

(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).

SPECIAL MEETING – CITY COUNCIL

-JANUARY 27, 2022-

A Special meeting of the City Council was called held on Thursday, January 27, 2022 via ZOOM Webinar.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by the Council President.

Roll call showed the following members present: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly (appeared at 7:35 p.m.), Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Also Present: Robert Strom, Director of Finance; David Dimaio, City Council Budget Analyst.

-JANUARY 27, 2022-



**CALL OF SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

In Accordance with Section 3.07 of the Home Rule Charter and Section 2.04.060 of the City Code, I hereby call a special meeting of the City Council to be held on **Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 6:00 PM.**

Meeting of the Cranston City Council will be held **via the Zoom platform as allowed per Executive Order of RI Governor Daniel J. McKee No. 22-01, as ordered**, and in accordance with the RI General Laws Chapter 45-24-53 for the purpose of considering the following items listed on the agenda. Remote participation by the public is available by using the logon information provided below as posted on the City's website at www.cranstonri.gov and Secretary of State's website at www.sos.ri.gov.

Technology problems should be reported immediately to:
CranstonCityCouncilMedia@gmail.com

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88472447216?pwd=SzV3c0JydmxOY0o5MVgwTkNibS90QT09>

Passcode: 841342

Or One tap mobile :

US: +13126266799,,88472447216#,,, *841342# or
+16465588656,,88472447216#,,, *841342#

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 9128 or +1 253 215 8782 or 833 548 0276 (Toll Free) or 833 548 0282 (Toll Free) or 877 853 5247 (Toll Free) or 888 788 0099 (Toll Free)

Webinar ID: 884 7244 7216

Passcode: 841342

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88472447216?pwd=SzV3c0JydmxOY0o5MVgwTkNibS90QT09>

at which meeting the following matters will be heard:

Agenda and Docketed Matters Before the Council

- **Call to order** by Council President; council members attendance taken
(No votes taken)

- **City Council Workshop to Consider American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding**
(No Votes To Be Taken)
 - **Presentation from City Council Budget Analyst** (No Votes To Be Taken)
 - **Update from Administration and or Finance Director** (No Votes To Be Taken)
 - **Public Comment on Use of ARPA Funds**

I hereby request the City Clerk to notify all Council members of the Call of the special meeting.

Executed at Cranston, Rhode Island, this ___19th___ day of January, 2022.

/s/ **Christopher G. Paplauskas, Council President**

-JANUARY 27, 2022-

I hereby certify that a true copy of the attached Notice of a Special meeting of the City Council to be held on, Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 6:00 pm via Zoom Webinar, was delivered via regular mail and electronic mail on the 19th day of January , 2022 to the addresses listed below.

Council President Christopher G. Paplauskas
14 Highland St.
Cranston, RI 02920
chrispaplauskas@gmail.com

Councilwoman Jessica M. Marino
799 Natick Ave.
Cranston, RI 02920
marinoforcranston@gmail.com

Council Vice-President Robert J. Ferri
2426 Cranston St.
Cranston, RI 02920
robferri2426@gmail.com

Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli
54 Massachusetts St.
Cranston, RI 02920
nicoleforcranston@gmail.com

Councilwoman Lammis J. Vargas
35 Betsey Williams Dr.
Cranston, RI 02910
Lammis.vargas@gmail.com

Councilwoman Anice Germain
53 Dale Ave.
Cranston, RI 02910
aniecegermain2@gmail.com

Councilman John P. Donegan
60 Packard St.
Cranston, RI 02910
JohnDoneganForCranston@gmail.com

Councilman Richard D. Campopiano
1640 Pippin Orchard Rd.
Cranston, RI 02921
RD.Camp@yahoo.com

Councilman Matthew R. Reilly
27 Dellwood Rd.
Cranston, RI 02920
mreillyesq@gmail.com

/s/ Rosalba Zanni
Acting City Clerk

-JANUARY 27, 2022-

Council President Paplauskas stated that Councilman Reilly, whose uncle passed away and the wake is this evening, will not be in attendance and Attorney Angell's mom, who passed away, also will not be attending. He expressed condolences on their loss on behalf of the City Council.

Council President Paplauskas asked Mr. Dimaio to update the City Council on what is going on, what has been going on and what to expect with the use of the funds.

Mr. Dimaio appeared to speak gave a slide presentation, which is made part of the record and stated that the American Rescue Plan Act, which went into effect, is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the City of Cranston with its residents, business owners and organizations. He stated that we need to take our time, review how we should and should not spend these funds, work collectively together to get the most value out of these funds. There was State funding that was received, there was City and Town funding that was received and there was School funding that was received. The State of Rhode Island received \$1.2 billion in ARPA funding, the City of Cranston will receive \$42.6 million in ARPA funding, of which \$7.9 million has already been used to fund revenue shortfalls in Fiscal Year ending Budget June 30, 2022. The Cranston School Department received "ARPA/Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund" separate from the City's allocation of \$20.8 million. The School system is going to have their own meetings and decide where they want the funding to go. This is not CARES Act money, so it is not necessary or urgent to spend it immediately. We need to put programs in place to make sure that we can administer and meet the deadlines that they have instilled. Those deadlines are: 1) deadline to appropriate the costs is December 31, 2024, that means to allocate it to areas that you want to spend it on; 2) deadline to disburse the funds is December 31, 2026, that would be at the time that you would have to make the payments and disburse the funding to the projects that you want it to adhere it to. The Treasury compliance and reporting guidelines are not finalized and have been changing.

Mr. Dimaio stressed that these funds were appropriated to prepare the City of Cranston for future issues or future pandemics.

Councilwoman Marino stated that if we do not allocate every penny of what we receive, she asked if we know what the expectation is. Would the federal government request it back or can we keep it in an interest-bearing account? Mr. Dimaio stated that he does not have an answer. He did do some research and he did not get an answer yet. He thinks that there may probably be some moving adjustments. We do not know. Director Strom stated that his understanding is you need to appropriate or structure costs for certain projects by December 31, 2024 and, his understanding, is it needs to be disbursed and completed by December 31, 2026.

Mr. Dimaio stated that the City Council is putting out a survey to reach out to business owners and residents to see what their opinion is on how we should use these funds.

Director Strom stated that we have an RFP out for polling, which was put forward by Resolution at the last City Council meeting.

Council President Paplauskas asked if there were any members of the public online that would like to speak and also stated that any questions asked, Mr. Dimaio will make note of them and answers could be provided for the next meeting on February 10th.

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Public Speakers:

Claire Stadtmier, 963 Seven Mile Rd., Co-Founder of 5G Free RI, appeared to speak and stated that as Cranston decides how to spend the ARPA money on broadband internet, it is absolutely critical for public safety and for economic viability that this broadband be FTTP fiber to the premises and not wireless. COVID19 cases per million are 95% higher and COVID19 deaths per million are 126% higher in states with 5G microwave radiation.

Jose Nunez, 151 Paine Ave., appeared to speak as a homeowner and asked if these funds could be used for solar panels on houses and trash collection and sidewalks.

Sheila Resseger, 50 Malvern Ave., Co-Founder of 5G Free RI, appeared to speak and stated that she is particularly focused on how the funds would be utilized for 5G infrastructure that is for reliable and affordable for broadband access.

Harrison Tuttle, 131 Belmont Rd., appeared to speak as Executive Director for Black Lives Matter Rhode Island Political Action Committee and as a resident of Cranston and stated that here in Cranston and throughout Rhode Island, we have a massive housing crisis. The majority of these funds need to go to affordable housing.

Susan Kelley, 199 Jordan Ave., appeared to speak and stated that she hopes we can use some of these funds to help people who are on the edge of being evicted or people who are on the edge of food and security.

Amy Rainone, 67 Valley St., appeared to speak and stated that she would like to see some of these funds be used for affordable housing. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the City to put some of these resources towards those issues.

Giona Pacheco, 16 Calvary St., appeared to speak and stated that he is in support of using some of these funds for affordable housing and housing assistance.

Pauline DeRosa, 97 Cypress Dr., appeared to speak and asked if these funds are distributed through 2026, how will the public be notified of these distributions and what entity or other bodies will be receiving those monies? She echoed support for funding for affordable housing in the City. She also stated that we need to have a people first approach in economic development in the City; increasing green space within the City's boundaries; address the pollution problems; flood mitigation; funding all departments and commissions of the City to allow them to provide hybrid meetings.

Martha Dimaio, 69 Laconia Rd., appeared to speak and asked questions about funding for construction. She stated that the Mayor has committed to seeking ARPA funds to build an indoor shooting range at the Phenix Ave. location. She asked Mr. Dimaio if he sees that falling in the guidelines. Council President Paplauskas stated that Mr. Dimaio will try to get an answer for this question for next meeting. Ms. Dimaio stated that if those funds cannot be used, she asked that the City Council take up this issue because this is right near two schools and also near homes and the residents cannot live through another year of mass shooting-like sounds. She reiterated that she is not requesting ARPA funds to build an indoor shooting range. The Mayor has committed to requesting those funds be used for that. She is questioning if that request is within the guidelines.

Annette Bourne, 51 Community Dr., appeared to speak and stated that substantial portion of the ARPA funds should be used for affordable housing.

Sarah Lee, 1330 Narragansett Blvd., appeared to speak and asked that some of the ARPA funds be used to increase the allotment that the City pays to Cranston Neighborhood for Tree Planting Program.

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Steve Frias, 107 Garden Hills Dr., appeared to speak and gave an overview of the document, which is made part of the record, he sent to the City Council today of some of his ideas of how to use the ARPA funds.

Jeff Gale, 44 Paine Ave., appeared to speak and suggested that some of the ARPA funds be used to support Child Care Program in Cranston.

Steve Stycos, 37 Ferncrest Ave., appeared to speak and asked that the amount allotted for the Tree Planting Program be doubled to \$20,000 per year. He also asked that some of the funds be used to address housing lead poisoning issue and the City pay for an additional person in the Inspections Department in order to pursue the lead problem.

Donna Childs, 22 Hyde St., appeared to speak and stated that she was glad to hear that part of the intentions of using these funds is to prepare for the next pandemic.

Ariana Cunha, 60 Lockwood St., Help Coordinator of Sunrise RI Youth, appeared to speak and addressed one major concern of growing homelessness in our City. She also stated that it has been made clear this evening that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to address this problem.

Jason Case, 47 Lark Ave., appeared to speak and stated that we have allocated some of the ARPA money to revenue losses. He questioned if that is a one-time allocation and can any of that money be applied to future years. He also asked if any money can be applied for pro-active health initiatives.

Kristina Brown, 217 Armington St., appeared to speak and stated that she hopes that a significant investment of these funds is made into safe and affordable housing in our City.

Council President Papluskas stated that a follow-up meeting will be held on February 10th at 6 pm. We do not know if that meeting will be in person or on Zoom. It would depend on the Governor's Executive Order. He also stated that there will also be public comment at that meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 P.M.

/s/ Rosalba Zanni
Acting City Clerk