

**CITY OF BRIDGPORT  
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEARING  
AUGUST 13, 2014**

**ATTENDANCE:** Denese Taylor-Moye, Mary McBride-Lee, Patricia Swain, Robert Halstead, Milta Feliciano, James Holloway, Thomas McCarthy, Council President

**STAFF:** Jorge Garcia, Director of Public Facilities.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council Member Taylor-Moye opened the public hearing at 6.35PM and she asked that comments be limited to no more that (5) minutes per speaker.

*Comments represent summarizations of statements made, unless otherwise noted.*

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**Carmen Lopez** said in most instances, when a legislative body conducts a public hearing there is a proposal for legislation before the Committee, and that this Committee does not seem to have any proposed legislation before it this evening. She said that she would hope that the Committee would conduct another hearing at some future time, at which time the public would be in a position to comment on the proposed legislation. She discussed the contract between the City of Bridgeport and O&G Industries, and said that she finds it curious that the contract on file in the City Clerk's office does not contain all of the terms for payment to O&G Industries. She said that she has made a request for information under the FOI to the City Attorney's office, and four months later received a response and that the language in the article regarding compensation differs from the contract approved by the City Council at its August 2, 1999 meeting. She said that she has not found, nor has the City Attorney provided her with any record indicating that the City Council approved any of the subsequent amendments to the contract. She said given the lack of transparency which has plagued this process, she suggested considering commissioning an audit of the School Building Committee, and said that the approval of the School Building Committee is not needed to audit its records. She discussed her concerns regarding the School Building Committee, and said that there should be a separate committee consisting of citizens, faculty, parents and other stakeholders as full voting members, and that the process of constructing public buildings should be a public process, and it must never be privatized in a manner that shuts out the public from meaningful participation. She concluded by saying that she would be happy to work with the committee and assist in the drafting of resolutions for the City Council action.

**John Marshall Lee** said that about three years ago he became aware of the existence of the School Building Committee, and said that he does not find any listing on the city site for the meetings or the agendas. He said that recently the subject of the city's rainy day fund had come up and asked who is responsible for watching the financial assets. He said that school building projects are typically accomplished with capital funds, and the City Charter indicates that a capital budget meeting is to be held annually and is supposed to solicit ideas from the public and that does not happen. He said that the School Building Committee is an unusual animal with the Board of Education and the City Council and he requested the operating manual on how the leadership is appointed. He concluded by saying that he is looking for open practices in the City Governance; accountable activities by those in charge of the mission; and transparent processes which the public can easily see and understand.

**Donna Culus** said that she that the roof at Bassick High School is in desperate need of repair, and it has been promised to be repaired for at least the past six years but it never gets done. She said that there needs to be a process where someone is responsible for ensuring the work is getting done, and to respond back to the public once the work has been completed.

**Joann Kennedy** said that Bassick High School is in very poor condition and is very unsanitary, but that the detention center is very clean and asked what kind of message that is sending to the students. She said that year after year that promises have been made and nothing gets done. She said that the Committee needs to be accountable to the people and that action needs to happen.

**Ethan Book** discussed some of the issues and said that he has come to the conclusion that there is a practice in Bridgeport among a good number of its city officials, and inter-government that there is a conspiracy which has been fueled through an unlawful Attorney.

**Maria Ferraro** said that it is inappropriate that city meetings are held at the City Hall Annex, and that they should be held in the evenings so that the public can participate. She said that no one should be required to sign in to attend a public meeting, and there is a question of legality. She said that she does not understand how schools are being constructed without the input of faculty and parents on what did and did not work in the building when decisions are being made. She gave an example of what had happened on a previous building project. She said that every building should have a new committee and should be made up of people that are most effected by that school, and that are from that community because no one know the needs better than the people that live there.

**Patricia Swain** said that she is a member of the Council and said that she has been listening to the comments tonight. She said that it does seem appropriate that there is a committee formed for every school project, and that it makes sense that a person from a particular district, and certainly the parents be involved in the committee. She said that she also agrees that no public hearing should be held before 6:00 P.M. She said that as a city it should be made obvious who a person can go to for complaints or remarks, and in this particular situation she thinks the public is having trouble finding out how the job can get done. She said that she is looking forward to

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having a discussion on how to move forward and that she will attend the meetings as much as possible.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* REV. MCBRIDE-LEE MOVED TO ADJOURN  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:25PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Dilene Byrd  
Telesco Secretarial Services