

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, March 15, 2007 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by the Chair.

Present: Council Vice-President Paula McFarland, Vice-Chair  
Councilman Anthony J. Lupino  
Councilman Emilio L. Navarro  
Councilman Jeffrey P. Barone

Absent: Councilman Terence Livingston, Chair

Also Present: Councilman John E. Lanni, Jr.  
Councilman Richard D. Santamaria, Jr.  
Council Member Maria A. Bucci  
Ernest Carlucci, Director of Administration  
Frank Migliorelli, Deputy Director of Administration  
Vito Sciolto, City Solicitor  
Aubrey Lombardo, Assistant City Solicitor  
Steve Woerner, City Council Internal Auditor  
Frank Smith, City Assessor  
Maria Medeiros Wall, City Clerk  
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees  
Heather Finger, Stenographer

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Councilman Navarro, 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:**

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **REAL ESTATE/TANGIBLE TAX ABATEMENTS**

Mr. Smith appeared to speak.

Councilman Navarro asked for an explanation on the terminology in the reports, such as "out of community". Mr. Smith stated that "out of community" would be when a person has moved out of State and if they register their vehicle out of State, they are entitled to an Abatement from the City of Cranston upon providing proof of their new registration. The same thing applies for stolen or junked vehicles, whereby, the taxpayer would have to provide a copy of a Police report or insurance report.

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Councilman Navarro, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Abatements. Motion passed unanimously.

## **MOTOR VEHICLE TAX ABATEMENTS**

Mr. Smith appeared to speak.

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Councilman Lupino, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Abatements. Motion passed unanimously.

## **TAX ASSESSEMENT BOARD OF REVIEW DECISIONS (Informational Only)**

No action.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **TAX INTEREST WAIVER APPEALS**

**DONNA BİBEAULT** - Approved by City Treasurer  
Committee recommended approval 2/15/2007  
City Council referred back to Committee 2/26/2007

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Councilman Navarro, it was voted to recommend approval of this tax interest waiver, as recommended by City Treasurer. Motion passed unanimously.

**BIING LEE** - Denied by City Treasurer  
Committee recommended denial 11/16/2006  
City Council referred back to Committee 2/25/2007

Mr. Carlucci appeared to speak and read a statement from the City Treasurer, who was not able to attend this meeting. He indicated that, per the City Treasurer, after some research, he recommends that the City refund Mr. and Mrs. Lee the interest in the amount of \$798.20.

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Councilman Navarro, it was voted to recommend approval of the City Treasurer recommendation to refund Mr. and Mrs. Lee \$798.20 in interest.

#### Under Discussion:

Councilman Lupino questioned if we are able to adjust the software so this does not happen again in the future. Mr. Carlucci stated that the software is something that this Administration is looking into rectifying. Chair asked that Mr. Carlucci submit for the record the document he read from the City Treasurer.

Chair asked Mr. and Mrs. Lee if they are comfortable with the amount they are being offered to be refunded to them. Mrs. Lee stated that they were very shocked to find out their house was in tax sale. She came to City Hall many times to find out what happened and could not get an answer. Former Treasurer, Randy Rossi, said to her, "if you don't want to pay, don't pay". She felt she was treated unfairly. Chair stated that whatever the outcome, on behalf of herself and the Administration, no one should ever be treated with disrespect and she apologized to Mr. and Mrs. Lee for the way they were treated. Mr. Lee stated that there is a serious gap of communication between the Tax Collector's Office and the Tax Assessor's Office.

Motion and second to approve the recommendation of the City Treasurer to refund Mr. and Mrs. Lee \$798.20 passed unanimously.

**6-06-7 Ordinance in amendment of Title 13.08.150 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Sewer Service System" (Establishing a Revolving Loan Fund for Connecting to the City Sewer System). Cont. from 1/11/2007 and 2/15/2007.**

Chair stated that since Councilman Livingston, sponsor of this Ordinance, is not present, she asked Mr. Woerner to speak regarding this Ordinance. Mr. Woerner stated that he, Councilman Livingston and Mr. Quinlan, City Council Legal Counsel, met with DEM on March 8, 2007 along with RI Clean Water Financing Agency and they are very interested in establishing a loan fund. Once it is approved, they would pay a 2% charge through RIMFC. There is a list, which he compiled, of properties that are on sewer lines, but have not connected. He provided the Committee members this list and a map showing where these properties are located.

Chair stated that looking at the Ordinance, there is income base need and there is an ability criteria that the property owner would have to meet to be able to pay.

Councilman Lupino questioned if the Wastewater Treatment Plant can handle additional services. Chair stated that the Plant can handle additional services. Councilman Lanni stated that last month, he spoke to former Public Works Director, Marco Schiappa, and he made it very clear that the Sewer Treatment Plant in this City has almost reached capacity. Mr. Woerner suggested that a survey be done of the people on this list and look at other issues, such as what kind of criteria the Council may want to set. Councilman Barone asked that a letter be sent to Veolia Water asking whether the Plant can handle this additional services or not, because he does not agree with the statement made by the Chair earlier, that the Plant can handle additional services.

On motion by Councilman Barone, seconded by Councilman Lupino, it was voted to table this Ordinance for two months. Motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**2-07-4 Ordinance amending the Budget for the Fiscal Year commencing July 1, 2006 and ending June 30, 2007 (Budget Stabilization – Refuse and Removal).**

Mr. Carlucci appeared to speak and stated that this money would be for daily operations to pay for such items as asphalt, hole patch and materials. Council Member Bucci asked for a list of what this money would be provided for. Chair stated that this list should be provided to the Council prior to the March 26<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Mr. Carlucci stated that this should not be a problem. No one appeared to oppose.

Councilman Barone motioned to refer this Ordinance to the full Council with no recommendation. No one seconded this motion.

On motion by Councilman Navarro, seconded by Councilman Barone, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance. Motion passed unanimously.

**MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:**

Councilman Lupino asked if there is a schedule of public hearings available regarding the Budget, since it is already March 15<sup>th</sup>. Chair stated that this schedule is usually made available the night of the Budget Introduction. She indicated that the Budget Introduction is scheduled for March 29, 2007.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni  
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees