

(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

-JANUARY 2, 2023-

A Special meeting of the City Council was held on Monday, January 2, 2023 in the Cranston High School West Auditorium, 80 Metropolitan Ave., Cranston, Rhode Island at 7:00 P.M.

Stephen Angell, Master of Ceremonies, welcomed everyone and announced the opening of the 2023 Fifty-Ninth Inaugural Program.

Mr. Angell introduced the members of the processional escorted by the Cranston Fire Department Honor Guard.

Mr. Angell asked the audience to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem and Invocation.

Mr. Angell introduced Alexis Franco of Cranston High School East, Michaela Consiglio of Cranston High School West and Chase Iacono of NEL/CPS Construction and Career Academy, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Angell introduced Geneva Lindsay of Cranston High School West, who sang the National Anthem.

Mr. Angell introduced Father John Soares of St. Thomas Church for the Invocation.

Mr. Angell introduced Mayor Kenneth J. Hopkins to give Mayor's Speech.

Mr. Angell recognized Dignitaries in attendance.

Acting City Clerk, Rosalba Zanni, City Clerk, read the Certificate of Election of the City Council Members-Elect.

Justice O. Rogeriee Thompson, Senior United States Circuit Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and former Rhode Island Superior Court Justice administered the Oath of Office to the City Council Members-Elect.

*NOTE: The Council Members-Elect were sworn in by the Acting City Clerk prior to the commencement of the meeting, per City Charter.

Rosalba Zanni, Acting City Clerk, read Certificate of Election of the School Committee.

Mayor Hopkins administered the Oath of Office to the School Committee Members-Elect.

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Rosalba Zanni, Acting City Clerk, called the meeting of the Cranston City Council to order and took the roll. The following members were present: Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Campopiano, Paplauskas and Reilly -9.

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Acting City Clerk announced that nominations for Council President are now in order. She asked if there were any nominations. Councilman Donegan nominated Councilwoman Marino. Acting City Clerk asked if there were any other nominations. There were none and nominations were closed. Roll call was taken on nomination of Councilwoman Marino as Council President motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Campopiano, Paplauskas and Reilly - 9.

COUNCILWOMAN MARINO was appointed ***COUNCIL PRESIDENT***.

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL VICE-PRESIDENT

Council President Marino called for election of Council Vice-President and asked if there were any nominations. Councilman Donegan nominated Councilwoman Vargas. Councilwoman Germain seconded the nomination.

Council President Marino asked if there were any other nominations. There were none and nominations were closed. Roll call was taken on nomination of Councilwoman Vargas as Council Vice-President motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Campopiano, Paplauskas, Reilly and Council President Marino -9.

COUNCILWOMAN VARGAS was appointed ***COUNCIL VICE-PRESIDENT***.

Council President Marino recognized Father John Soares, Member of Judiciary, Elected Federal, State and local Officials, including members of the Cranston Delegation to the R.I. General Assembly as well as the Cranston Fire and Police Departments Honor Guards.

COUNCIL LEGAL COUNSEL

On motion by Councilman Paplauskas, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, it was voted to re-appoint **STEPHEN ANGELL, ESQ.** as ***CITY COUNCIL LEGAL COUNSEL***. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Ferri, Councilwomen Renzulli, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Campopiano, Paplauskas, Reilly, Council Vice-President Vargas and Council President Marino -9.

Council President Marino administered the Oath of Office to the City Council Legal Counsel.

APPOINTMENT OF MAJORITY LEADER

Council Vice-President Vargas stated that the Democratic members of the Cranston City Council have selected **COUNCILMAN DONEGAN** as ***MAJORITY LEADER*** to serve during the 2023-2025 term.

APPOINTMENT OF MINORITY LEADER

Councilman Paplauskas stated that the Republican members of the Cranston City Council have selected **COUNCILWOMAN RENZULLI** as ***MINORITY LEADER*** to serve during the 2023-2025 term.

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COUNCIL RULES

Council President Marino stated that the Adoption of the Council Rules for the 2023-2025 session will be deferred to the January regular Council meeting. Attorney Angell stated that, in the meantime, the Council will operate under Roberts Rules.

APPOINTMENT OF MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGES

On motion by Councilman Donegan, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to take all Judicial appointments as a block, including Chief Judge, Senior Associate Judge, Associate Judges, Auxiliary Judges and Probate Judge.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Paplauskas stated that he will be voting against the motion to take the Municipal Court Judges as a block. He feels that every person that is up for appointment for a Municipal Court position brings different aspects of their resume and background to the table and he thinks that each one should be voted on separately. He also feels that that is the way it has been done in the past. It is not always the right way to do it, but it is not a business license we are taking as a block, it is a position for Municipal Court, so those are his feelings on that.

Councilwoman Renzulli stated that she will also not be in support of this. She would like to entertain a simultaneous motion to move this to continue to the full City Council meeting at the end of January. Her caucus has recently learned of some concerning issues with regard to some nominees and they have questions and she thinks that this is such an important position and she wants the public's confidence and integrity of our Court to be full, so she would like the Council to possibly talk about some of these issues and where we have the opportunity to go into Executive Session rather than in this ceremonious meeting.

Council President Marino deferred to Legal Counsel with respect to the ability for the Council to take this as a block. Attorney Angell stated that the Council is able to take these as a block.

Councilman Paplauskas seconded Councilwoman Renzulli's motion to continue with all of these nominees.

Councilman Paplauskas deferred to Legal Counsel with respect to the first of Councilman Donegan with second given that there was a second motion being made and if she can take the initial motion first and second motion second. Attorney Angell stated, yes, you should take the first motion first and the second motion following, although, if the first motion passes, the second motion will be moot.

Councilman Reilly stated that Council President Marino's speech this evening was about inclusivity and the importance of a position of a Judge in our City, he does not think this is something that we should treat as cavalier as to put five people through who are going to maintain the laws of our City over the next two years. He thinks it needs to be vetted. There are certainly questions that need to be answered and to determine that we have the right people have that position and he would be hopeful that we would take some time to talk about these and push it off a few weeks to the next meeting.

Councilman Paplauskas stated that since we are under Robert's Rules of Order, he asked if a motion to continue supersedes any other pending motion. Attorney Angell indicated to the Council President that vote can be taken on that motion.

Council President Marino asked Clerk to take the roll on motion to continue and motion failed on a vote of 4-5. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwoman Renzulli, Councilmen Campopiano, Paplauskas and Reilly -4. The following being recorded as voting "nay": Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Vargas and Council President Marino -5.

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Discussion resumed on original motion to take all Judicial appointments as a block.

Councilwoman Renzulli asked if City Council is allowed to have discussion on individual nominees at this moment or not. Council President Marino stated that the current motion is just to take the appointments as a block and not with respect to the actual nominees.

Council President Marino stated that before the roll call is taken, this Inauguration this evening is the 59th City Council Inaugural meeting and for a long standing number of years, this has been the procedure and all the nominees this evening are good standing members of the Bar, which is required and in the previous session, the Council with actually an Ordinance, that she believes she introduced for amendment, added the requirement that the Judges have a minimum of ten years of experience and having been a lawyer herself for nearly 23 years in the State, she has great confidence that all the nominees are well-suited as good standing lawyers and she does not have any issues with taking it as a block.

Council President Marino asked Clerk to take the roll on motion to take all Judicial appointments as a block, including Chief Judge, Senior Associate Judge, Associate Judges, Auxiliary Judges and Probate Judge and motion passed on a vote of 5-4. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Vargas and Council President Marino -5. The following being recorded as voting “nay”: Councilwoman Renzulli, Councilmen Campopiano, Paplauskas and Reilly -4.

Council President Marino asked for nominations with respect to a block.

Councilman Donegan motion to nominate **THE HONORABLE RAYMOND C. COIA** as **MUNICIPAL COURT CHIEF JUDGE**; **THE HONORABLE MICHAEL B. FORTE** as **MUNICIPAL COURT SENIOR ASSOCIATE JUDGE**; **THE HONORABLE ANGELYNE E. COOPER** as **MUNICIPAL COURT ASSOCIATE JUDGE**; **THE HONORABLE MATTHEW B. SMITH** as **MUNICIPAL COURT ASSOCIATE JUDGE**; **THE HONORABLE EMILI VAZIRI** as **MUNICIPAL COURT ASSOCIATE JUDGE**; **THE HONORABLE ROBERT A. RAGOSTA** as **AUXILIARY JUDGE**; **THE HONORABLE KENNETH SCHREIBER**, as **AUXILIARY JUDGE**; **THE HONORABLE CYNTHIA M. FOGARTY** as **PROBATE JUDGE**. Council Vice-President Vargas seconded the motion.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Paplauskas stated that he will be voting against this block not because he is voting against any particular appointment or Judge. He thinks they all bring the unique abilities to the table, he just does not agree in the process that we are doing.

Roll call was taken and motion passed on a vote of 5-4. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Vargas and Council President Marino -5. The following being recorded as voting “nay”: Councilwoman Renzulli, Councilmen Campopiano, Paplauskas and Reilly -4.

First Circuit Court Judge O. Rogeriee Thompson administered the Oath of Office to the Municipal Court Judges, Auxiliary Judges and Probate Judge.

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REGISTRAR

On motion by Councilman Donegan, seconded by Councilman Reilly, it was voted to re-appoint **NICHOLAS LIMA** as **CITY REGISTRAR**. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Renzulli, Councilwoman Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Campopiano, Paplauskas, Reilly, Council Vice-President Vargas and Council President Marino -9.

Council President Marino administered the Oath of Office to the City Registrar.

COUNCIL AUDITOR/BUDGET ANALYST

On motion by Councilwoman Renzulli, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to re-appoint **DAVID DIMAIO** as **CITY AUDITOR/BUDGET ANALYST**. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Renzulli, Councilwoman Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Campopiano, Paplauskas, Reilly, Council Vice-President Vargas and Council President Marino -9.

Council President Marino administered the Oath of Office to the City Council Auditor/Budget Analyst.

HARBOR MASTER

On motion by Council Vice-President Vargas, seconded by Councilman Paplauskas, it was voted to re-appoint **TED WESTCOTT** as **THE HARBOR MASTER**. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilman Ferri, Councilwoman Renzulli, Councilwoman Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Campopiano, Paplauskas, Reilly, Council Vice-President Vargas and Council President Marino -9.

Council President Marino administered the Oath of Office to the Harbor Master.

Council President Marino thanked the audience and elected officials for their attendance and participation and wished them a healthy and happy New Year.

Council President Marino called upon Father Soares to offer Benediction.

Mr. Angell invited all guests to a reception of light refreshments in the School Library.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

/s/ Rosalba Zanni
Acting City Clerk