

*(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, June 16, 2011 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

### **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 P.M. by the Chair.

Present: Council Vice-President Robert J. Pelletier  
Councilman Steven A. Stycos, Vice-Chair  
Councilman James E. Donahue  
Councilman Paul H. Archetto  
Councilman Michael W. Favicchio (appeared at 7:00 P.M.)  
Council President Anthony J. Lupino

Absent: Councilman Emilio L. Navarro, Chair

Also Present: Councilman Richard D. Santamaria, Jr.  
Robin Muksian-Schutt, Director of Administration  
Gerald Cordy, Deputy Director of Administration  
Evan Kirshenbaum, Assistant City Solicitor  
Robert Strom, Finance Director  
Steve Woerner, 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 Donahue, seconded by Council President Lupino, 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:**

**Chair** indicated that Councilman Favicchio had a prior engagement and will be late.

**Chair** asked that Tax Incentive Application for 1591 Cranston St., LLC and Dr. John A. Volpe for Five Year Commercial Tax Incentive be taken out of order. No one objected. [\[click here to view\]](#)

On motion by Council President Lupino, seconded by Councilman Donahue, it was voted to recommend approval of this Tax Incentive Application.

Under Discussion:

**Lawrence DiBoni**, Director of Economic Development, appeared to speak and stated that this is a Five Year Tax Incentive. This Tax Incentive is for increase on the assessment of taxes and is only on the building and improvement to the building. Increase of one to two full-time doctors and two staff members.

**Dr. Volpe** appeared to speak.

**Councilman Stycos** stated that if this application is granted, it would be a \$3,000 per year tax break, which would mean \$3,000 per year that is not available for public education or for libraries or for the Police Department.

**Salvatore Saccoccio**, City Assessor, appeared to speak and stated that the Tax Incentive is not \$3,000 each year of the program. The First year, Dr. Volpe would pay 25%, the second year, 25%, third year, 60%, the fourth year, 75% and the fifth year 90% of the total.

**Deloris Issler**, 108 Eldridge St., appeared to speak on behalf of the Tea Party and fully in support of this application. The \$3,000 will not save our schools. Our schools are in trouble because of the contracts.

**Valerie Schuele**, 27 Farm St., appeared to speak and stated to the Council that they should be welcoming Dr. Volpe in what he is requesting and thank him for what he is doing and grant this application.

No one appeared to oppose.

Roll call was taken on motion to recommend approval of this Tax Incentive Application and motion passed on a vote of 3-1. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmen Donahue, Archetto and Council Vice-President Pelletier -3. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilman Stycos -1.

**Chair** asked that Advice and Consent of Mayor's appointment of Christopher Rawson and William McKenna be taken out of order. No one objected.

**Advice and Consent** of Mayor's appointment of Christopher Rawson as Cranston City Solicitor.

**Ms. Schutt** appeared to speak and introduced Christopher Rawson.

**Christopher Rawson** appeared to speak and gave his background. No one appeared to oppose.

On motion by Council President Lupino, seconded by Councilman Donahue, it was voted to recommend approval of the advice and consent of the Mayor's appointment of Christopher Rawson as Cranston City Solicitor.

Under Discussion:

**Council President Lupino** asked Attorney Rawson, as Solicitor, whom does he represent. Attorney Rawson stated that he represents the City of Cranston, as well as the City Council and the Mayor.

**Council President Lupino** asked Attorney Rawson what his position is on the City Council being apprised of any pending litigation. Attorney Rawson stated that if he is confirmed, he would have to obtain a master list of pending litigations from present Solicitor and then he can give the City Council a general list of what is out there.

Roll call was taken on motion to approve the Mayor's advice and consent of appointment of Christopher Rawson as Cranston City Solicitor and motion passed unanimously.

**Advice and Consent** of Mayor's appointment of William McKenna as Cranston Fire Chief.

**Ms. Schutt** appeared to speak and introduced William McKenna.

**William McKenna** appeared to speak and gave his background.

**Paul Valletta**, President of Local 1363, appeared to speak in favor of this advice and consent.

No one appeared to oppose.

On motion by Council Vice-President Pelletier, seconded by Councilman Archetto, it was voted to recommend approval of the advice and consent of the Mayor's appointment of William McKenna as Cranston Fire Chief. Motion passed unanimously.

**Chair** asked that Ordinance 4-11-4 be taken out of order. No one objected.

**4-11-4** Ordinance ratifying School Committee's collective bargaining agreement with the Teachers Assistants/Bus Aides and Technical Assistants Unit (School Years 2010-2011 – 2012-2013). [\[click here to view\]](#) (Cont. 5/12/2011).

**Ray Votto**, Chief Operating Officer; Joe Balducci, School Business Manager and Attorney Ron Cascione appeared to speak.

**Councilman Santamaria** asked what the co-share is. Mr. Votto stated, 2010 – 10%, 2011 – 12% and 2013 – 15%. **Councilman Stycos** inquired on School buybacks.

On motion by Councilman Stycos, seconded by Councilman Archetto, it was voted to recommend approval of the above Ordinance. Motion passed on a vote of 4-0 with 1 recusal. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmen Stycos, Archetto, Donahue and Council Vice-President Pelletier -4. Councilman Favicchio recused.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

**4-11-4** Ordinance ratifying School Committee’s collective bargaining agreement with the Teachers Assistants/Bus Aides and Technical Assistants Unit (School Years 2010-2011 – 2012-2013). [\[click here to view\]](#) (Cont. 5/12/2011).

Discussed and voted on earlier in the meeting.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Tax Interest Waiver Approvals**

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

- **Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements**

On motion by Councilman Donahue, seconded by Councilman Archetto, it was voted to recommend approval of the above list of Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements as recommended by City Assessor. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Tax Assessment Board of Review Decisions** due to Taxes Assessed December 31, 2009 (informational only)

No action needed.

**Advice and Consent** of Mayor's appointment of William McKenna as Cranston Fire Chief.

Discussed and voted on earlier in the meeting.

**Advice and Consent** of Mayor's appointment of Christopher Rawson as Cranston City Solicitor.

Discussed and voted on earlier in the meeting.

**5-11-2** Ordinance in amendment of Title 3, of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Revenue and Finance" (Tax Assessment Board of Review Compensation). [\[click here to view\]](#)

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

On motion by Councilman Stycos, seconded by Councilman Archetto, it was voted to recommend approval of the above Ordinance. Motion passed on a vote of 3-2. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmen Stycos, Archetto and Council Vice-President Pelletier -3. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilmen Donahue and Favicchio -2.

**05-11-1** Ordinance of the City Council in Amendment of Title 5, of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, Entitled "Business License" (Tobacco License Fee). Referred from Safety Services and Licenses Committee 6/6/2011. [\[click here to view\]](#)

**Molly Clarke** appeared to speak in favor of the above Ordinance and presented a letter from Dr. Walter Harper of RI Tobacco Control Network.

**Shuatena Bella Teixeira**, 82 Chalkstone Ave., North Providence, and member of the RI Tobacco Control Network, appeared to speak in favor of this Ordinance.

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

Under Discussion:

**Council President Lupino** stated that at some point in the future, we need to look at the volume when it comes to fees because he does not think it is fair that a small neighborhood convenience store pays the same fee as a large chain store, such as CVS or Walgreens.

**Council Vice-President Pelletier** asked what other cities and towns have a similar Ordinance as to fees. Ms. Teixeira stated that Providence just passed such Ordinance, Portsmouth has such an Ordinance on the books and there are others who are in the process of passing one.

**Councilman Santamaria** questioned if increase in license fees stop people from smoking. Ms. Clarke stated that it may not stop an individual, but how available tobacco is makes people start smoking if they never did.

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

**Resolution** urging the Governor to openly bid for debit card services used by the State of Rhode Island. [\[click here to view\]](#)

On motion by Council President Lupino, seconded by Councilman Stycos, it was voted to recommend approval of the above Resolution.

**Public Speakers:**

**Joe Renzi**, 18 Newwood Dr., appeared to speak in favor of this Resolution and asked that this service be put out to bid with one of our local banks.

**Sandra Morra**, 131 Alexander St., appeared to speak in favor of this Resolution.

**Christopher Cook**, 14 Tallman Ave., appeared to speak in favor of this Resolution.

**Courtney Moore**, 27 Sherman Ave., appeared to speak in favor of this Resolution.

**James Losiere**, 307 Greenwich Ave., appeared to speak in favor of this Resolution.

**Resident of 47 Taft Ave.**, Providence, appeared to speak in favor of this Resolution.

**Mary Tavares**, 10 Marlow St., appeared to speak in favor of this Resolution.

No one appeared to oppose.

**Council President Lupino** asked when the contract was initiated and when it will expire. Mr. Losiere stated that the contract was first initiated in January of 2007. This particular contract is just for unemployment and TDI benefits and not food stamps.

On motion by Councilman Stycos, seconded by Councilman Archetto, it was voted to amend this Resolution as follows: after "Governor Chafee", add "**and all Rhode Island cities and towns Councils**". Motion passed unanimously.

On motion by Councilman Stycos, seconded by Councilman Archetto, it was voted to recommend approval of this Resolution as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution** establishing a Homestead Tax Exemption Study Commission. [\[click here to view\]](#)

On motion by Councilman Archetto, seconded by Councilman Donahue, it was voted to recommend approval of this Resolution.

Under Discussion:

**Council President Lupino** stated that in the past, when there was a Homestead Exemption, enforcement became an issue. There was allegation of abuse. He does not think this is enforceable.

**Ms. Schutt** agreed that enforceability was a problem in the past and will be in the future. The Tax Assessor could possibly compile a report on the history of this. Council President Lupino asked how long this would take. Ms. Schutt stated that it would be a matter of a week or two.

**Council President Lupino** suggested that this Resolution be continued for one month, subject to the Committee receiving this report from the Tax Assessor.

Motion to recommend approval and second were withdrawn.

On motion by Councilman Archetto, seconded by Councilman Favicchio, it was voted to continue this Resolution to next month's meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

**Tax Incentive Application** for 1591 Cranston St., LLC and Dr. John A. Volpe for Five Year Commercial Tax Incentive. [\[click here to view\]](#)

Discussed and voted on earlier in the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni  
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees