

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 9, 2012**

ATTENDANCE: Angel dePara, Chair; Susan Brannelly, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia,
Carlos Silva

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM; Nestor Nkwo, Finance Deputy Director

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member dePara called the meeting to order at 6:52 p.m.

General discussion regarding the review of the Monthly Financial Form

Mr. Sherwood said that the CAFR reports were in print and the year had ended with a surplus of \$890,000 in the general fund. He mentioned that the City was still engaged with negotiations and gave a brief update on the various contracts that had been concluded. The work on Plan B for the Fire Department is moving forward. The Police contract is not finalized.

Council President McCarthy asked how the move into the MERF plan would affect the risk. Mr. Sherwood gave a brief overview. Once this is completed, the City will be completely out of the defined benefit business. This will significantly reduce the risk.

Council Member Silva asked for details about the Fire Chief and Police Chief. Mr. Sherwood reviewed the details and pointed out that the article in the Connecticut Post was inaccurate. Discussion followed.

Mr. Sherwood said that monthly report reflected a number of zeros. He noted he had not been able to get MUNIS produce the type of reports that he wants, which would be centered on issues. He said that one of the key points was analyzing the payroll. Mr. Sherwood said that he might have to issue two different reports until everyone becomes familiar with the new format.

Council Member dePara said that he liked the idea of the two reports and added he would like having the information available electronically. The discussion then moved to the summaries and what information would be available in Executive Summary. Council Member dePara said that he would like to see a list of budget transfers with a certain dollar threshold. Mr. Sherwood said that there was a function in MUNIS that would track transfers. He added that the auditors require a list of transfers each year.

Council Member Silva expressed concerns about changing formats and losing information. Mr. Sherwood said that by doing the two reports, it would make the change easier.

Council President McCarthy reported on his meeting with the new Superintendent, who stated that the District would close out the year in compliance and he expected the student scores to improve. Council President McCarthy gave a brief overview of some of the changes that the new Superintendent of Schools expected to make. The new Superintendent is willing to meet with the Council Members. Mr. Sherwood listed a number of problems with the current BOE accounting practices. The new Superintendent is working on sorting out the various issues.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked for clarification about the superintendent's title and where the funding for his salary was from. Mr. Sherwood said that he believed that the new Superintendent was someone who turns around distressed school districts and several ways this might be done. Discussion followed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there had been discussion about moving the BOE to the Annex. Discussion followed about working with the BOE in terms of getting a building for the BOE and the community policing model.

Council Member Martinez joined the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Council Member Brannelly asked for clarification on Item #1, the Port Authority Pilot. Mr. Nkwo and Mr. Sherwood gave an overview of the payments and the responsibility of the City to maintain the facility. Mr. Sherwood said that he believed that the \$50,000 revenue on this year's budget would be put back into the facility next year and would not appear on the budget. Council Member dePara said that he would like to see a plan for what would be done with the money. Mr. Sherwood said that the main discussion should be what the future of Port Authority and the City is.

Council Member Brannelly asked why the interest income dropped. Mr. Nkwo then explained that funds had been invested and when the Feds dropped the interest rate, the income dropped. The discussion then moved to the decrease in income for the towed motor vehicles. Mr. Nkwo explained that the word is out on the street that the City will take the vehicle if the taxes are not paid. While the collection rate is down, the same amount of property taxes collected has increased.

Council Member Brannelly then asked about the Arena parking in reference to Item #10. Mr. Nkwo pointed out that while this was subject to change, it would not be a lower number. It was pointed out that many people park underneath the highway, even though there are No Parking signs posted. Mr. Sherwood said that the area under the highway was to be yellowed lined as No Parking zone, the City will get the ticket revenue or the parking revenue from the Arena parking.

Council Member Brannelly then asked about the Wonderland of Ice. Mr. Sherwood said that a punch list was being developed.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that there had been repairs authorized for the Wonderland of Ice. Mr. Sherwood reviewed the status of the project and reminded everyone that restaurant was not completed as it was supposed to be by the City. The Cove is on a payment schedule and making their payments.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the status of Baldwin Plaza. Mr. Sherwood said that he would look into it.

The discussion moved back to the Arena parking and the pricing scale. It was pointed out that there was an agenda item on the Contracts Committee tomorrow. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the staff that were listed under the Carbon Copy portion of the Agenda notice had not attended, such as Atty. Anastasi and Ms. Norton. She added that she would like to have the co-chairs of the Contracts Committee present at this meeting to discuss this matter. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia stated that she had not received an updated list of the new committee assignments. She went on to say that the Contracts Committee chairs should be aware of the budget issues related to these various businesses. It then pointed out to Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia that both Contracts Committee co-chairs were present.

Council Member Martin McCarthy asked why some projects were still languishing and not completed but granite esplanades were being installed elsewhere. A brief discussion followed.

When asked about the winter storage for the boats on land, Mr. Nkwo said that the City receives 10% of the rent for those boats, according to the contract. Mr. Sherwood suggested that a list of the various long term contracts for facilities be provided for the Council Members. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked why there were not programmers who could write the program to produce the reports on the properties. Mr. Sherwood said that much of the information was embedded in the actual contracts.

A question was asked if there was a revenue line item for the billboards. Council Member dePara indicated which line item it was covered under. Council Member Martin McCarthy said that he would like to see a breakout of the various billboard revenues. Discussion followed.

Council Member dePara asked about the savings in the Police Department, Fire Department and Roadway administration. Mr. Sherwood explained that all the savings on the narrative were from retirements and reflected on the salaries line item. He said that the largest portion of overtime was in the Police Department. Mr. Sherwood reviewed the details and how this was accounted for in budget and in the payroll. Discussion about the details in the budget followed.

Council Member dePara said that he would like to have the Fire Chief and Police Chief come in to review the overtime with the Committee. He added that it would also be good to have the Superintendent of Schools and the BOE in for a joint meeting.

Council Member Martin McCarthy asked about the police "private jobs" or outside O/T such as the officers stationed at construction sites. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia pointed out that when the officers do private jobs, they do it in uniform and if they get hurt, the City covers the insurance. The discussion then moved to the administration surcharge of \$10.00/hr on outside O/T. Discussion followed about the management of the O/T payments. Mr. Sherwood reminded everyone that there are only two departments that have unapproved overtime and they are the Fire Department and Police. With the exception of DPW during storms or other emergencies, all other departments require pre-approval for overtime.

Council Member dePara asked if any of the information would be available in report form. Mr. Sherwood said that he would work on it.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER SILVA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services