

*(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, February 7, 2022 via Zoom webinar.

### **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by the Chair.

Present                    Councilwoman Jessica M. Marino  
                                 Councilman Matthew R. Reilly  
                                 Councilman Richard D. Campopiano  
                                 Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli, Vice-Chair  
                                 Council Vice-President Robert J. Ferri, Chair  
                                 Council President Christopher G. Paplauskas

Absent:                    Councilman John P. Donegan

Also Present:            Anthony Moretti, Chief of Staff  
                                 Robert Strom, Director of Finance  
                                 David Dimaio, Council Budget Analyst  
                                 John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor  
                                 Rosalba Zanni, Acting City Clerk  
                                 Tom Lima, Video Technician  
                                 Heather Finger, Stenographer

### **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:**

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

#### **I. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER**

#### **II. CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **III. PUBLIC HEARINGS\* and/or NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE**

##### **A. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

##### **B. NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE**

- ***Opioid Litigation Update (Councilwoman Marino)***

**Councilwoman Marino** asked Administration if there is an update on this item since there was a public announcement as to this settlement. Director Moretti stated that the Administration was informed that the State, in its entirety, would be receiving \$114,500,000 as a result of the settlement of which 80% would be retained by the State, 20% of that number would be distributed to the municipalities. Of that number, we were told that 3½ % would be distributed to Cranston, which is approximately \$1.8 million. He was told that the uses of those funds were for fighting opioid addiction.

**Solicitor Verdecchia** stated that he has not spoken to Solicitor Millea. He spoke to him last week and we were waiting for the Attorney General's Office announcement. In terms of what those funds can and cannot be used for, he has not had any discussions yet with Solicitor Millea. He thinks that after he has a discussion with him, an Executive Session should be scheduled to discuss this.

**Council President Paplauskas** asked that Solicitor Verdecchia contact him regarding the Executive Session and possibly could be done at the full City Council meeting this month or a special meeting can be called.

- ***Potential for Cranston's participation in the RI Community Septic System Loan Program and the RI Sewer Tie-In Loan Program (Councilwoman Marino)***

**Councilwoman Marino** stated that this issue was discussed at the last Public Works Committee meeting and it is before this Committee to discuss whether or not this is viable to us in a financial way because it would be of great benefits to the residents. This program is run through the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank and there are two separate programs. One is a community septic system loan program that allows cities and towns that participate in the program to have residents that have existing septic system but do not have the option of sewers to take these low-interest loans at 1% for no more than \$25,000 for ten year-term. The other program, which runs under the same organization, is the sewer tie-in loan fund, which would allow residents to borrow money for the sewer tie-in at a low-interest loan.

**Director Moretti** stated that he believes Mayor Hopkins finds it interesting with what Councilwoman Marino has presented. In concept, it is supported by the Administration. He also stated that Director Mason has indicated that in order to proceed, the city of Cranston would need to be DEM approved to have an onsite waste management plan. Director Moretti also stated that Director Mason has informed him that Cranston does not have one at this time and indicated that he believes that it would be approximately a six-month process between applying and getting approved for that. There is a potential for that, but the Mayor feels that this is certainly worthwhile. There is a logistical problem though, which is the burden on this would fall with two departments, one being Public Works and the other being Finance. He indicated that we are going to be short-staffed at the top in both of these departments very soon so in terms of priority, at this time, it might be difficult, but maybe once we have new people onboard, we can turn it over to them and see if they want to proceed with this.

**1-22-01      *Ordinance ratifying School Committee's Collective Bargaining Agreement with the National Association of Government Employees, Local RI-153, Custodian Unit. Introduced Pursuant to Charter Sect. 11.02.1.***

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

Under Discussion:

**Michael Crudale**, School Department Chief Human Resource Officer, appeared to speak and stated that this is a three-year contract and over the life of the contract the members will receive 3% increase in year 1, 2% increase in years 2 and 3. This unit is also being offered \$2,000 ratification bonus and the funds being used from the federal relief money. That would be part of year 1 and years 2 and 3 they would get 2% increase.

**Director Strom** stated that, in his opinion, this is a fair contract.

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

- ***Real Estate Tax Abatements***

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

***Motor Vehicle Tax Abatements***

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

- ***Tax Assessment Board of Review assessed December 31, 2020***

Informational Only. No action needed.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

/s/ Rosalba Zanni  
Acting City Clerk