

*(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).*

## **REGULAR MEETING – CITY COUNCIL**

**-DECEMBER 19, 2022-**

Regular meeting of the City Council was called held on Monday, December 19, 2022 in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 869 Park Ave., Cranston, Rhode Island.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by the Council President.

Roll call showed the following members present: Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly (appeared at 7:30 p.m.), Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -8.

Absent: Councilman Campopiano -1.

Also Present: Anthony Moretti, Chief of Staff; John Verdecchia, Assistant City Solicitor; Stephen Angell, City Council Legal Counsel; David Dimasio, City Council Budget Analyst; Thomas Zidelis, Finance Director.

On motion by Councilman Donegan, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and they stand approved as recorded. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -7. Councilman Reilly was not present for roll call vote.

### **I. PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND COMMENDATIONS**

**Councilwoman Renzulli** presented plaque to Council President for serving as Council President for the past two years.

### **II. PUBLIC HEARINGS & PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **III. RESOLUTIONS**

None.

**IV. REPORT OF COMMITTEES**

**SAFETY SERVICES & LICENSES COMMITTEE  
(Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli, Chair)**

**CLASS BV LIQUOR LICENSE**  
*La Bandera Bistro LLC*  
(Yanelby Santos)

**OVER THE CAP**  
407 Laurel Hill Ave.

On motion by Councilman Donegan, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to approve this license application. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -7. Councilman Reilly was not present for roll call vote.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE  
(Council Vice-President Robert J. Ferri, Chair)**

***RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REAL ESTATE TAX ABATEMENTS***

On motion by Councilwoman Renzulli, seconded by Council Vice-President Ferri, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -7. Councilman Reilly was not present for roll call vote.

***RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING MOTOR VEHICLE TAX ABATEMENTS***

On motion by Councilman Donegan, seconded by Councilwoman Renzulli, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -7. Councilman Reilly was not present for roll call vote.

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE  
(Council Vice-President Robert J. Ferri, Chair)**

***REQUEST FROM COLBEA ENTERPRISES, LLC, 2050 PLAINFIELD PIKE – PERMIT FOR ALTERATION NEAR HISTORIC CEMETERY #18 (Fenner-Lawton Lot) and Historical Cemetery #64 (Charles Bennett Lot)***

On motion by Councilwoman Renzulli, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to approve the above request. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -7. Councilman Reilly was not present for roll call vote.

**ORDINANCE COMMITTEE  
(Councilman Matthew R. Reilly, Chair)**

**8-22-02      *ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF TITLE 10, CHAPTER 32, SECTION 590 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED ‘MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC’ (Tabor St. 2 Hr. Parking)***

On motion by Councilwoman Germain, seconded by Council Vice-President Ferri, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -7. Councilman Reilly was not present for roll call vote.

## **-DECEMBER 19, 2022-**

**10-22-01      *ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF TITLE 10, CHAPTER 32, SECTION 270 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED 'MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC – NO PARKING BETWEEN 8:00 A.M. AND 7:00 P.M. MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY'***

On motion by Councilwoman Germain, seconded by Councilwoman Marino, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -7. Councilman Reilly was not present for roll call vote.

**11-22-01      *ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF TITLE 5, CHAPTER 68 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED 'BUSINESS LICENSES AND REGULATIONS – TOBACCO DEALERS'***

On motion by Council Vice-President Ferri, seconded by Councilwoman Vargas, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -7. Councilman Reilly was not present for roll call vote.

### **AUDIT COMMITTEE (Council Vice-President Robert J. Ferri, Chair)**

#### ***AUDIT REPORT FROM MARCUM LLP FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2022***

**Council Vice-President Ferri** stated that we were scheduled to receive a presentation from Marcum with the Audit and they have failed to have it ready for this evening. He and Council President Paplauskas discussed this today and they have decided that because we have to have this ready by the end of the year, we are going to have to have a special meeting next week, which Council President Paplauskas will cover.

**Council President Paplauskas** stated that right now, we are scheduled to have a meeting on December 29<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. and the only agenda item will be the Audit Report from Marcum LLP.

On motion by Councilwoman Renzulli, seconded by Council Vice-President Ferri, it was voted to continue the above item to special meeting on December 29<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.

Under Discussion:

**Councilwoman Renzulli** asked if it is anticipated that the Audit will be done at that time and is there a penalty if it is not. Council Vice-President Ferri stated that he could not find anywhere in our Charter or Ordinances that there is a penalty so that is something that needs to be looked at next year.

**Councilwoman Marino** stated that the Audit is due December 30<sup>th</sup> and last year it was on the 30<sup>th</sup> also.

**Councilwoman Vargas** asked if Marcum provided any information in terms of at least when we would be able to receive the report possibly day before. She is trying not to get the report the day of. Council President Paplauskas stated that he did not receive any information. Councilwoman Vargas asked if we could follow up on that also. Director Zidelis stated that we will endeavor to get the Council the report in advance of the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting so the Council can receive it prior to the special meeting.

**Councilwoman Renzulli** asked who actually negotiates the contract just so we know next time we have to put anything in requesting or making these requests so that they are valid when we ask for them. Council President Paplauskas stated that it is paid out of the Council Budget, but BOCAP negotiates it and you can only stay with a certain Audit Firm for so many years and you are required to switch.

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**Director Moretti** stated that he used to be the Council Auditor and there were times that the Auditors went beyond the December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. By State Statute, the Audit Report on the financials have to be submitted to the Auditor General by the end of the year. If we were to go to that point, it is not the first time. There is nothing extraordinarily negative going on. In speaking with Mr. Wilkinson last week, Council President Paplauskas and he and Council Vice-President Ferri, he thought he would be able to have the results and the Audit completed. He did indicate today that he has had some illnesses at the firm that has caused some backup and the delay as a result of it.

**Mr. DiMaio** stated that last year, we received the power point presentation on December 20<sup>th</sup> and we all received on December 30<sup>th</sup> an e-mail with the Audit Report attached, the complete Audit that was finalized.

**Council Vice-President Ferri** asked if it is unrealistic for us in the future to look at moving this up a month so if there is a problem, it turns out to be December 15<sup>th</sup> instead of January 15<sup>th</sup>. Director Zidelis stated that we are in a perfect opportunity to advance the Fiscal Year 2023 schedule earlier, so that is something that after this, we will go back and schedule that with Marcum.

Roll call was taken on motion to continue the above item to a special meeting on December 29<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -7. Councilman Reilly was not present for roll call vote.

### **V. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR UN-DOCKETED ITEMS**

**Nancy Crosby** appeared to speak and stated that she is present to make the City Council aware of a situation at Eden Park Elementary School, a very dangerous situation. She has a second grader at Eden Park. As everyone is aware, there is construction going on at Eden Park and all around the school. The School is set up like a "U" and there are three streets all around it and some of the streets are one-way during school hours. One street has just been designated, just this year, as one-way only from 8-9 and 2-3. It is chaos. Parents are driving the wrong way down the one-way street, parking and pulling right up onto the curb where people go in to drop the children off. It amazes her that people, parents, guardian drivers can be so reckless. They are literally driving up onto the sidewalk and parking and just waiting for their children to either drop them off or to pick them up. It is very narrow there and there are two beautiful oak trees that take up half the parking lot and when people are parked on the sidewalk, there is not much room to walk. She has brought this up to the Principal, who has sent home maps of the area and advised parents what to do. she has e-mailed Mr. Fitzgerald, Director of Transportation, who said he handles buses, but was going to send it up to Norma Cole. She has spoken to both Sergeant Needham of Traffic and said he was going to contact the SRO and Paul Oslowski, Safety Director from Cranston Public Schools. She is running out of people and the problem is still there. Her first e-mail to the Principal was October 21<sup>st</sup>. She is not blaming anyone, but she feels like whose responsibility is it. Another issue there is the contractors who are working there have been parking on Glengrove and Chestnut with their trucks. That takes up a lot of room in that area. Today, the contractors were parked way up away from the School, so that freed up quite a few parking spots. She is present to ask for help. Someone is going to get hit. There have been so many near misses.

**Council President Paplauskas** indicated to Ms. Crosby that Director Moretti will speak to her and get some information from her and hopefully be able to help with this issue.

### **VI. ELECTION AND/OR APPOINTMENT OF CITY OFFICIALS**

#### **CITY PLAN COMMISSION:**

- *Re-appointment of Steven Frias as a member for term to expire \*December 19, 2026 (Council President)*

No action needed.

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- *Appointment of Thomas Barbieri as a member for term to expire \*December 19, 2026 (Council President)*

No action needed.

### **PROBATE JUDGE ADVISORY COMMISSION:**

- *Appointment of Fred C. White, Jr. as a member for term to expire December 19, 2023. (Councilwoman Marino)*

On motion by Councilwoman Renzulli, seconded by Councilwoman Marino, it was voted to appoint **Fred C. White** as a member of the Probate Judge Advisory Commission. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -7. Councilman Reilly was not present for roll call vote.

- *Re-appointment of Henry Palazzo as a member for term to expire December 19, 2025. (Council President Paplauskas)*

On motion by Councilwoman Renzulli, seconded by Councilman Donegan, it was voted to re-appoint **Henry Palazzo** as a member of the Probate Judge Advisory Commission. Motion passed on a vote of 7-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilman Donegan, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -7. Councilman Reilly was not present for roll call vote.

## **VII. REPORT OF CITY OFFICERS**

None.

## **VIII. EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

### ***LEGAL EXPENSE ANALYSIS FROM JULY 1, 2022 – DECEMBER 19, 2022.***

**Councilwoman Vargas** asked for reason why the legal matter that is coming before us on the invoice of Vin Ragosta still has 12/14/2021 through 4/29/2022 and why we are still seeing ones that state paid. Director Moretti stated that Anna Marino generates the report and he is not sure if she knows to take it off. He thinks she feels it is a cumulative document, but if you see a better way which you want, we could possibly define what to include and not include. Councilwoman Vargas stated that she thinks whatever invoice has been paid and the City Council approved at the last meeting, maybe it should fall off and no longer come before the City Council as a legal expense analysis. Director Moretti stated that he believes this report is a response to what the City Council had previously asked for. Director DiMaio stated that this initially was there to track the legal expenditures for the Fiscal Year we are in just to show the cumulative expenses being paid against the budgetary amount. He thinks it was former Council Member John Lanni who asked because he thinks at the budgetary period, what would happen is they budgeted a number and the expenses were so high they just wanted to track it just so that they could compare it to what the budget line item was and that they would have an understanding and it would not be a surprise at year end.

**Director Moretti** announced that there will be a Menorah lighting tomorrow evening at 5 p.m. and public is invited to attend.

**IX. COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS**

**Attorney Angell** asked Council President Paplauskas for a minute or two to speak this evening to everyone. He thanked everyone for this past term. It was his first term sitting as the City Council Legal Counsel and he thanked everyone for being receptive to his outreach and allowing him to build those relationships. As he stated to Council President Paplauskas, when he came to Cranston, much like he said to the Governor and to the Auditor General in 2003, he does not come here as the color red, the color blue, the color purple. He comes here as black and white. He is an umpire with a striped shirt and a whistle and he really believes that. He came to practice law and not politics and he has been allowed to do that and it is really quite refreshing. His respect for each of the Council Members and the dedication and advocacy that they bring to doing the peoples' work is profound. He expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve and to earn the Council's respect. He would be remised if he did not thank the Acting City Clerk, Rosalba Zanni, who has been terrific. To say that she has risen to a number of challenges in the course of the term on a variety of levels is an understatement and it really is a testament to the extraordinary person that she is. You are very lucky to have her in the Clerk's Office. She is really quite a resource. He also thanked Solicitor Verdecchia. He has always had a great deal of respect for Mr. Verdecchia. It has been a pleasure to work with him on behalf of the Administration to try to iron some things out for this Council. He thanked the City Council for the opportunity to serve and he would like to say that the bridge-building exercise that he engaged in a few years ago seems to have worked because he has, he believes, the good fortune of being invited back by the Democratic Majority and he is very grateful for that opportunity to serve once again in this capacity. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

**Council President Paplauskas** thanked Rosalba Zanni, who is Clerk of Committees and has stepped up to be the Acting City Clerk for entire City. Her ability to multi-task is second to none and certainly appreciates all the hard work for the entire Council and her institutional knowledge is second to none.

**Council President Paplauskas** thanked Mr DiMaio for everything. His knowledge has been extremely helpful and thanked him for everything he has done. He thanked Tom Lima for making everything streamlined and as easy as possible for this transition to online meetings. He has worked with the Acting City Clerk on links for our Dockets and everything has been flawless. He also thanked the Council Grant Writer, Lisa Andoscia, who has brought in \$1.5 million over the last 18 months and has another approximately \$2.75 million out there that hopefully we can get as a City. He also thanked the Council Legal Counsel, Mr. Angell, who sat by his side at all these meetings and he has been a wealth of knowledge he brings from his time in Johnston. It has been a pleasure to work with him. He thanked Solicitor Verdecchia for staying on and being our Solicitor as well. he also thanked Director Moretti and for being here. He thanked all members of the City Council for giving him the opportunity to serve as their President. It has been an honor and a dream and could not have done it without them and is proud to have been their colleague and friend and looks forward to serving with them on the next term. He also thanked Ron Ronzio and Heather Finger, the Stenographers, for everything that they do at the Committee meetings. He thanked all Committee Chairs who stepped up and worked with the Acting City Clerk the last two years. He knows it has not been easy. He also thanked the residents of Cranston for tuning in, for participating and for letting the Council have the opportunity to do what they do.

**X. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS**

**COUNCILWOMAN GERMAIN:**

- *Discussion of 18-wheeler trucks going through Norfolk St. and update on the feasibility of the Do Not Block Sign at the intersection of Reservoir Ave. and Norfolk St. (Cont. from 11/28/2022).*

**Director Moretti** stated that Director Bernardo will have a "No Through Trucks" sign posted upon entering Norfolk St. this week or next week. In terms of the blocking signs, DPW has sent the request to the State D.O.T. and they have acknowledged receipt of that, but we do not control the schedule for which they do their studies or evaluations because they have a lot of requests. The City has done its part to pass it along to the State and they have acknowledged that they have received that request.

**Councilwoman Germain** asked that a follow-up be given at the next meeting.

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- *Status and Update on the Budlong Pool Project. Cont. from 11/28/2022).*

**Director Moretti** stated that we do not think we are at a good point to share publicly that document because it is a work in process. Some of the City Council members have seen a first design, but we want to make sure we attach the cost to that. We have the estimated cost due to come in the next few weeks.

**Councilwoman Germain** stated that in a few days we are going to be in January, so if we are working on this project to make sure the Budlong Pool is available for the people of Cranston by this coming Summer, she asked where we are right now

**Director Moretti** stated that we would have a better idea in a few weeks and to give that answer, he would not want to be held to a number nor give a number that is too high or too low. He can take a guess, but it is not going to be meaningful. As to the Summer, that is in danger of getting the pool open for the Summer. The Architect has been in contact with some of the vendors who provide these services and what is going on in recent few years. That is going to be a pretty lofty goal that they are indicating both from a supply end and the contractors just to get the work done in the Summer. He would say that that is in question at this point in time, unfortunately.

**Councilwoman Germain** questioned if the pool is not going to be ready for the Summer. **Director Moretti** stated that it is very questionable. **Councilwoman Germain** stated that the Council passed a Resolution to use up the money for the Parks Budget and we also know that there is a Grant that was submitted from the Federal Government for the Budlong Pool. She questioned where we are with those projects. Also, do we have the number that we can use from the ARPA money because if it is a matter of money, the money is there. **Director Moretti** stated that financially, he could indicate that the Mayor's intentions is to have the Budlong Pool built in probably even a better format than as soon as possible. That is the Mayor's commitment. We are working on our Capital Budget at this time, and we anticipate including the Budlong Pool cost in the Capital Budget as a fallback if there is no other money available to use. As to the ARPA funds, that is certainly a possibility. As to the Grants, we have not heard back on any Grants and that is out of our control. He thinks that in a month from now, we will have a much better idea on costs for us to be able to absorb it and at that time, he thinks we could collaborate together and determine what is best.

**Councilwoman Germain** stated that she feels like we are going in circles with this project. The pool has been closed for the past two years and she thinks that the residents are asking for the pool to reopen. She would like to continue this item to next month.

**Director Moretti** stated that we are not going in circles. **Director Bernardo** has taken this extraordinarily seriously. He is doing it as diligently as he can, but no one is delaying this process.

**Councilwoman Germain** stated that what she would like for the meeting is have the numbers, a timeline for the first phase.

**Councilman Donegan** suggested that maybe this conversation would be best for the next Public Works Committee meeting rather than the City Council Docket this way **Director Bernardo** is available at those meetings.

**Councilwoman Germain** asked that the Clerk add this item to the next Public Works Committee meeting agenda.

- *Discussion about any help that the City provides to families who need to replace their lead water lines. Cont. from 11/28/2022).*

**Director Moretti** stated that the City does not provide any of those services nor funds per se.

**Councilman Donegan** stated that he thinks that there are definitely programs available through the Infrastructure Bank and he thinks North Providence currently has some sort of program going.

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**Mr. DiMaio** stated that the EPA put out approximately \$30 million in Grants in October to help with this. Some of the other programs that he researched is that some of the municipalities are doing kind of a 50/50 to reach out to more than just one person and fully fund them. There are programs, but he would like to further do some research, but until he gets some direction on what the Council may want, he just did that ancillary based on the last meeting.

**Councilwoman Germain** stated that we need to continue this conversation and have Mr. DiMaio do more research.

- *Discussion about sidewalk safety in Ward 2 and who is liable in case of a fall?*

**Councilwoman Germain** asked that this item be placed on next month's Public Works Committee agenda.

### **XI. COUNCIL BUSINESS MATTERS CARRIED OVER**

None.

### **XII. INTRODUCTION OF NEW MATTERS BEFORE THE COUNCIL\***

**12-22-01**     ***ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JULY 1, 2022 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 (Mayoral Reorganization). Sponsored by Mayor Hopkins. Referred to Finance Committee January 9, 2023.***

**12-22-02**     ***ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CH. 10, TITLE 32, SECT. 020 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CRANSTON, 2005, ENTITLED 'MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC – STOP INTERSECTIONS-ENUMERATED' (Rangeley Rd. and Carver Rd.). sponsored by Mayor Hopkins and Councilwoman Renzulli. Referred to Ordinance Committee January 12, 2023.***

***REQUEST FROM CARPIONATO GROUP, LLC – PERMIT FOR ALTERATION NEAR HISTORIC CEMETERY CR030 KING-RANDALL LOT. Referred to Public Works Committee January 12, 2023.***

***ADVICE AND CONSENT OF MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT OF PAUL MCAULEY AS DIRETOR OF SENIOR SERVICES. Referred to Finance Committee January 9, 2023.***

***CLAIMS REFERRED TO CLAIMS COMMITTEE – THURSDAY, January 12, 2023.***

- ***Property Damage Claim:***
  - ***Lisa Marie Ricci-Russo from alleged incident on September 12, 2022.***

**Director Moretti** stated that the Administration is withdrawing proposed Ordinance 12-22-01 and the Advice and Consent of Mayor's appointment of Paul McAuley as Director of Senior Services.

On motion by Council Vice-President Ferri, seconded by Councilwoman Germain, it was voted to refer the above new business, with the exception of proposed Ordinance 12-22-01 and Advice and Consent of Mayor's appointment of Paul McAuley as Director of Senior Services, to the respective Committees. Motion passed on a vote of 8-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilwomen Marino, Renzulli, Vargas, Germain, Councilmen Donegan, Reilly, Council Vice-President Ferri and Council President Paplauskas -8.



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**XIII. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS ON CLERK'S DESK**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

Rosalba Zanni  
Acting City Clerk

(See Stenographic Notes of Ron Ronzio, Stenotypist)