

(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

-JUNE 17, 2021-

A Special meeting of the City Council was called held on Thursday, June 17, 2021 via ZOOM.

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 P.M. by the Council President.

Roll call showed the following members present: Councilwoman Marino, Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Brady and Council President Paplauskas -8.

Absent: Councilwoman Vargas -1

Also Present: Anthony Moretti, Director of Administration; John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor; Stephen Angell, City Council Legal Counsel; Kenneth Mason, Director of Public Works.

-JUNE 17, 2021-



CRANSTON CITY COUNCIL

Special Meeting - Docket

Council President Christopher G. Paplauskas

THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 2021 @ 8:30 p.m.

Virtual ZOOM Meeting

Topic: Special City Council meeting
Time: Jun 17, 2021 08:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87879000679?pwd=UVpydFljMVpsOFplQmYzMGZRcFNSQT09>

Meeting ID: 878 7900 0679

Passcode: 851233

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,87879000679#,,,,*851233# US (New York)

+13017158592,,87879000679#,,,,*851233# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

833 548 0282 US Toll-free

877 853 5247 US Toll-free

888 788 0099 US Toll-free

833 548 0276 US Toll-free

Meeting ID: 878 7900 0679

Passcode: 851233

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kvXVIGpJn>

Agenda and Docketed Matters Before the Council

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

In Accordance with Section 3.07 and 14.17 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, June 17, 2021 at 8:30 p.m.**

at which meeting the following matters will be heard:

- **Executive Session pursuant to R.I.G.L. Sec. 42-46-5(a)(1)**
 - **Waste Management Job Performance** (No Vote will be taken)

-JUNE 17, 2021-

- **Adjournment:** *(Vote will be taken)*

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

Executed at Cranston, Rhode Island, this ___8th___ day of June, 2021.

Christopher G. Paplauskas, Council President

-JUNE 17, 2021-

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that a true copy of the attached Notice of a Special meeting of the City Council to be held on, Thursday, June 17, 2021 at 8:30 pm. via Zoom meeting, was delivered via regular mail and electronic mail on the 8th day of June, 2021 to the addresses listed below.

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

Council Vice-President Edward J. Brady
12 Thunder Trail
Cranston, RI 02921
Brady4cranston@gmail.com

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

Councilman Robert J. Ferri
2426 Cranston R.
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 Aniece Germain
53 Dale Ave.
Cranston, RI 02910
aniecegermain2@gmail.com

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

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

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees

-JUNE 17, 2021-

Council President Paplauskas deferred to the legal counsel if it is necessary to go into Executive Session.

Attorney Angell stated that this particular exception to the Open Meetings Act that allows for an Executive Session and job performance speaks to employees of the public body. Waste Management is a vendor under contract for the City and not an employee of the city of Cranston. Any discussion of the performance needs to happen in Open Session.

Council President Paplauskas asked for Solicitor's opinion.

Solicitor stated that he spoke to Attorney Angell between the last session and this and he agrees with that assessment. He does not see where this discussion would fit any of the exceptions normally relied upon to convene in Executive Session. As Attorney Angell pointed out, job performance only applies to employees and he agrees with Attorney Angell that this should be in Open forum.

Jim Nocell, Area Director of Public Sector Services for Waste Management, appeared to speak.

Council President Paplauskas asked if Mr. Nocell had any problems with the Council moving forward with this meeting. Mr. Nocell stated, no, none at all.

Council President Paplauskas asked Administration and Director Mason of what is going on up to this point as far as pickups.

Director Mason stated that we have had a significant issue with yard waste pickup since it started the first week of April. There were quite a few misses and delays stretched to people not getting picked up for weeks at a time. For the last two to two and a half weeks, they have done much better, however, they still are not necessarily pickup on the day of service, but they have made concerted effort to. We are still not pleased, but it is much better than it was in the beginning through the month of April. As far as trash and recycling, they have met their contractual requirements. We have not had any issues with the trash and recycling end.

Council President Paplauskas asked Mr. Nocell to speak on what has been going on and what challenges they have and are facing.

Mr. Nocell stated that the Spring yard waste has been a challenge for a number of reasons for that. Since the beginning of the pandemic, there is a lot of ripple effects that are affecting the transportation industry as well as the supply chain issues that we are facing. They have experienced and still experiencing much higher volume of materials being put out than anticipated when they entered the agreement seven years ago and a lot of that has been driven by the pandemic and folks working from home and producing additional trash, recycling and yard waste. In many months, they are seeing between 10-15% increase in trash volume and they have seen months where they saw 25% increase in yard waste. They have done their best to try to stay on track and handle the increased volumes. What they are experiencing now is a national driver shortage across the country. They have increased signing bonuses for CDL drivers; they have referral program where employees receive \$3,000 bonuses for referring someone to them; the company, approximately a month ago, instituted a new benefit that not only would be for the employees, but for all their families and that is an educational benefit where they are going to reimburse tuition for an employee or any of their children or family members to get a degree

Council President Paplauskas stated that he has certainly seen improvements over the last few weeks and the complaint calls have reduced a little bit.

-JUNE 17, 2021-

Council Vice-President Brady commended Mr. Nocell first of all, owning it and second of all, he highlighted the issues that we are having.

Chair asked Mr. Nocell if they will be doing an extensive job fair in Cranston targeting people who can fill these opportunities and benefit the most from the educational offers that the company has. She also stated that people would like to know what Waste Management's plan is for making sure all the neighborhoods are being covered at the same pace because some people are saying that they are getting their regular pickup for their yard waste and others are going weeks without getting it. Mr. Nocell stated that they are hoping that the benefit that they are just rolling out will attract the kind of people that are looking for a long-term career in the industry. As to the balancing of how they do the collections, he thinks that that is something that they have to work on and rethink.

Councilwoman Marino stated that she speaks for everyone that we are not surprised about the hindrances and the obstacles that Waste Management is facing in terms of staffing. She asked if the communication Waste Management is having with the City, with DPW and the Administration as to predictability of services when there is a delay, has that improved a bit? Mr. Nocell stated that communication with the City and with Director staff is pretty constant. Councilwoman Marino stated that it would just be beneficial for everybody if you know that you are going to have a certain area down and yard waste is not going to be picked up for a week or so, the soonest you can let the City know, the better off we will be able to at least let our residents know. Mr. Nocell stated that they will work on that.

Director Mason stated that the City of Cranston delivers more yard waste to Resource Recovery than any other City combined in the State. We typically deliver 6,000 tons of yard waste every year and we have a cap that Resource Recovery puts on us of 2,000 tons a year. This year, we will be tipping 7,000 tons, so it is a considerable increase in amount of trash this year, he thinks due to the pandemic. The City has a cap with Resource Recovery of, he believes 23,000 tons a year and we are probably going to exceed that by 2,000 tons this year.

Councilman Reilly asked if Waste Management is currently being fined under the contract. Director Moretti stated that, to his knowledge, the answer is yes. It is \$1,000 a day. Councilman Reilly asked if the payments have been made. Director Moretti stated that he believes it is a credit against invoices, it is not us billing them. Mr. Nocell stated that right now, they are a day to a day and a half behind on yard waste.

Council President Paplauskas stated that he would like to have a follow-up meeting with Waste Management, maybe at a Public Works committee meeting in September prior to the Fall cleanup. Mr. Nocell stated that that would be a good time to meet again.

Councilman Reilly asked how many employees Waste Management is down as of today and how many trucks were down, so we can have something to compare to in September. Mr. Nocell stated that he can put that information together and forward it to the Council.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

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