

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS
COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 22, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia, Co-chair; Tyler Mack, Co-chair; Aikeem Boyd, Matthew McCarthy, Samia Suliman; Rolanda Smith (6:03 p.m.); Alfredo Castillo (6:05 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member(s): J. Cruz & M. Pereira; Thomas Gaudett, Mayoral Aide; Eric Amado, Personnel Director; Amy Lehaney, Health Department; Barbara, iPhone, Call in User 1, iPhone DX3H8EAS0DXT, 203-209-7474; 203-901-7385, 862-823-6453

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Vizzo-Paniccia called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES:

• **July 25, 2022. (Regular Meeting)**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 25, 2022 MEETING.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MACK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 25, 2022 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Smith joined the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

112-21 Proposed update to the job description of the classification of Tax Assessor pursuant to Civil Service Rule IX, Sec 3.

Mr. Amado then gave a brief overview and read the job description to those in the meeting. He explained that the Tax Assessor exam has not been given in decades.

Council Member Castillo joined the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Mr. Amado said that a part of the validation was to perform a job analysis. In reviewing the job description, it was clear that the description had not been updated in a long time. The updated description has been presented to and approved by the Civil Service Commissioners. There are many Civil Service uniform metrics that have been updated and he noted that the job description and classification request were not financial in nature at this time.

Mr. Amado then reviewed the particulars of the job description and qualifications. He noted that Connecticut was experiencing a shortage of individuals who are interested in becoming Tax Assessors. The State of Connecticut requires the individuals to take a number of classes over a lengthy period of time, and this is followed by a State examination.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia thanked Mr. Amado for bringing these descriptions to the Committee. She asked about the new job titles and positions and requested that the departments create a policy and procedure manual.

Council Member McCarthy asked why the City was not working on bringing someone up through the ranks to ultimately become a Tax Assessor. Mr. Amado said that they would have to develop lower classifications. The Deputy Tax Assessor position has not been filled since 2013. He noted that the Assessor job classification was an open, competitive exam. Therefore, he could not prevent someone from outside taking the examination without a Charter change. There is no union involvement.

Mr. Amado said that there were a number of departments that would have to establish positions that were “trainee” positions. He added that when the examination was posted, he would hope that departmental staff would apply.

Co-chair Mack said that before the meeting, Council Member Burns and Pereira had submitted some questions.

Council Member Burns asked about No. 112-21 and wished to know whether there was any reference (direct or indirect) as to the Tax Assessor's responsibilities in terms of determining value of public property, i.e., city/state/federal property. He also asked if they had considered the fact that Bridgeport has significant PILOT properties, having clear and accurate values would be important to determining the requests under PILOT.

Mr. Amado said regarding Council Member Burns’ question regarding the Tax Assessor’s ability in terms of determining the values of properties that are involved in PILOT programs the job description section addresses this. He noted that the skills and qualifications would require the candidate to have the ability to assess all types of property.

Our Finance Director and Acting Tax Assessor believe this satisfies as an indirect reference to valuing public property. It is the responsibility of the Assessor to value all properties in the City, taxable and exempt. There are other references in the job description to the knowledge, skills and abilities required for the position, with regard to valuing property and keeping up with current methodologies for valuation of property, as well as having a deep understanding of the state, federal and municipal rules, regulations and practices.

While the new job description does NOT reference the PILOT program or public property valuation directly and as a separate concept, when read as a whole there seems

to be a wealth of expertise required that would encompass ALL methods of valuing any type of property a municipal tax assessor might encounter on the Grand List.

Council Member Burns also referenced Nos. 113-21 and 114-21 and wished to know if funding for these positions and whether approval from B&A is required in these instances.

Mr. Amado said that he had emailed the following to Council Member Burns:

“Lastly, the job description and classification request are NOT financial in nature at this time. The Charter solely mandates Council approval of the establishment and update of job description qualifications. If the Department requires funding, that will be a separate request from the Department to B&A.”

Co-chair Mack then stated that Council Member Pereira had submitted the following questions:

All three job descriptions were referred to the City Council on Wednesday, July 27, 2022, however the Tax Assessor Job Description requires the approval of the Council within 30 days of referral which is Friday, August 26th. Should the Council fail to approve the Tax Assessor Job Description by Friday, it is automatically adopted.

How will the full Council vote on the Tax Assessor Job Description by Friday?

Mr. Amado confirmed that the Charter does require a full vote by the Council by Friday, August 26th. If the Council fails to approve the job description by Friday, August 26th, it will be automatically adopted.

Mr. Amado said he had previously informed to the full Council and cited Civil Service Rule 9, Section 3, which had the time constraint. He added that he indicated that his response also included a statement indicating that a Special Meeting or agenda modification might be needed by the Council. Mr. Amado said that he was prepared for any potential additional meeting that might be scheduled.

Council Member Pereira said that page 2 of the old description compared with page 2 of the new description indicated that they were lowering the requirements bars for the Tax Assessor position. Currently the job description indicates that the candidate must have 7 years of professional assessing commercial, industrial, personal and residential properties with three years that should be at a supervisory level. Council Member Pereira said that she felt the requirement should read that the candidate must have three years of supervisory experience.

Council Member Pereira indicated that the new requirements indicate that the candidates need 7 years of professional assessing commercial, industrial, personal and residential properties with three years at a supervisory level in Connecticut or a Northeast municipality. She said that this appears to preclude anyone currently working in the Bridgeport Tax Assessor’s Office.

Council Member Pereira also noted that the new job description indicates that a candidate could have that experience in Connecticut or any Northeast municipality. She added that she did not

think that an individual who was working in a town with a significantly smaller grand list should be able to come to Bridgeport, the largest city in the State with one of the top 10 grand lists in the State, as a Tax Assessor.

Council Member Pereira said that there was also an exception for those candidates that did not have 7 years of experience and supervisory experience, but do have similar experience in the private sector. She questioned what kind of private sector position would qualify someone to work with a \$7 Billion dollar grand list. She repeated that it appeared the City was lowering the bar and felt it had been adjusted to allow a particular candidate to secure the position. She noted that the old description said “should have” while the new job description states the candidate “shall have”.

Mr. Amado said regarding the supervisory experience indicates comparable experience. Tax Assessors are required to sit through a State examination. He stated that Council Member Pereira’s comment about steering the job description towards an individual was not being taken lightly.

Mr. Amado went on to explain that the candidates that take the Civil Service examination are identified by a Candidates Identification Numbers due to confidentiality requirements. Doctoring a Civil Service examination would be wrong and would not happen under his watch. He has no intention of going to jail for anyone.

Mr. Amado said that when comparing other cities and towns also requires comparing salaries. While Bridgeport is very complex and had many responsibilities, when compared with CCM top salaries, Bridgeport is ranked in the middle. Smaller towns where the Assessor has fewer responsibilities rank at the top.

Mr. Amado said that he did not think that the City was lowering the bar but simply allowing for a larger pool of candidates to sit for the examination. Those candidates that have the skills, experience and knowledge listed in the job description will be the ones that will test higher. The new job description has more requirements.

Mr. Amado said that the new description expands on the old description.

Council Member Pereira states she had asked for a comparable private sector position. She said that she was in no way inferring that Mr. Amado was doctoring the exams. She claimed that she just wanted to be clear on this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia stated that Council Member Pereira had indeed implied that the exam was being steered towards someone. Council Member Pereira repeated that she was not implying that at all.

Council Member Pereira repeated her earlier question regarding a comparable private sector position. Mr. Amado said that when someone applies for the position, the job is to evaluate what the candidate’s experiences are and how they apply to the more than sixteen bullet points in the

description. And there is also a significant amount of required skills, knowledge and validated data required. While Mr. Amado said that he could not give a private sector job equivalent, each of those requirements will be reviewed and evaluated in light of the candidate's application.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED THE QUESTION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 112-21 PROPOSED UPDATE TO THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE CLASSIFICATION OF TAX ASSESSOR PURSUANT TO CIVIL SERVICE RULE IX, SEC 3.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira asked how this item would come before the Council before Friday. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would be discussing this with Council Member Mack and the City Attorney. She noted that she had no control over the recent death in her family.

Council Member McCarthy asked for a point of clarification on the point that if the Council did not meet before Friday, the job description would automatically be approved. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia confirmed that this was so.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

113-21 Proposed Approval of a New Job Classification and specifications of the Health Code Enforcement Inspector Position pursuant to Municipal Charter Chapter 17 Section 206(d).

Mr. Amado then gave a brief overview of the position and noted that it was not a budget request at this time. The job classification was approved by the Civil Service Commission at their Special Meeting. He explained that the Health Department was currently undergoing a reorganization in order to obtain State Certification. He said that he had wondered why there were so many different classifications in the Environmental Services. He explained that this had to do with the various State licenses. He spoke about the step increases.

Mr. Amado said that Council Member Pereira had forwarded the following questions regarding the job classification:

I am not clear as to why there is a need for a "Health Code Enforcement Officer" when we have blight and housing code enforcers already? What is the added and value? Will this be a tested position within Civil Service? Is this new position being added in the 2022 Budget? What is the total cost with fringe?

If it is being added in the 2022 Budget, where are the funds coming from?

I am not clear why there is a need for a new "Healthcare Administrator" when we already have a Deputy Health Director & Nursing Supervisor?

What is the added and value? Will this be a tested position within Civil Service? Is this new position being added in the 2022 Budget? What is the total cost with fringe? If it is being added in the 2022 Budget, where are the funds coming from?

Mr. Amado explained that this position was part of the reorganization of the Health Department for greater efficiency and institute cross training to handle situations where there are multiple complaints located at a single address. This will centralize endeavors and replace an existing position which is non-competitive and not tested.

Mr. Amado said that there was a variety of job classifications that perform enforcement. However, there is no requirement for the employees to pursue additional licensing. This change is to encourage current employees to expand their knowledge and training and also to expand the Health Department in terms of services.

Regarding the testing component, Mr. Amado explained that currently, all the classifications in the Environmental Department have been non-competitive and non-tested since the 1990s. Registered sanitarians are required to be tested by the State, which makes a City test unnecessary. This is why it will continue to be non-competitive as outlined by Chapter 17 of the Charter. He reviewed the details for the non-competitive positions with the Committee members.

Mr. Amado said that this was not a budget request at this time. If the Department feels that they need more funding, he said that he was sure that they would request it.

Council Member McCarthy asked where the position would fall in the Budget Book if they decided to hire someone next month. Mr. Amado said that the Health Directors were on the line, and said that he believed the position would be where the Housing Code inspectors were listed.

Council Member McCarthy said that during Budget Committee, there were some cuts made in the Housing Code because the productivity was not there. Now it sounds like they are adding more positions to an area where the Budget Committee had wanted to cut. He said that he did not think that they needed to add a position to the Department and would be voting against it.

Mr. Amado said that the request was not to add a position or fill something, but to establish a classification. He noted that the OPM Director could not exceed the budget. He said that the base salary of \$98,000 would require licensure by the State. Mr. Amado reiterated that this was not a request to approve a position, but establish a classification.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the information that Council Member Burns had requested had been sent to him.

Council Member Pereira said that she would like clarification on an issue. She stated that she did not receive written answers to her questions. She said that if she had a property in the City that

was overgrown, a blight inspector would be sent out. However, if there was no heat at this location, a Housing Inspector would be sent. She asked for confirmation that they were trying to combine the two duties.

Council Member Pereira said that Bullet #1 was incorrect because it states that they were inspecting properties for “anti-blight activities” and said she felt it should be that the inspector should be looking for the presence of blight”. She said that she thought it was merging Blight and Housing, which was smart and saved on sending out multiple people to the same property.

Mr. Amado clarified that the term “anti-blight activities” was used to express the functions of the Anti-Blight Department and the Environmental Services Department.

Council Member McCarthy said that his comments were not directed towards Mr. Amado or the Health Department itself.

**** CO-CHAIR MACK MOVED AGENDA ITEM 113-21 PROPOSED APPROVAL OF A NEW JOB CLASSIFICATION AND SPECIFICATIONS OF THE HEALTH CODE ENFORCEMENT INSPECTOR POSITION PURSUANT TO MUNICIPAL CHARTER CHAPTER 17 SECTION 206(d).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (MACK, BOYD, SMITH, CASTILLO AND SULIMAN) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (MCCARTHY).**

114-21 Proposed Approval of a New Job Classification and specifications of the Healthcare Administration Position pursuant to Municipal Charter Chapter 17 Section 206(d).

Mr. Amado explained that when a Department wishes to create a new classification, it is presented to the Civil Service and then it is presented to the Committee for adding a new classification for the Department. This is not a request for budget funding. Upon the Council’s approval, Mr. Amado will then add it to the Departmental organizational classification. He gave the details and explained that the demands of the Bridgeport Clinic has increased.

Mr. Amado then said that Council Member Pereira had submitted several questions. He explained that she asked why there was a need for a new Health Care Director when there is already a Deputy Director and a Nursing Supervisor and wished to know what the value added was. She asked if it would be a tested position in Civil Service. She also wished to know if this position would be added in the 2022 budget and the fringe costs. Council Member Pereira asked where the funding for this position was coming from.

Mr. Amado explained that this position was part of the reorganization of the Health Department and will assure that the Clinic services are administered efficiently. If approved, the position will replace the Nursing Supervisor position, a non-competitive, non-tested position. There is no budget request at this time. The duties and functions of the current position are in conflict with the smooth operation of the clinic, resulting in a number of union grievances from the Nursing

Supervisor. The new position will correct this and place the employee under the administration like the other administrators in the State. He outlined the details.

Council Member McCarthy said that he understood that Mr. Amado did not have the Budget Book and said that the new description was replacing the Nurse Supervisor. Mr. Amado said that he believed that was the correct position.

Council Member McCarthy asked for clarification. Mr. Amado said that the individual would not need to be an R.N, and that there had been a number of union complaints from those who filled this position. This will provide an administrator that would deal with outside agencies like health care centers or hospitals or disciplinary issues.

Council Member McCarthy said that this one would simply replace the other position.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia told Council Member Pereira that she could ask one question.

Council Member Pereira replied that Council Member McCarthy had asked three questions.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia stated that Council Member Pereira had submitted a number of written questions.

Council Member Pereira asked why the positions was called a Nursing Care Supervisors Inspector. Mr. Amado said that it was a typo and thanked Council Member Pereira for catching the error.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED AGENDA ITEM 114-21 PROPOSED APPROVAL OF A NEW JOB CLASSIFICATION AND SPECIFICATIONS OF THE HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION POSITION PURSUANT TO MUNICIPAL CHARTER CHAPTER 17 SECTION 206(d).**

**** CO-CHAIR MACK SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would be speaking with Co-chair Mack, Council President Nieves and the City Attorney about possibly scheduling an emergency Council meeting regarding the Tax Assessor's job description.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services