

(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, September 17, 2015, in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 P.M. by the Chair.

Present Councilman Steven A. Stycos, Chair
 Council Majority Leader Paul H. Archetto, Vice-Chair
 Councilman Michael J Farina
 Councilman Donald Botts, Jr.
 Councilman Mario Aceto
 Council Vice-President Richard D. Santamaria, Jr.
 Council President John E. Lanni, Jr.

Also Present: Council Minority Leader Michael W. Favicchio
 Robert Coupe, Director of Administration/Acting Personnel Director
 Michael Glucksman, Assistant City Solicitor
 Robert Strom, Director of Finance
 Salvatore Saccoccio, Tax Assessor
 Maria Medeiros Wall, City Clerk
 Heather Finger, Stenographer

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Council President Lanni, seconded by Councilman Aceto, 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: None

Councilman Santamaria asked to take the following Ordinance out of order. There was no objection.

8-15-03 **Ordinance in amendment of Title 2 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Police Department" (Composition). Sponsored by Councilman Stycos.**
[\[click to view\]](#)

Council Vice-President Santamaria motioned to continue this Ordinance to next month's meeting since the Administration and Union are in negotiations on the Josefson issue. Council President Lanni seconded the motion for discussion purposes.

Under Discussion:

Council President Lanni agreed with Council Vice-President and also stated that what happened to Mr. Josefson was unethical, immoral and it should never have happened. If someone has been wronged as badly as Mr. Josefson has been, he thinks it is the Administration, the City Council and the Union's duty to put everyone's collective heads together to come up with a solution to this problem. This Ordinance is a step in the right direction. It is not perfect, but it sends a clear message to the Administration and the Union that this City Council is willing to work with everyone to accomplish what has to be done and that is to make Mr. Josefson a Sergeant again.

Councilman Farina stated that he will support the motion to continue this Ordinance. He does think there was a mis-character of justice in regards to Sergeant Josefson. He thinks that the City Council should support the negotiations between the Mayor and the Police Administration to right this. He would hope that by the next meeting we will have a finality to this.

Council President Lanni asked if there is a Sergeant list in place. Robert Santagata, President of IBPO, appeared to speak and stated that there is a list in place. Council President Lanni asked if Mr. Josefson is on that list. Mr. Santagata stated, no. He stated that he applauds the City Council's enthusiasm to get this done, but he does not want to see us put the cart before the horse and do something that is going to negatively impact the other 149 members that he represents that could be affected by something that was done.

Council President Lanni stated that if we go by this Ordinance and we were able to get Mr. Josefson back to the Sergeant position, he asked if we would be losing a Patrolman position. Mr. Santagata stated, yes. Council President Lanni stated that the way the City is today, he thinks we do not have enough Patrolmen. Mr. Santagata stated that by FBI standards, we are about 50 Patrolmen short of what we should have.

Councilman Farina stated that his feeling is if we followed through with this this evening, not only would we have a grievance from the Union, but a grievance from Sergeant Josefson who would not get the Sergeant position and potentially the person in line to be hired as a Patrolman. He feels it is better to let the negotiations take its course.

Councilman Botts stated that he will vote against the motion to table because he thinks it should be withdrawn. This City Council passed a Resolution last month urging the Administration to negotiate with the IBPO in regards to making Sergeant Josefson a Sergeant again and as Mr. Santagata stated earlier, we are putting the cart before the horse and putting ourselves in a position where something totally different may come out of that negotiation. The Committee may want to consider withdrawing this Ordinance and when negotiations are done, re-write this Ordinance.

Chair asked what happened to Mr. Josefson was a travesty of justice. He agrees to the continuance of this Ordinance.

Councilman Aceto asked Administration how soon this would be resolved. Mr. Coupe stated that at this point, he cannot answer this question. There was a preliminary meeting held with the Union representatives. He understands that Mr. Josefson has retained his own counsel and there are a number of parties that need to be involved in this. It depends on where each of these parties begins and how quickly they can all come together. His best estimate would be probably sixty days, that would be his hope. He asked that this question be asked of the Union President. He may have a better opinion on this. Mr. Santagata stated that he would guess November, but that is just a guess.

Council Vice-President Santamaria asked that this issue be addressed and resolved and this issue be put on the front burner. Mr. Josefson has waited a long time. What happened to this gentleman is just wrong. This is a different situation than a normal grievance. Sixty days is fine, but let's make that the maximum. Let's right a wrong.

Chair agreed with the continuance of this Ordinance and stated that he disagrees with the interpretation that someone has to be on the promotion list because he does not think this is a promotion. This is restoration of Mr. Josefson to a Sergeant. Councilman Botts stated that using that logic, if it is not a promotion and he is restored to his original position, why would we have to create a position for him and whoever took that position should bump down. This would create multiple grievances.

Roll call was taken on motion to continue this Ordinance to next month's meeting and motion passed on a vote of 6-1. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilman Stycos, Council Majority Leader Archetto, Councilman Farina, Council Vice-President Santamaria, Councilman Aceto and Council President Lanni -6. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilman Botts -1.

OLD BUSINESS:

5-15-02 Ordinance in amendment of Title 3 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Revenue and Finance" (Tax Exemption Elderly and Disabled). Councilman Stycos. [\[click to view\]](#) (Cont'd 7/16/2015 & 8/13/2015 for Tax Assessor's Report)

On motion by Council President Lanni, seconded by Councilman Stycos, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Mr. Saccoccio appeared to speak and stated that as he tried to explain to the Chair, a lot of what is being requested in the Ordinance is already being done in his Department. He stated that we had approximately 5,400 Elderly Exemptions. A Clerk in his office, who just retired, handled the Exemptions. He went through the list and tried to match them up with Motor Vehicle ownership. That list was cut down from 5,400 to approximately 900. That number was further reduced to approximately 200 when other person in the dwelling had a car registered to them. He checked with Canvassing's records and that 200 number came down to under 50. Out of the 50 people that did not have a car or were not registered voters, he personally went through other records in his Office and that number is under two dozen. He is currently in the process of verifying that they actually reside in their dwelling. He stated that his office is doing a good job as far as making sure that those people live and reside at the address and they get the Exemption.

Chair stated that he sees this Ordinance as an inconvenience to the people. This is over regulating the individuals who are in Cranston six to eight months out of the year and possibly go to Florida the remainder of the year. They generate our economy with the money they spend.

Council President Lanni stated that this Ordinance is more or less codifying what Mr. Saccoccio's Office is doing right now.

Mr. Saccoccio stated that he would be comfortable doing this research every two to three years. Every year is a little bit much. Just doing this research that he just did took approximately six months.

Councilman Farina asked Mr. Saccoccio what would be the right number that he would feel comfortable with doing this research if this Ordinance was to be adopted. Mr. Saccoccio stated that he does not think we really need a number, but if there were to be one, he would say five years.

Councilman Farina asked Chair if he would be willing to amend this Ordinance to have this done every five years. Chair stated, yes

On motion by Councilman Farina, seconded by Council Vice-President Santamaria, it was voted to amend this Ordinance as follows: line #53, delete "annually" and add "every five years". Motion passed unanimously.

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS/NEW BUSINESS:

Richard Tomlins, 400 Farmington Ave., appeared to speak and stated that of the 47 pages in the State Police Report, over 25% of that report was on Mr. Josefson and we are sitting around and talking about this issue as though this Officer is no more than a piece of wood. That was his life and that is his life today. There was injustice done to that man and to his family and we are sitting around postponing a decision based on a lot of technicalities. He should not only put back to Sergeant, but he should be made whole from the day he was demoted, he should be given the salary and benefits that he would have deserved.

- **Real Estate Tax Abatements** [\[click to view\]](#)
- **Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements** [\[click to view\]](#)
- **Tax Interest Waiver Approvals** [\[click to view\]](#)
- **Tax Interest Waiver Denials** [\[click to view\]](#)

On motion by Councilman Farina, seconded by Councilman Botts, it was voted to recommend approval of the above lists of Tax Abatements and Tax Interest Waivers as a block. Motion passed unanimously.

On motion by Councilman Farina, seconded by Council Vice-President Santamaria, it was voted to recommend approval of the above lists of Tax Abatements and Tax Interest Waivers. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maria Medeiros Wall, JD, City Clerk



Rosalba Zanni,

(Transcribed from audio CD)