

(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, December 2, 2019, in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by the Chair.

Present Councilmember Paul J. McAuley
 Councilmember John P. Donegan
 Councilmember Christopher G. Paplauskas
 Council Vice-President Michael W. Favicchio, Chair

Absent: Councilmember Edward J. Brady
 Councilmember Kenneth J. Hopkins, Ex-Officio
 Council President Michael J Farina

Also Present: Councilmember Steven A. Stycos
 Councilmember Lammis J. Vargas
 Daniel Parrillo, Director of Administration (appeared at 7:10 p.m.)
 John Psilopoulos, Deputy Director of Administration (appeared at 7:10 p.m.)
 Robert Strom, Director of Finance (appeared at 7:10 p.m.)
 Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
 Heather Finger, Stenographer

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Councilmember Paplauskas, seconded by Councilmember Donegan, 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/COMMUNICATIONS:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

9-19-01 *Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 2 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Administration and Personnel" (Minimum Wage). Sponsored by Councilmembers Stycos and Donegan. Cont. 10/7/2019.*

On motion by Councilmember Donegan, seconded by Councilmember McAuley, it was voted to continue this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Councilmember Donegan stated that the Committee was waiting for information from Director Strom and since there is no one from the Administration present this evening, he is asking for a continuance to next month's meeting.

Roll call was taken on motion to continue this Ordinance to next month's meeting and motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/NEW BUSINESS:

None

11-19-01 *Ordinance authorizing the City to utilize Eastern Recreational Impact Fees for purchase of motor vehicle with plow. Sponsored by Mayor Fung.*

Councilmember Paplauskas motioned to recommend approval of this Ordinance and Councilmember McAuley seconded the motion for discussion.

Under Discussion:

Councilmember Stycos stated that this just is not right. He quoted Section 6.12 of the City Charter regarding Impact Fees and stressed that this money has to be spent on Capital Projects and on Recreational Capital Projects and we can't spend it because it is in the middle of the year. He stated that he emailed former Planning Director Kevin Flynn about this and he said it is a complete violation of the Impact Fee Ordinance and he also stated that maintenance vehicles are not Capital Expenditures.

Director Strom stated that this more or less is an emergency situation. Parks and Recreation Director Liberatore has indicated that two of the trucks cannot be used and are not safe and the two vehicles are needed and the Administration feels this is why Impact Fees could be used.

Councilmember Stycos stated that we can't just ignore the City Charter because it is not convenient. If this is an emergency, we do have funding for emergencies. He indicated that the Council all took an Oath to uphold the law and to him it does not mean when it is convenient, but all the time.

Director Strom stated that if the City Council does not support this, the funding for the two new trucks could be charged to Director Liberatore's Operating Fund, but there is no money in that account and money would have to be appropriated to that account.

Councilmember McAuley asked if this could be continued in order to get an opinion from the Solicitor if funding could be taken from the Rainy Day Fund with stipulation only if we get a favorable ruling from the Solicitor to repay those funds.

Director Strom stated that he would rather charge it from Director Liberatore's Operating Fund. Councilmember Stycos stated that he would be in favor of this.

Chair stated that he would like this Ordinance and the following Ordinance to be referred to the full City Council subject to a legal opinion.

Councilmember Paplauskas stated that he also does not want to violate the Charter. He also would like to have a legal opinion on this although he understands the emergency of this.

Councilmember Donegan stated that he does not feel comfortable passing this to the full City Council with questions not answered. He thinks we should have a full vetting in Committee.

Councilmember Stycos stated that brought up this issue at the last Council meeting when this was introduced and the Administration was aware of his concerns and the Solicitor had more than enough time to address this and there is no Solicitor present this evening. He does not see the Administration taking this as a real serious problem other than Director Strom.

Motion and second to recommend approval of this Ordinance were withdrawn.

On motion by Councilmember McAuley, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to refer this Ordinance to the full City Council with no recommendation in order to hear the Solicitor's recommendation.

Under Discussion:

Councilmember Paplauskas asked Director Parrillo when the new trucks are expected to be delivered. Director Parrillo stated that he does not know.

Councilmember Stycos stated that there is a section of the Charter that deals with emergency appropriations that could be looked at using, which would require a 2/3 vote of the City Council.

Director Strom stated that these vehicles are at Tasca and are available to be delivered when the money is available.

Roll call was taken on motion to refer this Ordinance to the full City Council with no recommendation and motion passed on a vote of 3-1. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmembers McAuley, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -3. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilmember Donegan -1.

11-19-02 *Ordinance authorizing the City to utilize Western Cranston Recreational Impact Fees for purchase of dump truck with plow. Sponsored by Mayor Fung.*

On motion by Councilmember McAuley, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to refer this Ordinance to the full City Council with no recommendation in order to hear the Solicitor's recommendation and motion passed on a vote of 3-1. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmembers McAuley, Paplauskas and Council Vice-President Favicchio -3. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilmember Donegan -1.

- ***Real Estate Tax Abatements***

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

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

- ***Tangible Tax Abatements***

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

On motion by Councilmember McAuley, seconded by Councilmember 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***

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

On motion by Councilmember McAuley, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Interest Waiver Approvals as recommended by City Treasurer. Motion passed unanimously.

- ***Tax Interest Waiver Denials***

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

On motion by Councilmember McAuley, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Interest Waiver Denials as recommended by City Treasurer. Motion passed unanimously.

9-19-01 Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 2 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Administration and Personnel" (Minimum Wage). Sponsored by Councilmembers Stycos and Donegan. Cont. 10/7/2019. CONT.

Director Strom asked if the Committee would like him to address this Ordinance. Members of the Committee agreed to have Director Strom speak regarding this Ordinance.

Director Strom stated that 40% of the part-timers would be affected. He also stated that by bringing people up to \$12.75 per hr., what would happen to the part-timers that are at \$12.98 to \$13 per hr.? They will get somewhat penalized by not getting anything.

Chair stated that usually, this is done during the budget process. He also stated that there are a lot of people in the collective bargaining agreements that are barely over that figure.

Councilmember Vargas asked Councilmember Donegan if he has shown this to Union representatives and what is their take on this? Councilmember Donegan stated that he has spoken to multiple heads of Unions in Cranston and Providence Federated Council and they do not think you would find a Union opposed to a raise.

Director Strom stated that checking with Unions, they would not care because the part-timers are not part of a Union. Also, this Ordinance would not take effect until 2021 so we have time to focus on this during the budget process.

Councilmember Stycos stated that he had asked for a list of lowest paid employees in Union groups. He asked Director Strom if he has been able to do that. Director Strom stated that he has not done that, but he can.

Councilmember McAuley stated that our focus should be on the people who make \$10-\$10.50 per hr. and, hopefully, get them to livable wage.

Chair indicated that prior motion to continue this Ordinance to the January meeting stands.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committee