

(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

-MARCH 22, 2021-

Regular meeting of the City Council was called held on Monday, March 22, 2021 via ZOOM Webinar.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M. by the Council President.

Roll call showed the following members present: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Also Present: Anthony Moretti, Director of Administration; Christopher Millea, City Solicitor; John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor; David Dimaio, City Council Budget Analyst; Stephen Angell, City Council Legal Counsel; Robert Strom, Director of Finance.

On motion by Council Vice-President Brady, seconded by Councilman Reilly, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

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I. PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND COMMENDATIONS

- *Cranston High School West Varsity Winter Ice Hockey Division II State Championship*

Council Vice-President Brady congratulated members of the team and read Citations and called each member acknowledging their win.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS & PUBLIC COMMENT ON DOCKETED ITEMS

Ginger Jackson-Gleich, Policy Counsel of the Prison Policy Initiative, P.O. Box 127, North Hampton, MA, appeared to speak regarding the “Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston” and stated that the Census Bureau counts incarcerated people as residents of the people of where they are confined. This means that when Cranston uses raw data from the Census, it counts anyone incarcerated at the ACI towards the population of Ward 6, thus, that Ward has fewer actual residents than any other Wards and those residents have a disproportionate amount of representation in City government. The solution is simple. Cranston may simply exclude the ACI population from its Redistricting data. Doing so would equalize the number of true residents in each District. All Cranston needs to do is amend the Resolution to say that the ACI population would be removed prior to dividing the City’s population into six Wards. She also addressed the following misconceptions that can arise when jurisdictions confront prison gerrymandering:

- funding would not be affected by this change;
- such an amendment would be consistent with RI statutory definition of residence;
- people incarcerated at the ACI are not Cranston constituents. Elected officials do not campaign at the ACI and once elected, they do not provide constituent services to the people incarcerated there.

RI Treasurer Seth Magaziner appeared to speak at the invitation of Councilwoman Germain regarding “Resolution of the City Council Asking the General Assembly to Re-examine the State Education Fair Funding Formula to Ensure Equitable Educational Funding to Local Municipalities” and stated that he thinks that the time has come for the State to take a fresh look at the funding formula to ensure that every student is fairly and equitably served. He stated that it has been over a decade since the funding formula was first passed into State Law and it is time to take a look at it to make sure all students are served fairly. He thanked everyone on the City Council for their leadership in education.

Pauline Derosa, 97 Cypress Dr., appeared to speak and echoed comments made by Ms. Jackson-Gleich regarding “Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston”. She also appeared to speak in favor of excluding the prison population from the Ward 6 resident population.

Stephen Piscopiello, 85 Fox Ridge Dr., appeared to speak regarding “Resolution recognizing the new multi-sport stadium housed within the Henry Hank Orabone Sports Complex located at Cranston High School West as ‘Allan W. Fung Stadium’ and stated that he is a proud resident and President of Cranston Western Little League for the past nine years and proud member of this association for the past sixteen years. Over that time, former Mayor Fung was always supportive of everything the league did. His passion for children and for keeping kids active in sports and activities has been paramount in his tenure as Mayor. He also stated that former Mayor Fung, along with former Parks and Recreation Director Anthony Liberatore and David Dimaio, were instrumental and worked tirelessly to get that complex up to snuff after twelve years of being dormant for high school football. It is now a jewel of the Western side of the City and he can’t think of a better person to name a facility after than our former Mayor Allan Fung who had so much to do with that particular project.

Steve Agnoli, 111 Coolspring Dr., appeared to speak regarding “Resolution recognizing the new multi-sport stadium housed within the Henry Hank Orabone Sports Complex located at Cranston High School West as ‘Allan W. Fung Stadium’ and stated that former Mayor Fung was Mayor for twelve years and has done great work for the City of Cranston during the time he was Mayor.

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Michael Beauregard, 136 Bluff Ave., appeared to speak in favor of “Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston” and stated that he is a member of Cranston Forward.

Lynnette Labinger, Esq., 128 Dorrance St., Providence, appeared to speak as a cooperating attorney for the ACLU of Rhode Island regarding “Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston”. She assured Council Members that as a result of the ACLU defeat in Court in trying to make that the rule of law in Cranston several years ago, we have a very clear ruling from the first Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston that this is a political decision that you have the right to make this decision without fear of being sued from the other side again. She urged the City Council to exercise that clear authority and recognize that people that are incarcerated in Cranston should not be counted in the Ward 6 calculation, which gives an outside clout to the other five Wards in the City.

Anthony Liberatore, 18 Bank St., former Parks and Recreation Director, appeared to speak in favor of “Resolution recognizing the new multi-sport stadium housed within the Henry Hank Orabone Sports Complex located at Cranston High School West ‘Allan W. Fung Stadium’ and stated that as far as Cranston High School West, we had no money to do that field. We did a bond request overwhelmingly approved by the voters and went to the Mayor and told him what the plan was for Cranston High School West and he was thrilled with the idea. He was in on the whole step of the way. There are so many things that were accomplished with Allan being Mayor and he thinks it is so well-deserved to name that complex after Allan Fung. He thanked Mr. Dimaio for all his help he provided for the concession stand. It was torn down to the ground and built back up to be the best concession stand in the State of Rhode Island.

Dan Parrillo, Director of Personnel and former Director of Administration, appeared to speak in favor of “Resolution recognizing the new multi-sport stadium housed within the Henry Hank Orabone Sports Complex located at Cranston High School West ‘Allan W. Fung Stadium’ and stated that he has not been with the City very long, but in the short time he has been here, he has had the honor of working with Mayor Fung and he has exemplified what it means to be a caring, compassionate and epithetic leader. These are words you very rarely hear of a political person. This is a well-deserved honor for a man who served the City for over sixteen years as a City Council Member and Mayor. His dedication, guidance and commitment are an example for all who are in public service to follow and he has left an indelible mark on the City. This tribute of having the stadium named in his honor will carry on his legacy as one of the greatest Mayor and servants the City has ever had.

Jim Vincent, 577 Scituate Ave., Local President of the NAACP, appeared to speak in favor of “Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston” and stated that the NAACP opposes counting the inmates of the ACI as part of Ward 6.

Heather Burbach, 1975 Broad St., appeared to speak in favor of “Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston” and stated that, as a member of Ward 1, she wants her vote to count the same as everyone else’s vote. She also stated that her vote should not be 25% less then someone living in Ward 6. She also stated that the population at the ACI is very transient.

Giona Balvega, 16 Calvary St., appeared to speak “Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston” and urged the City Council to support the amendment to exceed prison population.

Karen Rosenberg, 46 Bow St., appeared to speak in favor of Councilman Donegan’s amendment to “Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston”.

Meghan Grady, 70 Bass St., Providence of Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island, appeared to speak in favor of “Resolution recognizing March 2021 as the 19th Annual March for Meals Month” and stated that they have 99 active clients and last year they served over 24,000 meals.

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Michael Milito, 93 Moorland Ave., appeared to speak in favor Councilman Donegan's amendment to "Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston".

Nacho Shibusawa, 90 Sefton Dr., appeared to speak regarding "Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston" and urged the City council to remove the prison population from the count of eligible voters in Ward 6 for the same reasons other speakers have stated.

Gretchen Bath, 5 Mather Ave., appeared to speak regarding "Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston" and in favor of Councilman Donegan's amendment excluding non-resident ACI Population from the count for purposes of redistricting. She also stated that she thinks that it would make districts equal in size and equal in voting power.

Enrique Sanchez, 1533 Plainfield Pike, appeared to speak in support of "Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston" in keeping prison population out of future voting initiatives.

Nicholas Caruolo, 30 Juniper Dr., appeared to speak in favor of "Resolution recognizing the new multi-sport stadium housed within the Henry Hank Orabone Sports Complex located at Cranston High School West 'Allan W. Fung Stadium' and stated that he grew up in Cranston his whole life and he could not think of a more perfect individual to have the Cranston High School West field named after then former Mayor Fung. Mayor Fung engineered Cranston's most successful financial and economic period and we saw strong economic development of Garden City creating hundreds of new jobs, a healthy climate for small businesses to thrive and be profitable and constant budget surpluses year after year, but it is not the just the financial and economic accolades that make Allan Fung a role model to people like himself in this City. He listened and truly cared about people in his City.

Debbie Flipman, 400 Scituate Ave., appeared to speak in support of "Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston" and Councilman Donegan's amendment to remove the inmates from the ACI from the redistricting.

Melissa Richard, 5 Longview Dr., appeared to speak in favor of "Resolution recognizing the new multi-sport stadium housed within the Henry Hank Orabone Sports Complex located at Cranston High School West 'Allan W. Fung Stadium' and stated that she can't think of a better way to honor a Mayor that has done so much for the City of Cranston.

Tom Wojick, 11 Hall Place, appeared to speak in favor of "Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston" and Councilman Donegan's amendment to exclude ACI inmates from the Ward 6 census.

Caroline Alday, 1028 Garden St., appeared to speak in favor of "Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston" and Councilman Donegan's amendment to removing ACI population from the Ward redistricting.

Janice Ruggieri, 45 Overhill Rd., appeared to speak regarding "Resolution recognizing the new multi-sport stadium housed within the Henry Hank Orabone Sports Complex located at Cranston High School West 'Allan W. Fung Stadium' and sated that the stadium itself, the Alumni Association was really the driving force behind both the renovation of the auditorium and the stadium and between those two, they raised over \$1 million in funding for those projects. While she agrees with the sentiment of having something in the City reflective of the Mayor's years of service, she thinks it may be better served to find something that is not just on one of the side of the City, something that is centrally located that is truly reflective of his years of service. She agrees with the sentiment, but she does not agree with the place you will be putting his name on.

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Drake Patten, 684 Natick Ave., appeared to speak in favor of “Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston” and Councilman Donegan’s amendment.

Steve Frias, 107 Garden Hills Dr., appeared to speak regarding “Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston” and stated that it has come to his attention today that there is an amendment to be proposed to this Resolution and he thinks it is a very problematic amendment. First problem is the Resolution asks for the exclusion of ACI inmates from the redistricting process from the count, but the Charter specifically says that all Wards shall contain as nearly as possible, an equal number of inhabitants as determined by the most recent federal decennial census that can be adjusted by the City Council, modified by the City Council or changed by the City Council. It is the number of inhabitants as stated by the census. So, the change of excluding the ACI inmates would be contrary to the Charter. If you want to exclude the ACI inmates, you would have to change the Charter, which is why this issue was discussed at the Charter Review Commission when he was its Chair last year. If this Resolution is passed, it would be inconsistent with the Charter. This topic was discussed by the Charter Review Commission and it voted 8-3 against a Charter amendment excluding the ACI inmates with a lot of the same arguments stated this evening. The argument that they are not real constituents and not real inhabitants or residence of Cranston, the bottom line is that the City provides services to the prison and, therefore, the people inside in that institution. They provide Police and Fire support. We also count people at the Eleanor Slater Hospital who are mentally ill. We do not campaign at the Eleanor Slater Hospital, we do not campaign at the prison, but we still provide services there and we count the people at the Eleanor Slater Hospital. The argument that they are transient therefore they should not be counted. As we know, out of State college students are not legal residents of Rhode Island and some vote in their home States. We have people in the military who do not live here, they are here temporary, but they are counted. The problem the Commission had is if you start excluding one population, you are going to end up excluding other population eventually and you will start to open up a can of worms.

III. RESOLUTIONS

Resolution recognizing the new multi-sport stadium housed within the Henry “Hank” Orabone Sports Complex located at Cranston High School West “Allan W. Fung Stadium”

On motion by Councilman Reilly, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, it was voted to approve the above Resolution.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Donegan stated that he sent an email to the sponsors, Council President and Clerk and Council Attorney over the weekend regarding this Resolution. He has a procedural objection to this matter introduced and voted on in the same evening. Recent precedent when naming buildings ceremonially have gone through a different process. In 2017 when the Senior Enrichment Center was named in Former Mayor Traficante’s honor, that Resolution was introduced in May of 2017 and then sent to the Public Works Committee in July of 2017 and then sent to the full City Council for a vote. He asked that this Resolution follow that same process. He commends former Mayor Fung’s service to the City, but he thinks it is questionable to honor someone’s legacy less than three months after they turn in their keys to the Mayor’s Office.

Councilman Reilly stated that he and Councilwoman Renzulli put forth this Resolution to honor former Mayor Fung. Former Mayor Fung was instracal in spearheading the financial recovery of this City from junk bond status to one of the top fifty cities in America today. He was a true people’s Mayor. He served the City for seventeen years and that is commendable in of itself. He was the first Asian American Mayor to serve. This is the least we can do to thank him for all the hard work in turning this City around.

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Councilwoman Renzulli stated that former Mayor Fung was a dedicated public servant to our City for seventeen years. First as City Council Member and then as our Mayor. The major part of his success was the amazing team he surrounded himself with and in the case of the revitalization of the Cranston High School West football field, to create a multi-sport field that accommodates football, soccer and lacrosse and the upgrading of the stadium, is an example of that. She recognized the private/public partnership and how it was a true team effort. She also stated that she is so appreciative of all the work the Alumni did, former Parks and Recreation Director Liberatore and his staff, Mr. Dimaio, Cranston West Administration, athletes, members of the City Council past and present, School Committee Members and many businesses who donated their time and services for this collaborative effort. They all need to be recognized. She thanked former Mayor Fung for partnering with all the people she just named in an effort to upgrade this complex.

Councilwoman Marino stated that there is no question that former Mayor Fung should be thanked for his dedication to the City and work that he did. With that being said, he was an elected official and his service to the community should be thanks enough. Councilman Donegan made a good point. It is less than three months from when he completed his service as Mayor. To do something of this nature is rather unprecedented. She thinks that, as a public servant, we represent the community and there are many athletes, there are many teachers and many coaches that have dedicated not just their time, but because they generously devoted and gave their time to our community and to the Cranston High School West Athletics Department and those are the members whose names should be on those fields. Mayor Fung was doing his job just like we are doing our job. She stated that what she would propose is on an annual basis, with the help of the Cranston High School West Alumni Association, that they nominate someone on an annual basis to dedicate that field to. It could be a teacher, a former student, a coach or someone along those lines and dedicate that field on an annual basis for that person. That is a way to rally support for the community.

Councilwoman Vargas echoed the statements made by Councilwoman Marino. She also stated that while she commends former Mayor Fung for his years of service and dedication to the City, she feels that a building should not be named after an elected official, but rather an athlete or coach or someone who has provided great contribution to our City. This is not going against the Mayor. For these reasons she will be voting against this Resolution.

Councilman Ferri stated that when this Resolution came up, he received a few phone calls and emails. The question he has, which is bothering him is the field or complex are already named after someone. He just does not understand how we can strip the name that is on the complex or the field and put someone else's name in its place. He thinks that Allan Fung did an incredible job as our Mayor. He has many accomplishments. He helped this City enormously. He feels that we should honor him, but this soon into his departure is not the time and he does not think that we should take someone else's name off the field or the complex and put his name in its place and we should find another way to honor him in time, maybe as a group.

Councilwoman Germain echoed the sentiments of her colleagues and also stated that it is too soon for her to judge the legacy of former Mayor Fung.

Councilman Reilly clarified that no one's name is being removed from anything. There is the Hank Orabone Sports Complex at Cranston High School West and that encompasses all the athletic fields. Within the Orabone Sports Complex, is the Pagano Field and the softball field, which he does not recall the name of that field, as well as, hopefully, Fung Stadium. Within the Fung Stadium is Fritz Etter Field, Will Speck Track and then the concession stand, which is not actually named after Mark Van Eeghen. His number was retired and a plaque was put up on top of there, but re-clarified that no one's name is being removed from anything.

Councilman Ferri stated that he does not think the debate this evening is whether or not we should recognize Allan Fung. He did a great job and dedicated many years of service to the City of Cranston. He just thinks it should have been done in a different way and maybe if we had all been involved in this decision of what to do to honor him, we would not be sitting here for an hour discussing this right now. We need to be more cohesive and work as a unit and do things like this together and not just have two people come forward with no discussion. This was never brought to his attention or to any other Council Member's attention.

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Councilman Reilly stated that at this time, he would like to withdraw his motion to approve this Resolution and discuss it further. **Councilwoman Renzulli** withdrew her second to the motion.

Resolution was withdrawn.

Resolution of the City Council “Asking the General Assembly to Re-examine the State Education Fair Funding Formula to Ensure Equitable Educational Funding to Local Municipalities”

On motion by Council Vice-President Brady, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to approve the above Resolution.

Under Discussion:

Councilwoman Germain stated that this Resolution is not a partisan issue. Having quality education, having equitable funding for all children is not a partisan issue. As everyone knows, our schools have been under-funded for too long. She is asking all leaders involved in making decisions regarding our schools to re-examine how we fund our public schools. This is why this Resolution is being introduced.

Council Vice-President Brady thanked Councilwoman Germain for bringing this up. He also stated that he thinks everyone agrees that the funding formula needs to be looked at being ten years old.

Councilman Donegan thanked Councilwoman Germain and other sponsors for their advocacy on this.

Councilwoman Vargas thanked all the sponsors for bringing this forward.

Roll call was taken on motion to approve the above Resolution and motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Resolution recognizing March 2021 as the 19th Annual March for Meals Month

On motion by Council Vice-President Brady, seconded by Councilwoman Marino, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Resolution urging the Council and the Administration to proclaim March as a remembrance month of Survivors and Victims of Covid-19

Councilwoman Vargas, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas asked to be added as co-sponsors.

On motion by Councilman Donegan, seconded by Councilwoman Vargas, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Resolution “Freedom from Domestic Violence as a Fundamental Human Right”

Councilwoman Renzulli asked that this Resolution be withdrawn and she will introduce it again in October, which is domestic violence month.

IV. REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Council President Paplauskas asked to take the Redistricting Resolution out of order if there are no objections. No one objected.

Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston. Sponsored by Council President Paplauskas. Pending Approval of the Special Ordinance Committee of March 18, 2021.

On motion by Councilman Donegan, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to approve this Resolution.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Donegan stated that this matter before us is of great importance to our local democracy.

On motion by Councilman Donegan, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to amend this Resolution as follows: line #38 after “Target Population”, amend remainder of sentence to read as follows: “as determined by the total City population report in the 2020 federal decennial census minus any non-resident incarcerated populations divided by six”.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Donegan stated that it has been brought up that this could impact funding. We heard from Common Cause in written testimony. We have heard from the ACLU and we have heard from Prison Policy Initiative all to the effect that redistricting data in no way would have any impact on any sort of funding that we may receive. It has been brought up that Fire and Police at times respond to the ACI which they do, but the City also receives a significant amount of revenue and pays out expenditures in mutual aid because Fire and Police respond to neighboring municipalities.

Mr. Lima stated that he submitted this Resolution on behalf of the Board of Canvassers in order to get the redistricting process going. He used the 2011 Resolution when drafting this Resolution and he also used the existing framework State Law as well as the new redistricting guidelines that passed the City Charter by the voters last fall and he incorporated that in the Resolution. He also stated that if this Resolution was to be amended, it would be problematic because it would be modifying census data.

Council President Paplauskas asked for legal opinion. Attorney Angell stated that in looking at the law on this and talking with Mr. Lima, he concurs. He also stated that you have a Charter obstacle, but the broader problem is the political solution rests at the State level and that solution is being considered in the forms of two Bills that need to be reconciled. It is problematic for this City Council to do anything other than react and respond to a Charter amendment that would allow you to do something with the census data.

Councilman Reilly stated that he served on the Charter Review Commission this last time and this issue was brought up and defeated on a vote of 8-3. The City Charter is our controlling document. If we want to change it there are avenues to do so, but this is the wrong avenue to do so because we do not have the authority as a body to even change it.

Councilman Donegan stated that he respects Mr. Lima and Attorney Angell’s opinions, but he will not be withdrawing the motion. He thinks it is disingenuous for anyone that served on the Charter Review Commission to sit here tonight and say the Charter Review Commission is the right place to do it if when you were on the Charter Review Commission you voted against making this change. You can’t have it both ways. Councilman Reilly stated that he did vote against it. This prison was here long before Ward 6 was created. The only way to act within a manner that you would be gerrymandering is to do something about that, so what we are trying to do here is gerrymandering.

Councilwoman Marino stated that she applauds the efforts of Councilman Donegan. She is disappointed that the Charter Review Commission did not take action then. She made it clear that the concept that we are going to lose funding is a myth. Our funding is not based on this. We are not going to gain funding, we are not going to lose funding. With respect to the First Circuit Appeals Case, it needs to be crystal clear that the Court in the First Circuit said that this City Council have the ability to change this, so it is not that it can’t be done, it is not that it is illegal, it is not that if we did it, it is going to be found unconstitutional, it is constitutional to in fact change it so that the ACI population is not included in Ward 6. Let’s hope that the General Assembly makes the change and then maybe we can have a different discussion.

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Councilwoman Renzulli asked for Solicitor's opinion if this was passed, would it open us up to lawsuit? Solicitor stated that it would open it up to potential litigation, but this should be discussed in Executive Session.

Council President Paplauskas stated that he can't vote on the amendment this evening for the reason of the Charter. He indicated that everyone took an Oath to follow the rules of the Charter, but he looks forward to the work his colleagues will continue to do on this in the future.

Roll call was taken on motion to amend this Resolution and motion failed on a vote of 4-5. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwomen Marino, Vargas, Germain and Councilman Donegan -4. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Renzulli, Councilman Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -5.

Roll call was taken on motion to approve the above Resolution and motion passed on a vote of 5-4. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Renzulli, Councilman Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -5. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilwomen Marino, Vargas, Germain and Councilman Donegan -4.

Council President Paplauskas asked to take Council Member Communications out of order and hear the RIPTA issue. No one objected.

Councilwoman Vargas:

- **RIPTA COVID Presentation**

Jim Vincent appeared to speak and stated that approximately one year ago, at this time, when the pandemic started, our ridership was at 58,000 passengers per day. Within a month to two months, it went down to 15,000 per day because of the pandemic. The Department of Health mandated that they have capacity limitations and only 15 people could ride a bus at one time. RIPTA policy mandated that everyone riding the bus had to wear a mask. The reason why they did not have any service interruptions or routes terminated was because of the federal funding. The fares are 1/3 of their revenue. He outlined that one of the things that they were supportive of was Meals On Wheels. Their drivers were able to be freed up to be drivers for Meals On Wheels, which they are proud of.

FINANCE COMMITTEE OF MARCH 1, 2021 (Council Vice-President Edward J. Brady, Chair)

Resolution - Loan Order authorizing the City of Cranston to issue not to exceed \$147,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, Notes and other evidences of indebtedness to finance the construction, renovation, improvement, alteration, repair, landscaping, furnishing and equipping of schools and school facilities throughout the City, subject to approval of State Housing Aid at a reimbursement rate or State share ratio of not less than 50% at the time of issuance and provided that the authorization shall be reduced by the amount of certain Grants received from State Bond proceeds, from the Rhode Island Department of Education or from the Rhode Island School Building Authority

On motion by Council Vice-President Brady, seconded by Councilman Reilly, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Resolution - Loan Order authorizing the City of Cranston to issue not to exceed \$2,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, Notes and other evidences of indebtedness to finance the acquisition, improvement, renovation and repair of Fire and Public Safety equipment by the issuance of not more than \$2,000,000 General Obligation Bonds and Notes therefor

On motion by Councilman Reilly, seconded by Council Vice-President Brady, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

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Resolution - Loan Order authorizing the City of Cranston to finance the construction, improvement, renovation, repair, alteration, furnishing and equipping of public buildings in the City by the issuance of not more than \$1,000,000 General Obligation Bonds and Notes therefor

On motion by Councilman Reilly, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Resolution – Loan Order authorizing the City of Cranston to finance the acquisition, construction, improvement, renovation, repair and alteration of playgrounds, athletic fields and related equipment in the City by the issuance of not more than \$2,000,000 General Obligation Bonds and Notes therefor

On motion by Councilman Reilly, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Resolution - Loan Order authorizing the City of Cranston to finance the design, construction, repair, rehabilitation and improvement of streets, sidewalks and bridges in the City, including, but not limited to paving, drainage, traffic control devices, road maintenance equipment, safety improvements and landscaping and all costs incidental or related thereto by the issuance of not more than \$10,000,000 General Obligation Bonds and Notes therefor

On motion by Councilman Reilly, seconded by Councilwoman Vargas, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Resolution - Loan Order authorizing the City of Cranston to finance the acquisition, equipping and installation of renewable energy and energy conservation improvements that reduce energy costs and/or use of fossil fuels in public buildings and facilities in the City and all attendant expenses, including but not limited to engineering costs by the issuance of not more than \$5,000,000 General Obligation Bonds and Notes therefor

On motion by Councilman Donegan, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Resolution authorizing Real Estate Tax Abatements

On motion by Councilwoman Germain, seconded by Councilman Reilly, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Resolution authorizing Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements

On motion by Councilman Reilly, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

- ***Tax Interest Waiver Approvals***

On motion by Councilwoman Renzulli, seconded by Councilman Reilly, 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": Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

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Advice and Consent re: Mayoral appointment of James Warren as Fire Chief, Cranston Fire Department

On motion by Council Vice-President Brady, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, it was voted to approve the Advice and Consent of the Mayoral appointment of James Warren as Fire Chief. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

CLAIMS COMMITTEE OF MARCH 11, 2021 (Councilman John P Donegan, Chair)

Report of settled claims (Informational purposes – No vote will be taken): Raymond Votto Jr. \$149.11 Vehicle Damage; Alfred Oakes Jr. \$300.00 Property Damage; Timothy Mallin \$50.00 Property Damage; Steven Defusco \$5,000.00 Vehicle Damage; Jeanne Supino \$151.86 Vehicle Damage; Carmino Paliotta \$3,977.83 Vehicle Damage; Ann Marie Costa \$240.00 Property Damage.

No action needed.

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE OF MARCH 11, 2021 (Councilman Matthew J. Reilly, Chair)

1-21-05 *Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 17.84 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, Entitled "Zoning" (Conformance to District Regulations Required & Substandard Lots of Record). Sponsored by Mayor Hopkins. Pending Approval of the Special Ordinance Committee of March 18, 2021.*

Chairman Reilly indicated that this Ordinance was continued by the March 18th Ordinance Committee and no action is needed this evening.

2-21-02 *Ordinance in amendment of Title 2 Chapter 72 Section 060 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Administration and Personnel/Juvenile Hearing Board" Sponsored by Councilwoman Marino. Pending Approval of the Special Ordinance Committee of March 18, 2021.*

On motion by Councilwoman Renzulli, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

1-21-01 *Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 10 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Motor Vehicles and Traffic - Traffic control signal lights authorized at certain intersections -Pedestrian actuated." (Park Avenue and Grace Street). Sponsored by Councilwoman Germain. Pending Approval of the Special Ordinance Committee of March 18, 2021.*

Ordinance was withdrawn by sponsor.

1-21-02 *Ordinance in amendment of Title 2 Chapter 40 Section 020 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled "Administration and Personnel/Municipal Court" (Appointment, Term and Qualifications of Judge of the Municipal Court) and Section 130 (Acting Judge/Acting Clerk/Auxiliary Judge). Sponsored by Council President Paplauskas, Councilman Reilly. Pending Approval of the Special Ordinance Committee of March 18, 2021.*

Councilwoman Renzulli motioned to approve the above Ordinance. Councilwoman Marino seconded the motion for discussion:

Under Discussion:

Councilwoman Marino stated that she is not in support of this Ordinance as proposed with these amendments for the reasons that we already are the only City that has as many Judges as we do. She thinks it sends the wrong message to add even more. Warwick has three, two Municipal and one Probate. Providence has six the Municipal, three Housing, three Traffic Court and Probate.

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We already have eight. She stated that she understands the backlog of Probate Court. As a compromise, she would be agreeable to leave our Ordinance as is and add only an Auxiliary Judge to the one that we already have. She cannot support the five. She thinks it is irresponsible for us to have that type of a heavy load of Municipal Court Judges.

On motion by Councilwoman Marino, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to amend the above Ordinance as follows: line #25, amend “five” back to “four”. Motion failed on a vote of 4-5. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwomen Marino, Vargas, Germain and Councilman Donegan -4. The following being recorded as voting “nay”: Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Renzulli, Councilman Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -5.

Roll call was taken on motion to approve the above Ordinance and motion passed on a vote of 6-3. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Councilman Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -6. The following being recorded as voting “nay”: Councilwomen Marino, Germain and Councilman Donegan -3.

1-21-03 *Ordinance in amendment of Title 2 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Administration and Personnel - Small Business Advisory Committee”. Sponsored by Council President Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Brady and Councilwoman Renzulli. Co-sponsored by Councilmen Ferri, Reilly, Councilwomen Germain and Vargas. Pending Approval of the Special Ordinance Committee of March 18, 2021.*

On motion by Councilwoman Renzulli, seconded by Council Vice-President Brady, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

1-21-04 *Ordinance in amendment of Title 2 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Administration and Personnel - Pandemic Advisory Task Force”. Sponsored by Council President Paplauskas, Council Vice-President Brady and Councilwoman Marino. Pending Approval of the Special Ordinance Committee of March 18, 2021.*

On motion by Councilwoman Germain, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, it was voted to approve the above Ordinance.

On motion by Councilwoman Marino, seconded by Council Vice-President Brady, it was voted to amend the above Ordinance as follows: line #83, delete “at least monthly and more frequently as circumstances may dictate” and add “as frequently as circumstances require”. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Roll call was taken on motion to approve the above Ordinance as amended and motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

1-21-06 *Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 8.32 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Recycling”. Sponsored by Councilwoman Germain. Pending Approval of the Special Ordinance Committee of March 18, 2021.*

Ordinance withdrawn by sponsor.

Resolution of the City Council Authorizing a Redistricting Commission to Develop a Redistricting Plan for the Six Wards of the City of Cranston. Sponsored by Council President Paplauskas. Pending Approval of the Special Ordinance Committee of March 18, 2021.

Discussed and voted on earlier in the meeting.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR UN-DOCKETED ITEMS

None.

VI. ELECTION AND/OR APPOINTMENT OF CITY OFFICIALS

Traffic Safety Committee:

- *Frank Ritz: Sponsored by Councilman Reilly (Informational only no vote will be taken)*
- *Joe Graziano Sponsored by Councilwoman Germain (Informational only no vote will be taken)*
- *Michael Costello Sponsored by Councilman Ferri (Informational only no vote will be taken)*
- *Lindsay Michelle Correia Sponsored by Councilwoman Vargas (Informational only no vote will be taken)*

No action needed.

Juvenile Hearing Board

- *Bernard Kevin O'Connor: Member 2 Sponsored by Councilman Ferri (vote will be taken)*

Councilman Ferri stated that he would like to withdraw this appointment until further notice.

VII. REPORT OF CITY OFFICERS

None.

VIII. EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Legal Expense Analysis for 7/1/2020 – 3/22/2021.

Councilman Donegan asked what the status is of the traffic safety litigation case. Attorney Angell stated that this would have to be discussed in Executive Session.

Request to be continued in service for one year, Assistant Chief Daniel Marcinko, Cranston Fire Department

Director Moretti appeared to speak.

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilman Reilly, it was voted to approve the above request. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

Request to be continued in service for one year, Acting Chief James E. Warren, Cranston Fire Department

Director Moretti appeared to speak.

On motion by Councilman Reilly, seconded by Councilwoman Marino, it was voted to approve the above request. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

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Director Moretti stated the following:

- Mayor Hopkins expects to have the proposed budget to the City Council on or before April 1st.
- Vaccination Program is ongoing. We have vaccinated 3,500 seniors, educators and staff. Second vaccine to seniors has started and will continue over the next three weeks.
- American Rescue Act of 2021 – we are waiting to hear how that money can be spent.

IX. COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

Council President Paplauskas wished everyone a Happy Easter and also announced that the Easter Bunny will be going throughout the City this coming Saturday.

X. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman John Donegan:

- *Discussion of Covid Relief Funds*

Councilman Donegan asked, procedurally, who in the City, authorizes this spending. Director Moretti stated that he does not have the answer for that. He would have to rely on the Solicitor for that.

Councilwoman Vargas:

- *RIPTA COVID Presentation*

Presentation was made earlier in the meeting.

XI. COUNCIL BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER

None.

XII. INTRODUCTION OF NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COUNCIL*

* These new matters are referred for public hearing to the appropriate sub-committee of the Council. They are listed here for referral to a committee and vote will be taken.

- 3-21-01** *Ordinance in amendment of Title 10.32 of the City of Cranston Code of Ordinances, 2005, Entitled “Motor Vehicles and Traffic “(Baldwin Orchard Drive & Russet Way – 3 way stop) Sponsored by Councilmen Reilly and Ferri. Referred to Ordinance Committee April 15, 2021.*
- 3-21-02** *Ordinance in Amendment of Title 2 of the City of Cranston Code of Ordinances, 2005, Entitled “Administration and Personnel-Diversity Commission” by Councilwomen Marino, Vargas and Germain. Referred to Ordinance Committee April 15, 2021.*
- 3-21-03** *Ordinance Ratifying School Committee’s Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Cranston Teachers’ Alliance, Local 1704, AFT Paraprofessionals Unit (September 1, 2021 –August 31, 2021). Introduced pursuant to Charter Section 11.02.1. Referred to Finance Committee April 5, 2021.*
- 3-21-04** *Ordinance in amendment of Title 5 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, Entitled “Business Licenses and Regulations” (Third Party Delivery Services). Sponsored by Councilman Donegan. Referred to Ordinance Committee April 15, 2021.*

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3-21-05 *Ordinance in amendment of Title 10 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005 Entitled “Vehicles and Traffic” (Riding of Mini-Bikes, Etc on Public Property) Sponsored by Council President Paplauskas. Referred to Ordinance Committee April 15, 2021.*

3-21-06 *Ordinance in amendment of Title 10 Chapter 40.035 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, Entitled “Vehicles and Traffic” (Fuel Service of Mini-Bikes, Etc by Service Stations”. Sponsored by Mayor Hopkins. Referred to Ordinance Committee April 15, 2021.*

Request from National Grid for pole location at Natick Avenue and Valley View Drive, Referred to Public Works Committee April 15, 2021.

Director Moretti stated that the Administration is withdrawing proposed Ordinance 3-21-06.

Councilwoman Marino stated that she will be recusing from voting on the Pole Location request for Natick Ave. and Valley View Dr. due to pending litigation, which she is a litigant of.

On motion by Councilwoman Vargas, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, it was voted to refer the above new business except for proposed Ordinance 3-21-06 and Pole Location request for Natick Ave. to the respective Committees. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -9.

On motion by Councilwoman Vargas, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, it was voted to refer the National Grid Pole Location for Natick Ave. to the respective Committee. Motion passed on a vote of 8-0 with 1 recusal. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -8. Councilwoman Marino recused.

XIII. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS ON CLERK’S DESK

None.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 P.M.

/s/ Leanne Zarrella, JD
City Clerk

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

(See Stenographic Notes of Ron Ronzio, Stenotypist)