

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 3, 2014**

ATTENDANCE: Michelle Lyons, Co-Chair; Milta Feliciano, Co-Chair; Jack O Banta, Thomas McCarthy, Council President; Richard Salter (6:10 p.m.), Eneida Martinez-Walker (6:17 p.m.)

OTHERS: Cynthia Saunders Maignan, Captain Robert Porter, Bpt. Police; Sgt. Joanne Meekins, Bpt. Police; Erin McDonough, SPC, CAO; P. Agrawal, OPED Planning Director; Atty. Ray Rizio.

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Lyons called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES: JULY 1, 2014
(REGULAR MEETING).**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 1, 2014 REGULAR MEETING.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

130-13 Grant Submission: State of Connecticut Office of Policy & Management Youth Services Prevention Grant Program for the Police Department's Gang Resistance Education and Training Program.

Council Member Lyons distributed copies of the grant application and additional information documents to the Committee members.

Police Captain Porter came forward and said that he was one of the School Resource Officers (SRO) and was present on behalf of the Community Services Division. He stated that he and Sergeant Meekins were present to talk about the grant programs. This is actually the second school year that the grant has been applied for. There are several components of the grant so the total amount is \$67,150. Last year, six schools were targeted for the GREAT training, which is **Gangs Resistance Education And Training**. And is designed for K-9 and runs for 10-12 weeks. Last year the Police ran the 6 & 7 grade components and plan to introduce the program again this year with six more schools. Capt. Porter said that they had the approval of the BOE to conduct the program. The program covers gang resistance and also has a family component to help identify gang involvement. All of the SRO's trained as GREAT instructors through last year's grant. The Police Department has also added some aspects of the D.A.R.E. program and an anti-bullying program.

There are additional portions of the grant. One is a six week Life Skills Academy that Sgt. Meekins will do with the young ladies involved in the GREAT program. There will be a fall session and a spring session. This provides simple skills such as cooking, sewing, and personal responsibility. The GREAT SROs work with the teachers and guidance counselors to choose the students.

Another aspect of the program is for a Health and Wellness program. The officer that does this is a certified physical fitness instructor. This is done after school a few days a week for a few hours. He also discusses health, hygiene and personal responsibility with the students.

There will also be a pro-active curfew program and policing in the Safe School Corridors. This will include enforcement of the laws in and around the schools and the corridors leading to them.

Council President McCarthy asked if there was a match. There are no matching funds needed.

Council Member Feliciano has several questions. She wished to know how many schools were involved. Capt. Porter explained that six different schools had been selected and they would not be running the program at the six prior schools. Council Member Feliciano wished to know what kind of effectiveness the program had at the original six schools. Capt. Porter pointed out that the program is only designed to cover 10 to 12 weeks. The schools that had the program last year were the ones that seemed to be most in need and Capt. Porter said that the feedback was positive.

The school based arrests across the city declined by 40%, as were the incidents at the schools. However, the figures are for all schools and not broken out by grade levels.

Council Member Salter joined the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Council Member Feliciano asked about the \$55,000 for salaries. Capt. Porter said that it covers the salaries of officers because the SRO's are participating on days when they are not on duty as an SRO.

Council Member Feliciano asked about the Life Skills Class. Sgt. Meekins said that it covers topics such as Self esteem, pregnancy prevention, violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, finances, personal hygiene and other aspects.

Council Member Feliciano asked about what GREAT stood for. Capt. Porter replied it was the Gang Resistance Education And Training program. It is a national program and the officers received training in Wisconsin. A copy of the workbook was passed around.

Council Member Lyons asked if copies of the workbook could be given to the Committee members. Capt. Porter said that he would get copies for them. He added that they given out T-shirts and last year, they were able to purchase a Child Identification program that is computerized.

Council Member Salter said that when the program was done at Dunbar, it did not seem very effective. Sgt. Meekins said that the program has been updated to include bullying and other topics.

Council Member Martinez-Walker joined the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

Capt. Porter said that while the instructors were teaching the GREAT program, they have added other components, such as bullying and other aspects. The grant funding is not specifically for the GREAT program. He went on to say that there was positive feedback from the other schools. Council Member Salter said that in his experience, having just retired from the school system, the students were not impressed with the program but wanted the free time. Capt. Porter pointed out that a year ago, there were many gang problems but now there are not as many gang issues.

Council Member Banta asked how the program was changed to make it more effective. Capt. Porter said that the original targets were the schools most in need and the 7th and 8th grade, but now they are working on 6th and 7th. A therapist was also involved in the program to give some one on one time with the students who needed more attention. Council Member Banta asked how this was covered. Capt. Porter said that there was grant funding for that. As a school SRO, the staff knows where there may be potential gang problems.

Council Member Banta asked how was the parent component received? Capt. Porter said that it was hard to get the turn out but a teacher said that he had a hard time getting parents to attend for student report cards. This year, the program will try working with the Parent Center to see if they can get a better response.

Council Member Martinez-Walker asked why the program was labeled 'gang'. Capt. Porter said that it was the name of program. Council Member Martinez-Walker asked if it was associated with Jason Amato. Capt. Porter said that it was not. There was a brief discussion about whether the grant funding was separate from the City of Bridgeport program.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO APPROVE 130-13 GRANT SUBMISSION: STATE OF CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF POLICY & MANAGEMENT YOUTH SERVICES PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S GANG RESISTANCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

136-13 Appointment of Cynthia Saunders Maignan (D) to the Fire Commission.

Ms. Maignan came forward and greeted the Committee members.

Council Member Feliciano asked if her background was Human Services. Ms. Maignan said that her degree is in Policy Management. She said that she had a great deal of respect for the Fire Department and the Police Department. She has observed them in the community, particularly at Marin School. Ms. Maignan said that she thought she would be a good fit with the Fire Commission and would bring a female perspective to the Board. She has lived in Bridgeport her whole life and has raised her children here.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 136-13 APPOINTMENT OF CYNTHIA SAUNDERS MAIGNAN (D) TO THE FIRE COMMISSION.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

121-13 Proposed Resolution regarding the discontinuance of Morris Street, East of Bostwick Avenue.

Atty. Ray Rizio, representing O&G and Mr. Agrawal, OPED Planning Director came forward to present the resolution to the Committee. Copies of the site plan and copies of photos of the site were distributed to the Commissioners. The City is working with O&G to discontinue the section of the street. There are no landlocked parcels. It is in compliance with the Master Plan and will expand the tax base while reducing the City's maintenance costs.

Council Member Banta asked what would be done with the street. Atty. Rizio explained that O&G has managed to purchase the abutting property years ago. The problem is that they don't want the public venturing down there. It is a liability to the City, but if it abandoned, O&G will maintain and repair the street, but it will be added to the Grand List.

Council Member Martinez-Walker asked about discontinues a road. Atty. Rizio explained that when the City abandons the road, the State law dictates 50% of the road goes to the abutting property owners. In this instance, O&G owns both abutting parcels, so there are no issues.

Council Member Martinez-Walker said that she would like clarification on how the City abandons the street. Council President McCarthy explained that the Committee would be voting on it and then it would go Council. From there it will go to the City Attorney to develop the final language for the contract.

Council Member Banta asked how much tax revenue would be generated. It was pointed out that the surface area of the road was almost a third of an acre and that it would save the City on plowing and road maintenance.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 121-13 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE DISCONTINUANCE OF MORRIS STREET, EAST OF BOSTWICK AVENUE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

122-13 Proposed Request that the honorary designation of W.L. Phillips Boulevard be added above the street signage on the two corners where Trumbull Avenue intersects with Chopsey Hill Road and Reservoir Avenue.

Council President McCarthy came forward to speak on this issue. He explained that the sign had already been installed and when he attended the unveiling, he thought that it had already passed through the Committee. Council Member Martinez-Walker said that she thought that they

needed two signs for street. Council President McCarthy said that he felt they should ask Rev. Lee should be present so the item should be tabled.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 122-13 PROPOSED REQUEST THAT THE HONORARY DESIGNATION OF W.L. PHILLIPS BOULEVARD BE ADDED ABOVE THE STREET SIGNAGE ON THE TWO CORNERS WHERE TRUMBULL AVENUE INTERSECTS WITH CHOPSEY HILL ROAD AND RESERVOIR AVENUE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services