

(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 Monday, February 6, 2017, in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by the Chair.

Present Council Vice-President Michael W. Favicchio, Chair
 Councilman Kenneth J. Hopkins, Vice-Chair
 Councilman Christopher G. Paplauskas
 Councilman Paul J. McAuley
 Council President Michael J Farina

Absent: Councilman Trent M. Colford, Sr.

Also Present: Councilman Steven A. Stycos
 Councilman John E. Lanni, Jr.
 Councilman Paul H. Archetto
 Jeffrey Barone, Director of Constituent Affairs
 J. Patrick O'Neill, Assistant City Solicitor
 Robert Strom, Director of Finance
 Christopher Hallstrom, City Council Internal Auditor
 Maria Medeiros Wall, City Clerk
 Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
 Ron Ronzio, Stenographer

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, 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:

PUBLIC HEARINGS/NEW BUSINESS:

- **Real Estate Tax Abatements**

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to recommend approval of the above list of Tax Abatements as recommended by City Assessor. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements**

On motion by Councilman Paplauskas, seconded by Council President Farina, it was voted to recommend approval of the above list of Tax Abatements as recommended by City Assessor. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Tangible Abatements**

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to recommend approval of the above list of Tax Abatements as recommended by City Assessor. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Tax Interest Waiver Approvals**

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to recommend approval of the above list of Tax Interest Waiver Approvals as recommended by City Treasurer. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Tax Interest Waiver Denials**

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to recommend approval of the above list of Tax Interest Waiver Denials as recommended by City Treasurer. Motion passed unanimously.

AUDIT COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

- **John T. Cimino**

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to appoint John T. Cimino as a member of the Audit Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Robert A. DiStefano, Jr.**

Council President Farina stated that Mr. DiStefano was appointed to the Board of Contract and Purchase and will not be able to serve on this Committee.

No action taken.

- **Michael L. Forcino, CPA MST**

City Clerk indicated that there is a scrivener's error and the first name should be Michelle. She apologized to Ms. Forcino.

On motion by Council President Farina, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to appoint Michelle Forcino as a member of the Audit Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

1-17-03 Ordinance in amendment of Title 2 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Administration and Personnel/Municipal Court" (Judges Salaries). Sponsored by Council President Farina. Referred to Finance Committee 2/6/2017.

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

Under Discussion:

Councilman Stycos asked if this is a financial wash. Council President Farina stated, yes. He also stated that the Chief Judge's salary and the two Associate Judge's salary are being reduced.

Councilman Lanni asked if there are currently night sessions. Assistant Solicitor O'Neill stated, yes. He believes they are adding more night sessions to make it more convenient for people that work during the day to attend Court.

Council President Farina stated that after speaking to the Chief Judge, there was one evening session on Thursdays. The goal is to have more evening sessions to make it more convenient for people because what they found before was that people were not just showing up to pay their fine.

No one appeared to oppose.

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

1-17-04 Ordinance in amendment of Title 2.40.020 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Administration and Personnel/Municipal Court" (Appointment, Term and Qualifications of Judge of the Municipal Court). Sponsored by Council President Farina. Referred to Finance Committee 2/6/2017.

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

Under Discussion:

Council President Farina stated that this Ordinance adds two more Judges.

No one appeared to oppose.

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

1-17-06 Ordinance ratifying School Committee's Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Cranston Teachers' Alliance, Local 1704, AFT (Teachers' Unit – Fiscal Years 2017-2019). Introduced pursuant to Charter Sec. 11.02.1. Referred to Finance Committee 2/6/2017.

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

Under Discussion:

Councilman Hopkins stated that he has relatives who are or would be impacted by these salaries and would like a legal opinion on whether he should vote on this Ordinance or not. Assistant Solicitor O'Neill stated that as long as the person is part of a class and is not the only one impacted, he can vote on this.

Council President Farina stated that his wife is a Teacher's Aide and he had obtained an Ethics Commission opinion and Assistant Solicitor O'Neill is correct. He can forward a copy of this opinion to Councilman Hopkins if he would like.

Joseph Balducci, School Department Chief Financial Officer, appeared to speak and stated that this is a straight extension with a contract raise.

Councilman Stycos asked why a committee is being formed. School Superintendent Jeannine Nota-Masse appeared to speak and stated that at the High School level, they needed to address issues of programming, especially for the Career and Technical Center. At the Middle School level, they needed to accommodate additional students from when sixth graders were moved to the Elementary Schools. The main reason for changing the schedule is they were not able to service the kids. Councilman Stycos asked how students are not being served under the current schedule. Superintendent Nota-Masse stated that at the Middle School, the students right now do not have access to all the arts, music and technology that the schools have in place. She also stated that right now, the schedule makes it very difficult for teachers to do that. As to the two-year extension of the contract, there is a 2% raise and second year is contingent upon the schedule changes.

Councilman Paplauskas asked Mr. Strom for any comments. Mr. Strom stated that he met with Mr. Balducci and he feels confident with all three contracts.

Council Vice-President Favicchio asked what the fiscal impact would be. Mr. Balducci stated the following:

- Teachers Unit – 2017/2018 - approximately \$1.7 million
 - 2018/2019 - approximately \$1.8 million
- Teacher Assistants - approximately \$74,000
- Technical Assistants - approximately \$99,000

No one appeared to oppose.

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

1-17-07 Ordinance ratifying School Committee’s Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Cranston Teachers’ Alliance, Local 1704, AFT (Teacher Assistant/Bus Aides Unit – Fiscal Years 2017-2018). Introduced pursuant to Charter Sec. 11.02.1. Referred to Finance Committee 2/6/2017.

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

Under Discussion:

Council Vice-President Favicchio asked how many members are affected by this contract. Raymond Votto, School Department Chief Operating Officer, appeared to speak and stated, approximately 185.

No one appeared to oppose.

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

1-17-08 Ordinance ratifying School Committee’s Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Cranston Teachers’ Alliance, Local 1703, AFT (Technical Assistants Unit – Fiscal Years 2017-2018). Introduced pursuant to Charter Sec. 11.02.1. Referred to Finance Committee 2/6/2017.

No one appeared to oppose.

On motion by Councilman Paplauskas, seconded by Council President Farina, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance. Motion passed unanimously.

Administration update on “Discovery trail/historic marker grant” – Councilman Stycos. Referred from City Council 1/23/2017.

Mr. Barone stated that the original idea was to place markers all over the City. Subsequently, he met with the Library Director and Sandra Moyer from the Library and came up with the idea to create a walking trail. The Grant was for approximately \$15,000 and the signs and printing were priced. He also stated that once the signs are completed, we will do the installations. We will start at the Sprague Mansion and go down Cranston St to the Joy Homestead. We will be applying for further Grants and do other areas in the City, such as Edgewood.

Policy on use of City electronic devices

Council President Farina stated that former Council Vice-President Santamaria had asked if he could purchase his iPad and was told the cost would be approximately \$350 to purchase it even though it would be absolute. It probably is worth approximately \$50. City Clerk stated that issues that have come up is lost, stolen or damaged iPads. She indicated that she asked that this issue be placed on the agenda and discussed on how the Council would like these issues handled.

Council President Farina stated that since the Rules Committee will be meeting, maybe this issue could be addressed in the Council Rules.

Council President Farina asked if there is a motion to have former Council Vice-President Santamaria keep his \$50 iPad. Council Vice-President Favicchio stated that maybe the Council can put a value on them so when the Council members leave office, they can purchase them for a price.

Councilman Paplauskas stated that the Council should take depreciation into consideration.

No motions were made.

Councilman Stycos asked that Mr. Strom provide for the next Council meeting a report on Municipal Court and fees to the State.

Councilman Archetto asked that the following item be placed on the next Finance agenda: purchasing park benches on Rolfe St.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees