

(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 FINANCE COMMITTEE – APRIL 11, 2023
(BUDGET HEARINGS)

A special meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 869 Park Ave., Cranston, Rhode Island.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 P.M. by the Chair.

Present Councilwoman Aniece Germain
 Councilman Richard D. Campopiano
 Council Vice-President Lammis J. Vargas (appeared at 6:20 p.m.)
 Councilman John P. Donegan, Chair
 Council President Jessica M. Marino

Absent: Councilman Robert J. Ferri
 Councilman Christopher G. Paplauskas

Also Present: Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli
 Councilman Matthew R. Reilly
 Anthony Moretti, Chief of Staff
 Tom Zidelis, Finance Director
 John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor
 David DiMaio, City Council Budget Analyst
 Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Director Moretti stated that the Public Works Director left employment with the City last Friday, so he and Director Zidelis will do their best to answer any questions.

Chair questioned if with the current vacancy of the Director’s position. Would that result in any net savings or reductions in the Expenditure for the Salary Schedule for FY2024? Director Moretti stated that, hopefully, not. Hoping to have someone onboard by July 1st and anticipate filling this position. Chair asked if there will be an Acting Director in the interim. Director Moretti stated that for short-term, he thinks we can handle it inhouse if it is very short-term. They are earmarking Chief Engineer Mateus as not necessarily in the Acting, but being a liaison and then himself, they should be ok for a while.

Council President Marino stated that, in terms of the proposed Budget and actual Budget as it stands, she does not see any sizeable for Differential. She was told, not by the Administration, but

others, that Ken Mason, former Public Works Director, had returned. She asked if this is true that Mr. Mason has returned to the City under the 75-day Rule just this year and where he is getting paid out of. Director Moretti stated that he is not sure where he is paid out of, but former Director Bernardo did call upon him because of the reduction in Public Works, he relied on Mr. Mason to help quite a bit in the Budget production. This happened after the Mayor submitted this Budget and to plan for any Differential could very well be. Council President Marino asked that she be provided with information of where Mr. Mason is getting paid out of in the Budget, the amount and the number of days he will be working. She asked if anyone else besides Mr. Mason was hired to come in the last Budget to assist in some way and any hires in the Director level within Public Works. Director Moretti stated that at the moment he can't think of anyone. Council President Marino stated that given that there is no Differential in this Budget, she asked if the Administration plans on hiring someone on a temporary basis. Director Moretti stated that there are no plans. As he stated, this is pretty much new. The goal is to have that position filled by July 1st.

Chair indicated to line item #54001 Rent – Police Building and stated that it is budgeted for \$90,000, same as 2023, 2022 actual is \$79,000 and annualized actuals is \$79,000. He questioned if the full \$90,000 is necessary. Is rent going up by \$10,000 for next FY? Director Zidelis stated that his understanding is it is a contractual obligation. He noticed how inconsistent that has been. It is fluctuating. He assumes it is a contractual obligation for the \$90,000. Chair stated that he thinks that the steep increase in that is probably due to the DPW moving from Cranston Street to Sockanosset. That is when it went up. Director Moretti stated that the lease at Sockanosset was until July 1st of this year and it is approximately \$87,000. He thinks there is approximately 3% increase renewal, which with other expenses, brings it up to \$90,000.

Chair stated that he appreciates seeing Rodent Control increased by \$10,000 and appreciates Gina Capuano in the Mayor's Office. He bothered her and Director Moretti last summer and he knows residents appreciate her with their requests.

Council President Marino indicated to the Expenditure Gas & Oil and asked if this is just for the Public Works vehicles or does it include other departments such as Executive? Director Zidelis stated that he assumes it includes other vehicle, but he will check into it and report back to the Council President.

Council President Marino indicated to line item #54000 and asked if this includes purchase of lighting fixtures such as the ones being proposed on Facebook for outside City Hall? Director Zidelis stated, no it does not. This line item is just electric bill and believes it also includes lease of some street lights that we still lease.

Mr. DiMaio indicated to Revenue side – Street Opening Permits – and stated that it is running at 135% currently and it is annualized at \$166,000 and budgeted at \$82,000 for this coming year. he asked Director Zidelis if he feels that that is a little bit understated. Director Zidelis stated that there is a mis-posting of a Revenue that belongs down in the Engineering, so in terms of, if you are looking at FY2023 report, we are reconciling proceeds that were deposited in #13441 that belong in #1303-443 and a journal entry is going to occur in the near future. It is just an accounting error that needs to be corrected. Mr. DiMaio indicated to #44200 – Highway Miscellaneous and asked for clarification. Current actuals is running at approximately \$40,000, but there is nothing in the budget currently. Director Zidelis stated that he will have to assume that that is another mis-posting. He does not know where that would probably belong. He will have to check into that.

Council Vice-President Vargas indicated to the Sidewalk Program and questioned the actuals and demand for that. Director Moretti stated that year to date, we are at \$14,000 of the \$30,000 of the 50/50 Program, which is a matching program.

No one from the public appeared to speak.

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Chair indicated to #5420 Construction and Reconstruction and stated that current year annualized is running at \$97,000, the five-year average is \$135,000 and proposal is \$165,000. He questioned why the \$165,000. Director Zidelis stated that it is based on trends. This is similar to snow. We took the average. From year to year it does vary. It is one that you have to have the sufficient level to ensure safe streets.

Councilwoman Germain indicated to #54203 Snow Removal Overtime and asked how this works as to how this is used questioned the high amount. Director Zidelis stated that FY2022 actuals, that winter, we had snow every weekend throughout the year, so with a weekend snowstorm and calling in employees to plow or to be snow monitors, we are paying them overtime because it is outside their work hours. FY2023, the year we are in, we had a very mild winter, but again, if the employees are called in during the evening, they do get overtime rates per their contracts. The Snow Removal account varies from year to year. Trying to properly budget something that the citizens rely on for passable streets close to after the end of a snowstorm is imperative so we do pay overtime if the plowing is now during their non-working hours.

Council President Marino questioned #51306 Legal Services Fund. Director Zidelis stated that that is contractual payment from union contracts out to the governing union group.

Councilwoman Renzulli questioned #53507 City Claims and stated that she noticed that sometimes this is funded and sometimes it is not. Director Zidelis stated that FY2023, it was budgeted for \$10,000, this year we have had no claims, so we carried over the experience for next year with the same assumption.

Mr. DiMaio indicated that the Council may have a fourth quarter adjustment based on Claims that come in from snow removal. That is why from year to year it may be -0-.

Council President Marino questioned lighting outside City Hall and Sidewalk Repairs and asked what department that is coming from. Director Zidelis stated that from his recollection, 50% is from the Schools and he does not remember where the other 50% will be expended from, but he can get that information. Council President Marino asked if that is included in this year's Budget. Director Zidelis stated that it is being expended in this Fiscal Year Budget for the construction and lighting will be assumed as an operating expense.

Council Vice-President Vargas indicated to Traffic Sign Materials reduction by \$2,000 and asked if that is an account that could be possibly lower, since 31% has been used. Director Moretti stated that the trend is lower. Spring is a busier time. That is just a better estimate, but could be changed.

No one from the public appeared to speak.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Chair indicated to #54401 Electrical Supplies and stated that it was reduced by \$3,000 in this proposed Budget to \$52,000. The five year average is \$36,000 and the FY2023 annualized is at \$36,000. He questioned why the reduction and why not reduce it more. Director Zidelis stated that this is one that we trended it down to just reducing it at \$52,000 just not a straight line. Although, looking back at F2021, there was a big activity, so he does not know if DPW has plans for electrical upgrades. He will have to speculate that. There is work that is being done all over the City buildings, such as the lights outside of City Hall.

Director Moretti stated that Building Maintenance have been very assertive and feeling that they are Building Maintenance and not Building Improvements, so this Budget reflects costs if there is going to be improvements having to go outside at times that we would have preferred to do inhouse, but they are pushing back that work such as that they should not be covered under inhouse labor. Council President Marino asked who Director Moretti is referring as 'they'. Director Moretti stated that Maintenance staff has pushed back on some of the work they have been asked to do and if that is the case and without going to arbitration and grievance or be disciplined, it would cost the City money to do some things that they will not do on the inside. That would be coming from the workers themselves.

Councilwoman Germain asked if they would have duties on what they should and should not do. Director Moretti stated that he thinks it would be a gray area in looking to the Union contract as to what they do and what they do not do. You can't force them to do anything outside of their job description. We are looking at that to see what they should be doing, but with the help of a Personnel Director, it would help to delve into that further.

No one appeared to speak from the public.

ENGINEERING

Chair asked if all positions in this department are currently filled. Director Zidelis stated, yes.

No one appeared to speak from the public.

FLEET MAINTENANCE

Chair indicated to #52006 Equipment Repairs, proposed Budget is \$195,000, that is \$5,000 increase. The current actuals when annualized are \$180,000. Questioned the increase this year. Director Zidelis stated that getting parts for vehicles is getting more expensive. They are repairing larger vehicles. In terms of the actual cost compared to other years' costs keep increasing from year to year. He is assuming that when DPW did this Budget they estimated inflationary factor for purchase of whatever they need to fix on the vehicles.

No one appeared to speak from the public.

BUREAU OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

Chair stated that several years ago, Council Vice-President or Grant Writer might have worked with our Legislative Delegation at the State House to get some grants to purchase flashing stop signs or solar lights. They were relatively inexpensive according to a conversation he had with the Police

Department. He asked where within the Budget or is there anything in the Budget or any line item in the Budget where we can point to to try and take more pro-active measures on traffic and street safety in the City? Director Zidelis stated that in terms of the traffic safety budget, it is just funding an employee who has no operational account, so he is not aware of that grant and he is not aware of the cost of flashing street lights. Right now, he is not aware of any budgetary line item, but he can do some homework relative to this and research how much one costs.

Council Vice-President Vargas stated that the Salary Schedule is step 8. She asked if that is the highest step of a salary in terms of the City contract because she knows the salary continues to increase and it seems like there is only one person under that Division. Director Zidelis stated that he believes 8 is the highest, but even when you attain the highest step, you still pay contractual cost of living adjustments. That represents the step and the cost of living adjustment that was negotiated with the Union.

No one appeared to speak from the public.

REFUSE

Director Moretti stated that the trash hauling is the Waste Management contract. Tipping fees, we know the volume that we have there and is predictable in the City and knowing the rates that we are receiving from the landfill, so those numbers are pretty accurate.

Chair indicated to #45607 White Goods, \$5,000 increase why this is being increased. Is it contractual and if it is, what is the contractual obligation? Director Zidelis stated that that was DPW recommendation. He does not know their reasoning for it.

No one appeared to speak from the public.

CARE OF TREES

Chair indicated to #54501 Planting of Trees, proposed to go up \$2,000. He was a little surprised it was not increased further. The City Council just passed an Ordinance last month unanimously and the Mayor did sign that Ordinance into law that had a \$30,000 fiscal note to maintain our existing tree canopy when trees are removed. He asked why that was not fully funded. Director Zidelis stated that when the Budget was being formulated, in terms of trying to get a balanced Budget, the increase from 10-20 was determined to be what we could afford at the moment with the Budget. That is the reason. Chair stated that he appreciates that and is willing to give the department the benefit of the doubt that it was considerably close to the time of the Budget introduction that that Ordinance was passed. When looking at a City our size, spending \$12,000 on planting of trees is one one thousandth or probably less than that of the overall Budget, so hopefully we can move some money around to fully fund that because trees are a vital part of our environment and public health and certainly our neighborhoods.

No one appeared to speak from the public.

SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND

Director Zidelis stated that this is an Enterprise Account where Revenues typically need to offset the anticipated Expenses.

Councilwoman Germain indicated to #52016 Professional Services and stated that in 2023 it was \$100,000 and questioned why the big increase and what is meant by 'professional services'? Director Zidelis stated that with a service like this, this could be engineering services, potentially, so if we are doing extensive capital improvement work, which is paid out of the Enterprise Fund. He is assuming that the professional services is for engineering, but he will confirm that.

Chair recognized that Councilman Paplauskas, although he is not present in person, he is logged online.

No one appeared to speak from the public.

PLANNING AND CAPITAL BUDGET

Chair stated that the Comprehensive Plan Update funds have not been touched in FY2023. He questioned if that is something that the Director expects to be expended in the fourth quarter. Jason Pezzullo, City Planner, appeared to speak and stated, no, definitely not. This year, just like last year, he had asked that that money get put into a dedicated account so that they can use that for reimbursement for once they begin with the Commerce Grant so that that would give them the \$270,000, but it would need to be in a dedicated account. It is going to take years, so it is not going to be spent this year. Chair asked how much is going in the dedicated account. Director Pezzullo stated \$70,000 from this Budget year. With this \$70,000, there will be \$140,000 in that account and then we can begin. Chair asked where this dedicated account is in relation to the Budget. Director Pezzullo stated it should not be in the Budget. He had requested Finance to put this into a dedicated account outside of the Budget, so that they would have those resources available once they go and hire the consultant and work on this. He worked with Mike Igoe last year and he did that, so there is \$70,000 in a dedicated account and he is asking to include the \$70,000 from this current year into that account. Chair asked Director Zidelis if that would be a fourth quarter transfer into that dedicated account. Director Zidelis stated that the recognition of the expense to what dedicated account would be a fourth quarter adjustment if that is what happened, but he would have to check to see how it was done for FY2022. He is not aware of the transfer.

Mr. DiMaio stated that he remembers some dialogue with reference to that question being made and he believes that it would have to be voted on to set up a Reserve Account specific for that and anything that was not expended in the budgetary period just flows to the bottom line. He is pretty confident that any expenditure that is in an Operating Budget cannot be put into a Reserve Account. It just flows down to either fund balance or the Rainy Day Fund. He is unaware of this money being put aside.

Director Pezzullo stated that this process is a long process. If the money disappeared at the end of the Budget year, then we will never get any traction and do this project. The money is in a dedicated account now from last year. What he is saying now is he wants to do the same thing with this money so they can have that so that they can actually do this project. He does not want to make it more complicated about tying an RFT to certain quarters and how this money is going to be handled.

Mr. DiMaio asked Director Zidelis if he is aware of a fund set up with \$70,000 on our financial statements. Director Zidelis stated, no, he will go back and look at it. What he is seeing is there is a \$70,000 expense denoted on the expenditure detail for 2022. He will check in the morning to see if it was an actual expense or if it was a debit to that account or an adjustment.

Director Pezzullo stated that the issue with doing this process is that he needs to have cash in an account that he can use to hire a consultant. The issue in the past had been that if that same amount was given to him one year, he would need to get it subsequent years. That is just not going to work because they are not going to be able to work because they are not going to be able to hire someone and then have the uncertainty of the process and muck everything up. It needs to be in an account that they can actually draw upon and hire the consultant to work with it.

Mr. DiMaio stated that he is not disagreeing with the fiscal planning and budgeting for what the project has to be done, he just wants to make sure the City is representing where the funds are going and we are following the protocol.

Councilman Campopiano asked if it is his understanding that you can't begin the Comprehensive Plan until there is adequate funds in that account. Director Pezzullo stated that they did not want to begin the process until they had the adequate funds, that is correct. Mr. DiMaio asked how much it would cost for the Comprehensive Plan in total. Director Pezzullo stated between \$200 and \$250,000. Mr. DiMaio questioned the \$125,000 grant. Director Pezzullo stated that that is correct. Mr. DiMaio asked, if hypothetically, there is \$140,000 is the \$125,000 already have necessary. Director Pezzullo stated that that is correct. Mr. DiMaio asked Director Pezzullo when he will start. Director Pezzullo stated that they should be starting that sometime in the summer. The problem is staffing has been a problem. He stated that Josh left this year, they have a new staffer taking a long time to get people up to speed, the new staffer is going out on paternity leave, so then other people are in and out of the office. They only have so much capacity. This is the same theme six years on that he has been talking to this Board about. Doing long-range planning is really a luxury when we have shoestring budget to run this department. They are handling hundreds of millions of dollars of investment and staffing is not where it needs to be. He has stated this year after year.

Chair asked Director Pezzullo what he would ideally want. Director Pezzullo stated that what is realistic this year, one staffer, the Associate Planner back in the office. They had that position, it was cut during COVID, but that would be a reasonable request. They are not at the staffing they need to be. Chair asked Director Pezzullo if he would anticipate any of the revenue lien items for the department to go up or not have any impact, with the addition of an Associate. Director Pezzullo stated that he does not know if that would have any impact on revenue from application fees and things like that, but it would certainly free the staff up to do more long-range planning meaning that they could actually maybe go for some grants. Despite having a Grant Writer, that is not all that helpful for a department like this. They have to write the grant, they have to manage the grant, they have to do the grant reporting, then they have to do the work, so to go after grants and actually get money to do things, you need people and bodies and they are much locked down doing regulatory work for the City Council, the Planning Commission, Historic District, Zoning, Development Plan Review. They are pretty busy based on what is coming to them.

Councilwoman Renzulli stated that she understands that they are very busy because she attends the Planning meetings, but she is curious about what Director Pezzullo just stated about the Grant Writer because we have an excellent Grant Writer who brings in millions of dollars to multiple cities for all different departments. She writes them for Fire, Police, the Mayor's Office, Parks and Recreation, so she finds it a little bit hard to believe that the Grant Writer cannot procure any grants for Planning without inundating the department. She understands Director Pezzullo has to manage the grant or Finance has to manage the grant, but every other department does it, so she asked Director Pezzullo if he cares to elaborate. Director Pezzullo stated that the types of grants that they would go for, you are basically signing up to be a sub-contractor for someone else's project, the City is going to do that work.

The Grant Writer, yes, is fine to find a grant and help write the grant and submit it. The actual work, the commitment to do the grant, you have to dedicate some times 25% of the staff's time to manage the grant, to work on the grant, that is your in kind contribution, so there is no free lunch when it comes to any of this kind of grant work so when he says that the Grant Writer is not helpful, she does not work in his department, she is not managing the project, she is not doing the reporting, she is not going and doing all the financials. None of that happens through the Grant Writer. If we want to engage in more activity with grants, we need capacity in the department and the department is really locked down doing regulatory actions nonstop.

Councilwoman Renzulli stated that that would be every other department too. Every department is in the same position. The Grant Writer gets grants. They do not necessarily manage projects for departments. She finds that the last few cycles we have done this, she does not want to be insulting, but it comes across as a lot of excuses as to why the Comprehensive Plan does not get done, why we can't do this and why we can't do that. Eventually, we have to do something. She completely understands what Director Pezzullo is saying, but she would like to see him try and then say that he literally can't do it. He has Interns to help, they are here, she sees them present all the time. He has a hard working department, she believes they have flex hours. They have some flexibility within the department, that he can't come back here year after year and say 'can't do the Comprehensive Plan', 'can't get grants because it is not a free lunch'. At some point, he has to be held accountable to doing this work because a lot of the work of the City is affected by not having a current Comprehensive Plan. Every time she attends a Planning meeting there are attorneys sitting on either side referencing whether we should be listening to this Comprehensive Plan that may or may not be approved by the State and we are wasting a lot of money and he is wasting a lot of time there. He could spend that time maybe administering the grant. It just can't always be an excuse. Other departments go for grants.

Mr. DiMaio asked Director Pezzullo, if the money was available and he had \$125,000 in the current budget that is submitted with additional allocations and he has the grant of \$125,000, would he be able to start the Comprehensive Plan in the next budgetary period? Director Pezzullo stated, yes, but he is not asking for any additional funding. Mr. DiMaio stated that the reason he is asking that question is he believes that the \$70,000 from the previous year is not available. He believes the \$70,000 in the budget will be available. He is just asking the question if he had a full \$250,000 in the next budgetary period ending FY 6/30/2024, would he be able to start the Comprehensive Plan July 1st? Director Pezzullo stated, yes.

Council Vice-President Vargas asked that this item be added as a follow-up under Council Communication for the next regular Finance Committee meeting.

Councilwoman Renzulli asked if any other department gets to carry over their funds year to year for projects in special accounts. Mr. DiMaio stated only one that he is aware of is the Libraries and they fall under the Maintenance of Effort and they call it a Reserve. He believes it is either a State Law or a law that the Libraries treated like the Schools and whatever is in their budget is considered Maintenance of Effort and we can't take anything. We have to maintain the same level of funding.

Council President Marino stated to Director Pezzullo that she understands the staffing is not where he wants it to be, everyone here can't believe we are at this point again. It is the same explanation no effort has ben done and it is very true what Councilwoman Renzulli stated. For years she has been attending Planning Commission meetings and for years she has observed what happens

with Council and matters where there is amendments, whether it is constituents or developers, there is great dissatisfaction and it is costing the City money development wise because we are not where we need to be with that Plan. She just can't believe we are having the same conversation. He has to make do with what he has. The money is there and it has to be done.

Chair stated that in addition to the request from Council Vice-President Vargas on the Comprehensive Plan account, he asked that at the next full Council meeting, the clerk add under Communications', "status of the Comprehensive Plan RFP".

Council President Marino stated to Director Pezzullo that she attended a Planning Commission meeting on February 25, 2020 as a resident. The department was asked when the Comprehensive Plan would be updated. The following timeline was given: 2020 community engagement; 2021 develop initial drafts, review drafts of public meeting; solicit comments from Statewide Plan; 2022 develop final draft for City Council adoption; 2023 formal review by the Statewide Plan and other State agencies and 2023-2024 Plan finalization. She gets that COVID happened, it happened to all of us, but guess what, when we get a flat tire on a car, you put a spare on and keep it going. We are now three years in and this has to happen.

Steve Frias, 107 Garden Hills Dr., appeared to speak and stated that he did not look at how the Comprehensive Plan was funded in our budget from 2008, 2009 & 2010, but usually, how he understands how the City works, is that when you make a contractual obligation, it is funded through the budget. You do not have a pre-fund. Once the City enters into a contractual obligation, it is a legal obligation, period. The sense or urgency, House Bill 6085, which was co-sponsored and is part of Speaker's package, would render any Comprehensive Plan that has not been approved in the last twelve years null and void for purposes of prohibiting a project from occurring. Our Comprehensive Plan was approved in August of 2012 by the State and then subsequently by the City Council. Our Comprehensive Plan would become invalid for purposes of prohibiting a project from occurring. We have to have a sense of urgency about this and he very much appreciates and commends everyone who expressed that sense of urgency to get this done. In regards to getting this done, if you have a lack of staff, then you have to have a consultant. You work with what you have. He thinks the Council has sent a clear message. He hopes the Council directs a way of doing this and in a way it has already done that. As a member of the Planning Commission, he has brought this up a few times. There are two reasons he is a member of the Commission and one was to get this Comprehensive Plan done in a timely manner and to be done in a correct way. He asked that the Council keep the feet to the fire and we will get there.

No one appeared to speak from the public.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Raymond Tessaglia, Director of Parks and Recreation, appeared to speak.

Council President Marino asked how much of the landscaping services is done inhouse and how much is contracted out. Director Tessaglia stated that this year, we have done very little with the tree and shrub. Last year, when the budget happened, they were told to do as much as possible inhouse. They did the best that they could. They are not landscapers, but got the job done. It may not have been as quick. A lot of the cleaning was also delayed, but they are getting around to stuff now. He has tried

to preserve that somewhat. Council President Marino indicated to the “Maintenance of Trees and Shrubs” line item and asked if this includes both for inhouse and utilizing the contractor. Director Tessaglia stated that he only uses that line item for contractor when they are utilized.

Mr. DiMaio asked if Parks and Recreation maintains any of the buildings that are at the fields. Director Tessaglia stated that there is a lot of stuff that his employees do do without calling Building Maintenance, but for certain things, Building Maintenance does handle them, such as roofs on buildings, replacing locks, heaters, etc.

Council President Marino indicated to the Salary Schedule and stated that the proposed budget is down approximately \$20,000, but Overtime is proposed to be increased by \$60,000 and Differential by another \$7,000. She asked Director Tessaglia if he had another staffer, would Overtime be less? Director Tessaglia stated that they had a retiree this year. As far as Overtime, it is just only used when it is mandated contractual.

Councilwoman Renzulli questioned why line item #55000 Community Programs and Events is -0-. Director Tessaglia stated that they get assistance from various companies for these events and programs.

No one appeared to speak from the public.

CAPITAL BUDGET

Susan Blake, 173 Grand Ave., appeared to speak on behalf of many Cranston residents who feel very strong that the current size and depth of the Budlong Pool should be maintained. She questioned when all the residents of the whole City be given the opportunity to have their say about their pool. Why must the current size of the pool be redesigned for multiple uses, it is a pool? A very very busy pool. It holds 300 people at one time. What is the reasoning for selecting a more expensive design instead of keeping the current layout and use? Option one from the Federal Hill Group was to repair the current pool and bath house, bring it up to Code, ADA compliant and for that we are given a proposed cost of \$2.8 million, but the current plan proposed is significantly higher. Cranston has already received \$750,000 Congressional Grant specifically for the Budlong Pool. Will this still be able to be used for the current proposed plan or will we lose it and where will the remainder of the money come from, ARPA funds or Referendum? Cranston has already started installing a splash pad at Bain Middle School, so why do we need one at Budlong Pool? You can’t swim at a splash pad, so why fill in a pool to put in a splash pad? Where will the residents of the City supposed to go to swim this summer?

Dan Wright, resident of the Auburn area, appeared to speak and stated that he lived near the pool most of his life. Three years ago, would the pool have opened if we did not have COVID, yes. There is nothing about it structurally, it is built of stone. All that the City has ever done is sealed it and painted it every single year since he was ten and he sees no reason why they can’t do that again. He would like to see proof that there is something wrong with it, except it has been left in disrepair in the last few years.

Steve Frias, Planning Commission member, 107 Garden Hills Dr., appeared to speak and stated that the Capital Budget, Charter Section 6.12 of the Code gives the Council ability to accept, reject or modify proposals, but what you can’t do is add a Capital Budget item that has not been approved by the Planning Commission. Section 6.09 states that the Council may increase, decrease or add items, not included in the Operating Budget.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosalba Zanni". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R".

Rosalba Zanni

Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees