewed and have not been awarded yet. The most recent application was for 9.5 million.

She then directed the Committee's attention to the report pages that documented the funding that the Department had in the past fiscal year. Last year, the department generated 3,297 million. She also explained that some of the competitive grants require a matching grant, which would be in kind services. The Acting Director was asked about the Board of Education Grants Department. She replied that the City would not take the lead on a Board of Education application but there are some grants that require City participation, such as Safe Schools, Healthy Students, which had Health Department involvement.

Mr. Sherwood pointed out that the document was strictly for the fiscal year ending June 30th and not next year. The Acting Director confirmed that this was so.

Council Member Walsh had several questions about the grant application process. Mr. Sherwood and the Acting Director then reviewed the details of the process with Council Member Walsh.

Council Member Valle asked some of the grants for children. The Acting Director reviewed the programs involved with those grants with the Committee.

Council Member Baker asked about one of the pending applications. The Acting Director explained that the date that the Committee members were viewing was the due dates and not necessarily the date that an award would be announced.

Council Member Walsh asked about the grant application for planting trees. He pointed out that while trees were nice, the City Attorney was telling the Committee that the City was not responsible for putting trees on private property. Discussion about this then followed. Council Member Walsh then asked for an explanation of how the grant process works, which the Acting Director reviewed with him. Council Member Walsh asked if it would not be better to take a set back and reallocate the efforts towards areas that the City needs rather than whatever opportunities were available. Discussion then followed about the needs of the City.

Mr. Sherwood then gave a brief overview of the various departments that still were on the list for review. The discussion then moved to the allocation of Capital funds.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Budget and Appropriations Committee
Regular Meeting
April 30, 2008
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**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 1, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman; Leticia Colon, Co-chair; Andre Baker, Susan Brannelly, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Daniel Martinez, Howard Austin

STAFF: Michael Feeney, Deputy Director of Finance

OTHERS: Angel DePara, Council Member; Michael Lupkas, Bill O'Brien, Anne Kelly-Lenz; Council Member Robert Walsh, Council President Thomas McCarthy, Council Member Michelle Lyon, Bernard Tardy

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. He announced that he had another commitment and would be leaving the meeting early. Co-chair Colon would then conduct the remaining business of the evening.

TREASURER

Mr. Feeney directed everyone to page 7-2. He said that there was a decrease in revenue and said that the Mayor is recommending that this office be reduced from three people to two people.

Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that the reduction was because of a reduction of grants. There were several questions about the various line items that have to do with the WPCA.

Chairman Curwen asked about the City's investments. Ms. Kelly-Lenz explained that the money was in short term investments in order to allow the City greater flexibility.

TAX COLLECTOR

Mr. Feeney directed everyone's attention to pages 8-2 and stated that the revenues had been increasing. He pointed out that one position, that of the Deputy Tax Collector, be eliminated. Chairman Curwen asked why this was being done. Mr. Lupkas and Mr. Feeney reviewed the figures and the reasons for this.

Council Member Martinez asked about a vacant position in the office regarding Arrears Collection. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that it was still vacant and the position needed to be filled.

Council Member DePara asked about where the growth was coming from in the records. Mr. O'Brien gave a very brief overview.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked what was being done about cars with out of state plates belonging to those who live in Bridgeport. She said that the Florida and the New York plates had disappeared, but the Massachusetts was still appearing. Mr. O'Brien then briefly reviewed the change in the laws regarding out of state plates on vehicles. A brief discussion about this then followed.

Chairman Curwen asked about CRRA. Mr. Feeney explained that the expiration date of the contract has been factored into the Pilot payment. There was also a discussion about the CL&P substation, which was not completed as expected this year. The substation will be taxed as private property. Mr. Feeney said that the City was working on some legislation in Hartford that would regulate the industry like any other one. Mr. Feeney said that there are still negotiations going on with Wheelabrator and CRRA and that he believed that there would be savings.

Mr. Feeney then reviewed a document that listed the Pilot payments for the City, including the Marshall fees.

Council Member Baker asked about the property that the City sold in the Tax Sale. Mr. Feeney and Mr. Lupkas reviewed where this information would be located in the Budget binder.

Council Member Baker had several other questions about staffing and efficiency. Ms. Kelly-Lenz explained that one of the problems is that the software is antiquated and needs to be updated. This will cut down on the wait time and move things along. Chairman Curwen asked when the new system would be operable. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that she expected this system to be up and running within the next two weeks. Chairman Curwen asked about the amount of dead tax bills that are returned to the City. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that the new program would allow the City to utilize the DMV database for updated addresses. Also addresses can be flagged to prevent future mailings.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the method of collecting taxes, which are in arrears. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that personal property taxes were being collected, but not as aggressively as what was done with real estate. Mr. Lupkas pointed out that this would be a line item that decreases as the taxes are collected. Motor vehicles taxes are coming in regularly now because of the Boot Finder program that was started two years ago. Mr. Lupkas said that there might be a problem with personal property, especially if the

property is seized. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that last year, she sent out approximately 39 thousand warrant on vehicles, and this year the number was much less.

Chairman Curwen said that there was something around 40 million dollars in back taxes was from companies that closed fifteen years ago. Mr. Lupkas said that Ms. Kelly-Lenz and Atty. Liskov were working on visiting the sites and eliminating those bills that never will be collected.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the signage outside the office because people often wait in line for something when they could have gone straight to the counter. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that she and another staff member walk the lines during tax season and hand out cards to those who have to go to the Assessor's Office or to the ATM machine. Another suggestion was made regarding having TV monitors in the hallway with scrolling information.

Council Member Walsh said that there was someone on the delinquent taxes who had come before the Council three years ago for help when applying for some State grant. Everyone knew that this corporation owed back taxes. He also indicated that there were other cases like this, and mentioned one where a building permit has been issued.

Council Member Walsh then said that he had a problem when people purchase properties with tax liens. Ms. Kelly-Lenz quickly reviewed her portion of the issue. Council Member Walsh said that he would like to see the City receive a portion of the sales proceeding when the property is sold. Council Member Walsh said that the State was considering a tax amnesty. Mr. Feeney indicated that the City would need a State ordinance for this.

A question was then asked about the Marshall's line. Mr. Lupkas explained that a City had deputized an employee to utilize the Boot Finder and that if a marshall had done the job, it would cost the City 15% of the total redemption.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia had several questions about the tax collecting methods, which Ms. Kelly-Lenz and Mr. Lupkas answered for the Committee. Discussion about the process then followed.

Council Member Martinez asked what was being done regarding the tow companies who tow vehicles but close before the Tax Collectors Office does. He then related his personal experience with his car being towed because his father's name has been associated with the license plate years before. Mr. Feeney explained that there had been some major adjustments to the tow schedule and he reviewed the new schedule.

Council Member Martinez then asked about the Customer Service aspect of the Tax Assessor's Office. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that she believed the new system would move things along.

Council Member Martinez then asked if the new system would eliminate people having to bounce between lines. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that last year; the system has been changed and streamlined. Council Member Martinez suggested that the offices be closer together.

Council Member DePara had several questions about the mailing of the bills and how soon they could be sent. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that according to State Statute, they couldn't accept payments before the due date.

Council Member DePara then suggested that the City consider actually purchasing the boots rather than towing. Discussion about the pros and cons of this idea then followed.

Council Member Colon asked about extended hours during the tax season. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that this was being considered. Mr. Feeney said that during the last few days of the Tax Collection, the office was opened later. It was also commented that residents could pay their taxes at local banks.

Council Member Baker asked about one of the recent Pilots. It was explained that the Pilot had been approved in April and the Budget numbers had been compiled in January.

TAX ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Mr. O'Brien came forward and distributed copies of the Grand List to the Committee. Mr. Feeney then gave a quick overview of the proposed budget. Mr. Feeney said that there had been a letter from OPM Secretary Robert Genuario that stated that there would be a further decrease in State funds.

Chairman Curwen asked Mr. O'Brien to give a quick overview of his department's responsibilities, which Mr. O'Brien did.

Chairman Curwen asked about Grand List Growth. Mr. O'Brien said that he had arrived at the tail end of 2004. He said that the past year, which was a non-evaluation year, there was some growth rates. When Mr. O'Brien arrived there was a large number of phantom businesses on the list, which have been removed.

Chairman Curwen said that he had spoke with Mr. O'Brien earlier about a number of issues. He asked if the utility companies were being assessed as much as they should be. Mr. O'Brien said that it was a difficult area because it was complex. Mr. O'Brien said that the City subscribes to a cost evaluating services. There is also an aspect covering the

regulated and unregulated services. The regulated utilities are usually straightforward. The non-regulated utilities are less forthcoming. Mr. O'Brien said that his office does a continual monitoring. He added that with the telecom companies. There was a drop in the revenues because SNET and Verizon filed with the State. Chairman Curwen said that the Committee has to look at the big ticket items. Mr. O'Brien said that he does take an aggressive approach, which is tempered because he must defend it in court if so needed.

Chairman Curwen pointed out that there is an Appeals Board. Mr. O'Brien stated that the Mayor appoints the Board and that he tries to stay out of their business in order to allow them their autonomy. He added that he had brought the City Attorney in when he thought that the Board was heading towards trouble.

Chairman Curwen asked Mr. O'Brien to explain the mil rate. Mr. O'Brien stated that the bottom line was that the net budget divided by the Grand List.

Council Member Baker asked about the OPM Secretary's letter, which Mr. Feeney reviewed with the Committee.

Chairman Curwen and Council Member Austin left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Council Member Baker then asked about the moderate income housing and the DCA funding received from the State. Mr. Feeney and Nestor reviewed this for the Committee.

Council Member Walsh asked about vehicles with out of state plates. Mr. O'Brien then stated that the City was doing all that it could to tax the vehicles. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia explained that in Massachusetts, a person can register a vehicle with an international license, which they can not do in Connecticut.

Council Member Lyons asked Mr. O'Brien about a particular constituent concern.

Council Member Baker asked about the new system. Mr. O'Brien said that the new system would be replacing the dinosaur old system and would be tied in to the Tax Collectors Office so there could be an exchange of information. When asked if it would be tied into the Building Department, Mr. O'Brien said that the Building Department would be tied in but that there were some upgrading programs. Discussions about the details then followed.

PUBLIC PURCHASING

Mr. Feeney reviewed the proposed budge, which includes the elimination of one buyer's aide. Mr. Tardy came forward and explained that his department is working very hard to

get online. There have been some glitches with the RFP Depot. There have been other issues with the MBE ordinance, but these are being work out.

Council President McCarthy asked about the vacant position, which started as a buyer's aide but was downgraded to a minicomputer operator. Mr. Tardy said that his Department had experienced difficulty filling the position.

Council Member Baker had several questions about the process, which Mr. Tardy reviewed with him.

Council member Walsh asked about the quarterly reports on the MBE contracts. Mr. Feeney said that this should be issued from the CEO's office.

COMPTROLLER

Mr. Lupkas then gave a quick overview of the budget for his department, which was listed on page 3-2 of the binder. Under the Controller's Office, the transactions are tracked.

Council Member Baker asked about the Port Authority Payment Fund. Mr. Lupkas said that Mr. Nestor would answer that question. The Port Authority receives a percentage of the Bridgeport ferry as does the City also does. A discussion then followed about a court case that the ferry has with the Port Authority.

Council Member Martinez asked about the Payroll Accounts Supervisor. Mr. Lupkas reviewed the job responsibilities for that position. Council Member Martinez asked if the payroll was done all in house. Mr. Feeney said that it was.

Council Member Martinez asked about the Assistant Comptroller. Mr. Lupkas reviewed the job responsibilities and said that the position was very necessary because it supervises a number of financial functions.

Council Member Martinez asked about the increases in the salaries for his department members. Mr. Lupkas said that the salaries that were increasing were union contract increases. Council Member Martinez pointed out that the other departments were losing positions, but Comptroller's was not. Mr. Lupkas explained that at one time, there were four assistant Comptrollers and that over the years his department had been drawn down to the bare bones. Additional cuts would result in delays in Accounts Payable and the normal day to day accounting.

Council Member Baker asked about different positions, including the Special Revenues Managers. Mr. Lupkas said that the employee oversees the management of the 250 grants that the City receives. The employee also produces a report that is necessary for

the yearly audit. Another position was the Capital Projects Manager, who is the center focal point for the financial management of the budget.

Council Member Walsh then asked about the five management positions in the office. He said that he felt that the department needed to flatten out the management aspect. Mr. Lupkas said that there was an issue regarding the various job titles that been created over the years.

Council Member Walsh asked about cash management. Mr. Lupkas gave a brief overview of the old software system and the new software system. He then gave a brief scenario about scheduled payments, which are currently not being handled by the software.

Council Member Walsh asked about O&G paying the contractors. Mr. Lupkas explained that O&G cuts the checks and yields an 80% reimbursement rate. Discussion then followed about the details of this arrangement.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Feeney reviewed the changes proposed for this Department with the Committee.

Council Member Martinez asked if there was truly a need for two positions rather than combining them into one. Mr. Feeney said that it was a vital position. Mr. Lupkas said that his deputy director was responsible for the forecast reports. The expertise that is associated with the responsibilities requires a particular level of pay. Mr. Feeney then gave a quick overview of the functioning of the department and how it is responsible for all the money that passes through the City department.

Council Member DePara asked if job descriptions could be supplied to the members of the Committee for their edification.

Council Member Walsh asked if additional thought had been given to the auditing process. Mr. Lupkas said that it was being considering. Council Member Walsh then asked about the bond counsel and whether the MRE's have been considered. Mr. Feeney said that the RFP had been published and more will be known when the submissions have arrived.

OPERATIONS

Mr. Feeney said that Mr. Columbo was not able to be present because he was away on City business. Mr. Feeney said that the half clerical position was very important. Council President McCarthy asked what the clerical position would cover. The employee does the binding and stapling of the books, along with two hours in the mail room.

Council Member Martinez asked why the business cards were not printed in house. Mr. Feeney and Mr. Lupkas explained that it was cheaper to have it done outside because of the size of the runs.

Chairwoman Colon asked why Bullard Haven print shop was not being utilized. She also said that there were other organizations that provide employees who are paid by the organization. Mr. Lupkas said that there might be insurance issues. Discussion about this followed.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.
- ** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 3, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman, Leticia Colon, Andre Baker, Howard Austin, Susan Brannelly, Daniel Martinez,

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM

OTHERS: Thomas McCarthy, Council President; Maria Valle, Council Member; Robert Walsh, Council Member, Michelle Lyon, Council Member, Ezquiél Santiago, Council Member, Carlos Silva, Council Member, Michael Feeney, CFO, Alanna Kabel, Community Development and Housing CAO; Adam Wood, Chief of Staff

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 10:38 a.m.

Chairman Curwen said that the budget must be ready by Tuesday. He added that he would be giving the Mayor an individual list of streets to consider for the Capital Plan.

Chairman Curwen said that Council Member Valle and Martinez had requested some paving and Council Member Valle had included some sidewalk repairs, also. A million dollars has been allocated for paving. This is an off-paving year, and the streets that have been listed are all small projects.

Mr. Sherwood said that the quotes for the furniture for Wheeler A & B and the other two conference rooms had arrived. The tables and chairs will be replaced. Council Member Valle suggested that the current furniture be sent to one of the senior centers. Another worthy cause was also mentioned. Discussion about the details of this then followed.

Wooden railings for St. Mary's and signage were discussed. The Firehouse repairs were also discussed and Chairman Curwen pointed out that only \$500,000 of the 2.2 million has been used at this time.

Chairman Curwen then gave a brief recap of the various requests that have been submitted.

Council Member Silva apologized for being late and asked about the paving project, which Chairman Curwen reviewed with him. Council Member Silva mentioned that

there was a problem with the paving in front of the Beechmont Avenue Fire Department. Mr. Sherwood then noted the location and said that he would inspect the problem.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia then asked about the various sidewalk repairs. Mr. Sherwood then explained that the City cannot deal with the sidewalks on private property. The City has compiled a list of contractors that it makes available to the homeowners and encourages them to utilize those contractors. The City needs to work on the city owned sidewalks.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she wanted to be sure that all the districts are being treated equally. Adam said that this was one of the issues that the City Stat program will address by tracking where the improvements are being done to insure that all the districts are being treated equally. A discussion about sidewalk repairs that the City was responsible for followed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that Firehouses #12 and #16 are in disrepair and need attention. One of the firehouses has some flooring problems, which prevents the trucks from being stored inside. Mr. Sherwood said that there would be a meeting next week about #12. Chairman Curwen said that he had passed those concerns to the Mayor.

Council Member Valle said that she wanted to revisit the tree issue again. She said that some time ago, sidewalks were replaced but the work was poorly done. Now the sidewalks are cracking. She said that there were some trees that were contributing to this and that she was asking the Parks Department to consider removing these trees. Another tree is damaged on the East Side and UI trimmed some of the branches, but the tree needs to come down. Mr. Sherwood said that it was a two-step process. If it is determined that the sidewalk is privately owned, then the City can't touch it. Discussion about this then followed.

Council Member Baker asked if the City was doing something to strategizing a plan to address these problems. Mr. Sherwood said that there was a plan a few years ago where the sidewalks are included in the development projects. Council Member Baker suggested that an overall plan be submitted. Mr. Sherwood said that he would make sure the Council Members got a brief bullet point outline of major developments. Council Member Walsh said that the Council could demand that any work is reported to the Council. He said that the Council could state that nothing would be done in the City without Council approval.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like to see the North Street streetscape improvements. She said that she would like some collection enforcement from the property owners who privately own the sidewalks which the City is currently paying for. Discussion about this followed.

Chairman Curwen then reminded everyone that the paving list is done by priorities. The ones that are on the top of the list are the ones that are in most dire need. This priority list was determined by a company that inspects the roads in the City and ranks them accordingly. He said that the list includes information as to whether the street will be done curb to curb or if it would be just a resurfacing. Discussion about the various streets that need attention followed.

Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the Five Year Capital Plan with the Committee. He explained that regarding the Board of Education the State no longer allows the municipalities to announce to that they are planning to renovate a school. Now the State requires the plans be provided.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she wanted to know who would be tracking the funding because there were items that were paid by the Board of Education for Blackman School and were still sitting in the warehouse. Mr. Sherwood said that he would look into this. Council Member Lyons pointed out that there were schools that had mold and it was not being addressed.

Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the remaining details of the proposed Capital Plan.

Council Member Baker asked if the adjustments to the Board of Education Five Year Capital Plan would be part of the upcoming meeting with the Board of Education. Chairman Curwen said that it would be. He added that Mr. Hines had met with Mr. Sherwood to work on the Capital Plan. The Board of Education also met with the State to discuss their funding. Details of this were then discussed.

Chairman Curwen commented that last year the auditors were asked about five year Capital Plan. They said that it was fiscally prudent to do a five year plan, but that the actual bonding was a secondary issue.

Council Member Valle asked which parks would be receiving restrooms. Mr. Sherwood said Newfield, Beardsley, P.T. Barnum, and two others. Washington Park is also being considered.

Council Member Martinez asked about the Burroughs Library study. Mr. Sherwood said that an engineering study was being done to evaluate the status of the building.

Council President McCarthy asked about the debt repayment. Mr. Sherwood gave the figure and the pointed out that some of the projects would be bonded, others would be held off until the market was favorable. Council President McCarthy said that he wanted everyone to be aware of the cost of these projects. He added that the pension bonding was also something that cost the City money. Council Member Lyons asked if the pension bonding had been evaluated by an outside agency. Mr. Sherwood then reviewed

the history of the pension bonding. Mr. Feeney said that the bonding was reviewed every year. He added that a new GASBY 45 was also coming forward and would include post retirement benefits. This would include a health care pension funding. Mr. Feeney said that there would be a workshop about this for the Council Members.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia made a recommendation that the City put out a full-page ad in the newspaper explaining this to the residents.

Council member Colon asked about the MBE Construction Participation. Mr. Sherwood said that the State said that if a school project is planned, the 80-20 MBE Participation would be included. He then explained the particulars of the request to the Committee. Chairman Curwen explained that with the 80-20 split, the City would be reimbursed from the State because it is a qualified entity. Council Member Baker asked what department the funding would go to. Mr. Feeney said that he believe it would be to CMS.

Council Member Brannelly said that when the Capital Budget is voted on by the Council there would be a lot of residents present supporting the school based clinics and the school nurses present

**** COUNCIL MEMBER COLON MOVED APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED 2008-2009 CAPITAL PLAN**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chairman Curwen then stated it be referred to the Council for Special Consideration.

OPERATING BUDGET

Chairman Curwen said that the Operating Budget needed to be approved by next Monday. The first vote was scheduled for Friday. If the Committee cannot come to a consensus, the Mayor's Budget will pass. Chairman Curwen said that he had received several calls on his personal cell phone from children. He then said that there had been an incident where a statement was made that Black Rock School was being closed, which resulted with many people attending the Committee meeting. One of the staff later said that it was simply a ploy to have the public attend the meeting.

Mr. Sherwood said that Ms. Kabel was present to give the Committee an update on the negotiations with the clinics. Ms. Kabel said that the minimum was to maintain the services for the School Based Health Clinic (SBHC). An RFP is being drafted that requests services without the City money being involved. If a federally approved Community Health Center is done, their rate is higher than the amount the City would receive by providing the services. Dr. Evans and Ms. Kabel will be meeting to review the RFQ/RFP on Monday. There are also licensure and federal requirements that may

need to be met for the three types of services, the mental, the dental and the physical. No other municipality in the State puts the same amount of money into the service.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia then asked about enhancing the services in the plan, and whether it would be confined to the City or if it would cover a larger area. Ms. Kabel said that it would depend on the location of the Community Health Centers. Mr. Sherwood said that location did matter and that the CHC's are already recognized. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the number of students would increase. She expressed concerns that not every child in Bridgeport would know that they would be eligible to use the services. Mr. Sherwood said that many parents would not sign up for enrollment because of the birth control component. He said that there was a lot of education that would have to be done. Parents don't realize that they can opt out of the program.

Council Member Austin left the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had been receiving calls and letters that were being done on company time. The letters are being written on City stationary and this needs to be looked at.

Ms. Kabel said that there were a number of base lines that were being examined, including the fact that current employees would be given similar positions within the City. Council Member Silva asked if the SBHC would be available year round. Mr. Sherwood said that this would be an important aspect and to check as to whether the school would be charging the Health Center rent during the summer months.

Council Member Martinez asked if Mr. Sherwood had a list about the various requests. Mr. Sherwood said that he would have it for the Committee on Friday.

Council Member Martinez also asked about the jobs that would be reassigned. He said that it would be important to make sure that this was known by the public. Council Member Lyons said that she had concerns about the mental health services being continued. Ms. Kabel reviewed this with her. Council Member Lyons asked about the City employees who had significant years of service and might lose their pension continuations. Council President McCarthy said that unfortunately, the State will not allow the employees to continue with their seniority.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the uninsured population. Ms. Kabel reviewed this with the Committee. Mr. Sherwood added that there were people who were reluctant to enroll in Husky because they have the CHC.

Council Member Colon asked if podiatry was included in the program because there has been a marked rise in juvenile diabetes and in obesity. Ms. Kabel made a note of this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the use of mental health label and pointed out that certain children are being over medicated and others are being over-diagnosed.

Council Member Walsh said that when the City had tried to privatize the golf course and there was a clause in the contract that if the contractor underperforms, the City was supposed to receive a million dollars, a penny of which it never received. Council Member Walsh said that the new contractor would simply agree to do whatever in order to get the contract and that the various skill sets would not be available. Mr. Sherwood said that a licensed R.N. was a licensed R.N. and referred the question to Council Member Brannelly. Council Member Brannelly said that there were specializations and that the nurses would not all have the same skill sets, however, this would be part of the reality check that the City was experiencing. She added that the contractor would be a health care contractor who would be able to providing health care to the school population.

Chairman Curwen then gave a brief recap of the various line items and requests that were currently being considered. A discussion then followed about the process for reducing the various amounts.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that while surcharges are nice to raise revenue, but that she knew what a nightmare it became, particularly when the State misallocated the funds. Later the surcharges were dropped because of the logistics involved. Discussion about the pros and cons of having a surcharge on tickets and hotels followed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia also mentioned the WPCA vehicles that are being taken home. Mr. Sherwood said that the WPCA does not have the ability to bond, however they manage their own funds.

Mr. Sherwood said that he had spoken to Mr. Hines about moving the recycling back to the Board of Education. He said that he would have the requested information for the Committee soon.

Council Member Silva said that the WPCA committee had already approved the 4.5 increase but it would not be made publicly known until June.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if the Board of Education presentation would include additional information. Mr. Sherwood said that no requests had been made at this time. He added that Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia should call Mr. White and request the information she would like.

Chairman Curwen said that he had a meeting with Dr. Ramos in the past where there was conversation about improving communication between the Council and the Board. However, recent actions have not born this out.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia had several questions about the Board of Education Salary listing. Mr. Sherwood reviewed the details of those items with her.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER COLON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED**

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 7, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Bob Curwen, Chair; Leticia Colon, Co-chair; Andre Baker, Howard Austin, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia

OTHERS: Council Member Bob Walsh, Council Member Michelle Lyon, Council Member Maria Valle, Council Member Carlos Silva, Andrew Nunn, CAO; Dr. John Ramos, Bridgeport School Superintendent; John Hiscox, Max Medina, Bridgeport Board of Education; Mr. Molleda, Bridgeport Public Schools; BOE Member Newman, BOE Member Simmons, BOE Member Cunningham; BOE Member Fuller; Mr. Hinds, Bridgeport Public Schools; Ms. Pannoazzo, Bridgeport Public Schools; Ms. Douglas-Grier, Bridgeport Public Schools Media Specialist

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. He reviewed the rules for those present.

Mr. Max Medina, the Board of Education Chair, came forward and greeted the Committee. He stated that Board members Newman, Simmons and Cunningham were also present.

Mr. Medina then said that everyone on the Board of Education was a Bridgeport taxpayer and he urged those present to encourage the State to increase the amount of funding for the Bridgeport students.

Mr. Medina said that there were RFPs being published regarding the School Based Health Centers and that these were being done without input from the Board of Education. He said that he would have preferred having the Board had involved, particularly since the schools own the buildings Mr. Medina said that they had spoken with the Mayor about the cuts and that the Board was willing to work with the Mayor and the Council on the budget.

Mr. Sherwood then gave an overview of the information found on page 68-1 of the budget binder.

Dr. Ramos said that he would like to state that Board Member Fuller was also in attendance. Dr. Ramos said that he was trying to figure out a way to present the budget in a different perspective. He said that there are no words to express the pain that occurs in the system. It is about the Bridgeport students and what the students do without.

Dr. Ramos said that he met with the state agents about the Cambridge reports. However, the state agents were more concerned about the various goals. Dr. Ramos said that he did not know how to open a conversation that would bring the Committee to a place where there could be a genuine conversation about the budget.

Dr. Ramos distributed copies of a document titled "Bridgeport Public Schools Strategic Plan 2007-2012 Executive Summary". He said that the goal is to have every Bridgeport student graduate from school college ready and able to succeed in life. Currently, only 50% of the high school students graduate on time. This means that they have fulfilled the graduation requirements and does not mean that the students are college ready.

The Finance Director then gave a PowerPoint presentation of the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Budget Summary. Dr. Ramos said that when he arrived in Bridgeport, his first task as Superintendent to reconcile the budget. In the last two years, he had to deal with additional cuts. Mr. Molleda then reviewed the slide, which outlined the Estimate Fiscal Impact of Redistricting, Opening of New Schools, Contractual Changes and New Requests.

Council Member Brannelly asked if redistricting was necessary. Dr. Ramos said that the redistricting was necessary with the closing of some schools and the opening of others. The Master Plan called for creating schools wherever possible for PreK to eighth grade.

Council Member Brannelly asked for an explanation of the new requests. Mr. Molleda replied that there were some items that were unfunded mandates, such as the In School Suspension Paraprofessionals. A Labor Relations specialist was included in the hopes of reducing outside legal fees.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the transportation issue. Dr. Ramos reviewed the situation for some Garfield students who were expected to walk to the new school. When this was looked at, it became evident that these students would need busing.

Council Member Baker asked about Columbus School being vacant and the utilities billing. Mr. Hinds pointed out that when renovations are in progress, it is the obligation of the District to supply the utilities.

Council Member Baker asked about other non-salary costs. Dr. Ramos then reviewed the figures. He directed everyone to the information on page 23 of the Board of Education

budget book. The increases are a result of the nominal increases in equipment and supplies throughout the District.

Co-chair Colon asked about the reconstitution figures. Dr. Ramos explained that once a school is on a list for a period, reconstitution is required by the State. It can be radical as replacing all the staff, or simply training the staff differently. Chairman Curwen asked if this could be funding with grant funding. Dr. Ramos pointed out that grant funding is never assured. The full day kindergarten program is funding with a grant and it could disappear if the funding is discontinued. Dr. Ramos said that the grant structures were changing and that the government was not offering RFPs like they did in the past.

Council Member Martinez said that he had read in the newspaper article that there were so many initiatives that the focus should be fine-tuned. Dr. Ramos said that the report that Council Member Martinez was the Cambridge Report. The State has an idea of how it thinks the system should be for urban school systems. Dr. Ramos said that when he arrived, the administration had met and listed all the initiatives and since then have been culling them down to a manageable size. As for the suggestion from Cambridge that there was a disconnect between the Central Office and the various schools, Dr. Ramos said that the District was trying to reconnect with the various schools with the three new administrators.

Council Member Martinez said that the focus currently was on the early childhood students, but he was concerned about the students in high school who had difficulties.

Mr. Hiscox said that the Opportunity Schools as a means of allowing the students to take care of their personal needs and also getting an education. Currently there are over 500 students and this is the second year. There is also a program called "Making the Grade", which helps the students prepare for high school.

Council Member Silva asked about the In School Suspension Paraprofessionals. Dr. Ramos reviewed the details of the program including the definition of paraprofessionals. Ms. Pannozzo said that the paraprofessionals are required to have a two-year degree or 60 college credits or other qualifications.

Council Member Brannelly said that with some of the salaries of over \$100,000, which average out to \$117,000 that adding three \$100,000 positions was difficult for her to understand. Dr. Ramos explained that teachers are peers and unless there is someone has some authority, there are problems. Dr. Ramos said that if the District wants competent people, the District has to pay for them. Dr. Ramos said that the District was coming to the Council in an attempt to recover from a deficit model. In order to deliver the product that the residents want, there will be a cost. Council Member Brannelly said that in her professional life, she has had to establish a culture where there is teamwork. Council

Member Lyons had some questions about the details of this, which Dr. Ramon reviewed with her.

Mr. Kelly said that the State is superimposing a structure on the schools that have been on list for a number of years. The District can no longer let the schools run on an autonomous model. Mr. Kelly said that it was a complex issue because the administrator needs to be able to analyze the situation in order to correct it. Mr. Kelly said that his son was a Bridgeport teacher and his son is constantly approached at conferences by those who recruit for nearby towns and pay larger salaries.

Council Member Lyons said that having the teachers advance through the system was a very good thing. However one issue that pushes teachers out is handling the discipline of the students. Dr. Ramos said that the point was an important one because the cities were being asked to do more with less, but the students were school dependent. Without the school lunch program some students don't eat. The Cambridge Report noted that Bridgeport was one of the cities that pays attention to the socio-emotional aspect of the students.

Council Member Walsh commented that he had been told that there were over 100 employees in the District that make over \$100,000 a year. It makes a lasting impression and those who were there at the meeting went out and told 10 people this, and then it spread from there onward.

The discussion then returned to the PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Molleda then reviewed the sources of the general budget funding. Only 26.3% of the total budget comes from the City Property Taxes. Mr. Molleda said that the grant funding comes with strict limitations as to how it will be used. He added that the grant funding would be used to supplement, not supplant the programs. Mr. Molleda then reviewed the list of major programs and items that were paid for by Grant Funding and the combined Budget Summary for the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Proposed General Budget and Grants.

Council Member Baker asked where the District would be making some cuts. Mr. Henry said that what was before the Committee was the basic operating budget. This will guarantee the minimum amount of services that will allow the schools to function. In terms of energy conservation, the school is looking at saving \$400,000 in savings. Mr. Henry then asked Mr. Hinds to review the reductions in the area of maintenance.

Mr. Hinds said that things that were cut are not in the budget document. The schools will not be leasing some facilities, which will result in savings.

Council Member Baker asked about the School Based Health Clinics and the school nurses. Dr. Ramos said that the SBHCs and the school nurses do not fall within the

District budget, so Dr. Ramos said that the Board did not discuss it. He also reiterated that there were numerous items proposed that never made it to the budget book.

Chairman Curwen asked where the funds for auditing were. Liz said that it was page 41 and indicated where the information was located on the page.

Chairman Curwen said that there had been prior discussion about recycling and that he would provide information about recycling for the District. Mr. Sherwood then distributed a document titled "School Garbage Pick Up for Fiscal Year 2008-2009". Mr. Sherwood then gave an overview of the recycling and how it generated savings by removing it from the waste stream and also generated some revenue by selling the paper to the recycling center. Dr. Ramos then reiterated that what was being proposed was the City giving the District the amount of funding for the tipping fee and then the District would manage the recyclables.

Ms. Bellinger said that she could remember when the recycling bins were originally distributed and how the students were recycling, but the custodians had taken the bins and dumped them in the dumpsters. Mr. Sherwood agreed and said that the City had reduced its waste stream significantly.

Chairman Curwen asked about workmen's compensation. He said that it appears that the figures were carried over from year to year. He suggested that there be a program to reduce the figures in the compensation. Mr. Hinds said that there had been a meeting that reviewed the various claims. Some claims are going to be long term, but incentive offers have been made to others.

Chairman Curwen asked about sick time statistics. Ms. PannoZZo explained that a teacher may be absent from the classrooms it could also be because the teacher is attending a class to enhance their methods. There are 17,000 certified teachers in the District, which could mean that a number of teachers are absent on any given day.

Co-chair Colon said that last year there had been seventeen teachers out at Harding High and the students were in the auditorium for over an hour without a teacher present. Co-chair Colon was assured that steps were being taken to insure that this did not happen again.

Council Member DePara joined the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Council Member Walsh commented that there was a Bridgeport student who graduated from the school system, went to Harvard and is currently serving in a program. He said that it was important for the District be aware of the students that do well.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the bar coding of the various textbooks. Mr. Molleda said that he would give Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia the number as soon as possible.

Council Member Vizzo-Panicica said that there was a problem with Central students being on the streets during school hours. She added that the business owners were complaining and that the police officers were patrolling the area.

Mr. Hiscox said that there were a number of students that were skipping classes and this was being worked on. There are only five School Security officers for the District. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like to have the Council work with the District on this. Mr. Hiscox said that the District knows who these students are and will be addressing this soon.

Council Member Walsh left the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Council Member Brannelly then asked about several of the figures and how they were compiled. Liz reviewed the details of these figures with the Committee.

Council Member Martinez asked about whether there were any positions of the administrative staff that are not involved in instructional teaching were being considered for reduction. Dr. Ramos said that he wasn't aware of any positions that did not impact the students in some manner.

Co-chair Colon asked about the line break outs for some of the items. Mr. Sherwood explained the difference, which had to do with the accounting software methods.

Council Member Martinez asked what the benefit was of having a Department of Adult Education. Dr. Ramos reminded everyone that there were a number of residents in Bridgeport that had not completed their educations for various reasons and the Adult Education program helps these residents finish the job.

Council Member Martinez asked if the non-instructional areas could be combined with the City staff workers to be more efficient. He encouraged everyone to think about this as the City moved forward to focus on the priorities. Dr. Ramos said that the Adult Education was primarily State funded. Dr. Ramos said that the District was not closed to the idea of combining forces.

Co-chair Colon asked about the Public Relations position and the associated salary. Dr. Ramos said that the title was Director of Communications and the job responsibilities include facilitating communication between the Central Office, the schools and the community. Dr. Ramos gave an example about the "Great Expectations" program on public TV.

Council Member Martinez said that he felt the District needed to focus on priorities rather than other programs. The primary goal is to educate the students.

Council Member Austin left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Dr. Ramos said that everyone loves a winner and gravitate to them.

Ms. Ms. Douglas-Grier came forward and said that she was a journalist for fifteen years. Her first two weeks, she spent putting out fires. On her third day on the job, there was a report that there was a student with a gun. Ms. Douglas-Grier said that she spent the day at the school working with the parents, dealing with the media and assisting with the principal. Parents were arriving at the school to take their children home in the middle of the CMTs. It is vital to get back to people as quickly as possible because Hartford was listening to the media and evaluating what they heard.

Rather than constantly hearing negative things about the Bridgeport District, they want to hear positive things. After today's show, Ms. Douglas-Grier got a call from someone who had seen the show and was interested in donating laptops to the senior students.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked Ms. Douglas-Grier if she could include the Council Members on her email blasts. Ms. Douglas-Grier said that she would.

Chairman Curwen said that Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia had just given a fine example of the disconnect between the District and the Council. He said that he would like to reach out and work on that.

Council Member Baker asked what the current drop out rate. Dr. Ramos said that it was 26%. Mr. Hiscox said that the figures for the drop outs have been improving.

Council Member Baker then asked about take home vehicles. Dr. Ramos said that they could get that information to the Committee members quickly. Mr. Sherwood added that there was a different arrangement for the District where there was an arrangement where private cars were reimbursed.

Council Member Brannelly said that she hope that the Education Committee could work with the District in the future.

Council Member Lyons said that when she was in Washington D.C. it became evident that there are financial problems all over the place. The recession covers the entire country. A solution is needed not only for the City, but also for the District. This is not a taking sides situation, the District has to work with the City.

Council Member Baker thanked the District staff for coming to the meeting and giving such good input to the Committee. He said that he thanked the District for their efforts in educating the students.

Chairman Curwen said that he believed that there was a good foundation for a future relationship. He said that there was clearly a deep passion for the students in Bridgeport. Chairman Curwen said that this current budget calls for the use of the fund balance, which will take the City below the 5% cap. The bond rating may be affected, but the District needs to be aware of the debt service.

Dr. Ramos said that he appreciated the spirit of the conversation and the generous compliments. Mr. Sherwood gave Dr. Ramos a quick update on the actions of the City Council on Monday. Chairman Curwen said that he had discussed this with Mr. Hines. A discussion about the details then followed.

Dr. Ramos said that on his part, the District understands that they are part of a larger society. He said that it is expected that the District would advocate for the children. He said that it appears that the District and the Committee has moved further down the road towards understanding and removing misconceptions. Dr. Ramos gave an example of how the students had recently related their stories to him at Bassick High.

Co-chair colon thanked the District members for their input.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 8, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman; Leticia Colon, Co-chair;
Daniel Martinez, Susan Brannelly, Andre Baker, Howard
Austin; AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director

OTHERS: Police Chief Brian Norwood, Police Sgt. Cueso; Council Member
Marie Valle; Council Member DePara; Michael Feeney, Council
Member Robert Walsh. Council President Thomas McCarthy;
Council Member Michelle Lyons; Andrew Nunn,

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Sherwood then gave an overview of the Mayor's budget. He said that there was a major amount of street work going on and this was driving the figure up. He also then reviewed the various positions that would be transferred to the new EOC. Mr. Sherwood said that the cuts would also eliminate some of the positions, some of which are filled. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that last year, the budget amount for gas had been reduced because of the new fleet of vehicles and their fuel efficiency. The Department is using less fuel but the price of gasoline has gone up significantly.

Sgt. Cueso explained that there were two classes of officers that were processed and this created a financial strain because the candidate's list was about to expire. Outfitting the new officers has been a bit difficult.

Sgt. Cueso also explained that the Department would still use the CrownVics until the new vehicles arrive.

An RFP went out for veterinarian services and there was only one respondent.

Sgt. Cueso also explained that the Detective Bureau would eventually be paperless.

Co-chair Colon asked if all the vehicles have the GPS system. Chief Norwood said that the new vehicles do and it is part of the data modem.

Council Member Valle asked about the Crime Victims Advocate. Mr. Sherwood directed Council Member Valle to the specific line item where the budget cut was indicated.

Council Member DePara asked Chief Norwood how he felt about the Crime Victims Advocate and the Crime Analysis being cut. Chief Norwood said that the Crime Analysis position would be nice to have, but the economics dictate otherwise. He explained that the Crime Victims Advocate provided a great deal of assistance to the community, but as with the other position, there just wasn't enough money to fund the position.

Council Member Baker asked about the positions that had been transferred to the CAO's office. Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the details with Council Member Baker.

Council Member Baker asked why the Crime Victims Coordinator was being eliminated, but the receptionist would be continuing on. Mr. Sherwood said that a staff member would still be needed to field the calls, and the information would be then turned over to the uniformed officers. Discussion about the details about this proposed program cut followed. Chief Norwood commented that other communities had the advocates but the funding was from grants. He also explained that there was not anyone in Central Grants that reports to the Police Department.

Council Member Valle asked about having someone work with Central Grants on this issue. Chairman Curwen said that he would be researching this aspect. Chief Norwood said that he would not be taking a sworn officer off the street, but adding those duties to one of the officer's duties. Council Member Valle said that she had gone to the Central Grants office to ask that the staff there look for a grant that could be used towards refunding the marital arts program, which did not get funding from CDBG funding.

Council Member Baker asked about some of the overtime issues. Chairman Curwen asked whether the Alarm Administrator generated income. Chief Norwood said that the position was cumbersome and generated about \$15,000 last year. Sgt. Cueso said that many of the companies had been able to reduce their amount of false alarms.

Council Member Walsh had several detailed questions about the Outside Overtime revenue. Mr. Sherwood reviewed the details with the Committee. The discussion then moved to the issue of the length of time required to train an officer, which is about one year.

Council Member Martinez had several questions about various positions, including the 20 plus typists. Chief Norwood said that the clerical staff handles the records and all the

filing for the entire department. The State mandates that the Police Department maintain their records for a set number of years. Mr. Sherwood and Chief Norwood reviewed the various positions and responsibilities associated with these various positions.

Chief Norwood said that he had concerns about 24-5 because the phrase was “goal status” and that all but four had been accomplished in the last year, so the term should be changed to “Goals Accomplished”. Among other accomplishment, the Bridgeport SWAT team has been doing a phenomenal job. He pointed out that the Department has been doing this with less funding. Other cities are beginning to replicate the NET teams. Chairman Curwen said that he could not recall when a department had accomplished so many goals.

Mr. Sherwood said that last night there were questions about School Resource Officers. Chief Norwood said that the Madison Avenue corridor has been an area of concern. He said that when Central and Harding dismiss, the Bridgeport Police monitor the area with the motorcycle division, the mounted police department and others without assistance from the Board of Education. Chief Norwood said that the School Resource Officers are sworn officers, but do not report to him.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked Chief Norwood about the overtime for the Arena. Mr. Sherwood gave the Committee some general numbers on the overtime.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia congratulated the Chief on receiving an award for the K-9 unit. She then asked about the status of the animal shelter.

Council President McCarthy said that he had seen the NET team out on Madison Avenue and that he appreciated it. Chief Norwood reviewed the details of the issue with the Committee. The Chief added that it was the mission and goal of the Police Department to keep the community safe. He explained that there would be a rap concert and the particular artist is known for the violence associated with him. The police will not only be doing crowd control but also patrolling the area around the arena. The artist’s entourage only provides security for the inside of the arena. The Bridgeport Police will cover anything that happens in the parking lot, or anywhere else in area.

Council Member Lyons asked about the Victim Advocate position and Mr. Sherwood reviewed the figures with her.

Co-chair Colon commended the Department for a recent arrest of an individual on the East Side. She then asked about the Community Service. The Chief then gave an overview of the Department Table of Organization.

Mr. Sherwood said that he had been asked how the transportation program was working. Chief Norwood then explained that since the taser policy and the jail wagon had been

implemented, the number of injuries to officers has dropped. Chief Norwood said that one of the reasons is because the individual involved with the transport is not the arresting officer. This reduces the number of physical incidents involved in transporting the suspect to headquarters.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the various fees associated with towing. Sgt. Cueso reviewed the procedure. He also confirmed that the revenue fee charged by the City was being turned over the Police Department.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the cost associated with the horses. Sgt. Cueso explained that the veterinarian line item covers animal shelter, the K9 dogs, and the horses. Sgt. Cueso also explained that he had not used general funds in the last six years.

Council Member Baker asked whether any of the positions that were about to be cut other than the Alarm Administrator brought in revenue. The Chief replied that they did not. Council Member Baker asked about the Victim Services. The Chief reviewed the various aspects of the services.

Council Member Walsh asked about the drop in traffic violations. Sgt. Cueso said that the line item is actually parking. Actual moving violations fees go to the State and the State returns the funding as the Governor sees fit and also uses the funding for the Police Academy.

Council Member Lyons asked about the Permit Parking only for the park. Mr. Sherwood reviewed this and Sgt. Cueso said that the Police only enforce that between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The discussion also came to various fees that were not collected, like block parties. Chairman Curwen asked Sgt. Cueso for a list of fees that were currently not being collected.

Council Member DePara asked about the real cost of the various events to the sponsors. Mr. Feeney then said that when the Juneteen parade had occurred, it cost the Department \$135,000 for the five block parade. The cost of the Puerto Rican parade was over \$300,000. Chairman Curwen said that he would like Chief Norwood to compile a list of the cost for the various parade events.

All the security for all of the public housing is handled by the Bridgeport Police Department. Mr. Sherwood reviewed the history of the entire relationship and how the responsibility of security passed over to the Department.

Chairman Curwen then asked about overtime for a Sergeant. Chief Norwood said that the issue is Deputy Chief Hannis because he handles all the arena events. The Deputy Chief visits each of the venues. There will be white shirts at events because there is no way

around it. Chief Norwood said that it would be good to find a way out of the contract because it is costing the City.

Chairman Curwen asked about the Park Police and stated that Chief Norwood had said that there was no cooperation between the three departments. He then asked the Chief how he would solve this. Chief Norwood said that he would defund the Park Police and have the sworn officers reapply to the regular force.

Council Member Valle said that she wanted the East Side cleaned up and realizes that it was not the Chief's fault, but the abandoned vehicles had to go.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about transferring the officers into the Department. Chief Norwood said that they are sworn officers. Chairman Curwen asked Council President McCarthy about how this could be facilitated. Chief Norwood then reminded everyone that last year, there were six deaths in the parks. In order to prevent further loss of life, ATV's have been purchased and officers have been trained to operate. The Department has received a complaint from the Park Officers that they believe that there is encroachment. Discussion about this issue followed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia had several detailed questions for the Chief, which he answered. Council Member Colon asked about the station on State Street. Chief Norwood said that the officers report to 300 Congress Street and then go to their assignment.

Chairman Curwen then had several comments about one of the intersections that was dangerous. Chief Norwood said that there would be a flashing yellow light in the near future and also commented that this particular intersection needed to be re-engineered.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia congratulated the Chief on the June 6th Special Olympics funding.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Budget and Appropriate Committee
Regular Meeting
May 8, 2008
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**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 9, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chair; Leticia Colon, Co-chair; Daniel Martinez, Howard Austin, Andre Baker, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Susan Brannelly

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM

OTHERS: Council President Thomas McCarthy, Council Member Carlos Silva, Council Member Robert Walsh, Council Member Maria Valle, Council Richard Bonney, Andy Nunn, CAO; Attorney Ed Maley, Adam Wood, Mayor's Office

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

FUND BALANCE

Chairman Curwen said that Mr. Feeney had created a brief presentation about the Fund Balance. Mr. Feeney was not able to attend the meeting so Mr. Nunn would be giving the report. Mr. Nunn said that the Mayor did not like one-time revenue because they are only one time.

Council Member Baker asked what a Fund Balance was. Chairman Curwen and Mr. Sherwood explained briefly. Mr. Nunn said that currently it was expected that the Fund Balance would be down to 15 million at the end of the fiscal year. As of today, the fund balance is 29.2 million and when the books are closed on June 30th, the balance will have been reduced by 14 million.

The State requires a 5% balance, Wall Street prefers a bond rating closer to 10%. The fund balance is needed for catastrophic events.

He then introduced Atty. Maley explained that one aspect of the fund balance is that it is cash on hand. When a municipality approaches a rating agency with a downward trend, the agencies are not pleased.

Council Member Walsh has several questions about the fund balance and how it was managed. Mr. Sherwood said that there was some use of fund balance for replacement of

police cars and a few other items. Council Member Walsh said that he did not recall alarms going off when the audit was done. Discussion about this followed.

Mr. Nunn said that on behalf of the Mayor, he would like to thank the Budget Committee for all the hard work that the Committee had done.

BUDGET REVIEW

Mr. Sherwood then distributed a copy of an email that he had received from Ms. Twistol today. He then distributed a copy of an article that will be appearing in the next day's Connecticut Post about the Board of Education Budget options.

Chairman Curwen then mentioned the Alarm Administrator position, which he believed should be reinstated because the amount of revenue generated by the position covers almost half of the salary for the position. Council Member Baker pointed out that if the Alarm Administrator was removed, the responsibilities would be moved to another position and this could create additional overtime.

The discussion then moved to the Victim Assistance position and possible grant funding available. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that there were State services available for the victim assistance. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that the funding that was currently available in December or January for the budget year 2009-2010. Council Member Martinez said that if the Victim Assistance advocate decided not to apply for grant funding, then it makes a statement.

Mr. Sherwood said that the new CityStat program might address this issue by management. He explained that the Social Service Department has managed to find grant funding, but by accepting grant funding, it puts a burden on the funded position to maintain the records and paperwork. Council Member Baker said that he had interacted with the Victim Assistance program and that it was very valuable to the community. Council Member Brannelly said that it was always her feeling that a position should never been cut for disciplinary reasons. Council Member Austin said that it disturbed him that there were grants out there and that the Police Department was not applying for them. A discussion about this followed.

Chairman Curwen asked for a show of hands by the members of the Committee who wished to retain the position of Victim Assistance Coordinator. There were four members of the Committee who were in favor of retaining the position.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia then submitted a piece of mail that she had received from a City Department to Mr. Sherwood and commented that it had postage on it. Mr. Sherwood will be verifying how it had been sent to her.

Chairman Curwen then directed the Committee's attention to the Park Police, which was listed in the Parks Maintenance budget on page 41-1. Chairman Curwen said that he had spoken to Mr. Carroll about this issue. Discussion about this then followed and the decision to transfer the Park Police positions to the Police Department was agreed upon.

Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the various suggestions that had been made over the past few weeks and explained that he would have an itemized listing for the Committee. One of the topics of discussion will be the conveyance tax.

Chairman Curwen then gave a very brief overview of the Steel Point project. There has been some difficulties with the TIFF funding in Hartford that is associated with the project. Chairman Curwen said that he had seen Mr. Stone recently and that Mr. Stone had commented that the shovel would be in the ground in the next few weeks.

Council Member McCarthy explained that last year, the Committee had taken a risk on receiving the Steel Point funds, which did not happen. The result was that the fund balance took a major hit. Council McCarthy said that while he agreed with the Mayor that one time revenues were not to be depended upon, this was not a perfect financial world. Bridgeport is not a wealthy city and even with the current mil rate, some residents will be driven out of Bridgeport and others will lose their homes. Council Member McCarthy said that the Commission has to decide about taking the risks.

Council Member Brannelly mentioned a number of departments that she wished to review. Chairman Curwen then gave a quick history of the WPCA situation and possible solutions. He also reviewed the situation with the Port Authority and said that he had spoken to the Mayor about a possible solution.

MAYOR'S OFFICE

Council Member Walsh said that his suggestion would unfund all the new positions in the department. He said that either there was a financial crisis or there was a means of setting priorities. Copies of Council Member Walsh's proposed cuts were distributed to the Committee members.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO UNFUND THE AMOUNT OF \$7219 FROM THE MAYOR'S BUDGET
** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.
** THE MOTION FAILED WITH TWO IN FAVOR (BAKER AND MARTINEZ) AND FOUR AGAINST (AUSTIN, BRANNELLY, COLON AND VIZZO-PANICCIA).**

COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE

Mr. Sherwood indicated where Steel Point was located under Debt Service. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that that she would like to see a copy room on each floor, but to have the bulk of the copies go down to the print shop. She added that there should only be one fax machine per department. Council Member Martinez said that departments like the Tax Collector or the Comptroller need their own machines because the staff would be standing in line all day. Chairman Curwen agreed with Council Member Martinez, but added that he understood Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia's position. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that building was now wired so that documents could be sent directly to the printers, which will reduce the need of copiers. After some further discussion, it was decided that a recommendation to review the use of copy machines and the Master Lease.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ELIMINATED THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF FINANCE.**

Council President McCarthy said that the position that was being discussed was essential to the functioning of the City. Some discussion then followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ WITHDREW HIS MOTION.**

IMPRINTING

Mr. Sherwood then said that this was one of the examples of consolidation that had worked well.

PUBLIC PURCHASES

Mr. Sherwood said that Mayor Fabrizi had intended to fill the director's position, but this had not filled the position. The current employee has the title of "Acting Director". Chairman Curwen said that he would write a letter recommending the position be filled by the current Mayor.

TREASURER

This position of Treasurer is required by Charter. Currently, Ms. Kelly-Lenz is covering the position in order to provided a second signature on the checks as required by the Charter.

TAX ASSESSOR

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like send a recommendation letter regarding the number of assessments that appear to be over inflated. The committee decided not to act on this suggestion

CITY CLERK

Chairman Curwen said that there was excessive postage on the letters. After a brief discussion, it was decided that no action was needed.

CITY ATTORNEY

Chairman Curwen said that there had been a discussion about having a City Attorney assigned to the Board of Education and the Board will be charged for his or her services.

The discussion then moved to the paralegals positions. Mr. Sherwood said that the paralegals would be responsible for preparing the material for the attorneys. The paralegals would also work on the blight issues. A discussion about the part time attorneys who work on the construction contracts followed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would like to make a recommendation by decreasing the out of court settlements.

Council Member Baker recommended that one of the paralegal's positions be unfunded along with one City Attorneys. Council Member Brannelly then suggested that both paralegals be retained but suggested the City Attorneys be unfunded. After some discussion, the Committee agreed that one City Attorney would be unfunded and the paralegals will be retained at \$55,000.

TOWN CLERK

There was a brief discussion about the mapping software for the Clerk's office in order scan the old maps digitally.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

Council Member Baker recommended to cut the five project managers. Discussion then followed. The Committee decided not to follow this action

Council Member Martinez made a recommendation to eliminate the health services project manager. Discussion followed. This recommendation also failed.

Council Member Baker recommended that some of the project managers be consolidated by cutting three positions. Discussion followed. This recommendation also failed.

Council Member Brannelly recommended to reduce the pay range to \$44,000. This was agreed to the Committee.

Council Member Baker recommended that the vacant position project manger be eliminated. This recommendation also failed.

RECESS

The Chairman called for a recess at 11:20 p.m. and returned to public session at 11:28 p.m.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Sherwood said that the earlier discussions regarding the restoration of the Alarm Specialist and the Victims Assistant Advocate. He added that the Council had decided to transfer the Park Police into the Police Department.

Chairman Curwen said that there had been a discussion analyzing the parade costs and having the sponsors pay for the police work.

EOC

Mr. Sherwood reviewed the details of the creation of the EOC Department and why the staffing would need to be maintained at 32 employees. Discussion then followed.

CITY ENGINEER

Chairman Curwen said that he had received a letter from the City Engineer saying that State had said there would be a reduction in revenue. Chairman Curwen said that there was no letter from the State about that.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there had been many, many request for stop signs and most of those requests are denied.

SANITATION

Mr. Sherwood reminded everyone that the City was proposing to transfer the cost of garbage and recycling, for a total of \$386,000. This was agreeable to all.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Chairman Curwen said that there had been a recommendation to include \$5,000 for one of the Senior Enrichment programs that had not been funded by the CDBG funds.

BEARDSLEY ZOO

Council Member Walsh had a question about a recent raise for the Zoo Director. Mr. Sherwood said that he would check into the figures.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 10, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chair; Leticia Colon, Co-chair; Andre Baker, Susan Brannelly, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Howard Austin, Daniel Martinez

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM

OTHERS: Council President Thomas McCarthy; Council Member Robert Walsh; Council Member Angel DePara; Council Member Michelle Lyons, Michael Feeney. CFO

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 10:50 a.m.

Mr. Sherwood distributed copies of the changes that were discussed last night to the Committee members. He added that he had checked on the salary raise that the Zoo Director had received last year and explained that this increase was a result of the an increase in the Director's hours from 35 hours a week to 40 hours a week.

The discussion then moved to the "City Schools Face Dire Budget Options" article that appeared in Connecticut Post edition for May 10, 2008.

FISCAL YEAR 08-09 MAYOR'S PROPOSED REVENUE INCREASE

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE REVENUE INCREASES OF 4.5 FROM THE LAND SALES BACK INTO THE BUDGET
** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ACCEPT THE REVENUE INCREASE FROM THE HANGER FEES INTO THE BUDGET
** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chairman Curwen said that he had spoken with the Mayor about placing the funds from the land sale and the hanger revenue into the fund balance.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO REQUEST THE MAYOR PUT IN WRITING THAT ANY REVENUES GENERATED WOULD BE PUT IN THE FUND BALANCE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

FY 09 BAC PROPOSED REVENUE DECREASES

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO CONSOLIDATE THE FOLLOWING REVENUE DECREASES:**

PILOT COLLEGES & HOSPITALS	\$450,408.00
PILOT STATE OWNED PROPERTIES	\$169,569.00
PILOT MASHANTUCKET/PEQUOT	\$122,335.00

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSOLIDATED DECREASES.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

CONVEYANCE TAX

A discussion followed about the allocation of the conveyance tax funds.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO KEEP THE REVENUE DECREASE OF \$800,000.00 FROM THE CONVEYANCE TAX IN THE BUDGET.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Walsh asked about the amount of revenue generated by the golf course. Mr. Feeney reminded everyone that the golf course revenue was a moving target due to weather conditions and renovations.

OPED CULTURAL AFFAIRS POSITION

Mr. Sherwood reviewed the reasons for the request. Council Member Walsh pointed out that there currently was not a Director of Economic Development in the City. He stated that it would be good to hire the Director first and allow the Director to choose his staff.

Council Santiago joined the meeting at 11:32 p.m.

Council President said that the only way that the City will find its way out of the economic bind without the cultural events. He also gave a quick update on the status of the search for the Director's position.

Council Member DePara asked if the Director would be working on the stalled NRZ programs. Mr. Sherwood explained that the Deputy Director was responsible for the NRZs. Discussion then followed about the pros and cons for the Cultural Affairs position and the overall status of the hiring process for the Director of Economic Development.

Council Member Walsh said that last year, the Building Department had added staff in anticipation of the Steel Point project. The Steel Point project has not started, but the Building Department is working on their backlog. He also commented that there was a new employee added in Planning who has not been able to do field work because of illness.

Council Member Walsh then said that he felt that the NRZs were not working because they keep asking for more money, but the projects are just piling up.

Council Member Walsh pointed out that the Committee could talk about the staff positions for Economic Development but Civil Service was the one that made the final hiring decision.

**** COUNCIL BAKER MOVED TO REDUCE THE SALARY LINE FOR OPED CULTURE AFFAIRS WITH THE LEGISLATIVE INTENT TO UNFUND THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS POSITION AND ADD A PART TIME CLERICAL ASSISTANT IN OPED WORKING WITH NRZ/ANTI-BLIGHT PROGRAMS/**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia suggested that it be included in the contract that the employee be able to work in other departments when the anti-blight work is completed.

****COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

RECESS

Chairman Curwen announced a recess at 12:20 p.m. and reconvened into the meeting at 12:33 p.m.

ZONING COMMISSION

A discussion then followed about the pros and cons of the Zoning Administrator position and the Zoning Inspector position. Mr. Sherwood said that the department was staffed to the full compliment.

DENTAL HYGIENIST

Chairman Curwen said that there was no apparent solution for the proposed positions cuts. Mr. Sherwood said that the hygienists do generate revenue. It was suggested that their services be extended for six months to see what revenues come in. Mr. Sherwood said that this would cost \$144,327.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she felt that the program should be advertised and that every child in the City was eligible for the services.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AMOUNT OF \$144,000 EXTEND THE DENTAL HYGIENISTS PROGRAM FOR AT A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

Council Member suggested that the program be reviewed in two months to evaluate the revenue.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO AMEND THE AMOUNT OF \$144, 000 TO \$170,313 FOR THE DENTAL HYGIENISTS**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE EXTENSION OF THE DENTAL HYGIENISTS PROGRAM FOR AT A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AS AMENDED PASSED WITH FIVE IN FAVOR (VIZZO-PANICCIA, AUSTIN, BAKER, BRANNELLY AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE ABSTENTION (COLON).**

VITAL STATISTICS

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO ADD A MINI COMPUTER OPERATOR TO VITAL STATISTICS BUDGET**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO UNFUND THE MINICOMPUTER COMPUTER FROM COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

There was a brief discussion about the needle exchange positions.

SCHOOL NURSES

Mr. Sherwood then distributed a document listing the various schools that do not have a school based nurse.

Chairman Curwen said that many parents had contacted the Council members, attended the public hearing and called members on the phones about this cut. Chairman Curwen said that while he did not believe that a non-medical person should not be administering medications to students, he felt that this program should be shifted over to the Board of Education. This would place the responsibility on the Board of Education, rather than the City. Council Member DePara said that last year, Dr. Ramos said that he would cut the program and that this was his prerogative. Council Member Baker pointed out that the City can't continue to supervise the Board of Education's actions because the program is under the Board. Council Member Austin said that it is time to hold the Board of Education to their accountability. He said that the Board should utilize what is in their house.

Co-chair Colon said that she was in favor of bringing the nurses back to the schools that don't have Health Clinics. Council Member Brannelly asked for clarification whether any of the nurses answer to the BOE. Mr. Sherwood replied that they were not accountable to the BOE. Discussion about the details of the program then followed.

Due to the fact that there were several questions about the school nurses, a conference call was placed to Alanna Kabel for clarification reasons. Some of the concerns could be added to the RFQ. When Ms. Kabel was contacted, a discussion took place about the various details of the RFQ and issues that should be included it.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO RESTORE EIGHT PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES INTO THE BUDGET WITH THE ALLOCATION OF \$436,000.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE MOVING THE BUDGET OF \$1,416,321.00 FOR THE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

Discussion then followed about the details of this proposal then followed. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she wanted everyone to know that all the children of the City would now have access to services.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTER

Council Member DePara said that the scope of the RFP, it would be very important to have an opportunity to view the plan. He said that he was not comfortable with an interim and long term plan. Council Member Brannelly said that she felt that the City would come out of the crisis in good condition. She then suggested that the budget be funded at 25% for a transition period. Council Member DePara said that he would be much more comfortable with that proposal.

Chairman Curwen said that he was under the impression that the reason that the Dental Hygienist budget was given an extension, because there was no solution in sight. In the case of the SBHC, there is actually an RFP proposal underway.

Council President McCarthy reminded everyone that every addition will result in adding tot the mil rate.

Council Member Austin said that it might be a good idea to take a hit now to put the City in a better place next year. Council Member Walsh said that it would be better to cut now rather than this time next year. Council Member Walsh said that next year is an election year and added that his constituents love him.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO FUND 25% OF THE SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTER BUDGET IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH AN INTERIM TRANSITION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

****THE MOTION FAILED WITH TWO IN FAVOR (BRANNELLY AND MARTINEZ) AND FOUR AGAINST (VP, BAKER, COLON, AND AUSTIN).**

BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the Head Librarian was reorganizing the personnel and she was not sure it would be good to give him funding until the situation is clarified. Ms. Sherwood pointed out that if the Committee did not provide him with funding, twenty five positions would be eliminated.

Council Member Baker said that the Head Librarian had not been in his position for a full year and giving him a chance to make his changes

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET TO \$150,000 FOR THE LIBRARY FOR A TOTAL OF \$900,000.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR IN FAVOR (COLON, BAKER, AUSTIN AND BRANNELLY) , TWO AGAINST (MARTINEZ, AND VIZZO-PANICCIA)**

RECESS

Chairman Curwen announced a recess at 2:50 p.m. and reconvened at 3:00 p.m.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Chairman Curwen asked Mr. Sherwood to give a brief overview. Mr. Sherwood said that he had recalculated the numbers based on the changes made so far in the meeting. With

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia mentioned that the Mayor had indicated a State allocation of \$1,390,000 for property tax relief would be given to the BOE . She then said that she would like to see the funds go into the general fund. Discussion about the details then followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCA MOVED TO SHIFT THE \$1,390,000 THAT THE MAYOR PROPOSED TO ALLOCATE TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BE PLACED IN THE CITY FOR PROPERTY TAX RELIEF.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chairman Curwen said that on Monday, Mr. Sherwood would provide a clean document of all the changes for a final vote. Mr. Sherwood then reviewed the process for the Committee Members.

Council President McCarthy said that he believed that the Committee had done unbelievable work and given great consideration to the details to the proposed budget. At the end of the day, the Committee did the best that they could. He then thanked everyone for their hard work.

Co-chair Colon said that she would like to thank everyone for all their hard work. She said that the Health Centers are open all the time and that her nephew uses those services as do many, many other Bridgeport children. She added that dental is a vital service and

in a different category. It was important for her to see that the dental services were restored. She then spoke about how hard the families of Bridgeport work to provide for their families

Chairman Curwen said that he would like to thank everyone for their hard work and this year was one of the best for the exchange of ideas and dialog. He said that all the voices have been heard and that everything had been considered. However, economically times are difficult. The Committee has made difficult decisions and that in three or four years, the City will reap the benefits. He then thanked those members of the Council Members who were not on the Committee who attended the meetings. He reminded everyone that there is still work to do. Any increases in the budget require a 2/3 majority, which will require fourteen votes. The bottom line requires that the Committee remains consistent and that the Committee needs to remember their consistency.

Council member McCarthy said that it is now the job of the Council Members who are present to help the other Council members understand the thought process.

Chairman Curwen then thanked Mr. Sherwood and the secretary for all their hard work on the project.

Chairman Curwen reminded everyone that there were ideas and suggestions that were brought forward and died quickly, but this was the democratic way. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia corrected him by pointing out that this was the American way. The Committee then broke into a rousing chorus of "America".

Council Member Martinez commented that Mr. Sherwood is not part of the dead wood in City Hall. Chairman Curwen said that Mr. Sherwood was the Mayor's hatchet man, but the Council did not believe this.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 12, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chairman; Leticia Colon, Co-chair; Andre Baker, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia; Howard Austin; Susan Brannelly, Daniel Martinez (6:58 p.m.)

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM

OTHERS: Council President Thomas McCarthy; Council Member Marie Valle, Council Member Michelle Lyons; Council Member Richard Bonney; Michael Feeney, Council Member Carlos Silva

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. He then introduced the members of the Committee to those present.

50-07 PROPOSED FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2009-2013

Mr. Feeney came forward and distributed copies of the Five Year Capital Plan for the Fiscal Years of 2009-2013. He explained that there were some minor changes. Previously the capital had a number of schools (Roosevelt, Cross, Longfellow and in the outlying years of 2010, 2011, and 2012, but these number need to be approve for bonding in 2009. Therefore, those numbers have been included in the 2009 Capital Plan. Discussion followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 50-07 PROPOSED FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2009-2013 AS AMENDED**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chairman Curwen requested this item be included on the Consent calendar

90-07 APPROVAL OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND – FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009-2013 (\$44,292,643.00)

Mr. Feeney distributed copies of the GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND – FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009-2013 and Mr. Sherwood noted that this document would be amended because of the changed in the Five Year Capital Plan.

Council Member Martinez joined the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM #**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chairman Curwen requested that this item be included on the consent calendar.

Mr. Sherwood then presented an overview of the updated Budget Amendment Resolution. He explained one of the changes regarding the figures for the School Base Health Centers for the transition phase as shown on see highlights.

Chairman Curwen said that the Commission will be monitoring the budget and those proposals that do not work will be unfunded next year. The Mayor has agreed to enforce the changes. It will be the Committee's responsible and due diligence to see that the funding is directed towards the fund balance. It is this Council's intent to take any revenues and direct them towards the replacement of the fund balance.

GENERAL DISCUSSION/VOTE

69-07 PROPOSED GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009

GENERAL FUND INCREASES

Pursuant to the City Charter, the City Council shall have the power to increase any item in said budget or add new items to said budget only on a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the entire membership of the council.

City Council Vote Number 1 – 69-07a

Budget & Appropriations Committee Vote of General Fund Revenue Increases

That there be adjustments to the Mayor's Recommended Budget for general fund purposes as detailed by the City Council's Budget & Appropriations Committee.

AGY	ORG	APPROP	DESCRIPTION	MAYOR PROPOSED	BUDGET & APPROPRIATION ADOPTED	CHANGE
REVENUES						
003	1010		R061 Debt Service Principal Reimbursement		\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000
030	1175		R006 Hangar Rentals	267,000	315,000	48,000
Total Revenue Increases				\$267,000	\$4,815,000	\$4,548,000

LEGISLATIVE INTENT REVENUE INCREASES

003-1010-R061 The legislative intent of increase revenue item for the land sale transaction of the Steel Point site.

030-1175-R006 The legislative intent of increase revenue item for hangar Rentals at the Sikorsky Memorial Airport per the justifications made by the Director of the airport.

GENERAL FUND DECREASES

Pursuant to the City Charter, the City Council Budget & Appropriations Committee reports its changes to the Council as a whole in the form of budget amendment resolution. The City Council has the power to reduce or delete any item in the budget recommended by the Mayor by a majority vote of the council members present and voting.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 69-07A BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE VOTE OF GENERAL FUND REVENUE INCREASES AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

City Council Vote Number 2 – 69-07b

Budget & Appropriations Committee Vote of General Fund Revenue Decreases

That there be adjustments to the Mayor’s Recommended Budget for general fund purposes as detailed by the City Council’s Budget & Appropriations Committee.

AGY	ORG	APPROP	DESCRIPTION	MAYOR PROPOSED	BUDGET & APPROPRIATION ADOPTED	CHANGE
REVENUES						
003	2010	R193	Current Taxes: Real Estate	\$243,118,986	\$241,048,067	-\$2,070,919
003	2011	R186	PILOT: Tax Exempt Colleges and Hospitals	\$11,665,085	\$11,214,677	-\$450,408
003	2011	R187	PILOT: State Owned Properties	\$2,834,890	\$2,665,321	-\$169,569
003	2011	R192	Mashantukett Pequot Mohegan Fund	\$9,693,124	\$9,570,789	-\$122,335
010	1090	R225	Assignment (conveyance tax)	\$1,850,000	\$1,050,000	-\$800,000
Total Revenue Decreases				\$269,162,085	\$265,548,854	-\$3,613,231

LEGISLATIVE INTENT REVENUE DECREASES

003-2010-R193 The legislative intent of reducing this revenue item is lower the current property tax collection need.

003-2010-R186 The legislative intent of reducing this revenue item is to adopt the revenues for the Colleges & Hospitals PILOT as transmitted by the State of Connecticut's Office of Policy & Management's Office.

003-2010-R187 The legislative intent of reducing this revenue item is to adopt the revenues for the State Owned Properties PILOT as transmitted by the State of Connecticut's Office of Policy & Management's Office.

003-2010-R192 The legislative intent of reducing this revenue item is to adopt the revenues for the Mashantucket/Pequot PILOT as transmitted by the State of Connecticut's Office of Policy & Management's Office.

003-2010-R225 The legislative intent of reducing this revenue item is to adopt the revenues for the Town Clerk's Office for conveyance tax due to the failure of the legislature to continue the current fee rate. This may be corrected in the special session, but is not available at this time.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO APPROVED AGENDA ITEM 69-07B BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE VOTE OF GENERAL FUND REVENUE DECREASES AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

City Council Vote Number 3 – 69-07c

Budget & Appropriations Committee Vote of General Fund Appropriation

Increases

That there be adjustments to the Mayor's Recommended Budget for general fund purposes as detailed by the City Council Budget & Appropriations Committee.

AGY	ORG	APPROP	DESCRIPTION	MAYOR PROPOSED	BUDGET & APPROPRIATION ADOPTED	CHANGE
<u>APPROPRIATIONS</u>						
010	1090	61090SS	Town Clerk Special Services	212,810	216,310	-3,500
003	1030	11030PS	Print Shop Personal Services	346,765	361,325	-14,560
004	1050	41050PS	Part Time Seasonal Earned Pay	114,000	139,000	-25,000
004	1050	41050EX	Registrar of Voters Operational Expense	42,805	82,805	-40,000
009	1075	31075FB	Benefits Fringe Benefits	42,146,428	42,285,765	-139,337
009	2020	32020FB	Pensions Fringe Benefits	13,966,797	14,004,903	-38,106
009	2021	32021FB	Other Fringe Benefits Fringe Benefit	2,427,141	2,445,909	-18,768
011	1095	61095SS	Legislative Department Special Services	59,051	84,051	-25,000
021	1250	11250PS	Police Personal Services	27,517,118	27,856,049	-338,931
021	1250	41250EX	Police Operating Expenses	1,588,653	1,738,653	-150,000
022	1240	41240EX	Fire Operating Expenses	751,503	771,503	-20,000
030	1175	41175EX	Airport Operating Expenses	361,090	366,090	-5,000
030	1200	11200PS	Building Maintenance Operating Expenses	1,478,182	1,541,585	-63,403
030	1205	41205EX	Municipal Garage Operating Expenses	1,031,859	1,056,859	-25,000
030	1215	11215PS	Pub Facilities Admin. Personal Services	1,037,044	1,066,809	-29,765
030	2050	42050EX	Recreation Operatng Expenses	108,433	113,433	-5,000
030	2351	12351PS	Dental Hygiene Personal Services		144,327	-144,327
030	2351	22351TPS	Dental Hygiene Other Personal Services		8,464	-8,464
030	2351	32351FB	Dental Hygiene Fringe Benefits		1,250	-1,250
030	2351	42351EX	Dental Hygiene Operating Expenses		16,023	-16,023
030	2351	62351SS	Dental Hygiene Special Services		250	-250
050	2352	12352PS	Vital Statistics Personal Services	159,671	201,553	-41,882
050	2361	12361PS	School Nursing Personal Services	952,580	1,389,226	-436,646
050	2362	12362PS	SBHC Personal Services		250,000	-250,000
050	2362	42362EX	SBHC Operating Expenses		10,300	-10,300
050	2362	62362SS	SBHC Special Services		9,250	-9,250
080	1140	11140PS	Library Personal Services	2,276,525	3,176,525	-900,000
310	2821	12821PS	BOE Nursing Personal Services		1,389,226	-1,389,226
310	2821	42821EX	BOE Nursing Operating Expenses		32,351	-32,351
310	2821	62821SS	BOE Nursing Special Services		4,744	-4,744
310	2831	42831EX	BOE Sanitation Operating Expenses		236,902	-236,902
310	2831	62831SS	BOE Sanitation Special Services		150,074	-150,074
Total Appropriation Increases				\$96,578,455	\$101,151,514	-\$4,573,059

LEGISLATIVE INTENT APPROPRIATION INCREASES

010-1090-61090SS The legislative intent is to increase the appropriation for the Town Clerk for mapping.

003-1030-11030PS The legislative intent is to restore the appropriation to fund the part-time clerical position.

004-1050-11050PS The legislative intent is to increase the part-time seasonal appropriation for the primary and general election needs in the Registrars Office.

004-1050-11050EX The legislative intent is to provide appropriation increases for the primary and general election need for printed ballots for the Registrars Office.

009-1075-31075FB The legislative intent is to increase the health benefit appropriation to cover cost estimates for new/restored staffing.

009-2020-32020FB The legislative intent is to increase the MERF pension appropriation to cover cost estimates for new/restored staffing.

009-2020-32021FB The legislative intent is to increase the medicare appropriation to cover cost estimates for new/restored staffing.

011-1095-61095SS The legislative intent is to increase the appropriation for other services.

021-1250-11250PS The legislative intent is to increase the personal services appropriation in police to restore the Victim Assistant Coordinator and Alarm Administrator positions. To move parks special officers and the supervisor of parks officers under the Police Chief's command.

021-1250-41250EX The legislative intent is to increase the appropriation for Police gasoline.

022-1240-41240EX The legislative intent is to increase the appropriation for Fire fuel.

030-1175-41175EX The legislative intent is to increase the appropriation for Airport fuel.

030-1120-11200PS The legislative intent is to fund a mason for the department.

030-1205-41205EX The legislative intent is to increase the appropriation for the City Fleet fuel.

030-2050-42050EX The legislative intent is to fund the Senior Enrichment Program.

050-2351-12351PS, 22351TPS, 32351FB, 42351EX, 62351SS The legislative intent is to fund 6 months of the Dental Hygiene program and explore sustainability options for the program.

050-2352-12352PS The legislative intent is to fund a clerical position that is being unfunded in Communicable Clinics.

050-2361-12361PS The legislative intent is restore funding for 8 school nurse bringing the total to 23 funded positions. The program is being transferred to the BOE. (see approp. decreases)

050-2362-12362PS, 42362EX, 62362SS The legislative intent is fund a transitional appropriation for the SBHC program.

080-1140-11140PS The legislative intent is restore partial funding for the Libraries in order to maintain program hours. The City Librarian now has the fiscal year to look at staffing and funding solutions.

310-2821-12821PS, 42821EX, 62821SS The legislative intent is to transfer the funding and activity of the Nursing Program to the Board of Education. This action restores funding for 23 nurses and provides a fully funded transfer.

310-2831-42831Ex, 62831SS The legislative intent is to transfer from Public Facilities the funding for the BOE's sanitation and recycling program. The BOE will run its own program.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 69-07C BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE VOTE OF GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

City Council Vote Number 4 – 69-07d

Budget & Appropriations Committee Vote of General Fund Appropriation

Decreases

That there be adjustments to the Mayor's Recommended Budget for general fund purposes as detailed by the City Council Budget & Appropriations Committee.

AGY	ORG	APPROP	DESCRIPTION	MAYOR PROPOSED	BUDGET & APPROPRIATION ADOPTED	CHANGE
APPROPRIATIONS						
006	1060	11060PS	City Attorney Personal Services	\$1,679,790	\$1,550,177	\$129,613
015	1106	11106PS	CAO Personal Services	\$541,132	\$531,759	\$9,373
030	1225	41225EX	Sanitation Operating Expenses	\$4,139,855	\$3,902,953	\$236,902
030	1225	61225SS	Sanitation Special Services	\$601,920	\$451,846	\$150,074
030	2056	12056PS	Parks Maintenance Personal Services	\$1,337,568	\$1,086,693	\$250,875
040	1165	11165PS	OPED Personal Services	\$1,438,340	\$1,435,340	\$3,000
050	2354	12354PS	Communicable Clinic Personal Services	\$241,814	\$199,932	\$41,882
050	2361	12361PS	School Nursing Personal Services	\$1,389,226		\$1,389,226
050	2361	42361EX	School Nursing Operating Expenses	\$32,351		\$32,351
050	2361	62361SS	School Nursing Special Services	\$4,744		\$4,744
310	1800	41800EX	Schools Operating Expenses	\$20,271,166	\$18,880,916	\$1,390,250
Total Appropriation Decreases				\$31,677,906	\$28,039,616	\$3,638,290

LEGISLATIVE INTENT APPROPRIATION DECREASES

006-1060-11060PS The legislative intent is to unfund the request for an additional City Attorney.

015-1106-11106PS The legislative intent is to reduce one of the Assistant Special Project Managers salary to the entry level base amount.

030-1225-41225EX, 61225SS The legislative intent is transfer the Board of Education's portion of solid waste and recycling programs to their budget. This will allow for the BOE staff to monitor its programs and increase recycling efforts that may save in expenditures and create a new revenue stream.

030-2056-12056PS The legislative intent is to transfer Parks Officers and the Supervisor to the Police Department and become part of the Chief's command.

040-1165-11165PS The legislative intent is to unfund the Cultural Affairs position and to fund a part-time Clerical Assistant.

050-2351-12354PS The legislative intent is to unfund the mini-computer operator position and transfer it to Vital Statistics.

050-2361-12361PS, 42361EX, 62361SS The legislative intent is to transfer the funding and program of School Nursing to the Board of Education budget.

310-1800-41800EX The legislative intent is to reduce the BOE proposed appropriation that included property tax relief and use it for property tax relief in the general fund.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM – 69-07d BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE VOTE OF GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION DECREASES AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.
 ** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.
 ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

City Council Vote Number 5 – 69-07e

Budget & Appropriations Committee Vote of General Fund Budget

OVERALL TOTAL

DESCRIPTION	MAYOR RECOMMENDED	BUDGET & ADDITIONAL ADOPTED INCREASES	BUDGET & ADDITIONAL ADOPTED DECREASES	BAC ADOPTED AMOUNTS
REVENUES				
REVENUE ADJUSTMENTS	\$491,414,201	\$4,548,000	-\$3,613,231	\$492,348,970
<hr/>				
TOTAL BAC ADOPTED REVENUES				\$492,348,970
 APPROPRIATIONS				
APPROPRIATION ADJUSTMENTS	\$491,414,201	-\$4,573,059	\$3,638,290	\$492,348,970
<hr/>				
TOTAL BAC ADOPTED APPROPRIATION:				\$492,348,970
 NET BUDGET SURPLUS / (SHORTAGE)		-25,059	25,059	

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 69-07e BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE VOTE OF GENERAL FUND BUDGET AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.
 ** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.
 ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2008

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2008 AS SUBMITTED.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Comments from the floor

Council Member Martinez said that the Committee members had done the best that they could and that the SBHC were being extended for a short period of time. This was not an easy decision.

Council President McCarthy commended everyone for an excellent outcome of a difficult task. He applauded the Committee for making all the meetings. He said that he had never seen the same amount of effort put into the budget as he did with this budget.

Chairman Curwen said that he agreed and reminded everyone that they could have done tax relief, but instead restored the library to a functioning level, gave the SBHC a short interim, and worked on keeping the school nurses in the schools. Until the city is rebuilt and the vacant buildings are back on the tax rolls, there will be a financial struggle.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 9, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chair; Daniel Martinez, Howard Austin, Susan Brannelly, Andre Baker, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia (6:34 p.m.)

OTHERS: Michael Feeney, Finance; Andy Abate, WPCA; Mr. Harris, WPCA

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Chairman Curwen noted that Council Member Colon had been hospitalized with food poisoning

Approval of Committee Minutes of May 12, 2008

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 12, 2008 MINUTES.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

101-07 Approval of General Obligation Tax Anticipation Notes to pay Current Expenses and Obligation of the City (\$95,000,000)

Mr. Feeney came forward and gave a quick review of the request for Tax Anticipation. He explained that there was a large shortfall this year, and said that he was requesting 95,000,000 in short-term notes. Last year, the amount that was borrowed in June was paid back by August so he was looking at a 45 day note. Council Member Baker asked where the funding came from. Mr. Feeney explained the funding comes from banks and that there were two banks that were interested in bidding on the notes. Council Member Baker asked when the City has started this practice. Mr. Feeney explained that last year was the first year that this was done and that right now, it was almost mandatory because the City's cash flow would be exhausted. Once the tax revenue comes in, and then the notes can be repaid.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

Mr. Feeney reviewed the details about the two times when the City's funds run low, in June/July and in December. Chairman Curwen requested that Mr. Feeney said that he

would like Mr. Feeney to report to the Budget and Appropriations Committee before the borrowing is done in December

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 101-07 APPROVAL OF GENERAL OBLIGATION TAX ANTICIPATION NOTES TO PAY CURRENT EXPENSES AND OBLIGATION OF THE CITY (\$95,000,000)
** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chairman Curwen requested this item be put on the consent calendar.

61-07 Resolution Approving Financing in the Amount of \$2,000,000.00 for Design, Rehabilitation, Upgrading and Construction of Various Repairs and Improvements to the City Sewers.

Mr. Abate came forward to discuss the repairs for the City sewers. Chairman Curwen asked about the percentage of increase, which Mr. Abate explained that it would be a 2% increase to the ratepayers. Mr. Harris explained that annually it will be about 1 1/2 cents on the rate, and then will rise to 2.2 cents over the life of the loan. Mr. Harris then distributed a list of various figures regarding the amounts over the life of the loan.

Council Member Martinez asked if the work could be put off for a year or so. Mr. Abate explained that the City has waited over thirty years to do this work and it needed to be done to prevent sewers from backing up into people's homes.

Council Member Martinez said that there were projects that were in progress in his District and he would like to have that project finished before a new one is started. Mr. Abate explained that he realized that there was a serious disruption to the residents on the East Side, but once the gas lines and the other utility lines under the street are moved, the sewers can go in. Mr. Harris also pointed out that work would be going on all over the City and that the crews would be inserting fiberglass liners into the sewers without digging up the street.

Council Member Baker asked what kind of revenue the City received from the WPCA. Mr. Abate explained that the WPCA was self-sustaining and did not generate revenue for the City. Discussion about this then followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 61-07 RESOLUTION APPROVING FINANCING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,000,000.00 FOR DESIGN, REHABILITATION, UPGRADING AND CONSTRUCTION OF VARIOUS REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CITY SEWERS.
**COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chairman Curwen requested this item be put on the consent calendar.

62-07 WPCA Resolution regarding Marin Combine Sewer Overflow (MCSO)

This is a continuation of the CSO program. Mr. Abate stated that a full set of copies of consent orders and resolutions had been sent out to the Committee members. Mr. Harris then reviewed the various areas that would be affected by the separation of the storm and sanitary sewers to prevent the overflow of raw sewage into Long Island Sound. Mr. Abate also commented that it would take pressure off the West side Treatment Plan also by reducing the amount of water that flows through the system.

Chairman Curwen said that he had strong concerns about the condition of the roads on the East Side where the current project is underway. Mr. Abate explained that one problem was the number of gas lines, the new 340K electrical cables, water lines and other utilities. One problem on the East Side was that the work was done and then Northeast Utilities came through with the high voltage line and ripped up the streets again.

Mr. Abate pointed out that the project could be done with the DEP funding with a 50% grant and 2% loan interest rate, or wait for a consent order to be handed down, which will require the City to pay for 100% of the cost of the project. Mr. Harris said that the CSO projects have been underway since 1990. Some of the loans that were taken back then will be expiring in 2015 or 2016. Approximately 10 projects have been financed and completed. The current project is known as "H".

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 62-07 WPCA RESOLUTION REGARDING MARIN COMBINE SEWER OVERFLOW (MCSO)**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chairman Curwen requested this item be put on the consent calendar.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 11, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Leticia Colon, Chair; Robert Curwen, Co-Chair; Susan Brannelly, Andre Baker, Daniel Martinez (6:40 p.m.)

OTHERS: Michael Feeney, Council Member Robert Walsh.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Colon called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of Committee Minutes of June 9, 2008

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 9, 2008 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

127-07 City of Bridgeport Undesignated Fund Balance Policy

Mr. Feeney explained that the Mayor was looking for approval from the Committee regarding this Undesignated Fund Balance Policy, which will be important to rating agencies. Mr. Feeney then reviewed the figures associated with the fiscal year shortfall.

The proposed policy will bring the City back to the 8-12% levels, which are within the GAAP principal guidelines. Mr. Feeney then read the following policy to the Committee.

Council Member Martinez joined the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Council Member Curwen said that he was not in favor of locking in a percentage for the replenishing the fund, but he thought that there was a clause regarding flexibility. A discussion then followed about having the flexibility rationale included in the policy. He said that without this language, a set percentage could result in additional taxes on the property owners.

Council Member Baker asked why a policy needed to be approved. He commented that he did not see why the City needed this policy. Mr. Feeney explained that the City had not been in a position where the fund balance was in the emergency range and therefore had not needed this policy. Council Member Curwen said that this policy was needed for appeasing the various rating agencies as a matter of commitment. Council Member

Curwen reiterated his concerns about the lack of flexibility language in the proposal. Discussion about the details of this then followed. Council Member Curwen pointed out that it would be important to have the flexibility language included in the actual policy rather than the rationale because in the next ten years, the Council Members will operate on the policy, not the rationale. Mr. Feeney said that he was more than willing to work on the language, but said that the Mayor was firmly committed to the 10% replenishment figure.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the change in the City's Bonds rating. Mr. Feeney then reviewed the details of the concept of this and the situation with the Tax Anticipation Notes with the Committee. He explained that it would strengthen the argument that the City had a plan to replenish the fund balance. Mr. Feeney said that the Real Estate Conveyance Tax was actually helping and that this funding could be directed towards the replenishment of the Fund Balance.

Council Member Martinez said that he was in agreement with Council Member Brannelly on this issue. He then asked about what happens when a department overspends. Mr. Feeney reviewed the process with him.

Council Member Walsh then asked about a recent press conference where the Mayor was asked about Steel Point. Council Member Walsh asked whether the Mayor was going to veto the proposals. Council Member Walsh asked how many budget transfers had come before the Budget and Appropriations Committee and said that he believe it was zero. Mr. Feeney said that there had been a "lifting of financial controls" rather than budget transfers. Council Member Walsh said that he believe that the budget had been ignored by the administration, and that this was a direct violation of the Charter. Council Member Walsh said that this policy was a gimmick and gave a quick history of how the practice of "lifting controls" had come into being.

Council Member Curwen then proposed the following alternation to the proposal.

"The sum of all components identified for the undesignated fund balance level will be set at no less than 8.00% of annual operating expenditures and other financing uses (transfers out) of the prior audited fiscal year with annual City Council Approval. In the event that the undesignated fund balance exceeds 12.00%, the amount exceeding this percentage may be available for appropriation at the discretion of the Mayor with the approval of the City Council."

Council Member Curwen said that unless he was reading it incorrectly, his addition to the proposal would allow the City Council a final say annually on the replenishment of the fund balance. Currently the profit from any sale of a large piece of City property would go into the fund balance. Council Member Curwen stated that if he had his preferences, that he would send the money to education rather than to replenishing the fund balance.

He said that he did support a fund balance policy, but did not support locking the City into a percentage. Council Member Baker said that he agreed with Council Member Curwen. Additional discussion then followed.

Council Member Martinez said that it sounded like the policy was unnecessary because the Council would be annually approving it. Mr. Feeney said that without this type of policy, the bond rating agencies, such as Moody's and Fitch's, would have difficulty giving a firm rating. He said that if the City did not put in the percentage, the following year, the rating agencies will be asking why. He reminded everyone that this was a government best practice and that there will be ramification for the City in the future. Council Member Curwen said that he would prefer that if a major asset was sold, he would like to see a major percentage go towards paying down the debt service which would increase the borrowing power and indirectly decrease the budget, also.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the effectiveness of the policy when it could be changed by a Council vote at a later date. Mr. Feeney replied that this was a good point and that he did not know the answer.

Chairwoman Colon asked if there were properties that were in the position to sell. Mr. Feeney said that there were. One was Steel Point, another is Elias Howe, a school that had been recently vacated by the Board of Education and was now being transferred back to the City. He then listed several other possible parcels that could be brought on to the market.

**** Council Member Curwen moved to amend the policy from:**

“THE SUM OF ALL COMPONENTS IDENTIFIED FOR THE UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE LEVEL WILL BE SET AT NO LESS THAN 8.00% OF ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES AND OTHER FINANCING USES (TRANSFERS OUT) OF THE PRIOR AUDITED FISCAL YEAR. IN THE EVENT THAT THE UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE EXCEEDS 12.00%, THE AMOUNT EXCEEDING THIS PERCENTAGE MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR APPROPRIATION AT THE DISCRETION OF THE MAYOR WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE CITY COUNCIL.”

TO:

“THE SUM OF ALL COMPONENTS IDENTIFIED FOR THE UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE LEVEL WILL BE SET AT NO LESS THAN 8.00% OF ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES AND OTHER FINANCING USES (TRANSFERS OUT) OF THE PRIOR AUDITED FISCAL YEAR WITH ANNUAL CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL. IN THE EVENT THAT THE UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE EXCEEDS 12.00%, THE AMOUNT EXCEEDING THIS

PERCENTAGE MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR APPROPRIATION AT THE DISCRETION OF THE MAYOR WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE CITY COUNCIL.”

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 127-07 City of Bridgeport Undesignated Fund Balance Policy AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER Curwen MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 8, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Robert Curwen, Chair; Andre Baker; Daniel Martinez;
Susan Brannelly, Howard Austin; Leticia Colon, Co-chair
(6:40 p.m.)

OTHERS: Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director; David Cody, City
Engineer/Consultant; Dr. Hines, Bpt. BOE; Dr. Henry,
BOE; Mr. Lavidia, Bpt. Public Schools Budget Director;
Lisa Pavilik, Parent's Potential Center Project Coordinator;
Donna Thompson- Benton, Parent's Potential Center; Genia
Simpson, Parent's Potential Center; Marilyn Feliciano, Parent's
Potential Center; Robert Walsh; Fire Chief Brian Rooney,
Bridgeport Fire Department

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Curwen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He introduced everyone in the room.

Approval of Committee Minutes of August 11, 2008

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 11, 2008.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

177-07 Approval of General Obligation Bonds to Fund Certain Capital Improvement Project - the 7/11 Firehouse Rehabilitation Project (\$47,404)

Chairman Curwen said that the funds for the 7/11 firehouse had been approved but the funds ran short. Mr. Cody came forward and introduced himself. He said that he was requesting an additional \$47,404 for emergency repairs that were done at the 7/11 firehouse. The total expenses on the project came to \$622,000. \$500,000 was spent on work that was done on station and an additional \$75,000 was transferred from the Maintenance account to the project.

The ground beneath the slab subsided. The building was built in the 1960's and appears to have been constructed on some landfill. The building was constructed on piles, but there were not sufficient hangers holding the sanitary piping. These pipes pulled away

from the slab and broke, which resulted in unsanitary conditions. He then recounted how this situation was handled.

Council Member Leticia Colon joined the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Mr. Cody then reviewed the process of reinforcement that was done to correct the problem. Asbestos was discovered in the grouting of the floor tiles and other conduit issues came to light. Mr. Brian Dylan from the State Department of Economic Development came down recently to inquire about the project, along with the Engine 12 project that is currently underway, because of an item that is currently on the State bonding agenda for the DEC for 1.1 million dollars for reimbursement for these two projects. It is expected that this money will be available to the City within 60 to 90 days.

Mr. Sherwood pointed out that this was not listed as a capital project because the City had already authorized the project. Chairman Curwen then asked about the 1.1 million dollar reimbursement and whether there were additional projects needing to be done in the firehouses. Discussions about roofing needs of the various firehouses then followed.

Council Member Brannelly asked about the allocation of funding, which Mr. Cody reviewed with her.

Council Member Walsh asked about the area around the building and the structural integrity for the roads and parking lot near the firehouse. Mr. Cody said that there were some voids in the south end of the parking lot and the sidewalks were slanted, but these things would not cause the building to fail because the building was supported on pilings. The items should be addressed but the issue was the failure of the sanitary plumbing. Council Member Walsh asked if there would be a secure firehouse surrounded by inaccessible roads. Mr. Cody said that it was easier to repair roads than it was to repair a standing building.

Chief Rooney came forward and said that the reimbursement funding for 7/11 is needed for evaluating Engine 12 in the North End where the floor is caving in. The Chief said that he was hoping to purchase some land to construct a new firehouse because the current facility is over 100 years old.

Council Member Baker asked Mr. Sherwood about the study that was underway on the firehouses. Mr. Sherwood said that there was a study underway evaluating the firehouses. An RFQ was put out for evaluating the firehouses and other City facilities. The responses are in and the interviews are about to commence.

Council Member Colon asked about the property available for Engine 12. Chief Rooney said that Mr. Nidol would be the best person to ask.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 177-07 APPROVAL OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS TO FUND CERTAIN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - THE 7/11 FIREHOUSE REHABILITATION PROJECT (\$47,404)
** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chairman Curwen stated that this item would be placed on the consent calendar.

176-07 Approval of the De-Authorization of Projects Approved for Bonding Authority (\$16,358,998)

A discussion followed about the availability of copies of the completed Capital Plan for the Committee members.

RECESS

Chairman Curwen announced a recess at 7:00 p.m. in order to make copies of the Capital Plan for the Committee members. The Committee resumed the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

176-07 Approval of the De-Authorization of Projects Approved for Bonding Authority (\$16,358,998) CONT'D

Mr. Sherwood explained that that document only indicated the status of the Capital Plan. He then gave an overview of why the Board of Education was de-authorizing the \$16,358,998 and reviewed the amounts that were being reduced for the various the projects allocations. \$75,000 of this bond funding reallocation will be added back for the Parent's Center.

Council Member Martinez asked if this funding was coming out City bond funding for the Board of Education. Chairman Curwen pointed out that the Council had carried over particular line items for BOE projects for a number of years, when the first year's allocation had not been expended yet. This made the Council look like they were not funding the various school projects, when in fact; the Council was being fiscally prudent since the authorizations had already been given. Chairman Curwen pointed out to Council Member Walsh that one of the reasons that it took so long for the updated Master Capital Plan was because the City was waiting for the Board of Education to de-authorize a number of their projects.

Council Member Baker has some questions about the de-authorization, which Mr. Sherwood reviewed with him. Mr. Sherwood confirmed that these projects under consideration would not longer be on the list for bonding. Council Member Brannelly asked for clarification. Mr. Sherwood explained that the money that was allocated for these projects would be transferred to the repair of the Parent Center.

Dr. Hines and Dr. Henry commented that after evaluating the list of projects, the Board discovered that some of the projects had been completed already, others were evaluated and deemed not to be feasible and others have dropped in terms of priority.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER COLON MOVED TO APPROVE 176-07 APPROVAL OF THE DE-AUTHORIZATION OF PROJECTS APPROVED FOR BONDING AUTHORITY (\$16,358,998).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER COLON MOVED TO INCLUDE 176-07 APPROVAL OF THE DE-AUTHORIZATION OF PROJECTS APPROVED FOR BONDING AUTHORITY (\$16,358,998) ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

174-07 Approval of Additional Capital Project Authorization to the 2009-2013 Capital Budget - Parent Center Renovation Project (\$650,000)

It was stated by a member of the Board of Education that this request was the Capital funding needed to complete the Parent Center Renovation Project as marked on Exhibit A. Mr. Sherwood then gave a brief overview of the original project and the costs involved for the Committee. Since the project was awarded the cost of steel and fuel has increased significantly. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that there was a document listing all the changes in the Council Members packets that would itemize all the increases.

Dr. Hinds said that he had tried to summarize the project and explained that it was a ten year lease for the space at 900 Boston Avenue. A bid was posted and value engineering was done to decrease the cost of the project from \$599,000 down to \$489,000. The project was approved by City Purchasing in November of 2007. This project does not qualify for State reimbursement, there are no grants for it and it was not part of the O&G project scope, so the Board of Education was asked to manage it.

Dr. Hinds then distributed a handout to those present.

When the contractor tried to get a building permit, some issues came to light. There was no zoning approval, there was a lack of parking on the site, and there was no real investigation of the existing building conditions including the structure and the utilities. Also there were numerous code and building department requirements imposed after the contract was awarded but prior to the issuance of the building permit. A few of the largest project costs increases were the need for a sprinkler system and an elevator for the two-story building. Dr. Hinds said that the various code requirements were included in the document, but since the list was compiled, it has been discovered that the electrical service to the building is not what it should be.

Dr. Hinds said that today, the project has been updated and that the building will meet all the codes and is appropriate for the use. The contractor is looking to finish the work during the end of October or November.

Chairman Curwen asked when the work started. Dr. Hinds said that the work started in March. Chairman Curwen expressed disappointment in the manner that his project was being handled. Dr. Hinds agreed that the project was flawed from the beginning and that work had been languishing in 2006. He then reminded everyone that all the problems had come to light after the funding was approved and the contract was awarded.

Mr. Sherwood pointed out for the record that the changes started in November of 2007. He then proceeded to discuss the timing of the changes and increases.

Council Member Brannelly asked if the contractor was still the one working on the project. She was told this was so. Council Member Brannelly then asked if the contractor had any liability regarding the fact that he bid on a project that had drawings that were not signed by a licensed architect. She went on to list some of the other building department code violations that the contractor she felt should have known. A Board of Education member replied that he could not answer to the legal issues of Council Member Brannelly's question, but that the plans were put out to bid by the Purchasing Department and a number of contractors bid on them. Discussion about this then followed.

Council Member Martinez asked about the ten-year lease. It was explained that the original lease was for ten years, with one five year extension and that the City Attorney's office was working on another extension. The building is owned by Warren Austin, Inc. Council Member Martinez pointed out that this was a leased property and that there was major funds invested. He then asked whether the Board had considered using one of the empty schools as the Parent's Center. It was explained to him that the schools that were vacated are not handicapped accessible, the systems are in worse shape and the buildings are in excess of the needed 5,000 square feet. The leased space is well situated and well suited to the purpose. Also a lot of time and effort has gone into the project in terms of lay out and design to match the program needs.

Council Member Baker asked about the parking situation. He was informed that Public Works has provided an open-ended lease on the twenty-five spaces next to the park behind Marin School. Council Member Baker asked what the value of the building was currently and was told that this was not known.

Council Member Baker said that he believes that the Parent's program was an excellent program and that he would like to see it continue to grow. He then added that he had a lot of problems with how the City was approaching projects like this. He then asked if

the change orders had been verified. It was agreed that this was an unusual situation and that there was a fine line in the change of use category, when children were in the building. This would be a permanent home for the Center.

Council Member Baker asked if the City was considering purchasing the property. He was told that the City Attorney was looking in that direction. Mr. Sherwood said that the City Attorney was working on a document that would address all the improvements that the City was making on the property. The lease currently extends to 2013 and with the five year extension; it would be 2018 before this would be addressed.

Dr. Hinds said that the City Attorney has started a conversation about purchasing the property and the owner appears to be amenable to this. Council Member Baker expressed concern that when the lease runs out, the owner might refuse to renew. Mr. Sherwood said that if the owner refused to renew the lease, the building would return to the tax rolls.

Chairman Curwen said that the use of the facility by the City would actually drive the value of the building up when the time came to purchase. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that the terms of the lease had to satisfy the State and Federal guidelines. As long as the building is Board of Education use, it is not taxed, but the moment it returns to public use, the building will return to the tax rolls.

Council Member Brannelly asked for a quick summary about the Parent Center. Ms. Pavilik, the project coordinator, was then recognized by the Chair. She said that the project was a non-profit program that had been in existence for sixteen years. The program provides services to the Bridgeport Schools. Ms. Pavilik then listed a number of services that the program provides, including childcare while the parents are attending classes. The theme of the program is that if you educate the parent, you educate the family.

Council Member Martinez asked about the completion date and was told that the expected date was the end of October or early November.

Council Member Walsh asked about the space that was occupied by the program at the University of Bridgeport. Ms. Pavilik said that it was approximately 4,000 square feet and a portion of that space was not usable because it was a former residence where not all the area could be utilized.

Council Member Walsh asked about the new building. It was explained that the concrete building was one large area with 20-foot ceilings. It has been divided in half to have two floors with 10-foot high ceilings. There is an open atrium to allow light in and the elevator is located near there. It works out to about 7,500 square feet of usable space.

Council Member Walsh then asked if it would have cost over one million dollars for any of the new schools to have an additional space of 7,500 square feet added on to accomplish the same thing. It was explained that if it had been added on to the school building, it would have been fully paid for by the City and that it would have most likely cost more than that per square foot. The State Department of Education does not view this program as part of the School Reimbursement Grant program.

Council Member Walsh said that he had a hard time believing that the City could not have added this space on to one of the new schools with the excessive costs. Council Member Walsh then pointed out that the Board of Education had already spent \$156,000 for leasing a building that has never been occupied. It was stated that the lease started in 2004 and the building was unoccupied until the construction started, which would bring the project closer to completion.

Ms. Pavilik said that the project had started in 2002 and that it was not expected that it would take so long. The funding comes from Priority Grant money that was allocated for that. The work was expected to start in 2004. She then gave a quick overview of the various roadblocks that the project had encountered. She added that she was grateful that the project was moving forward because the University of Bridgeport had requested that the program move to other quarters in 2001 and they have been very patient with the delay. No one anticipated this type of cost or many of the adjustments that had been required by code. Ms. Pavilik said that the benefits that the parents will receive from the program will exceed the \$650,000 price tag. There can't be a dollar value estimated on the life changing programs.

Council Member Walsh said that he was looking at a sheet titled Project Specs dated August 27, 2008, which lists the property as being leased for ten years from 2003 to 2013. He then asked why Ms. Pavilik said that the project started in 2004. Ms. Pavilik said that the grant was submitted in 2003, but the project was expected to start in 2004. Discussion then followed about the details of the lease and the grant requirements.

Council Member Walsh said that although he was not a member of the Committee, he wished to state that he would not be voting for this issue when it comes to the full Council. Secondly, he said that as far as the priorities in the City, he was extremely concerned that the City had paid out so much for a building that has never been occupied and that it would take another \$650,000 to bring the project to completion.

Council Member Baker asked what would happen if the Committee did not approve this resolution. Dr. Hinds said that only the City Attorney could answer that question. Mr. Sherwood said that the dilemma was that the contractor has performed the work and that the City was waiting for an extension of the grant that would allow the City to apply for the DSS funding. If this is not approved, the block grant money will have to be returned.

This would result in many different legal issues, but Mr. Sherwood said that the City would be sued because the contractor has performed the work.

Council Member Brannelly then asked about the requirements from the Building Department. It was explained that the elevator was required because it was new building, not an existing structure.

Council Member Martinez said that he had a sense that his colleagues were somewhat reluctant but that the program had been good for his district. He said that his constituents were eager to have the Center opened. Council Member Martinez asked if the motion was tabled, if it would allow the Board of Education could arrange for a tour of the site before the next meeting.

Dr. Hines said that it could be an option, but was not sure why this would be important. It was also stated that the contractor had issued demand notices informing the Board that he planned to stop work. Once that happens, it will be difficult to restart the project and could result in additional costs. The Council Members could tour the site at their convenience while the contractor was there, which is a safety zone and requires hard hats.

Chairman Curwen said that there had been a host of problems and difficulties with this project. While he takes all the comments made by the other Council Members seriously and that he could not fault Council Member Walsh for voting against this. Chairman Curwen said that he would make a recommendation to the Committee to approve the resolution because the Board had de-authorized \$16,358,998 from the plan and demonstrated cooperative behavior.

Secondly, he said that the legal aspect was complicated and the City might be liable. Chairman Curwen said that it would be important to stop placing the City in a position of liability. The taxpayers are shouldering the building of five new school buildings and three more to be built.

Council Member Austin said that he agreed with Chairman Curwen. He said that the format that was laid out indicated that the Committee couldn't not hold the Board accountable for all the mistakes. The Center is definately needed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 174-07 APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECT AUTHORIZATION TO THE 2009-2013 CAPITAL BUDGET - PARENT CENTER RENOVATION PROJECT (\$650,000).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

Council Member Brannelly then asked for clarification on the impact to the taxpayers when the de-authorization of the other projects, which was only on paper. Chairman

Curwen said that the projects that were de-authorized were only on paper, but the \$650,000 that will be bonded will cost the taxpayers in debt service. It was estimated that the interest would be about \$75,000 over a ten-year period. Discussion about the repayment schedule and possibly paying the bond back in a five year period was discussed.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO INCLUDE AGENDA ITEM 174-07 APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECT AUTHORIZATION TO THE 2009-2013 CAPITAL BUDGET - PARENT CENTER RENOVATION PROJECT (\$650,000) ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

175-07 Approval of General Obligation Bonds to Fund Certain Capital Improvement Project - Parent Center Renovation Project (\$650,000)

Mr. Sherwood explained that this was the resolution that would authorize the bonding of the \$650,000.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDAT ITEM 175-07 APPROVAL OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS TO FUND CERTAIN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - PARENT CENTER RENOVATION PROJECT (\$650,000).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO INCLUDE AGENDA ITEM 175-07 APPROVAL OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS TO FUND CERTAIN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - PARENT CENTER RENOVATION PROJECT (\$650,000) ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services