

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY &
TRANSPORTATION AND ORDINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 19, 2013**

ATTENDANCE: **Ordinance:** Richard Paoletto, Jr., Co-chair, Steven Stafstrom, Jr.,
Warren Blunt Co-chair, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Lydia Martinez

Public Safety: Michelle Lyons, Co-Chair; Richard Bonney,
Angel dePara, Jr.

OTHERS: Police Chief Joseph Gaudett, Sgt. Dickerson

CALL TO ORDER.

Council Member Paoletto called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. A quorum was present

**44-12 Informational Session to Review Chapter 9.12 Offenses by or Against Children,
Articles I Curfew for Minors Ordinance.**

Council Member Paoletto introduced Chief Gaudett and Sgt. Dickerson. Chief Gaudett said that he had not had the chance to review the documentation with Mr. Laskey. Chief Gaudett said that crime is down and the curfew has been in effect for six months. Homicides have dropped 97%, aggravated assault has dropped by 13%; shots fired have also been reduced for the same period.

He reminded the Council members that most of the incidents were occurring on the midnight shift. During the last six months, there have only been eleven different contacts with juveniles. The majority has been verbal warnings, the writing warnings were followed up by the Juvenile Review Board (JRB). Chief Gaudett then reviewed the statistics of the various incidents. There were two contacts that resulted in arrests, one for possession of drugs, and the other one was for possession of a vehicle without the owner's permission.

Chief Gaudett said that it was difficult to know how much was attributable to the curfew, but he cautioned that school was still in session. This curfew is a tool in the tool box and is to be used if needed. He did not recommend any changes at this time since there was not enough information available.

Chief Gaudett said that the City was part of a disproportionate Minority Grant study and the goal is to reduce the number of school based arrests. With the merger of the BOE school police with the Bridgeport Police, there has been a reduction of 40% in arrests and an increase of 60% in referral to the Juvenile Review Board. He then gave an overview of the process and the effort to keep the students in school.

Council Member Paoletto said that he would like to recognize Council Member Blunt for all his hard work on this issue. He said that it would be important to keep the curfew active during the coming months.

Council Member Bonney asked if the police had been in contact with the parents and wished to know how the parents reacted. Chief Gaudett said that every contact involved the parents. With the two previous arrests, the JRB was already aware of one of the students and the other student was already on probation. Council Member Bonney asked how the family felt about the police contacting them. Chief Gaudett gave a very brief overview of the parents' reactions.

Council Member Lyons said that she agreed that while school was still in session, it would not be a good indication of how well the program. She then asked if there were any fines issued. Chief Gaudett said that there had been no fines issued.

Council Member Stafstrom asked if there seemed to be fewer youth on the street. Sgt. Dickerson said that he had heard from officers that the parents are using this as a tool to make their children realize the curfew is the law.

Council Member Martinez said that she had seen fewer youths on the street. She then requested that the Police Department have another reminder done with Radio Cumbre with a Spanish speaker. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the Mayor would be on Radio Cumbre on Monday.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that at the end of the school year, there were packets of information that were sent home. Council Member Martinez pointed out that there would be a parent conference on either May 21st, there will also be a parents' election for the PAC on May 8 or 9th.

Council Member Blunt said that he was pleased that crime was down. However, it will be important to gear up. He said that one factor no one knows is how the word is getting out to the parents and that this is a deterrent. The system is set up to keep kids out of the system. Having the cross-referencing with the agencies is really good. He asked what could be done to make this more effective as the City moves towards the summer.

Chief Gaudett said that it is extremely difficult to measure what hasn't happened. Reminding people about the curfew as school lets out would be important. Council Member Blunt said that this has been a very good start and having the grant program is excellent.

Council Member dePara asked what was being done to strengthen the alternative programs for the youth. Council Member Paoletto suggested that perhaps Council Member Blunt could bring some of the partners with the City and Police Department to discuss this aspect. Council Member Blunt said that the ultimate barometer for initiating programs would be determined by economics. It will be important to utilize what the City has already.

Council Member Lyons pointed out that through the consequence flow chart, there already were opportunities for the youth, such as summer jobs and programs from various organizations and Recreation Department.

Council Member Martinez suggested that it might be worthwhile to have some of the organizations that have programs available for students on Radio Cumbra.

Council Member Bonney said that the Educational and Social Services would be better handling these issues.

Chief Gaudett said that he had been notified by the Lighthouse Program that the City's Summer Youth Activity Guides were available in Room 301 of City Hall.

Council Member Blunt said that he felt that the purpose for this meeting was to evaluate the program. He said that he felt that the curfew should continue through the summer and have another informational meeting in six months. There was a consensus that the curfew would continue for another six months.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER STAFSTROM MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BONNEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services