

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
CONTRACTS COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
JUNE 9, 2015**

**ATTENDANCE:** Howard Austin, Sr., Co-Chair; Milta Feliciano, Co- Chair; Richard Salter; Melanie Jackson; Susan Brannelly

**STAFF:** Elaine Carvalho, Tax Assessor; Anne Kelly-Lenz, Finance Director

Council Member Feliciano called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm. A quorum was present.

**1. Approval of committee meeting minutes of May 12, 2015**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 12, 2015**

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

**\*\* MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

**2. 100-14 Proposed Agreement with Vision Government Solutions, Inc. for the Reappraisal and Revaluation of Taxable, Real and Exempt Property Located within the corporate limits of the City of Bridgeport. Term of Agreement from June 15, 2015 through February 26, 2016.**

Council Member Feliciano asked Ms. Carvalho to speak on the item. Ms. Carvalho said Vision Government Solutions did about 75-79% of revaluations in Connecticut, and had been used by the City of Bridgeport twice before: in 2003, and also in 2013 when the City began a revaluation process and then was granted an extension by the Governor. She said the City had the Vision Government Solutions software. Council Member Brannelly asked Ms. Carvalho for an overview of the revaluation process. Ms. Carvalho said the State of Connecticut mandates the revaluation process for every town every 5 years. One cycle is a full revaluation, going into each home. In the off 5 year term, a statistical revaluation is calculated by using property sales and commercial property surveys. Ms. Carvalho said this year's revaluation was a statistical revaluation. Council Member Brannelly said she understood the statistical revaluation which should have been completed two years ago in 2013, was granted an extension, and she wanted to know how much Vision Government Solutions was paid for the partial work completed. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said she would have to look it up the exact amount and email it. Ms. Carvalho said the full cost of the process of revaluation was not paid up-front, but broken down by Vision Solutions into distinct tasks, with amounts due upon completion of each separate task. Council Member Brannelly said it was her understanding that there was an effort moving forward

City of Bridgeport  
Contracts Committee  
Regular Meeting  
June 9, 2015

regarding changes in property taxation. She asked if the City was changing its taxation policies that would make the current revaluation inapplicable, were there any protections in place if the Vision Government Solutions contract was rendered null and void? It was noted as work on the contract was slated to begin June 15<sup>th</sup>; it was unlikely to be cancelled before work started. There was some discussion and it was determined the Vision Government Solutions contract could be cancelled, without penalty, as long as Vision Government Solutions was paid for any work due prior to termination (p. 9, 3DD). Ms. Carvalho said as soon as the contract was signed, and not before, Vision Solutions would begin work.

Council Member Brannelly asked when the determined values would go into effect. Ms. Carvalho said the assessment date would be the value as of October 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, and the first tax bill would be in July, 2016. Council Member Brannelly said when she received the contract she had sent a note to the Mayor's office asking if, indeed, the City was considering a whole new method of property taxation, and although she understood it might be required, why would the City be proceeding with the current revaluation? Council Member Brannelly said she had not received a response to her question. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said she did not see how the new PILOT taxation program could be in place before the end of the year. There was some discussion about which municipalities in Connecticut had initiated the PILOT program, and it was determined that only New London had done an initial study and decided not to adopt the PILOT program. Council Member Brannelly said there had been discussion within the Budget Committee to take the opportunity to study the PILOT program. She said as \$335,000 was being spent on the proposed current revaluation process, it is worth trying to understand if it was worthwhile to see if there was an option not to complete the study if it would be inapplicable. Ms. Carvalho said the revaluation had to be completed now to be in compliance with the State, as the Governor had already given an extension in 2013. Council Member Jackson asked if there could be a further extension granted to the revaluation based on the possible adoption of the PILOT program. There was some discussion about how the revaluation could not be done in time by Vision Government Solutions, or any other company, if there was a further delay. Council Member Brannelly said if the question had ever been asked by the Administration regarding the expense of \$335,000 for the current revaluation, against the possible PILOT taxation changes. Ms. Carvalho said to keep in mind the full revaluation also had to be done in 2017, and takes about 2 years to complete. Council Member Austin said the problem was the Committee was given about a week to decide, when questions about the study should have been answered months ago. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said it would be difficult to get another extension, as there were many unknowns. She said it would be best to complete the current proposed revaluation. There was further discussion about unanswered questions. Council Member Brannelly said she had no problem with the contract itself, the company was reputable, but she wished the question of its relevance with regard to the possible changes in the tax structure, had been addressed in some form. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said she did not see how the change over to the PILOT program would take less than about 2 years, making the current proposed revaluation still necessary.

Council Member Brannelly said it was possible the item could be tabled and the Committee could ask for clarification. There was some discussion about whether it should be debated at the next Council meeting on Monday, or resolved in the Committee. Council Member Austin said he thought it would be best if it was resolved within the Committee. There was some discussion how best to proceed regarding timing. Council Member Feliciano noted the items in the contract were only being paid upon completion. There was discussion on how the \$335,000 then would not be paid up-front, and therefore there was some protection against spending the full amount of \$335,000 if the contract was determined unnecessary. It was agreed that Vision Government Solutions was a reputable company.

Council Member Feliciano asked Ms. Kelly-Lenz why the revaluation of 2013 was granted an extension. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said in the interest of attracting new businesses to the City, she requested a delay in the revaluation, in order to keep the tax rates stable for these new businesses. She said she wanted a full 5 year delay and got a 2 year delay.

**\*\* MS. BRANNELLY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 100-14 PROPOSED AGREEMENT WITH VISION GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS, INC. FOR THE REAPPRAISAL AND REVALUATION OF TAXABLE, REAL AND EXEMPT PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT. TERM OF AGREEMENT FROM JUNE 15, 2015 THROUGH FEBRUARY 26, 2016.**

**\*\* MR. AUSTIN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Council Member Jackson asked if there was any way to get answers to the questions surrounding the contract before Monday. Council Member Brannelly said she had made a motion to approve because Ms. Kelly-Lenz's statements regarding the 2 or 3 years it would take to study and possibly implement the PILOT program, made sense to her. Council Member Feliciano said the contract could be moved out of Committee but that there should be representatives from the Administration at the Council Meeting on Monday, June 15, to answer questions regarding the PILOT program and the relevance of the current proposed revaluation contract under these possible changes in taxation. It was agreed an email should be sent to coordinate this effort.

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

There was some further general discussion of the implications of revaluation and taxation and more effective communication needed on the part of the Administration.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- \*\* COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOTIONED TO ADJOURN.**
- \*\* COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Lund  
Telesco Secretarial Services