

(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, October 15, 2015, in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 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.

Absent: Council President John E. Lanni, Jr.

Also Present: Council Minority Leader Michael W. Favicchio
 Councilman Christopher G. Paplauskas
 Carlos Lopez, Chief of Staff
 Robert Coupe, Director of Administration/Acting Personnel Director
 Evan Kirshenbaum, Assistant City Solicitor
 Robert Strom, Director of Finance
 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 Majority Leader Archetto, 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:

OLD BUSINESS:

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. (Cont. 9/17/2015).

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS/NEW BUSINESS:

9-15-02 Ordinance ratifying the LIUNA (Laborers International Union of North America) contract, Local 1322 (FY July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2018).

On motion by Councilman Aceto, seconded by Councilman Farina, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Mr. Coupe stated that the Administration feels this is a fair agreement. The Finance Director has provided a fiscal note indicating there are funds to pay for this contract and he asked for passage of this contract.

Chair asked Mr. Moretti to address the fiscal note. Mr. Moretti stated that he has not seen the detail of the fiscal note.

Chair asked Administration to address some of the concessions.

Mr. Coupe stated the following:

- Some management rights – the Administration requested including a change in length of time for call backs
- Change in obligation on members of the Union regarding call back list and Overtime
- Change in accrual of vacation days and payments to new employees to have benefits pro-rated rather than upfront
- Increase in health care co-payments by certain employees of the Union

Chair stated that this contract would increase cost by \$800,000 per year and during the three year period and there is going to be \$380,000 in savings of one time savings.

Mr. Strom stated that most of the employees are at their top step. Also, with people leaving, employees would be coming in at Step 1 in year 2017 and 2018. This will be a savings.

Council Minority Leader Favicchio stated that it seems like we are picking on small Unions who do not get paid much. We gave \$5,000 increases to the School Department Administration and a pretty decent contract to the Teachers and other Unions. He also stated that we need some sort of consistency on how we treat our Unions.

Councilman Farina stated that this seems like a fair contract.

Councilman Aceto echoed Councilman Farina's statement and stated that there are two Unions who are the backbone of the City, the Laborers and the other being the Teamsters, who confront the taxpayers every day and do not make a lot of money and he hopes to see a Teamsters contract coming before the City Council soon also.

Council Vice-President Santamaria and **Councilman Botts** both stated that these employees are out every day in all kind of weather working hard and they deserve more.

Council Majority Leader Archetto asked if longevity is still being given. Arthur Jordan, Business Agent for Local 1322, stated that anyone hired prior to 1995, which is approximately 21 members, receive longevity. Council Majority Leader Archetto stated that this is a deserved raise. They are out in bad weather working for all citizens.

Chair stated that he will be voting against this contract because the Administration continues to have fiscal notes that do not reflect long-term costs to the City. These employees do do a good job, but sees no rationale for 11% when cost of living is 0-1%.

Roll call was taken on motion to recommend approval of this Ordinance and motion passed on a vote of 5-1. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Council Majority Leader Archetto, Councilman Farina, Council Vice-President Santamaria, Councilmen Botts and Aceto -5. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilman Stycos -1.

**9-15-01 Ordinance authorizing the City to utilize Western Cranston Library
Impact Fees for Central Library Youth Services renovation.**

Edward Garcia, Library Director, appeared to speak.

Councilman Aceto asked what prompted this project and why was it not part of the Capital Project in this year's Budget. He also stated that he has received numerous complaints regarding the Oaklawn Library in regards to grass not being cut and paint peeling, which is an eyesore. Mr. Garcia stated that as to the Oaklawn Library, there have been a lot of issues in that building in the past year or so. Asbestos abatement had to be done and front windows had to be replaced. He also stated that painting is not a Capital Expense. He is looking to get estimates to have the building painted next Spring.

Councilman Aceto questioned the possibility of adding an additional branch in Western Cranston. Mr. Strom stated that in his opinion, he does not think we need an additional library. We have six in the City, we do not need seven. Councilman Aceto stated that if the Oaklawn branch is becoming a money pit, we not build a new branch in Western Cranston in another location.

Council Vice-President Santamaria asked Mr. Garcia if he would consider this request a nice to have or a need to have. Mr. Garcia stated that he would say it is a need to have because the population of the City does not have the space they need.

Council Minority Leader Favicchio asked how much usage the Oaklawn branch gets. Mr. Garcia stated that the children's program is busy, but other usage is down. Most of the people go to the Central Library. Council Minority Leader Favicchio asked what the percentage is of the usage of the Central Library versus the entire library system. Mr. Garcia stated approximately 80-85%.

Council Majority Leader Archetto asked for legal opinion if this can be done and where and how these funds will be used. Mr. Garcia stated that the funds of \$200,000 would be from the Champlain Foundation would be used for reallocating space in the Central Library. Council Majority Leader Archetto asked if there is an architectural design. Mr. Garcia stated, yes. Council Majority Leader Archetto asked that this be forwarded to the City Council.

Councilman Aceto asked if these fees have to be used for new construction because if that is what the Ordinance on the books states, they can't be used for what Mr. Garcia is proposing. He also stated that he is opposed to this Ordinance.

Council Vice-President Santamaria asked Mr. Garcia if this additional space is needed for the operation of the Library. Mr. Garcia stated that he believes, yes, for the future of the Library to have adequate space for the children.

Councilman Botts stated that he would love for this project to go through, but he would not want problems caused by using Impact Fees that are meant for new construction, to be used for re-allocating space of an existing building.

Councilman Aceto asked Solicitor if he knows how the Ordinance in question reads as far as use of Impact Fees for Western Cranston.

On motion by Councilman Aceto, seconded by Council Vice-President Santamaria, it was voted to continue this Ordinance to next month's meeting.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Farina asked Administration for a written legal opinion from the Solicitor as to whether these Impact Fees can be used for this purpose or not. **Mr. Garcia** will send out the plans.

Councilman Aceto asked also for answer to the question if the property is sold, where do the funds go and who can dispose of the property.

Roll call was taken on motion to continue this Ordinance to next month's meeting and motion passed on a vote of 5-1. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmen Stycos, Farina, Council Vice-President Santamaria, Councilmen Botts and Aceto -5. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Council Majority Leader Archetto -1.

Councilman Stycos left meeting at 7:50 P.M.

Vice-Chair conducted the remainder of the meeting.

- **Real Estate Tax Abatements**

On motion by Councilman Aceto, seconded by Council Vice-President Santamaria, it was voted to recommend approval of the above list of Real Estate Tax Abatements. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements**

On motion by Councilman Aceto, seconded by Council Vice-President Santamaria, it was voted to recommend approval of the above list of Real Estate Tax Abatements. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Tax Assessment Board of Review Decisions as of December 31, 2014**

No action needed.

- **Tax Interest Waiver Approvals**

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

Administration to report on funding for tree cutting budget (Councilman Stycos and Council Majority Leader Archetto). Referred from Public Works Committee 10/5/2015.

Mr. Strom stated that we have a budget of approximately \$115,000 for care of trees. To date, we are well over budget due to the micro burst storm we had a few months ago. If it is an emergency, and something has to be done, it will be addressed, even though we are in the red. We usually take care of transfers during the fourth quarter transfers.

Councilman Botts asked if the Rainy Day Fund can be used to offset those costs. **Mr. Strom** stated that we have the money to do it, but we would have to wait until the end of the fiscal year to do a transfer. You would have to take it on a case by case basis. If it is an emergency and safety issue, it will be addressed.

Council Vice-President Santamaria asked if the City has applied to the State for reimbursement for the micro burst storm. **Mr. Coupe** stated that Providence County did not qualify so there was nothing to apply to from FEMA.

Administrative report on current tipping fees and city's recycling revenues and any proposed changes. Councilman Aceto

Councilman Aceto asked if tipping fees are increasing and what they are going up to and what is that going to add to the deficit. Mr. Coupe stated that two weeks ago, the Mayor sent a letter to RIRRC protesting their initial proposal of increase in tipping fees to projected \$57 per ton. It will not affect this year's and next year's budget. Councilman Aceto asked if the City Council can do anything to start lobbying the State Senators and Representatives to stop this. Mr. Coupe stated that any outreach would be helpful.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees