

(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

-APRIL 23, 2025-

Special meeting of the City Council was held on Wednesday, April 23, 2025 in the Cranston High School East Auditorium, 899 Park Ave., Cranston, Rhode Island.

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:09 P.M. by the Council President.

II. ROLL CALL:

Roll call showed the following members present: Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Wall and Council President Marino -9.

Also Present: Anthony Moretti, Chief of Staff; Thomas Zidelis, Director of Finance; Christopher Millea, City Solicitor; Stephen Angell, City Council Legal Counsel; David DiMaio, City Council Budget Analyst; Rosalba Zanni, Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committee.

III. FY 2025-2026 BUDGET AMENDMENTS

- ***Consideration of Amendments to the FY 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, including, but not limited to: all Expenditures and Revenues; and any and all departments and line items thereof***

Council Vice-President Wall provided a spreadsheet of his proposed amendments.

On motion by Councilwoman Haroian, seconded by Councilman Andujar, it was voted to accept Council Vice-President Wall's spreadsheet of proposed amendments into the record. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Wall and Council President Marino -9.

Council President Marino asked for a short recess so the Council Members can review Council Vice-President Wall's spreadsheet.

The meeting recessed at 6:11 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 6:45 p.m.

Council Vice-President Wall stated following amendments:

- 1111-42162 Inspections – Electric Permits, increase of \$5,000 for total of \$230,000
- 1200-43103 Fire - Plan Review, increase of \$5,000 for total of \$115,000
- 1203-43300 Police – Animal Impound, increase of \$500 for total of \$3,500
- 1302-44200 Division of Highway – Public Works Misc., increase of \$1,500 for total of \$221,500
- 1306-44300 Division of Engineering – Inspection Fees, increase of \$2,000 for total of 14,000
- 1306-44405 Refuse Removal & Disposal – Misc. Revenue, increase of \$1,500 for total of \$9,000
- 1400-45000 Parks & Rec – Revenue, increase of \$25,000 for total of \$425,000
- 1101-51100 Executive – Salary, decrease of \$14,664 for total of \$471,064 with a October 1 start date
- 1101-51300 Executive – Payroll Tax, decrease of \$1,122 for total of \$47,581 with a October 1 start date

- 1101-51301 Executive – Pension, decrease of \$1,606 for a total of 41,166 with a October 1 start date
- 1101-51302 Executive – Hospitalization, decrease of \$6,844 for total of \$91,613 with a October 1 start date
- 1101-51304 Executive – Group Life, decrease of \$40 for total of \$1,296 with start date of October 1
- 1103-52310 Legal – Admin Legal Fees, decrease of \$1,000 for total of \$5,500
- 1105-52004 City Clerk – Departmental Expenses, decrease of \$3,000 for total of \$23,957
- 1106-52004 Probate Court – Departmental Expenses, decrease of \$1,500 for total of \$2,500
- 1116-52017 Division of Information & Tech – Equipment, decrease of \$10,000 for total of \$40,000
- 1202-53507 Police – City Claims, decrease of \$5,000 for total of \$30,000
- 1304-54401 Division of Building Maintenance – Electric Supplies, decrease of \$5,000 for total of \$27,000
- 1304-54408 Division of Building Maintenance – City Supplies, decrease of \$3,000 for total of \$12,000
- 1901-52063 Boards and Commissions – Diversity Commission, decrease of \$4,500 for total of \$500
- 1901-52061 Board and Commissions – Conservation Commission, decrease of \$500 for total of \$500
- 1901-52062 Board and Commissions – Historic District Commission, decrease of \$1,000 for total of \$1,000
- 1102-52004 Council – Departmental Expenses, decrease of \$1,000 for total of \$28,000
- 1204-53402 Rescue – Billing, decrease of \$30,000 for total of \$135,000
- 1102-52211 Council – Auditor, increase of \$6,280 for total of \$36,000
- 1105-51100 City Clerk – Salaries, increase of \$1,420 for total of \$377,714 with a start date of January 1
- 1105-51300 City Clerk – Payroll Tax, increase of \$109 for total of \$29,498 with a start date of January 1
- 1107-51104 Municipal Court – Differential, increase of \$2,500 for total of \$10,000
- 1107-51300 Municipal Court – Payroll Tax, increase of \$191 for total of \$11,216

Council Vice-President Wall deferred to Mr. DiMaio.

Mr. DiMaio stated that he did a quick calculation. First column of the handout is the proposed levy as the budget was submitted by the Administration and it shows the increase of the levy of \$5,361,911, which is approximately 2.792%. Doing a quick calculation increasing the levy to 3% and it went to \$5,599,665, which gives you additional levy revenue of \$237,754, which he put back to the additional amendment on the first page.

Council Vice-President Wall stated that the net changes due to the amendments and levy change would be increasing the School funding to \$357,537.

On motion by Council Vice-President Wall, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, it was voted to approve the above amendments as stated.

Under Discussion:

Councilman Traficante asked for explanation of additional \$25,000 net to Parks and Recreation. Mr. DiMaio stated during this department's hearing, the question was asked by one of the Council Members of the Director if he felt the Revenue in the Department were a little less, could he attain the Revenue and he made it sound that it was more than attainable.

Director Moretti stated that he does not anticipate the Mayor having much of an objection to most of the proposals. He thanked the Council for funding the position in the Executive. Only thing the Administration is sensitive about, not necessarily the dollar amounts, but the principles of it, is any increases, any changes in salaries. The Administration has painstakingly declined most Department Heads increases. With all due respect, the over 20% increase for the Auditor seems under the circumstances, a bit much. Other thing is, he always refers to the squeaky wheel syndrome when

someone does come out and represent themselves because the other Department Heads, excluding the City Clerk, are respectful of the process, the Administration explained to all Department Heads the conditions which we are under right now and he believes if there are real changes to the salaries, the salaries should reflect performance and because that particular department intertwines so much with the Administration, it might be best to discuss in Executive Session about performance and attendance and all those HR items. That would be a recommendation. By giving that increase, it would be the salary equal to the Chief of Staff position and he does not think it is fair. The position of Chief of Staff does more and puts more hours in and is more complex and to make the salary basically equal, he does not think is fair. It makes this person the highest paid at will Administrator Appointee in the City and exceeding the Tax Assessor and Building Official that has unique qualifications. The Planning Director will not be making as much as this individual. He strongly recommended that that not be passed based on recommendations he stated.

Roll call was taken and motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Wall and Council President Marino -9.

Council President Marino clarified that that motion was for the approval of the amendments as a block as stated into the record with additional appropriation to the Schools for \$357,537.

Councilman Buonanno stated that what we just passed was reflective of what the entire Council feels especially with respect to funding the School system. Everyone strongly feels that our School system is valuable and needs to function at a high level, which it does and needs funds to function at a high level. All this came from hard work from both sides. He is proud to be a part of this Council who all feel the same way. This is not a partisan issue whatsoever. He wished we could have done more, but we have to answer to the taxpayer as well and everything is a balance.

On motion by Councilman Buonanno, seconded by Councilman Andujar, it was voted to amend the following line items:

- 1102-55217 City Council Video Streaming, decrease of \$10,000 for total of \$20,000 and difference moved to Schools
- 1300-54802 Public Works – Sidewalk Program, decrease of \$5,000 for total of \$26,000 and difference moved to Schools

Roll call was taken and motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Wall and Council President Marino -9.

On motion by Councilwoman Graziano, seconded by Council Vice-President Wall, it was voted to amend the following line items:

- 1400-45000 Parks and Rec. – Revenue, increase of \$10,000 for total of \$435,000
- 1400-55006 Parks and Rec. – Expenses, increase of \$10,000 for total of \$190,000

Under Discussion:

Director Zidelis stated that increase of \$25,000, he was hesitant on. Without any analysis, he will work with this, but he intentionally dropped the Revenue from \$450,000 to \$400,000, but the Director was confident with the \$400,000. He is sure he won't have any problem with the \$435,000, but he has not had the opportunity to view it himself or speak with the Director. He has reservations.

Councilwoman Graziano stated that she has confidence based on her review on how well-utilized our fields are by outside companies like AAU. She believes there is a reduction necessary here.

Councilman Buonanno asked Councilwoman Graziano what the Expense side is for. Councilwoman Graziano stated that there were a number of items that she thought necessary based on her time here and her time as a resident. She has been asked over and over again about playground inspection. There are a number of playgrounds that have gone uninspected and we are looking for those to be inspected so we can get a cost when we have any Capital improvement items we need to see why we are getting those requested.

Roll call was taken and motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Wall and Council President Marino -9.

Councilman Traficante stated that when proposing an amendment, he was asked by Council Vice-President Wall to do some research. He checked with Mr. Boyle, Chair of Workforce Development Board, he checked with Personnel and he ran it by Director Zidelis. He motioned to amend line item 51100-7010 WIA Salary Schedule. He stated that there are four positions that are funded, but when checking with Mr. Boyle, Personnel and Director Zidelis, only three of those positions are active and one position is not filled, but funded. He is recommending that that position be deleted and the amount of \$69,914 for that particular position, not including payroll tax, hospitalization, pension and insurance, be dedicated to the School Department. Mr. DiMaio stated that that is a grant funded department so he would assume there is a Revenue line that offsets that, but deferred to Director Zidelis. The amendment could not be made, but it would basically be a wash.

Councilman Traficante withdrew his amendment.

The meeting recessed at 7:21 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:40 p.m.

IV. BUDGET ADOPTION

ADOPTION of Budget for Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026; As Amended by the City Council April 23, 2025

On motion by Council Vice-President Wall, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, it was voted to approve the Budget for FY2025-2026 as amended. Motion passed on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Wall and Council President Marino -9.

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL Adopting the Operating Budget and the Salary Schedule for the General Fund, the Sewer Fund, Ice Rink Fund, the Insurance Fund and the Capital Budget for the Fiscal Year commencing July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026 and adopting the Capital Improvement Program for the four succeeding years

On motion by Council Vice-President Wall, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Wall and Council President Marino -9.

RESOLUTION Authorizing the Adoption of the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2025 through 2030 pursuant to Section 6.12 of the Home Rule Charter of the City of Cranston

On motion by Council Vice-President Wall, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Wall and Council President Marino -9.

ORDINANCE Making Annual Appropriation for the City of Cranston for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2025 and Ending June 30, 2026

On motion by Council Vice-President Wall, seconded by Councilman Traficante, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting “aye”: Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Wall and Council President Marino -9.

RESOLUTION Authorizing the Assessment of Valuations and Levy of Taxes on Ratable Real Estate and Tangible Personal Property in the City of Cranston

Council President Marino asked Solicitor Millea to speak regarding this Resolution given the amendment this evening relative to the tax levy.

Solicitor Millea clarified that there has been a motion to amend the tax levy at a 3% flat, the cap within our Charter. Every discussion that has been before the Council this evening dealt with numbers that were based on a 2.91%. Just to be clear, any excess between the 3% and 2.9% as discussed, would go to the School Department based on the motion and based on the Charter.

Attorney Angell asked that the Council adopt Solicitor Millea's comments as the motion respect to this item.

On motion by Councilman Traficante, seconded by Councilman Andujar, the above Resolution was adopted on a vote of 9-0 consistent with the Solicitor's remarks relative to this Resolution. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Wall and Council President Marino -9.

ORDINANCE Fixing the Date When Taxes Are Assessed, as of December 31, 2024, Will Be Due and Payable and the Date When Unpaid Taxes Will Carry a Penalty

On motion by Council Vice-President Wall, seconded by Councilwoman Haroian, the above Ordinance was adopted on a vote of 9-0. The following being recorded as voting "aye": Councilmen Campopiano, Buonanno, Councilwomen Graziano, Haroian, Councilmen Andujar, Ritz, Traficante, Council Vice-President Wall and Council President Marino -9.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Rosalba Zanni
Assistant City Clerk/Clerk of Committees