

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 22, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Co-Chair; Richard Salter, Sr., Co-Chair; Milta Feliciano, Nessah Smith, John Olson, Anthony Paoletto, Denese Taylor-Moye

STAFF: Angel dePara, Jr., CAO's Office
Veronica Jones, Tax Collector

OTHERS: Pearl Brooks, People with Disabilities Commission
Michael Piccirillo, Zoning Board of Appeals
Paul Errico, Harbor Commission

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. A quorum was present. She reviewed the procedures of the meeting to all present.

Between the Call To Order and the taking up of the Agenda, Council Member Olson called for a moment of silence in regard to the shooting that had just happened in Bridgeport. All present honored his request.

AGENDA

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES OF JUNE 27, 2016

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF JUNE 27, 2016.**
**** CO-CHAIR SALTER, SR. SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked the Committee whether she could re-arrange the order of items so that the four appointments on the agenda could all go first. The Committee agreed.

ITEM 39-15

APPOINTMENT OF PEARL BROOKS (U) TO THE COMMISSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia introduced Ms. Brooks and asked Ms. Brooks to introduce herself to the Committee. Ms. Brooks thanked the Committee for having her there and for the members' time, and started her introduction by remarking on something the Mayor had said in a press conference which stated, "I extend my hand in friendship and partnership to anyone who can

help improve the quality of life in Bridgeport.” Ms. Brooks said she took that as an invitation because she explained that she has spent her life in public service helping people and provided several examples of this. She also said that she is highly invested in doing whatever possible to ensure that the public receives the necessary resources and that she is working on the State level to close disability services gaps. Ms. Brooks listed awards and recognitions she has received, and mentioned the extensive volunteerism she has performed. She ended her introduction with a listing of her academic degrees and professional certificates.

Council Member Olson remarked that the Commission will be very fortunate to have Ms. Brooks. Co-Chair Salter, Sr. agreed that Ms. Brooks would be an asset to the Commission given her background and her attention to the elderly. Council Member Taylor-Moye also agreed that Ms. Brooks would be an asset and said she is looking forward to knowing that Ms. Brooks will be working with the people of Bridgeport. Council Member Taylor-Moye asked whether Ms. Brooks will be available for meetings to which Ms. Brooks answered in the affirmative.

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia explained to Ms. Brooks that the Committee will vote for or against the appointment after which it will go to the full Council and then to the Mayor's Office. She said the paperwork is in order, but she noted that the sign-off from the Chair of the Ethics Commission was missing. She said she would like to have the vote in the Committee, then get the sign-off from the Ethics Commission, and then schedule a quick Committee meeting before the full Council meets in September to which the Committee consented.

- ** **COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 39-15, APPOINTMENT OF PEARL BROOKS (U) TO THE COMMISSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WITH THE CAVEAT THAT THE ETHICS COMMISSION PROVIDE A SIGN-OFF DOCUMENT TO THE COMMITTEE AND TO THE FULL COUNCIL.**
- ** **COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**
- ** **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ITEM 83-15
APPOINTMENT OF MICHAEL PICCIRILLO (D) TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia introduced Mr. Piccirillo and asked him to introduce himself to the Committee. Mr. Piccirillo started by saying he was born in Bridgeport, loves the city and wants to give back by making sure zoning regulations are followed, by always going to the meetings, also because he likes and wants to continue the good work of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Council Member Olson asked Mr. Piccirillo what qualifications are important in someone who is deciding Zoning Board issues. Mr. Piccirillo answered that the person should study the statutes, be open-minded, and not decide issues from a subjective perspective. Council Member Olson asked whether Mr. Piccirillo had ever been pressured by anyone to which Mr. Piccirillo answered that he has, at times, received phone calls or people come to talk to him, but he tells them that he does everything before the Board and not in any side conversations. Council Member Paoletto referred to Mr. Piccirillo's previous service at the Zoning Board of Appeals, asking if he had served 16 years with 10 years as Chair to which Mr. Piccirillo answered in the affirmative.

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia noted that, as in the previous item for appointment, the Committee will vote, the meeting will be recessed until the next meeting prior to the full Council meeting, and then Mr. Picirillo will be notified by Mr. dePara.

Council Member Olson wanted to know whether these appointments are for any specific length of time or if they are open-ended. After a short discussion among the Committee members, Mr. Picirillo said the Zoning Board of Appeals is three years. Mr. dePara interjected that the expiration of the term was delineated in the original paperwork. Council Member Olson asked if the expiration of all appointments are noted in the paperwork to which Mr. dePara and Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia answered in the affirmative. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia explained that when appointments or re-appointments come to the Committee, it will have the name, party affiliation, and length of the term. Council Member Olson wanted to know if all the Commissions are kept up-to-date to which Mr. dePara answered that they are, but Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia interjected that this was not the agenda at the moment. Council Member Olson explained that he wants to understand about these appointments and how long they are going to be, and he is wondering whether the Administration is checking when these appointments expire, and whether they are brought to the Committee, or whether some go on for years and are never re-appointed. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked Council Member Olson to hold off for the moment and return to the question later in the meeting to which Council Member Olson agreed.

- ** **COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 83-15, APPOINTMENT OF MICHAEL PICCIRILLO (D) TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS WITH THE CAVEAT THAT THE ETHICS COMMISSION PROVIDE A SIGN-OFF DOCUMENT TO THE COMMITTEE AND TO THE FULL COUNCIL.**
- ** **COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO SECONDED.**
- ** **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ITEM 164-15
APPOINTMENT OF PAUL L. ERRICO (U) TO THE COMMISSION ON HARBOR
MANAGEMENT

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia introduced Mr. Errico and asked him to introduce himself to the Committee. Mr. Errico started by saying that he has been a resident of Bridgeport for 36 years, and he had had a conversation with Paul Timpanelli about getting how to get involved with Bridgeport. He said he has an environmental-safety company in Bridgeport and had joined the Marines, so that, with an engineering degree and marine knowledge, his background is a good fit the Harbor Commission. He also said it is a good group of people.

Council Member Taylor-Moye commented that she likes the security part of Mr. Errico's background, and that he certainly has the qualifications. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia noted that it is listed on the agenda as Harbor Management to which Mr. dePara answered that the short name is the Harbor Commission, but the full name is the Commission on Harbor Management. Council Member Feliciano wanted to make sure that there are no conflicts of interest in this appointment and asked Mr. Errico whether his company, or any family-related companies have done any business with the City of Bridgeport to which Mr. Errico answered in the negative. Co-

Chair Salter, Sr. commented that Mr. Errico sounds like the ideal person. Council Member Olson wanted to know what the Harbor Commission does, and Mr. Errico explained that the Commission oversees and monitors anything that is put in or built in the harbor or in the water. Council Member Taylor-Moye interjected that the Commission does a lot and she has seen some of their work. Council Member Olson said that Bridgeport needs to develop the harbor, but he remarked that the question is whether it will happen, instructing Mr. Errico to think outside the box.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 164-15, APPOINTMENT OF PAUL L. ERRICO (U) TO THE COMMISSION ON HARBOR MANAGEMENT WITH THE CAVEAT THAT THE ETHICS COMMISSION PROVIDE A SIGN-OFF DOCUMENT TO THE COMMITTEE AND TO THE FULL COUNCIL**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ITEM 166-15
APPOINTMENT OF NOEL KAYO (D) TO THE ETHICS COMMISSION

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia introduced Dr. Kayo and asked him to introduce himself to the Committee. Dr. Kayo came forward to say he is an M.D who has been a resident of Bridgeport since 2000. He said he was educated in France and Belgium and that he started to research preventative measures for heart disease in minorities, i.e. Blacks and Hispanics. He said that, in addition to other appointments, he has recently been appointed to Yale School of Medicine to participate in a healthcare disparity research project on which he is now working.

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked Dr. Kayo whether Dr. Kayo had asked to be on the Ethics Commission or if anyone had asked him to be on it. Dr. Kayo said he had had a conversation with Mr. Mario Testa who told him about the Ethics Commission and what it was about. Dr. Kayo said he has always been looking for ways to be more involved locally as a Democrat on the political scene given his expertise, and Mr. Testa suggested that Dr. Kayo start by applying for an appointment to the Ethics Commission.

Council Member Feliciano remarked that Dr. Kayo is a great fit in that he has traveled the world and is knowledgeable about various ethnicities and cultures. She then asked Mr. dePara how many people sit on the Ethics Committee to which Mr. dePara answered there are seven members, but with one current vacancy, noting that, if Dr. Kayo were to be properly approved and sworn in, he would become a critical part of creating a consistent meeting schedule. Mr. dePara continued that one of the biggest issues is that one of the members is not interested in serving any longer and there is, therefore, a problem with getting a quorum. Council Member Feliciano then asked Mr. dePara whether there is anyone on that Commission who is bilingual to which Mr. dePara answered in the negative. Council Member Feliciano then asked if it could be looked into that a bilingual member be present to represent the community the Commission serves. Co-Chair Salter, Sr. asked Dr. Kayo how he will find the time for the Commission to which Dr. Kayo stated that he is a researcher and is, therefore, the master of his own schedule.

Council Member Taylor-Moye addressed Mr. dePara by asking him what to do in regard to

Bridgeport residents who may be interested in applying for an appointment to a Committee. Mr. dePara noted that the applications are online, and Council Member Taylor-Moye asked him how many openings there are. Mr. dePara said there are about 12-15 that have openings, several of which are members whose appointments have expired or expiring terms that need to be either re-appointed or replaced. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked Council Member Taylor-Moye to hold off on this question until the agenda items have been addressed to which Council Member Taylor-Moye agreed.

Council Member Smith referred to a comment by Council Member Feliciano that there was not a bilingual member of the Commission, stressing that Dr. Kayo speaks both French and German.

Council Member Olson asked Dr. Kayo what might come up in the Ethics Commission to which Dr. Kayo answered that he has not met anyone who sits on the Commission. Mr. dePara interjected that he is preparing training for each of the Commissions, so that members are better briefed and are knowledgeable about the subject material. Council Member Olson put forth the problem of a solution based on religious principles vs. a solution based on philosophical principles at which point Dr. Kayo set forth all the conditions of the moral dilemma that a doctor might encounter with a Jehovah's Witness patient who needs a transfusion.

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 166-15, APPOINTMENT OF NOEL KAYO (D) TO THE ETHICS COMMISSION WITH THE CAVEAT THAT THE ETHICS COMMISSION PROVIDE A SIGN-OFF DOCUMENT TO THE COMMITTEE AND TO THE FULL COUNCIL.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Jones from the Tax Collector's Office came forward to speak about four overpayment refunds for which she is seeking approval from the Committee before she can remit the refunds to the respective companies

ITEM 156-15
REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS – LAND ROVER MILFORD

Ms. Jones said that Land Rover basically paid the wrong account. Land Rover had purchased a property and thought another property was part of the purchase and had paid tax on the wrong property. Co-Chair Salter Sr., wanted to know how much the refund was to which the answer was \$155,000. Council Member Smith wanted to know how long it had been before the error was caught to which Ms. Jones answered that it was within a year. Co-Chair Salter, Sr. wanted to know if the money is available to which Ms. Jones answered that it is.

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 156-15, REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS – LAND ROVER MILFORD.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ITEM 157-15
REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS – INDUSTRY CONSULTING GROUP, INC.

Ms. Jones said that Industry Consulting is a reverse mortgage company and, this was a double payment in which both the actual taxpayer and the mortgage company paid tax. The mortgage company is entitled to a refund and has requested that the Tax Office refund the money to the taxpayer in the amount of \$30,778.49. Council Member Smith wanted to know how long it was before it was noticed to which Ms. Jones answered that the mortgage company had signed off in 2012, the overpayment was rolled down, and then the mortgage company agreed to give the money back to the taxpayer in Feb. 2016.

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 157-15, REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS – INDUSTRY CONSULTING GROUP, INC.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ITEM 158-15
REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS ENGINEERED ELECTRIC CO. DBA FERMONT

Ms. Jones said that Fermont paid off its first installment in July, then made an error by doubling up payments in January. The total amount of refund is \$26,000.

- ** COUNCIL PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 158-15, REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS ENGINEERED ELECTRIC CO. DBA FERMONT.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ITEM 159-15
REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS – 1313 CONNECTICUT AVENUE LLC
DBA WESTROCK DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Jones said that the company paid tax of \$11,000 and then the company had a closing, and the lawyer agreed to give the money back to the taxpayer which is the company.

- ** COUNCIL PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 159-15, REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS – 1313 CONNECTICUT AVENUE LLC DBA WESTROCK DEVELOPMENT.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ITEM 126-15
PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE RECONSTITUTION OF
LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia stated that this item had been presented to the Council by Council Member Jose Casco before the summer, but said that Council Member Casco had not called her, so she assumed that he was going to be at the meeting. She continued that what Council Member Casco was asking was to dissolve the Library Board for so many days and then start fresh with no Library Board which she stated is really not allowed. She said that a Board cannot just be dropped because a council member or someone mentions that. She asked the Committee what they want to do with this item, wait to see what Council Member Casco has to say, table the item or deny it. Council Member Paoletto made a motion to table the item.

Council Member Feliciano noted that Council Member Casco was not on the list of people cc'd on the Committee Agenda email to which Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia responded that he is a council member, so he would get a copy of the agenda. Council Member Feliciano said that she does not have copies of all Committees' agendas, saying she only gets copies of agendas of the Committees on which she sits. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia disagreed, saying that the council members get all the agendas, they just do not get all the paperwork. Mr. dePara stated that he has noticed that the agendas are sent out electronically by the City Clerk's Office, but Council Member Feliciano stated again that she does not get agendas and paperwork for every other Committee unless she personally asks for it. She continued that Council Member Casco's name is not on the cc or ec list, and stated that the Committee should not be talking about what Council Member Casco wants or does not want. She said that she does not remember seeing this paperwork, and stated that she thinks the Committee should wait until Council Member Casco comes to the table to talk about it. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia said that she gets all agendas from every other Committee that she is not on. Council Member Taylor-Moye said that the usual procedure when a council member brings something involves the member being at the meeting, and Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia added that Council Member Casco is always called about the meetings.

Council Member Olson mentioned the controversy at the Library Board, and said he wonders whether Council Member Casco's proposal is possible. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia stated that what Council Member Casco is proposing is to put a 30-day hold on the Board. Council Member Taylor-Moye reiterated her statement that Council Member Casco needs to be present, so that the Committee members can all voice their opinions and ask questions about the viability of his proposal. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia noted that, since the inception of this resolution, she has asked Attorney Meyer for a legal opinion on this item and she stated that, to-date, she has not gotten it. Council Member Olson addressed Mr. dePara, saying that, in his understanding of the situation, there are members of the Library Board whose appointments have expired long ago. Co-Chair Salter, Sr. added that this is what it is all about. Mr. dePara responded by saying that his response is conflicted since there had already been a motion to table and there was not supposed to be any discussion after that. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia took responsibility for the error, explaining that Council Member Feliciano had had her hand up before the first table was mentioned, and that was why she brought it back in. Council Member Olson said that they need to have more conversation to which Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia noted that they do not have the information at the meeting. Council Member Paoletto asked if the table for this item would go to

the Special Meeting to which Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia answered it would not because the purpose of the Recess Meeting is to get information in regard to the Ethics Commission signing off on their paperwork. She then asked the Committee how it would like to vote on this item.

- ** **COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO MOVED TO TABLE ITEM 126-15, PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE RECONSTITUTION OF LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS.**
- ** **COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH SECONDED.**
- ** **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Olson commended Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia on asking the City Attorney for an opinion to which Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia restated her comment that she has requested this from the beginning of the resolution, saying they would figure it out.

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia then returned to the questions Council Member Olson had regarding the appointment process, saying that, if there were no objections, there would be a five-minute briefing from Mr. dePara on this topic to which the Committee consented.

Mr. dePara first had a question about recessing the four nominee items and asked Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia if the four items will or will not be on the consent calendar to which Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia responded that she would present them on the floor. She said they could put them through under the condition that the Ethics Commission provide the sign off paper to which Mr. dePara stated that he would provide that paperwork as soon as possible. He said he would rather they be placed on the consent calendar so as to avoid any “hiccups” to which Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia agreed under the condition that they not go through if she does not have the paperwork. Mr. dePara agreed and addressed Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia, giving his permission that, if she does not have the paperwork, she is free to pull it off the agenda. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia re-confirmed the condition with Mr. dePara of possibly having to pull it off the agenda if she does not have the paperwork, and he acknowledged the confirmation.

Mr. dePara then returned to the topic of the appointment process and addressed Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia, saying that he would provide a briefing, but that it was not on the agenda. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia acknowledged his concern and noted that she had already asked the permission of the Committee members to address this topic even though it was not on the agenda. Mr. dePara agreed to do the briefing as long as it was on the record.

NON-AGENDA ITEM
BRIEF OVERVIEW OF APPOINTMENT PROCESS
FOR BOARD OR COMMISSION NOMINEES BY MR. A. DEPARA

- The nominee is referred to Mr. dePara.
- A disclosure form is completed.
- A copy of driver's license is taken.
- The application is compiled.
- The nominee is vetted to match skill sets with appropriate committee.
- Paperwork is sent to Mayor's Office for authorization and request to Internal Affairs to

conduct a background check.

- After background check is cleared by OIA, notification is provided to Mr. dePara which states there are no areas of concern.
- If there are areas of concern, they are marked on the notification from OIA, stating what they might be.
- If there are no areas of concern, the nominee is placed on the Ethics Commission agenda, and undergoes Ethics Commission vetting.
- After successful completion of Ethics Commission vetting process, a second paperwork is signed off by the Mayor Office which refers the nominee's name to the appropriate Commission for which they have been selected.
- Then, depending on the Commission to which the nominee is seeking appointment, the appointment may be referred to Miscellaneous Matters or to various Commissions, e.g. Police, Fire.
- While the appointment is being referred to Miscellaneous Matters or a Commission, the nominee has a tax check to make sure there is nothing outstanding.
- The nominee then comes before the Committee or Commission for approval.
- If the Committee/Commission approves the nominee for the specific Commission to which they have been referred, the nominee goes before the full Council floor which will, more than likely, affirm the Committee's/Commission's decision.
- The nominee is then sworn in by the Mayor to serve the term that has been indicated in the initial paperwork provided to the City Clerk and the City Council.

At the conclusion of the briefing, Council Member Olson asked Mr. dePara what the procedure is to determine whether a nominee is ethically qualified, stating that good ethics can mean a billion things. Mr. dePara said that, much like the sub-committee process, they go through the nominee's personal disclosure form in which there are questions pertaining to any business dealings or family relationships that deal directly or could potentially deal directly with the city of Bridgeport. There are also questions related to the nominee's involvement in the city and how they were referred to the Committee or the Board. Council Member Olson asked whether there is a danger that an Ethics Commission member might harbor a negative view of the nominee, and he provided an example of such an incident which ended with the nominee withdrawing his application. Council Member Olson wanted to know if this can be avoided and, if so, how. Mr. dePara stated that they try, to the best of their ability, to avoid any type of personality conflicts and if something like that were to arise in the future, interjecting that he was not aware of the incident mentioned by Council Member Olson, they would ask said Commissioner, much like the process in any of the City Council Sub-Committees, to recuse him/herself if there is any appearance of direct or even indirect conflict, so that the Commission vote would not be subject to any perceived impropriety. Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia asked if there any more questions for Mr. dePara which there were not, and Council Member Olson thanked Mr. dePara for the information he had provided for the Committee.

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia then referred back to the recessing of the meeting, asking the members to make sure they have a full quorum at that meeting. The Committee decided upon Tuesday, September 6, 2016 at 6:00 PM with the room to be determined when Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia talks to the City Clerk.

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO RECESS THE MEETING TO SEPTEMBER 6, 2016 AT 6:00 PM WITH THE ROOM TO BE DETERMINED WITH THE CITY CLERK.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER SMITH SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

Co-Chair Vizzo-Paniccia adjourned the meeting at 7:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nerina Kagan
Telesco Secretarial Services