

(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).

REGULAR MEETING – CITY COUNCIL

-AUGUST 24, 2020-

Regular meeting of the City Council was held on Monday, August 24, 2020 via Zoom Webinar.

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 P.M. by the Council President.

Roll call showed the following members present: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina -9.

Also Present: Daniel Parrillo, Director of Administration; John Psilopoulos, Deputy Director of Administration; Robert Strom, Finance Director; Christopher Rawson, City Solicitor; Evan Kirshenbaum, City Council Legal Counsel; David DiMaio, City Council Budget Analyst.

I. PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND COMMENDATIONS

CITATION IN RECOGNITION OF GAZMINE MASON

Councilmember Germain acknowledged Ms. Mason.

Ms. Mason thanked the members of the City Council for the acknowledgement.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

III. RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO EXPEDITIOUSLY APPROVE A BUDGET WHICH PROVIDES THE CITY OF CRANSTON WITH AN APPROXIMATE \$4.1 MILLION INCREASE IN STATE EDUCATION AID

On motion by Councilmember Vargas, seconded by Councilmember Stycos, it was voted to adopt the above Resolution.

Under Discussion:

Councilmembers Hopkins, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina asked to be added as co-sponsors.

On motion by Council Vice-President Favicchio, seconded by Councilmember Brady, it was voted to amend the above Resolution as follows: add paragraph at the end of the Resolution with the following language: “Be It Additionally Resolved, that the Cranston City Clerk transmit forthwith a copy of this Resolution to the members of Cranston’s legislative delegation in the Rhode Island General Assembly”. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina -9.

-AUGUST 24, 2020-

On motion by Council Vice-President Favicchio, seconded by Councilmember Brady, it was voted to adopt the above Resolution as amended. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina -9.

RESOLUTION URGING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO FULLY FUND THE STATE EDUCATION FUNDING FORMULA AT THE FY 2021 PROJECTED LEVELS AND TO SUPPORT TOTAL STATE AID TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AT THE SAME AGGREGATE LEVELS AS IN FY 2020

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Hopkins, it was voted to adopt the above Resolution.

Under Discussion:

Councilmember Paplauskas asked to be added as co-sponsor.

Councilmember Stycos asked for explanation of the different types of State Aid and their status at this time.

Director Strom stated the following:

- Motor Vehicle Excise Tax – we normally receive quarterly. We received \$840,000 in July and will be receiving another \$840,000 in August and another \$840,000 in September.
- Pilot in the amount of \$401,000 is being paid on a monthly basis.
- School Aid – last year for the month of July we received \$1,643,780. This year, we received \$1,605,405, approximately \$38,000 less than last year. For the month of August, we will be receiving \$5,599,256 instead of the \$5,733,817, which we received last year.

Roll call was taken on motion to adopt the above Resolution and motion passed on a vote of 9-0. Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina -9.

IV. REPORT OF COMMITTEES

FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Council Vice-President Michael W. Favicchio, Chair)

7-20-02 ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JULY 1, 2020 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2021 (Economic Development)

Council Vice-President Favicchio stated that he is withdrawing this Ordinance.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REAL ESTATE TAX ABATEMENTS

On motion by Councilmember Hopkins, seconded by Councilmember Germain, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina -9.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING MOTOR VEHICLE TAX ABATEMENTS

On motion by Councilmember Hopkins, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina -9.

-AUGUST 24, 2020-

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TANGIBLE TAX ABATEMENTS

On motion by Councilmember Hopkins, seconded by Councilmember Vargas, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina -9.

TAX INTEREST WAIVER APPROVALS

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to approve the above Tax Interest Waiver Approvals. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina -9.

TAX INTEREST WAIVER DENIALS

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Hopkins, it was voted to approve the above Tax Interest Waiver Approvals. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina -9.

**CLAIMS COMMITTEE
(Councilmember John P. Donegan, Chair)**

REPORT OF SETTLED CLAIMS (*Informational purposes*): Christopher Reynolds \$300.00 Vehicle Damage; Raymond Palmaccio \$67.39 Property Damage; Jeff Sweet \$140.93 Vehicle Damage; Richard Rossi \$798.28 Vehicle Damage; Ciara Irace \$121.90 Vehicle Damage.

No action needed.

v. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Sheila Resseger, 50 Malvern Ave., member of 5G RI, appeared to speak and stated that there are several members of the public who would like to speak regarding 5G.

Cece Doucette, Ashland, Massachusetts, appeared to speak and gave a presentation regarding 5G. She indicated that this is not just a community problem, it is a City and Statewide problem that needs to be taken seriously.

Claire Stadtmue, 963 Seven Mile Rd., appeared to speak regarding 5G and read a statement into the record.

Angel Lopez, 41 Dorchester Ave., Providence, member of 5G RI, appeared to speak regarding 5G.

Stephen Dahl, 36 Diane Dr., Kingston, appeared to speak regarding 5G and asked that the City Council pass a 5G Moratorium for Cranston.

Chris Soeller, 28 Eddy St., West Warwick, appeared to speak regarding 5G and showed pictures of tree damage from 3G and 4G.

-AUGUST 24, 2020-

VI. ELECTION OF CITY OFFICIALS

BUILDING APPEAL BOARD:

- **Re-appointment of Louis P. Petrucci, Jr. for term ending August 24, 2025 (Councilmember Paplauskas)**

On motion by Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Paplauskas, it was voted to re-appoint **Louis Petrucci, Jr.**, as a member of the Building Appeals Board. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina -9.

VII. REPORT OF CITY OFFICERS

CRANSTON DIVERSITY COMMISSION – UPDATE AND PRESENTATION BY ONECRANSTON OF COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Susan Ayraasian, Director of Personnel and member of the Diversity Commission, appeared to speak and stated that last week she submitted, on behalf of the Commission, a written report outlining update on the progress of the Commission it has made since October. The focus of the Commission since October has been on the community survey. There were two different components to that. One was done in a closed fashion with limited participation by residents that were invited to participate and there was also an open survey that was conducted over a period of approximately one month. Major Patalano of the Police Department executed that survey and compiled the results. The Commission reviewed these results at their last in-person meeting in February and then their work was on hold for a few months due to COVID. They did have a meeting last month via Zoom and were able to have the results of the survey reviewed by OnceCranston and they did a lot of the data and presented their findings to the Commission at the last meeting and made some recommendations.

Caitlyn Blankenship of OneCranston, appeared to speak and stated that they analyzed the data the Commission presented and gave their findings to the survey.

Andrea Champagne of OneCranston, appeared to speak and also addressed the findings of the survey.

David Quiroa, member of the Diversity Commission, appeared to speak and on behalf of the Diversity Commission, he thanked the people at OneCranston for all their help in this survey. He questioned what the Council feels is the role of the Commission now that this survey is completed.

Council President Farina stated that with the results of the survey, there are some short-term goals and some long-term goals. He thinks that we should look at is basically decide how we can better utilize the Commission going forward as the first phase is finished and now it will be where do we go with the Commission, how do we work together and continue to focus on driving equity training, leverage grant opportunities and continue to implement some of the things the Commission has identified both in short-term and long-term.

Councilmember Brady stated that he appreciates the information and it was very insightful and he definitely will take that information as we go into the budget hearing season next year. These are all incredibly important initiatives that we need to move forward on, but some could be started without funds, but the ones that require funds, he would like to be there when time comes.

Councilmember Donegan thanked everyone on the Diversity Commission and the members of OneCranston for all their work on this. We need elected officials who have the political will to take on systemic racism and that is going to cause difficult conversations, but we need to build with our community partners and educate ourselves and work towards dismantling systemic racism in Cranston.

-AUGUST 24, 2020-

Councilmember Vargas thanked all the members of the Diversity Commission and also the School Department who disseminated the survey out to the families the School Department has e-mails to.

Council Vice-President Favicchio thanked everyone on the Diversity Commission for all the work they did. He has been advocating for years that we have a vocational school and Cranston East High School and has been imploring the School Department that we should be recruiting our students from our student population for EMT or Police and this would be with no funds needed.

Councilmember Stycos thanked the Diversity Commission for their work. He urged everyone to keep all the elected officials to their fire on this.

Councilmember Brady thanked everyone for putting together this survey and presentation and thanked the Diversity Commission for all the work they did on this.

Mr. Quiroa stated that with the term “systemic racism”, he thinks the better term we should use is “systemic disadvantage to minorities” because by the use of “systemic racism”, it almost implies that all of us that are in government are serving elected or appointed or hired, are also racist because we are part of that systemic system. He thinks that that is not where we are in 2020. There are disadvantages and disparities, but he is a strong believer that racism as a word is very strong and full of hate and by no means has he actually met a person that is filled with that kind of hate. There is systemic disadvantages that we need to work together to make a field an equal playing field.

Councilmember Germain stated that that is the problem we have. We are always afraid of addressing a real issue. WE are in denial all the time. We cannot be afraid to talk about it. You need to call it the name. The name exists. You may not be racist, but it exists so we need to acknowledge it exists and do something about it.

Councilmember Vargas suggested that the results of this survey be updated to the City’s website for the public to view. Council President Farina stated that he will speak to the Administration regarding this.

VIII. EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

REPORT ON HIRING OF SPECIAL COUNSEL, CONSULTANTS, ETC., PURSUANT TO CHARTER SECTION 15.05.

No discussion.

IX. COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

None.

X. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

COUNCILMEMBER VARGAS:

- **Regulations, if any, for 5G antennas**

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

-AUGUST 24, 2020-

- **Sanders School – rodents and people playing in building**

Councilmember Vargas stated that a neighbor, who lives next door to the school, reached out to her and indicated that there were people playing in the building rodents in the area. She asked if Administration can confirm that that building is fully intact and if Public Works can look into the rodent control in that area. Director Parrillo stated that he will have Public Works look into the rodent issue and will have the building looked at to make sure it is not accessible to people.

COUNCILMEMBER DONEGAN:

- **Bike Path trash**

Councilmember Donegan thanked the Administration for addressing the issue at the bike path at Harmon Ave. and being cleaned up.

Councilmember Donegan asked what the schedule is for cleaning of the bike path and possibility of placing trash receptacles in areas of the bike path. Director Parrillo stated that Parks and Recreation has a set schedule and are out as much as possible cleaning the bike path. He also stated that as to the receptacles, he will follow-up with Parks and Recreation Director Liberatore in the morning.

XI. OLD BUSINESS

None.

XII. INTRODUCTION OF NEW BUSINESS

- 8-20-01** **ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO UTILIZE WESTERN ROAD IMPACT FEES FOR THE ENGINEERING FOR TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS AT TWO MAJOR INTERSECTIONS. Sponsored by Mayor Fung. Referred to Finance Committee September 14, 2020.**
- 8-20-02** **ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 3.08 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘CONTRACTS AND PURCHASES’ (Creating the Minority Owned Business Enterprise, Women Minority Owned Business Enterprise and Veteran Owned Business Enterprise). Sponsored by Councilmembers Vargas, Donegan, Hopkins and Germain. Referred to Finance Committee September 14, 2020.**
- 8-20-03** **ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 15-04.120 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION’ (Complaints) Sponsored by Councilmember Donegan. Referred to Ordinance Committee September 17, 2020.**
- 8-20-04** **ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF TITLE 9 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘PUBLIC PEACE, MORALS AND WELFARE’ (Social Security No. Police Complaint.). Sponsored by Councilmember Stycos. Referred to Ordinance Committee September 17, 2020.**

RESOLUTION LOAN ORDER AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION REFUNDING BONDS OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON. Sponsored by Mayor Fung. Referred to Finance Committee September 14, 2020.

REQUEST FROM NATIONAL GRID FOR POLE LOCATION AT ROLFE SQUARE, NORTH OF LAURENS ST. Referred to Public Works Committee September 17, 2020.

REQUEST FROM NATIONAL GRID FOR POLE LOCATION AT PETTACONSETT AVE. Referred to Public Works Committee September 17, 2020.

-AUGUST 24, 2020-

CLAIMS COMMITTEE – Thursday, September 17, 2020

- **Property Damage Claim:**
 - **Brenda Davis from alleged incident on July 28, 2020.**

On motion by Councilmember Donegan, seconded by Councilmember Hopkins, it was voted to refer the above new business to the respective Committees. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmembers Stycos, Hopkins, Vargas, Germain, Donegan, Brady, Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Favicchio and Council President Farina -9.

XIII. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS ON CLERK’S DESK

None.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

/s/ Leanne Zarrella, JD
City Clerk

/s/ Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees

(See Stenographic Notes of Ron Ronzio, Stenotypist)