

(The following is not a verbatim transcript of comments or discussion that occurred during the meeting, but rather a summarization intended for general informational purposes. All motions and votes are the official records).

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, March 13, 2014, in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by the Chair.

Present Councilman Steven A. Stycos, Chair
 Council Vice-President Michael J Farina, Vice-Chair
 Councilman Mario Aceto
 Councilwoman Sarah Kales Lee (arrived at 7:10 P.M.)
 Council Majority Leader Paul H. Archetto
 Councilman Donald Botts, Jr.
 Council President John E. Lanni, Jr.

Also Present: Councilman Richard D. Santamaria, Jr.
 Gerald Cordy, Director of Administration
 Jeffrey Barone, Director of Constituent and Government Affairs
 Evan Kirshenbaum, Assistant City Solicitor
 Robert Strom, Finance Director
 Anthony Moretti, City Council Internal Auditor
 Maria Medeiros Wall, City Clerk
 Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
 Heather Finger, Stenographer

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Councilman Aceto, seconded by Council Vice-President Farina, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE:

PUBLIC HEARINGS/OLD BUSINESS:

John Lewis appeared to speak regarding statements he made at the last meeting and the Committee not being receptive to his comments.

Report from Solicitor's research – Café Itri Tax Incentive Application (Councilman Stycos)

Solicitor Kirshenbaum stated that per his research, Café Itri is appropriate in receiving such a Tax Incentive. He also quoted RIGL 44-4-6. He also stated that the City Ordinance does not state that both property owner and tenant must apply for Tax Incentive. The way the Ordinance reads, it's on the improvement of the property, it is not the property itself.

Councilman Santamaria asked if a chain, such as Burger King or McDonalds, apply for Tax Incentives. Solicitor Kirshenbaum stated, yes. Councilman Santamaria stated that he has a concern with this because the Economic Development Director stated to him that the applicant has to own the land. If Solicitor Kirshenbaum is correct, this is a concern because it would give incentives to big conglomerates and hurt the smaller mom and pop stores.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution requesting the members of the General Assembly from Cranston to introduce and urge passage of legislation authorizing a \$1.8 million dollar bond for the City's Libraries. [\[click to view\]](#) [\[click to view report\]](#)

On motion by Councilman Aceto, seconded by Council Vice-President Farina, it was voted to recommend approval of this Resolution.

Under Discussion:

Ann Osbon, Assistant Director, appeared to speak.

Councilman Botts questioned if the Council approved a bond last year for HVAC for the libraries. Mr. Strom stated, yes. The City went out for bonding last year for \$200,000. The original amount was approximately \$900,000. There is still approximately \$700,000 left, which bond Counsel is researching to see if this could be used. He should receive her answer by the end of the month of March.

Councilman Aceto suggested amending this Resolution to state that if there is \$700,000 in surplus based on older bond, then the bond request would be \$1.1 million instead of \$1.8 million.

Roll call was taken on motion to recommend approval of this Resolution was taken and motion passed unanimously.

Resolution requesting the members of the General Assembly from Cranston to introduce and urge passage of legislation authorizing a \$11.8 million dollar repair and renovation bond for the City's Schools. [\[click to view\]](#) [\[click to view reports\]](#)

On motion by Councilman Aceto, seconded by Council Majority Leader Archetto, it was voted to recommend approval of this Resolution.

Under Discussion:

Superintendent Judith Lundsten appeared to speak.

School Committee Member, Michael Traficante appeared to speak and explained the bond. He also referred to a handout he presented and stated the following:

- 2000 Bond for \$13.8 million – remaining authority is \$41,000
- 2002 Bond for \$2.9 million – remaining authority is approximately \$1.3 million
- 2004 Bond for \$1.4 million – remaining authority is \$1.4 million
- 2006 Bond for \$9.5 million – remaining authority is approximately \$4.5 million

Joseph Balducci, School Chief Financial Officer, appeared to speak.

Council President Lanni asked which buildings are in violation of fire and health codes that have to be corrected immediately. **Mark Saccoccio** of Saccoccio and Saccoccio Architects, appeared to speak and referred to a handout and stated that all schools, with the exception of Hope Highlands and Orchard Farms, are in violation. He also stated that after the Station Fire, the Schools were evaluated and variances were given, but never followed up on.

Ray Votto, School Chief Operating Officer, appeared to speak and explained some of the variances that the School Department has not complied with. He noted that every year, the Cranston Fire Marshall inspects out Schools and gives approval as amended by RI State Law. He indicated that the plan is over a five year period to address the issues that have been brought up. He also indicated that the issues the architect found were never part of the variances.

Council Vice-President Farina asked that a more detailed report be provided by the architect of a breakdown of each school. He provided his email address to the Architect for him to access the report and he will forward that information to the rest of the Council members.

Council President Lanni asked if the Council could be provided with the cost of fixing the expired variances. Mr. Votto stated that this will be provided to the Council.

Council President Lanni asked the Administration's position regarding this. Mr. Cordy stated that he just became aware of this this evening. As to the violations, they may not be as serious as they sound. As to the waivers, we could be overreacting. At this point, it may not be the proper way to approach this. He would like to speak to the Fire Marshall regarding this.

On motion by Council President Lanni, seconded by Councilman Aceto, it was voted to amend the amount of this Resolution to \$15 million. Motion passed unanimously.

Roll call was taken on motion to recommend approval of this Resolution as amended and motion passed unanimously.

Resolution in opposition to proposed Pension Settlement Agreement. [\[click to view\]](#)

On motion by Councilman Botts, seconded by Council Vice-President Farina, it was voted to continue this Resolution. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Real Estate and Tangible Tax Abatements** [\[click to view\]](#)

On motion by Council Vice-President Farina, seconded by Councilman Aceto, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Abatements. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements** [\[click to view\]](#)

On motion by Council Vice-President Farina, seconded by Councilman Aceto, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Abatements. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Tax Interest Waiver Approvals** [\[click to view\]](#)

On motion by Council Vice-President Farina, seconded by Councilman Aceto, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Interest Waiver Approvals. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Tax Interest Waiver Denials** [\[click to view\]](#)

On motion by Council Vice-President Farina, seconded by Councilman Aceto, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Interest Waiver Denials. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees