

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 4, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Michelle Lyons, Co-Chair; Denese Taylor-Moye, Co-Chair;
Jack Banta; Richard D. Salter Jr.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:25 PM. A quorum was present.

Renu Gupta stated that item 112-14: Grant Submission RE: 2015 FEMA Port Security Grant (Project #16389- Trainings, #16390- Cameras, #16388- Sustainment) was withdrawn as the grant was not funded.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES: JUNE 2, 2015 & JULY 7, 2015

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 2, 2015 REGULAR MEETING & THE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE JULY 7, 2015 REGULAR MEETING.
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED THE MOTION.
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

110-14: PROPOSED RESOLUTION RE: SUPPORT FOR THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM: URBAN (STP) REALIGNMENT OF LAFAYETTE CIRCLE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BI-DIRECTIONAL TRAFFIC ON FAIRFIELD AVENUE FROM PARK AVENUE TO LAFAYETTE SQUARE (PROJECT #13-358)

David Kooris, Director of OPED, and Jay Habanski, special project member for OPED came forward to present the item.

Mr. Kooris stated that this application goes back to 2007, when the city created a Downtown master plan. One of the ideas was to eliminate Lafayette Circle in an attempt to facilitate the redevelopment of that portion of the downtown area. Mr. Kooris stated that at present, Lafayette

is unsafe, confusing to out of towners and reduces the property value of the surrounding areas because it is nothing but a funnel. The idea proposed the street grid be continued and create more easily developable sites.

In 2011, the Greater Bridgeport Regional Council allocated \$250,000 for a feasibility study on the concept. Stantech was procured to conduct the study, and did so from 2011 to 2013. The study concluded that the concept was feasible. Mr. Kooris took the feasibility study to the State, and over the course of the year convinced them to fund the project. The State has allocated almost \$10 million to the project, with the majority of the funds coming from USTP and LOTCIP, which reduces the City's percentage of contribution to around 8%, just under \$1 million.

Mr. Kooris stated several public meetings on the matter have been held, including ones with the Downtown and Neighborhood stakeholders. He stated that the project is phased and orchestrated in such a way that it will not disrupt traffic flow or parking in Downtown. Lafayette Circle will become Lafayette Boulevard, and it will run straight to Fairfield Avenue, and be accessible at the base of the Exit 2 Ramp. Fairfield Avenue will be made bi-directional as a first step to eliminating one-way streets such as Stratford, State, and Connecticut. It will create a direct line from the North End to the South End to Downtown, and should make for a dramatic difference.

Mr. Kooris stated, if they are approved, bids for design services would go out and be settled in 12 to 18 months. The construction is slated to be completed in 2019. He stated that there is only one property affected by the construction, a vacant property abutting the credit union.

Council Member Banta asked who owns the property. Mr. Kooris stated Forestone owns the property, and they are amenable to the project. Mr. Kooris stated that they are confident there is a way to implement this project in a way that benefits Forestone, as their purpose is to enable development rather than hinder it.

Council Member Salter asked if there was an architect's view of the finished project, and Mr. Kooris stated that they have a conceptual rendering from the feasibility study he would be happy to send. He stated that it is slightly outdated, but has the same basic concept.

John Urquidi, Department of Engineering, stated that the plan clears up a lot of the safety issues and traffic conflicts in the area. Mr. Kooris stated that Lafayette Circle has one of the highest accident stretches in the region.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE MOVED TO ACCEPT ITEM 110-14:
PROPOSED RESOLUTION RE: SUPPORT FOR THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION
PROGRAM: URBAN (STP) REALIGNMENT OF LAFAYETTE CIRCLE AND THE**

City of Bridgeport

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Public Safety & Transportation Committee

Regular Meeting

August 4, 2015

ESTABLISHMENT OF BI-DIRECTIONAL TRAFFIC ON FAIRFIELD AVENUE FROM PARK AVENUE TO LAFAYETTE SQUARE (PROJECT #13-358).

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SALTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

108-14: LETTER OF COMMITMENT- TRAFFIC SIGNAL IMPROVEMENTS ON WASHINGTON AVENUE. UTILIZING STATE FUNDING (STATE PROJECT #15-365)

Mr. Urquidi stated that the 5 traffic signals on Washington Avenue are currently owned and maintained by the state, and were put in place when the highway was first built. Per state statute, the signals should then have been turned over to the city, but in clearing up old paperwork, they realized these 5 signals still need to be handed over to the city. Mr. Urquidi stated that the signals are old and not well-maintained, and so the State is proposing they design and rebuild signals to a city standard and then hand them over to the city's ownership. The funding is 100% federal and state.

Mr. Urquidi stated that the benefits are as follows:

1. The city will now have ownership of the signal, and thus can go out and change or maintain them as necessary, as opposed to waiting for the State to repair them.
2. The signals will be brand new, and will have 5 year warranties. Most signals do not necessitate heavy maintenance within the first decade.
3. With traffic signal control, the city can implement traffic calming measures, and can start implementing pavement markings, reducing travel lanes, and incorporating more parking.
4. All of the signals will be fiber-optically interconnected to the traffic command center. In addition, the fiber optics can be tapped into for security purposes.

Council Member Salter asked about the scheduling and cost of the project to the city. Mr. Urquidi stated that the state is currently in the design phase, and if for any reason they do not receive city approval, they will move forward with the construction and maintain ownership of the signals. The design phase will take a year, construction will take another year, and handing over ownership is slated to happen around 2017. While the city will make no monetary contribution, but will be involved in the construction to make sure everything is being done to their standards.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SALTER MOVED TO ACCEPT ITEM 108-14: LETTER OF COMMITMENT- TRAFFIC SIGNAL IMPROVEMENTS ON WASHINGTON AVENUE. UTILIZING STATE FUNDING (STATE PROJECT #15-365).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

111-14: GRANT SUBMISSION: RE: 2014 FEMA STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE & EMERGENCY RESPONSE (PROJECT #16332)

Renu Gupta and Robert Petrocelli, Deputy Fire Chief, came forward.

Ms. Gupta stated that the grant is from FEMA to support the hiring of firefighters and maintain adequate levels of them in the city. It would provide funding to hire 5 additional firefighters, whose salary and benefits will be paid in full for 2 years. The grant does not require any match, and the total amount is \$702,490.

Council Member Lyons asked what would happen after the 2 year period is up, and Mr. Petrocelli stated that the City would pay it out of the Fire Department's budget.

Council Member Banta asked if the benefits would be all-inclusive, and Mr. Petrocelli answered in the affirmative. Council Member Banta asked if internal hiring was possible should the individuals be qualified, and Mr. Petrocelli stated that they do an extensive recruitment drive. He stated that a recruitment team goes out into the community and finds candidates, and that Civil Service is developing an entrance examination. They expect to have the exam by next summer. Council Member Banta asked if preference was given to community members in recruitment, and Mr. Petrocelli stated that Bridgeport residents receive an additional 15 points in their favor. Both Mr. Petrocelli and Council Member Banta noted the importance of having members of the community involved in the police department, fire department and emergency services.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked how long it would take to receive the decision on whether the grant is funded, and Ms. Gupta stated there was no way to tell.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS EXCUSED HERSELF AT 7:00 PM.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS RETURNED AT 7:05 PM.**

Council Member Salter asked if there was a volunteer component, and Mr. Petrocelli stated that Bridgeport's First is a fully paid career department.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SALTERS MOVED TO ACCEPT ITEM 111-14: GRANT SUBMISSION: RE: 2014 FEMA STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE & EMERGENCY RESPONSE (PROJECT #16332).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

113-14: GRANT SUBMISSION: RE: 2014 FEMA FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY-SAFE ASLEEP (PROJECT #16279)

Ms. Gupta stated that the goal of this program is to support the fire department with promotion of fire prevention. FEMA will fund the installment of \$4,000 smoke detectors in homes in Bridgeport in the amount of \$189,880. There is a 5% cash match of \$9,494, which will come out of the Fire Department budget if awarded.

Mr. Petrocelli stated that the external organization handling the venture, RYASAP, has worked with them for a decade, and has helped them instal 45,000 smoke detectores. He stated that they constantly market the program to the communities, and calls come in for the free installation all the time.

Council Member Banta asked about the battery life, and Mr. Petrocelli stated that the alarms are equipped with 10 year batteries in tamper proof, sealed alarms.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked if they also installed carbon monoxide alarms, and Mr. Petrocelli stated that they only installed fire alarms. She asked if they supplied the housing authority with alarms to put in their complexes, and he stated that the housing authority has their own budget and requirements. She asked if they ever check the fire alarms, and he stated that they check those they can. She asked if it would be possible to receive a list of the schedules of firefighters checking the alarms, and he stated that the best way to do so would be for the council members to contact their local fire department.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE MOVED TO ACCEPT ITEM 113-14: GRANT SUBMISSION: RE: 2014 FEMA FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY- SAFE ASLEEP (PROJECT #16279).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

114-14: GRANT SUBMISSION: RE 2014 FEMA ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT- EQUIPMENT (PROJECT #16345)

Ms. Gupta stated that the goal is to enhance the abilities of first responders by purchasing 60 face pieces, 29 assemblies and 29 air cylinders. The amount requested is \$210,807 with a cash match required that totals \$21,081, which would come out of the Fire Department's budget.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked for specifications on the equipment, and Mr. Petrocelli stated that they are breathing apparatuses, which must meet national standards and are upgraded every few years. She asked if they would have enough for everyone, and he stated that they buy a certain amount using the budget every year, and that this would help save money.

Council Member Lyons asked if it was possible to repurpose the older masks, and Mr. Petrocelli stated that the masks had to go out of service, as if they malfunction due to being below standard, the result could be fatal.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE MOVED TO ACCEPT ITEM 114-14: GRANT SUBMISSION: RE 2014 FEMA ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT-EQUIPMENT (PROJECT #16345).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SALTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

115-14: GRANT SUBMISSION: RE 2014 FEMA ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT- FIRE STATION ALERTING SYSTEM (PROJECT #16346)

Ms. Gupta stated that the amount is for the replacement of the fire station alerting system, as the current system is rather old and is beginning to malfunction. The amount requested is \$241,034 with a cash match of \$24,103 out of the Fire Department's budget.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked for the equipment to be explained. Mr. Petrocelli stated that they have a combined dispatch center on 581 North Avenue, which dispatches police, ambulances and fire. Each fire station is attached to the station alerting system and utilizes the phone lines, which transmit the call over the loudspeakers and can sound the alert tone, and turn on lights. This current system is over 40 years old, and is starting to fail. The new system to be bought with this grant would be wireless, and ultimately much more efficient, dependable, and affordable.

Council Member Taylor-Moye stated that she greatly appreciated that Fire Department's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of their firefighters, as well as the residents of the city.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE MOVED TO ACCEPT ITEM 115-14: GRANT SUBMISSION: RE 2014 FEMA ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT-FIRE STATION ALERTING SYSTEM (PROJECT #16346).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER SALTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting closed at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Ramos
Telesco Secretarial Services