

(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 5, 2018, 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 Councilman Trent M. Colford, Sr.
 Councilman Christopher G. Paplauskas
 Councilman Paul J. McAuley
 Councilman Kenneth J. Hopkins, Vice-Chair
 Council Vice-President Michael W. Favicchio, Chair
 Council President Michael J Farina

Also Present: Councilman John E. Lanni, Jr.
 Councilman Steven A. Stycos
 Councilman Paul H. Archetto
 Robin Muksian, Director of Administration
 Robert Strom, Director of Finance
 John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor
 Maria Medeiros Wall, City Clerk
 Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees

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:

Computerization:

- *Land Records on line access – Status report from City Clerk*

City Clerk stated that she and Maria Giarrusso had a conference call with the vendor on January 12th and they did a demo on the new online access system to land records. Our land records are currently on the web but we do not allow access as there is no software module in place to charge for those records. There is a billing module available but it requires a major upgrade of our existing system. Any upgrade would be towards the end of the year.

Chair stated that the issue is do we want to offer those records for free. This should be discussed further. He would like the Tax Collector, Dave Capuano's input, since he did an upgrade in his department recently.

City Clerk stated that she checked with the City of Warwick and their share in revenue for online copies is \$8,300 for a six month period.

Chair asked that more information be provided for next month's meeting.

- *Video streaming of meetings – Status report from Dir. Strom*

Mr. Strom stated that he met with Jay Rosenfield of ClerkBase and he discussed some of the video streaming and some of the things that could be beneficial to us and provided copies to the Committee. He stated that at this point, Mr. Rosenfield provided him with a breakdown of some of the benefits. Mr. Strom also stated that he believes there may be a State Bill, which may mandate cities and towns to have all the meetings videoed for transparency. Because of this, he suggested holding off until we see what happens on the State level and in the meantime, he can continue to discuss this with Mr. Rosenfield. Mr. Strom also stated that he is concerned about the cost that we would be adding, because there is a cost involved and preliminary it would be \$8,000 a year according to Mr. Rosenfield, which he believes is just for the Council meetings.

City Clerk stated that this same legislation was introduced last year as well. The Clerk's Association has sent a letter in opposition in passage of the bill in that it is an unfunded mandate to the cities and towns and it is still pending again this year.

Mr. Strom stated that there was discussion of possibly videotaping the budget hearings. He does not think it is worthwhile having the budget hearings videotaped. The responses we get for the budget hearings is minimal. The only hearing that draws a lot of people is education, which is held at Cranston High School East. He is concerned about the costs that we are adding and what is the benefit of the costs that we are adding for something like that.

Council President Farina asked Mr. Strom, for the next meeting, provide a proposal from Mr. Rosenfield of the costs of videotaping all the Committee meetings and Council meetings so we can look at it and look at the expenses as opposed to just the benefits. He also asked that this proposal include costs for both with and without the budget sessions.

Councilman Stycos asked what we are currently paying the videographer for the Council meetings. Mr. Strom stated \$15 per hour, approximately \$105 per month.

City Clerk stated that she thought the figure Mr. Rosenfield provided included the committee meetings, but regardless, one of the factors in whatever proposal he gives was we are talking about video streaming and we would have to purchase the equipment, which is the cameras. She looks at this as eliminating the need for a videographer. Some cities and towns do the video streaming through ClerkBase and still have a videographer because they use multiple cameras for different angles and that requires the videographer to then splice the films. When she spoke to Mr. Rosenfield this morning, she suggested that if we are going to go this route, it makes more sense to have a stagnant panoramic camera capture the body because the audio is the most important component. That way, it would reduce the cost and would eliminate us having a videographer.

Councilman Lanni stated that this is a lot less than what we would pay for ClerkBase. He questioned why we can't use the same videographer to tape our budget meetings.

Council President Farina asked that Council Vice-President Favicchio contact the videographer to see if he is available to video the budget hearings once the budget hearing schedule is established.

Councilman Paplauskas stated that he is in favor of having at least the major departments budget hearings videotaped.

Councilman Archetto stated that as to streamlining the meetings, he thinks we need to do that for the public for transparency.

Councilman Stycos asked what the status is of the teleprompter for the Council Chambers to be used during the meetings to display agendas for the public during the meetings. City Clerk stated that she made the inquiry to the Purchasing Agent to see what was available and she has not heard back from him.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/NEW BUSINESS:

***Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) Pending Litigation
Scott Bergantino v Valetta and City of Cranston
Administration report including operational and legal costs to date***

On motion by Councilman McAuley, seconded by Councilman Lanni, it was voted to go into Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2).

Under Discussion:

Councilman Stycos questioned why the Committee is going into Executive Session. Chair stated that this is a pending litigation and it is the Solicitor's recommendation to go into Executive Session just to discuss finances and not the case or the personnel. Councilman Stycos stated that his concern is he does not want the City Council members to say they can't talk about the costs because they were given in Executive Session.

Director Muksian stated that, according to the Call of this meeting, at this point, she is not sure the Administration can give anything more than the costs

Council President Farina stated that the Executive Session was called to give Councilman Stycos latitude to ask questions that he tried to ask at the last Council meeting, which could lead to the pending litigation.

Councilman Stycos stated that if there are no additional costs to report on and we can't discuss personnel matter, he does not see any reason to go into Executive Session.

Mr. Strom stated that he has no further update from the amount he gave at the last meeting and he has not received any additional legal bills at this point.

Motion to go into Executive Session and second were withdrawn.

Video taping/streaming of Finance Budget hearings. Vice President Favicchio

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

Meshanticut Valley/Dean Parkway/Budlong – Adm. report on RI DOT TIP status

Director Muksian stated that she is looking into this and will report next month.

Real Estate Tax Abatements

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

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

Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

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

1-18-01 Ordinance amending the 2018 Capital Budget to include renovations at Hope Highlands Middle School Softball Field. Sponsored by Councilman Colford.

Chair stated that this Ordinance is being withdrawn by sponsor.

Council President Farina announced that since this Ordinance was withdrawn, there is no need for Special Council meeting, which was scheduled for 7:30 p.m. this evening.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosalba Zanni".

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees

(audio recorded – 1cd)