

(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, June 7, 2021 via Zoom Webinar.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 P.M. by the Chair.

Present Councilman Matthew R. Reilly
 Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli
 Councilwoman Jessica M. Marino
 Councilman John P. Donegan
 Councilman Robert J. Ferri, Vice-Chair
 Council Vice-President Edward J. Brady, Chair
 Council President Christopher G. Paplauskas

Also Present: Councilwoman Aniece Germain
 Councilwoman Lammis J. Vargas
 Robert Strom, Director of Finance
 John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor
 Steven Angell, City Council Legal Counsel
 Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees
 Heather Finger, Stenographer

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilwoman Marino, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed unanimously.

I. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER

None.

A. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Robert Murray, Esq., appeared to speak and stated that he submitted a letter last week and asked that it be made part of the record.

On motion by Council President Paplauskas, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, it was voted to place all written testimony as part of the record. Motion passed unanimously.

B. NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

- ***Real Estate Tax Abatements***

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

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

- ***Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements***

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

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

- ***Tangible Tax Abatements***

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

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

- ***Tax Interest Waiver Approvals***

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

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

5-21-01 ***Ordinance authorizing the City to utilize Western Recreational Impact Fees for the bike path beautification and restoration project. Sponsored by Councilwoman Marino, Councilmen Donegan and Ferri.***

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilman Donegan, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Council President Paplauskas asked for any Solicitor or Attorneys on the call for any feedback on this.

Attorney Angell stated that his feedback at this point is no different then it was at the budget hearings. He thinks this should be held for further studies for us to take a look at the RI Development Impact Fee Act as well as the City Ordinances relative to the use of this money and get back to the Committee with a legal memorandum on that as opposed to just reading from the Statute.

Solicitor stated that in reading some research Solicitor Rawson had downloaded and emailed him, it seems that Impact Fees, as a general principle, cannot be used for maintenance or repairing existing infrastructure. How this particular Ordinance is worded, he is not quite sure what beautification and restoration contemplates, but it seems to be Solicitor Rawson's opinion and he agrees with him, that Impact Fees are not designed for maintenance and/or repairing infrastructure. He has no problem with Attorney Angell's suggestion that more research needs to be done.

Councilwoman Marino stated that she agrees that there are legal concerns, but she thinks it is something that we could do right. This is not maintenance. State Law does allow for Impact Fees to be used with respect to even such details as landscaping, recreational facilities and Open Space. She thinks that we will be able to reach the ultimate goal of doing restoration and necessary improvements in that area and the Ordinance could be improved so we would be in full compliance. She thinks it would be best if we continue this for further discussion.

Councilman Ferri stated that he knows there are areas of concerns in reference to this Ordinance and he is hoping that everyone can work together as we agreed during the budget sessions that the bike path does need beautification, landscaping and restoration.

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

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

On motion by Councilwoman Marino, seconded by Councilman Ferri, it was voted to continue this Ordinance to the next regular schedule Finance meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

5-21-02 ***Ordinance authorizing the City to apply Eastern and Western Police Impact Fees towards rent. Sponsored by Councilman Donegan.***

On motion by Councilman Donegan, seconded by Council President Paplauskas, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Donegan stated that this is to reflect what was approved in the budget.

Director Strom stated that based on what is left in those two line items, pretty much absorbs and concludes the funding that is in there so next year it may not be available to do the same thing.

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

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

5-21-03 *Ordinance in amendment of Chapter 5 of the Code of the City of Cranston, 2005, entitled “Business Licenses and Regulations” (Fireworks Vendors). Sponsored by Councilman Donegan.*

On motion by Councilman Ferri, seconded by Councilwoman Marino, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Donegan stated that this is the change that was made during the budget process to raise the fees for fireworks vendors.

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

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

5-21-05 *Ordinance transferring appropriations and supplemental appropriations amending the Budget for the Fiscal Year commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021 (4th Quarter Transfers). Sponsored by Mayor Hopkins.*

On motion by Council President Paplauskas, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, it was voted to recommend approval of this Ordinance.

Under Discussion:

Director Strom stated that when we did the fourth quarter transfer, it was done approximately middle of May. His concern is he thinks it is a little premature due to the fact that our Fiscal Year ends June 30th. He thinks we need to wait until the Fiscal Year comes to almost conclusion so that if there is any department transfers that have to be done internally, they will have the funds to do it.

No one appeared to speak in favor or to oppose.

Director Strom stated that he would prefer having this Ordinance withdrawn and a new Ordinance be introduced next month with current figures. Director Moretti agreed and stated that the Administration is withdrawing this Ordinance.

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

Ordinance was withdrawn by Administration.

C. COUNCILMEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

- *Update regarding status COVID money*

Director Strom stated that on May 20th, the City received \$13,385,228.50 and it represents 50% of the American Rescue Fund Act. That money was placed into a fund #102 called 'Budget Stabilization'. There is ongoing discussion of what that money can be used for.

Chair asked that this be placed on next month's agenda for further update.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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