

**SPECIAL FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**(BUDGET HEARINGS)**

Special meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Tuesday, April 8, 2008 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 869 Park Ave., Cranston, Rhode Island.

The meeting was called to order at 630 P.M. by the Chair.

Present: Councilman Terence Livingston, Chair  
Council Vice-President Paula McFarland, Vice-Chair  
Councilman Jeffrey P. Barone (left meeting at 9:00 P.M.)  
Councilman Emilio L. Navarro (appeared at 7:05 P.M.)  
Councilman Anthony J. Lupino  
Council President Aram G. Garabedian (left at 8:10 P.M.)

Also Present: Councilman Richard D. Santamaria, Jr.  
Ernest Carlucci, Director of Administration  
Frank Migliorelli, Deputy Director of Administration  
Charles Garganese, Jr., Assistant City Solicitor  
Corsino Delgado, Director of Finance  
Mike Igoe, City Controller  
Steve Woerner, City Council Internal Auditor  
Maria Medeiros Wall, City Clerk  
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees  
Tracy Shepard, Stenographer

**Public Speakers:**

**Walter Skorupski**, 7 Wessex St., appeared to speak and stated that he is an employee of the City and a member of the Teamsters Union. He appeared to speak on behalf and in support of his co-workers in the Engineering Division. He stated that the Union has provided the Council with a packet of a biography of this department and he asked that the Council review this packet.

**Lynne Furney**, Steward and member of the Teamsters Union and employee in the City Planning Department, appeared to speak and stated that she and three other Planners in her office deal with the Engineering Division on a daily basis. If a private engineering firm were hired as of July 2, 2008, the private firm would not have the vested interest in the projects in the City of Cranston. There are currently approximately nineteen developments or sub-divisions in the process in the City, and bringing in an outside consultant, that firm would not have the vested interest in the projects. Ms. Furney stated that she resides in the Town of Gloucester, which does not have an Engineering Department and the private firm they hire charge between \$25 to \$200 per hour depending on what services are requested. Her estimate in eliminating this Division in the City of Cranston would not be a cost saving to the City.

**Jason Pezzullo**, employee of the City Planning Department, appeared to speak and echoed the remarks made by Ms. Furney.

### **BOARD OF CANVASSERS**

**Jackie Caruolo**, City Registrar, appeared to speak.

**Chair** asked Ms. Caruolo if polling places could be consolidated in order to save money. Ms. Caruolo stated that this is a possibility. Precincts could be consolidated, not polling locations. There is pending legislation, one to be heard tomorrow allowing for consolidation.

**Council Vice-President McFarland** asked that Ms. Caruolo provide the Council with the fees her office charges to see if anything could be increased. Ms. Caruolo stated that she will check with the members of the Board of Canvassers and provide this information to the Council.

**Council Vice-President McFarland** asked why the maintenance contract has increased. Ms. Caruolo stated that the copier contract requires we pay so much per hour. Because it is an election year, we provide candidates with copies.

### **PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**David Macksam**, Director, and Nancy Davis, member of the Library Board of Trustees, appeared to speak. Mr. Macksam stated that the changes to this budget are:

- Salary \$36.45 difference
- Hospitalization reduced by \$349.00
- Group Life Insurance - \$292.00
- Library Supplies - \$6,000
- Operation of Library – reduction of \$7,000
- \$17,000 definitely needs to be restored

## **SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND**

**Anthony Sylvia**, Director of Public Works, appeared to speak.

**Council Vice-President McFarland** questioned if the privatization line item is increased enough. Mr. Sylvia stated that he expects it will be. Council Vice-President McFarland asked what the percentage increase is in last year's budget. Mr. Sylvia stated that in this budget, it is marked as a decrease. Council Vice-President questioned why the revenues for the Pre-Treatment Plant seem to be a little lower than the past. Mr. Delgado stated that there is no sewer increase for rate due to growth. Council Vice-President McFarland indicated that the School Sewer Fees shows -0-. An amount should be reflected in this budget and offset somewhere else. She asked Administration that this be corrected.

## **INSPECTIONS & ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW**

**Steve Rioles**, Acting Building Official, appeared to speak and presented two handouts regarding proposed increase in fees. Council Vice-President McFarland asked Mr. Rioles which community he compared these increases to. Mr. Rioles stated that we are up in the top five in the State. We compared them to Providence.

**Gary Stepalavich** appeared to speak.

**Council Vice-President McFarland** asked if any State Statutes have to be changes for these increases as to the Zoning Board of Review fees. Mr. Rioles stated that he is not sure. This would have to be checked into.

**Councilman Navarro** asked what percentage was used in coming up with the increases. Mr. Stepalavich stated that they just bumped up the fees a little.

**Mr. Rioles** stated that these fees have not been increased since July, 2003.

**Councilman Navarro** stated that he is concerned about these increases after five years now that times are hard. They should have been increased a little every year.

**Councilman Lupino** addressed the answers to question 13 of the Chair's questionnaire that was sent to all the departments. He stated that he appreciates the time put into these answers.

**Councilman Navarro** asked where this department will be in revenues by the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Stepalavich stated that where this department is right now, is this department will be down \$400,000 in revenues. Councilman Navarro asked where this department will be under expenses. Mr. Stepalavich stated that they expect to be between \$212,000 to \$250,000 under-budget on the expenses, mainly due to the fact that four vacancy positions have not been filled.

## **PARKS & RECREATION**

**Anthony Liberatore**, Director of Parks and Recreation, appeared to speak. Council Vice-President McFarland stated that there is a differential in the line item in the amount of \$20,000. She questioned what this is for. Mr. Liberatore stated that he has to use laborers to take crew out, since he has no foreman. He stated that the City has 139 locations that Parks and Recreation is responsible for. They have three vendors, Shalvey Brothers Landscaping, who has 54 locations; Town & Country, who has 32 locations; Weed & Feed, who has 24 locations. These are all contractual.

**Council Vice-President McFarland** addressed revenues from the Ice Rink. Mr. Liberatore stated that the following funds have been received: \$20,000 in January; \$12,000 for the month of February and \$2,000 for the month of March. Historically, April, May, June, July and August have been the slowest. We are booked solid for the months of April, May, June and July. The Dome Rink is shut down now.

**Chair** questioned if the City could save money as to the recreational sites by maintaining them ourselves. Mr. Liberatore stated that we can maintain them ourselves, but he would need approximately eight more employees and other equipment. It would cost more for us to do it.

**Councilman Navarro** stated that there is quite an increase in proposed revenues compared to the current. Mr. Liberatore stated that the projected revenues for this fiscal year was \$219,500. City deposits made to this date is \$86,366.15. In the next two and a half months, between playground registrations, tennis, arts and crafts and others, we would be bringing in \$224,116.15, in his best estimate.

**Councilman Navarro** asked Mr. Liberatore if he expects to meet the projected budget on the expenditure side. Mr. Liberatore stated that he will spend every dime before June 30<sup>th</sup>, but he will not have a shortfall.

## **SENIOR SERVICES**

**Terry Murphy**, Director of Senior Services, appeared to speak.

**Council Vice-President McFarland** asked Ms. Murphy if there has been an increase in people attending the Center. Mr. Murphy stated that over the past year, the number of attendees has increased. Council Vice-President McFarland asked what the percentage of increase is from last year. Ms. Murphy stated approximately 10% increase.

**Councilman Navarro** asked Ms. Murphy if there is any line item that she expects to go over in reference to expenditures. Ms. Murphy stated that they are just about on track. She does not foresee going over. Councilman Navarro asked Ms. Murphy if she foresees not meeting the projected revenues for this fiscal year. Ms. Murphy stated, no, she should meet all the revenues projected.

## **REFUSE & CARE OF TREES**

**Anthony Sylvia**, Director of Public Works, appeared to speak and stated that there is a new program being proposed, “no bin no trash”, whereby, if there is no bin placed on sidewalk, the trash will not be picked up. Also, if bin is half full, trash will also not be picked up.

**Councilman Navarro** asked who would remove a dead tree and stump. **Nick Capezza**, Chief Engineer, appeared to speak and stated that our private contractor would be responsible for removing a tree and grinding the stump to the ground. As to removing the stump below the ground, the City does not do that. Councilman Navarro asked if Mr. Capezza knows how many trees in the City have been removed by the City which the stumps have not been removed. Mr. Capezza stated that all trees removed by the contractor have the stump removed to the ground.

## **BUILDING MAINTENANCE**

**George David**, Superintendent of Building Maintenance, appeared to speak.

**Council Vice-President McFarland** asked Mr. David if the new Police Station recycles. Mr. David stated that he does not know. Mr. Carlucci stated that it has been noticed that they do not have a good recycling rate, but it is increasing and getting better.

## **HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE**

**Ernest DePari**, Superintendent of Highway, appeared to speak and stated that there have been discussions regarding the repairs to the roads and there have been numerous claims filed regarding road repairs and damage to cars. He stated that Providence Water has done work on roads and have not repaired the roads properly, which cause claims to be filed with the City.

**Chair** asked that either the City Clerk or the Administration follow up on the ideas the department heads have given and try to get some of these ideas implemented.

**Mr. Carlucci** stated that he and the Public Works Director have met with Providence Water in regards to repairing roads that they do work on. There is legislation pending to have Providence Water included with the rest of the utilities to do final patch work. He asked for the Council to contact the General Assembly supporting this bill. **Council Vice-President McFarland** suggested that the Council pass a Resolution to the General Assembly supporting this bill.

**Council Vice-President McFarland** addressed the snow removal and asked Mr. Sylvia how he expects to close the gap in next year's budget. Mr. Sylvia stated that work and expense wise, it was a very busy winter. As far as the proposal for the next fiscal year, there is no way to tell what next winter is going to be like, it is only an estimate.

**Council Vice-President McFarland** stated that this Division will be taking on additional responsibilities. She asked where those line items are going to be addressed. Mr. Sylvia stated that they would be a reflected increase in the Salary line items. Those expenses have been shifted over to the Highway Division.

**Councilman Barone** asked for an update on the camera for storm drains. Mr. Sylvia stated that progress is continuing and he is still working with Veolia. The proposal has not changed, but progress has been made.

## **FLEET MANAGEMENT**

**Gerard Scotti**, Fleet Manager, appeared to speak. Councilman Lupino asked Mr. Scotti if he feels he will be over in expenses in this year's budget. Mr. Scotti stated that right now, it looks like he is going to meet the current budget. Councilman Lupino stated that recently, a vehicle was stolen at the garage and it was determined that the security cameras were not operating. He asked if this has been corrected. Mr. Sylvia stated that the security is an issued that he is discussing with the owner of the property. Councilman Lupino stated that he was advised that the City is prevented by Charter that it can't sell excess vehicles, he asked if this is correct. Mr. Woerner stated that that may have to be advertised in a local newspaper. That may be an issue. Chair stated that that may be a legal question.

## **TRAFFIC SAFETY**

**David Ferguson**, Public Safety Engineer, appeared to speak.

**Chair** stated that a traffic study was to be done in the Edgewood area. He asked if the Administration is looking for a traffic study for this area. Mr. Carlucci stated that he is sure we could allocate funds and Mr. Ferguson is the person who would look at the problems and everything depends on finance. He is sure we could start an original proposal to look at this.

**Councilman Lupino** stated that there has been a recent increase in enforcement of the Ordinance passed regarding discharge to City streets from homes. He indicated that we are not looking for revenues with this Ordinance, we are looking at preserving safety during the Winter months. He asked if there are any cases where a home is grandfathered in. Mr. Ferguson stated that under the Ordinance, we are allowed to charge people a certain amount per day.

**Council Vice-President McFarland** asked what the bumping mechanism will be if the Engineering Division is dissolved. Mr. Sylvia stated that the Engineering Division has engineers who he does not know if they can bump anyone. There is a Principal Clerk in this office, who may be able to bump other Principal Clerks. **Nick Capezza**, Chief Engineer, appeared to speak and stated that this is a question for the Personnel Department and Union Representatives. Council Vice-President McFarland asked how these changes in the Public Works Department relate to the Charter. Mr. Sylvia stated that, in reading the Charter, we are in compliance. Council Vice-President McFarland asked if there is a legal opinion regarding this issue. Mr. Carlucci stated that he does not have a written legal opinion. In reading the Charter, we are in compliance as to the Chief Engineer and the Traffic Engineer, but he will provide a legal opinion.

**Councilman Navarro** asked if there is a plan in place on how those two departments will operate with all the duties and job functions and services. Mr. Sylvia stated that the plan is to condense those two divisions. The Traffic Safety program will be changed and "Traffic Safety" position under Public Works will be changed to the "Traffic Analyst" and will have different duties than the current position, such as not having supervisory duties. The three employees currently under the "Traffic Safety" will become part of the Highway Division. The "Traffic Analyst" duties will be to aid him and the duties of traffic studies will remain the same.

**Council Vice-President McFarland** asked how many projects we have coming up that would require some type of engineering studies. Mr. Sylvia stated that he does not have the information as to new developments. Council Vice-President McFarland stated that there is no line item in the Public Works budget for consultants. She questioned where the funds would come from for engineering consultants.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

**Anthony Sylvia**, Director of Public Works, appeared to speak. Council Vice-President McFarland asked what the \$80,000 grant would offset. Mr. Sylvia stated through RI Resource Recovery to supplement City funds to enhance the recycling program.

**Councilman Navarro** questioned why there is no request for this coming fiscal year for Capital Lease of Equipment and Vehicles. Mr. Sylvia stated that his understanding is the leases have been paid off and that is why there is no request for the upcoming fiscal year. Councilman Navarro questioned why Office Expenses is over-budgeted in the current budget. Mr. Sylvia stated that he does not have the details regarding this.

## **CITY CLERK & PROBATE**

**Maria Medeiros Wall**, City Clerk, appeared to speak. Councilman Navarro asked if there will be a surplus in the year to date expenses or will it go over-budget. Ms. Wall stated that we will not be over-budget. She is under-budget approximately 20% on the expenditure side. Councilman Navarro asked Ms. Wall if she sees any line item that would have a significant reduction in the Revenue side. Ms. Wall stated that there will be a significant reduction of approximately \$600,000. We are going to be under-budget on the Revenue side because of reduction in Land Evidence recordings. The Expenditures in the next fiscal year budget Real Estate Tax is the biggest reduction.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni  
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees