

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

ATTENDANCE: Jeanette Herron, Co-chair; Matthew McCarthy, Co-chair; Ernest Newton, Maria Pereira, Rosalina Roman-Christy, Jorge Cruz

STAFF: Thomas Gaudett, Deputy Chief of Staff; Matthew Abbott, City Planner; Kenneth Flatto, Director of Finance; Lynn Haig, Director of Planning, OPED

OTHER: Council Member(s): Reverend Mary McBride-Lee; Aikeem Boyd & Tyler Mack; Barbara; Chris Brill; Curtis Denton, Director, ITS; Deborah Garskof, Associate City Attorney; Eneida Martinez; Tiadora Josef; Veronica

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Herron called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M. There was a quorum present.

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

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 13, 2022 AS SUBMITTED.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (HERRON, MCCARTHY, ROMAN-CHRISTY, NEWTON) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (PEREIRA).**

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES: FEBRUARY 14, 2023 (REGULAR MEETING)

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 14, 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (HERRON, PEREIRA, ROMAN-CHRISTY, NEWTON) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MCCARTHY).**

21-22

PROPOSED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH SONO STUDIOS LTD, LLC FOR LOGO DEVELOPMENT AND ACCOMPANYING GUIDEBOOK. (NOTE: THIS ITEM CAN BE FOUND ON THE CITY CLERK'S WEBSITE: CITY COUNCIL AGENDAS/MINUTES; CITY COUNCIL; 2022-2023; FULL/MINUTES/SIZE; 2023-02-21PDF)

Mr. Abbot came forward to discuss this item. This contract is for a City logo and branding guidebook to be delivered by SoNo Studios. This project is a response to requests from local City of Bridgeport
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leaders for better marketing to new families and businesses. He said that Bridgeport currently had few options to graphically brand its identity. The City currently uses the City Seal for its mass communications headers, business cards, and other official documents. This new logo will complement the City Seal, not replace it. The new logo will help conduct public outreach.

Council Member Pereira asked how much this would cost.

Mr. Abbot said it would cost \$23,300.

Council Member Pereira asked how important he thought new logos for the City were.

Mr. Abbot said he felt they were important and would help with tourism and be a marketing asset. He pointed to the effect that the logos have had in Stamford and Norwalk for examples of this.

Council Member Pereira said she did not feel this was worth the cost and voiced her disapproval of it.

Council Member McCarthy asked if this had gone out to bid.

Mr. Abbot said that it had, and they had selected SoNo Studios as a result. Mr. Brill came forward to provide further information on the company. Ms. Haig came forward to provide further information as well. Further discussion followed.

Council Member Newton said he supported this and felt it was good to support any time they could promote the City and felt this was the right direction and it was long overdue.

Council Member Mack asked if there had been consideration to local artists for the designing of the logo.

Mr. Abbot said that they had sent out the RFP and local companies had attempted for the job. From the short list SoNo Studios had been selected.

Council Member Mack asked why they had been selected over a local artist.

Ms. Haig said it was more than creating a logo but creating a guidebook and implementation as well. She provided further details to what they desired. They did not believe a local group had the implementation guide and plan.

Council Member Pereira asked if they were affiliated with the SoNo Wall.

Mr. Abbot said that they were not.

Council Member McCarthy suggested that they hold a contest for local artists for the logo instead.

Ms. Haig said that they had not restricted who could apply for the RFP when it got put out and no local artists had responded. Further discussion followed.

Council Member Pereira asked for details regarding the proposed book and its contents.

Ms. Haig outlined what would be contained within the book including how it would help standardize things like business cards and provide a foundation for further projects.

It was noted that there was an error in section 3 which stated that the amount was '\$27,300' when the actual amount was '\$23,300'.

Council Member Cruz voiced his agreement with Council Member McCarthy that they should try to hire local artists.

Council Member Newton noted that the local artists had not met the qualifications.

Council Member Pereira noted that the average artist was not going to be on Bidsync. She also felt that businesses would not be swayed to come to Bridgeport by the logo. Further discussion followed regarding engagement with the community.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that Bridgeport needed to be advertised more but they should try to involve local artists.

Council Member Cruz voiced his support for the project and said he felt Bridgeport was in need of advertising. He wished that, in the future, similar projects will make a good faith effort to advertise to local groups.

Council Member Mack asked if the group had done the logos for Stamford or Norwalk.

Mr. Brill said they did not do the logos for Stamford or Norwalk but had done branding with other companies and educational institutions. Further discussion followed regarding the importance of advertising the City.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 21-22 PROPOSED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH SONO STUDIOS LTD, LLC FOR LOGO DEVELOPMENT AND ACCOMPANYING GUIDEBOOK.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

34-22

PROPOSED ASSIGNMENT OF TAX LIENS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023. (NOTE: THIS ITEM CAN BE FOUND ON THE CITY CLERK'S WEBSITE: CITY COUNCIL AGENDAS/MINUTES; CITY COUNCIL; 2022-2023; FULL/MINUTES/SIZE; 2023-03-06PDF)

Ms. Jones came forward to discuss this item. This is the annual tax lien sale. There are no changes in the way the process works from the prior two years. This year there are appx. 3.6 million new tax liens. She provided further information regarding the tax liens. They are requesting that they be approved so they can be assigned to a third party.

Council Member Pereira asked for more information about payment of the tax liens and where the list of every tax delinquent was.

Council Member McCarthy said he had received the list but had gotten an email saying they hadn't distributed it in the past. It was confirmed that the City has not shared the list in recent years. Further discussion followed regarding the tax liens and the confidentiality of the list. This is just real estate and not business property. Discussion followed regarding what would happen if people could not pay off the tax liens. Anyone with a tax lien of 100 or more went onto the list, though no seniors had been assigned liens. Further discussion followed. Concerns were voiced that people would be paying bills to support themselves and their families before paying off tax liens which could result in issues and companies being abusive with the tax liens and fees compounding to an amount larger than the lien itself.

Council Member Newton asked if they could get a copy of the list of members that was sent to the chairs.

Co-chair Herron said that she would try to get Council Member McCarthy to send it to everyone.

Council Member Cruz explained his own experiences with similar situations and said that the thing that exacerbated the amount was the fees that they kept adding onto it. He felt they needed to do something to stop the mistreatment of people who fell on hard times and could not afford either the lien or the fees. He further outlined his frustration in dealing with liens and said they needed to take a serious look at these issues.

Council Member Pereira noted that a bill had just come out in Hartford that made it impossible to foreclose on WPCA unless the debt was \$4,000 or greater. She asked for clarification on the debt on some of the properties. Council Member McCarthy clarified the information for her. Council Member Pereira said she would move to approve with the detail that no property that was under \$1,000 or less is included in a lien sale this year. Discussion followed to clarify if this included LLC's or not. Council Member Pereira clarified that she wished to exclude investment properties. Ms. Haig said that neither the collector nor the finance director would know who had a property for investment purposes. Further discussion followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOVED TO AMEND 'ITEM 34-22 PROPOSED ASSIGNMENT OF TAX LIENS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023' TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENT:**

- **EXCLUDING ANY PARCELS THAT OWE \$1,000 OR LESS IN PROPERTY TAXES.**

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

Council Member Newton asked how this would impact the budget. Discussion followed regarding the current state of the City Budget. The question of if any of the people under \$1,000 were still delinquent in a years' time, if they would be included next year.

Council Member Pereira said they would be included in next year's package.

Council Member Newton suggested that they have the budget and collection departments sit down and review the properties.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked to clarify if LLCs were included or not in the amendment

Co-chair Herron clarified that they were included and noted that the sale of the liens should be held for a year and those that are outstanding after a year should be put on a list.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 34-22 PROPOSED ASSIGNMENT OF TAX LIENS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023 AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:19 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Ian A. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services