

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CONTRACTS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Jeanette Herron, Co-chair; Jorge Cruz, Rosalina Roman-Christy, Maria Pereira, Frederick Hodges, Ernest Newton (6:05)

STAFF: Thomas Gaudett, Deputy Chief of Staff

OTHER: Councilmember(s): Rev. Mary McBride-Lee & Aikeem Boyd; Atty. E. Skyers; Dom Costello; Fire Chief Lance Edwards; Barbara;

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Herron called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M. There was a quorum present.

18-22

PROPOSED TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS (IAFF), AFL-CIO, LOCAL 834 REGARDING THEIR BARGAINING UNIT CONTRACT FOR THE PERIOD OF JULY 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025. (NOTE: THIS ITEM CAN BE FOUND ON THE CITY CLERK'S WEBSITE: CITY COUNCIL AGENDAS/MINUTES; CITY COUNCIL; 2022-2023; FULL/MINUTES/SIZE; 2023-02-06PDF)

This item was handled out of order.

Council Member Newton arrived at 6:05 P.M.

Atty. Skyers came forward to discuss this item. They had entered into the tentative agreement after a mediation that occurred at the beginning of October 2022. He reviewed those who had been in attendance for those present. The salient features of this agreement include the following:

- Wage increases.
- Sick Leave Provisions being entirely revamped.
- Methods to cap overtime.
- Employees hired after January 2011
- Health Care Premium Costs.
- Details regarding employees paying more than the health care cap.
- Vacation eligibility.
- EMP stipends.
- Tuition reimbursements.

Further review of the agreement followed.

Co-chair Herron asked the Union President to confirm he was in agreement with this. The Union President confirmed this. He said that they had voted overwhelmingly to endorse. He hoped they would manage to avoid arbitration and strike a fair deal.

Council Member Pereira asked if they were looking to add an additional Lieutenant position due to the wording in Article 8, Section E.

Atty. Skyers said that this had existed for a couple of contracts already. He provided more information regarding this section and further review followed.

Council Member Pereira noted that language had been added in section 4 A regarding keeping a regular Assistant Chief on duty at all times and wished to know if there was a monetary cost to that.

It was noted that they would not be adding payroll hours and a review of the members of staff and when they were on duty followed.

Council Member Newton asked if they were experiencing Fire Fighters leaving the job due to benefits.

He was informed that, though it wasn't to the same degree as the Bridgeport Police Department, the rollback of health care would likely help them either retain or attract new employees and the old language was not sustainable. Further discussion regarding the healthcare followed.

Council Member Newton expressed his belief that it wasn't fair for the residents and taxpayers for Fire Fighters to get trained in Bridgeport then leave for other cities due to offering better benefits. Further discussion followed.

Council Member Pereira said she did not understand the philosophy behind compensatory time and asked for more details regarding compensatory time in the tentative agreement. The process was reviewed and explained for those present.

Council Member Pereira raised concern over the number of people permitted to have time off at one time in the agreement. Further discussion followed.

Council Member Cruz asked if other Fire Fighting Schools helped to train Fire Fighters and how education was currently being handled.

The plan is currently to no longer use the Connecticut Fire Academy and, instead, run a recruit program in the City. Further discussion followed.

Council Member Cruz expressed his happiness that they have been able to work out the health insurance issues in negotiations. He asked how the Fire Chief felt about the proposed contract.

Fire Chief Edwards said he was happy with it and felt it was extremely fair.

Council Member Cruz said he approved of the contract as a result.

Council Member Pereira raised questions regarding the vacation time and questioned how the proposed amounts of vacation time were fair and equitable. A review of the proposed vacation time allotments followed. It was noted that, while it wasn't completely fair and equitable, it was an improvement over the prior arrangement.

Council Member Pereira asked about the work schedules for the front-line firefighters. She noted that it was 1 10-hour day shift and 1 14-hour night shift followed by 72 hours off. Chief Edwards reviewed how this shift worked in practice for her. Council Member Pereira voiced her dissatisfaction with the current scheduling arrangement. Further discussion regarding the scheduling followed. Co-chair Herron noted that other places in the nation practiced similar schedules to what was being utilized.

Council Member Cruz asked the Union President if the contract had been approved by their membership.

The Union President confirmed this.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE PROPOSED TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS (IAFF), AFL-CIO, LOCAL 834 REGARDING THEIR BARGAINING UNIT CONTRACT FOR THE PERIOD OF JULY 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Council Member Pereira voiced her dissatisfaction with the motion and said she had further questions she desired to ask.

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (HERRON, CRUZ, ROMAN-CHRISTY, HODGES, NEWTON) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES: DECEMBER 13, 2022 (RESCHEDULED MEETING)

This item was handled out of order.

The minutes of December 13, 2022 were not addressed at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ian A. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services
City of Bridgeport
Contracts Committee
Regular Meeting
February 14, 2023