

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CONTRACTS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 19, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Matthew McCarthy, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Co-chair;
Ernest Newton; Richard Ortiz; Scott Burns

OTHERS: Council Member Michelle Lyons; Ken Flatto, Finance Director; Veronica Jones, Tax Collector; Russell Liskov, Esquire

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair McCarthy called the meeting to order at 6:47 p.m. There was a quorum present at the time of roll call.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

- **January 9, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING)**

****COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 2024.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION WAS PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (MCCARTHY, HERRON, ORTIZ, AND BURNS) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (NEWTON).**

- **January 25, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING)**

****COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 25, 2024.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION WAS PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (MCCARTHY, HERRON, ORTIZ, AND BURNS) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (NEWTON).**

47-23 Proposed Assignment of Tax Liens for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Ms. Jones would like to request the assignment of the 2024-2025 tax liens. They would like to assign the liens to a third party after April 1st, 2024. Currently totaling at \$8.8 million dollars in delinquent taxes as up to date. They reach out to the assignee as first bidders, if the original property owner doesn't want to handle the cost it will go to the first bidders, then it will go into a

sub sale.

She is asking the council to approve the sale including anything under one thousand dollars from 2021 that was not paid off.

Mr. Flatto made a note to make a correction to the item as the correct fiscal year is 2023-2024 and not 2024-2025.

Co-chair Herron asked if they are still following the same protocols to the lien companies with lawyer and fees. Ms. Jones said yes, they are still signing contracts. Mr. Flatto added they use a bid process and whoever gives them the best offer gets the sale, they usually get 15% over the amount but the state has made strict regulations.

Council member McCarthy asked if the one thousand dollars is taxed or interest and penalties. Ms. Jones replied it is interest and fees associated with the taxes.

Council member Burns asked who authorized the tax collector, financial director, and/or the mayor to sign the contracts. Mr. Flatto answered it is one of those positions with two witnesses to acknowledge the contracts being signed but the city attorney's office does review the contract which is done from the purchasing office. The mayor is not involved in the negotiation process.

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED BY TO REMOVE "OR NEGOTIATE" FROM THE SECOND RESOLUTION.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE ITEM 47-23 AS AMENDED WITH THE FISCAL YEAR TO BE CORRECTED AS 2023-2024.**

****SECONDED BY CO-CHAIR HERRON.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

38-23 Proposed lease agreement/Eminent Domain regarding the parking lot located at 405-435 Congress Street for the Police Department.

Mr. Liskov made a note that the item has to be corrected as the address is 205-245 Congress Street not what was documented. He went on to explain if they should continue the lease at the current location for the police officers or take it by eminent domain. The department has been leasing it for about 15 years with no rent increase at \$45,000 a year and the owners are looking to increase it to \$60,000 a year. Chief Porter suggested looking into taking ownership by eminent domain but they would have to look at (inaudible) but the problem would be if they acquire the parking lot then there won't be any parking available. They can take the location next year with bonding money or just buy more time by leasing.

Co-chair Herron asked if the taxes are up to date and if so, how can they take it away from the owners. Mr. Liskov said they are up to date but for city use they can condemn the building.

Co-chair McCarthy added they are not getting taxes on it as it is a triple net lease with the new lease. Mr. Liskov said the lease can be changed. Co-chair McCarthy shared there is a municipal lot that is used to store broken down police vehicles that can be used, all they would need to do is add a fence. The owners of the current parking lot are entertaining the idea of developing the lot. Co-chair McCarthy said they should not be entertaining the lease or be put in contract for many years as the city is also looking at getting a new location for the police department.

Council member Newton said he can hear the police officers complaining about the walk from the current station to the new parking lot.

Co-chair Herron said there should be tax records.

Mr. Liskov said usually for commercial leases the tenant pays the taxes, insurance, and (inaudible). Council member Newton added hopefully they only need to use the location for one more year.

Co-chair McCarthy asked if they could make it a one year lease with the city having an option to terminate or renew.

Mr. Liskov said they can add that into the lease contract but who would be the gatekeeper to say if the lease will be continued or not. That person is to report to the owner to let them know.

Co-chair Herron added she has been on the council for 8 years and they have been trying to get a new police facility since then. She believes the chief must have the say so but they can't do anything until they begin groundbreaking.

Co-chair McCarthy said they don't need to sign for five years but that will allow them more time.

Mr. Liskov added this has been in the air for almost a year and the owner can kick them out for a lapse of time. They are month to month tenants and can be evicted, the only hardball would be to eminent domain.

Council member Burns asked if the lease was to begin in December and now, they are month to month.

Mr. Liskov said they have been month to month for over a year, they have been trying to get an appraiser but they are aged out, retired or dead.

Mr. Liskov said they can create a new lease without the triple net lease, one year increment options with a 60 day termination.

Council member Burns asked if the committee will see the new contract. Mr. Liskov said yes.

Council member Burns asked in regards to page 8 from the chief to the city clerk, it has a letter regarding the Aquarian lease. Mr. Liskov said that can be corrected.

Co-Chair Herron asked after all the corrections, is there urgency for approval or can they wait for the next committee meeting. Mr. Liskov said they can wait until the next meeting and go retroactive with the lease.

****CO-CHAIR HERRON MOTIONED TO TABLE ITEM 38-23.
**COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

****CO-CHAIR HERRON MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.
**COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Vianca Rivera,
Telesco Secretarial Services.