

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS AND
PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION
SPECIAL MEETING
JULY 18, 2022**

ATTENDANCE

Contracts

Jeanette Herron, Co-chair
Matthew McCarthy, Co-chair
Frederick Hodges
Ernest Newton
Maria Pereira
Rosalina Roman-Christy

Public Safety

Maria Valle, Co-chair
Aikeem Boyd
AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
Jorge Cruz (5:46 p.m.)
Michelle Lyons, Co-chair (5:58 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member(s): T. Mack & R. Smith; Thomas Gaudett, Mayoral Aide; M. Anastasi, Interim City Attorney; Atty. M. Jankovsky; Atty. D. Garskof; Daniel Roach, Mayor's Office; Steve Randazzo, BusPatrol, 203-829-5222

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Herron called the joint meeting of the Contracts and Public Safety Committees to order at 5:03 p.m. A quorum was present

05-21 Proposed Agreement with BusPatrol America, LLC regarding a School Bus Stop Arm Enforcement Program.

Mr. Roach introduced Atty. Anastasi, Atty. Jankovsky and Atty. Garskof from the City Attorney's Office and said that Mr. Steve Randazzo from BusPatrol would also be speaking to the Joint Committee. He said that cars ignoring the flashing school bus lights and sign and almost hitting students was a growing problem. An RFP was issued and BusPatrol responded.

Council Member Mack joined the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Mr. Roach said that the State will issue the ticket and when the fines are issued, the State will take a 20% and after a percentage of the officer's time reviewing the video is deducted, the remaining funds will be split between BusPatrol and the City. BusPatrol will pay for the equipment and installation. Mr. Roach said that the ultimate goal was to have the public realize that if they ignore the flashing school bus lights, they will get a ticket and there will be a fine.

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Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that the school buses were not owned by the City. Mr. Roach said that this was correct. The plan was to have the Committee approve this, and present it to the full Council in August. BusPatrol will work with the bus company.

Council Member Newton asked what the role that the BOE would be playing in terms of this program. Mr. Roach said that they had discussions with the Superintendent and the BOE Chair. It was determined that this program did not require BOE approval.

Council Member Valle asked if the company could outsource this contract once it was up and running. This happened with the bus company.

Mr. Randazzo, the BusPatrol Executive Director, greeted the Committee and gave a brief overview of his previous role in Suffolk County where there are 5,000 buses using this socially conscious program. He gave a brief overview and said that they were looking to set up a flagship office in Bridgeport. Distracted driving is an increasing problem along with road rage. Connecticut is a new opportunity for the company.

Mr. Randazzo said that they had done a small pilot program with 10 buses for a two month period last year. The average bus averaged 1 ticket per bus per day. It only takes one incident for a child to be injured or killed. Nationally, the majority of individuals who received a ticket never make the same violation again. He pointed out that other companies target particular routes rather than outfitting the entire fleet. The company works with private fleets and already are working with WeeTransport buses on Long Island. The company does not plan to outsource this program to anyone. There is no cost to the City, the BOE or the buses. The company maintains the equipment for life. The equipment is monitored daily and replaced or repaired as needed by the company.

The City and the company will negotiate the percentage when the contract is under consideration.

Council Member Herron asked how long it would take to outfit the buses. Mr. Randazzo said that it would take between 30 to 60 days once they have access to the buses.

Council Member Herron noted that Council Member Pereira would not be allowed to speak at the meeting unless she had a motion to make as per the decision by the Council.

Council Member Newton asked about the percentage that would be designated to the Police Department. Mr. Randazzo said that State statute requires that a police officer must review the video footage and potentially attend a court hearing. He said that the City or the Police Department would be reimbursed for those costs. The first year or two, the ticket amounts will be high, and then hopefully decline.

Council Member Pereira asked where the funding was coming from for the installation of the cameras. Mr. Randazzo said that the company funds the equipment from their own accounts. He added that they provided 90% of the current programs available.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked if they would be installing cameras inside the buses. Mr. Randazzo said that installing cameras inside the buses would require further discussion with the BOE and the parents. He noted that many buses are already outfitted with the internal cameras. He explained that if they did do that, it would be narrowed focused on bullying and fights and limited to select BOE members and school staff.

Council Member Mack asked if they had spoken with the Superintendent and the BOE. Mr. Roach explained that they were dealing with moving vehicular violations and it was determined that they would not need BOE approval for that. Mr. Roach said that the Superintendent had inquired about potential benefits and it was verbally agreed that 20% would go to the BOE.

Council Member Hodges asked about the revenue to the Police officers. He asked if this would involve police overtime and wished to know the percentage the City would receive. Mr. Roach said that the City would receive 50% of the net. In cases where officers have to review the video footage, officers that were on administrative leave or light duty could be assigned to review the footage. Mr. Randazzo said his company tries to make this program to be a zero cost to the cities. They have large programs running and find that it involves about 10 review hours a week.

Council Member Hodges asked if they had figures available for the other programs. Mr. Randazzo said that they could provide that information, along with the numbers from the Pilot program.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the light duty and administrative leave officers might not be available on court dates, so there may be overtime costs there.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she wished to know what the range of the cameras were. Mr. Randazzo said that the cameras are focused on the license plate and after a certain period of time the video must be destroyed. The company does not issue the violations, it is done by the police officer as required by State Law.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she was concerned about the privacy infringement.

Council Member Herron said that she has seen individuals running these lights. It is been a long time coming and this program has been running in other areas.

Council Member Herron asked Mr. Roach if the unions had been informed about using officers on light duty or administrative leave. Mr. Roach said that he had discussed this with the current Acting Chief of Police and they would work on it once it was approved.

Council Member Herron said that she thought this was a good program, the Superintendent was for this and felt it was a no brainer. However, she did not want this to be an overtime issue.

Council Member McCarthy said that if this saves the lives of children, he was all for this.

Council Member Newton said that he thought it was a good idea and suggested putting cameras on regular street stoplights.

Council Member Cruz joined the meeting to order 5:46 p.m.

Council Member Pereira said that her hand had been raised and she had not been recognized. Council Member Herron repeated her earlier statement that Council Member Pereira would not be allowed to speak at the meeting unless she had a motion to make as per the decision by the Council.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked if the individual who gets a ticket would be penalized if they don't pay. Mr. Roach said that the State issues the ticket and would be handling the collection of the fines. He reminded everyone that if someone had an outstanding ticket when they go to register their vehicle, they would not be able to do so until they pay the fine.

Council Member Cruz apologized for being late and said he had been a bus driver in both Connecticut and Massachusetts before the stop signs were installed and was 100% in favor of this. He added that he also did not want to have this become an overtime issue.

Council Member Hodges asked where the company was located now. Mr. Randazzo said that they have offices in Long Island, Virginia and Pennsylvania. He said that when this was being discussed, they were told that they would have to open an office in Bridgeport, which they are happy to do. This will create jobs for the local residents.

Council Member Hodges said that he was receiving calls from constituents about people not stopping for the school buses and was 100% for this program.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked if they would be voting on the final contract before the August Council Meeting. Mr. Roach said that the draft that they were looking at would be used and that the final details would be presented to the full Council. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she was not aware of the pilot program and wished that the Superintendent and the Acting Chief of Police were on the call. Because they did not have all the details, she could not vote for this item.

Council Member McCarthy asked his fellow Council Members to vote the item out of Committee tonight in order to bring it to full Council at the August meeting.

Council Member Herron asked the City Attorneys to draft the final contract as soon as possible. She said that if it is given to the Council Members an hour before the meetings, she will request it be tabled.

Council Member Valle said that Superintendent Testani sent an email and said he would not be able to attend the meeting.

Council Member Lyons joined the meeting at 5:58 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED AGENDA ITEM 05-21 PROPOSED AGREEMENT WITH BUSPATROL AMERICA, LLC REGARDING A SCHOOL BUS STOP ARM ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira stated that she was denied the opportunity to make a motion and that she would be taking everyone to court.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE PASSED WITH EIGHT (8) IN FAVOR (MCCARTHY, VALLE, LYONS, CRUZ, ROMAN-CHRISTY, HODGES, NEWTON, AND BOYD AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (VIZZO-PANICCIA AND PEREIRA).**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services