



Operations Committee - Board of Representatives

Virgil de la Cruz, Chair

Carmine Tomas, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Monday, February 26, 2024
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Place: *This meeting was held remotely.*

The Operations Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair de la Cruz, Vice Chair Tomas, and Committee Member Reps. Boeger, Graham, Ley, Sherwood, Stella, Dakary Watkins, and David Watkins. Also in attendance were Reps. Adams, Campbell, Mays, Miller, Morson, Summerville, Walston, and Weinberg; Lou Casolo, City Engineer; Matthew Quiñones, Director of Operations; Josephine Carpanzano, Deputy Director of Operations; Dan Colleluori, Director of Recycling & Sanitation; Elda Sinani, Director of Office of Policy and Management; Erik Larson, Purchasing Manager; Thomas Cassone, Director of Legal Affairs; Joshua Noggle, Building Systems Engineer; Brandon Mark, Sustainability/Energy Manager; Bridget Fox, Chief of Staff; and Bill Maguire.

Chair de la Cruz called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

The Committee first considered Item No. 2.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
2. O31.017	REVIEW; Stamford Transfer Station Operations and Possibility of Increasing Fees for Non-Residential and Commercial Businesses using the Transfer Station. 07/06/22 – Submitted by Reps. Stella and Curtis 07/18/22 – Report Made & Held by Committee 7-0-0 08/15/22 – Report Made & Held by Committee 7-0-0 09/12/22 – Moved to Pending 10/17/22 –Held by Committee 8-0-0 12/29/22 –Held by Committee 9-0-0 01/23/23 – Held by Committee 03/02/23 – Recommitted to Steering by Committee 6-0-0 03/13/23 – Moved to Pending 05/15/23 – Report Made & Recommitted to Steering by Committee 7-0-0 06/12/23 – Moved to Pending 09/18/23 – Report Made and Recommitted to Steering 7-0-0 10/10/23 – Moved to Pending 01/17/24 – Held by Committee	Report Made

Chair de la Cruz and Rep. Watkins analyzed the tipping fees being charged to commercial operators concluding that the tipping fees being charged to commercial operators exceeded the department's handling of the tonnage. The commercial operators more than cover their costs and contributing to the economics of the transfer station.

Director Colleluori added that he is comfortable with this analysis. The fees being charged currently are appropriate. Director Sinani added that there will be more data available in the upcoming fiscal year and if the tipping fees need to be raised, they will come back to the Board.

Committee members discussed Item No. 2. Items discussed included the following:

- what can be done to encourage more commercial users, since it is profitable, such as shorter wait times
- The increased fees by private haulers revolve mostly around staffing and fuel, not collection or disposal costs.
- Should the fees be raised for non-residents in order to combat traffic and transfer station closures
- Could a dumpster be added at the site so that residents can use it instead of waiting in line?
- Residents who pay for private haulers only get a small portion back in the form of lower taxes; is there is a way to identify nonresidential garbage haulers and in turn increase their rates? This type of differentiation will take more time and create longer lines.

1. [O31.044](#) REVIEW; Early Voting Process; Infrastructure Requirements and Implementation Including Locations, Security, Storage and the Role of the BOR. **Report Made**
01/03/24 – Submitted by Rep. Sherwood
01/17/24 – Report Made & Recommitted to Steering by Committee 8-0-0

Chair de la Cruz emailed the Registrar's Office and the Town Clerk outlining the concerns of the previous meeting. In their absence, a memo was sent outlining their responses to the Committee's concerns. The Town Clerk will discuss her concerns with the administration before meeting with the Committee.

Committee members discussed Item No. 1 with Director Quiñones. Items discussed included the following:

- Facility concerns regarding the Government Center and parking are being addressed. Rep. Graham added that due to process changes some of the requests made were retracted.
- There are challenges securing funding necessary to acquiring additional space and identifying City locations that wouldn't incur additional costs however it may be possible to achieve by the August primary. Rep. Graham added that the technical issues had to do with cyber security and groundlines installation.

3. [O31.038](#) REVIEW; Status of plans to replace multiple gas fired HVAC units with fewer heat pumps units and installation of solar panels on the roof of the Yerwood Community Center. **Recommitted to Steering 7-2-0**
- 10/05/23 – Submitted by Rep. de la Cruz
10/16/23 – Report Made and Recommitted to Steering by Committee 5-0-0
11/13/23 – Moved to Pending
01/17/24 – Held by Committee

Chair de la Cruz discussed the economic analysis of using heat pumps vs. gas fired units, presented by City Engineer Lou Casolo in an off-the record presentation to him which concluded that given that the cost of each alternative was around seven million dollars, that there was no economic advantage to combating global warming. Chair de la Cruz stated that this conclusion could not possibly be right. To ensure that the entire Board of Reps had the same information presented to him, he had the presentation material linked to this item well in advance of the meeting.

Committee members discussed Item No. 3 with the invited guests. Items discussed included:

- Yerwood's infrastructure is not able to provide ventilation and will always need to have make-up air units for the units that are currently on the roof.
- Not only is there a code requirement for ventilation air but that zero-degree air cannot be provided to the space and that the air would need to be tempered. Chair de la Cruz described available Energy Recovery air make up units that eliminate the need for tempering make up air.
- Outdoor air could not be used on humid days due to humidity issues and a system would have to be installed to provide ventilated air.
- While there is one make-up air unit for the kitchen, ventilation air is provided to all the spaces through a rooftop unit.
- Breakaway Energy was invited to review their energy model with their assessment concluding that in terms of the overall operating costs through the life of the building, there will be some reduction but not much of a difference regarding carbonization. Chair de la Cruz pointed out that the consultant looking at decarbonization was not even aware that solar panels were included in the project. When so advised the consultant stated that with solar panels the decarbonization number would increase dramatically.
- The system will not be all-electric due to the gas fired units still being used that have not reached end of life
- The construction period would be less for a one-to-one gas fired unit replacement whereas the building would have more downtime and more issues converting to a system that is mostly electric.
- Using the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to help offset expenses would not be reliable because the funds don't come until the project is completed. Chair de la Cruz countered that inasmuch as the guest expected to discuss the IRA could not be at the presentation, and agenda item will be added to have this person explain the difficulties in obtaining IRA funding, since there is a general expectation that IRA grant funding will be available from the various provisions of the IRA.
- Antinozzi Associates, the architectural development firm the City is working with, estimated that the MEP entire roof replacement project will cost around 5 million dollars, that far exceeds the 1.7 million in funds that are available. Chair de la Cruz

countered that Mr. Casolo should apply for an additional appropriation. Best to do the project right than a project that does not deliver the objectives.

- The mechanical unit for the pool that the City is leasing for \$9,000 a month should be replaced until a decision is made regarding the gas fired units.
- Yerwood does not have a backup generator; a generator to power the electric units would be larger than for the gas fired units. Chair de la Cruz disagreed with this assertion and suggested that lithium-ion back up batteries be considered instead, since they are noiseless and polluting emissions free. Mr. Casolo stated that backup power is not in the scope of the project.
- Power from the solar units does not feed electricity back into the units, it's used as a credit to the bill; currently Yerwood is on a third-party supply rate which lowers their electric rate.

Chair de la Cruz disagreed with most items in the off-the record presentation mentioned above.

A motion to recommit Item No. 3 to steering was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 7-2-0 (Chair de la Cruz, Vice Chair Tomas, Reps. Boeger, Graham, Sherwood, Stella, and Dakary Watkins in favor; Reps. Ley and David Watkins opposed).

- | | | |
|------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 4. O31.040 | REVIEW; Opportunities for the Board of Representatives (BOR) to Participate in the Drafting of Project Descriptions and Scopes of Work for Request for Proposals (RFPs) for Projects Anticipated to Require BOR Approval to Ensure Consistency with BOR Expectations and to Improve the Efficiency of Processing Awards.
11/22/23 – Submitted by Reps. de la Cruz and Ley | Recommitted to Steering 7-2-0 |
|------------|--|--------------------------------------|

Committee members discussed Item No. 4 with Attorney Cassone and Mr. Larson. Items discussed included the following:

- Former Corporation Counsel Kathryn Emmett had voiced concerns as to whether the Board of Representatives should have membership on selection committees due to a conflict of interest.
- There isn't enough time for the Board to participate efficiently in the drafting of an RFP and he feels it's unnecessary since the Board has the authority to approve or not approve the resulting contract. Chair de la Cruz countered that the proposal aims to save time by avoiding the need to reject contracts based on RFPs that do not meet the expectations of the Board. Chair de la Cruz also challenged the comment on "efficient participation" and Attorney Cassone withdrew the comment.
- Under the purchasing ordinance a contract is sent to the Board of Finance first, then once received, the Board of Representatives can make changes when there is a majority vote without having to send the contracts back to the Board of Finance.
- It is frustrating to voice an opinion during Committee meetings and have RFPs return with contents that aren't what the Committee asked for.
- The idea is not for the Committee to participate in every RFP but instead focus on the ones where the resulting contract requires Board approval and have the biggest impact in the various districts; once the scope of work section of the RFP is drafted it could then be sent to the district reps as well as the relevant committee to address comments or concerns; or the Committee could create a list of what they would like to see in all proposals requiring Board approval, which could also help avoid those issues.

Chair de la Cruz requested that Attorney Cassone provide the Committee with the statutory language, to be linked to this item so the entire Board is informed, that says what the Board is permitted to do, to which Attorney Cassone agreed.

A motion to recommit Item No. 4 to steering was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 8-0-1 (Chair de la Cruz, Vice Chair Tomas, Reps. Boeger, Graham, Ley, Sherwood, Stella, and Dakary Watkins in favor; Rep. David Watkins abstaining).

A motion to discuss Item 5 and 6 together was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 9-0-0 (Chair de la Cruz, Vice Chair Tomas, Reps. Boeger, Graham, Ley, Sherwood, Stella, Dakary Watkins and David Watkins in favor).

5. [O31.045](#) REVIEW; All Bridges in Stamford, from Start Date of the Planning Stages to the Start of Construction and Completion of the Project; List of Grants Funds Awarded for Repairs, and Construction of any New Bridges, Total Cost, Including the West Main St. Bridge.
02/07/24 – Submitted by Reps. Campbell and Stella **Report Made**
6. [O31.046](#) REVIEW; Bridge Construction Projects, Specifically Anticipated Completion Dates for the Cedar Heights and Riverbank Road Bridge Replacement Projects, and the Schedule and Completion Dates for the Future Wire Mill Rd. and Hunting Ridge Rd. Bridge Replacement Projects, as well as Measures to be Taken to Keep These Projects on Schedule.
02/07/24 – Submitted by Reps. Mays and Weinberg **Report Made**

City Engineer Casolo shared his presentation regarding the bridge updates. Some points of the overview are as follows:

- Bridges require a lot of environmental permitting which takes time including Right of Way (ROW), easements, tree removals and on-structure or aerial utility relocations.
- Six local bridge applications were submitted for funding:
 - West Broad Street (1954)
 - Cascade Road (1926)
 - Farms Road (1950)
 - Farms Road (1985)
 - Old Long Ridge Road (1917)
 - Old Long Ridge Road (1940)

None of the projects were accepted because there weren't enough funds available statewide and the City's applications totaled \$16 million. Four bridges (Old Long Ridge - 1917, Mill Road, Cascade Road and Dannell Drive) will be submitted for 2024.

The ongoing Federal Local Bridge Program's funding source is 80% Federal and 20% City or State. Bridges included are:

- Cedar Heights Road (1930)
- Riverbank Road (1957)
- Wire Mill Road (1957)
- West Glen Drive
- Lakeside Drive (1936, rebuilt 1993)
- Hunting Ridge Road (1940 +/-)

No other bridges in Stamford qualify for the 80/20 funding source.

Completed Bridge & Culvert Projects (excludes ConnDOT projects):

- Farms Road (culvert deck replaced 12/2021)
- Soundview Ave (superstructure replacement 2003)
- Interlaken Road (culvert 2007)
- June Road (2014)
- Cold Spring Road (rehabilitation 10/2012)
- Chestnut Hill Road (culvert replacement 2013)
- Richmond Hill Ave
- Broad Street (deck repair)
- Buckingham Drive (2005)
- Studio Road (2005)
- Farms Road
- Tresser Blvd (7/2013)
- Pedestrian Bridge over Tresser Blvd
- Brookdale Road (culvert replacement 2012)
- Merriebrook Lane (rehabilitation 2016)
- Main Street (rehabilitation project not awarded)
- Main Street Pedestrian Bridge (12/2023)
- Main Street Bridge Options Assessment (assessment available in Spring 2024)

City Engineer Casolo confirmed that Stamford has thirty-nine bridges, a couple of privately owned, and several on the town lines of Darien and New Canaan.

Committee members discussed these items with the invited guests. Items discussed include the following:

- There are any penalties imposed when a contractor replacing a bridge does not meet their deadlines, however, contract extensions can be made, and performance bond can be called by the City.
- It would be difficult to recoup money spent on estimates from engineers in regard to the West Main Street bridge due to the uncertainty and risks involved with bidding.

Mr. Casolo agreed to complete a matrix designed by Rep. Weinberg to help the representatives communicate certain aspects of the projects to their constituents. Chair de la Cruz requested that the matrix be linked to the item for the benefit of the committee and the other Board members.

Director Quiñones agreed to reach out to the state delegation regarding the possibility of paving Blackwood Lane to fix the problems created by the bridge construction projects.

7. O31.047 REVIEW; Return to Chambers; Discussion to **Report Made**
Include Current Status and Timeline for Completion.
02/07/24 – Submitted by Reps. Matheny and
Sherwood

Director Quiñones discussed the three components of the project's focus of giving the Board of Representatives the opportunity to conduct hybrid meetings. The first component is regarding the AV system:

- The best AV systems have been identified and research on available funding was conducted. It was brought to the Board in December 2023 and the contract was approved. The existing wiring of the Legislative Chambers was removed, and the new AV system will be installed in a couple of weeks.
- The second component is replacing the voting system. The system will be tested, and a training program will be available to the Board of Representatives. The goal is to have members trained and the system installed in preparation for the full board meeting in April. During the month of March training for the Chairs and Steering Committee members will be available.
- The third component will be an ongoing initiative. Director Quiñones that the board could develop a small working group to speak on behalf of the board for prioritizing upgrades that can help to secure additional funding for additional needs. Some of those needs include new desks, a plexiglass system and securing facility.

Deputy Director Carpanzano discussed the voting system remote.

- The Meridia software is the same software used by Greenwich.
- The small remote enables the members to vote from anywhere right within the window of the voting time frame.
- The software allows the members to view on a split screen their Zoom meeting or their team's meeting. It will bring up the agenda item and then open the voting session.
- Video training will be available to back up the in-person training or one-on-one training.
- Each member will have a remote assigned to them. Their phone can be used to vote as well.
- The remote has an activation code to verify the member's identity.

The remotes have been tested and will be tested again to ensure comfort with their use. Special microphones still need to be obtained. The installation and completion of synchronizing every camera to every desk and microphone should take no longer than a week and a half. There will be five cameras in the ceiling that will pan to the location of any microphone that is triggered.

Director Quiñones confirmed the new technology does allow is more flexibility for the movement of the desks as opposed to being restricted by the hard wiring however, nothing has been done regarding seating space. The Clerk and the Board Leadership will provide direction on the seating structure.

Chair de la Cruz adjourned the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Virgil de la Cruz, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).