

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CONTRACTS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 12, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Jeanette Herron, Co-chair; Matthew McCarthy, Co-chair; Jorge Cruz, Michael DeFilippo, Ernest Newton, Samia Suliman

OTHERS: Council Member(s): M. Pereira, M. Valle; M. McBride-Lee, A. Vizzo-Paniccia & E. Martinez; M. Anastasi, Esq., City Attorney's Office; E. Amado, Director, Labor Relations; P. White, Senior Labor Relations Officer; T. Gaudett, Mayor's Aide; C. Vickers, Legislative Office; Bob, Barbara, iPhone and Call In User 1

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.
The public was able to listen to this meeting by calling a conference line.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Herron called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. A quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES:
DECEMBER 8, 2020 (Regular Meeting)**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE OF THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2020 REGULAR MEETING.
** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.
** THE MOTION TO APPROVE OF THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2020 REGULAR MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

01-20 Proposed Tentative Agreement with New York Typographical Union, CWA Local 14156 (Printers) regarding their Bargaining Unit Contract.

Council Member Herron said that the Committee Members had been told that they would each have two questions.

Council Member Pereira said that the cover letter stated that if the Council did not vote on this by December 29th, it would go through automatically.

Mr. Amado said that the Council should go ahead and vote on it. The contract is already operational under law. A cover letter will be submitted with all the appropriate documentation. Since the meeting dates do not coincide with the deadlines, there will be a request to schedule Special Meetings to address these issues in the future.

Council Member Herron said that if the Committee needs to schedule special meetings to prevent this type of situation from happening, they will.

Council Member Newton said that the Council previously had no input with the contracts before the Committee changed the ordinance to allow the Council Members to have some input. He said that he was glad to see that the Labor Relations Director would see that this issue is addressed.

Council Member McCarthy asked when the contract was signed by the Union. Mr. Amado said that the Union signed off on July 20, 2020. The Mayor signed it on November 10, 2020.

Council Member McCarthy said the contract had been waiting for the Mayor's signature for three months while the Council only had two weeks to consider it. He said he was fed up with this and it was not a good way to do business.

Mr. Amado said that there were two different issues, one of which was when the Mayor signed off, and the second was when the contract was presented to the Council. He explained that the trigger point was when the Mayor signed it and presented it to the Council. The time frames for the meetings do not coincide with the CGS. Mr. Amado said that they cannot tell the Council or Committees when to meet, but they can make recommendations.

Council Member McCarthy said that there had been a month lag after the Mayor signed it before the Council received it. Council Member Herron said that this type of scheduling problem was why they had changed the ordinance. Mr. Amado agreed with Council Member Herron and explained that this was one of the last contracts that had been done. He also noted that it predated his appointment to Labor Director.

Council Member Pereira said she wanted to place on the record that Mr. Amado had included all the dates in the cover letter which was sent to the City Clerk. The referral was sent the day before to the City Clerk and the item could have been added to the Contracts meeting agenda that was held the following day by a 2/3rd vote.

Council Member Pereira asked how many members were in the bargaining unit.

Mr. Amado said that his office would be doing as much as possible to include the dates to the Council in the cover letter.

Mr. Amado said that there were two full time employees and one part time employee. One of the full time employees has coverage elsewhere.

Council Member Pereira said when a contract is being edited, the Council Members need to see the changes with the additions included in brackets and the omissions underlined. She asked that he do this going forward. She added that she was concerned about the changes made to health care and vacations.

Council Member DeFilippo said that it was ridiculous that there was such a small union. He asked if there would be any additional language regarding layoffs or furloughs.

Mr. Amado said that the unions were currently presenting language about emergency situations. He said that if there were some type of reduced service, there is no furloughs. Layoffs area

triggered by reductions in service, such as budgetary constraints. Furloughs and layoffs would be handled by Labor Relations and would depend on the situation.

Council Member DeFilippo said that there should be something in the contracts that would protect the City since everyone expected the COVID lockdown to only last 14 days.

Council Member Newton reminded everyone that there were always two sides in labor negotiations. He added that they could propose items, but the unions could reject it and have it go to arbitration. The unions have won for too long.

Mr. Amado said that if they needed to talk about strategies, he would request that they discuss it in Executive Session.

Council Member Pereira said that they were not strategizing about this contract.

Council Member Pereira said Sections 12.4A and 12.4B were about retirement and Medicare eligibility. It says those hired after 2019 would not be eligible for post-retirement benefits.

Mr. Amado said that this was a push by the administration to eliminate the medical after retirement. The cost of medical was quite high because of the medical costs of retirees. From an organizational viewpoint, this will make recruitment quite difficult.

Council Member Pereira said that on page 11, as of July 1, 2019, there would be a 25% cap on health care. This date was changed from July 1, 2009.

Mr. Amado said Mr. Phil White was on the call to talk about the change in dates. He added that accrued sick leave has been something the Council wanted to target for some time. The accumulated sick time was a liability when retiring employees left with massive amounts of money. However, Mr. Amado reminded everyone that the negotiations are give and take.

Mr. White said that while there is no immediate benefits to the City, getting out of the retiree medical benefits was something that the City had wanted to do for some time. This contract will be the end of that for the City. He said on the whole, this was a major benefit for the City.

Council Member Pereira then asked about accrued sick leave and the pay rate. She said that the current contract helps the employees because they can bank days at a lower rate of pay and when they retire, they will be paid out at their current rate of pay.

Mr. Amado said that the City has not been following the practice of prorating the sick day pay. This is some of the cleanup which fixes it. He reminded everyone that there was only one person that would be affected by this.

Council Member Pereira said that she felt that people were entitled to earn their sick time and bank it, but at the rate of pay that they earned it.

Mr. Amado agreed and said that they were on the same page.

Council Member McBride pointed out that people pay into the insurance but it may be a long time before they use it. She added that educators accumulate sick days. She had 300 sick days, but she will only be paid for 100 sick days. When the Union bargains for the employees, they are supposed to get the best deal they can for their members.

The Police and Fire Department accumulate a lot of sick days and the City has to pay out large amounts to them when they retire.

Council Member Brantley said that when people retire, they shouldn't get all that time. The person that was in the union has retired and the union members are all newer employees. She said that she did not think they needed to worry about this.

****COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 01-20 PROPOSED TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH NEW YORK TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION, CWA LOCAL 14156 (PRINTERS) REGARDING THEIR BARGAINING UNIT CONTRACT.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) IN FAVOR (NEWTON, CRUZ, AND MCCARTHY) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (SULIMAN AND DEFILIPPO).**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services