

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2020**

6:30 P.M.

**City Council Chambers, City Hall
45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, CT**

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Nieves called the Public Speaking Session to order at 6:36 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk Lydia Martinez called the roll.

130th District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy
131st District: Jorge Cruz, Denese Taylor-Moye
132nd District: Marcus Brown, M. Evette Brantley
133rd District: Jeanette Herron
134th District: AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
135th District: Rosalina Roman-Christy, Mary McBride-Lee
136th District: Alfredo Castillo
137th District: Maria Valle, Aidee Nieves
138th District: Maria Pereira, Samia Suliman
139th District: Ernest Newton, Eneida Martinez

A quorum was present.

Council President Nieves noted that Council Member Lyons was not able to attend the meeting and also welcomed the Junior Council Members to the meeting.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2020 AT 6:30 P.M., IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT.

NAME

SUBJECT

John Marshall Lee
30 Beacon Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Boards and Commissions.

Mr. Lee welcomed the Junior Council Members. He then read the following statement into the record:

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Members of the Council, I come before you tonight to ask why information about governance process, especially about finances, including budgets, bonding, bidding and handling of cash seems to become harder to access. Especially by a citizen with continuing curiosity and some experience but no favored access.

I visited the City Clerk office last week to withdraw my reservation to speak on 3-16, a courtesy, not required and to request speaking dates in April. I happened to see a notice on the bulletin board informing me that March 4, at 11:00 AM the Pension Plan A committee would meet. For years I have been interested in the activity of that group, the decisions they make when faced with diminishing assets, fluctuating markets and required new funds from current budgets based on Ganim's 30 year plan to borrow at high percentages and earn lower percentages, a risk that was present back in 2000 when Plan A represented borrowing over \$350 Million, more than \$30 Million per year currently paid from Police and Fire budgets until 2029. Total of 30 years. Do the math. Over \$900 Million but another \$100 Million and more have been required to keep pensioners paid and some funds in the pot.

I was instructed to complete an FOI form. Then, if and when approved, they would make a copy for me. I was stunned. Perhaps new instructions were misunderstood? In any case I placed two quarters down for copies requested and then asked another question. What happened to the check made out on January 24 to City Clerk for \$2.50 that has not been cashed? I thought the City was suffering cash flow issues, I related. No good answer although perhaps you can puzzle it out with the Treasurer. No revenues reported to either line this year?

This caused me to return to an oft raised issue about City revenues. Does the Finance Director provide accurate, timely and honest reporting of all cash flows to City departments: In-Plant Printing is a line item showing \$3500 but never a monthly report during 12 months? Why not? City Clerk and Town Clerk have line items but no entries even though I have already deposited \$3.00 in cash and check with that office in 2020. Where does one look for records of parents paying for Lighthouse programs in cash or money orders? That program has no Board it seems, no meetings, agendas, minutes or budgets that are public though funded by Bridgeport taxpayers, State funds, and likely some Federal funds as well. What Committee of the Council does Lighthouse respond to?

Are there other programs or operations aside from the scrap metal of Public Facilities that have garnered Federal interest and the ones I mention that have haphazard reporting? Will you check and respond? Time will tell.

Cecil Young
99 Carroll Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06607

Taxes.

Mr. Young came forward and encouraged the Junior Council Members to pay attention to the information that they have. He went on to display a number of posters showing enlargements of documents. He said that he had been married for 14 years and also had worked for the City for many years before being unjustly fired. He said that he was a black man speaking to both black

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and white Council Members. He spoke about his disagreements with Reverend Lee and Council Member Newton. He told Council Member Newton he should do what he promised to do. Council President Nieves told him his time was up twice, but Mr. Young continued to speak and turned to address the audience about the injustices that he felt the City had committed against him.

Myron Dukes
184 Harriet Street
Bridgeport, CT 06608

Equality update for Myron Dukes.

Council President Nieves called Mr. Dukes' name several times. There was no response.

Helen O. Losak
304 Bradley Street
Bridgeport, CT 06610

Repayment of Misused Stipend.

Ms. Losak came forward and greeted the Council. Ms. Losak said that she had previously come before the Council and reported that former Council Member Karen Jackson had been mis-using her stipend five months ago. She said that she had spoken with Mr. Flatto, with the Mayor and various other officials about this but nothing had been done. Ms. Losak then listed a number of items that former Council Member Jackson had used her stipend money for and concluded her remarks by stating that former Council Member Jackson should repay every cent.

Lillie Troy
144 Cottage Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Taxes and lack of response by Police Dept.

Ms. Troy came forward and said that she was here to speak in integrity. She said that she wanted to know where the money was going from the foreclosures by the WPCA. She said that she wanted to know who was benefiting from the sale of these properties, where the money was going and who is paying for the taxes. Ms. Troy asked why these homes were not being offered to other low income and minority residents. There is nowhere else where one could purchase a home for \$10,000. This would attract people who could work and help the City prosper. She said that it was time to remove the sheets and reveal who is benefiting from these sales. Something is not right in Bridgeport.

Jacquelyn Cauthen
D.I.V.A.S. Program
397 Charles Street
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Need support for DIVAS Program.

Council President Nieves called Ms. Cauthen's name several times. There was no response.

Giselle Chavez
Make The Road CT
45 Vine Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Support for our Immigrant Community.

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Ms. Giselle Chaves came forward and said that she was born in the United States, but was the daughter of immigrant parents. She said that she was with the Make the Road CT. She said that her parents could be deported and this thought terrorizes her and the rest of her family. The ordinance needs to be changed to allow the Bridgeport Police Department to do their job without putting immigrant families at risk.

Nidia Marin
Make The Road CT
45 Vine Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Support for our Immigrant Community.

Ms. Nidia Marin came forward and addressed the Council in Spanish.

Ms. Chaves came forward and stated that Ms. Marin had said that she had lived in the United States for 18 years and wants to continue to live in the United States where she can speak her language without fear. She asked the Council to support the ordinance so there will be no more fear.

Nely Mendoza
Make The Road CT
516 Hallett Street
Bridgeport, CT 06608

Support for the Immigrant Community.

Ms. Mendoza came forward and addressed the Council in Spanish about how she was present to support the immigrant community. She said that she was survivor of domestic violence and that it was important that the police officers write accurate reports since those documents will be used in court. This is why it is important to support the ordinance to protect the immigrant community.

Elizabeth Martinez
Make The Road CT
493 Fairview Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Support for our Immigrant Community.

Ms. Martinez came forward and said that she has lived in Bridgeport for 15 years with her family. This proposal will help those who need protection. She then went on to address the Council Members in Spanish.

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Nieves adjourned the public speaking at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

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CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2020

7:00 P.M.

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

Mayor Ganim called the meeting of the City Council to order at 7:23 p.m.

PRAYER

Mayor Ganim requested Atty. Errol Skyers to lead those present in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Ganim requested City Clerk Martinez to lead those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk called the roll.

130th District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy
131st District: Jorge Cruz, Denese Taylor-Moye
132nd District: Marcus Brown, M. Evette Brantley
133rd District: Jeanette Herron
134th District: AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
135th District: Rosalina Roman-Christy, Mary McBride-Lee
136th District: Alfredo Castillo
137th District: Maria Valle, Aidee Nieves
138th District: Maria Pereira, Samia Suliman
139th District: Ernest Newton, Eneida Martinez

Mayor Ganim welcomed the Junior Council Members to the meeting and acknowledged the presence of State Representative Christopher Rosario and State Representative Antonio Felipe.

Council President Nieves then stated that Council Member Maria Zambrano Viggiano had resigned her seat on the Council. Chapter 5, Section 1 Subsection (d) states that The City Council shall fill for the unexpired portion of the term by a majority vote of the city council members from the same political party as the council member vacating such office.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADDING AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA.
** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council President Nieves said that she would like to present Mr. Avelino D. Silva as a candidate to fill the vacancy left by Maria Zambrano Viggiano in the 136th District.

Council Member Castillo spoke briefly about Mr. Silva's character and said that he would be pleased to have him on the Council.

Council Member Pereira said that she had just met Mr. Silva earlier in the evening and did not know anything about him. She said that because she did not have enough information about him, she would be voting no on the nomination.

Council Member Brantley said that it was the District Leaders responsibility to nominate this young man to the Council to fill the vacancy.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that it was up to the District leaders to choose the best representative from their District. It is not good when other Council Members become involved in other Districts.

Council Member Herron said that Mr. Silva was a community activist and that she was proud that he was joining the Council.

Council Member Newton welcomed Mr. Silva to the Council.

A roll call vote was requested.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO NOMINATE MR. AVELINO D. SILVA AS A CANDIDATE TO FILL THE VACANCY LEFT BY MARIA ZAMBRANO-VIGGIANO IN THE 136TH DISTRICT.
** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIXTEEN (16) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, TAYLOR-MOYE, BROWN, BRANTLEY, HERRON, VIZZO-PANICCIA, ROMAN-CHRISTY, MCBRIDE-LEE, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SULIMAN, NEWTON AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

Mr. Silva came forward and was sworn in by Ms. Wanda Jeter, his District leader.

City Council Citation: In Recognition of Vanessa De La Cruz of the Dominican American Coalition of Connecticut for her many contributions to strengthen and unify the Bridgeport Community.

Council President Nieves called the Council Members forward to present the City Council Citation to Ms. De La Cruz for her many contributions to strengthen and unify the Bridgeport Community.

49-19 Public Hearing re: Proposed Resolution Authorizing the Disposition of 398, 400, 430, 440, 448 and 454 Bunnell Street (the “Redevelopment Properties”) within the Seaview Avenue Industrial Park.

Mayor Ganim opened the public hearing regarding Agenda Item 49-19 Public Hearing re: Proposed Resolution Authorizing the Disposition of 398, 400, 430, 440, 448 and 454 Bunnell Street (the “Redevelopment Properties”) within the Seaview Avenue Industrial Park at 7:39 p.m.

Council Member Martinez stated for the record that although this was a public hearing, there would not be any action taken tonight.

Mayor Ganim asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak in favor of the item.

Mr. Bill Coleman came forward to introduce Mr. Ed Lavernoich of Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation (BRBC) who came forward to speak about the project.

Mr. Lavernoich said that the East End has often been asked to take a number of difficult projects in the past. This project, which involves two buildings in the East End and will bring in some new business to the area, will be a benefit for everyone.

Mayor Ganim said that most of the questions about the project would be asked in Committee. One of the company owners came forward and spoke about the business which would be bringing an electronic business to Bridgeport. His company has outgrown its current space and is looking forward to moving to the East End. Another member of the company came forward and spoke about the benefits of the project.

Mayor Ganim asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak in opposition. Hearing none, Mayor Ganim closed the hearing at 7:45 p.m.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

Approval of City Council Minutes: February 18, 2020

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN MOVED THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 18, 2020.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

Edits City Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 18, 2020

Page 9 – Paragraph 5 – Should read “Council Member Martinez moved to combine and refer the following items to be referred to committees:

Page 11 – Paragraph 1 – Council Member Pereira moved to amend the motion regarding 50-19 to direct the City Attorney to send a new Executive Summary to the City Clerk electronically regarding the settlement with Darsey Papcun to include the “best reasonable estimate as to all expenditure and revenue effects” as per City Council Rule XIII Section 15.

Page 12 – Paragraph 7 – Should read “Mayor Ganim spoke briefly...”

Page 14- Paragraph 9 – Council Member Pereira said that we should never go out to bond for street paving because the long term costs are a negative for tax payers. Long term Bonds should only be used for long-term construction and infrastructure projects that will last for 20, 30, or 40 years such as school construction projects, a new facilitates garage or new sewer lines. A \$2,000,000 Bond at 3% will cost Bridgeport tax payers at least \$662,000 in interest over the life of the bond. Many streets that our paved with this bond will need to be repaved before the loan is even re-paid.

Page 14 – Last Paragraph – Council Member Pereira had several objections regarding the PMA Contract ... The City went out to bid on behalf of the Board of Education without their knowledge, permission or approval. In addition, the Board of Education played no role in selecting PMA, nor did it review or approve the PMA Contract although they are expected to pay a significant portion of the PMA Contract. This is an absolute violation of CT state statutes and a number of Board of Education Policies.

Page 16 – Paragraph 6 – Council Member Pereira said that this was one of the most outrageous contracts she had ever seen in her ten years involved in Bridgeport politics. The attorneys are some of the highest paid salaried employees in the City. She further stated that a Step 12 was being added which increased every union member’s salary by \$6,296 retro-active to January 2018. When adding the 2% increase for 2019 & 2020, every City Attorney who was a member of the union would receive an over \$9,000 increase this year retro-active to 2019. Over the length of the five year contract each City Attorney would receive a salary increase of \$18,874 taking their salary from \$138,938 at the end of 2017 to \$155,000 by the end of 2022. She stated that the average constituent would not support this. The contract even states taxpayers are required to pay for their law license renewals, yet we do not pay for the teachers, social workers and guidance counselor renewals. She further stated that the Union President stated the basis for this significant salary increase was based on what the City Attorneys made in Greenwich and Stamford.

Page 17 – Paragraph 1 – Second Sentence - Should read “This shows him that it is time for the City Attorney’s Office to appoint one attorney to be solely responsible to the Council.”

Page 17- Paragraph 2 – Second Sentence – While the Council does not have the power to change the contract, the City Attorneys are not supportive of the City Council Members.”

Page 17 – Paragraph 3 – “Council Member Pereira said that there were three new steps, not two as previously stated. She indicated that salary Step 12 is retro-active to 2016 and all the current union members benefit from the significant retro-active increase.”

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOVED TO AMEND THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 18, 2020 AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

53-19 Communication from Tax Collector re: Proposed Assignment of Tax Liens for Fiscal Year 2020, referred to Contracts Committee.

54-19 Communication from Fire Department re: Proposed Request by the Fire Chief Pursuant to and in accordance with C.G.S. §7-430 and their Collective Bargain Agreement, Fire Fighters Local 834 that Kevin Higgins having or soon to attain the age of sixty-five years or more to remain employed by the City for another year, referred to Contracts Committee.

55-19 Communication from Fire Department re: Proposed Request by the Fire Chief Pursuant to and in accordance with C.G.S. §7-430 and their Collective Bargain Agreement, Fire Fighters Local 834 that Terence O’Connell having or soon to attain the age of sixty-five years or more to remain employed by the City for another year, referred to Contracts Committee.

56-19 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Settlement of Pending Litigation with Wanda Lee Mendez, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

57-19 Communication from Mayor re: Proposed Five-Year Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025, referred to Budget and Appropriations Committee.

58-19 Communication from OPEd re: Proposed Professional Services Agreement with NV5-Connecticut, LLC for the creation of a Complete Streets Guide, referred to Contracts Committee.

RESOLUTIONS TO BE REFERRED TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC.:

59-19 Resolution presented by Council Member Brown re: Proposed Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Title 2 – Administration and Personnel, amend to add New Chapter 2.125 – Trust Act Enforcement, referred to Ordinance Committee.

60-19 Resolution presented by Council Member(s) Brown and Lyons re: Proposed resolution in Support of HB 5139 – An Act Increasing the Maximum Fine for Operating a Snowmobile or All-Terrain Vehicle at an unreasonable Rate of Speed or in a Negligent Manner, referred to Ordinance Committee.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED COMBINE AND REFER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:**

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

53-19 COMMUNICATION FROM TAX COLLECTOR RE: PROPOSED ASSIGNMENT OF TAX LIENS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020, REFERRED TO CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

54-19 COMMUNICATION FROM FIRE DEPARTMENT RE: PROPOSED REQUEST BY THE FIRE CHIEF PURSUANT TO AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH C.G.S. §7-430 AND THEIR COLLECTIVE BARGAIN AGREEMENT, FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 834 THAT KEVIN HIGGINS HAVING OR SOON TO ATTAIN THE AGE OF SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OR MORE

TO REMAIN EMPLOYED BY THE CITY FOR ANOTHER YEAR, REFERRED TO CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

55-19 COMMUNICATION FROM FIRE DEPARTMENT RE: PROPOSED REQUEST BY THE FIRE CHIEF PURSUANT TO AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH C.G.S. §7-430 AND THEIR COLLECTIVE BARGAIN AGREEMENT, FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 834 THAT TERENCE O'CONNELL HAVING OR SOON TO ATTAIN THE AGE OF SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OR MORE TO REMAIN EMPLOYED BY THE CITY FOR ANOTHER YEAR, REFERRED TO CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

56-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION WITH WANDA LEE MENDEZ, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.

57-19 COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR RE: PROPOSED FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021-2025, REFERRED TO BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE.

58-19 COMMUNICATION FROM OPED RE: PROPOSED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH NV5-CONNECTICUT, LLC FOR THE CREATION OF A COMPLETE STREETS GUIDE, REFERRED TO CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

RESOLUTIONS TO BE REFERRED TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC.:

59-19 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN RE: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, TITLE 2 – ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL, AMEND TO ADD NEW CHAPTER 2.125 – TRUST ACT ENFORCEMENT, REFERRED TO ORDINANCE COMMITTEE.

60-19 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL MEMBER(S) BROWN AND LYONS RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF HB 5139 – AN ACT INCREASING THE MAXIMUM FINE FOR OPERATING A SNOWMOBILE OR ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE AT AN UNREASONABLE RATE OF SPEED OR IN A NEGLIGENT MANNER, REFERRED TO ORDINANCE COMMITTEE.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira stated that she wished to remove Agenda Items 56-19 and 50-19. Mayor Gamin stated that this was a vote to refer items to Committees. Council Member Pereira stated that Council Rules allow any item to be removed by a Council Member.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):

***44-19 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Resolution in Support of the Selection of Sikorsky Airport by the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA).**

***50-19 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Settlement of Pending Litigation with Darsey Papcun.**

Mayor Ganim asked if there was any Council Member who would like to remove an item from the Consent Calendar. Council Member Pereira said she would like to remove Agenda Item 50-19.

City Clerk Martinez read the remaining item into the record.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEM AS THE CONSENT CALENDAR:**

44-19 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE SELECTION OF SIKORSKY AIRPORT BY THE CONNECTICUT AIRPORT AUTHORITY (CAA).

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

***50-19 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Settlement of Pending Litigation with Darsey Papcun.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED THE ITEM.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that the Committee had discussed the item at the February 4, 2020 meeting.

Council Member Pereira said that then read a statement from the February 18th Council Minutes and said that the City Attorney was expected to provide an Executive Summary and there had been an amendment to that item which has passed with a vote of eighteen to one, with Council Member Burns being the single vote in opposition. She said she had provided the City Clerk with the appropriate amendment language and asked when the City Attorney had gained the right to overrule the City Council.

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SEVENTEEN (17) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, TAYLOR-MOYE, BROWN, BRANTLEY, HERRON, VIZZO-PANICCIA, ROMAN-CHRISTY, SILVA, MCBRIDE-LEE, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SULIMAN, NEWTON AND MARTINEZ) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that they had been prepared to add four items to the agenda but had to recess the meeting because they were waiting on additional information.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADD THE FOLLOWING FOUR ITEMS TO THE AGENDA:**

32-19 APPOINTMENT OF LAWRENCE E. OSBORNE, JR., TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.

33-19 APPOINTMENT OF GAIL M. BUCCINO TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.

34-19 APPOINTMENT OF BENSON OYIBOKA BENSON TO THE BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS.

35-19 APPOINTMENT OF FRANSICA HODGES TO THE ETHICS COMMISSION.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira requested that each item be voted on separately. She cited the Freedom of Information Act and said that the Council would have to specify the items including the names.

**** THE MOTION TO ADD FOUR ITEMS TO THE AGENDA PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

32-19 Appointment of Lawrence E. Osborne, Jr., to the Civil Service Commission.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said they had not received all the information for Mr. Osborne's appointment.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO TABLE 32-19 APPOINTMENT OF LAWRENCE E. OSBORNE, JR., TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION PENDING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

33-19 Appointment of Gail M. Buccino to the Civil Service Commission.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED AGENDA ITEM 33-19 APPOINTMENT OF GAIL M. BUCCINO TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED TO ADD AGENDA ITEM 34-19 APPOINTMENT OF BENSON OYIBOKA BENSON TO THE BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS TO THE AGENDA.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

34-19 Appointment of Benson Oyiboka Benson to the Board of Assessment Appeals.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED AGENDA ITEM 34-19 APPOINTMENT OF BENSON OYIBOKA BENSON TO THE BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Newton asked if Mr. Benson worked for the City. He was told that Mr. Benson does not work for the City.

Council Member Pereira said that there was one member on the Board of Assessment Appeals for a long time and that the collective body should be making decisions by the majority, not by one person. She added that there was an incident in the past where the individual on the Board of Assessment Appeals decided to lower his own taxes by over \$2,000 and later ended up selling their house for \$950,000. She said that if this is approved, there will be a sole member on the Board who is not qualified. She then spoke about someone who had purchased properties in a depressed neighborhood and later sold each of the properties for \$1.6 million dollars. This is what happens when there are unqualified people on Boards and Commissions. She said that Mr. Benson would be making decisions on over 100 cases and this was how taxpayers are hurt.

Council Member Brantley said she would like to speak in favor of Dr. Benson. He has extensive experience working with the Bridgeport Housing Authority and in spite of what he went through with his own personal property, it will not affect his ability to work with the Tax Assessor. He will do what he is charged to do for the City of Bridgeport. It is not fair for the Council to sit in judgment of this man. We all have short comings and we often speak of second chances. She then asked her fellow Council Members to support Dr. Benson.

Council Member Martinez said for the record that the City does not have a Tax Assessor at this time. Her second concern, which was her personal opinion, was that Mr. Benson had come before the Council two years ago and was not approved for appointment by the Council. She said that she would be voting no against this individual.

Council Member Cruz said that he would like more than one member on the Board. He said that he did not know anything about Mr. Benson and would like more transparency. The Tax Assessor is a serious position and that individual will be making decisions about taxes. He said that he would like more information and answers to questions.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she knew Dr. Benson from the Bridgeport Housing Authority and familiar with all that he did for the BHA. Everyone has to make their own decision regarding this, but the Council cannot weigh what the last Assessment Board Member did against Dr. Benson. The choice is between appointing Dr. Benson or not having anyone on the Board. The Council Members need to do their due diligence and find constituents to fill the positions on Boards and Commissions. She pointed out that she had not known much when she was elected to the Council but did her job and learned what she needed to know.

Council Member Brantley said that Dr. Benson had come before the Committee previously. She said that he will be working with the current Interim Tax Assessor. She said that the Interim Tax Assessor was willing to work with Dr. Benson.

Council Member Pereira said that the Tax Assessor was not the Board of Assessment Appeal. She said that it was a conflict of interest. Council Member Pereira requested a roll call vote.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that Council Member Cruz could ask questions about the potential applicants by contacting the Chairs. The applicants are reviewed by the Police Department and reviewed by the Council Committee. The applications are available for the Council Members' review at the Committee meetings.

Council Member Herron said that the process for appointing Commissioners and Board Members was not very easy. The Council Members have the right to refer potential candidates to the Mayor's Office but people are not willing to be criticized and ridiculed. They have to submit an application and then go to OIA and then be reviewed by the Committee and later by the full Council. The process takes months and months.

Council Member Herron said that she commended Mr. Benson for coming back because he had a difficult time during his previous application.

Mayor Ganim called for a vote by show of hands. Council Member Pereira objected and stated she had requested a roll call vote. Mayor Ganim said that her objection was noted and repeated his request for a show of hands.

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIXTEEN (16) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, TAYLOR-MOYE, BROWN, BRANTLEY, HERRON, VIZZO-PANICCIA, ROMAN-CHRISTY, SILVA, MCBRIDE-LEE, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SULIMAN AND NEWTON) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (PEREIRA AND MARTINEZ).**

35-19 Appointment of Fransica Hodges to the Ethics Commission.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED AGENDA ITEM 35-19 APPOINTMENT OF FRANSICA HODGES TO THE ETHICS COMMISSION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SULIMAN SECONDED.**

Council Member Brantley said that Ms. Hodges was an awesome candidate and she was looking forward to working with her.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AN ITEM REGARDING THE ASSIGNMENT OF COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS TO THE AGENDA.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE RE-ASSIGNMENTS:**

CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT: AIDEE NIEVES

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPE: MARCUS BROWN

MAJORITY LEADER: ENEIDA MARTINEZ

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER: JEANETTE HERRON

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER: ERNEST NEWTON

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER: MICHELLE LYONS

SGT AT ARMS: ROSALINA ROMAN-CHRISTY

BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS: SCOTT BURNS, MICHAEL DEFILIPPO, DENESE TAYLOR-MOYE, JEANETTE HERRON, MATT MCCARTHY, JORGE CRUZ, AMYMARIE VIZZO-PANICCIA.

ORDINANCE: ENEIDA MARTINEZ, MARCUS BROWN, MICHELLE LYONS, ERNEST NEWTON, ROSALINA ROMAN-CHRISTY, SAMIA SULIMAN, AVELINO SILVA.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION: MICHELLE LYONS, MARY MCBRIDE-LEE, ENEIDA MARTINEZ, MARIA PEREIRA, ERNEST NEWTON, M. EVETTE BRANTLEY, MARIA VALLE.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT: M. EVETTE BRANTLEY, MARIA VALLE, ROSALINA ROMAN-CHRISTY, MARY MCBRIDE-LEE, JEANETTE HERRON, ALFREDO CASTILLO, SCOTT BURNS.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS: AMYMARIE VIZZO-PANICCIA, SCOTT BURNS, DENESE TAYLOR-MOYE, ALFREDO CASTILLO, M. EVETTE BRANTLEY, MATTHEW MCCARTHY, MARIA ZAMBRANO-VIGGIANO, SAMIA SULIMAN.

CONTRACTS: : JEANETTE HERRON, ERNEST NEWTON, JORGE CRUZ, MICHAEL DEFILIPPO, ALFREDO CASTILLO, AVELINO SILVA, AMYMARIE VIZZO-PANICCIA

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES: JORGE CRUZ, MATT MCCARTHY, MARIA PEREIRA, MICHELLE LYONS, SAMIA SULIMAN, AVELINO SILVA, MARCUS BROWN

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG) (SPECIAL COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT ON FEBRUARY 18, 2020) : JEANETTE HERRON, MARY MCBRIDE-LEE, JORGE CRUZ, SAMIA SULIMAN, MARIA PEREIRA, ALFREDO CASTILLO, MATTHEW MCCARTHY.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE MEMBERS: AIDEE NIEVES, MARCUS BROWN, ERNEST NEWTON.

LIAISON TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: SCOTT BURNS.

LIAISON TO THE FIRE COMMISSION: JEANETTE HERRON

LIAISON TO THE HARBOR COMMISSION: MATT MCCARTHY

LIAISON TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY: ALFREDO CASTILLO, ENEIDA MARTINEZ AND DENESE TAYLOR-MOYE

LIAISON TO THE LIBRARY: ROSALINA ROMAN-CHRISTY

LIAISON TO THE PARKS COMMISSION: AMYMARIE VIZZO-PANICCIA

LIAISON TO THE POLICE COMMISSION: MARIA VALLE, ENEIDA MARTINEZ

LIAISON TO THE PORT AUTHORITY: MARCUS BROWN

LIAISON TO THE WPCA: ERNEST NEWTON

LIAISON TO THE ZOO: AMYMARIE VIZZO-PANICCIA

LIAISON TO THE HISTORIC COMMISSION: M. EVETTE BRANTLEY

LIAISON TO THE FOOD POLICY COUNCIL: MARIA VALLE

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
City Council
Regular Meeting
March 2, 2020