



Special Communications Committee – Board of Representatives

Bob Lion, Chair Nina Sherwood, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Thursday, November 1, 2018
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Place: Democratic Caucus Room, 4th Floor Government Center, 888
Washington Boulevard, Stamford, CT

The Special Communications Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Lion, Vice Chair Sherwood and Committee Member Reps. Michelson, Moore, Morson, Nabel and Zelinsky. Absent or excused was Rep. Matherne.

Chair Lion called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. C30.004	REVIEW; Discuss a communications allowance to assist Board of Representatives members to communicate issue-oriented matters with constituents, and propose draft rules governing the appropriate use of said allowance. 03/06/18 – Submitted by Reps. de la Cruz, Lion, Sherwood, Michelson, Matherne, Zelinsky 03/15/18 – Held in Committee 05/02/18 – Held in Committee 05/22/18 – Held in Committee 06/27/18 – Held in Committee 08/23/18 – Report Made and Held by Committee 7-0-0 09/24/18 – Report Made and Held by Committee	REPORT MADE & HELD
2. C30.008	REVIEW; Review Information Gathered and Preparation of Report to the Board. 08/10/18 – Submitted by Rep. Lion 09/24/18 – Report Made and Held by Committee	REPORT MADE & HELD

3. C30.009 REVIEW; Proposal for an Outreach Effort by the City to Conduct a Large Scale Data Collection Drive with the Goal of Creating a Resident Contact Bank to Enable Elected Officials to Communicate with their Constituents in a More Widespread, Timely and Cost-Free Way.
08/10/18 – Submitted by Reps. Sherwood, Matherne and Nabel
09/24/18 – Report Made and Held by Committee
- REPORT MADE & HELD**

Committee members discussed Items 1 through 3 together:

- The Committee should produce something more actionable, and should wait to produce concrete recommendations to the Board, possibly by resolution
- Other communities do more outreach with their cable channels
- Rep. Sherwood spoke with President Quinones: the presentation should be 15 to 20 minutes long; the Committee can continue its work past the December meeting
- The Board rule concerning public participation should be changed
- Much of the current presentation is what the Committee has reviewed and is useful
- The recommendations should be narrowed down and should be more concrete
- The Committee could do more than one presentation to the full Board
- The website address should be on Board member business cards

A motion to have 2 reports to the full Board was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 5-2-0 (Reps. Lion, Michelson, Moore, Morson and Nabel in favor; Reps. Sherwood and Zelinsky opposed).

The first presentation should be on the research done by the Committee, and sent out to the full Board prior to the meeting. Committee members reviewed the specific pages of the presentation

- There needs to be more of a push out of public notices
- Maybe there could be a Board of Representatives app
- A push strategy needs to use already travelled avenues of communication, such as Facebook
- No one strategy is going to reach everyone
- Having someone in the Board office posting to a variety of social media outlets would be difficult and costly; an email list might be more useful, collected at every point of entry into the City would be useful (with an opt-in/opt-out required)
 - They need to get a legal opinion as to whether this can be done
- Hootsuite allows posting to all social media platforms at once
- Who will manage Channel 79 to ensure it runs effectively? NBC will assist in building a TV studio in the building? Is this necessary? How would this be funded in the future?
- Recommendations to the full Board need to be fleshed out
- Keep the 30-minute public participation session
- Recommendations are based upon ideas that the BOR should expand its outreach and no single platform can reach all member of the public

- One recommendation is that there should be a citywide collection of emails so that elected officials can contact their constituents
- There should not be a recommendation about having public participation sessions before every committee meeting
- Should the Board have a presence on a variety of social media platforms? This may require additional work by someone in the Board office which should be researched before a recommendation is made. The language of this recommendation will be fleshed out.
- The Board website is very functional and there should not be a recommendation to modernize it; it would be helpful if there were a button to “find my rep”; Maybe that should also be on the City website.
- The recommendation of \$1000 per year for the postage allowance – maybe a citywide email list would be more useful;
- It may be useful to determine the cost to implement a citywide email list; representatives should then have a postage allowance with the remainder
- How would residents without email be reached
- This recommendation should be retained pending more research
- The Committee should recommend that a Steering Committee be formed and the BOR be part of that group
- Should grant money be spent to hire someone to ensure that cameras at Board meetings are focused on the speaker or to upgrade the camera equipment or are there more effective uses of the money

The recommendations are:

- Make the public participation session permanent
- City-wide collection of emails
- Some form of social media investigation
- Some sort of communication allowance, pending an investigation
- Channel 79 involvement

These will all be submitted as review items for the next committee meeting.

A motion to hold Item 1 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-0-0 (Reps. Lion, Sherwood, Michelson, Moore, Nabel and Zelinsky in favor).

A motion to hold Item 2 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-0-0 (Reps. Lion, Sherwood, Michelson, Moore, Nabel and Zelinsky in favor).

A motion to hold Item 3 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-0-0 (Reps. Lion, Sherwood, Michelson, Moore, Nabel and Zelinsky in favor).

Chair Lion adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Lion, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#)