



Special Communications Committee – Board of Representatives

Bob Lion, Chair Nina Sherwood, Vice Chair

Communications Committee

Date: Tuesday, May 22, 2018
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Republican Caucus Room, 4th Floor Government Center, 888
Washington Boulevard, Stamford, CT

The Communications Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Lion, Vice Chair Sherwood and Committee Member Reps. Matherne, Michelson, Moore, Morson, Nabel and Zelinsky. Also present was Michael Pensiero, IT.

Chair Lion called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. C30.002	REVIEW; Review of current outreach processes 03/05/18 – Submitted by Rep. Lion 03/15/18 – Report Made & Held in Committee 05/02/18 – Report Made & Held in Committee	Held in Committee
2. C30.005	REVIEW; IT Department communication capabilities including City website, email lists and alert options 04/02/18 – Submitted by Rep. Lion 05/02/18 – Held in Committee	Report Made

Mr. Pensiero distributed the [attached handout](#). He discussed this item with the committee as follows:

- Max McFarlane in the IT Department responsible for maintaining websites and some social media
- The department uses a content management company which coordinates Board of Education and City websites, although not the Board of Representatives' website; this results in a uniform look and feel
- The City maintains 49 urls, many of which are not exposed to the public, such as the Kronos time and attendance system
- The Board of Education has a website and each school has its own
- The City has in excess of 10,000 email addresses collected, which is usually for a specific purpose
- Harvesting the email addresses to use for other communication processes may be difficult given email policy, in addition, systems don't necessarily communicate with one another

- Possibly citizens who call Citizens' Services could opt-in to have their email address provided to their representatives; this might result in a large number of emails to representatives; possibly a report could be generated instead
 - Often contacts are made anonymously or by telephone
- Some of the webpages are overseen by the federal government and the City does not have access to the information
- Some systems could easily include an opt-in option for residents, but some could not; it is not clear what legal issues that might be present
- It might be possible to include a link to the Board of Representative member for the district
- They could create a page on the Board of Representatives website to opt-in to an e-mail system and collect information
- They are waiting for Altice to allow access to the channel feed via computer and regarding how to broadcast the meetings over cable
- There is a State system for calling residents in an emergency upon a community's request – that information is concealed within the State and there is no access to it by the City
- The Stamford Police Department uses Twitter, Instagram and Facebook
- Most of what the Board deals with is not of public interest and is not controversial; would using social media be advantageous?
- How would the Board choose information to highlight?

3. 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

Committee members discussed:

- Using a Facebook page with advertising to audiences; this would cost some money
- Members could use the allowance however they want
- There should be a communications allowance per district that could be used by each member to communicate with their district in whatever medium they wish
- The cost of postage to an entire district would be about \$2000 per district per mailing
- The committee will investigate the availability of bulk rate postage; the minimum amount should be the amount needed to reach each resident once per term

As a Secondary Committee:

1. [LR30.036](#) APPROVAL; Amendment to [Board of Representatives Rules of Procedure](#) to add a public participation session.
03/07/18 – Submitted by Rep. Cottrell, Sherwood, Zelinsky, Lutz, Aquila, Nabel, Summerville and Matherne
05/02/18 – Held in Committee

The Committee reviewed the language proposed by Rep. Nabel on May 9, 2018. It was noted that this language did not come out of the Legislative & Rules Committee.

The Committee discussed whether the public participation session should be limited to agenda items, whether non-residents should be permitted to speak during the public session and moving the public speaking to the end of the meeting. A motion to recommend amending the first paragraph under “New Entry: Time for Public Comment” to strike “or more widely on areas within the jurisdiction of the Board of Representatives” was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-0-2 (Reps. Lion, Michelson, Moore, Morson, Nabel and Zelinsky in favor; Reps. Sherwood and Matherne opposed).

A motion to recommend amending the first paragraph under “New Entry: Time for Public Comment” to add “of Stamford” after the word “residents” in the first line was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Lion, Matherne, Michelson, Moore, Morson, Nabel, Sherwood and Zelinsky in favor).

A motion to recommend amending the fourth paragraph under “New Entry: Time for Public Comment” to add “of six months” after the words “trial period” and deleting “and extending to December 4, 2018,” was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Lion, Matherne, Michelson, Moore, Morson, Nabel, Sherwood and Zelinsky in favor).

A motion to recommend adopting this rule change, using the language of Representative Nabel, as amended, was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Lion, Matherne, Michelson, Moore, Morson, Nabel, Sherwood and Zelinsky in favor).

Chair Lion adjourned the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Lion, Chair

This meeting is on video