

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 14, 2014**

ATTENDANCE: Susan Brannelly, Co-Chair; Michael Marella, Jr., Lydia Martinez, Howard Austin, Council President Thomas McCarthy, Patricia Swain (6:23 p.m.)

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director.

OTHERS: John Stafstrom, Bond Counsel; Councilmember, Rick Torres

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brannelly called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES: FEBRUARY 10, 2014

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 10, 2014.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 10, 2014 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

49-13 PROPOSED FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN (CP) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016

Mr. Sherwood distributed copies of the amended five year Capital Plan. He said that this had been approved on Saturday as amended. Mr. Sherwood also stated that he had put copies of the various hand outs in the other Council Members boxes.

Council Member Brannelly then reviewed the changes that had been made to the Capital Plan.

**48-13 APPROVAL OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS - TO AUTHORIZE
CERTAIN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

Mr. Sherwood explained why the administration wanted to go out and borrow now because the rates were favorable.

Council Member Swain joined the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

Council Member Martinez asked about the various items on the Capital Plan. She requested that a list of the buildings that would be demolished. Mr. Sherwood made a note of this.

Council Member Swain said that a constituent had called about drug activity in Norman Park. She asked if putting a fence and lighting would be part of the Parks Improvements. Council

President McCarthy said that there had been a similar situation in a park near him. He then gave a brief overview of how the problem was handled. Discussion followed.

Council Member Taylor-Moye joined the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

Council Member Austin pointed out that the City pays for the Street Lights and the lights in the Parks. If the lights are out, the constituents should note the number on the pole and report it to UI Call Center. If the light is not repaired in a reasonable amount of time, the next call should be to the City Call Center.

Council Member Torres said that he had concerns about two items, Marina Village and Knowlton Park. He said that he looked at the specific purchase orders. He said that he had concerns about the contractors who were getting the work. Council Member Torres said that the buildings at Marina Village were very well built. He said that his concern was centered on the fact that the Committee was authorizing 47 million dollars, but that there was very little feed back about whether or not the money was being spent where it should be. He said that the City needed to be fiscally responsible to the residents. He said that it was not fair to the residents to pay for the City's wish list.

Council Member Taylor-Moye left the meeting 6:44 p.m.

Council Member Brannelly said that it was not a matter of X number of dollars per unit, but how the City helps residents who can't sell their homes because the value of their homes have dropped through the floor. When the neighborhood deteriorates, it drops the value of the homes. Council Member Brannelly said that she was in favor of the Marina

Council Member Torres said that he was concerned about the lack of minority contractors being used for the demolition.

Council President McCarthy said he wanted to address the concerns about the contractor. He said that if someone had concerns about the contractor because of wrong doing, he felt that this should be reported to the proper authority. He added that he would be willing to help anyone file the complaint.

Council President McCarthy said that the City was leading the State in incorporating minority companies. He said that there are people nationwide looking at Bridgeport's school construction program because of the minority contractor involvement.

Council President McCarthy pointed out that every Council Member could relate stories about constituents who couldn't pay their taxes. He said that the Capital Plan was not a wish list, but projects that need to be done. By spreading the purchases over a number of years, and letting the debt retirement balance out the new bonding, it avoids raising the taxes.

Council Member Taylor-Moye rejoined the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

He pointed out that it would be easy to save money by not putting money into the schools, but eventually they will crumble.

Council Member Martinez said that she is often at the Governmental Center and how hard the staff works to help the minorities. She said that she appreciates the work that is being done, but that there was more that needed to be done.

Council Member Martinez said that the neighbors who live in the area around Knowlton Park were very excited about the project.

Council Member Torres said that he had been agreeing with everyone regarding the maintenance rather than deciding not to spend the money on the various projects. He said that the City has to focus on doing what it has to do. The private sector is where the job growth will happen, not the governmental growth.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that it will be important to have all the districts get rid of the blight. The health department has been out to Marina several times.

She then related a story about how she overheard someone tell their child they could not go to a Bluefish game because it was in Bridgeport and they could be killed by going there.

Council Member Swain said that when someone markets a house, they put a price on the house greater than what they know it will sell for. She said that the Committee had added Bassick to the list and some other constituents had been amazed that this was being added to the list. Discussion followed.

Mr. Sherwood said that when a project is starting up, the Council Members will be approached with the plan. He added that notifications go out. Council Member Marella said that he had been notified of the Virginia Avenue project.

Council Member Torres said he had tried to purchase a former manufacturing site, but had been informed that the waterfront portion of the parcel was very polluted. Now that parcel is a park. He wanted to know if the Council was aware of the pollution factor. He also wished to know if the parcel had been cleaned up. Council Member Marella said that Mr. Coleman had all the reports and that the parcel was cleaned to the State standards.

Council Member Marella said that someone compared Bridgeport was like Detroit.

Council Member Brannelly asked Mr. Stafstrom to come forward and speak to the Committee. He gave a brief overview of the process and said that in order to bond, the project must be in the Capital Plan and also be approved with a bond authorization. He then outlined the role of the Bond Counsel in this process. He reminded everyone that the assumption of the Council is that there are licensed professionals working on the project, such as engineers, purchasing agents, and other areas. He listed the ways that the bonded money could be used, but said that bond money should never be used for general funds. When that is done, it results in the problems that Detroit has today.

Mr. Stafstrom said that the City works to balance off the debt. He then gave a brief overview of the pension bonds. The City goes to the rating agencies when it goes out to bond.

Council Member Torres asked if it was legal to bond funds to retire debt. Mr. Stafstrom said that it was not permissible to bond Capital funds for General obligations. Council Member Torres asked if there had been any refunding. Mr. Stafstrom said that the underwriters were very aggressive in brining

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT TITLED GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS TO FUND THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AS EXHIBIT 1-4.14.14**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNELLY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO AMEND BY SUBSTITUTE THE EX 1 4-14-14 APPROVAL OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS TO FUND THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS. FOR 48-13.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 48-13 AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**GENERAL DISCUSSION REGARDING THE REVIEW OF THE MONTHLY
FINANCIAL REPORT**

Council Member Brannelly asked for a sense of the Committee as to whether or not to start working on the General Operating Budget. It was agreed that the Committee would focus on the overview tonight.

Council Member Brannelly said that previously, the Committee had reviewed each and every department in great detail. However, this year, it would be better to interview the top 10 departments to get a better overview. She then distributed copies of photos of the working diagram from last year. She said that the department heads will bring their assistants to explain the various aspects of the budget.

Council Member Swain asked if there had been a third party invited in to help the with the budget process. Council Member Brannelly said that auditors had been in and worked with the Committee. Mr. Sherwood pointed out that there was better data to work with now. Council President McCarthy said that the Council Members had to be conduits for the constituents. He encouraged people to submit their ideas in advance. Mr. Sherwood said that it would be important to have consistent revenue coming and not inflated by one time events such as the sale

of a major City property. A discussion followed about the upcoming Affordable Health Care plan.

Council Member Brannelly said that tomorrow night the Committee should start on time and start working on the budget overview at 7 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER MARELLA MOVED TO REOPEN THE MEETING.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting reconvened at 8:14 p.m. A quorum was present.

66-13 Proposed General Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-2019.

- ** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 66-13 PROPOSED GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015-2019.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- ** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services