

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
CONTRACTS COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 9, 2024**

**ATTENDANCE:** Jeanette Herron, Co-chair; Jorge Cruz, Matthew McCarthy,  
Richard Ortiz, Dasha Spell, Scott Burns

**OTHERS:** Council Member(s): E. Newton, E. Martinez, & M. Valle; Associate City Attorney J. Maye; Atty. E. Skyer, Labor Relations; Tom Gaudett, Deputy Chief of Staff; Nestor Nkwo, OPM Director; Domenic Costello, Deputy Director, Labor Relations; Michelle Otero; Aaron Curry, Deputy Director, Public Facilities; Constance Vickers, Director, Legislative Affairs; Anthony Paoletto, Mayor's Office; Milta Feliciano, PRPFC President; Rodney Strong, Griffin & Strong; Susan G. Johnson, Griffin & Strong;; Michele Clark-Jenkins, Griffin & Strong; Galaxy S10, Su-Yun, 1-732-586-1540; 203-880-5666; 1-475-225-6136

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Herron called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

Council Member Herron said that Council Member Pereira was absent due to a family emergency. Co-chair Pereira has requested that Agenda Item 01-23 (Aquarion) item be tabled.

**APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES:**

**• October 11, 2023 (Regular Meeting)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 11, 2023 REGULAR CONTRACT MEETING.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH TWO IN FAVOR (CRUZ AND MCCARTHY) AND TWO (2) ABSTAINED (ORTIZ AND SPELL).**

**• December 12, 2023 (Regular Meeting)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 12, 2023 REGULAR CONTRACT MEETING.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**01-23 Proposed Lease Agreement with Aquarion Water Company of Connecticut regarding Vacant Land at the Fairchild-Wheeler Golf Course for the purpose of Installing a Water Pump Station along with any related Infrastructure or Appurtenances to the Facility.**

Council Member Herron asked Atty. Maye for his opinion. Atty. Maye said that he would prefer to hold a special meeting next week. Mr. Gaudett suggested that Council Member Pereira had requested that the item be recessed until Tuesday.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 01-23 PROPOSED LEASE AGREEMENT WITH AQUARION WATER COMPANY OF CONNECTICUT REGARDING VACANT LAND AT THE FAIRCHILD-WHEELER GOLF COURSE FOR THE PURPOSE OF INSTALLING A WATER PUMP STATION ALONG WITH ANY RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE OR APPURTENANCES TO THE FACILITY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED.**

Several Committee members indicated that they had questions.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ WITHDREW HIS MOTION TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 01-23 PROPOSED LEASE AGREEMENT WITH AQUARION WATER COMPANY OF CONNECTICUT REGARDING VACANT LAND AT THE FAIRCHILD-WHEELER GOLF COURSE FOR THE PURPOSE OF INSTALLING A WATER PUMP STATION ALONG WITH ANY RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE OR APPURTENANCES TO THE FACILITY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ WITHDREW HIS SECOND.**

Discussion followed.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE MOTION TO HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024 AT 5:00 P.M. TO CONSIDER AGENDA ITEM 01-23 PROPOSED LEASE AGREEMENT WITH AQUARION WATER COMPANY OF CONNECTICUT REGARDING VACANT LAND AT THE FAIRCHILD-WHEELER GOLF COURSE FOR THE PURPOSE OF INSTALLING A WATER PUMP STATION ALONG WITH ANY RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE OR APPURTENANCES TO THE FACILITY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Spell asked if they would still hold a special meeting on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. if Council Member Pereira was still not available.

Council Member Herron said that they would still hold the meeting to vote on the item.

**29-23 Proposed Tentative Agreement with The Connecticut Laborers' District Council for the Bridgeport Public Employees Union Local 665 (LIUNA) regarding their Bargaining Unit Contract from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2026.**

Atty. Skyers greeted the Committee. He said that he felt that this contract was going to be strict. There were not many changes. He then reviewed the wage increases and pointed out that the increases would take effect July 1st. There is a scribner's error in the contract with the start date, which should be July 1st, not January 1st.

Council Member Spell asked who would be included in this group. Atty. Skyers said that there were a number of different positions represented in the union.

Council Member Newton asked what type of positions were represented in this group. Atty. Skyers said that there were a variety of positions included and it would be best for the Council Member to refer to a list.

Council Member Newton said that this sounded like a hodge-podge kind of thing and the Committee should take a look at this group. Council Member Herron pointed out that AFSCME and NAGE both have overlapping categories.

Council Member Spell asked when the employees would receive their raises. Mr. Costello said that it usually takes about two to four weeks after the Council ratifies the contract. He then gave a brief overview of the retro aspect for the employees who had not received a raise since July of 2022. Council Member Spell asked if they could get a break down of who would be receiving the raises, since it appears to be managers. She also wanted to see what kind of amount they had received.

Mr. Nkwo gave a brief overview of the compounded amount. He said that he felt it was a fair contract.

Atty. Skyer encouraged everyone to look at Appendix A, where there was a listing of the employee categories.

Council Member Martinez said that contract expired in June of 2022. She asked why the City always put the employees in a financial hardship position by waiting until the contract expired and then not voting on it until six months or more before ratifying it.

Council Member Herron agreed and reminded everyone that she and Council Member Newton had written an ordinance that would notify the Committee six months before a contract expired. Atty. Skyer said that his department was aware of the ordinance and this particular contract pre-dates his arrival in the department. This will not happen again.

Council Member Burns asked about information listed on pages 35 and 36 in the contact. Mr. Costello said that the positions Council Member Burns was referring to were positions that were not currently occupied. Council Member Burns asked if they could eliminate the language so they don't end up with data points that are irrelevant. He would like to remove the 20 or so vacant positions. Mr. Costello replied that it was difficult to get a union to give up a job classification.

Council Member Newton said that as a Budget co-chair, the Budget Committee will be looking at this. It is wrong to keep the positions on the list when they are not being filled.

Council Member Martinez asked about the Photo ID clerk position. Mr. Costello said that it was a Photo ID Tech. Council Member Martinez asked for the details about this position. Mr. Nkwo said that the position was in the budget, but it was not funded.

Mr. Nkwo suggested that they adopt what the OPM spreadsheet says since the date of the contract was correct.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 29-23 PROPOSED TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE CONNECTICUT LABORERS' DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THE BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC EMPLOYEES UNION LOCAL 665 (LIUNA) REGARDING THEIR BARGAINING UNIT CONTRACT FROM JULY 1, 2022 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026 WITH THE DATES AND TIME FRAME LISTED IN THE OPM SPREADSHEET.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER SPELL SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 29-23 PROPOSED TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE CONNECTICUT LABORERS' DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THE BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC EMPLOYEES UNION LOCAL 665 (LIUNA) REGARDING THEIR BARGAINING UNIT CONTRACT FROM JULY 1, 2022 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026 AS AMENDED WITH THE DATES AND TIME FRAME LISTED IN THE OPM SPREADSHEET.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**30-23 Proposed Professional Services Agreement with Griffin & Strong P.C. regarding the creation of a New Disparity Study for the City.**

Mr. Gaudett said that Mr. Strong, Ms. Johnson and Ms. Clark-Jenkins were present representing Griffin & Strong. The last time a disparity study was done was during the Finch administration and the data is now old. He recommended that it was time to have a new study done. A committee was formed and a bid went out. A number of groups were finalist and Griffin and Strong was selected.

Mr. Strong said that his group was based in Atlanta and was a law firm and public policy firm. They are working with a number of different cities in the Midwest and in the Northeast. They are currently doing a study for the State of Connecticut. These studies are becoming more important because of the nature of the Supreme Court decisions regarding admissions.

Ms. Clark-Jenkins then spoke about the various teams that Griffin & Strong has and noted that their work is very data driven. However, they also consider available firms in the area. In addition, they speak with the business community for their input. This is done through one on one conversations, surveys or focus groups. They then look at a gender neutral remedies. It will be important to get to know the business community and the community at large.

Council Member Cruz asked what the overall studies results were that Griffin & Strong has already done. Ms. Clark- Jenkins said that it often changes the distribution of participation in public contracts. They try to provide the communities with a number of tools to put policies in place to encourage a number of communities in the municipality. Mr. Strong said that the City of Nashville had improvements in the area of subcontracting, but their basic procurement process needed improvement.

Council Member Burns said that the contract that they had received indicated that it would take a year. He asked if the study would take a year and when they would start. Ms. Clark-Jenkins said that the study would take a year and they would start as soon as they receive approval. Ms. Clark-Jenkins then gave a summary of the various items that the City had for the last five years which they would review. It is more of an organic development. Each city is different.

Council Member Spell asked if there were any Connecticut firms selected. Mr. Gaudett said that there was one Connecticut firm that submitted a proposal, but they were not selected. It is a very specialized field.

Council Member Spell asked about the cost of the study. Ms. Clark-Jenkins said that they had submitted a full proposal with the financial estimate. Mr. Gaudett said that the estimated cost was about \$350,000.

Council Member Martinez said that she was happy to see this because the last study was done in 2015. She asked about the local partners who would working with them. Ms. Clark-Jenkins said that Brianna Regine Visionary Consulting, LLC, which is located in Bridgeport would be helping doing outreach to organizations.

Council Member Martinez asked if the results would be available to the public and how they would work with the City where improvement is needed. Ms. Clark-Jenkins said that the results are given to the City and the City will release the results as they see fit. The contract takes the City to the point of recommendations. The contract does not go into implementation but they will make recommendations.

Council Member Martinez asked how they would focus on the businesses that are in need of improvement in the area of services. Ms. Clark-Jenkins said that in a disparity study identifies where a city is in a point of time. It is not a needs assessment. She said that they talk to the businesses about their experiences with the city and in a way, Griffin & Strong become their voice. They will make recommendations based on best practices.

Council Member Newton said that he was aware of the organization. He added that if the leadership doesn't provide direction, then the study is meaningless. Ms. Clark-Jenkins said that Mr. Strong had worked with Maynard Jackson. Mr. Strong said that the landscape in terms of how one approaches the issues varies from city to city. They were able to respond to how the City of Atlanta did business and responded to the Supreme Court decisions. Griffin & Strong is steeped in the history of disparity studies. They are invested in providing the cities with legally sustainable solutions and policies.

Council Member Newton said that they could not have chosen a more qualified group for this study, but it takes a strong Council and Mayor to implement the recommendations.

Council Member Burns asked who would be the Bridgeport contact person. Ms. Clark-Jenkins said that Ms. Ortero and Mr. Gaudett would be the contact people.

Council Member Herron said that she was tired of reading about issues in the Connecticut Post before the information was presented to the Council.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 30-23 PROPOSED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH GRIFFIN & STRONG P.C. REGARDING THE CREATION OF A NEW DISPARITY STUDY FOR THE CITY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ADJOURNMENT.**

**RECESS**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO RECESS THE MEETING TO TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024 AT 5:00 P.M. TO CONSIDER AGENDA ITEM 01-23 PROPOSED LEASE AGREEMENT WITH AQUARION WATER COMPANY OF CONNECTICUT REGARDING VACANT LAND AT THE FAIRCHILD-WHEELER GOLF COURSE FO A SPECIAL MEETING ON R THE PURPOSE OF INSTALLING A WATER PUMP STATION ALONG WITH ANY RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE OR APPURTENANCES TO THE FACILITY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER SPELL SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting recessed at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services.