

**CITY of BRIDGEPORT**  
**CITY COUNCIL**  
**PUBLIC SPEAKING SESSION**  
**JULY 5, 2011**  
**6:30 PM**

ATTENDANCE: Council President McCarthy

Council President McCarthy called the public speaking session to order at 6:32 pm.

*There were no public speakers who previously signed up to speak. And there were no public speakers who requested to speak when the public session was called to order.*

The public speaking session was closed at 6:34 pm.

## CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, July 5, 2011

7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers, City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace  
Bridgeport, Connecticut

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Brannelly, M. McCarthy, A. Ayala, Taylor-Moye, Brantley, Walsh, T. McCarthy, Austin, Lyons, Bonney, Blunt, dePara, Silva, M. Ayala, Martinez, Paoletto, Curwen, Baker

ABSENT: Council members: Vizzo-Paniccia, Holloway

Council President McCarthy called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Prayer - the prayer was offered by Valerie Sorrentino.

Pledge of Allegiance- the pledge was led by Anna Motolo.

Roll Call - the assistant city clerk took the roll and announced there was a quorum.

Council President McCarthy made the following announcements: Council member Vizzo-Paniccia was recovering from a medical procedure on her eyes. He welcomed Council member Blunt back after a long absence. He welcomed Council members: M. Ayala and Silva back from lengthy illnesses. He expressed that he was glad they were back to serve on the council.

He further announced that Mayor Finch wasn't in attendance tonight due to a previous commitment.

### MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

Approval of City Council Minutes: June 6, 2011

\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

**COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO COMBINE PAGES 1 and 2 COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED**

**103-10** Communication from Central Grants and Community Development re Conflict of Interest for HOME Program/Down Payment Assistance, Althea Brown, BOE, **ACCEPTED AND MADE PART OF THE RECORD.**

**104-10** Communication from Mayor re Reappointment of Richard Cruz (D) to the Harbor Commission, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

**105-10** Communication from Health and Social Services re Proposed License Agreement with the State to provide office space and parking to staff of the State Department of Veterans Affairs at the Department of Health and Social Services Building, First Floor, 752 East Main Street, referred to Contracts Committee.

**106-10** Communication from Central Grants and Community Development re Grant Submission: 2012 Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging (SWCAA) for an Elderly Hispanic Grant Program, referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

**107-10** Communication from Central Grants and Community Development re Grant Submission: 2011-2012 Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging (SWCAA) for a Senior Transportation Services Grant, referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

**108-10** Communication from Central Grants and Community Development re Grant Submission: 2011-2012 Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging (SWCAA) for an East Side Senior Grant, referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

**109-10** Communication from Central Grants and Community Development re Grant Submission: State OPM, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Pilot Program, referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

**110-10** Communication from Central Grants and Community Development re (Ref. #35-10) Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development Program Year 37 Annual Action Plan Community Development Block Grant Program Substantial Amendment, referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

## MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):

- \*66-10** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Disposition of 60 Circular Avenue: Offer to purchase from Brennan's Shebeen Irish Bar and Grill.

Council President McCarthy asked if there were any items to be removed from the consent calendar.

Council member Walsh requested to remove item \*66-10 from the consent calendar.

Council member dePara reported out of the ECDE Committee.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER dePARA MOVED TO APPROVE \*66-10 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Disposition of 60 Circular Avenue: Offer to purchase from Brennan's Shebeen Irish Bar and Grill.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED**

Council member Walsh stated that he was troubled by the process being used, due to the selection of the appraisal company to determine the value of the property. He recalled that in years past, the City of Bridgeport hired their own firm to conduct an independent appraisal. He felt the process used would result in trouble in the future. He further stated that when they established a sale price of \$30k in Black Rock, in comparison to other properties throughout the city *as read*; he didn't feel that the properties he mentioned had any relevance to the property values in Black Rock. He emphasized that his concern was that there is nothing to protect the city from these people turning around in a year and selling it at a profit. He said he would prefer language that indicated *"they can't sell the property or use it for another use without offering it back to the city"*. He went on to say that once again, the taxpayers were getting the short end of the stick. He referred to the volume of paper involved that he held up, for selling a parking lot for \$30k. Overall, he felt it was a bad deal.

Council member Baker questioned why the city didn't obtain their own appraisal – *Council President acknowledged that there was no one present from the department tonight to answer his question.*

Council member Brannelly responded to Council member Walsh's recommended language *"to sell the property to the buyer for a specific amount of time"*. She said it might be a good idea, but she had an issue with Council member Walsh keeping the idea to himself until it became time to approve the item. She explained that the piece of property in question consisted of a fifteen (15) to twenty (20) parking spaces lot. She didn't feel it could be anything more than what it is now; unless it was sold to the adjacent land owner. She pointed out that it's not a grand piece of land and she urged everyone to support the sale and finalize it tonight. She noted that if the recommended language change was supported, approval of the item could be delayed once again.

Council member Baker stated that he didn't have a problem with putting the property back on the tax role. However, he once again questioned why the city didn't conduct their own appraisal. He said before he voted on the item, he would like some explanation from OPED as to why an independent appraisal wasn't sought by the city before the vote came before the council.

Council M. McCarthy echoed Council member Brannelly's comments. He noted that the property went to public auction and it went to the highest bidder. He explained that an abutter and business owner came to the city and offered 50% of the auction price of \$30k. He stressed that the property has been loaded with vagrancy, drug use etc. and he didn't feel it was good for another use. He felt the offer of \$30k was the most that anyone would pay for it. He urged approval of the item.

Council member Curwen commented that OPED generally makes sure the city conducts their own appraisals, but he didn't recall the appraisal issue coming up for this item. He clarified that the property is **not** a build-able parcel. And although the appraisal is a legitimate issue, he didn't feel they could get much more money for the property.

Council member Walsh referred to page 19 of a document he had, regarding the minimum site size of 12,000 sq. ft. He relayed that his point was that the parcel could conform to zoning and perhaps for another use.

Council member Brannelly mentioned that she works across the street from the abutting building. She stressed that in all the years she worked there, she has never walked inside the building they were discussing due to the drug activity that went on. She emphasized that the establishment is currently nice and it should be recognized for being that. As for the parking, she noted that parking is currently limited, so that's why the establishment is looking to purchase the property.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED WITH EIGHTEEN VOTES IN FAVOR AND TWO VOTES IN OPPOSITION (COUNCIL MEMBERS: WALSH and BAKER)**

**New Business:**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADDING AN ITEM FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION**

***\*Council President McCarthy clarified that a two-thirds vote of those present is required to add an item to the agenda for immediate consideration, per Council Member Walsh's question what the procedure is for adding an item for immediate consideration.***

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN SECONDED**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED FOR ITEM 101-10 Tentative agreement with AFSCME, Local 1522 regarding a collective bargaining agreement TO BE ADDED TO THE AGENDA WITH FIFTEEN VOTES IN FAVOR, ONE VOTE IN OPPOSITION (COUNCIL MEMBER WALSH) and TWO ABSTENTIONS (COUNCIL MEMBERS: BONNEY and LYONS)**

Council member Walsh questioned what the final dollar amount was, noting that the information wasn't outlined on the fact sheet. He stated that not having that information was unconscionable. He stated that it was the Board of Education's intention to play off members of the bargaining unit. He felt this was a complete disconnect because they are unaware of what the implication will mean to the taxpayers. He asked if there was a current layoff clause. Council President McCarthy responded not to his knowledge. He stated that the standard has changed, because the governor put a different deal on the table; but he thought that eventually, they will implement a no layoff clause. He further commented that significant savings will be in people retiring now, noting that generally, savings is sought by layoffs. And once a person retires, they don't have to pay unemployment. He explained that the current plan gives an incentive for people to retire and they have to make a commitment by July 15<sup>th</sup> if they opt to retire.

Council member Walsh said he was never given a piece of paper to show what's received and what's spent. He said he felt the matter pertained to an "*Alice in the looking glass*" scenario. He said he couldn't vote on the item until he finds out if the state is taking over the Board of Education.

Council member Baker questioned if the state takes over the BOE, will the contract become voided. Council President McCarthy replied that due to what happened in Waterbury, new legislature was written that doesn't allow that.

Council member Baker stated that since they weren't sure the direction the BOE was going, he questioned whether it would be better to wait until they see the scenario and if the state is going to take over. Council President McCarthy said the contract had been negotiated for a significant length of time and it's currently in binding arbitration, so it can be rejected. However, there are risks and the possible loss of savings etc., so they needed to weigh if it's worth doing. He further relayed the issue related to the health care costs. He encouraged support of the item.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO MOVED TO APPROVE  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED WITH FIFTEEN VOTES IN FAVOR, ONE VOTE IN OPPOSITION AND TWO ABSTENTIONS (COUNCIL MEMBERS: LYONS and BONNEY)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BLUNT MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADDING AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BLUNT MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 94-10 Settlement of pending litigation Garcia, et. al v. Finch, et. al. USDC. No. 3:09CV-02001-PCD and public session action if and as appropriate**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED**

Council member Walsh stated that he believed it was important to make the amount of the settlement public at this point. Council President McCarthy stated only the dollar amount could be made public, without any discussion about details of the settlement. He stated that the settlement amount was \$290k.

Council President McCarthy noted that any other discussion regarding the settlement would require an executive session.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER dePARA MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING ITEM 94-10 Settlement of pending litigation Garcia, et. al v. Finch, et. al. USDC. No. 3:09CV-02001-PCD and public session action if and as appropriate**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN SECONDED**

**\*A role call vote was taken for the purpose determining those in favor of entering into executive session**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED WITH ELEVEN VOTES IN FAVOR OF ENTERING INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AND SEVEN VOTES IN OPPOSITION (COUNCIL MEMBERS: A. AYALA, TAYLOR-MOYE, WALSH, AUSTIN, BONNEY, BLUNT, CURWEN)**

The council members entered into executive session at 7:50 pm.

The council members came out of executive session at 7:55 pm.

Council member dePara stated that he appreciated his colleagues that supported his request to enter into executive session. He admonished the two colleagues who voiced their issues about the previous item regarding the sale of the property for \$30k, yet they didn't feel this item, involving a settlement of \$290k warranted discussion.

*Council members Brannelly, Curwen and Walsh responded back with brief comments.*

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BLUNT MOVED TO APPROVE**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES FOR THE  
PURPOSE OF ADDING AN ITEM FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 82-10 Grant  
Submission: 2011-2012 Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant for  
Bridgeport Health and Nutrition Education Program  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED**

Council President McCarthy asked if matching funds were required. Council member Curwen said no.

Council member Martinez thanked Valerie Sorrentino and those that work on these types of programs. She expressed that they are good for the community and the people in need.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO REFER AN ITEM TO COMMITTEE  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO REFER RE: RESOLUTION TO  
ESTABLISH A FEE FOR THE PREPARATION OF AN AFFIDAVIT BY THE CITY  
OF BRIDGEPORT OFFICE OF VITAL STATISTICS TO THE ORDINANCE  
COMMITTEE (ITEM # 111-10)**

***\*It was stated that the item was inadvertently referred to the Budget &  
Appropriations Committee***

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO REFER AN ITEM TO COMMITTEE  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO REFER RE: RESOLUTION TO  
ESTABLISH A FEE FOR ALL GENEALOGICAL SEARCHES IN THE OFFICE OF  
VITAL STATISTICS TO THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE (ITEM # 112-10)**

***\*It was stated that the item was inadvertently referred to the Budget &  
Appropriations Committee***

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER PAOLETTO SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Other announcement(s):

- Council member Brannelly reminded everyone that the Public Safety & Transportation meeting would be held at 581 N. Washington Avenue on Wednesday, July 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. A tour will be conducted of the Emergency Management Center.
- Council President McCarthy announced that Reuben Felipe's grandfather passed away and the wake was being held tonight from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm for anyone that wished to attend.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham  
Telesco Secretarial Services