

*(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, May 6, 2024 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Cranston, Rhode Island.

### **I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 P.M. by the Chair.

### **II. ROLL CALL:**

Present: Councilman Robert J. Ferri  
Councilwoman Kristen E. Haroian  
Councilman Richard D. Campopiano  
Councilman Christopher G. Paplauskas  
Councilman Daniel Wall  
Council Vice-President Lammis J. Vargas, Vice-Chair  
Councilman John P. Donegan, Chair  
Council President Jessica M. Marino

Also Present: Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli  
John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor  
Thomas Zidelis, Director of Finance  
David DiMaio, City Council Budget Analyst  
Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees  
Meredith Potter, Stenographer

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Minutes of the April 1, 2024 regular meeting
- B. Minutes of the April 8, 2024 special meeting
- C. Minutes of the April 10, 2024 special meeting
- D. Minutes of the April 13, 2024 special meeting
- E. Minutes of the April 22, 2024 special meetings
- F. Minutes of the April 23, 2024 special meetings
- G. Minutes of the April 29, 2024 special meetings

On motion by Councilman Paplauskas, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, it was voted to take all the above minutes as a block. Motion passed unanimously.

On motion by Councilman Paplauskas, seconded by Council President Marino, it was voted to approve all the above minutes as a block. Motion passed unanimously.

#### IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER

**12-23-01** *ORDINANCE In Amendment of Title 3 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Revenue and Finance", Chapter 3.110 – Ten (10) Year Tax Stabilization for Property Located at Oaklawn Avenue (Plat 17-3, Lot 670) (Oaklawn Avenue Tax Stabilization). Sponsored by Council President Marino. (Cont. from 1/8/2024, 2/5/2024, 3/4/2024 & 4/1/2024)*

**Chair** stated that sponsor has requested two month continuance.

On motion by Councilman Paplauskas, seconded by Council President Marino, it was voted to continue this Ordinance to the July meeting. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0 with 1 abstention. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Haroian, Councilmen Campopiano, Paplauskas, Wall, Council Vice-President Vargas, Councilman Donegan and Council President Marino - 7. Councilman Ferri abstained since he was not present for the beginning of the meeting.

**12-23-02** *ORDINANCE In Amendment of Title 3 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Revenue and Finance", Chapter 3.111 – Ten (10) Year Tax Stabilization for Property Located at 320 Scituate Avenue (Scituate Avenue Tax Stabilization). Sponsored by Council President Marino. (Cont. from 1/8/2024, 2/5/2024, 3/4/2024 & 4/1/2024)*

**Chair** stated that sponsor has requested two month continuance.

On motion by Councilman Paplauskas, seconded by Council President Marino, it was voted to continue this Ordinance to the July meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

**03-24-02** *ORDINANCE In Amendment of Title 2 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, Entitled "Administration and Personnel" (Minimum Wage); Sponsored by Councilmember Donegan and Councilwoman Germain. (Cont. from 4/8/2024 for fiscal note)*

On motion by Councilman Wall, seconded by Council Vice-President Vargas, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

**Chair** stated that fiscal note was received from Director Zidelis stating that there is no financial impact and asked Director if that is correct.

**Director Zidelis** stated that that is correct and the financial effect will come in with the FY26 Budget because this predominantly affects the Parks Department. Their Summer programs will be gone so as we formulate the FY26 Budget, the minimum wage increase of \$15 will be in place predominantly in the Parks Department for the FY26 Budget formulation.

**Chair** stated that this Ordinance would increase the minimum wage in the City to \$15 starting January 1, 2025. The State Law is increasing the minimum wage to \$15 on January 1, 2025 so that just brings us in line with what the State is increasing it to. Under State Law, there is a carve-out where municipalities can pay less for their employees as well as there is a carve-out for seasonal and temporary employees so this would also eliminate that by eliminating high school or summer workers.

He also stated that he had a conversation with Parks and Recreation Director Tessaglia and his understanding is that despite what is on the books right now, they are currently paying people what the minimum wage is so he does not think this will be changing anything with current practice. He asked if that is correct. Director Zidelis stated that that is correct, the Parks Department has been paying because if you read the minimum wage law Statute or what has been promulgated by the Department of Labor, Parks is not exempt so the FY25 Budget is predicated on paying \$14 an hour for the Parks employees as what is approved by the City Council this evening.

**Councilwoman Renzulli** stated that although this will be bringing us in line with the State, she asked Director Zidelis if he did an estimate of how much of an increase that will be across the board by keeping the same amount of employees next Summer. Director Zidelis stated that it is approximately another \$20,000 into FY26 for that line item for the Parks Department.

**Council Vice-President Vargas** stated that she would like to be added as co-sponsor.

**Councilmen Paplauskas, Ferri, Wall, Campopiano, Council President Marino and Councilwoman Haroian** also asked to be added as co-sponsors.

**Chair** asked Clerk to remove name of former Councilwoman Germain as co-sponsor.

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

**Councilman Donegan:**

- *Exploration of Liability Policy for the City (Cont. from 8/7/2023, 10/2/2023, 11/6/2023, 12/6/2023, 1/8/2024, 2/5/2024, 3/4/2024 & 4/1/2024)*

**Director Zidelis** asked for another month continuance.

**V. CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS**

*None.*

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**VII. NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE**

A. Ordinances

*None.*

B. Resolutions

*None.*

**C. *Real Estate Tax Abatements***

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilman Wall, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Abatements as recommended by the City Assessor. Motion passed unanimously.

**D. *Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements***

*None.*

**E. *Tax Assessment Board Of Review assessed December 31, 2022.***

*(Informational Only-No Vote will be taken)*

*None.*

**F. *Tax Interest Waiver Approvals***

*None.*

**G. *Tax Interest Waiver Denials***

On motion by Councilman Paplauskas, seconded by Councilman Ferri, it was voted to recommend approval of this list of Tax Interest Waiver Denials. Motion passed unanimously.

**Councilman Donegan:**

- ***Discussion of Waste Management Services and Contract***

**Chair** asked when the contract is coming up for renewal again. Director Zidelis stated that the contract ends June 30, 2025. Chair asked when the last time was that it was renewed. Director Zidelis stated that he does not have that date, but he will look into it and email the Chair with that information.

**Chair** stated that his understanding is there were optional annual renewals built in after so many years in the contract and in years past, he has and other Council Members have expressed a desire to have a conversation with the Executive regarding the contract services and complaints that the Council receives from constituents and he thinks that that conversation would be time well-spent before the City executes any further contract renewal. Director Zidelis stated that this contract will be bid to potentially a new contractor or an extension predicated on the new bid will occur. If there are things that the Council would like to bring to the Administration's attention, he would recommend it would be a joint venture between DPW, under the Mayor, Administration and Finance so any questions, concerns, comments would be welcomed as the bid is formulated.

**Council Vice-President Vargas** stated that she believes that in the past the Council was always part of the discussions in Executive Session when the contract came up for renewal. We should definitely be part of that conversation.

**Councilman Ferri** stated that maybe before we renew a contract with them, we can ask Waste Management to appear before the Council and express some of our concerns and answer some of our questions that we have had. Council Vice-President Vargas agreed just because of the amounts of emails the Council has been receiving.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Rosalba Zanni  
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees